

LOCAL NEWS October 1st, 2010

Raila in Western Kenya

Prime Minister Raila Odinga is on an official tour to Western province. Raila is expected to officially open a water project later today. The project worth 3 billion shillings was funded by the German Government and is expected to benefit the entire society.

End...Sila Kosgei

Rare pink hippo spotted in Kenya

A rare pink hippo was spotted by British photographers this week at the Masai Mara in Kenya. Will and Matt Burrard-Lucas were searching for migrating wildebeest but came across a pink-colored hippopotamus instead. The brothers said that the hippo is not albino as it had spotted pigmentation and also dark eyes. Instead it is leucitic, meaning the animal has reduced skin pigmentation. Albinism is characterized by absence or defect of an enzyme involved in melanin production.

The Telegraph noted that leucitic animals often do not survive in the wild for very long due to their high visibility. They also get sunburnt easily. The brothers said that this particular hippo is a "young one" due to its small stature and its remaining in close proximity to its mother.

Kenya encourages women engineers

Kenya is to initiate a full sponsorship programme for female students taking engineering courses, Higher Education Minister William Ruto has said. The move is geared towards encouraging more female students to pursue technological and science based courses in order to assist the country achieve the Vision 2030 goals. The Minister was speaking at the Masai Technical Institute in Kajiado during the institution's first graduation ceremony where he pledged government's actions in removing hurdles afflicting technical institutes in their service delivery.

Ruto announced that students at various technical institutes across the country would soon be able to access loans from the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB). He added that his ministry was committed to increasing the number of students in technical institutes nationally from the current 54,000 to more than 500,000 in five years' time. Ruto said that the government would also address challenges facing the labour force at the institutes with a view of improving the lecturers' working conditions.

The Church called upon to pursue holiness

Christians have been asked to develop a close relationship with God so that they will be able to hear what God is ministering to the entire church. Addressing believers Wednesday night at Christians Growth Center church in Eldoret, Apostle Bheki Ncube from South Africa said it's time from the church to continue in its effort of preaching the message of truth and holiness by

proclaiming God's word and rising against the powers of darkness in the country. Apostle Ncube said that God wants to hear the voice of his followers saying we are living in season that God wants to bless his followers in all aspects of their lives and called on churches to unite and bring change in the country.

End...John Chikamai

The youth challenged to preach peace

A group of over 100 youth who have been championing for a peaceful coexistence among the communities living in the North Rift region is set to begin an exchange programme with youth from Norway beginning next year. Speaking during the issuance of certificates of participation to members of the North Rift Theater Ambassadors, the project manager Ken Ruto said that peace is diverse with differing applications, noting that the group will be sending its members to go and learn more from abroad so that they can effectively impact the community with messages of peace and good governance.

The group participated in mobilizing communities to register as voters and also championed for a peaceful referendum and now wants the full implementation of the new constitution. They have also vowed to champion for the election of youthful leaders in the counties and never again be misused by politicians to cause chaos saying change can be realized in a peaceful environment. During the event, 80 youth were awarded with certificates

ENDS...CARO KOECH

Church begins a programme to benefit the poor in the society

The Catholic Church has began a programme dubbed "Savings and international lending communities –SILC" aimed at empowering economically the poorest Kenyans in order to reduce levels of poverty in the country. According to the Catholic Relief Service country manager Simon Karoki, unlike the other micro finances, the projects are sustained in the communities in that both savings and interests go back to the members. Eldoret diocese which has 589 members has already saved 18 million shillings in savings and 20 million in form of asserts under this programme that began a year ago.

The "Savings and International Lending Communities –SILC" programme began in Mombasa town, then to Malindi, Homabay and has now been launched in Eldoret town and is targeting to have 92,600 people from across the country coming on board by the end of July 2011. The project officer at Eldoret diocese Isaac Mukenya said that under the programme, a member is not allowed to borrow 3 times the saving and only allowed to have a maximum of 5 shares in a group The loan is returned with 10% interest after a month and membership is interdenominational.

The project is currently in Marakwet, Keiyo, Uasin Gishu Nandi North and Nandi South The two were speaking in Eldoret town during a graduation ceremony for the four private service providers for being Savings and International Lending Communities –SILC field agents.

Ends.....Caro Koech

IEC censures parties over electoral bribery

An elections observation group has faulted the conduct of aspirants in the recent by-elections claiming they violated the Political Parties Act. The Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) which also released a report on the polls, said voter bribery and inducement featured prominently among Narc-Kenya, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the Party of National Unity (PNU) candidates.

Executive Director Peter Okoth added that the door-to-door campaigns that characterised the campaigns created room for undue influence by the participants. He further said that the integrity and character of the candidates were not well scrutinised by the constituents and the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC). The civil society also faulted the political parties that fielded candidates through direct nomination arguing that it was against the spirit of democracy. Okoth further proposed that the Political Parties Act be reviewed to tighten its provisions and ensure that all electioneering processes were properly managed.

New Cause Suggested for High African HIV Rates

Malaria, and other common African infections, may make women more susceptible to HIV/AIDS than they are in the developed world. This is according to a study that may help solve the mystery of the vastly different infection rates around the globe. Researchers who compared immune cells in the genital tracts of women in Kenya and the United States, found that Kenyan women had more "activated" cells, which are more vulnerable to attack by HIV.

Carolyn Deal, chief of the sexually transmitted diseases branch of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, United States, said the study's strength lay in its detailed immunological tests. But Caroline Kabiru, an associate research scientist with the African Population and Health Research Center, Kenya, stated that beyond the biological factor, women are more vulnerable due to poverty.

Global Polio Eradication is Within Reach, Special Envoy Says

Global polio eradication is within reach, but this last push will require a renewed international commitment, cooperation and community involvement, says U.S. Special Envoy Rashad Hussain. According to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, there have been 663 cases of polio reported worldwide this year, compared with 1,020 cases at this point in 2009. The initiative reports that poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus that invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours.

While the disease can strike at any age, it mainly affects children under the age of 3, who account for more than 50 percent of all cases. The United States has provided more than \$1.8

billion to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative since 1988, as well as extensive technical support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Crop and Animal Insurance Takes Root in Rural Areas

Crop and animal cover has become the latest fad in the insurance business - with appropriated advertisements in the media to boot. Although the practice has been common among large-scale farmers, their small-scale counterparts are fast embracing the need to safeguard their animals and farm produce against unforeseen losses by turning to local insurers. Until 2006, when five local insurance companies came together to form a consortium in a bid to offer agricultural covers, it was rare to insure crops and livestock.

With improved technology and funding from financial institutions and private organisations, agriculture insurance is fast gaining popularity. Agriculture insurance covers are tailored on the basis of weather conditions, where farms are located, the size of the produce being insured, and the health history of animals, among other considerations.

Regional News

UN set to publish DR Congo 'war crimes report'

The United Nations is set to publish a controversial report into human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the 1990s. The final version is believed to have toned down its language after an earlier, leaked draft provoked a fury from Uganda and Rwanda. Both countries were accused of committing war crimes against ethnic Hutus in DR Congo during the conflict. They had threatened to pull out of UN peace keeping missions in response. The report into conflicts in the DR Congo between 1993 and 2003 is said to detail crimes never previously documented.

It covers some 600 incidents and includes allegations of massacres of civilians, torture, and the destruction of infrastructure that led to civilian deaths. Rwanda had reacted furiously to allegations that its troops had committed genocide in the country.

Nigeria marks 50 years of freedom

The people of Nigeria - Africa's most populous country - have begun celebrations to mark 50 years since independence from the UK. There have been firework displays in the capital, Abuja, while parades will be held later in major cities. The anniversary has prompted a raucous public debate over the state of the nation.

Nigeria is a major oil producer yet most people live in poverty.

More than 200 different ethnic groups co-exist in an uneasy coalition and the scars of numerous coups and a civil war are still visible.

A former military leader, Yakubu Gowon, told the press that despite its faults and inner problems Nigeria was moving forward.

Sports News

CAF Releases Fixtures for African Women Championship

The hosts of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) African Women Championship (AWC) 2010, Banyana Banyana, will face Tanzania in the tournament's opening match on 31 October at Daveyton's Sinaba Stadium. Banyana's crucial opening encounter will kick-off at 13:00, while defending champions Equatorial Guinea, will kick-off the defence of their AWC title with a group B clash against Cameroon at Sinaba stadium on November 2 at 11:00. Group A of the seventh edition of the AWC comprises the host Banyana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Mali, while group B comprises Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Ghana and Algeria.

The tournament will be hosted by the Ekurhuleni Municipality, and take place at Daveyton's Sinaba Stadium and Tembisa's Makhulong Stadium from 31 October to 14 November. The opening match, most of the group stage matches, semi-finals and final will take place at the Sinaba stadium, while two of the tournament's final group matches will be played at the Makhulong stadium in Tembisa on November 7 and 8 respectively.

Lel set for New York

Two-time winners Martin Lel and Marlison Gomes dos Santos and reigning women's champion Derartu Tulu will return to compete at the New York Marathon on November 7, organizers said Thursday. Other stars announced for the race include four-time Boston Marathon winner Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot, two-time New York runner-up Abderrahim Goumri and 2000 New York women's winner Ludmila Petrova. Lel, a three-time London Marathon winner who captured New York crowns in 2003 and 2007, set a personal best of 2hrs 5mins 15secs at London in 2008, the same year the 31-year-old Kenyan finished fifth at the Beijing Olympics.

Brazil's Dos Santos, 33, won at New York in 2006 and 2008 while Kenya's Cheruiyot, 32, won at Chicago in 2006 and was second last year at New York while Morocco's Goumri, 34, was the Big Apple runner-up the prior two years. Defending men's champion Meb Keflezighi and marathon world-record holder Haile Gebreselassie had already committed to the race.

United out to put pressure on Chelsea

Manchester United can draw level with champions Chelsea before the Premier League leaders even kick-off if they win away to Sunderland on Saturday. Victory for Sir Alex Ferguson's side against a team managed by United old boy Steve Bruce would see the Red Devils join Chelsea on 15 points. And that would give the Blues something else to think about before their London

derby against Arsenal at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, even though they would likely still be on top, such is their vastly superior goal difference.

But a United win at the Stadium of Light is anything but assured. So far this season, Ferguson's men have drawn each of their three away games in the Premier League, losing leads at Fulham and Everton and having to fight back to earn a point at Bolton. United go into this match on the back of a 1-0 Champions League win away to Valencia, which suggests they are getting over their travel sickness.