

ICC accused of selective justice

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE African Union is on a collision course with the International Criminal Court, a tribunal that has indicted only Africans since its founding in 2002.

In an extraordinary meeting of the African Union at its headquarters in Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia, the AU took the position that no sitting head of state should be prosecuted by the ICC while still in office.

In the immediate term, the AU calls for the postponement of the trial of Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta, scheduled to begin in the The Hague, next month. Kenyatta and his deputy

president are charged with crimes against humanity stemming from election violence in 2007. President Kenyatta has told the African Union that the International Criminal Court “stopped being the home of justice the day it became the toy of declining imperial powers” – a clear reference to the United States and Britain.

And that is the heart of the matter. It is a travesty of justice that the ICC only indicts Africans, but even more importantly, the International Criminal Court also only indicts those politicians that get on the wrong side of the United States and the former colonial powers in Africa. The ICC is a tool of U.S. foreign policy, an instru-

ment of neocolonialism.

Among the apologists for the ICC is South African former archbishop Desmond Tutu, who says African leaders are “effectively looking for a license to kill, maim and oppress their own people without consequence.” Tutu says it all boils down to a question of “who should represent the interests of the victims?” However, in the real world of imperial power, Desmond Tutu’s reasoning is specious, shallow. He might just as well argue for the return of colonial rule, which established its own kind of law and order in Africa. The question is, whose law and whose order? The ICC represents U.S. foreign policy

masquerading as law.

Tutu maintains that, without the deterrence of the ICC, African “countries could and would attack their neighbours, or minorities in their own countries, with impunity.” Well, that is, in fact, the case right now in Africa, and it has occurred with the complicity of the ICC, which has sanctioned and morally assisted mass murder and outright genocide by American allies on the continent.

And here lies the great irony. The very nations that most strongly oppose the ICC – Rwanda,

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Thirty-eight towns to lose status

By PATRICIA WAFULA

THE Transition Authority has come up with a raft proposals that will pave way for the downgrading of 38 towns in the country.

A report released by the Authority and dubbed “classification of urban areas and cities based on resident population” reveals that only Nakuru and Eldoret will retain their status as municipalities while the rest, including Meru, Nyeri, Kakamega, Machakos and Kericho are to be downgraded to townships.

Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu are set to retain their city status while Karatina in Nyeri County and Wote, the headquarters of Makueni County, have been stripped of their municipality and township status to unclassified urban areas (see table on Page 2).

The Transition Authority Chairman Mr Kinuthia Wamwangi, says that report was jointly compiled by experts drawn from the ministries of Devolution, Housing and Lands and Kenya Law Reform Commission who carried out the survey.

“It should be noted that 38 former municipal councils will be downgraded to townships, 36 formerly unclassified urban areas qualify for classification as townships while one former municipal council, Karatina, and one town council, Wote, will be declassified,” he said.

The new rankings have been defined by population, integrated development plans, ability to generate revenue and collection potential, economic and financial viability, services such as airports and water fronts and existing infrastructure, among others.

According to the 2009 population census, Nairobi’s population



Mr Kinuthia Wamwangi, Transition Authority chairman.

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County plans to train farmers to boost food production —Pg. 30

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE county government of Laikipia will build more boarding schools to cater for children of pastoral communities in the region, Governor Joshua Irungu has promised.

Irungu said his government has partnered with all education stakeholders including teachers and parents to work for a prosperous county in terms of education.

He noted that regular movement of parents in the pastoral communities mostly Samburu and Maasai communities in search of pastures for their domestic animals, has affected education of their children.

He was speaking at Ol Joigi

Primary School during the district education prize giving day recently.

“We shall continue putting up more boarding schools in the county because of pastoralists. The nomadic communities’ children need to be in school and they should enjoy education rights like any other child in Kenya. Movement of parents should no more affect or halt children’s education,” said the governor.

He said it is only education that can enable them to compete with other communities in the country precisely in national government job positions.

“It is high time we initiate change, uphold it and realize that we are in a competitive world where everything is done on merit and fairly prior to considering any other factor,” said Irungu stating that without education they will remain marginalized.

Irungu however said his leadership will include all communities living in the region saying it is a multi-ethnic county therefore every community should be involved.

He further said that he will provide all primary schools with text books and lend a hand in initiating education based projects including introduction of an examination body to process exams for the entire county instead of each district having its own examination unit.

Irungu urged local communities to discard retrogressive cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is illegal.

“Plans are underway for a project called Adopt a school mentorship programme which will involve university students and professionals from this region. They will be tasked with mentoring pupils so as to lift up their morale in studying,” said Irungu.

The governor added that soon a mentorship programme to pupils will begin involving university students and other professionals from the region.



Laikipia Governor Joshua Irungu inspects a guard of honour mounted by Ol Joigi Primary School scouts recently during District Education Prize Giving day. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Education, a critical component to social mobility

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

PARENTS have been challenged to value education of their children regardless of their social status in the community.

Rodgers Nato, the Chebuyusi High school accounts clerk in Kakamega county asserted that it was the responsibility of parents to ensure that children go to school to pursue education.

The school bursar decried parents who do not invest in the education of their children saying that they are worse than witches in communities.

Nato argued that it was easier to heal a person suffering as a result of witch-craft than to deal illiteracy in grown up people.

He appealed to parents to be responsible people and desist from habits that can easily disable them from undertaking family obligations particularly provision of basic needs and fees payment.

Speaking at Wacheka C.C.A Church in Bungoma county during a funds drive meeting organized to assist an orphan girl to pay university fees, Nato at the same time appealed to well-wishers to assist orphans access higher education to realize their dreams.

The orphan, Evelyn Wana-kacha has now joined Kenyatta university, Garissa branch to pursue a bachelor’s degree in education with a bias in Mathematics and Business.

Speaking at the same function, Mwibale zone KEPSHA chair, Juma Nanjali appealed to merry-go round groups in the area to diversify their activities.

Nanjali challenged the groups to move away from buying household goods and instead start income generating activities for members.

The move, the zonal KEPSHA chair said will not only help to create wealth but also boost education standards in the region.

Mount Kenya University introduces outreach programmes

By TITUS MAERO

Mount Kenya University has said that the institution is investing more in learning infrastructure.

A Co-founder member of the university Mrs Jane Nyutu says the University seeks to expose students to programmes which present a sound theoretical foundation and a strong practical background.

Nyutu notes that the courses offered at the campus prepare students to a sea of opportunities that seek to promote a record of achievement and success in academic excellence and job prospects.

“The University provides a stimulating learning environment through an innovative student based and quality driven approach to teaching and learning,” she says adding that the institution has also incorporated e-learning to give students flexible and dynamic learning experience.

Nyutu says the institution had continued to generate knowledge through outreach programmes in



A section of staff of Mt. Kenya University in a group photograph. Photo/File

order to equip students with skills that would assist them utilize the available resources for development purposes upon graduation from the institution.

She challenged the local community to treat their children equally regardless of sex noting that only 700 female students had enrolled at the Kakamega Campus against a male population of 2,000.

She urged parents to send more girls to the institution to enable them compete favourably in the

current job market where everything requires high academic qualifications.

Noting that the University plays a very important role in society, she said there is need to lay emphasis on science and innovation saying the two are important drivers to the economy.

“There is need to continue offering access to education through flexible and innovative approach for positive delivery of University programmes,” Nyutu noted adding that the University has over

the years harnessed the potential of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Science to expand learning opportunities through modern system of teaching.

She said the setting up of more private universities had taken higher education closer to the people especially school leavers who would wish to advance their education to the next level in the competitive world.

Nyutu added that the only way to fight social vices such as poverty, illiteracy, diseases and ignorance is to send children to higher institutions of learning adding that education especially the youth, give them skills making them more competitive in the job market.

Present at the ceremony included the Kakamega Campus Director Dr Philemon Bureti. The clubs that were launched included Mathematics, Environment, ICT and Science which were formally presented with registration certificates in order to be independent and operate officially.

Parents in Kisii County urged to invest in schools

By BOB OMBATI

KISII County Director of Education, Konchora Chepe wants parents from Kisii County to invest in local schools to improve education standards and performance in national examinations.

Konchora notes that local schools continue posting poor results annually due to poor infrastructure and yet the area is endowed with massive resources to be invested in schools to improve them.

The CDE asserts that wealthy parents have shunned local schools and take their children to other counties where they pay high school fees for their children to get quality education and pass exams.

The Director, who spoke at Itibo Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK) secondary school, revealed that Gusii candidates in the diaspora excelled in national exams while those within the county performed dismally.

The funds parents invest in the diaspora schools, noted Chepe was used to improve them and motivate teachers, leading to high performance in national exams.

"Parents from this area invest heavily in the education of their children in the diaspora while those with children in local schools are unwilling to support them," said Chepe, stressing the trend should be reversed for the candidates to excel.

Chepe, accompanied by District Education Officer, Gilbert Oloo, Deputy Commissioner, Willy Chemboi, Knut Executive Secretary, Charles Mokua and Catholic University of East Africa Don, Prof. Mary Getui challenged stakeholders to stop blame games and focus on the education of their children.

He asserted the District's mean score in Kenya Certificate of Secondary examinations (KCSE) had improved from 211 in 2011 to 241.76 last year but lamented that quality Grades continued to dwindle.

The officer noted out of 38 and 279 candidates who scored A plain and A minus respectively in last year's KCSE in the County, only 2 had A



Pupils in front of their poorly built classrooms. Parents are urged to invest in schools.

plain and 13, A minus from the district.

Few students, stated Chepe would be admitted to join universities and undertake excellent professions owing to poor Grades, denying the County the essential manpower to boost its social and economic development.

Indiscipline among majority of the students, noted the officer was hampering performance in national exams and challenged parents, guardians and teachers to guide and counsel them to be responsible and accountable citizens.

Some school children, noted the officer were from broken families and should be assisted to understand and shun wayward behaviours which would ruin their lives.

Parents, noted Chepe should shun inciting students against Principals from outside their clans to pave way for their clansman, saying it fuelled ceaseless conflicts and led to poor performance in national exams.

"Parents should support Principals

whose schools perform well regardless of their clans, political or religious affiliations" stated Chepe.

Chemboi urged parents to shun believing and scaring children with witchcraft, stressing they should focus on competing with other counties nationally to emerge the best in social, economic, educational and cultural aspects.

The Deputy County commissioner doubling up as District Education Board Chairman decried low transition rate especially for the girl-child from primary to secondary, saying it had created a glaring disparity.

Primary schools in the area, noted Chemboi had 26000 pupils against 6000 students in secondary schools, saying the trend was worrying and showed that few children graduated from primary to secondary schools.

Prof. Getui challenged learners against negative peer group influence and abusing drugs and substances,

saying they disoriented their education and ruined their lives.

Getui challenged school Heads to embrace strategic plans and help children set goals, be focused and work hard to achieve them.

Conflicts, stated Mokua were hampering education standards in the area and challenged stakeholders to play their rightful roles to boost performance in national examinations.

"We would all be held responsible and accountable if our schools perform poorly in national exams. We should shun blaming each other and contribute positively to the development of education in our jurisdiction" stated Mokua

The Knut Executive Secretary challenged teachers to aid learners balance formal education and extra-curricular activities, saying it would help some discover their talents in sporting activities and pursue them to better their lives.

KEPSHA boss raises alarm over teachers' shortage

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Kenya Primary School Head Teachers Association (KEPSHA) Laikipia North sub-county chairperson has raised alarm over shortage of teachers in the area.

Ann Lesiano said the schools are faced with an acute shortage of teachers noting that some have only seven teachers and are overworked.

She said more teachers are needed in the region as she opined that college students taking teaching course can be deployed to contain the situation which is becoming worse.

Speaking at Ol Jogi primary school during the district education prize giving day recently, Lesiano said there were glaring discrepancies between the student-teacher ratios.

During the event, Ol jogi Primary School which is sponsored by Ol jogi Limited Nanyuki was recognized as the best performing school in the entire district.

"We would request the national government to employ more teachers in the district and interns from teachers' colleges to help reduce the burden of understaffing. Teachers in Laikipia North are extremely overworked," said Lesiano as she asked area governor, Joshua Irungu, to intervene in addressing the issue.

In the district, she said, many head teachers are the overall observers of their respective schools whilst simultaneously they have a lot of lessons to cover.

She precisely said in Doldol Primary School, some teachers were handling as much as 81 pupils and were certainly overworked.

She added that in some schools, there are no female teachers and young girls are lacking role models and therefore have a perception that it is only men who are successful in life.

Lesiano also decried the rising cases of insecurity singling out human-wildlife conflict which she said has caused some pupils to boycott classes for fear of attack.

However, despite the challenges faced by the educators, she stressed that head teachers have to play their roles of supervising the curriculum for effective learning.

She requested them to ensure quality education services are offered for improved performances to better the future of the pupils.

She further underscored that early marriages, child labour, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), long distance to schools especially for lower primary kids and inadequate classrooms for children with special needs are an uphill task facing the education sector in the district.

Lesiano called upon the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) management to support educational programmes as she emphasized need for creation of awareness on the importance of education and eradication of negative cultural practices.

Varsity orders a head-count on employees

By TITUS MAERO

THE Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) new Vice Chancellor Professor Fredrick Otieno has ordered a head count of the institution's employees.

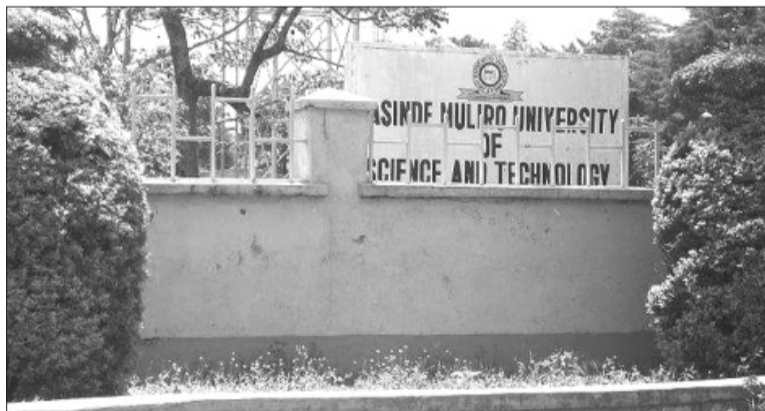
Addressing workers at the University, Otieno said the exercise is aimed at establishing the number of permanent employees at the largest public institution of Higher learning in Kakamega County and to also find out if there are ghost employees on the University's payroll.

The V-C also said the Head Count would be extended to the University's Campuses which include Ebanangwe, Bungoma, Webuye noting that study centres in Nairobi, Mumias Kaimosi, Koioi, Khasoko, Mt Elgon, Bukura and Nambale would also undertake the exercise.

Reliable sources at the University intimated that employees had received a directive through an internal memo to reapply for their respective positions afresh.

The move is aimed at scrutinizing their qualifications and suitability in holding their current positions at the institution.

"We fully support the new V-C



The Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

in his efforts to clean up this University. Am sure the head count and calls for fresh application for employment would unearth many things at the institution," said a lecturer who did not want to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

The V-C took over from the long serving Professor Barasa Wangila whose term in office expired. Until his appointment, Professor Otieno worked at the Durban University in South Africa. He is said to have been among four people who were short listed for an interview by the MMUST

council.

Otieno officially joined the university in September 6, 2013 and was received by all Dean of Faculties and MMUST Council members led by their Chairman Dr David Nyamwaya.

The outgoing V-C Professor Wangila has headed the public University since 2003 as a principal when the institution was a constituent College of Moi University-Eldoret. Wangila was subsequently appointed to the position of Vice Chancellor in 2007 when the former head of State Mwai Kibaki became the Chancellor

of the institution.

In Public Universities, Vice Chancellors work on a 5-year contract that is renewable after it expires. The position is advertised by the University Council who short lists the candidates for an interview.

Meanwhile, Professor Josephine Ngaiywa has been appointed the new Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs. Ngaiywa takes over from Professor Asenal Sigot whose contract at the institution expired.

Professor Alfred Ndiemu is the acting Deputy Vice Chancellor in Charge of Finance and Administration following the expiry of Professor Sibilike Makhanu's contract at the largest public University in Kakamega County.

At the same time, Dr Elizabeth Asenga has been appointed the acting Vice Chancellor in Charge of Finance and Administration. Asenga replaces Professor Sibilike Makhanu whose contract at the University expired.

The University has over 10,000 students making it among the institutions of higher learning with a huge student turn over, while there are 30 Professors and Associate Professors teaching in various faculties on full time basis.

Don set to chair education task force in Kakamega County

By TITUS MAERO

THE Kakamega County Governor Mr Wycliffe Oparanya has appointed Professor Laban Ayiro to Chair Education Task Force in the County.

Ayiro, who is a don at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), has his mandate spelled out in the County Government of Kakamega Gazette notice.

According to the Gazette Notice, the task force is charged with the mandate of identifying challenges facing Early Childhood Education (ECD), Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education in the County.

Further, the Task force has the responsibility of identifying the reasons for the low transition rates from ECD to Primary, from Primary to Secondary and from Secondary to Tertiary institutions and recommend remedial measures thereafter.

The task force has also been charged with the responsibility of establishing the reasons for low enrolment in the County's youth Polytechnic and further review the polytechnic curriculum to include more of Agricultural content.

The task force will also look into the cause of poor performance in Primary and Secondary schools in terms of enrolment and learning outcomes and propose measures for improvement.

The task force is also charged with the responsibility of evaluating performance indices at the ECD centres and youth polytechnics and propose mechanisms that would enhance enrolment and learning outcomes at the education centres.

The task force is also mandated to propose strategies for the establishment of a viable and regularly updated data base on enrolment at all levels of education, performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Exams and exit avenues plus placements in Kakamega County.

The task force would also identify strategic partners for collaboration in the area of infrastructure development, capacity building and education standards and quality standards for the education sector in Kakamega County.

Further, the task force is to present a comprehensive report that captures previous national policy reports and the current laws and policies guiding education in Kenya to the County Government.

School provides hope for vulnerable children in Bunyala

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

SINCE its inception about four years ago, Seed of Abraham Orphan School situated at Ruambwa trading centre, Bunyala East location in Budalangi Sub-county has enabled scores of orphaned and vulnerable children access education.

Majority of the beneficiaries who had lost their parents from the HIV/AIDS pandemic have been forced to live with their aging grandparents and close relatives.

The founder of the orphan school in question, pastor William Tabu Musumba of the Seed of Abraham Ministry says the orphan ministry that was started way back in January 2010 as an early childhood development centre with a population of only forty two orphaned vulnerable children, currently has a total of 120 children out of which eighty are total orphans and forty non-orphans.

"Sustaining the orphan ministry had not been that easy considering the meagre earnings from my fish business. In order to establish at least an extra source of funds to help in managing the school the following year, I decided to introduce standard one class to accommodate non-orphans who would pay fees to supplement the church fund and help generate

revenue to pay teachers' salaries, purchase office stationery and also pay rent," said the founder.

Pastor Musumba further said that this year, the school board of management unanimously resolved to introduce class three in order to enrol needy cases who had opted to join the school after their guardians failed to raise the levies being charged by their former public primary schools within the locality.

The school board of management agreed to rent one more room this year to accommodate the growing demands of needy cases who had opted out of some public primary schools as their guardians could not raise the extra levies being charged by the said schools," said pastor Musumba.

In order to keep the orphaned children at school and also draw their attention to learning, the school board of management has introduced a school feeding programme aimed at catering for their needs.

Pastor Musumba further says that the school that is still in its infancy stage requires more funds to facilitate the construction of more classrooms, an administration block, separate toilet facilities for boys and girls as well as land for expansion.

"We are at the moment operating



Pupils of Seed of Abraham Orphan School outside classes.

from a rental house, but we look forward to buying our own land where we shall put up a school with a spacious compound as soon as funds are available," says Musumba.

However, the founding cleric says that the major challenges facing the orphan school includes lack of a conducive learning environment, lack of clothing and pairs of shoes for the children as well as a play ground.

Some of the orphaned vulnerable children who have been assisted and are attending the Seed of Abraham Orphan Centre include Sylvia Ajiambo, aged twelve and is in class three, Titim Mukhuma, 10 in class two and Calvin Oduor aged ten and still attending Early Childhood education whose parents passed away when he was one week old. Their eldest sibling, Erick Nyang'oda, aged fourteen is learning at Ruambwa primary school.

The orphans' grandmother, Phylister Awino Wanyama, a resident of Bukhoba village in Ruambwa sub-location, a widow aged fifty says that since the death of her children some years ago, she has had contend with hardships in an effort to find food for her grand children single-handedly.

"At times I would be forced to leave my land uncultivated in order to go and look for casual work in other peoples' farms where I am usually paid Ksh150 per day which I use to buy food for my grand-children," says Awino.

"In some instances, after I have been engaged to weed a maize plantation, the owner of the farm declines to pay me my dues promising to pay me the following

day, a situation that forces us to sleep hungry," recounts the distraught widow.

Sylvia Ajiambo, Awino's grand-child on her part says that after coming from school in the afternoon she and her other siblings with an exception of the younger one normally goes to catch fish from pools of water in the rice fields closer to their home.

"At times we sympathize with our grandma and we have been going to the pools of water within the rice fields to catch fish for the evening meal," says Ajiambo.

Ajiambo elder brother, Erick Nyang'oda, 14, on his part says during the weekends when he is not in school, he engages in charcoal burning business in order to supplement their grandmother's meagre income.

"During the weekends when I am not in school, I cut down trees and burn charcoal which I later sell to my clients at Ruambwa market and neighbouring villages to supplement our grandmother's little income," says Nyang'oda.

The orphans' grandmother is however grateful for the assistance that the Seed of Abraham Orphan Centre has offered to her grand-children which includes school uniforms, books, second-hand clothes and some pairs of shoes donated by well-wishers.

The orphans are appealing to Good Samaritans to come to the aid of their school which they say is their only hope in life so that they can be able to further their education since their guardians are too poor to afford extra levies being charged majority of public primary schools in the area.



Mrs Phylister Awino Wanyama, 50, a widow with her orphaned grand-children outside her house at Bukhoba village in Ruambwa. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo

Graft mars public schools as subordinate staff complain of poor pay

By BOB OMBATI

AS majority of poor Kenyans dig deeper into their pockets owing to the impact of the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act, secondary and primary school workers in Kisii County are crying foul over what they term as exploitation.

The workers say they are overworked, underpaid, mistreated and working without appointment letters and feel insecure.

They say majority had surpassed probation period required before they can qualify for permanent employment and attempts to seek a review on their terms of employment have been with threats to sack them.

They spoke during a meeting organized by Kisii County Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Hospitals and Allied workers union (KUDHEIA).

Richard Ming'ate who is their representative in the union said most of these workers sign note books instead of pay-rolls for their salaries.

They said their salaries are illegally subjected to statutory deductions remitted to statutory bodies -National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) contrary to the Labour laws requiring the employer pays part of the contribution.

Joseph Onchuru, a cook at a local primary school said his salary was slashed from Ksh.2000 per month to Ksh.1000 after he was accused of misusing fire.

Onchuru who was cooking for the teachers said he was suspended for a month and the teachers were using school girls to cook for them, prompting community members to complain and force the school management to reinstate him.

He said the head teacher told him they had reduced his salary after a board resolution, adding that he feels demoralized and accuses the board and school management of violating his right to earn lawfully.

"It is shameful and ridiculous. What can a family man with school going do with Ksh. 1000?" posed Onchuru.

Ming'ate said some school Heads had refused to implement the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and

were instead intimidating and frustrating workers to discourage them from joining the union to foster their bargaining power.

Ming'ate said the school managers had perfected the art of dismissing them verbally without following due process owing to the fact that majority of the workers are ignorant of their rights enshrined in the labour laws.

"Majority of the workers are illiterate but that does not deny their rights in labour laws," stated Ming'ate adding that it was wrong for the school heads to collude with board members exploit them with impunity.

The Ministry of Education, noted Ming'ate channels five percent of the Free Education kitty to the operational

account, only for the school managers to misappropriate the money and pay retirees tokens as benefits.

"Some heads give retirees a bag of sugar and a wheel barrow as a retirement benefit. That is violating the worker's rights" said Ming'ate.

He accused some school heads of using two pay rolls to exploit workers, adding that the genuine pay roll is concealed from auditors who are only able to access records presented to them by the school managers. The official urged the government to investigate graft in public schools and prosecute those found culpable to end the vice and ease suffering for the workers.

School heads, noted Ming'ate should be vetted before they are allowed to manage schools as majority lack leadership and administrative qualities and use the institutions as milk cows to enrich themselves while workers wallow in abject poverty.

IMLU condemns shoot to kill order by Government

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

INDEPENDENT Medico -Legal Unit has condemned the shoot to kill order which was issued recently by Inspector of Police David Kimaiyo terming it as uncalled for.

IMLU Executive Director Peter Kiama said that the organization is very disturbed by the directive and appealed to the cabinet Secretary Interior Ministry Joseph Ole Lenku to immediately rescind the decision as this will not resolve insecurity matters in the country.

“Such a policy in the Police Service negates the supreme law. The constitution is very clear. We want police who will act within the law and not shoot to kill. Police can only use firearm as the last alternative. This will result to many deaths and injuries and will not end the rising insecurity,” he said.

The Executive director said that such an executive order will affect many urban towns like Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret and Nakuru.

He said already 120 cases of victims have been reported as police comply with the directive in the recent past and thus the need to rescind such an order.

He was speaking at a Nyeri hotel recently during a police reform forum involving participants of Nyeri, Murang'a and Kirinyaga counties.



Some of the one day workshop organized by IMLU at a Nyeri hotel recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

The participants included police commanders, religious organizations, civil societies and NGOs among others.

“Most of the victims involved are young Kenyans who are between 18 -30 years of age. Every case of use of firearm must be reported to authorities,” he added.

Kiama however said they are supporting the police reforms and urged the police to involve more citizens in their reforms.

Similar forums have been held in Isiolo, Maralal, Trans Nzoia, Kisumu and Kakamega counties.

The director however urged the members of the public not to attack

police officers.

The Nyeri county Muslim Development Group chairman Uled Majid said such an order is outdated since the constitution has given every Kenyan their right to live and urged leaders from the country to condemn this.

Majid also urged police not to dub all Muslims as terrorists.

Laikipia governor assures residents of piped water

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

LAIKIPIA Governor, Joshua Irungu has assured residents that it is within their constitutional rights to access to clean water.

The governor was speaking recently when he hosted members of the Nyahururu Water and Sewerage Board who had paid him a courtesy visit in his Nanyuki office.

He urged the board to ensure that there is better management of the water resources and bring down the level of water wastage which now stands at 47 per cent. This, he observed, would bring down the cost of production and consequently the water charges.

Irungu promised the various water companies within Laikipia that he would not interrupt their operations but they should comply with all the set laws of the county government.

The company Managing Director, Joseph Theuri informed the governor that measures have been put in place to ensure that this was realized.

The company is in the process of improving the water service within the region. It has secured a Ksh 200 million grant from the ADB for water provision within Marmanet area.

The project is due to start in the month of January. The company is also in the process of installing new generation water metres to ensure efficiency in the water billing.

More so, a leak detector has already been acquired which will help in detecting the underground water leakages. Present during the meeting was the Deputy Governor, Gitonga Kabugi. On his part, he declared that there would be no mediocrity in the public service in the county and performance would be enhanced.

Governor wants CBK to establish branch in Kisii County

By BOB OMBATI

KISII County Governor, James Ongwae wants the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) to open a branch in Kisii to foster financial services in the area.

Ongwae says reports indicate that, the County Government control more than over 60 percent of the money market in Nyanza region, thus the need for a CBK branch to handle the billions of shillings in the region. The Governor notes financial institutions incur huge costs ferrying money to Kisumu CBK branch or Nairobi besides the risks they undertake.

The Governor who spoke during the opening of Kenya Commercial Bank West Branch in Kisii town, noted that the County has 26 banks and thus the need to either open a CBK branch or a Clearing house to handle the increasing amount of money in the area.

He challenged financial institutions operating in the area to support women and youth with loans to enable them venture in income generating activities to improve on their standards of living.

The Governor noted that the County was expanding fast and was a commercial hub in the region, adding that the increasing number of banks and supermarkets showed that money circulation in the area was high and has a potential of controlling the economy in the region.

Ongwae, accompanied by his Deputy, Joash Maangi, KCB'SM



Governor James Ongwae

managing Director, Samwel Makome, Director of Medical Services, Dr Geoffrey Otomu, KCB's Western region Business manager, Susan Koech pledged to ensure streets were lit and security beefed up for business people to operate for 24 hours.

He wooed investors to take advantage of the area's strategic position and invest in hotel industry and real Estates to cope with the increasing demand of housing in the area. The County, stated Ongwae was rapidly expanding and suburbs like Nyakoe, Suneka, Kegati and Menyinkwa will be made satellite towns to decongest it.

“We want four star hotels in the area to serve the swelling number of visitors, civil servants, tourists and investors,” noted the Governor.

The Governor noted the County government had embraced a 2013-2017 Integrated Development Plan, stressing that a Bill was being finalized to enhance commerce and industry in satellite towns within the area.

Ongwae said the county government was encouraging private public participation in some of its activities to boost the county's revenue, adding plans were underway to contract a private company to collect revenue for the County.

He lamented that the county government was losing millions of shillings through corruption, adding that collection will be digitized to seal loopholes of corruption.

“Traders should be able to pay their revenue through their mobile phones from their business locations” said Ongwae, stressing the era of manual revenue collection is outdated.

The accused some revenue officers of pocketing the revenue collected adding that once the collection is digitized, revenue officers will be assigned other duties. Makome noted the bank has 176 branches across East Africa and Southern Sudan, adding that it was the third largest in the stock exchange market.

The bank, noted Makome was partnering with county governments to foster development and urged the locals to patronize its products to realize funds to plough back to the community through corporate social responsibility.

He said the bank has launched the M- Benki services to enhance its financial services, saying the service allows a customer to transact financial business from the comfort of his or her house.

Corruption cartels delay issuance of ID cards in Kakamega County

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

TIMELY issuance of Identification Cards to youths in several parts of the country has remained an issue even with the new Jubilee administration.

Delay in the issuance of Ids to legitimate youths in Mumias district in Kakamega County, is now being blamed on chiefs and the local registration offices.

Area residents accuse the chiefs and clerks in the registration offices of conspiring to delay, and even deny some applicants who fail to part with bribes.

The residents led by Mr. Boniface Wabwile alleged that the officers withhold application forms from youths who decline to bribe them.

They singled out application form serial number 2345955044 which was filed on 12-11-2012, by Collins S.Nyongesa as one of the forms that were not dispatched to Nairobi for appropriate action.

Nyongesa, who reportedly declined to part with Ksh.450 so as to have his ID application process accelerated has been frequenting Matungu DO's office since March, 2013, to obtain the document.

However, every time he went to the DO's office he was reportedly told

to check after one month by the clerks.

Recently he made an inquiry at the ministry headquarters in Nairobi about the status of his ID and was shocked to learn that the application form is yet to reach Nairobi.

Speaking to the Link in Bungoma town, the resident claimed that the form does not even appear in the dispatch book at Matungu registration office.

“On September 4, 2013, we went to Matungu registration office to peruse the dispatch book and established that the serial number of the form in question was missing,” Wabwile said.

The residents also took a swipe at some chiefs in the area saying they demand at least Ksh.100 from every youth who applies for the ID.

They added that the scenario was impacting negatively on the acquisition of IDs in the area since most eligible youths cannot afford the amount.

The residents at the same time also dismissed mobile registration centres conducted in the area as a fiasco.

They alleged that during mobile registration exercise the clerks normally report to designated centres late and leave early thus leaving hundreds of youths who turn out to be registered in a state of confusion.

MP wants ICC cases halted

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

POLITICAL leaders from Nyeri County are supporting the move by the AU to halt the ICC cases against Kenyan leaders pending determination of the prosecutors appeal.

The leaders led by Tetu MP who is also the chairman of the parliamentary committee on Defense and Foreign relations Ndung'u Gethenji said that most of the MPs are backing the position by the President of the AU summit and Commission that the cases against President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto be halted pending the determination of the

prosecutor's appeal.

"We align ourselves fully with this position of stopping the case and call on the ICC to make an expedient response confirming the same," he said.

Gethenji was speaking in his Tetu constituency recently where he termed the matter of ICC as an attack on the sovereignty and dignity of Kenyans.

"The decision by the judges to grant suspensive effect is against the laws of natural justice and continues to undermine and constrain the ability of the deputy president to undertake his constitutional obligations as mandated to him by the

sovereign people of Kenya," said the MP.

He lamented that the issues that office of the prosecutor and the ICC are now dealing with have been overtaken by events and the overwhelming mandate given to Uhuru and Ruto on 4th March and the coming together and reconciliation of the erstwhile warning communities in that regard.

"Kenyans want to move forward and not backwards. The present scenario has transformed from a personal challenge affecting Uhuru and Ruto to an attack on the sovereignty of the people of Kenya and its constitutional order," said

the chairman of Defense parliamentary committee.

The Tetu MP noted that the President shall safeguard the sovereignty of the country adding that Parliament manifests the will of the people and exercises their sovereignty.

He added that on the resumption of the parliament, the MPs exercised the sovereignty in the defense of the constitution and the people of Kenya.

Gethenji also told off ICC for listening to NGOs instead of listening to elected leaders, adding that Kenyans have trust with Uhuru and Ruto.

County grapples with high HIV infection rates

By BEDKADZO TONDO

KILIFI County is grappling with the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates.

A survey by National Aids Control Council reveals that 30,000 people in Kilifi are infected with HIV/AIDS.

The Governor Mr Amason Kingi says that the County has moved to address the situation by allocating a lion's share of its resources to the health sector during this financial year to ensure that those infected with the scourge access quality health care.

Kingi says that statistics by the National Aids Control Council indicate that new infections are reported annually and proper plans need to be put in place to fight the menace.

"The HIV/AIDS infections are likely to be more than the figures released by the NACC because only a few people know their status," said Kingi

Data available at NACC indicate that adults account for 20,832 of those living with Aids in the county with women registering large numbers of those infected.

Children living with Aids stood at 14 percent which translated to 3,328 while 65 percent of the total number infected with the disease are said to have experienced delays before accessing care and treatment programs.

The records further noted that a total of 890 people died of HIV/AIDS related complications in Kilifi in the year 2011 with adults accounting for 700 deaths and 190 from the children.

Kingi blamed outdated cultural practices such as wife inheritance and circumcision among factors that had contributed to the high infection rates.

He also noted failure by expectant mothers to deliver in hospitals and drugs abuse by the youth as other factors contributing to HIV/AIDS infections rates in the county.

Mr. Kingi cautioned youth against engaging unprotected sex as the trend exposed them to HIV/AIDS infections.



Tetu MP Ndung'u Gethenji addressing the press in his constituency recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

County Assembly members targeted for capacity building

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

BUNGOMA County Assembly speaker, John Makali has expressed the need to build the capacity county Assembly.

Makali observed that since devolution is new, major players in the new governance system need to learn more in order to manage devolved resources effectively.

The county speaker said that devolution is not about blaming Nairobi but about management of resources at the grass root level.

Consequently Makali urged the county government leadership to avoid blame game and instead effectively manage the untapped scarce resources within the county.

Speaking at St. Patrick's pastoral centre-Kabula before officially open-

ing a training module in governance and budget tracking, Makali questioned the position of Bungoma County in terms of empowerment of the people and management of resources.

"Bungoma county is the third largest in the country. But when it comes to empowerment of the people and management of resources, where are we?" he posed.

The speaker was emphatic that people should be empowered economically and in terms of their responsibility as citizens so as to minimize voter bribery during elections, a fact that was also echoed by Bungoma Catholic Diocese Bishop Norman Wambua.

Makali pointed out that the residents' expectations in terms of improved service delivery and social economic development were very

high.

He challenged members of the county assembly and the entire county leadership to live up to the peoples' expectations.

"Our peoples' expectations are very high. Let us manage the expectations," the county assembly speaker said.

Makali noted with concern that people should be encouraged to attend civic education forums so that they can effectively track and interrogate county budgets either directly or through their elected leaders.

Quoting chapter one of the Constitution on sovereignty of the people, Makali told the county leadership to engage with the people since power belongs to the people.

Bungoma catholic Bishop, Norman Wambua, asked members of

the county assembly to ensure that whatever comes to the county is not wasted.

The bishop challenged the entire county leadership to look for ways of generating wealth and ensure that resources go where they are earmarked so as to lower levels of poverty.

He reminded participants of the workshop drawn from the church, CSOs, and County assembly members that budget tracking is not about fault-finding but about service delivery.

"We should be vigilant and not witch-hunters because negative engagement cannot take us anywhere," the bishop observed.

The bishop added that for the county to generate wealth and lower the level of poverty which now stands at 52 per cent, the standards of living

among people in the county assembly must be lifted.

Paul Masese, a programs manager at the Centre for Enhancing Democracy and Good Governance (CEDGG) took the participants of the workshop through the concepts of governance, devolution, transparency, participation, accountability and budget process and how they relate to each other.

He pointed out that a good budget should be contestable, involve public participation, transparent and be able to determine how much is spent and on what and whom is spent.

Masese consequently urged the participants to know how the system works and use section 87 of county government Act, 2012 to access information, data, documents and other information so as to effectively track budgets.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Tribalism may show last straw for doctors

PLANS by some Machakos county government officials to expel doctors who don't hail from the region are alarming. So is the interference by non-medics in the treatment of patients.

These are the kind of reports that Kenyans hope are not true. Unfortunately, the source of the reports is impeccable. The alarm has been raised by no less than the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union Secretary General, Sultani Matendecheo.

He also termed the practice demeaning to doctors and pointed out that they are receiving these orders even before governors and Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) take full control of the health sector.

These, and similar reports in a few other counties, are fuelling resignations that have seen the number of doctors in the public service drop from 4,000 to 3,500. More resignations can be expected in the coming months. The practice also underlines the growing resistance among a cross section of health personnel to plans to devolve the payment of their salaries and their terms of service to the counties.

Indeed, so vehemently are the health professionals opposed to the devolution of their functions from the national to the county level that they issued a 21-day strike notice. A paralysis of public health institutions is on the cards unless an agreement is reached sooner rather than later.

But more to the point, surely, it is not too hard to understand that the country suffers from a serious shortage of health-care professionals and the few available are overworked and underpaid. The result is that few doctors, for example, remain in the public service after their internship period is ended.

A visit to the more affluent parts of Johannesburg, South Africa, provides a unwelcome reminder of how easily Kenyan health professionals leave home in search of greener pastures. But with the kind of treatment the doctors are reportedly being subjected to in Machakos County, who can blame them for leaving?



COMMENTARY

Kenya's economy reels in stagnation, survey says

THOUGH significant progress has been made, recent economic survey reports show Kenya's economy is underdeveloped with unclear long-term predictability.

The reports indicate the country is trapped in a narrow economic base, social disparities, fragile state institutions, infrastructure underdevelopment, insecurity, urbanization crisis, low income and savings, limited employment opportunities, uneven access to resources and falling trade.

For the country's economy to integrate into global economy, it has to invest in right fundamentals addressing the denial of larger human rights and freedoms, weak and corrupt institutions, socio-political and economic exclusion and deficiency of effective participation and accountability in governance.

The foundation for a future growth path is science, technology and human knowledge.

Kenya has very resilient people. However, its governance and political system is rotten. The World Bank (1991) identifies four key dimensions of governance: capacity and efficiency; accountability; predictability; and information.

Building from World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (1995) identified four basic elements of good governance: accountability; participation; predictability; and transparency.

Bottom-line: good governance and rule of law matters a great deal.

Kenya's curse is lack of credible, impartial and legitimate public institutions necessary for creating the conditions and rules within which sustained and inclusive economic growth is possible.

The country needs a strong public sector with capacity and competence to deliver quality public services and carry out their regulatory and other responsibilities transparently and with strong accountability culture.

Flowing from Supreme Court of Kenya legal opinion on Division of Revenue Bill, the country has to fundamentally alter the Vision 2030, which is generic of Session paper 10 of 1965.

The Senate has to facilitate enactment of new national sound integrated democratic devolved system of sustainable development and governance

COMMENT

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

policy framework consistent with the Constitutional principles. It has to be based on rule of law, credible public institutions and long term predictable public policies.

At the heart of this new devolved system of governance and development policy framework is right to equal development, improving livelihoods and living standards of all people, human rights application on social inclusion and sharing wealth and opportunities equitably. It offers the nexus between governance, security and economics.

This policy framework anchors policies that are more effective, equitable and sustainable driven from middle and below. It creates proportionate, effective and transparent watertight regulatory and governance institutional framework. The policy provides anchorage for strong predictable and transparent legal and justice environment.

Under this framework, everyone operate within the mainstream socio-economic and political contour including the informal sector. All resources available are consolidated and channeled ensuring maximum utilization, impact and return benefits. Currently, there are so many scattered wasteful funds with little impact on the ground. The policy framework fundamentally cut down and rationalizes governance structures under the constitutional devolved governance order, saving billions of shillings wasted on recurrent expenditure.

Implementation devolved system of governance and the development is in severe constrains due to lack of this policy framework. First, ideological governance clarity lacks.

Devolution, as crafted in the Constitution, is a departure from the old system with different pathway and trajectory goal. Secondly, Devolution is about social engineering of the society and the country.

However, the people steering the wheel of devolution both at national and county levels are social mechanics not social engineers of the country's and communities' development,

governance and human security needs.

Thirdly, devolution has been reduced into rent seeking venture with personal interests taking precedence over public good as various institutions and individuals are fighting to take control despite clear constitutional separation of functions and powers.

It is no longer about productivity, competition and innovation. Finally, devolution is being interpreted and implemented in form rather than in its substance.

County is the new engine of participatory democracy, development and human security hub.

It influences and shapes direction of local socially inclusive economy and human development creating a better life for all citizens. It should therefore make the right long-term strategic policy decisions, anticipating change and meeting expectations.

Every shilling the government spends, has first to be earned. The government, county or national, must seek efficiency, minimize waste more cost-effective ways to deliver services, and benchmark itself against the best practices.

Kenya must raise productivity, do more with less, and restructure as needs and priorities change. This means investing in the right citizen-centered policy outcomes, human capacities, efficiency and high performance.

Both the county and national government should consolidate certain processes, organs and institutions removing duplication for greater economies of scale.

The county public and private actors must work together in creating, expanding and growing sustainable county economy. There are two major policy thrusts necessary: credible public sector leadership and governance; and sustainable community investment programs.

Accurate information availability to citizens is primary motor of inclusive economic growth in the 21st century.

Therefore, build human and institutions' competences and capacities enable theme capture the potential of the revolution in information and communications technologies. Governance is not the exclusive preserve of the state. It is a shared edifice involving all citizens.



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Govt bid to issue title deeds to squatters in Kilifi County hits a snag

By BEKADZO TONDO

CONFUSION has marred the issuance of title deeds in Kilifi County after it emerged that most beneficiaries had already disposed off their land long before the process started.

Details are emerging that most beneficiaries do not own the land in question as majority as sold their land to other parties.

Two elderly squatters who are among beneficiaries of title deeds issued by President Uhuru Kenyatta in Kilifi County said that they sold off their land long before the exercise to distribute title deeds started.

Karisa Fondo and Saidi Charo all from Mwehara in Ganze district admitted that they had sold part of their land before they were officially issued with the title deeds.

Mr Fondo who had 12 acres admitted that he had sold 8 acres at a throw away price while Charo said he had sold 10 acres out of his 15 acres.

"Although I have received a title deed for the 12 acres, I had already disposed off eight acres before the ex-

ercise and now I will be forced to sub divide the land to carve off the sold portion," said Mr Fondo.

Kilifi land registrar Mr Athuman Juma confirmed that cases where people had sold their land before being issued with title deeds had come to light and added that the process of transferring land to the new owners must start without delay.

"As we went round the Kilifi County issuing title deeds, there were cases where the original land owners were accompanied by the people whom they sold their land," he explained.

Kaloleni MP Gunga Mwinga has expressed dismay that residents of Mariakani in Kilifi County had disposed off their land before they got issued with title deeds.

Gunga noted that some residents have been forced to surrender the title deeds they were receiving from the county government to the people whom they sold the land to.

The MP spoke at Mariakani milk scheme where Kilifi governor Mr Amason Kingi led other officers in

the county to issue 1450 title deeds to residents of Kadzonzo/Madzimbani.

He singled out squatters in Kadzonzo area among the most affected by the scam saying that third parties have now started fencing off the land.

"Even as county government seeks to address the squatter problem, residents of Mariakani especially at Kadzonzo area have sold off their land and thus are unlikely to benefit from the title deeds," said MP Gunga.

Governor Kingi cautioned residents against selling their land as this meant that they remain as squatters.

Mr Kingi said land was a lasting asset that parents could leave to their dependents and said it would be wrong to sell the land.

He said his government will ensure that adjudication process begins without delay and all people receive title deeds so that they can develop their land and enhance their livelihoods.

The governor said the function of land allocation had been transferred to the counties and said his government will be allocating funds every finan-

cial year to facilitate surveying of land to enable local people get title deeds.

Mr Kingi further cautioned that all private developers who acquired land irregularly in Kilifi County will have their title deeds revoked.

He said most of the beach land in Kilifi County is owned by private developers who are suspected to have used dubious means to get them.

Mr Kingi said those lands will be identified and their list taken to the national land commission for investigation to establish if they were issued correctly.

Nyeri governor censures method used to determine urban status

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI County Governor Nderitu Gachagua has censured the method used to give urban areas new status after some in the county were given lower status by the Transitional Authority.

In a report issued by the Authority, Karatina town was stripped its Municipality status to an unclassified urban area while Nyeri Municipality was lowered to township.

"I doubt the criteria used since Karatina was elevated to town status long time ago as it was viewed to have attained the characteristics required," he said.

According to Urban areas and cities Act 2011, the population of an urban area, Integrated Development plan among other factors is used as guide whether to elevate an area to a city, a municipality or a town.

The Act requires a municipality to have a population of 250,000 residents and a population of 10 000 residents for a town.

Karatina which until recently was a municipality has a population of 8, 499 according to year 2009 National Population Census which automatically falls short of qualifying for a municipality or even a town.

Gachagua argued that Karatina has over 50,000 people operating within the area during the day and then leaving to adjacent villages before dawn and cannot therefore be said to be under populated.

"We all know that population census takes place in the evening hours when many people have left Karatina and other urban areas within the county and this should not be used as reason to strip them their status," he said.

According to 2009 population census, Nyeri has a population of 119,353 residents making it to fall short of the required 250, 000 residents to be conferred municipality status by more than a 100,000 residents.

However, the Governor said in Nyeri town recently that the low status though not good for these old urban areas in the county will not affect the realization of development.

He said that his county Government has already drawn an integrated development plan for all urban areas in the county to ensure that they are all factored in matters of development.



President Uhuru Kenyatta issues title deeds in Mombasa recently. Looking on is Deputy President William Ruto and Lands Cabinet Secretary Charity Ngilu. Photo/File

Demand accountability from counties, Public urged

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

CITIZENS have been urged to be proactive and take responsibility in ensuring that standards of accountability apply across both the National and County governments in equal measure.

Cabinet secretary for Devolution and Planning, Ms Anne Waiguru made the remarks when she held an interactive session with the private sector in a Nairobi hotel.

The cabinet secretary informed representatives from private sector organizations that a significant part of the Ksh.210 Billion allocated to county governments would cater for recurrent expenditure with a substantial amount still being available for development activities.

Consequently the Cabi-

net Secretary affirmed the in-building of a comprehensive civic education and sensitization programme to entrench public awareness so as to enhance public engagement in devolution.

Waiguru pointed out that it was a collective responsibility of all Kenyans to ensure that implementation of devolution delivers on the aspirations that informed the constitutional spirit.

"If the government was not committed to devolution it could not have allocated over 30 per cent of national revenue to county governments against the stipulated 15 per cent constitutional threshold," she argued.

The cabinet secretary highlighted the on-going and soon to be enhanced capacity building and technical assistance programmes that target at en-

hancing capacity and effective implementation of transferred county functions.

Waiguru added that the government was determined to secure coordination and harmony in national and county government policy, legislation and regulations.

These, she said include the establishment of sectoral consultative forums, guidelines for county government support and the establishment of integrated service delivery mechanisms.

The meeting dubbed, 'Devolution Hard Talk,' brought together various representatives from private sector organizations and sought to demystify the concept of devolution and explore the place and space for private sector engagement within the new dispensation.

Busia County MP calls for improvement of roads to promote trade

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

FUNYULA Member of Parliament Dr Paul Otuoma has called upon his counterparts from Kenya and Uganda to improve on the road network and education standards in order to pave the way for development that will transform the livelihoods of the people of the two nations.

The legislator who was speaking at a fundraising ceremony in aid of a secondary school held at Bulwande primary school in Samia Uganda recently in the company of Busia County Assembly speaker

Bernard Wamalwa and county representatives said there was urgent need to rehabilitate the road and bridge that connects Kenya and Uganda in order to allow smooth trade hence improving the economy.

The Funyula MP who was the chief guest said without a good road infrastructure connecting the two countries, no development can take place as goods being transported in and out of the two countries will not reach the market in good time," said Otuoma.

"Without proper infrastructure, no development can take place as

goods being transported in and out of the two countries will not reach the market in good time," said Otuoma.

Otuoma called on leaders from the two countries to utilize every means at their disposal to allocate more funds to facilitate the construction of more learning institutions within their respective areas of jurisdiction in order to give the children the opportunity to get access to education which he said was the key to success.

"Education is the key to success, therefore there is urgent need on our part as leaders to utilize

every means at our disposal to ensure we construct more learning institutions so that our children can be able to get access to school," said the legislator.

He said Funyula Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) members will allocate more funds from its kitty to facilitate the construction of more new schools as well as rehabilitation of existing ones.

"In my Funyula constituency, the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) in collaboration with the local community have unanimously agreed to set

up more schools in order to accommodate more children," he said.

He cited the construction of a bridge at Bulwande area in Samia Kenya which he said is aimed at improving transport system between Kenya and Uganda, adding that the construction of rural access roads at the border points is also in progress.

The ceremony was also attended by the minister in charge of Karamoja Barbrah Nekesa Oundo and Samia Bugwe legislator Julius Maganga who lauded the cordial relationships between the two countries.

By PETER MUTUKU

PRESIDENT Uhuru Kenyatta has appealed to Kenyans to support development-conscious leaders who will improve their lives.

Addressing a public rally at Machakos Golf Club grounds, President Kenyatta said there was no place in the new dispensation for politicians who thrived on empty talk and abusive language at the expense of serving the electorate.

"Kenyans elected their leaders expecting them to help in alleviating poverty and other socio-economic challenges facing them but not endless politicking at the expense of development," President Kenyatta said.

The President said the country will not realize its development goals if leaders continued preaching hatred and propagating divisive politics.

He said under the new Constitution, Kenyans have a right to demand good services from their leaders.

The President assured Machakos county residents and the wider Ukambani region that he will work with all leaders in addressing the development needs of the people. He cited improvement of roads and provision of water as some of the projects that will be implemented through the partnership between the national and county governments.

Referring to the launch of the new Machakos city and investment programme, the President urged the Machakos Gov-

President Kenyatta urges leaders to shun empty rhetoric



President Uhuru Kenyatta at the launch of New Machakos City and Investment Programme in Machakos County recently. Looking on is Machakos County Governor, Dr. Alfred Mutua (right) and other leaders from the County. Photo/File

ernor, Alfred Mutua, not to be discouraged by politicians who were opposed to his development initiatives.

"We have launched the first new city in the Republic of Kenya after 50 years of our

independence. These are the developments that Kenyans aspired for when they passed the new Constitution," President Kenyatta said.

Noting that the new city has already provided jobs to 5000

youths from Machakos county, the President expressed optimism that the initiative will solve the problem of unemployment. He said it will also help in ending insecurity by absorbing most of the youths who

engage in the vice.

The President welcomed the assurance from the leader of majority in the National Assembly that Parliament will pass the Uwezo Fund regulations and unclog the disbursement of funds to women, youths and people living with disability.

"The Uwezo fund will enable women, youths and people living with disability to start businesses, generate wealth and create employment for others. And that is one way of transforming our country," the President said.

Ukambani leaders led by the Machakos Governor and his Makeni and Kitui counterparts Prof. Kivutha Kibwana and Dr. Julius Makau Malombe assured the President of their support in moving the country to higher levels of development.

Saying the time for elections was over, the leaders expressed the need to rally behind the President for the country to achieve its development targets.

Other speakers were Cabinet Secretaries Charity Ngilu and Najibu Balala, Machakos Member of the National Assembly Victor Munyaka and the leader of Majority in the National Assembly Mr. Aden Duale.

Wakhungu eyes counties to promote conservation

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

CABINET Secretary for Environment Judy Wakhungu has said that her ministry was in the process of aligning its environmental conservation operations with devolved governments to avoid antagonizing central government policies with the expectations of county governments.

She said the rationalization of duties and functions of the central government and the counties in conservation efforts will be spelt out clearly as the devolution of functions within the government continues.

Wakhungu at the same time announced that the government will start a green zoning programme in schools to encourage children to plant trees and intensify conservation efforts.

Prof Wakhungu was speaking at the Kenya Forest Service when she toured the institution to familiarize herself with the activities being undertaken by the Government in restoring and protecting the country's forestry resources.

She was accompanied by the Principal Secretary Dr Richard Lesiyampe and KFS board Chairman Peter Kirigua.

"In addition to the schools pro-

gramme, the Forestry Act 2013 which will replace the 2005 Act is ready for tabling in Parliament and will incorporate emerging trends in forestry conservation," she said.

She said all forestry stakeholders including farmers and the community forest associations will be integrated in forests restoration exercise noting that the ministry will ensure that restoration of indigenous forests is given priority.

The Kenya Forest Service Director David Mbugua who was present during the visit said KFS was aligning its functions with

the demands of the counties noting that the organization had appointed county conservators to work closely with the devolved units.

Mbugua said despite the challenges associated with conservation, the body had managed to stop wanton destruction of forests in addition to gazettement of various new forests to boost the forest cover.

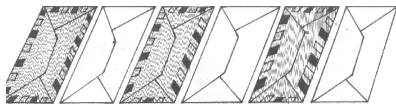
"I warn forest rangers against colluding with loggers and charcoal burners. I wish to add that despite the many challenges the organization is facing, on-going efforts to restore the national for-

ests cover are commendable," he added.

KFS chairman Peter Kirigua commended the government's on-going support of the organization in seeking international support for conservation.

He also called on conservation donors to work closely with various KFS conservation programmes.

Dr. Lesiyampe urged KFS and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to harmonize their conservation efforts saying the two organizations should complement each other's effort since they operate under the same ministry.



A child of eight having sex, Aids will wipe out Kenyans

LATEST revelations that children as young as eight years are actively engaged in sex and thus a big threat to the fight against HIV/Aids is cause for worry.

Just what is going on in our country? How does an eight-year-old girl or boy start knowing that there is something called sex, let alone practising it? And with whom do they engage in that act?

These girls could be getting introduced to sex with people they adore and fear, their fathers, uncles, brothers, teachers, clerics, neighbours, leaders, etc. The same applies to boys whose predicament is, however, rarely reported. Somebody else, mature, is the one who starts the process.

We think we are starting a monster in the face and deceiving ourselves that this ogre will just vanish. Once upon a time, there was no Aids, yet sex was a reserve of mature, married people. What went wrong?

Any parent, church leader or Government official who thinks as long as his or her daughter or son is safe, he or she should not bother is in for shock. That child will marry someone who started sex at eight.

The point here is, the fight against HIV/Aids should be a concerted effort. It should not be left to the Government, World Health Organisation or NGOs. Our church leaders should stop concentrating on "money scriptures" and start giving more sermons on morality. Nobody is safe.

**Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail.**

MPs fighting everyone except the Executive

PARLIAMENT'S plan to send home senators among other constitutional officers oversteps its mandate.

It is hardly one year since our Constitution's full implementation kicked off. Rather than working to keep the Executive on its toes, the House is actually leading the way in the violation. Parliament throws stones while it is itself living in a glasshouse, so these hasty recommendations will haunt the MPs.

It's ironic that some of the very legislators campaigning for the butcher of our Constitution are the same people who drummed up mass endorsement of the Constitution.

Minority Leader Jakoyo Midiwo was in the last Parliament.. What is it that they have seen that is now too flawed? Is Parliament too idle as to dwell on irrelevant things? Do the MPs' ridiculous salaries and allowances do nothing to the wage bill?

It appears MPs have positioned themselves to fight everyone. If it is not the Judiciary, it is the media, the NGOs, the Senate or the SRC.

**Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail**

Knut and Kuppet are here to stay and they need each other

TEACHERS were recently treated to unnecessary catfish fights between Knut and Kuppet - the two leading teachers unions in Kenya. I wish to advice Wilson Sossion and Mudzo Nzili for free that they cannot wish Kuppet away. Neither can they keep on reminding teachers that Knut is the sole union that represents teachers; they should tell that to the birds.

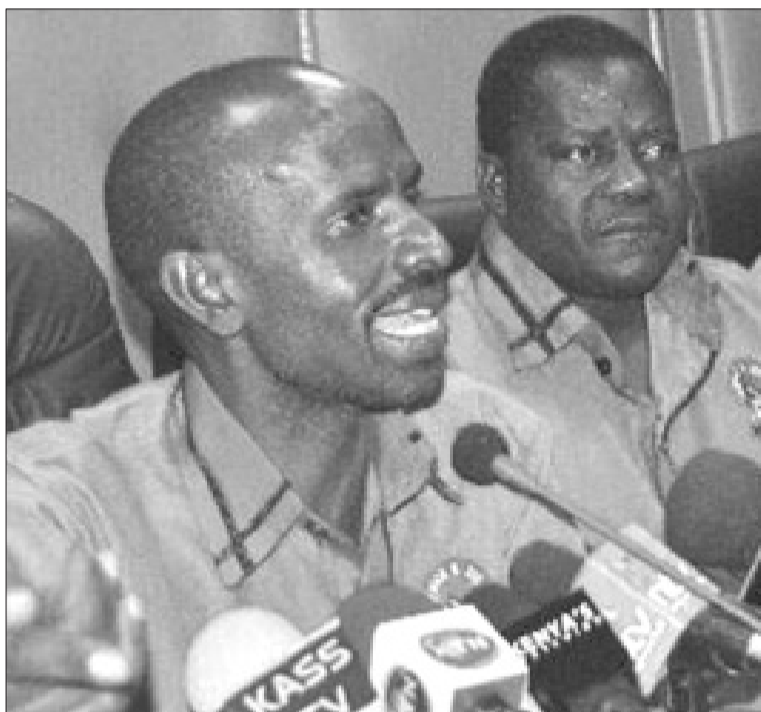
To Omboko Milemba and Ake-lo Misori of Kuppet, your forte is not about proving to teachers that Kuppet is equal to Knut. It will never be. Your constituency is clearly marked out; serve it.

The last teachers' strike showed how vulnerable Sossion can be. I laughed when the Knut leadership first rejected the Kuppet deal with government, but later swallowed it hook, line and sinker at the State House lawns!

Last year when Kuppet had teachers' salaries harmonised with those of Civil Servants, Knut chased 300 per cent salary increment. When it leaked that Kuppet had hit the harmonisation deal, Knut ran to Tribe Hotel on a Sunday as the rest were in church, to look like the owners of the deal!

The current stalemate of the examiners' allowances should be handled expeditiously. Teachers are still perturbed as Sossion supports Kshs.2 increment to examiners while Kuppet fights for Kshs.135 per script.

I've seen documents from Kneec to Kuppet addressing the issue of taxing examiners' allowance where the ceiling is raised to Kshs.133,000. No correspondence went to Knut.



KNUT Chairman Wilson Sossion flanked by Acting Secretary Mudzo Nzili at a previous press conference. Photo/File

Sossion cannot prefect Kuppet and, in turn, post primary teachers. Let Sossion quickly borrow a leaf from the ODM-Jubilee partnership in Parliament. When they have an issue affecting them all, they quickly forget their differences.

The two unions cannot pull in different directions on the examiners issue. Sossion has surprised both friend and foe regarding his current stand. Known for his hard-line positions in defending teachers, it is difficult to comprehend what his motive is this time round.

The Knut Annual Delegates' Conference is slotted for this month, against the backdrop of the absurd Sossion-Nzili fight. I knew

from the onset that these two fellows were taking members for a ride.

The biggest loser is the Knut second National vice-chairman Wycliffe Omucheyi who had been salivating for the chairman's slot, had Nzili insisted on the secretary-general's seat. And did I hear Sossion say that for a democratic election, they will ensure nobody contests against Nzili?

Teachers pray for a day when teachers will employ their intellectual tyranny to determine Kenya's social-political matrix. Kuppet and Knut can unite in diversity.

**Concerned Citizen,
Via e-mail**

Why ICC is a tool of Western powers

THE International Criminal Court (ICC) is going through the most challenging of times in the execution of its mandate in respect to the handling of the cases facing President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto.

This is the first case that has attracted considerable world interest and attention since the court was created 12 years ago, a move attributed to a number of the reasons.

First, this is the first time the court is trying a sitting head of state and government and his deputy. Secondly, the questions around the process of investigations and the criteria that was used to pick and file charges against the initial six Kenyans.

Thirdly, the debate on whether those facing the charges were actually the ones who bore the greatest responsibility.

The debate has in the recent past taken a new dimension with reports indicating that ICC is controlled and managed by Western powers.

The allegations that the court is working in the interests of the West gained momentum in the count-down to the vote by UN Security Council in the petition filed by the Africa Union seeking the deferral of the Kenyan cases for one year.

Another strong indicator that the decisions of the ICC are influenced by Western powers came to fore on the eve of the Assembly of State Parties in The Hague and during the deliberations. Prior to the meeting, it appeared the UK had already held talks with the ICC and it was charged with convening and setting the agenda for a meeting on how the proposal to have Uhuru and Ruto participate in their trials via video technology would be slotted and pushed to sail through.

Given this scenario, one is left wondering whether ICC can be relied upon to give objective, fair and impartial verdicts.

**Joseph Mutua,
Nairobi**





The editor welcomes letters and comments on a variety of issues. The letters should be brief, topical and issue based. The editor reserves the right to edit for brevity or clarity.

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UK and Kenya scouts strengthen ties

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

BRITAIN and Kenya scouts have signed a deal that seeks to strengthen their relationships.

During a two-week recent visit by the about 100 scouts from United Kingdom, the scouts from the two regions joined hands in a programme dubbed 'U Kenya camp 2013' where they engaged in community services in Nairobi and Nyeri counties.

Together with the local scouts, they engaged in clean-up activities and community

services in Kibera, tree planting exercises in Ngong forest and adventure peace hikes in different parts of the country.

They also donated foodstuffs worth thousands of shillings to poor people in Nairobi.

They were camping at Rowallan Camp in Nairobi during the visit where they strengthened the relationships with their Kenya counterparts.

The scouts later visited the grave of the scout's founder Baden Powell and wife Olave who were buried in Nyeri town where they paid tribute to their

founder before laying a wreath of flowers.

They later visited Paxtu office at the prestigious Outspan Hotel which is situated at the outskirts of Nyeri town.

This is where the founder was living before he died in 1941.

Kenya Scouts Association national treasurer Steve Foster said the visit brought together about 100 UK explorers and network scouts who are aged between 15 – 25 ages.

"The visit has helped us establish a new partnership with Kenya and renew the promise of

scouts. There is every need for us to be together by enhancing the ties between the two countries. We have members from over 215 countries with 36 million young members," he said.

The treasurer therefore hoped for a bright future of the renewed and strengthened relationships.

One scout Denise Hallet from Southampton in UK was excited to visit Kenya for the first time and hopes the relationship will last long.

Another scout Bethan Streader was happy to visit Baden Powell's grave.

MP calls for harmonization of health services

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

MUMIAS East MP has asked the national and county governments to partner in provision of health services. Washiali said services like medication have been devolved to counties when procurement of drugs is still undertaken by the national government.

"Medication is a very expensive service and the counties' budgets may not be able to shoulder its operating costs," he said. Washiali was speaking at Shinda village during a free medical camp. He said the ministry of health should work very closely with counties' health executives to harmonise their operations.

Washiali said the central government has allocated very little money to county governments when devolved functions are expensive to run. "Despite devolving 70 per cent of functions to the counties, they had allocated only 33 per cent of the funds," he said. He said the healthcare is an important and expensive social sector that was devolved to the county governments.

He said failure for coordination between the two levels of governments will have a big impact on people's lives "because it is at the grassroots where we have a burden of diseases"

He said the county governments are charged with provision of county health facilities and pharmacies, promotion of primary health care, ambulance services, licensing and control of food vendors and veterinary services.

"Cemeteries, refuse removal and disposal and water and sanitation are some of the health functions devolved to counties as opposed to the national government which is charged with health policy formulation and national referral health facilities only," Washiali stated.

Washiali appealed to development partners to commit and assist the county governments which are challenged with disparities in terms of access to various components of health care.



Some of the visiting UK scouts after laying a wreath of flowers at Baden Powell grave in Nyeri town recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Kisumu's HIV/AIDS prevalence rate blamed on extra marital affairs

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Kisumu County has been blamed on the rising cases of extra-marital affairs in the area.

A joint study by the Kenya Medical Research Institute and Kenyatta University in the region reveals that more than a third of married couples around Lake Victoria were having extra marital affairs and thus the highest HIV/Aids prevalence rate in the country.

A similar study has been undertaken by a British medical journal which completed a survey of the area in June last year, and published its findings recently.

The survey says infidelity in marriage recorded in the area stands at 37.6 per cent and is the highest ever recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Comparing what they saw with marital infidelity elsewhere in Africa, the team led by Dr. Zachary A. Kwena of the Kenya

Medical Research Institute cites examples of 1.5 per cent in Rwanda and Burundi and 13.3 per cent in Cameroun among men.

Recorded also is 0.1 per cent in Rwanda, Malawi and Burkina Faso, and 2.3 per cent in Lesotho among women.

The Kisumu study surveyed 1,090 individuals, which translated to 545 couples from 33 fish landing beaches along the shores of Lake Victoria in Kisumu and found 32.1 per cent of the men and 6.2 per cent of the women had sexual relationships outside marriage in the six months preceding the study. "This meant that 37.6 per cent of the couples were involved in extra marital affairs."

The researchers say this is the first study in the country to interview both partners in marriage but more important to interrogate why any of the partners would be tempted to look for happiness elsewhere.

The most common reason given for infidelity by those in-

terviewed was lack of sexual satisfaction at home. Unmet sexual desires, inter-spousal infidelity suspicions, male dominance and domestic violence were the main reasons for couples to wander in this community," say the researchers.

Most of those out of marriage affairs, the research team found, were mainly for money.

"An equal proportion, 64.1 per cent of men and women reported that they were involved in transactional sex in their last non-spousal sexual encounter."

Of those stepping out, only 38.6 per cent of the men and 28.2 per cent of women used condoms in their last non-spousal sexual activity, the report says.

According to the Kenya Aids Indicator Survey 2012, released by the Cabinet Secretary for Health Mr. James Macharia last month, shows that Nyanza leads in HIV prevalence in the country. Prevalence in Nyanza was found to be almost three times the national average at 15.1 per cent.

Nyeri residents want more engagement with the county assembly members

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI residents have expressed the need to have more participation forums with the county assembly members and the county executives.

The residents who were speaking during the Nyeri Urban Dialogue said there is need for mechanisms to be put in place to pave way for a partnership between the Nyeri Local Urban Forum and the county executive and the Nyeri county assembly members.

A resident Timothy Kariuki said there is need to have a dedicated Bill named Nyeri County Citizen Fora and Participation that will empower citizens to engage effectively with the county assembly members.

"This will also create a citizen forum as a formal institution for citizens. I want more regular meetings with the Speaker of the national assembly and the members. I also want partnerships of towns to towns involving even foreigners," said Kariuki.

He was speaking during a one day Nyeri Urban Dialogue at Outspan Hotel recently which was convened by Nyeri Local Urban Forum and sponsored by Swedish Embassy and Civil Society Urban Development Programme.

Nyeri county assembly speaker Mwangi Mugo who opened the forum which was attended by over 80 participants commended the idea saying such meetings will strengthen citizen participation and fora.

Physical and Planning Nyeri executive John Maina called on the Local Urban Forum to partner with his office to make Nyeri an outstanding city in the country.

Nyeri Urban Dialogue chairman David Ngige said there is need for a Bill to be formulated in order to empower citizens to engage county assembly members and ensure that the county government provides quality services so that the town can attain standards of symbio city which will attract an influx of investors.

Swedish embassy officials who attended the dialogue and who included Gustav Asplund, John Olof and John Nderitu welcomed the bid for stronger partnership between the assembly and the locals and promised to support the processes in order to make Nyeri the model symbio city.

The officials also promised to support devolution programme through active citizen participation.

Fourteen towns in the country have also embraced such programmes.

Team says lack of buildings will not stop devolution

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

LACK of basic infrastructure will not hinder the establishment of the devolved governments, the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution (CIC) has said.

CIC commissioner Peter Wanyande said despite 19 counties being listed as not ready to accommodate the devolved system, existing buildings could be improvised to serve the purpose before the credible buildings are constructed.

"It is time to be innovative in whatever we do because the Constitution's implementation cannot be stopped by small problems that have solutions at hand," he said.

Before promulgation of the Constitution, Prof Wanyande said, there were offices that were being used to discharge government activities, and could also be used to set up necessary equipment to suit the new system of governance.

He noted that what was needed was renovation of some buildings to provide for the gallery, debating chambers and the governor's offices among others.

The commissioner added that implementation of the new law had already taken momentum and could not be stopped because of lack of offices and disagreements over county headquarters.

He was speaking in Voi Town during a one-day media workshop on devolution. He urged the media to advocate for peace during the electioneering period.

Meanwhile, the Transition Authority has promised to fast track the transfer of disputed national government functions to the county governments in a bid to enhance devolution.

The transition body has yielded to pressure mounted by devolution stakeholders including governors after it failed to devolve some functions to the counties in its gazette legal notice dated August 9, 2013.

The chair of the governor's council, Isaac Ruto, who has been at the fore front in championing

the devolved cause, castigated the legal notice that failed to devolve key functions such as agriculture and road functions.

Speaking during a Constitutional Commissions and independent offices' conference in South Coast, the TA chairman Kinuthia Wamwangi said he has lobbied for the transfer of the disputed functions of health, roads and agriculture functions that the national government was keen on keeping.

Wamwangi said the authority had begun putting in place requisite structures and mechanisms to enable the counties a successful management of agricultural training centres and mechanization stations.

"The successes realized with the implementation of allocating functions as provided for in schedule four is indeed a huge step in successful implementation of devolution process. TA has delivered," said Wamwangi.

The TA Chair castigated politicians and leaders accusing the authority of collusion to maintain the status quo to derail the successful implementation of the devolved government.

Wamwangi said the authority had managed to successfully set up the 47 county government offices that were fully staffed to execute their mandate to realize a transition to devolved governance.

"Our commitment to devolution can be captured on the way we have been at the forefront to provide for the successful implementation to devolution. We have manifested indefatigable input to devolution," said Wamwangi.

Bomet governor Ruto had accused the TA of reneging on earlier agreements on devolution that had included the core functions in a previous meeting with deputy president William Ruto.

Ruto wanted the control of grain storage, farm inputs and

roads plans under the Kenya Urban Roads Authority and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority transferred to the Counties.

Ruto was responding to TA's gazette notice that showed that the role of governors has been restricted to "roads including primary roads linking all sub-county headquarters and minor roads linking markets and administrative centres."

This meant the authority placed most of the major roads in counties under the national government and irked governors in the process.

In the notice, the national government also maintained its grip on early childhood education, supply of drugs and medical commodities, and construction of diesel power stations.

According to the notice, the county governments were given time to first build their capacity to handle the roles before they apply for more functions.

MP calls for boundary review to reflect public aspirations

By BEKADZO TONDO

MALINDI MP Dan Kazungu wants to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to review constituency boundaries afresh.

He claims sections of the Constituency were erroneously hived off and placed under Ganze and Magarini Constituencies.

Kazungu says Chakama location which borders his constituency and Magarini constituency was wrongfully carved out of his constituency and put under Magarini Constituency.

The MP further wants the boundary between his constituency and Ganze constituency revised to revert Malanga location to his constituency.

Speaking during two public barazas at Chakama and Malanga locations respectively, the MP said the two locations fall under his constituency and moving them to Magarini and Ganze constituencies had interfered with the traditional links.

The MP further argued that the move had adversely affected development programs in the area.

"The alienation of Chakama and Malanga locations was ill advised and therefore IEBC should review the boundaries of the three constituencies to remedy the situation," said Kazungu.

The legislator said residents of Chakama and Malanga location voted for him in the past general elections but according to the political and administrative boundaries, the two locations are in Magarini and Ganze constituencies.

He said the situation interferes with both political and administrative units which if not addressed will deny residents access to services.

"Chakama and Malanga locations have always been part of Malindi constituency and residents cast their votes in Malindi but due to the delimitation of the boundaries, residents can only access services in Magarini and Ganze constituencies," said Kazungu.

The accused IEBC of ignoring views of grassroots leaders in delimiting the boundaries and demanded that the anomaly be corrected.

"Residents of Chakama and Malanga locations should have been consulted before the changes were enforced," said the MP.



CIC Commissioner Professor Peter Wanyande (C) as he addressed journalists during the one day workshop held at Comfy Hotel in Eldoret on the implementation of the constitution. Photo/File

By BOB OMBATI

A FORMER Civic leader wants the government to register, equip, staff and avail drugs to Bobaracho Health centre, Nyaribari Chache constituency, Kisii County to benefit residents.

Thomas Oresi, a former defunct Kanga/Jogoo Ward councillor, says the facility has been completed but is not functional.

Oresi, who spoke at the facility after donating drugs, a thermometer, a weighing machine and blood and diabetes measuring tools valued at Ksh. 50,000 said locals sought medical services in far-flung health facilities.

He said weak, poor aged and pregnant women suffer most as they have to hire people to ferry them to the main road to board vehicles to the health facilities.

The former civic leader noted it was difficult to save lives of accident

victims due to the lack of a functional health facility in the locality, adding that some accident victims die when they are being rushed to the far-flung Health Facilities.

Oresi, who renovated the hospital with the support of the Constituency's Development Fund urged well-wishers to support the hospital to be fully operational.

"The Facility lacks furniture and waiting bay. Patients stand and brave the scorching sun as they await to be served," stated Oresi.

The former Civic leader, flanked by the Centre's Chairman, Henry Mabeya, Treasurer, Jane Nyanganya, area Assistant Chief Vincent Omanwa and a Nurse, David Maranga said the Facility would serve over 2000 residents.

Other board members include; Anah Mautia, Vice Chairperson, Maranga, Secretary and members- Jackline Ocharo, Mary Mokeira and Chris Ondieki.

"We want medical services to be brought closer to the public in line with the provisions in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," noted Oresi.

Oresi, recognized by United Nations four years ago for his role towards the achievement of MDGs, the UN's Goals set for 2015 said he was touched by the plight of pregnant women who delivered under unhygienic conditions on the way to health facilities.

The 65-year-old philanthropist was among 11 finalists awarded prizes at the University of Bradford, UK, in May 25, 2010, out of the 230 contest-

ants drawn from Europe, Africa, United Kingdom and USA.

He said he was recognized by The Nile African Development Organization's founder and Chief Executive Officer, David Ndiwanyu and selected for his efforts in improving lives of people under difficult situations.

Oresi, who worked at the Colonial African Development Council (ADC) said he founded Oresi Health centre and handed it over to the Government, adding that he has a passionate to support Health facilities to boost health services and development.

"I worked as a Health Technician. I started charity work based on my experience to help people lead better lives," stated the former leader, adding that he helped the community to con-

serve 25 water springs and supports orphaned primary school children with uniforms and examination fees.

Mabeya said the government had seconded Maranga to the health centre from Municipality and visited the Facility on Wednesdays only to treat patients.

He said Maranga was overwhelmed with the work amid inadequate equipment and drugs, forcing majority of the patients to seek treatment in other well-equipped and staffed Health facilities.

Mabeya noted that drugs were sourced from the neighbouring health facilities. He said registration of the Facility was being fast-tracked as it has been recognized and fully supported by the government.

Govt urged to equip health facility

ICDC seeks county support to recover disputed plot

By BEKADZO TONDO

A STATE parastatal is seeking the support of Kilifi county government to evict 30 families who have encroached into their 10 acres of land and put up residential houses in Malindi.

The chairman of Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) Mr Martin Muragu said the corporation was officially allocated the plot near Malindi Airport and issued with a title deed 15 years ago before the squatters invaded the plot and put up some residential structures.

Mr Muragu said the land was meant to put up a food processing plant but said the project could not take off due to the invasion of the land by squatters.

The chairman who spoke to The Link when he led directors of the

parastatal to inspect the plot called on Kilifi county government to help them recover the plot to pave way for the intended project.

"ICDC plans to put up a food processing plant at the disputed plot which will help boost the County's economy and we are therefore pleading with the governor to take up the matter and convince the squatters to vacate from the land," said Mr Muragu.

The team later paid a courtesy call to the Kilifi County secretary Mr Owen Baya and reiterated their calls to the County government to assist them evict the squatters.

"ICDC was allocated 10 acres of land near Malindi Airport and issued with a title deed 15 years ago but squatters invaded the plot and put up residential houses and we need the support of the county government to remove them," said Mr

Muragu.

Mr Baya on his part promised to present the concerns to the County governor and see how best the problem could be resolved.

The county secretary said Kilifi County needs more industries which could open up the area for job opportunities besides engaging in value addition adding that said the county government was ready to work with development minded organizations.

Mr Baya said collapse of the famous Kilifi cashew nut factory where ICDC had some shares, rendered over 60,000 people jobless.

"When Kilifi cashew nut factory was fully operational, about 60,000 people had direct and indirect employment including the farmers of the product," said Mr Owen.

He said the collapse of the factory also drastically affected the economy of the County and said

new measures will be put in place to bring back its lost glory.

According to the ICDC property Manager Mr Paul Okwiri, development plans at the disputed plot have been finalised and the project could take off soon the logistical issues are addressed.

"However the encroachment of the 10 acres of land near Malindi Airport by squatters is set to derail the commencement of the project," said Mr Okwiri.

Mr Okwiri said the county government has an obligation to help ICDC secure its plots which had been allocated to oversee long term development projects.

He said ICDC supports entrepreneurs with finances to put up industries which could help in value addition of local produce and availability of land was an important component which needs to be observed.

County targets mining companies to increase revenue

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

KILIFI county government plans to set up several weighbridges to enhance monitoring and collection of cess accrued from the minerals and other natural resources in the area.

The governor Mr Amason Kingi said that the county continues to lose millions of shillings as investors evade payment of taxes due to the absence of weighbridges.

Mr Kingi said local authorities in the county had incurred huge losses amounting to millions of shillings every month as they had no capacity to get hold of those who evaded taxes.

He said Kilifi has many minerals like manganese and limestone but said the county government was getting little in form cess from the miners and transporters of the minerals' due to lack of proper mechanism to get hold of the culprits.

The governor said the area also has substantive quality of river salt at Ngongoni and Mjaneheri in Magarini district.

He also said the area was endowed with many quarries of coral block which is normally extracted to make building blocks.

"My government plans to put up more weigh bridges at different points so that we can curb tax evasion by some traders and transporters of the minerals," said Kingi.

He made the remarks when he addressed sand soil loaders at Magarini who wanted him to address their grievances in regard to the high levies charged on transporters by a private weighbridge company.

However the governor said the weigh bridge was set up after his government was consulted by the company owner so that it could help his government improve in cess collection by weighing all the sand soil being transported from the area to Mombasa and other parts.

Mr Kingi said already his government had flouted some tenders for the interested companies to put up the weighbridges.

"We have floated tenders inviting investors willing to assist us to put up the weighbridges and work will be started soon we get the qualifying companies," said Mr Kingi.

He said once the bidding process is completed, weighbridges will be established at different spots to ensure all the revenues meant for the county was released.

The governor said most materials used in the construction of multibillion shilling Lamu port were ferried from Kilifi county and said the weigh bridges will be able to monitor and get the accurate amount of tones being transported.

He said another weighbridge will be erected along the Mombasa-Marikani road to beef up cess collection.

Differences split County bigwigs in the middle

By MALACHI MOTANO

RECENT events point to a well-calculated move to stifle efforts aimed at successfully implementing the devolved system of government. It seems enemies of devolution are growing in number and completely shutting their ears to what Kenyans spoke loudly about on August 4, 2010, and March 4, this year.

When the over 10 million voters trooped to the ballot boxes on the historic General Election, they were clear on where power in the counties should rest.

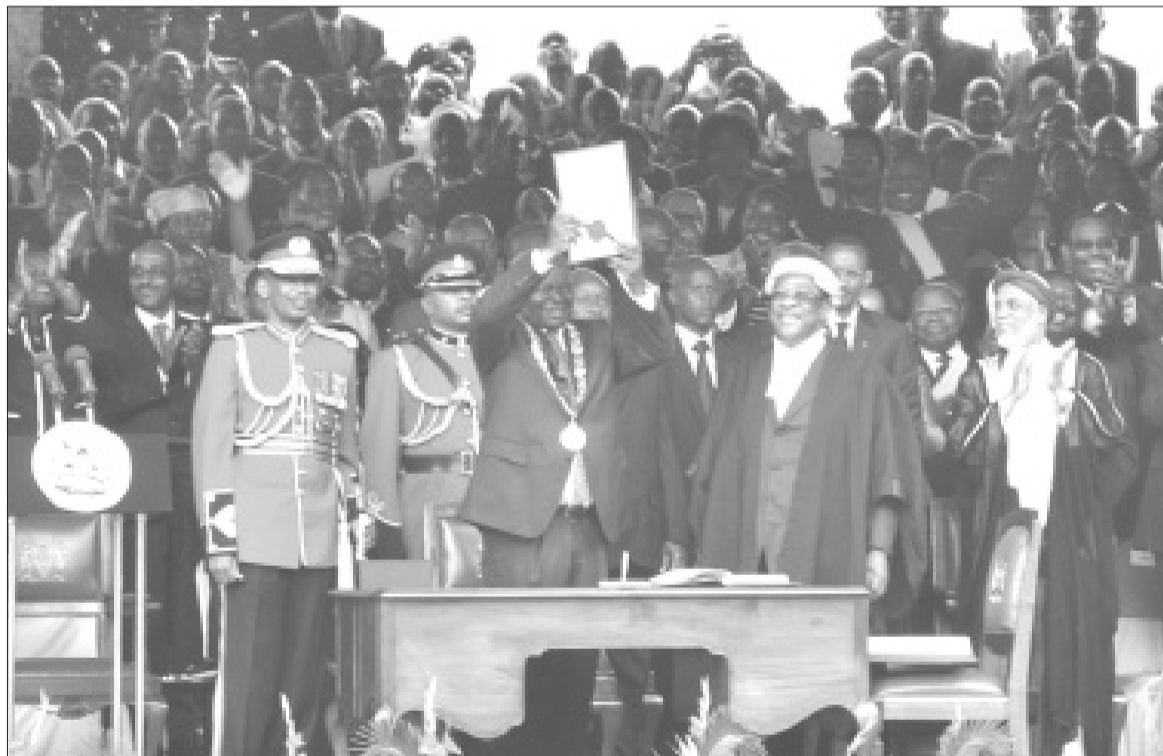
Kenyans voted in 47 governors, giving them the mandate to take charge of county resources and development, which the majority felt had been concentrated at the centre in Nairobi for far too long.

At the core of the clamour for a new Constitution was the thirst for equitable share of the national cake and devolution of political power. Skewed distribution of resources has contributed to underdevelopment of certain regions, and devolution is meant to correct this anomaly.

Devolution informs the huge expectations Kenyans have in the new constitutional dispensation. For the hungry, devolution will help put food on the table. For the thirsty, devolution should ease the flow of clean water. For the power-starved, devolution brings responsibility and decision-making ability closer home.

But as the old gives way to the new order, there are those still stuck in the unfortunate romance of the past. For instance, we feel the tussle over control of county resources and functions between the governors and the senators, is uncalled for. The Senate Bill aimed at clipping the governors' powers is ill-advised.

The Senate seeks to establish county management boards, to play an oversight role on the regional governments.



Kibaki during promulgation of new constitution at Uhuru Park in 2010. Photo/File

The senate was established to protect the county governments and indeed senators should be above the fray. They should be overseeing successful transfer of political power and resources from the national government to the county governments. The power disputes between senators and governors is not only derailing devolution, but also going against the aspirations of Kenyans.

And as if that is not bad enough, the office of the Attorney General is drafting a Bill seeking to establish an Inter-Governmental Relations Committee to replace the Transition Authority.

The Kinuthia Wamwangi-led TA, which is overseeing transition to the devolved system of government, is supposed to complete its work in March 2016. So, why the hurry to replace it just when coun-

ty governments are trying to settle down?

The proposed Inter-Governmental Relations Committee is apparently meant to give the national government leverage in county matters, further frustrating devolution.

The State Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2013, proposes deletion of Section 37 (1) of the Transition to Devolved Government Act 2012, which defines the functions and timeframe of the TA. By dissolving TA, which is an independent body, at this point in time, implementation of devolution will be greatly jeopardized.

Currently, the law gives the Transition Authority three years to define roles of the county governments and distinguish them from those of the national government.

TA is also preparing an inven-

tory of all assets under the county governments, a critical exercise for running of the new administrative units.

Understandably, transfer of power to counties has stripped off the national government the prerogative on many matters, including resource distribution. But that is what Kenyans wanted as envisioned in the 2010 Constitution. The Jubilee government should indeed not be seen to frustrate devolution. The way it handles transfer of power and functions to the governors will determine the amount of goodwill it will enjoy among the majority of Kenyans. Ultimately, adherence to the Constitution should ensure a smooth transition. This way, Kenyans' dream of an equitable society will be half won as drafters of the Constitution envisaged.

Housing problem degenerates into a crisis

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

KENYA is facing a massive shortage of decent urban housing owing to the rising population growth.

Fears abound that slums and informal settlements are likely to start mushrooming at an alarming rate. According to the government, the current annual shortage in urban housing stands at around 150,000 units. This figure however, does not take into account the houses required to provide those currently living in poor housing conditions with decent accommodation. So in essence, the actual shortage is higher.

The government has tried to deal with urban housing problem, investing billions of shillings in housing programmes over the years but its efforts have largely failed. More than half of the urban population lives in squalid conditions, lacking access to basic services such as piped water, sanitation, electricity, roads and even security. And, unless urgent action is taken, this number could rapidly rise given the ongoing urbanization surge.

Housing is largely a county affair with the national government being in charge of the policy aspects. The question then arises, can county governments deal with the urban housing crisis?

Early indications are not so encouraging with hardly any county making significant provisions for urban housing in their 2013-14 budgets.

Nairobi county for example allocated about Sh400 million to its department of land, housing and urban planning,

yet Nairobi is arguably at the epicentre of the urban housing crisis. The national government is not helping as it is still retaining funds for housing development that otherwise should be devolved.

So what can county governments do?

As a starting point, they should start investing in serviced land. The lack of serviced land has been a major obstacle to the provision of housing at scale especially low cost housing. The county government can facilitate the increased supply of houses by making serv-

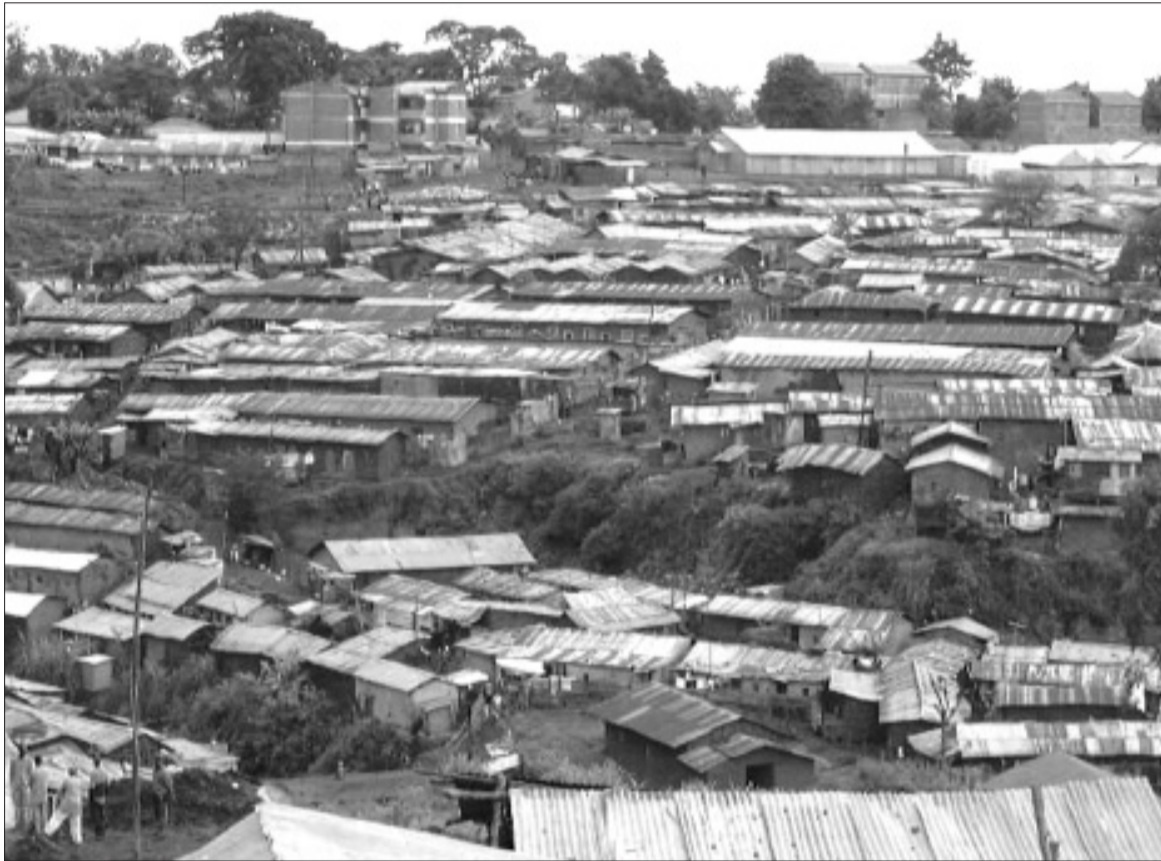
iced land available to housing developers.

Invest adequately in preparing appropriate and effective urban plans. Poor urban planning is partly to blame for the mess in our major towns and cities. Most plans did not anticipate the current urban population size hence there was inadequate investment in the provision of services and infrastructure including housing.

Review, adapt and implement new building regulations and codes that are in sync with the existing economic realities. Current building regulations

have become a hindrance to the development of urban housing at scale by making construction costs high to conform to the standards and hindering the use of modern technologies such as prefabricated houses.

Our urban centres are sitting on urban housing time bomb and the clock has begun ticking. It is important that county governments, through meaningful and effective involvement of the residents, begin immediately investing in the provision of housing if we are to solve the looming housing crisis in the country.



A section of Kibera slum. More than half of the urban population lives in squalid conditions.

Govt accused of dragging its feet in issuance of title deeds

By BEKADZO TONDO

LEADERS in Kilifi County have accused the government of taking too long to process land documents.

The leaders led by Rabai MP William Kamoti rubbished the recent issuance of 19,000 title deeds in the area by the government, saying most beneficiaries are dead.

The MP said most beneficiaries are dead and thus are unlikely to benefit from the noble initiative spearheaded by the government.

Mr Kamoti made the remarks at Chiferi Primary school grounds in his Rabai constituency where Kilifi governor Mr Amason Kingi and the area lands and settlement officer Mr. Felix Kiteto distributed title deeds issued by President Uhuru Kenyatta to the people of Mwawesa.

The MP cited title deeds issued to residents of Mwawesa location in his constituency, saying that the adjudication work was completed 20 years ago but the title deeds are being issued now.

The legislator challenged the Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Lands Ms Charity Ngilu to put measures in place to ensure the title deeds issued reflect the living dependants of original applicants.

"The ministry of lands should make sure the title deeds reflect the names of the dependants of the deceased people who were officially registered for the documents," said Kamoti.

Governor Kingi said Coastal residents have been deprived of their land rights for decades and the move by government to issue them with title deeds is commendable.

Mr Kingi said Coast region had lagged behind in development as residents did not have of their own land to engage in meaningful activities.

He said the plight of Coastal residents had been politicised with leaders harping on the issue of landlessness during the electioneering period.

"The fact that Coastal residents have been without title deeds over the last 50 years, was a deliberate move by the former governments to ensure that they remained poor and used their plight as a platform to solicit votes from the region through false promises," Kingi.

The governor at the same time accused corrupt land officers of demanding bribes of between Ksh. 2,000 and Ksh3,000 from the beneficiaries before they release the documents to them.

"I have received complaints from beneficiaries that lands officers in Kilifi County have been demanding bribes that range between Ksh 2,000 to Ksh3,000 before they can issue them with the title deeds and let me warn such officers that they will be dealt with firmly," said Mr Kingi.

Govt halts plan to upgrade Kilifi, Diani towns to resort cities

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE government has halted plans to develop Kilifi and Diani towns in Kilifi and Kwale counties respectively to resort cities at a cost of Ksh 3 billion due to lack of land.

According to the acting director Enablers and micro directorate vision 2030 Mr Jonathan Lodompui from the ministry of Devolution and planning, the plan which was proposed as a flagship project for the two towns under the vision 2030 will now be replaced by beach management units and eco-tourism projects.

The director made the revelations when he paid a courtesy call to the Kilifi county governor Mr. Amason Kingi in his office.

The new development shocked governor Kingi who demanded to be given a comprehensive report explaining why the flagship project had been revoked.

Governor Kingi who was flanked by his deputy governor Mr Kennedy Kamto and the executive committee members complained that his office was not consulted



Mr. Amason Kingi, Kilifi County Governor

before the decision was made.

Mr Kingi said governors from the 47 counties have problems in planning and starting long term development projects as they are supposed to be done jointly with support from the national government.

However, Mr Lodompui explained that the decision was arrived at after it emerged that the counties did not have land earmarked for development.

He however said that projects had been replaced with the beach management units and eco-tourism system.

The director said the government tried to purchase land in Kilifi and Diani for the establishment of the resort cities but prices were too high.

Mr Lodompui further said the Ksh 3 billion budget earmarked for the two projects was inadequate as the money would go into buying of land and other logistical problems.

"The plan to develop Kilifi and Diani town to resort cities has been revoked due to lack of land," explained Mr Lodompui.

But governor Kingi and his cabinet did not take the matter lightly and hit the national government for playing tricks to sabotage development plans for the counties.

Mr Kingi said the change of plans was a serious matter and expressed concern as to why his government was not consulted when the changes were made.

He said before he was elected the governor, he was a cabinet

minister and at no time did the cabinet meet to revoke plans to upgrade the two areas into resort cities.

"We strongly oppose the move as it is driven by ulterior motives especially due to the fact that no one was consulted before the decision was arrived at," said Mr Kingi.

The governor said Kenyans ought to stand up and fight to ensure the constitution was respected by the national government.

He said it beats logic to claim that power has been devolved to the counties when the national government is making unilateral decisions without consulting the counties.

Mr Lodompui noted that the beach management units and eco system project will cover five counties namely Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi, Tana River and Lamu.

He said the project entails security surveillance along the ocean waters to avoid illegal fishing by foreign fishing companies' vessels in the Kenya water territories and curb the pirate menace.

Social Assistance

Introduction

THE Social Assistance Act seeks to cushion the less fortunate, poor, elderly and persons with disability in our communities.

The Act among other things seeks to give effect to Article 43 (1)(e) of the Constitution, establishes the National Social Assistance Authority and provides a legal framework to cushion the needy and vulnerable in the society.

Groups earmarked to benefit under the Act include orphans and vulnerable children; poor elderly persons; unemployed persons; persons disabled by acute chronic illnesses; widows and widowers and persons with disabilities.

Once identified, individuals are to receive regular payment for food, shelter, clothing, fuel and household supplies

National Social Assistance Authority

The Authority contemplated in section 3 of the Act, sets in motion a more centralised and co-ordinated approach to handling social support.

Composition

The Authority comprises of

- The chairperson appointed by the Cabinet secretary for social

- The principal secretary for social services
- The principal secretary for Finance
- The principal secretary for Health
- The Director of the Authority who is the secretary to the Board
- Seven other persons including
 - (i) Two representatives from the national council of children services
 - (ii) One representative from the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
 - (iii) One representative from the National Council for Persons with Disabilities
 - (iv) One representative from the National Gender and Equality Commission

Functions of the Authority

The Act has vested the Authority with the mandate to:

- (a) identify and provide social assistance to persons in need of social assistance;
- (b) plan, develop, operate and manage any project or enterprise that has as its object to render recipients of social assistance

Social Assistance in this country remains a subject of controversy with initiatives started to cushion the needy grappling with mismanagement, unaccountability and exclusion of the deserving cases. Social Protection policies and programmes are scattered, fragmented and uncoordinated leading to duplication, mismanagement and wastage of resources. The impact has been dire as promoters have been working in uncoordinated manner besides the fact that the resources are inadequate, irregular, unpredictable and insufficient, writes PATRICIA WAFULA.

- (c) make grants to any organization, group or body of citizens for the purpose of providing assistance to persons in need or likely to become in need;
- (d) construct or acquire, maintain and operate residential institutions for people in need of social assistance;
- (e) sponsor, develop or operate community development services;
- (f) enter into agreements with agencies or other persons for the provision of social services;
- (g) approve residential institutions for the purposes of this Act;
- (h) advise the Minister on the national policy to be adopted with regard to provision of social assistance ;
- (i) formulate and enforce standards for the

- (j) maintain and promote the status, well being, rights, safety and security of persons in need of social assistance;
- (k) develop, maintain and operate a national social assistance information management system;
- (l) facilitate the periodic review of the national social assistance policy in line with other government policy statements;
- (m) mobilize resources to support and fund social assistance programmes and initiatives;
- (n) coordinate with other social assistance organizations to ensure that persons in need of social assistance access to resources and services appropriate to their needs;
- (o) coordinate and harmonize social assistance programmes;
- (p) inspire and promote the spirit of protecting persons in need of social assistance;
- (q) develop mechanisms to facilitate citizen participation in social assistance programmes;
- (r) formulate operational guidelines that protect persons in need against any form of abuse or manipulation;
- (s) work with other agencies to roll out and popularise social assistance programmes.
- (t) establish cost-effective, predictable and sustainable interventions that benefit the persons in need of social assistance;
- (u) develop guidelines for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social assistance programmes; and

- (a) formulate the policies of the Authority;
- (b) carry out the objects and functions of the Authority;
- (c) provide overall directions on effective coordination of operations of the Authority;
- (d) administer the property and funds of the Authority in such a manner and for such purposes as will, in the opinion of the Board, promote the functions of the Authority;
- (e) receive on behalf of the Authority gifts, grants, donations or endowments;
- (f) enter into association with such other bodies or organizations within or outside Kenya as it may consider desirable or appropriate and in furtherance of the purposes for which it is established;
- (g) open a bank account or bank accounts for the funds of the Authority into which all moneys received by the Authority shall be paid in the first instance and out of which all payments made by the Authority shall be made; and
- (h) do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the preceding functions.



Elderly people in Kieni share a cake to mark the International Day for Older Persons which was recently marked in Nyeri County. They are among groups earmarked to benefit from the Social Assistance Act.

Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa



A section of elderly people

Powers of the Board

The Authority has been vested with powers to:

Assistance Act

Forms of Social Assistance

Forms of social assistance includes

- Emergency assistance for a period not exceeding one month
- Short term assistance for not more than four consecutive months
- Long term assistance for several months

According to the Act, beneficiaries are to receive regular payments for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, household and other personal requirements.

Social Assistance Fund

The Act provides for the establishment of the National Social Assistance Fund which is to be administered by the Board.

The kitty draws funding from bilateral or multilateral donors, monies that may accrue to or vest in the Authority when discharging its functions under this Act; gifts, grants, donations or endowments as may be given to the Authority; monies that may be borrowed by the Authority for the discharge of its functions; fees for services rendered to any designated institution in terms of a service agreement; and monies from any other source provided for the Authority.

Eligibility

Only Kenyan citizens can benefit from the National Social assistance fund.

Orphans and vulnerable children are to benefit from the fund

only if

- They have no biological parents or not adopted by a guardian
- They are under the care of a person suffering from long-term illness or disability
- They are abandoned by the parents and not under the care of a guardian
- They are under the care of parents or guardians unable to provide for them

Older persons set to benefit from the fund must be

- 65 years or older
- Neglected or abandoned

Unemployed persons are to benefit from the fund only if

- The person is youth with proof that he or she has no source of income
 - The person has proof that failure to have income is not due to negligence or lack of industriousness
- Persons with disabilities qualify for the funding only if
- They are suffering from severe mental and physical disability
 - The disability renders the person incapable of caring for his or her basic needs

Under the Act, social assistance also entails developing the capacities of individuals, families and communities to become self reliant.

The programme is designed



Elderly people cut a cake to mark the International Day for Older Persons in Nyeri. Photo/Joseph Wambugu

to increase the ability of beneficiaries to assume greater responsibilities for themselves and lessen their dependence or public financial assistance

Such initiatives are geared towards providing support services that remove, lessen or prevent the causes and effects of poverty.

Procedure for Application and Administration of Social Assistance

Application forms and manner of applying for assistance are to be prescribed through regulations

The authority has powers to investigate and inquire into applications to ensure that only eligible persons benefit from the fund

Applicants who do not qualify for social assistance must be informed in writing with rea-

sons as to why they have not qualified.

Applicants not satisfied with a decision of the Authority declining to offer them social assistance are entitled to appeal within thirty days to the Magistrates Court for a review.

The court may annul, uphold or vary the authority's decision.

Termination

Abuse of social assistance may lead to:

Suspension of payment of the social assistance to the affected person.

Appointment of another person to receive social assistance on behalf of the beneficiary and apply it as prescribed by the Authority.

The law provides that the Authority may terminate payment of social assistance to or on behalf of a person who is

absent from Kenya, for a continuous period of six months or longer.

The Authority may reinstate the provision of social assistance suspended where the applicant justifies the reinstatement.

The Authority may also suspend or cancel social assistance if support was obtained through misrepresentation, deceit, fraud or failure to disclose any material information; in excess of amounts permitted by this Act and Regulations made pursuant to this Act; and a beneficiary abuses their social assistance.

Social assistance lapses when the beneficiary dies or is admitted to a residential institution.

The law provides for the establishment of a kitty to be administered by the Authority in support of organizations and groups that provide assistance to persons in need.



Persons in a function in Nyeri recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

“Orphans and vulnerable children are to benefit from the fund only if They have no biological parents or not adopted by a guardian.”

Uhuru orders reports over unaccounted Ksh300bn

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Uhuru Kenyatta has directed all ministries to prepare detailed reports of their expenditure after an audit report revealed Ksh300 billion remained unaccounted for in the 2011-2012 financial year.

The President who was chairing a Cabinet meeting at State House also ordered that they submit their reports without delay.

The report from the Auditor General's office shows that Ksh338 billions spent by the government in the financial year 2011/2012 cannot be accounted for.

According to the document, only Ksh582 billion of the Ksh920 billion the government spent can be accounted for.

Auditor General Edward Ouko said that more than half of the statement errors were due to unsupported expenditure, failure by civil servants to surrender imprests, unauthorised spending and uncleared balances.

Cabinet meeting at the State House, the President also ordered that they submit their reports in a week's time/PSCU

"A total of 252 financial statements were audited and only six percent had clean (unqualified) audit reports, 51 percent had qualified opinion reports, 10 percent had disclaimer of opinion reports and 33 percent had disclaimer of opinion reports. A trend that is worrying is that 33 percent of the financial statements or 83 financial statements cannot be regarded as having been properly accounted hence a disclaimer of opinion," he stated.

In the report, Ouko explained that

there were no supporting documents for Ksh561 billion which could have resulted in the misuse of the funds.

"Of major concern is the poor maintenance of accounting records. As in the previous years and indicated in my report, there is weak and inadequate maintenance of accounting records observed across a number of ministries and departments during the year," he said.

Ouko says that in the 2011-12 year, many ministries and departments prepared their statements on cash basis,

making it impossible to tell what the government owns and owes.

"In addition, the ministries and departments continued to prepare their respective financial statements on Cash Basis of accounting as instructed by the Treasury."

"This implies that capital assets are expensed as a result of which Statements of Assets and Liabilities as at the end of each financial year do not show a complete and true and fair view of the ministry's or department's assets and liabilities," he said.

He further explained that he was not able to establish whether expenditures reflected in these statements were incurred lawfully and in an effective way as required by Article 229(6) of the Constitution.

"This hence means that there were accounts with disclaimer of opinion and should be treated as accounts with no proper justification, then by implication 33percent of the total actual expenditure for 2011/2012 of Ksh920bn can be regarded as having not been properly accounted for."



President Uhuru Kenyatta after chairing a cabinet meeting at State House, Nairobi recently.

Coastal residents endorse MRC in new survey

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

A NEW survey has shown Mombasa Republican council was actively fighting for the rights of the coastal people.

More than 53 percent of respondents considered the group as genuine and committed to fighting for the rights of local communities.

The survey carried out early this year by Ipsos Synovate was funded by USAID through the Kenya Transition Initiative (KTI) and involved respondents from more than 3100 households.

Speaking at the Pwani University, a chief researcher in the survey Dr Tom Wolf said the survey covered the six counties in coast region.

Dr Wolf who is also the political analyst with Ipsos Synovate company said the findings reflected half of the outcomes but the full report covering over 100 pages will be released in the next two months.

According to the report 33 percent of the respondents expressed their knowledge of MRC with its main agenda being fighting for the land rights of the Coastal people.

"At least 33 percent of the respondents in the survey indicated that they were aware of the existence of MRC with most of them saying that their main grievance was land ownership problem for the coastal people," noted the report.

Other issues that MRC was keen to promote included the clamour to secede and calls for fair distribution of national resources.

The report indicated that out of those interviewed, 86 percent either mentioned land or equitable distribution of resources as the most burning issues for the coastal people.

Respondents in the report showed that Mombasa and Kwale counties were perceived as local support zones for the MRC

Only 9 percent of the total respondents discounted claims that MRC had ties to other groups but 77 percent of them linked MRC with Al Shabaab.

Dr Wolf in the report noted that most of the coastal people preferred an official policy to engage with MRC to help resolve outstanding issues afflicting the region.

It further indicates that 68 percent of the respondents blamed the low voter turnout registered in the region to outlawed groupings which also affected the outcome of March 4 General Elections.

The report showed that due to fear of attack by MRC, most people in the area had not registered as voters while other failed to register due to lack of national indentation cards.

In contrast to what might have been expected, more upcountry respondents called on the government to ensure fair distribution of resources.

However the report says that indigenous people demanded the establishment of strong public institutions to help find a lasting solution to their problems.

It was further noted that nearly twice as many respondents in Lamu County were not happy with governance issues in the county.

Machakos County unveils education and performance improvement program

By PETER MUTUKU

MACHAKOS County has rolled out an ambitious County Education and performance Improvement Program.

The program that is under the Machakos County Department of Education will see candidates in both Form Four and Standard Eight provided with standardized exams and provided with meals during exams.

Already candidates in the just concluded national examinations have benefitted from the initiative with the County Governor Dr Alfred

Mutuku flagging off a fleet of lorries, with food to be taken to schools within the County.

"These efforts are being made to ensure that the county improves its education standards after perennially under-performing in national exams. The program will also be integral in providing an educated and professional workforce for our job market," explained the governor.

He at the same time revealed that the county has through the Department of Health disbursed Ksh. 464 Million to build community hospi-

tals each fully equipped with facilities, ambulances, maternity wings, a mini-theatre and a morgue in every sub-county.

The Governor said that an additional Ksh. 200 Million has been channelled to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Housing to aid in the upgrading of roads and culverts.

He said that plans are underway to launch a Social Welfare Board to deal with affairs of the youth, women and the disabled.

"The board will run a kitty that

has been funded to the tune of Ksh. 35 million to give grants to the group to empower them. We already have a system in place to ensure accountability and transparency in disbursing the funds," he said.

He at the same time revealed that he had bought farmers tractors and fertilizer under the subsidy program. "The tractors have been purchased and dispatched to farmers together with thousands of fertilizer bags to help us attain food security through improved yields of agricultural produce," he said.

Cheap sugar imports flood local markets

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

KENYA Sugar Board (KSB) has ruled out the possibility of a hike in sugar prices following a recent move by the government to lift the ban on exports to mop-up excess stocks in the local market.

KSB notes that the country's raw sugar stocks currently stand at a remarkable 20,000 tonnes against a required optimal level of 9,000 tonnes for five days, partly because of illegal imports.

The regulator's Chief Executive Officer Rosemary Mkok says the rising stock levels had suppressed the commodity's prices by 30 per cent to Kshs.3,800 per 50 kg bag.

"There is an oversupply in the market because of the current global market dynamics. The situation has worsened because of illegal imports, with industrial sugar being repack-

aged and finding its way to the table. We have to up our game and that is why tough regulations are long overdue," adds Ms. Mkok.

She says the country had not exhausted her annual quota imports from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and that it had about 200,000 tonnes of imports, out of the required of 340,000 tonnes.

The move is expected to suppress ex-factory prices further. Kenya is under Comesa safeguards and is obligated to import 340,000 tonnes of sugar from the trading block to fill her deficit.

Mkok said despite the recent move by the government to lift the ban on export to mop up the surplus, increased illegal imports would continue to put pressure on prices hence the need for tougher regulations to rein in unscrupulous traders.

"Once the Sugar Act becomes operational, any illegal sugar impounded would be destroyed and the importers banned. Currently we just penalize the importer and then release the consignment to him. The importer's licence should also be revoked," said Mkok in Mombasa recently during a consultative meeting with sugar importers.

She said sugar importers would be pre-qualified before being issued with import licences.

Importers of white sugar would also be required to pay an annual registration fee of Kshs. 1 million, up from Kshs.100,000 while industrial sugar importers would pay Kshs. 2 million.

Mkok was speaking during a meeting with sugar importers and other stakeholders in Mombasa to discuss The Sugar Act and The Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Authority Act.

Taita-Taveta County Govt clashes with KWS over ban on charcoal burning

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE County Government of Taita-Taveta has sharply differed with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) over its bid to ban charcoal burning in the area.

Members of the Taita-Taveta County Assembly (MCAs) and County Executive members have publicly expressed their outrage over the ban and are demanding that KWS revokes it.

The ban has suffered a devastating blow after a county government official issued permits for felling trees for charcoal burning, a move that has infuriated KFS.

County KFS Ecosystem Conservator Allan Ongere recently accused the county government of usurping the role of the national government.

He claimed the issuance of the permits by the County Executive member in charge of Environment, Minerals and Natural Resources, Elijah Mwandoe, was illegal. He also said the sections of the constitution Mwandoe had used to issue the licences had not yet been operationalised.

"The member of the Executive came up with his own forest permits on movement of charcoal quoting some sections of the constitution. What he is doing is

wrong and contravenes the law," said Mr. Ongere. He said KFS is implementing the Forest Act 2009, and the county government has to abide by it to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

"The ban on charcoal harvesting still stands and we cannot allow the charcoal trade to continue. We are advising the Executive Committee member to seek clarification with the KFS director's office," said Ongere. He said only the director has powers to either lift or relax the ban to allow minimal transportation of charcoal. "The Charcoal Producers Association members should follow the law or risk facing prosecution," Ongere warned.

Recently, Mwandoe accused KFS of not being conversant with the laws regulating tree felling and charcoal burning.

Meanwhile, residents and leaders have recovered seven tones of timber poached from a community forest in Taita Taveta.

The forest materials were recovered in the disputed Lushangonyi community forest in Taita District after a raid by the residents led by Mgange-Mwanda Ward Representative Cromwell Baridi.

A senior Kenya Forest Service (KFS) officer John Mbori said his office had detained the consignment.

He said no suspect had so far been ar-

rested in connection with the incident that has sparked public outcry.

"The forest materials were impounded in a disputed community forest which lies at the boundary of Taita and Mwatate districts. Two villages are fighting for the ownership of the forest," said Mr. Mbori.

Speaking recently to The Link, the KFS official said one of the villages had processed a permit to cut down trees.

"Two villages are fighting for the ownership of the forest. The KFS and Provincial Administration will intervene to address the boundary dispute involving the two villages," said Mbori.

Recently, Mr. Baridi and his Werugha Ward counterpart Jason Tuja stormed the KFS offices in Wundanyi town to protest over wanton destruction of environment.

The leaders urged KFS to step in and stop influential timber merchants in the area from wanton destruction of wood sources and forests.

Challenges facing President Uhuru Kenyatta's laptop promise

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

AS President Uhuru Kenyatta's laptops promise for the 2014 Class One children develops into reality, it is important to highlight some learning challenges within Kenyan public primary schools.

Further, what are the efforts being made to integrate ICT in education?

Kenya's education system is undergoing reforms to align itself with Vision 2030 and the new Constitution, promulgated in 2010. For instance, in January 2011, The Task Force on the Re-alignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010 was commissioned by then-Education minister Professor Sam Ogeri. In order to meet its objectives, it "undertook a detailed situational analysis of the education sector by reviewing the Education Act, various commission reports, other relevant policy and legal documents; Benchmarking with good practices from countries with national and county governments and also received submissions by various stakeholders. The Task Force conducted County cluster stakeholder consultation forums and also analyzed memoranda submitted to it."

The Task Force presented its report in February 2012 and a pertinent observation on ICT in education was that: "only about 2percent of schools in the country have the necessary ICT infrastructure. It recommended that ICT institutional framework be strengthened to allow efficient integration of ICT in the entire education sector with enhanced ICT capacity at all levels and for the establishment of a National Centre for ICT Integration in Education (NAC-ICTIE) and be devolved to counties. It also called for the provision of technical backup in ICT initiatives in government learning educational institutions."

The Task Force further noted that:

- The development of digital content has been progressing well at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), now the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).
- An ICT Curriculum has been introduced at teacher training level.
- The proposed 10-Year Master Plan for ICT in Education will ensure that ICT development will be holistic and integrated with all levels of education. This will produce citizens knowledgeable and skilled in using ICT as well as having the ability to compete with the outside world as envisioned in VISION 2030.
- A National Centre for ICT in Education (NACICTIE) will be established, complete with a National Help Desk and Support Section.
- Enhancement of Public-Private-Partnership for ICT investment in education and training.
- Provision of computers in schools based on the following ratios:
 - one desktop per 15 learners, and one laptop per teacher;
 - projected costs for implementation of



Mr. Fred Matiang'i, Cabinet Secretary, ICT at a previous press conference.

Photo/File

ICT Master Plan in Education (2010–2015):

- Launching of educational broadcasting services throughout the country.

In March 2011, former President Kibaki launched the broadcasting station granting the KICD a fully dedicated digital educational broadcast channel (Radio and Television) with outreach to all areas of the country.

Learning situation for teachers and pupils

Generally, Teacher Education in Kenya lacks a policy framework and the teaching profession is not well defined. Only a few teachers have a clearly defined career development plan. The results of a World Bank survey titled: 'Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) for Kenya', were made public on July 12, 2013. "The main objective of the new SDI initiative, which is an Africa-wide programme, is to generate data on quality service delivery that can then help citizens to hold their government and service providers accountable, and push for change that delivers better results for them."

"Increasing accountability for education and health services is at the heart of the Service Delivery Indicators," says Ritva Reinikka, Director of Human Development for Africa at the World Bank. "These new data will help governments and service providers take specific actions to deliver better services and to track the impact of reforms across time as the surveys are repeated." SDI can also help governments achieve greater

efficiency of public spending. "Unless you know where exactly the problem is, you can't fix it," Reinikka notes. "Governments today are often operating within tight budgets that already devote a large share of resources to health and education—so honing in on the issues and spending money more smartly is really critical."

A key finding in the SDI survey was that, in terms of service delivery, Kenyan teachers do not work at all or merely engage in other non-teaching activities while at school. The survey of 300 schools revealed that teachers in public primary schools spent only two hours and 40 minutes daily to teach pupils. Further, these teachers were 50percent less likely to be in class compared to those of private schools; and only one third of them "give students value for money." Public school pupils received an average of 20 days less teaching a term, compared to those in private schools.

In addition, only 35percent of teachers in public schools "showed mastery of the subjects they taught" while "seniority and years of training did not correlate with higher levels of knowledge." Kenyan schools do well in terms of "hardware" i.e. textbooks, equipment and infrastructure, but not on "software" which is: "the level of effort and knowledge among teachers." Around 80percent of schools had adequate lighting facilities for reading, and there were enough textbooks per pupil – more than the recommended three per pupil.

The SDI findings recommended that human resource management be improved to realize quality education.

The results of another study which investigated why some Kenyan schools performed well while others continually performed poorly in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) indicated that: "mathematics teachers in Kenya's primary schools had a poor understanding of the subject." The Classroom Observation Study in Nairobi was conducted by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) between May 2009 and March 2010. The participants were: 2,443 pupils, 72 mathematics teachers and 72 head/deputy head teachers. Teachers scored a mean grade of 60.5percent in mathematics tests with a margin of 13percent difference from the pupils' outcome at 46.89percent. One teacher scored 17percent despite being in the profession for five years. APHRC researchers felt that their poor scores contributed to the poor performance by the pupils.

But a teacher in Central Kenya blamed the government for not providing the right teaching aids "that would demystify mathematics and science as difficult subjects." Trade unions for teachers blamed the government too for not training enough teachers for these specialties. Teachers are overloaded with a requirement by the Education ministry to teach six subjects daily, especially in overcrowded classrooms.

On April 27, 2013 Lee-Anne Benoit posted an outline of Kenya's system of

education and personal observations made during her educational trip to Kenya. A section of her piece states that: "In addition to overcrowded classrooms, teachers face many challenges, which in turn affect student performance. Firstly, they are under a great deal of pressure to teach all of the curriculum outcomes in order to prepare students for their examinations. Combined with a lack of funding and classroom space, teachers are at a loss when it comes to planning creative lessons. Secondly, teachers face a strong tradition of teaching practice that is both historically and culturally embedded. Attitudes towards change can be stubborn, making transformation a slow process. Thirdly, teachers lack an appropriate amount of support and assistance within the classroom as well as opportunities for professional development. As it stands, resource and literacy programs are virtually non-existent in schools, and the government cannot afford to pay for assistants within the classroom. Few primary schools can even afford a library. Fourthly, and in part due to distance, there are barriers to communication between home and school, which negatively impacts student progress. Lastly, primary school teachers work for very low wages, which can be demotivating for some, ultimately affecting their professional pedagogical practice. For many teachers and students alike, school can be a truly sink or swim endeavour."

Poor literacy and numeracy outcomes

A survey report titled: 'Are our children learning? Annual Assessment Report' by Uwezo Kenya for 2012, notes that there is at least one computer out of 10 schools in Kenya and only five out of the ten use them for learning purposes. Meanwhile, only one out of ten schools has an email address. Uwezo tested over 153,000 children in all the 47 counties across Kenya. The report which was launched on July 23, 2013 painted a grim picture of learning processes within the free primary education (FPE) program. Excerpts from standardmedia.co.ke are posted verbatim below. (Also visit uwezo.net).

"Kisumu, Tana River, Turkana, Siaya, Garissa and Samburu counties have the lowest average of children in class three who can read a story and do a division of simple maths for class two. By class five, 33 per of the children cannot read and understand simple class two English stories, or hadith in Kiswahili. A class three child in Nairobi Province is twice as likely to read a class two level paragraph than a child in the same class in Western Province. Girls are better readers than boys in Kiswahili nationally, except in arid areas of Wajir, Garissa, Tina River and Mandera. The report also shows that seven out of 100 class eight children cannot read a class two level Kiswahili story. The findings

By BOB OMBATI

RENAL patients in Kisii County and its environs are set to benefit from a dialysis machine worth Ksh. 1.5 million donated by the Kenya Commercial Bank to Kisii level five (KL5) hospital.

Commissioning the machine, Governor James Ongwae, his Deputy, Joash Maangi and KCB managing director, Samwel Makome said patients will access the services easily instead of seeking them in other counties.

Ongwae said the machine handles four patients per day, noting it would reduce costs incurred by patients who are referred to either Kenyatta National Hospital and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret.

The trio lauded the bank's move, saying it would enhance access to services and enhance development in the county, saying renal services will be subsidized for impoverished patients to access them.

Makome, flanked by KCB Western Region Business Manager Susan Koech, Kisii branch manager John Momanyi, Kisii County Medical Director Dr Geoffrey Otomu, and the hospital's Medical Superintendent Dr Enock Ondari said the bank would support county governments with equipment to enhance quality health care services and programmes.

Kisii level five hospital, noted Makome was the first to benefit from the programme, stressing was keen to supporting the locals access quality care services to enhance their contribution in the county's social and economic development.

Governor Ongwae asserted that the County leads in diabetes and hypertension which causes kidney failure, stressing the machine will

Kisii hospital gets dialysis machine

save lives and reduce expenses incurred in transport to Referral hospitals and medical bills.

The Governor lamented the hospital, started 1917 by the colonial government lacks a CT-Scan, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), endoscopy Intensive care Unit (ICU) facilities and orthopaedic surgery machines.

He said the county government would secure five dialysis machines within the next three years to serve Kisii, Nyamira, Narok, Homabay and Migori counties with a population of over 6 million people.

The Governor disclosed plans were underway to elevate KL5 hospital to level six, Teaching and Referral and be affiliated to Kisii University.

He said it was imperative to equip the hospital with modern machines and equipment to help medical students and professionals conduct Research on various diseases to help tackle them.

A Bill, stated Ongwae was being finalized and passed by the County Assembly for the University and the Hospital to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Ongwae urged national government and donor communities to support the hospital, adding it would help de-congest the far-flung Kenyatta National and Moi Teaching and Referral hospitals.

Otomu said the hospital has trained 8 qualified staff to handle renal patients and urged patients to seek the services at the facility.

"We used to refer 8 patients per month to Kenyatta National Hospital per month. That is now history" said Otomu, adding the demand for renal services were high.

The Director urged residents to shun lifestyles that make them vulnerable to renal diseases, adding that they should be checked periodically for various terminal diseases to help them lead healthy lifestyles or seek early treatment in case they are sick.



Kisii County Governor, James Ongwae (left), flanked by KCB MD, Samwel Makome cuts a plaque to open KCB West Branch in Kisii town. Ongwae urged Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) to open a branch in Kisii. Photo/Bob Ombati

Police service introduces mobile device to nub rogue officers

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

IT will no longer be business as usual for police officers who indulge in malpractices in the course of their duties.

A police service delivery mobile based feedback system which enables police stations, unit commanders and the public to better understand how people feel about services offered by police officers has been launched and is already in operation.

The 'Utumishi Platform' initiative is jointly implemented by the office of Inspector General of the National Police Service, Deputy Inspector General of Kenya Police, Deputy Inspector General of Administration Police, Usalama Forum and Safer world.

Members of the public are as a result have been encouraged to use the system on their mobile phones to provide feedback that will help in improving the quality of services offered by police officers.

ers.

To lodge a complaint or to commend the work of a police officer, members of the public are asked to use the sms system on their safaricom lines which is toll free by pressing * 384* 7711# and then follow the instructions.

This system was disclosed by Mr. Jacob Atian'g of the Usalama Reforms Forum during a community policing workshop held at Garden Park Tourist hotel in Malaba town of Busia county.

Atian'g appealed to travellers in both public and private vehicles to use the system to report traffic police officers who demand bribes from Matatu operators and other motorists.

He also appealed to the public to make use of the system to compliment police officers who do their work professionally.

The Usalama Reforms Forum officer challenged crime observatory team, and accountability team which were formed during

the previous community policing meetings to adopt the system as one way of ensuring that service delivery charter at Bungoma police station is strictly adhered to.

Atian'g urged the workshop participants to be in constant touch with the police station, Children's department, chiefs and hospitals so as to easily identify crimes and track them to conclusion.

Bungoma Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) in partnership with Saferworld facilitated the workshop.

CJPC Bungoma coordinator, Mr. Albinus Muga was one of the speakers at the workshop that was attended by 30 people drawn from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and community policing members operating in Bungoma County.

Muga asked the participants to courageously engage the police if they find them taking bribes or allowing Matatu operators to violate traffic rules with impunity.

Challenges facing President Uhuru's laptop promise

From Page 19

also established that 11 out of 100 pupils in class eight couldn't do a simple class two math while seven out of 100 of them couldn't read a simple English or a Kiswahili story. Less than half of class three children in Western, Nyanza and Eastern Regions can read a class two level paragraph, with a class three child in Nairobi having twice as much chances of reading a class two level paragraph than a child in the same class in Western region."

According to Lee-Anne Benoit: "There is much speculation that the poor performance of public school graduates on the KCPE examinations is due to a number of specific factors. For example, because of the increased enrolment in primary schools in 2003, teachers had to contend with extraordinarily large class sizes made up of a diverse range of students whose preparedness varied. Circumstances such as these diminish a teacher's ability to differentiate their instruction and give individualized attention. Resources and materials are spread thin and mobility within classrooms becomes limited. It is thought that this large influx of "first generation learners" has contributed to declining test scores in the public school system (Glennerster and Kremer, 2011). It is also thought that poor performance in primary schools is perpetuated by an increasing stratification between public and private schools. This disparity becomes all the more clear when considering the disparity between the KCPE scores of public and private

school graduates (Glennerster and Kremer, 2011). Under qualified teachers has also been stated as a factor as well as corruption."

The Government of Kenya needs to invest more resources in research and development (R&D), to be on the cutting edge of science. Former East Asian Tigers (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore) leapfrogged the Western-based stages of economic development by investing heavily in science and technology (S&T). These countries developed a manufacturing and export-driven economic model which had its genesis in capital accumulation since the 1960s. Although they suffered immensely during the Asian economic crisis in 1997-98, they have regrouped to be a financial hub worth emulating by other developing countries. This region also invests heavily in higher education.

Kenyan politicians recall now and then how the country was on the same economic development level with South Korea in the 1960s, yet are doing very little to get the country back on track. With misplaced budget allocations favouring their huge salaries and allowances at the expense of poorly paid teachers, nurses and other civil servants, Kenyan politicians can only dream of meeting the Vision 2030 program, which aims to industrialize the country. Although competitive grants are offered to university students through the National Council for Science and Technology, there is no indication that Kenya is producing enough scientists to contribute to national development.

Nyeri county assembly to develop a policy framework on climate change

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI County Assembly is developing a county climate change policy framework which will be advanced into a Bill.

Deputy speaker Joel Gichuru said the policy framework will help to mitigate climate change in the region.

Gichuru who was accompanied by the assembly Environment chairman Bernard Kinga and his vice chairman James Muchiri said that once the Bill is passed, it will be enacted into law in order to help in environment conservation of the county.

Gichuru lamented that most of the rivers have started drying in the county and there was need to develop laws which will prevent illegal logging and destruction of forests.

"We want laws which will help conserve environment as climate change will lead to more poverty. We want more trees to be planted," said the speaker.

They were speaking at Green Hills hotel in Nyeri town recently during a one day workshop which was sponsored by a non-governmental organization Help Self Help Centre.

Over 30 participants who included county reps, heads of various government departments and community representatives attended the one day workshop.

Help Self Help Centre Director Bernard Muchiri said that unless climate change is mitigated early, it will lead to crop failures and higher incidences of poverty.

He said such a policy is very important since it will help to manage climate changes in order to prevent food crisis in future.

"The climate change has led to change of rainfall patterns and those relying on rainfall have suffered enough. Most of the crops have been affected by hailstorms, frost and land slide

leading to low production," he lamented.

He advised farmers to plant more trees and adopt drought resistant crops, integrating in high value crops that require little space, little water and bring high returns.

The added that sectors of economy like industry, water,

energy and forestry among others must adopt and mitigate climate change.

Muchiri noted that the Kenyan government is a signatory to many international treaties and has come up with the country climate change strategy and national climate change action plan.



Nyeri County assembly deputy speaker Joel Gichuru (left) and the assembly Environment chairman Bernard Kinga during a workshop at Green Hills Hotel in Nyeri town recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

By BOB OMBATI

YOUTH in Kisii County have been urged to join savings and credit cooperative societies (Saccos) to aid them access loans, invest and better their lives.

Area Youth Development Forum chairman, Dennis Orioki says the youth should embrace a saving culture through their groups and Societies.

Orioki, who addressed Kisii county bunge Sacco members at Kisii sports Club during the society's first anniversary, challenged the youth to invest in viable projects to boost their incomes and improve their standards of living.

He said the Sacco with 1500 members had disbursed Ksh. 2.7 million loans to various youth groups, adding that the society has a capital of Ksh. 5 million.

The youth, noted the official guaranteed their members in groups and serviced their loans at one percent per month with a reducing balance, adding it had helped the youths access and secure loans without collaterals like land and log books demanded by other financial institutions.

The Sacco, noted Orioki had assisted 50 members access 30 percent of the government tenders as directed by President Uhuru

Youth urged to join Saccos

Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto, stressing more youths were forming Groups to access the public funds through the tenders.

"Youths are gradually getting economically empowered. They will no-longer rely on hand-outs forked by politicians to survive" stated Orioki.

Nyanza region Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF) Manager, Leonard Ochieng urged youths to shun white collar job mentality and strive to be job creators.

Youths, noted Ochieng formed 60 percent of the country's population, stressing that they needed support to participate in the country's social and economic development to hasten the attainment of vision 2030.

He urged the government and Non-governmental organizations to train youths on greenhouse farming to enable them enhance their earnings and improve on food security, noting the farming was optional amid shrinking land sizes in Gusiland.

Kisii central Deputy Commissioner, Philip Soi who represented area County commissioner, Lydia

Muriuki urged the youngsters to manage the Society professionally to reap maximum benefits and attract more members.

Some Societies, noted Soi had collapsed due to mismanagement, poor leadership and wrangles, saying that they should guard against members hell bend on messing up with the Sacco for their selfish interest.

Meanwhile, Nyaribari Chache constituency Trainer, Job Moriasi has challenged youths to be conversant with savings, budgeting, book keeping and investments to manage and sustain their Groups.

Moriasi who sensitized Bobaracho Rhino Youth Group on financial skills and investments at Bobaracho dispensary hall noted that youth groups faced a myriad of challenges due to poor financial management and investments.

He challenged the youth to shun abandoning their groups for greener pastures in urban areas where, he noted they were paid peanuts and exhausted their funds before end month and relied on support from their parents.

"Some youths who have wise-

ly invested in rural areas are better than their underpaid working colleagues in urban areas" stated Moriasi.

Moriasi, accompanied by his colleague, Nickson Atei and the Group's Chairman, Dennis Obisa challenged youths to embrace honesty, transparency and accountability to sustain their groups.

He said the Organization will train the Group periodically and monitor their progress besides linking them to donors and other financial organizations to fund their projects.

Obisa said the youths were engaged in rabbit keeping and fish farming and majority were students while others were working.

He said the members fed the rabbits and cared for the fish ponds in shifts, adding the Groups have 15 members actively involved in the projects.

Lauding the government for initiating the Uwezo fund which charge low interest rates on loans, Obisa said it would help youths access the funds, venture into more projects to alleviate poverty.

Busia clearing agents trained to boost trade

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Associations (FEAFFA), in collaboration with Kenya International Freight Forwarders and Warehousing Association (KIFWA) and the Revenue Authorities in EAC member states have launched a formal training program for practitioners in the customs clearing and freight forwarding sector.

The program, which culminates into an award of a certificate after a six-month of intensive training, aims at equipping practitioners with improved technical skills and professional ethics in line with emerging trends in industry dynamics.

Addressing the course participants during the official launch of the training workshop at a Busia hotel recently, KIFWA Busia branch chairman Moses Ochieng said that at the end of the training a certificate, titled "East Africa Customs Freight Forwarding Practicing Certificate" (EACFFPC) would be awarded.

The certificate is intended to become the main criteria for licensing of Customs Clearing Agents (CCA) by the Revenue Authorities in the East African Community.

He said the training will enable the clearing agents to discharge their roles as Customs Agents competently, entrench professionalism in the services offered by freight forwarders, especially in customs clearing and enhancing ethical conduct, good governance and integrity in the profession.

"The course is intended to equip the trainees with the necessary skills, competence and desirable values in customs and freight forwarding," said Ochieng, adding that the certificate will become mandatory for licensing as a customs agent by the revenue authorities in East Africa.

The freight forwarders and warehousing association chairman said the clearing and forwarding sector plays a very critical role in facilitating international trade and is therefore an agent of economic development.

"In the East Africa Region, the sector plays an even more strategic role in the regional integration process. The competitiveness of the sector has a direct bearing on the cost of goods in the region," he said.

"The overall purpose of the training is to rebrand and transform the culture of the Clearing and Forwarding industry that will enhance efficient global trade facilitation," he said, adding that the specific objectives of the policy is to augment the knowledge and application of standards in customs procedures, enhance the application of freight forwarding standards and efficient supply chain management fostering behavioural change of the customs clearing & freight forwarding agents.

Busia branch chairman however expressed concern over congestion of tankers ferrying fuel products to neighbouring countries saying the delay was caused by customs officials from the Ugandan side of the border.

"I am appealing to Ugandan authorities to speed up the clearance of vehicles in order to reduce congestion along the highway," said Ochieng.

Belgium donates marine vessel to enhance surveillance at the Indian Ocean

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

KENYA'S first ever marine research vessel, *RV Mafiti* (formerly *Zeeleuw*), finally arrived in Mombasa recently.

The Ksh.3.5 billion vessel, donated by the Belgian government, will be used in conducting surveillance in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) up to 200 miles into the Western Indian Ocean, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) Director Johnson Kazungu said recently.

The acquisition of the research vessel is geared towards attainment of goals outlined in Vision 2030.

The economic blueprint underscores the role that fishing research, a healthy environment and science technology and information can play in spurring development in Kenya.

The donation of the vessel follows the signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) and KMFRI for bilateral collaboration in marine sciences.

According to KMFRI Communication Officer Morris Munene, the institute will manage the vessel, which will be used to conduct marine research in the Western Indian Ocean.

"It is going to further deepen our knowledge and science of the territorial waters in the Indian Ocean," Munene said recently as he confirmed the imminent arrival of the vessel.

The vessel, which left the Belgian port of Ostend on August 31 with a crew of 29 (all Kenya Navy Soldiers), has been sailing for over 7,000 kms, with stop-overs at Vigo Port, Almeida, Malta, Port Said and Djibouti.

RV Zeeleuw has previously been used by Belgium and international marine researchers in the southern bight of the North Sea for 13 years.

According to co-ordinate and facilitating the translocation of the vessel, as well as assist in all scientific operations such as providing and placing scientific instruments on the ship, training IT staff, research assistants and students.

The collaboration is expected to further strengthen the co-operation between the Belgium and Kenyan governments in marine research, technology and education.

Mombasa County introduces 'Green Buses' to curb air pollution

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

ROAD transport in Mombasa County has received a major boost following the introduction of open buses equipped with both solar and grid power.

The environmentally friendly 'Go Green Buses', which hit the road in September, have become an instant hit, with visitors to Kenya's serene star-rated hotels in the North Coast sampling the daily shuttle services.

"It is arguably a rare first for Mombasa and we believe it is time to start making Mombasa a centre of moder-

nity, innovation and accessibility. It's time to have tourists venture beyond hotels and into local businesses. It is time for environmental concern to centre in our business plans," Go Green Buses Director Tor Barstad said.

He told The Link that the company has two shuttle buses imported from China for the service and hopes to increase its fleet to serve a larger part of Coastal beaches by early next year.

This is in a bid to provide tourists with an affordable and efficient form of transport from their hotels to local shopping centres and restaurants.

The director said the buses follow

a set route that runs from several large hotels to the major shopping centres, arriving every 15 minutes for only Kshs.100 per person per trip.

They carry up to 12 passengers for a single trip.

"The best thing about our services is that our buses will emit no deadly fumes into the air and there will be no noise pollution," he said.

He further said that there were numerous reports citing massive destruction forests, desecration of beaches, and coral reefs, the increase in noise, air and water pollution due to the growing numbers of gas guzzling vehicles.

"This is where Go Green Buses step up by utilizing a mixture of solar power and grid power to run our vehicles. We want to be part of the solution not the problem," the director said.

Routes have been planned to maximize the reach of the buses while considering the number of clients and favoured destinations.

"This formula encourages tourists to explore local businesses more effectively. Along the tip, Go Green Buses also provides multiple advertising channels to assist local businesses reach the international and domestic tourist market," added Barstad.

ICDC plans to put up fruit processing plant in Kilifi County

By BEKADZO TONDO

PLANS are underway to put a mango and banana fruit processing plant at Msabaha in Malindi constituency of Kilifi County at a cost of Ksh 500 million.

The proposed plant has capacity to process 90 tonnes of fruits on a daily basis.

The plant which is being built on 10 acres of land with funds sourced from Industrial and Commercial Development Cooperation (ICDC) is set to be operational by early next year.

According to the chairman of ICDC Mr Martin Muragu, the project which was set to be completed at the end of the year, will drag up to March next year due to logistical problems.

The chairman made the remarks at the plant when he led ICDC board of directors and area MP Dan Kazungu to inspect the construction works.

"This project is supposed to have been completed about one year ago, but due to logistical issues the project was delayed but I am happy to say that the work is almost complete and the plant is set to become fully operational by March next year," said chairman Muragu.

Director of Organic growers and packers company which is putting up the plant Mr Gordon Richards said the factory has capacity to process fruit products in about five tones per hour and produce about 90 tonnes of fully produced mango and banana fruit juices and other by-products.

Mr Richards said 80 percent of the processed products will be exported outside the county with only 20 per-



Women trading at one of the biggest roadside banana market at Kilifi.

cent of the products being sold locally.

The director said that an office of the Kenya Revenue Authority is being built within the plant premises to facilitate quick checks and fasten the process to export the products.

He said that more than 30,000 mango and banana farmers have been identified to supply their products directly to the plant.

Mr. Richards further noted that the factory will rely on farmers in Kilifi, Tana River, Kwale and Taita Taveta

counties to supply their produce.

He said the plant will also source mangoes and bananas from Kitui County.

"Our survey has shown that there is enough supply of mango and banana products within Kilifi, Tana River, Kwale and Taita Taveta counties to make the plant fully operational," said Mr. Richards.

Malindi MP welcomed the project saying it will offer ready market for mango and banana farm produces.

The MP said the plant will also offer job opportunities to the local people and urged mango, banana, passion, pineapple, oranges and papaws farmers to ensure there is full supply of the products.

"The fruit processing project is an important initiative for Malindi Constituency and Kilifi County as a whole as farmers will access ready market for their produce and local people will also get job opportunities," said Mp Kazungu.

Leaders forge unity to promote development in Kilifi County

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THREE MPs in Kilifi County have vowed to work closely with the county government to enhance devolution of services from the national government.

The law makers Dan Kazungu of Malindi, Gunga Mwinga of Kaloleni and William Kamoti of Rabai constituencies expressed their support to devolution of functions at the counties as stipulated in the constitution.

Speaking at different forums, the MPs urged all leaders in the

area including the County Governor Mr Amason Kingi, the senator Stewart Madzayo, county women representative Asha Katisa, the seven MPs in the county and the ward representatives to end their political differences and work together for the development of the county.

Kazungu who visited development projects in Jilore ward and donated Ksh 10.6 million from the CDF kitty in aid of community projects said politicians must strive to unite the local people and spearhead development within their ar-

reas of jurisdiction instead of engaging in incessant infighting.

"Politicians have a responsibility to forge unity among the people and spearhead development instead of using political platforms to settle their differences," said Mr Kazungu.

His Kaloleni counterpart Mr Mwainga said the squatter problem was one of the challenging issues which politicians need to approach with a sober mind and assist the people get title deeds for their land.

"Many people in Kilifi county do not have title deeds and it is our

duty as leaders to push the national government to hasten the issuance of title deeds," said Mr Mwainga.

Kamoti on his part said he will set aside funds in the CDF kitty in his constituency to support the land adjudication process to ensure people get title deeds.

Speaking at Chiferi primary school where Kilifi governor led a team of land officials from his county government and those from the ministry of lands to issue title deeds, the MP cautioned residents against selling their land.

He noted Rabai Constituency

which borders Mombasa County was more prone to speculation as investors could target the area to get land for their business and expressed fears that residents could be tempted to dispose of their land.

"Mombasa county is now fully developed and there is no idle land to accommodate investors and since Rabai constituency is bordering Mombasa and falling along the Mombasa-Nairobi highway, most investors could now move to the area to buy land and thus the reason we are cautioning people against selling their land," said Mr Kamoti.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

ABOUT 20 old people from Mweiga in Kieni area, Nyeri County enjoyed this year's Nyeri National show for their first time when they visited the show recently.

The old people were happy to see the modern technology used in growing of crops, a Police band and the young musicians at the show who were very talented.

Although it is only four kilometers from Mweiga town to Kabiru-ini grounds, they were visiting the show for the first time unlike other years when it would pass without them bothering.

"I have never been here before. I had no money to visit. Today was one of my happiest day in life," said a jovial 75 year old Mary Wairimu who was visiting the show for the first time.

Sixty-five-year-old Mary Wanjiku said that she was very happy to see an animal which was bigger than goat named Ilama.

While clad in shukas and balloons on their head, the old men and women enjoyed a happy day out and were able mingle freely with politicians whom they only hear over their vernacular radios.

Purity Elderly Care Foundation Executive Director Joyce Kairu who sponsored the group said she wanted to ensure that the old people also enjoy the show just like any other Kenyans.

"I wanted them to feel good just like other people by having fun like school going children and also remove them from the stress they undergo in their houses. They were very happy and wished it was a daily event," said Kairu.

Aged people receive a free treat at the Nyeri show ground



Some of the old people who visited Nyeri National show recently at Kabiruni grounds, Nyeri County.

Photo/Joseph ukubwa

The executive director said this was one of the events in preparations of the United Nations

International Day for the Older Persons which was marked on 1st October this year.

Hospital gets physiotherapy machine

By BOB OMBATI

CHASE Bank Group Foundation has donated a state-of-art physiotherapy machine worth Ksh. 3.2 million to Kisii level five hospital to aid accident survivors and orthopaedic patients.

The Bank General Manager, Parmain Ole Narikae says the Foundation with support from the hospital has rehabilitated the physiotherapy Ward to make patients and staff comfortable.

Ole Narikae, who spoke after donating the machine to the hospital's Medical Superintendent, Dr. Enock Ondari said the Foundation is committed to supporting enhanced health care in its business communities.

The Group, said Ole Narikae would support students of the Nyambunde school bus accident who are undergoing physiotherapy at the hospital. Eleven students and four teachers perished in the carnage.

"Survivors of the accident are the first beneficiaries of the Foundation's commitment to counties' health services," said the General Manager.

He said Chase Bank would provide more advanced physiotherapy to patients with orthopaedic needs including internal injuries, post surgical rehabilitation, stroke, fracture care and back problems.

"We can avail advanced machines like a hi-tech multi-gymnas-

tic, electric and manual beds, orthopaedic sets, electric wheelchairs and massagers to help patients recover quickly," stated the Manager.

The Foundation, said the manager would partner with county governments within the Group's business blueprint to rehabilitate public health facilities to enhance effective and efficient services.

Narikae, accompanied by Kisii County Governor James Ongwae, Deputy Governor Joash Maangi, the county minister for health Sarah Omache, Dr Enock Ondari, Chase Bank Regional Manager George Njoroge among other staff said the bank ploughs back part of its earnings to the community by funding various community based projects.

Governor Ongwae commended the Foundation for the support and called on other corporate organization to aid the facility which serves Kisii, Nyamira, Migori, Homabay and parts of Narok County.

The hospital, noted the Governor lacks essential equipment such as CT-Scan, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), ICU facilities and orthopaedic surgery machines, saying his government was partnering with well-wishers to serve residents within and outside the County.

"For the survivors of the school bus accident who escaped with life-long body injuries, there is nothing better we can do for them than to offer rehabilitative health care. Most of them come from poor background and

cannot afford physiotherapy charges," said Ongwae.

The hospital's dental Unit, stated Ongwae was ill-equipped to effectively serve the increasing number of dental patients, adding that it has a chair and serves one patient instead of four at ago.

Healthy people, asserted Ongwae play a major role in fostering the county's social and economic development, adding that provision of health services contributes towards maintaining and enhancing the productive potential of the people.

The Governor said health care is part of his reform agenda in the county and pledged to work together with stakeholders to improve health care services in his jurisdiction.

Dr Ondari noted the hospital has been operating a dilapidated physiotherapy department and lauded the Foundation for the renovation and equipping it to serve patients better.

The machine, said Ondari would handle at least 100 patients who were previously referred to hospitals in Nairobi and Kisumu, adding that it would reduce transport costs and inconvenience for patients.

Omahe said plans were underway for the hospital to be elevated to Kisii level six, Teaching, Referral and be affiliated to Kisii University, adding that learners will have opportunities to conduct research on various diseases, curative and preventive methods.

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Keroka residents irked by boundary dispute

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

RESIDENTS of Keroka town are up in arms over a boundary dispute which has derailed provision of services.

The town has been at the centre of a bitter boundary dispute between Nyamira and Kisii counties, with each side claiming it.

Waving placards and carrying twigs, the residents held a procession along the main street, temporarily disrupting business in the busy urban centre.

Riding on boda bodas blaring horns, the demonstrators accused elected leaders in the region of failing to address the town's boundary

row, leading to confusion in services delivery. They cited poor garbage collection, lack of sanitary facilities and a clogged drainage system as some of the main challenges the town faces as the impasse persists.

They threatened to boycott paying rates and taxes to the two counties until the issue is substantively resolved. Police in anti-riot gear patrolled the streets but allowed the demonstrators to continue with their protest, which was largely peaceful.

"It is a shame that Keroka, one of the major revenue sources for the two counties, continues to suffocate in garbage. There is no designated dumping site and when it rains, the

drainage system clogs up, exposing us to the threat of diseases," said Alfred Onyambu, a clothes trader.

He wondered why neither of the two governors had visited the town to listen to their grievances.

Two months ago, the Transition Authority (TA) published an advisory on classification of urban areas and cities, which indicated that the town is located in Kisii County.

In June, governors James Ongwae (Kisii) and John Nyagarama (Nyamira) resolved to form a team to oversee revenue collection and administration of Keroka and two other trading centres along the border as they sought a lasting solution to the stalemate.

"We want the governors to visit this area and explain to us what is happening. As market women, we pay taxes daily yet filth is all over and those concerned are not heeding our pleas. We have sent numerous petitions to the Nyamira Governor but nothing has happened," said Miriam Anunda, a trader.

Residents who spoke to The Link said the town was congested as land designated for public utility had been grabbed. They said some former Keroka Town Council employees were collecting tax and depositing it in the Nyamira County kitty while others submitted theirs to Kisii County accounts.

Govt halts plan to upgrade Kilifi, Diani towns into resort cities

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE government has revoked its earlier plan to develop Kilifi and Diani towns in Kilifi and Kwale counties respectively into resort cities at a cost of Kshs.3 billion due to unavailability of land.

According to the acting Director of Enablers and Micro Directorate of Vision 2030 Jonathan Lodompui, beach management units and eco-tourism projects will now replace the project.

The director made the revelations when he paid a courtesy call on Kilifi County Governor Amason Kingi in his office recently.

The new development shocked the Governor, who demanded a comprehensive report on what had conspired to have the flagship project changed.

The Governor, flanked by his deputy Kennedy Kamto and the executive committee members led by the County Secretary Owen Baya, all expressed shock on learning of the changes.

Kingi said governors from the 47 counties are having problems planning and starting long term development projects supposed to be done jointly with the national government.

He said the national government had failed to involve them while making decisions on development matters.

However, Mr. Londompui explained that different factors were considered before the decision was made.

The director said the government would be forced to buy land in Kilifi and Diani to establish the resort cities, something that could not be done due to the high cost of land in the two towns.

Mr. Londompui further said the Kshs.3 billion budget for the two projects could not work as most of the money would be eaten up by logistical matters such as the buying of land and other needs.

"The plan to develop Kilifi and Diani towns into resort cities anchored on Vision 2030 could not take place as initially planned as the issue of non-availability of land came up as a major challenge – buying land in those areas could lead to spending a lot of the Ksh.3 billion," he explained.

But Kingi and his cabinet did not take the matter lightly and hit at the national government for playing tricks to sabotage the development plans for the counties.

Kingi said the change was a serious matter and expressed concern that his government was not consulted over the changes.

He further said devolved governments mean nothing if governors have not been given the powers they deserve.

Nyeri county government officials trained on financial services

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A GROUP of Nyeri county government officials have been trained on the proper use of books of accounts in order to ensure transparency and accountability of funds.

The Institute of Certified Public Accountant of Kenya (ICPAK) sponsored the training during the one day financial services clinic which was held at White Rhino Hotel in Nyeri town recently.

The event also targeted to train the county government officials who may be lacking knowledge on the accounts and book keeping.

ICPAK official in charge of Financial Services Nebart Avutswa said that event also involved the business community and the financial sector officials drawn from banks, sacco and insurance companies.

"We also trained the officials on the new developments on the new VAT Bill so that they can benefit. The business community also had a chance to interact with ICPAK officials. The response has been overwhelming," said Avutswa.

Grant Thornton director Samuel Mwaura urged Kenya Revenue Authority to educate the local community on the VAT Bill for them to understand adding that some essential commodities are still expensive.

The organization has trained business community and county government officials in Nairo-



ICPAK official in charge of Financial Services Nebart Avutswa (left) chats with Grant Thornton director Samuel Mwaura during a one day financial services clinic held at White Rhino hotel in Nyeri town recently. Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa

bi, Eldoret, Nyeri and will be in Kakamega soon.

Nyeri governor Nderitu Gachagua in his speech which was read by chief of staff Maina Mathenge said he will create an enabling environment for the growth of the financial services sector in the region.

"I will also engage the professionals to ensure that the talent and knowledge within them achieves prosperity for the county," he added.

He noted that the financial sector plays a key role in driving and ensuring sustained growth and de-

velopment of the economy Gross Domestic Product. The services range from banking, insurance, assets management, Hedge fund management, Foreign exchange services, intermediation or advisory services, venture capital, sacco and microfinance.

WEF partners with Safaricom to ease loan repayment

By PETER MUTUKU

WOMEN Enterprise Fund has partnered with Safaricom Limited to provide easier, faster, efficient and secure loan repayment method through the use of M-Pesa.

The Fund is the only institution in Kenya that gives its financial services to women in all the 210 constituencies through the CWES Channel. Since its establishment, women have been making payments through the Kenya Commercial Bank which has the widest branch network in Kenya. However, the bank is located in the major towns and for a majority of customers, taking a trip to the bank

to make loan payment is a full day or even a two days event.

According to our Regional Credit Coordinator for North Eastern Region Mr. Muteti, "Our volunteer who is based in Rhamu in Mandera Central would spend Ksh1,200 to and from Mandera Town, more than 100Kms away on lorries that ferry animals between these towns, not to mention that he would have to spend the night in a lodging in town, of course at an additional cost."

In another case, the District Gender and Social Development Officer (DGSDO) based in Elwak Town, would travel to Mandera Town, more than 200Kms at a total cost of

Ksh.1,600 on behalf of our women beneficiaries."

"In both instances," says the Coordinator "our beneficiaries would give their money to our volunteer or the Gender officer to bank to our collection account in KCB since they were not in a position to make these trips, because, first it was too costly and would eat up any profits made, secondly, they have to spend the night out due to the unreliable transport. This would mean a night out which requires permission from their spouses, and thirdly being mothers, they naturally have a lot of responsibility in their households."

He adds that, "with this MPESA

payment system, all the women have to do is be guided only once by the volunteer and the DGSDO and subsequent payments will be made with no hushes".

Our beneficiaries had for a long time been requesting us to adopt this technology, for most of them the nearest major town could be between 30 and 300 kms away from their homes.

The Fund's Operations Manager, Mr. Mwirigi says, "With the M-Pesa innovation in place, we no longer have to do manual reconciliation because the money goes directly to our account, also errors in posting have been greatly reduced."

Mt Kenya region governors encourage farmers to grow bamboo

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MT KENYA governors are encouraging farmers to grow bamboo plants for commercial purposes.

The about ten governors who met during a consultative meeting recently proposed that bamboo which is a grass type of plant is a very important plant of conserving water and environment.

The counties bordering Mt Kenya and Aberdare forest have partnered with several organizations including the Environment ministry to encourage farmers to grow bamboo as a cash crop for value addition purposes.

The governors led by Laikipia governor Joshua Irungu noted that bamboo is a plant which is economically viable and can make furniture for export and cosmetics among others.

Bamboo is also used as fencing poles for construction, for making fuel and detergents.

It is also used in the manufacture of tooth picks and matchsticks.

Bamboo foliage can be used as fodder for animals while young bamboo shoots can be cooked and eaten as food.

Its juice is used to make vinegar. In Western Kenya, the sap is used to make ulanzi, a local brew.

Bamboo is also a good source of charcoal and makes a great hedge.

"I will launch a thorough campaign in my county to ensure that everybody grows bamboo. It mostly does well at riparian land. This will be our gold mine," said governor Irungu.



A Nyeri resident admires some of the bamboo which the region wants to grow. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

The meeting at a Nyeri hotel recently which was opened by Environment Principal Secretary Richard Lesiyampe was also attended by officials from Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, NEMA and WARMA among other organizations.

The governors said the farmers can grow *Oxytenanthera abyssinica* variety, which is the scientific name for solid bamboo which is a drought resistant shrub and can thrive with minimum annual rainfall of between 350 and 800 mm.

An acre of land can grow 100 shrubs.

It can be grown on high and low altitude areas or in wet and dry areas.

Lesiyampe said bamboo can create jobs for youth and women since industries will be established if it is commercialized.

The plant which grows one meter per week does well in Mt Kenya region especially in wet-land areas.

Similar sentiments were backed by Murang'a governor Mwangi Wa Iria, Nyeri governor Nderitu Gachagua, Embu governor Martin Wambora, Meru governor Peter Munya, Tharaka Nithi governor

Samuel Ragwa, Nyandarua Governor Daniel Waithaka and Kirinyaga Governor Joseph Ndathi.

"This is a good idea which must be supported by all. It must involve the government and relevant ministries and communities before it is rolled out," said Munya.

The governors also promised to join hands in curbing illegal harvesting and poaching in the region adding that 'they will get the bull by its horns' blaming the officials in the ministries saying they are the ones who are abetting, condoning and even spearheading the vice.

Farmers urged to comply with early warning signals to avert food insecurity

By TITUS MAERO

The Former Meteorological Department Director Mr. Alexander Alusa has urged Kenyans to take weather forecasts information seriously and use it to plan how to avert disasters and increase food production.

Alusa said following major global climate change, it was imperative for Kenyans to keep abreast with regular weather forecasts information by Meteorological Department to avoid hazards developing into disasters.

According to Mr. Alusa, Kenya has one of the best Meteorological services in Africa with computer trained staff and competitive equipment to provide accurate weather forecast.

He said across Africa, Kenya ranks second after South Africa in terms of meteorological service with over 100 scientists, majority of who have masters and PhD qualifications.

Mr. Alusa, who is currently the climate change policy advisor in the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, was speaking to reporters in Kakamega after delivering a keynote address during a participatory scenario planning workshop organised by CARE – Kenya.

He said climate change was a reality according to information released three weeks ago by intergovernmental panel on climate change of international community of scientists.

In their report, Mr. Alusa said the scientists have confirmed that climate change was happening, noticeable and, recorded and therefore needed people to be ready to respond to the changes.

On disasters that were happening in Kenya and other parts of the world, Mr. Alusa said they occur because of lack of early warning signals and response by people in the areas they occur.

According to Mr. Alusa, hazards do exist everywhere but they are left to turn into disasters by lack of early warnings and response by people.

He hoped that participants will impart the knowledge gained to their neighbours.

He said the main challenge facing meteorological department in Kenya was funding and station network to reach many people across the country and hoped the county governments will incorporate the services in their development programmes.

Kakamega County Director of meteorological Mr. Walter Nganyi hailed CARE – Kenya for organizing the workshop in Kakamega after Machakos to help people in various sectors of economy to understand climate change and use information provided by his department through weather forecasts to avert disasters and improve crop production.

CARE – Kenya information and knowledge management officer Mr. Joseph Ndiritu said the participatory scenario planning has been an ongoing exercise in Garissa where the project started in 2011 and was now being rolled out to other counties after being successful in the area.

He said the project will end next year and hoped county governments will adopt it in their development programmes since climate change was a reality.

The workshop also attracted participants from Central, Eastern, and Nyanza province.

Farmers urged to mobilize resources to buy company's shares

By AGGREY BUCHUNU

SUGAR cane farmers contracted by Nzoia Sugar Company are now being asked to mobilize financial resources in readiness for the purchase of shares once the factory is finally privatized.

Asking the farmers to organize and ready themselves to have a stake in the mill, Agriculture cabinet secretary, Felix Koskei, reveals that 24 per cent shares of the sugar factory are reserved for them.

Other shares of the highly indebted sugar firm, Koskei adds that would be held in trust by the county government and made available for sale to locals in order to empower them also to own a stake in the mill.

Koskei discloses that Nzoia Sugar Company is over-staffed by 600 workers and consequently urges the company management to immediately down size the work force in order to reduce its wage bill.

"We must bite the bullet, adopt a business approach and do things right. Let us be pragmatic and get certain basic economic variables right. We must also stop politicizing everything," he

says.

The Bungoma county based sugar factory is supposed to be privatized before the expiry of the Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) safeguard period-February 28, 2014.

Koskei was speaking during the World Food Day national celebrations at Gladys Muyundo's farm near Webuye town where he was hosted by Bungoma Governor, Kenneth Lusaka.

The Agriculture cabinet secretary was accompanied by the principal secretary-state department of fisheries, Prof. Micheni Ntiba, FAO country representative, Robert Allport, Webuye MP Alfred Sambu and other top ministry officials.

On general farming in Bungoma County Koskei pointed out that major cash crops such as maize, sugarcane, coffee, beans and horticultural produce and the dairy sub-sector fetched local farmers more than Ksh.12.6 billion last year.

Koskei said that major cash crops raked in Ksh.10.5 billion while the dairy sub-sector raked in an additional Ksh.2.1 billion bringing the total to Ksh.12.6



Felix Koskei, Agriculture Cabinet Secretary

billion.

The cabinet secretary adds that Bungoma was ranked as one of the most productive Counties in the country with great potential in agriculture due to its fertile soils and well distributed rainfall throughout the year.

Koskei disclosed that the County produced 3.1 million bags of maize, 582 tonnes of horticultural produce, 424,000 bags of beans and 65.3 million kg of milk last year.

Koskei, however lamented

that sustainability of food was under threat from poverty, unemployment, land degradation, subsistence farming, land fragmentation, absence of strategic food reserves, low value addition, climate change, high cost of inputs and inadequate access to credit.

He says that his ministry consequently set up the National Accelerated Agricultural Input Access Programme (NAAIAP) to provide seed and fertilizer to poor farmers under the Kilimo plus component and to provide low cost credit to more endowed farmers under the Kilimo bishara component.

The cabinet secretary adds that since the inception of the programme, 7,700 farmers in Bungoma county have benefited from the Kilimo plus component while 168,000 bags of fertilizer were sold to 1,000 farmers at subsidized rates under the bulk procurement of fertilizer programme.

Koskei says that his ministry will make available 3,000 tonnes of subsidized fertilizer in December to farmers in the region for use during the long rains season that is expected to begin in March, 2014.

By MALACHI MOTANO

DAIRY farmers in Rift Valley are opposed to plans to enlist the New Kenya Co-operative Creameries (New KCC) at the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE).

They argue that unscrupulous businessmen are likely to promote their selfish interests to commercialise the company and overshadow them.

Kenya Farmers Association (KFA) North Rift Director Kipkorir Menjo said they shot down the idea that had been proposed at various forums and instead resolved to seek a strategic partner in future.

Menjo said they arrived at the resolution at a meeting held in Eldoret where they also discussed shareholding in the New KCC and safeguarding other farmers' organizations like KFA and the National Cereals and Produce Board.

"We need to re-look at the issue in line with what other people are focusing on and changes in the industry. Privatisation will require money and consequently focus on how to handle the matter," he said.

The meeting was preceded by a visit to Harare by some farmers, which prompted revisiting the issue of milk production with a view to privatizing New KCC. The new resolution led to retailing of the initial respective shareholding suggestion of 51 per cent, 25 per cent, 20 per cent and four per cent for farmers, NSE, Government of Kenya (GoK) and employees.

"We consequently resolved to have the company's ownership as 51 per cent, four per cent and ten per cent shareholding for farmers, employees and GoK respectively," said Menjo.

Major (Rtd) Augustine Cheruiyot, the former chairman of KCC 2000, offered that the government's Ksh.547 million to resuscitate the once sinking giant only amounted to 10 per cent of the company's worth whose asset base then stood at Kshs.5.5 billion.

"The money paid by the government on behalf of farmers to revive the company can be converted into government shares because coming to think of it, the profits accrued since their intervention could have offset their in-

Farmers oppose KCC's bid to trade at the Nairobi's stock exchange

jection by now," he argued.

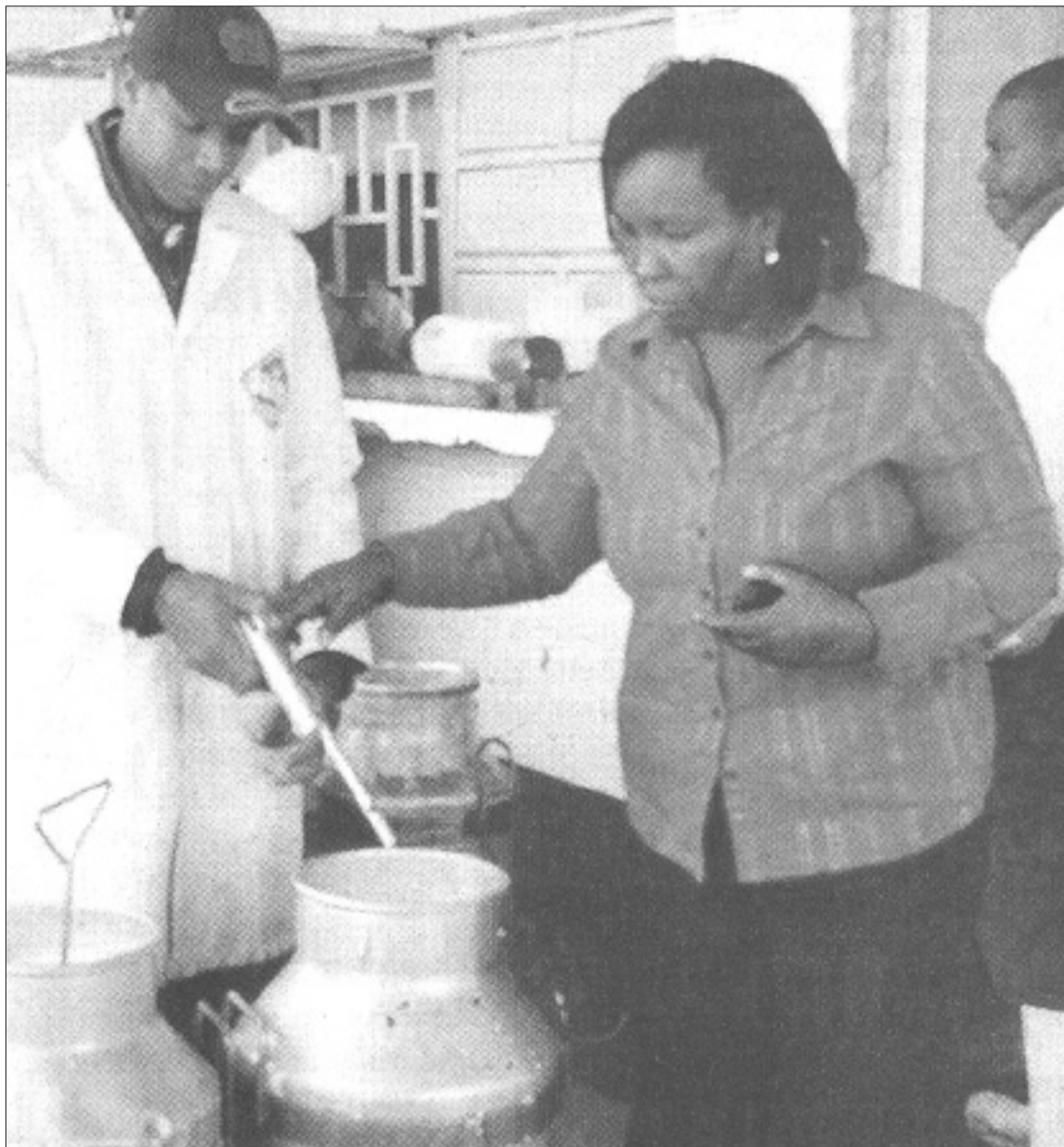
Dairy farmers have been urging the government to privatise the company by reverting its ownership back to its original owners/

farmers.

Moirira Chepkok raised concerns over the state's reluctance to revert the ownership of the once mismanaged company that led to

its eventual fall.

"We wonder why the government converted the facility into a parastatal instead of reverting it to farmers," she said.



A woman inspects milk at a collection point. Dairy farmers have expressed reservations over the enlisting of the New KCC at Nairobi bourse.

Outdated beliefs stall silk worm farming project in Ikolomani

By TITUS MAERO

TRADITIONAL beliefs and lack of entrepreneurial skills have combined to slow down a lucrative agri-business project in Ikolomani Constituency in Kakamega County to rear silk worms.

Silk worm farming is a multi-billion shilling business in Malaysia which manufactures silk cloths for export using threads extracted from silk worms cocoons.

The project was started in Ikolomani 7 years ago with support from the Kenya Agricultural Production Agri-business Project (KAPAP) to diversify income generating activities in the area but has not endeared itself to the residents as anticipated.

The group which was spearheading the initiative has dropped significantly from the initial 30 people who started Iguhu Silk Worm Rearing Group, to a mere 10 who are still remaining while the rest have withdrawn due to traditional beliefs and lack of determination.

A member of the Group Mrs Emily Bunoro who has vowed to continue with the project says it is only a matter of time before residents realize the importance of silk worm rearing.

Mrs Bunoro said she had ordered a total of 20,000 silk worms from International Centre for Insects Physiology and Entomology (ICIPE) to keep the project on course.

She pointed out that the first batch of insects she ordered are maturing while the other 10,000 are still young. She said the insects will take 30 days to mature but noted that they will remain with cocoons to extract silk threads.

She said the cocoons will give her 6 to 10 Kilogrammes of silk thread which she will sell at Ksh 650 per kilogramme.

Mrs. Bunoro showed reporters her silk worms which are feeding on leaves of marryberry trees. She said most of the people like quick money and see rearing of silk worm as time wasting while others fear the sight of the creatures and associate them with witchcraft.

She said the project has big potential to generate more revenue. She said KAPAP has bought a small scale machine for the group to extract silk thread from the cocoons.

Bunoro said the machine has been installed at a small building within the premises of Ikolomani District Officers office. She noted that when the project was started by KAPAP a good number of people welcomed it but later started pulling out one by one.

She noted that members that have remained in the group bought the last consignment of worms from ICIPE last year but slowed down in placing more orders. To save the project from collapse, Mrs. Bunoro has ordered her own worms which she is raising in her house on trays.

Mrs. Bunoro said she is willing to share the business with other members and transfer the worms they have jointly constructed on a member's land. The worms, she said, are currently in good health and are feeding on leaves of marryberry trees she grows on the family land.

Mrs. Bunoro says apart from the worms producing silk thread, the by-products from the cocoons can be turned into chicken feeds. She also says when squeezed, the cocoons can produce oil to clean computers.

Mungatsi-Musikoma road in Nambale set to be tarmacked at KSh1billion.

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE government has allocated a total of Ksh1billion to facilitate the tarmacking of a 30 Kilometer road from Mungatsi to Musoma in Nambale Sub-County linking Busia and Bungoma counties.

Nambale legislator John Bunyasi who was speaking at Madende primary school recently said that surveying of the road has already been done adding that the contractor is set to commence the work in January next year.

Bunyasi said he will establish the constituency roads and bridges management committee that will collaborate with the county government to repair and upgrade various rural access roads which include Lwanyange-Maira dip, Nambale-Segero, Igara-Lupida, Sidende-Mlanga and others.

"The constituency roads and

bridges committee will also oversee the tarmacking of a road from Mungatsi to Esikoma," he said, adding that they will create new rural access roads and expand existing key feeder roads in the wards.

On education, the legislator said he will establish model Early Childhood Development centres (ECD) throughout the constituency and new model primary schools in each ward.

"There is need to build early childhood development centres (ECDs) and new primary schools in every ward in order to ensure our children are not trekking long distances while going to school. There is also need to build girls schools considering that there is only one secondary school for girls in the constituency," said Bunyasi.

He at the same time said that

Nambale Constituency Bursary Fund committee will establish a scholarship fund for bright students to enable them proceed with their education.

The Nambale legislator at the same time said that he will develop a policy framework that will enhance food security by investing in agricultural extension services.

"I will also develop and implement effective land management policy, expand Nambale cooperative society and adopt value chain approaches that will enable farmers in the constituency diversify to other cash crops," said Bunyasi.

Bunyasi added that he will encourage dairy farmers to make maximum use of Nambale cooperative, encourage horticultural farming, training of manpower in various target areas, re-energize women to take full advantage of

available loan facilities to enable them engage in income generating activities and transform their lives.

"I will ensure the training of groups so that they can participate fully in UWEZO fund initiatives," he said, adding that he will encourage Jua Kali and craftsmanship activities in the constituency.

On healthcare, the legislator said he will improve facilities in existing health centres, dispensaries and Sub-district hospital, ensure the completion of dispensaries at Musokoto, Buyofu, Mudev, Namahindi and Sibembe among others.

He said he will ensure the establishment of umbrella women and youth groups throughout the constituency, reward creativity and innovations among the youth; encourage sports activities and talent development.

Sugar industry set for harsh times as COMESA safeguards are halted

By TITUS MAERO

A wave of uncertainty has gripped sugarcane farmers in Western Kenya following reports that the removal of COMESA safeguards next year could drastically affect their earnings.

Farmers are worried that local sugarcane companies could either shut down or reduce the price of their cane in an effort to produce sugar that could compete with sugar from COMESA member countries in the local market.

Kenya has severally asked for extension of COMESA safeguards to reorganize its sugarcane sector but has been unable to utilize the moratorium to bring meaningful reforms to its sugar sector.

Kenya is calling for another moratorium against accusation it was stalling regional trade that allows products

from member countries enter the country at zero tariff.

Former Kenyan legislator to East Africa Legislative Assembly Mr. Maxwell Shamalla has advised farmers in Western Kenya to diversify into high value crops to cushion themselves from adverse effects the withdrawal could cause to the local sugar industry.

He said the removal of the safeguards would allow cheap sugar from COMESA member countries to flood the local market.

"We should brace for hard times ahead after the safeguards are removed and look for alternative crops to earn us income" Mr. Shamalla said.

He was speaking in Malava Sub-County where Japan Africa Trust and United Mission for the Needy (Kenya) have established a centre to teach

farmers how to stop relying on sugarcane and maize.

He said the centre has come at the right time as sugarcane and maize were no longer economical crops because of high cost of production and low earnings. The ex-legislator said the Malava pilot demonstration centre on an acre plot is destined to receive funding from Japanese Organizations to extend the concept to other parts of Kenya and Sub-Sahara Africa.

Malava farmers and children from Daizu Kids Day School were taught how to grow Soya beans a crop that is highly regarded to replace sugarcane because of its high value. During the occasion residents planted Soya Beans on two plots at the same time as farmers in Japan grow the crop in their country.

The Malava demonstration centre

is a brain child of a local student Mr. Jared Lumbavi who has completed his Master's Degree at Nagaya University in Japan. Mr Lumbavi told the gathering that the centre was an innovation initiative to teach farmers how to enhance Agricultural production to earn more money.

He said the removal of COMESA safeguards posed a big problem and challenge to farmers in Western Kenya who have been depending on sugarcane to diversify into other crops and use modern techniques to increase production.

According to Mr Lumbavi, despite Japan having advanced in electronic and automation industries its agricultural sector was highly mechanized. He said Kenya could produce more food if it emulated the example to produce enough food for export and

subsistence.

The project has received big support from Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI -Kakamega Centre) and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) who sent a representative at the launching ceremony.

Mr. Michael Akhwale, an Agronomist at KARI showed residents how to grow Soya beans. In the meantime Mr. Shamalla has called on farmers in Kakamega to venture into dairy and poultry farming which he said generated more money throughout the year.

A Japanese youth attached to the Centre by Japan Africa Trust Mr. Takami Toyoda said he was happy farmers in Kenya were ready to increase production of Soya Beans.

He said his organization wants other farmers in the Sub-Saharan Africa to increase production of the crop. United Mission for the Needy (Kenya) chaired by former District officer Dr. William Sakataka has been active in Public Health and Agricultural Projects to improve the living standards of Kenyans in urban slums and rural areas.

Nyeri coffee farmers seek bid for certification

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

PLANS by coffee farmers from Nyeri County to partner with Dedan Kimathi University of Technology as their produce certifying and classification body are at an advanced stage.

The move follows the adoption of a coffee task force report that outlined a raft of recommendations geared towards improving the farming of the cash crop in the area for better returns.

Nyeri Governor Nderitu Gachagua, speaking to various coffee societies leaders recently at Information Hall in Nyeri town said they intend to enlist the services of Kimathi University in grading and classifying their coffee before releasing it to the market.

"The farmers will be in a position to know the quality of their produce and also know the best prices it can fetch instead of entrusting their produce to agents who do all the work and end up raking in huge profits from the farmers sweat," said the governor.

Gachagua who was accompa-

nied by Nyeri county commissioner Michael Mwangi lamented that marketing of coffee has been a big challenge due to failure by coffee societies to form one umbrella body to oversee the management and marketing of their produce.

"Farmers have been getting a raw deal from their marketing agents due to the fragmentation of the societies which has led to varying pay rates for the same produce from one society to another," he added.

He also said that the current scenario where coffee societies are divided has seen each appointing agents to auction their coffee in unknown markets and led to farmers getting raw deals from the middle men who end up with the lions share.

Gachagua said that it is a high time that farmers got a voice in the marketing of their produce by determining who buys and at what price, saying coffee has been the only crop which farmers hand over to would be buyers without a price tag.



A coffee farmer in Iria-ini area, Othaya, Nyeri County, Wambugu Kagambo sprays his coffee in his farm. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Sugarcane farmers hit-out at Kenya Sugar Board

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Kenya Sugar Board is directly responsible for the sugarcane poaching crisis that has nearly crippled the operations of the country's leading sugar producer Mumias Sugar Company and not poor planning. More than 500 sugarcane farmers from Busia and Mumias sugar belts have accused the sugar board director, Billy Wanjala of being part of the sugarcane poaching syndicate that has gripped the multi-billion shillings business in a stranglehold.

The farmers' spokesman, Nicholas Makokha Shikanda said Wanjala who is in charge of Mumias and Busia sugar belts that are the lifeline of Mumias Sugar in cane supplies should explain why sugarcane poaching has for the last two years remained rampant in these two belts.

"We also challenge Wanjala to explain why the Kenya Sugar Board introduced West Kenya Sugar Company to buy cane in these belts when it knew that farmers here are all contracted to Mumias Sugar," said Shikanda, adding that as a KSB director representing these belts he

has failed to spearhead a decisive action to be taken against the poachers.

The irate farmers were reacting to reports carried out by a section of the media outlets quoting Wanjala as saying that poor planning and management was responsible for the crisis facing the sugar industry in Busia and Mumias sugar belts.

The Director was also quoted as saying that KSB expected Mumias Sugar to increase sugarcane acreage after releasing Kshs.140 million to boost sugarcane development in the two areas as he welcomed the sacking of the MSC agriculture and factory managers and calling for the assessment of the current Chief Executive Peter Kebati to ascertain his capabilities.

"We know that Wanjala has for years been closely operating with the former agriculture manager, West Kenya Sugar Company and the resulting cane poaching crisis. If there had been poor planning and management, Mumias Sugar could not have invested more than Kshs.3 billion in sugarcane development for the last two years, what is Kshs.140 million compared to three billion?" said Mr. Shikanda.

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By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE County Government of Kakamega has concluded plans to establish a Giant Co-operative Society that could be used to lend farmers money to buy in-puts at affordable interest rates.

The move is part of the County Government's initiative to revamp the Agricultural sector to increase Wealth and Employment for residents.

The County Government executive committee member for Agriculture Mrs Peninah Mukabane spoke when she officially launched a 1,200 litre milk cooler and Artificial Insemination (A.I) kit at Kakamega Dairy Co-operative Society Limited.

The New Milk facility will curb on wastage and enable farmers reap highly from their produce while the A.I services will provide services to dairy farmers at affordable prices.

The cooler facility was bought by funds from Ministry of Agriculture's programme of Njaa Marufuku while the A.I kit was procured by the East Africa Agricultural Productivity Project (E.A.A.P.P).

Addressing guests and staff of

County plans to establish cooperative society

the society, Mrs Mukabane said Kakamega County has identified agriculture as a driving force for the county's development programmes and creation of employment.

"We have concluded a blue print paper that was compiled together with Veterinary and Agricultural County Directors that will give a big impact on agriculture in Kakamega County," She further said.

She said to kick off the ambitious programme, the county government will employ 300 extension veterinary officers to provide services to dairy farmers at ward level in the county.

Mukabane also said the County Government will also launch a massive A.I service campaign to educate farmers to rear grade animals in order to increase milk production.

She appealed to farmers to embrace value addition to their produce to earn more money instead of selling them in bulk that give them little money.

Mukabane said through the cooperative society the County Govern-

ment will partner with friendly banks to give farmers money to meet their immediate needs and recover the loans from their produce delivered to the society.

The Minister noted that the dairy farmers will only pay Ksh 500 while the county government will subsidize the balance by paying Ksh. 1,500 of the Ksh 2,000 charged for A.I services.

She pointed out that currently Kakamega County has a shortage of milk and residents have been forced to rely on milk from other counties in the country adding that a litre of milk sells at between Ksh 50 and Ksh 55.

She observed that demand for milk has considerably risen due to population growth in Kakamega town and its suburbs following the establishment of university campuses in the area such as Mt Kenya Campus, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenyatta University Campus and University of Nairobi Centre.

She said that the dairy sector had

provided a steady market for milk from local dairy farmers since the collapse in early nineties of the co-operative societies due to poor management and liberalization of milk sector.

The Minister noted that neighbouring counties have taken advantage of the situation to invade the market by selling adulterated milk that pose health hazard to consumers of the product.

Kakamega Dairy Co-operative Society Limited Chairman Mr Julius Shivutsa hailed Njaa Marufuku programme and EAAPP for assisting his society to improve its services.

He said his society in collaboration with relevant government departments, stakeholders and other development partners were working towards restoring farmer's confidence in the dairy sector as a viable economic activity and source of livelihood.

Shivutsa also said they want to influence change with the aim of encouraging farmers to shift from preference of local cattle breeds which have

low or no milk to embrace value chain in line with the objectives of vision 2013.

"We also want to promote consumption of safe and high quality milk products and encourage community participation in the socio-economic agenda," He added and appealed to the county government to help his society recover and obtain title deeds for its four plots grabbed by private developers.

He said the plots were grabbed by private developers who have refused to relinquish them to the society forcing the management to take the matter to court.

Other government officials who lauded the move by the County Government and development partners to revamp agricultural sector in the area included Kakamega Central District Veterinary Officer Dr Christopher Kadenge, Kakamega County Dairy Officer Mrs Frandina Machwenu and Kakamega County Director Dr Fineas Mulala.

Proposed legislation on Media and NGOs, a backlash against supporters of ICC cases

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

International and local human rights groups have reacted angrily to proposed new legislation in Kenya which they say is part of growing efforts to clamp down on opposition voices.

They are concerned that three bills, two regulating the media and the third on non-government groups, seem to be a response to the trials of Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Ruto is currently being tried in The Hague, and Kenyatta is due to come to trial, on charges of financing and organising the mass violence which followed the disputed presidential election in December 2007.

More than 1,100 people were killed and 650,000 others lost their homes during two months of bloodshed which brought East Africa's leading economy to its knees.

Proceedings against Ruto and his co-defendant, former journalist Joshua arap Sang, will resume on November 21, while the start of Kenyatta's trial has been put back to February 5, 2014.

The first of the contentious pieces of legislation, called the Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2013, outlines changes to the ways NGOs can operate. Published on October 30, it is due to be debated in parliament in the coming weeks.



Journalists at work. Photo/File

Two other pieces of legislation concerning the media are also causing concern.

The Media Council Bill, which has been drafted but is still to be debated in parliament, would give the government powers to ban any media content it deems "prejudicial to public or national interest" and impose harsh penalties on offending organisations.

Another law, the Information and Communication Amendments Bill

2013, would give a government body powers to impose hefty sanctions on the media. The bill was passed by parliament on October 31, although the president has yet to sign it into law.

Joan Magut, project coordinator with the Transparency International group in the Rift Valley town of Eldoret, believes the legislation are a retrograde step.

On 5 November 2013, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) be-

gan handling the request to defer the International Criminal Court's (ICC) cases in the Kenyan situation. The request, which was submitted on 1 November for consideration by non-permanent members Rwanda, Togo and Morocco under instruction from the African Union (AU), relates specifically to the cases against Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy, William Ruto.

Kenyatta and Ruto (together with Kenyan journalist Joshua Sang) face charges related to the violence that erupted after Kenya's December 2007 elections, in which over 1 100 people died. Ruto and Sang's trial began in September 2013, while Kenyatta's trial is due to start on 5 February 2014 after a third postponement.

In October this year, the AU held an extraordinary summit at which the relationship between the ICC and Africa was discussed. Central to the discussions was the fact that all cases currently before the ICC are from African countries, including the indictment of two sitting heads of state. In its 12 October 2013 decision, the AU called for the Kenyan cases to be deferred and asked that the UNSC provide feedback on the deferral request by 12 November 2013, the date on which Kenyatta's trial was scheduled to start.

Given that Kenyatta's trial has been provisionally moved to February 2014, it remains to be seen

whether the AU will still expect the UNSC to make a decision on deferral immediately. As things stand, the UNSC agenda for November does not include a session to discuss the deferral request. However, this is not to say such discussions will not be held, as the programme of work can be updated at any time.

Even if heard, despite support from Russia and China, the likelihood of the deferral being granted is slim, given that the United States, United Kingdom and France, who all hold the power to veto resolutions, insist that the ICC's postponement of Kenyatta's trial to February next year was sufficient. The views of the five permanent members of the UNSC notwithstanding, it is essential to assess the merits of the deferral request itself.

Article 16 of the ICC's Rome Statute, in terms of which deferral requests can be made, states that 'No investigation or prosecution may be commenced or proceeded with ... for a period of 12 months after the Security Council, in a resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, has requested the court to that effect ...'. Chapter VII of the UN Charter empowers the UNSC to take measures to 'maintain or restore international peace and security' if it has determined 'the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of peace or act of aggression'.

Western Kenya set to reap highly from palm oil production

By TITUS MAERO

WESTERN Kenya could soon start producing raw materials for palm oil products.

Research and trials to grow palm oil in the area, have proved the region has big potential for the tropical crop which earns countries in East Asia billions of shilling per year. Currently Kenya spends Ksh 16 billion annually to import palm oil raw material from Malaysia to make soap and edible oil.

The initiative has received a major boost from the Anglican Church of Kenya, Western Kenya Christian development Service which has imported machines to aid farmers to engage in the initiative in Busia, Bungoma and Kakamega and process edible oil and

soap from mature palm oil trees.

Palm oil farmers have been using crude methods to extract oil from mature nuts in the palm oil trees. The four machines valued at Ksh 1.4million were bought by the church with funds from the Ministry of Agriculture's Njaa Marufuku Programme, China and Ghana.

Palm oil and soya beans are being recommended as alternative crops to replace sugarcane and maize whose income is diminishing due to maize lethal necrosis disease and imported cheap sugar.

Presenting the machines to Bungoma County Director of Agriculture Mr Arlington Omucheni, the Church's Western Kenya Christian Development Service Chief Executive

Officer (CEO) Mr Peter Mudy said the region has big potential for growing palm oil with the largest concentration now in Bungoma West. He said so far 2,000 farmers are engaged in extracting cooking oil and soap from their trees using crude methods.

"I am hoping the quality and quantity of oil will now increase using the machines," Mr. Mudy said.

Mr Omucheni hailed the church for availing the machine to farmers in the area saying it will boost their income and improve their nutrition level.

Kakamega County Director of Agriculture Mr Johnston Imbira, who witnessed the handing over ceremony said the machines will help farmers add value to their produce and brand it for sale to a large market in

the country.

Imbira said the United Nations Development Organization (UNIDO) is promoting Soya Beans in Western Kenya where it has established small industries in Kisumu, Migori and Malakisi in Bungoma County.

He noted that Palm oil and Soya Beans are highly nutritious crops adding that Palm oil takes four to five years to mature while Soya beans take three months to mature. The Officer observed that Palm oil which has a life span of 50 years can be inter-cropped with Soya Beans.

He said because of diminishing land acreage in Western Kenya, only a small area is required to produce the two crops. Imbira said research to grow palm oil was funded by the World Food

Organization (FAO) in early 1990's and carried out before being implemented jointly by Mumias Sugar Company, Ministry of Agriculture and Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

Imbira said the Ministry of Agriculture gave KARI Funds which it used to import palm oil seeds from Porte Rica. The seedlings were planted at KARI Kakamega centre, Mumias Sugar Company and KARI-Alupe sub centre in Busia county.

He pointed out that the seedlings which later sold to farmers at Ksh 100 each and are now mature. He said the region has 30,000 mature trees a number, he says, was still lower than the 300,000 required by Bidco Oil Company to sustain a factory in the area.

Private sector to bridge high unemployment rates among the youth

By PETER MUTUKU

THE government is committed to creating a conducive environment for the private sector to grow.

President Uhuru Kenyatta notes that a vibrant private sector would create more job opportunities, alleviate poverty and address the problem of unemployment among the youth.

"To achieve this objective, we have to give a lead role to the private sector to complement government initiatives," he said.

He said that the Government is undertaking a number of measures, which are intended to create an enabling environment for investment and to reduce the cost of doing business.

He cited the adoption of fiscal and monetary policy to ensure stability in the key macroeconomic prices such as the general price level, the shilling exchange rate and interest rates.

The President further pointed out that the Government had invested heavily in economic infrastructure, including investment in power generation and transmission, railway and road network countrywide.

"The Government will soon be tendering for the dualing of Mombasa Highway from Athi River all the way to Konza and Machakos so as to speed up transportation of goods and people between Nairobi and Machakos," he explained.

He commended Dr. Alfred Mutua, the Governor of Machakos, for coming up with the noble idea and urged other Governors to borrow a leaf from Machakos County and focus on economic development.

"This is the only way we can ensure our people remain confident in devolution as a truly effective instrument to promote lasting socio-economic development, equity and national unity," he explained.

The President said that over the last ten years, the country had made commendable progress towards conquering disease, illiteracy and

hunger, which have been the main development goals.

"However, challenges still remain that require serious and bold actions by the National Government, working, of course, with the county governments," said the President.

The President noted that poverty is still a major problem with more than forty percent of people living under one US Dollar per day.

He said that government is at an advanced stage of beginning the construction of a standard gauge railway line from Mombasa to Nairobi and later to Malaba.

"We are also planning to expand the railway line for passengers all the way to Machakos. We are also taking measures to enhance clearing of cargo through the Mombasa Port and Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, in addition to expanding

them," he said.

The President further pointed out that security would be enhanced as this is the bedrock for sustained socio-economic development.

"We must assure our people and the business community, both domestic and foreign, that their lives and property are protected. We know very well without security, hardly any investment will take place, and, therefore, our dream of a prosperous and equitable Kenya will remain a mere rhetoric," said the President.

In this regard, the President said that the Government plans to procure one thousand and one hundred National Police Service motor vehicles.

The President said that attracting investment and optimizing opportunities to improve the lives of the people is a priority of the National

Government and the County Governments.

"This is the way to proceed. We must now change our politics to focus on politics of development. Elections are over and this is now a time to work together, regardless of party affiliations, to change Kenya for the better," he observed.

He said that Kenyans want better services, food security and employment and this will only be achieved if all leaders work together.

"My Government has made the delivery of better public services its core mandate. I wish to reiterate here the pledge that I have previously made that the days of corrupt and inefficient officers are numbered. This is an era that should be carried down to the county level. The time for change in the manner we manage our public affairs has come and it is not stoppable," he explained.



President Uhuru Kenyatta (second left) arrives at Machakos Golf Club grounds accompanied by Governor Dr. Alfred Mutua (3rd right) and other county officials. Photo/File

Vision 2030 flagship projects on the spotlight

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

FLAGSHIP projects anchored on Vision 2030 are likely to stall due to lack of proper coordination between the national and county governments.

Kilifi County governor Mr Amason Kingi says that although Vision 2030 was one of the best development blue prints the country has ever had, he feared that the desired targets may not be realised due to poor linkages between the two arms of governments.

The governor raised the concern in his office when he received two senior government officials attached to Vision 2030 under the ministry of Devolution and Planning.

The officers who included the Assistant Director of economic pillar under Vision 2030, Mr John Kariuki and the acting director of micro directorate Mr Jonathan Lodompui had paid a curtsey call to the governor to look into possible ways of hastening the implementation of the flagship projects anchored on the vision 2030.

The Governor who was flanked by his deputy Mr Kennedy Kamuto and the executive committee members of the county government however told them that the idea of initiating the projects was good but feared that the targets may not be realized because the national government had failed to involve the county governments.

"While Vision 2030 blue print is premised on a good development plan for all the 47 counties, the dream may not be attained because the national government is working in isolation," said Mr Kingi.

The governor cited the launch of a coal plant at Zowerani as a flagship project in the County without involving the county government despite the fact that the project falls under his county.

Kingi said the coal plant project can only be successful if the national government involves the County government at the initial phase.

He said implementation of the project is likely to stall as residents and the government are embroiled in a tussle over the ownership of the land where the plant is to be put up.

He said that the land in question has been occupied by people who have also invested on it and it would be in order if the central government liaised with the government to see how best the problem can be resolved.

The governor said the land issue could cause tension if residents are not consulted and involved fully during the implementation process.

He said the residents living on the land need to be identified and compensated before the project can take off.

"The flagship project is a good idea for the county as it is geared towards enhancing the county economy but am fearing that the project could incite tension among the residents if they are not fully involved in the process of acquiring the land," said Mr Kingi.

The governor said county governments are not competing with the national government but there is need for consultation on any development matters involving the two systems of governments.

He said lack of consultations is to blame for the conflict between the national and county governments especially on matters touching on development projects.

Students miss exams in registration anomalies

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

DELIBERATE failure by some schools to register pupils for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams is rife in most parts of the country.

There are some headteachers who either deliberately fail to remit KCPE registration fee to the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), or embezzle the money.

These headteachers force pupils perceived to be slow learners to repeat classes contrary to the education policy and without the consent of the learners and their parents.

The scenario is increasingly becoming a thorny issue in the education sector and hence needs urgent intervention measures.

In most cases, the affected pupils and their parents are traumatized and shrouded in agony, a situation that sometimes culminates in deaths of pupils through suicide.

While releasing 2012 KCPE results, the then education minister, the

late Mutula Kilonzo noted that the Basic Education Act had criminalized forced repetition.

He said that repetition had negative effects on the learning progression and performance and consequently warned those forcing pupils to repeat that the law will catch up with them.

However, a public primary school head teacher in Kakamega County took advantage of lack of enforcement to ask pupils to repeat class 8 even after having collected registration fee from parents for the 2013 KCPE exams.

Francis Khavumi, the head teacher of Kisembe primary school in Navakholo district deliberately failed to register seven pupils for KCPE exams despite the fact that parents had paid their exam fee.

Khavumi allegedly poached more bright pupils from private schools to displace the seven purposely to boost the school mean score.

The affected pupils learnt about their fate with shock five days to the national exams.

Speaking to the media, the pupils accompanied by their parents said they were fully prepared to sit for the 2013 KCPE exams.

"The head teacher has ruined my future by failing to register me for the national exams which I was very much ready for," said Fridah Wekulo.

They accused their head teacher of short-changing them amid fears that some of them may commit suicide if not urgently counselled.

The parents of the affected pupils led by Festus Wechuli appealed to the Education Cabinet secretary, Jacob Kaimemyi to intervene with a view to consider giving the pupils an emergency exam.

Wechuli further appealed to the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ)-Ombudsman to ensure that the perpetrators of the anomaly are brought to book.

The code of the school under scrutiny is 37603211. Wechuli alleged that candidates indexed 4, 5, 14 and 24 are some of those pupils poached from private schools to displace bonafide pupils of the school.

The seven pupils affected include:

- 1-Ali Ukhevi,
- 2-Perineta Mango,
- 3-Osman Ukhevi,
- 4-Bonface Wechuli,
- 5-Fridah Wekulo,
- 6-Christopher Matete,
- 7-Litrophen Machiri.

Contacted for comment, the head teacher said the seven were not registered because their parents paid the KCPE registration fees late.

But in a quick rejoinder, Wechuli, who had two children in class 8 said he paid registration fees for both of them at ago on 14-3-2013 and wondered how one was registered and the other one not.

He dismissed the head teacher's claim of late payment of registration fee as a fabrication meant to defeat justice, a fact that was also echoed by the other parents.

And on registration of pupils from private schools at the expense of bonafide pupils, Khavumi disassociated himself from the anomaly arguing that registration exercise was done by class 8 teacher and not him.

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

County targets farmers to boost food production

PLANS are underway to train farmers in Busia County on modern farming techniques in order to improve food security and enhance commercial agriculture.

Governor, Sospeter Odeke Ojaamong said Busia Agricultural Training Centre would be upgraded to offer high quality services and training for farmers in the area.

Ojaamong said the county had enormous resources to become the country's food basket and an agricultural export hub. He said the training centre would be properly equipped with staff and equipment to ensure farmers receive the best training in modern farming methods locally.

"We want farmers to be properly trained in these new methods to increase their yields and that is why we will upgrade the training centre by equipping it with staff and machinery," said Ojaamong.

He added that agriculture was a top agenda for his government and said he would ensure farmers add value to their products to make them more marketable.

He was speaking in Olepito, Teso South District where he added that the county's agricultural resources were more than enough to provide food for export to other counties and other East African countries.

Ojaamong revealed the county government was launching the "Mia Poultry Project" where farmers will be taught how to rear 100 local chickens using modern methods. He said this will be rolled out to farmers in the county and they will be assisted in marketing their produce.

He assured farmers that agriculture would be decentralized to sub-counties through posting of extension officers and facilitating their movements

in order to better serve the farmers.

The governor praised a farmer in Olepito sub-location for generating Ksh.500,000 in income after planting four acres of cassava and urged others to emulate him and make farming profitable.

County Agriculture Executive, Martin Mwenje, said it was unfortunate that about 67 per cent of the

county's population was living below the poverty line yet the county had enough resources.

Mr. Mwenje said it was time local residents took farming seriously and the government would do all they can to empower them.

"We do not need to hear cases of people living below the poverty line yet they can develop by embracing

agriculture, he said.

Area County Representative Romano Orenge appealed to the government for decentralization of farm inputs like fertilizer and maize seeds to make it easily available. Other county executives who attended the function were Gregory Odeke (Roads), Leonard Wanda (Finance), Martin Khafwa (Lands) and Hillary Makhulu (Trade).



Busia County Governor Sospeter Ojaamong hands over fertilizer to farmers in Oletipis village, Teso District in Busia recently.

CSOs urged to be vigilante in the fight against corruption

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

CIVIL Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in Bungoma County have been urged not to relent in their efforts to expose graft in the region.

Transparency International (TI)-Kenya, programme coordinator, Richard Maina asked the CSOs to be more vibrant so as curb public officers' excesses.

Maina expressed fears that the devolved governance may be another avenue for corruption and as a result reminded the media and civil society to remain active and vigilant.

He at the same time challenged the CSOs to speak in one voice while confronting corruption related cases so as to triumph over the vice.

Speaking recently during a workshop in Bungoma town, Maina however underscored the need for the CSOs to be prudent and credible when engaging public officers over some issues.

The TI programme coordinator told the participants of the workshop that for them to effectively lobby for or against an issue they should always have facts and understand the issue in terms of relevant policies and map relation of power and policy.

Maina added that the civil society should also endeavour to educate the people to know how the issue affects them and build consensus about the plan of action.

This, Maina said that will build support for the cause and at the same time transform relations and social structures or systems.

He, however, challenged the CSOs to analyse policy environment and develop strategies that offer options of policy change while engaging authorities over an issue.

"You should not only point out the problem but also offer the solution," he said.

Maina disclosed that TI will build the capacity of CSOs in various fields of advocacy but challenged them to put their houses in order first.

"TI does not work with CSOs that are disjointed. We work with CSOs that have bank accounts and valid registration certificates," he added.

Maina however pointed out that TI is not a donor but provides timely and relevant information to its partners for effective advocacy of policy making and public accountability.

The participants drawn from 21 CSOs were taken through techniques for an effective advocacy and stages involved and guidelines of engagement.

Kenya increasingly lacking skilled labour

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

"PEOPLE are opting to go to universities to do degrees in marketing, sales not because they are sure of getting jobs once they are through, but because it is the cool thing to do."

Those were the words of Nairobi Deputy Governor Jonathan Mueke as he urged more student enrolment in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) institutions.

Mueke explained that most students opt to go to universities rather than training institutions but fail to get white collar jobs yet there are many opportunities in the informal sector.

He added that the lack of skilled labour in the country is forcing the government to outsource labour which would otherwise be readily available as the courses are taught in training institutions.

"It is worrying that most of the technical institutions have been changed into universities, which has in turn created a gap in the skills area which needs to be filled like real estate which are large consumers of skilled labour," he said.

Mueke further revealed plans to revise the TVETs curriculum's into a competent based one that addresses the demands in the job market. "Employers have raised concern over half-baked graduates who they have to train even after leaving the universities with so called full credentials."

He added that some courses also need to be revised to meet the international standard allowing the students to efficiently work in any part of the world.

"Technical institutions in the developed countries are famed for producing their own skilled labour and this is the industry that drives

their economies."

"We recently opened Honda Assembly plant that creates employment opportunities for many youth that have been to technical institutions but our aim should now be to have plants where we manufacture and assemble our own products and export," he explained.

Speaking at a workshop by the Housing Finance Foundation, he further noted that a partnership between the foundation and tertiary institutions will see youths receive loans to study in the TVETs and slowly pay back after their completion.

Housing Finance Foundation Executive Director Winnie Imanyara acknowledged, "there is an existing gap between the industries expectation and graduates' technical level leading to difficulties for TVET graduates to find jobs."

"With the Ministry of Higher

Education, Science and Technology, we are spearheading a Vision 2030 flagship project that targets to facilitate skills development for one million artisans by 2016," she added.

Manyara noted that a major challenge facing the Government and the labour market is the absence of a skills inventory that would indicate the distribution of well-trained Kenyans.

"We currently do not have a database, which is an indispensable tool for planning the country's future training programmes," she said.

The TVET Bill 2012 seeks to institute a mechanism for promoting access and equity in training to assure standards, quality and relevance.

It further seeks to shift TVET from time-bound, curriculum based training to flexible and competency based training.

towards, a US based organization, have now set aside 350 acres of land to be used for growing horticultural crops under Inkaikok Irrigation Scheme.

James Sinkua, director of Nareto Olosho said they are introducing horticulture as an alternative source of livelihood. He said the residents who have

for many years relied on livestock have embraced the idea after being educated by American experts on how they can earn more from their farms.

"The Maasai community has practiced nomadic lifestyle for a long time. This lifestyle must change because we have to take our children to school and

engage in meaningful productive farming," said Sinkua. The director revealed the project would promote food security hence reduce dependency.

"We hope to grow vegetables, beans, peas, carrots and even maize in this farm. The experts from the USA have trained farmers on the need to

give the soil so that the soil gives back," said Sinkua, who pointed out that water from Enkari Nyiro River has to be put to good use.

According to area chief James Lempaka, the project will boost food security and act as a source of an alternative source of income.

Narok residents set to benefit from an irrigation project

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

OVER 10,000 residents of Oletukat area in Narok North Sub-County are all smiles following the joint launch of an irrigation project by a local NGO and American experts.

Nareto Olosho Partners and Agris-

Busia County Govt probes loss of Ksh2.4m from Cooperative Society

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Government of Busia County has launched investigations to unravel details of how Magombe Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society allegedly lost millions of shillings through a scandal said to involve its top officials, a banking institution and other government agencies.

The County's Trade, Cooperatives and Tourism executive Hillary Makhulu said some officials from the society had allegedly colluded with officials from the National Irrigation Board and Kenya Commercial Bank to create a parallel account adding that an account known as Magombe Revolving Fund was allegedly used to swindle money from the cooperative unnoticed.

According to a copy of a press statement availed to The Link recently, the trade, cooperatives tourism minis-

ter Henry Makhulu said that investigations had established that some Ksh2.4 million was withdrawn from the cooperative's bank account through the Port Victoria Kenya Commercial Bank branch and wired to Kano Irrigation Scheme in Kisumu County in defiance of an order from Bunyala cooperatives officer stopping any such withdrawals.

Among those implicated in the scandal included a senior national irrigation board official, a local irrigation officer as well as senior Kenya Commercial Bank official at Port Victoria town.

Makhulu vowed to speed up investigation saying stern legal action will be taken against all those behind the embezzlement of the society's funds.

He said problems at Magombe Multi-purpose cooperative society began when the scheme became dormant in the late 90s, adding that the society

experienced scores of hardships as a result of the dormancy.

The minister at the same time noted that the cooperative society had various liabilities outstanding at the time when production stopped in the scheme.

"At this moment, the National irrigation Board assumed the supervisory role over the management of the society against the provisions of the Cooperative Society's Act Cap 490 of the Laws of Kenya," said the statement, adding that the irrigation officials alleged that the cooperatives owed them a sum of Ksh2.4million.

Meanwhile, farmers in Busia County have been advised to diversify and grow other crops instead of banking only on maize which has of late become prone to attack by crop diseases.

Speaking at a stakeholders forum at the Busia district headquarters recent-

ly, outgoing Busia district agricultural officer Samson Khachina expressed concerns saying 30 and 10percent of maize crops had been affected by a crop disease known as Maize Lethal Neurotic disease (MLND) in Teso and Busia during the last planting season.

He at the same time urged the farmers to grow other crops like cassava, potato, finger millet and beans among others.

"A part from maize which has of late become prone to attack by crop diseases, you can also grow crops like cassava, potatoes, beans and finger millet among others," said the agricultural officer.

The agricultural official at the same time cautioned the farmers against buying unpackaged fertilizers being sold in the open saying such fertilizers had been robbed of chemicals due to too much exposure to sunlight.

VC laments on high varsity drop-out rate

By TITUS MAERO

THE Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) Vice Chancellor (VC) Professor Fred Otieno has regretted that many students who enrol at Universities end up not completing their studies.

Addressing first year students at MMUST Graduation square in Kakamega, Otieno told the students to be courageous and overcome the academic hurdles and impediments that could come on their way.

"Even though it will be a spectacular journey full of adventure, it will also have a good share of both pain and joy. Over the years, a good number of people have not been able to finish this journey because they succumbed to the many temptations they find along the way," he advised the learners.

He told the students that as they start their first year at the University, they might have all the good intentions and the promise of prosperity that comes with education but unfortunately some never complete their studies.

The VC said, "Before you embark on this journey, like any other journey, you must know where you want to go. As one thinker once said 'No wind favours he who has no destination'."

He said without a destination, the students would be heading nowhere. "That is why I want to urge you all to determine where you want to go. Set your goals clearly in the first weeks of your stay in this University," he told the students.

Otieno urged them to remain focused and refrain from activities that are likely to expose them to danger.

He disclosed that the University had established a mentoring system in which all the students are provided with an opportunity to learn from those who have experience and knowledge in all spheres of life.

"This is a special journey. It is a journey of growth and discovery. While on this journey, you will encounter a number of new challenges, but you have to overcome them. You will have to learn how to ignore failure messages, how to manage your time and how to heighten your sense of self preservation," Otieno stressed.

He advised them to shun people who may be interested in recruiting them into self-destructive habits. "These habits include drug and substance abuse. What drugs do is to simply destroy your chances of being anything useful in this world. If you get hooked to drugs, they will destroy your intellectual capacities and consign you to zombies," he said.

"I want to advise you to seek guidance and counselling when and where required. Our guidance and counselling department will be educating you more on the harmful effects of drugs," the administrator added.

Sugarcane farmers oppose bid to include them in bill

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

A MEETING convened by the Ministry of Agriculture in Kisumu to discuss the Agriculture Fishers and Food Authority Bill (Affa) 2013 ended in disarray after stakeholders rejected the proposals in the bill.

The farmers, who accused the government of taking them for a ride, said they had previously proposed that sugarcane be exempted from the Act but their views had been ignored.

Kenya Sugar Growers Association (Kesga) Secretary Richard Ogendo led the protest in the middle of the meeting held recently at a Kisumu hotel. The meeting brought together stakeholders in the sugar industry.

"With this law, specialization is lost. The proposed law is oppressive, unconstitutional and discriminative to the cane farmers," said Ogendo.

The farmers gave the ministry two weeks to remove sugarcane from the proposed law or face the wrath of farmers.

Ogendo said there was no public participation in drafting the Bill and called on Parliament to reject it and push for self-regulation in the sugarcane industry.

"Fish and livestock moved out of Affa. We must know why the government insists on sugarcane

being part of it," said Ogendo.

He said the law gives the president and the Agriculture cabinet secretary direct roles in the appointment of Kenya Sugar Board directors, a situation that could compromise the effectiveness of their service to farmers.

Kesga also hit out at the government for alleged failure to re-

solve problems that have dogged the industry for years.

"The sugar industry has been grappling with many problems such as pricing, zoning and cane poaching, none of which have been satisfactorily addressed.

"The question now is, if we consolidate several crops under one banner, will we ever solve all

these issues?" posed Kesga national chairman Juma Ibrahim. The law proposes the creation of a 14-member board, which will have only a single representative from the sugar sector.

The Affa 2013 Act seeks to consolidate nearly all agricultural institutions, and this, cane farmers argue, will cripple the giant sector.



Sugarcane farmers accused the government of taking them for a ride.

Community initiative seeks to save insects from extinction

By TITUS MAERO

A KAKAMEGA Community Conservancy Organization has started a Garden to provide conducive habitat for insects that pollinate food crops to save them from extinction.

The Kakamega Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) has urged scientists to incorporate the diminishing sites for insect pollination in their programmes to address food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The KEEP Chairman Mr Benjamin Ogalo said while more attention has shifted towards improving quality of seeds, poor soils and eradication of emerging diseases due to climate change to boost food production, nobody was worried about extinction of pollinating insects.

Addressing a stakeholder's workshop at the Kakamega Golf Hotel, Ogalo said pollination was an im-

portant factor in food production and attention should now focus on preserving habitats for insects that are involved in the process. The official said certain insects pollinate particular crops and if the process is not done, there would be no seeds or fruit production despite the quality of the crop.

He said habitats for pollinating insects were being destroyed at an alarming rate to give room for building and other projects without caring where the insects will get shelter.

"Human beings can restore other factors of nature that threaten food security but cannot create these insects once they die or disappear from the face of the earth," Ogalo observed.

He said some plants could sprout well after addressing issues of poor soil water and seeds but will fail to bear fruits or seeds if there is no pollination by insects.

Ogalo appealed to Kakamega

County government to work with researchers in the area in order to preserve habitats for pollination insects.

He further said his organization has started a pollination garden where insects come to collect nectar and pollination for food when they fail to get the items from crops.

The Official said the garden ensures the insects have food throughout the year and those whose habitats are destroyed come to stay in makeshift shelters created for them.

Saying that his organization scooped the first trophy in Eco-Global warrior award competition last year in Nairobi, Ogalo disclosed that 38 countries are involved in different programmes to preserve the biodiversity of the expansive Kakamega Equatorial rain forest.

He observed that some of the projects involve making briquettes from waste paper and leaves to reduce

use of charcoal to conserve forest, rearing of snakes and other reptiles and birds to promote the western tourist circuit as well as making special drink from Whytei Mondia (herb) popularly known as Mukombero.

He said KEEP also has a large tree nursery for both indigenous and exotic trees, a snake park and butterfly garden as well as cottages for tourists who want to enjoy a quiet and clean atmosphere far from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Ogalo said because of the attractions KEEP has created, many spouses have booked their facility to conduct their wedding in the environment this year.

Officials of Kakamega county government recently toured the area KEEP manages and expressed satisfaction with the work it was doing to conserve the environment and attract tourists and research to Kakamega forest.

Deputy President assures donor community

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

DEPUTY President William Ruto has reassured the donor community of government's commitment to working with them.

Speaking at a forum with representatives from over 100 donor agencies, Ruto said that the government was committed to maintaining mutual relationship with the donor community and will thus uphold the spirit of cooperation to facilitate partnership.

The meeting was attended by heads of missions from various countries, notable among them the UK, US and France which have recently faced criticism after they abstained in the crucial ICC vote at the UN Security Council.

"I want to assure all of you that our government will receive your input and consider it in good faith. We will engage with our charismatic dynamism and energy. My door and that of the President will always be open for constructive dialogue and consultation," he urged the envoys present and encouraged them to work closely with the Government and align their programmes fully with it.

He said that the forum will provide a platform for review and evaluating the working relationship between Government and development partners.

He emphasised that such ac-

tion is critical to the realization of development strategies in the country.

"Donors need the reassurance

that they are not funneling funds to dodgy characters and our framework aims to relieve the burden of constant auditing to aid effective-

ness," he said.

He explained that following the talks, it is expected that useful perspectives and inputs will ensure

better cooperation with Kenya is achieved.

"We are all alive to the "Aid Effectiveness" principal that includes mutual accountability, alignment and harmonisation. Furthermore, we understand development partners' efforts to the civil society as part of the development support to Kenya. I do not feel it is necessary to demonstrate the government's commitment to constitutional implementation and devolution," he said.

He further emphasised that the government is focused and committed to achieving economic transformation in a way, which will also uplift the standards of living for all Kenyans.

"After the inauguration, the allocation for County Governments was doubled to more than double the constitutional minimum amount provided. We are through the Ministry of Devolution implementing every key initiative of the government through the devolved units," he stated.

He further urged them to share information with the Government when planning their activities.

"Our government is the custodian and trustee of vision 2030. Full execution of this remains our unshakable commitment. In it we see an excellent opportunity and strategy of delivering the crux of vision 2030," he said.



Deputy President William Ruto shakes hands with Danish Ambassador to Kenya Geert Aagaard Adersen during the Sixth Development Partnership Forum at a Nairobi hotel recently.

Media to play an oversight role in Constitutional implementation process

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

MEDIA Practitioners and journalists have been urged to play an oversight role in the implementation of the constitution in the country.

Speaking during a workshop for journalists from Kitale and Uasin Gishu counties, Constitutional Implementation Committee Commissioner Professor Peter Wanyande said that the media has a crucial role to play in implementing the constitution that is faced with many challenges.

"When we invited you to this meeting we had a number of ob-

jectives but perhaps the overriding one was to have an opportunity to exchange the views on the role the media can play in contributing to the implementation of the constitution of Kenya 2010," said professor Wanyande.

He added that, "We want to have you empowered and have the capacity in terms of using your skills and expertise to contribute to the implementation of the constitution of Kenya 2010. Therefore from this point we shall develop the necessary networks between you and CIC to enable us keep the issues of the constitution implementation alive and in public debate



Journalists covering a function.

so that citizens are continuously aware of what is going on."

He noted that if the constitution was to be effectively implemented then some of the issues such as the unrest and clashes at the Tana Delta and even the ongoing strikes in various aspects could not be there because the constitution addresses most of such things that are being raised by the parties involved in the chaos and strikes.

He pointed out that the move can be achieved through the positive re-

ports aired or written pertaining the implementation of the constitution and programs aimed at educating and sensitizing the members of the public on the new constitution.

Wanyande also urged for the full support of the devolved system of governance that he noted shall transform the lives of Kenyans a great deal.

The commissioner was accompanied by other CIC officers including Polycarp Ochilo, Khalid Salim and Valary Nagidi revealed that the com-

mission is engaged in similar workshops across the country to empower the media and thereafter, have a bigger workshop in Nairobi that shall have several journalists picked from all the counties to attend and conclude the process of empowering the media on the constitutional implementation.

The workshop comprised of journalists from Kitale, West Pokot, Eldoret, Elgeyo Marakwet and Nandi counties.



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