

Local News 20th August 2010

Cholera surges in parts of the world

Cholera is surging again in parts of the world, a World Health Organisation expert said Thursday, pointing to epidemics in Nigeria and Cameroon. Claire-Lise Chaignat, the coordinator of the WHO's group on cholera, noted the UN health agency has recorded 2,849 cases in Cameroon, including 222 deaths since May. It has also recorded 837 cases of the disease in the north of Nigeria since mid-June, including 30 deaths.

The WHO expert noted that "globally, cholera is growing across the world" with outbreaks also recorded in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Sud-Kivu province, as well as in Laos, Uganda, Djibouti, Afghanistan, Nepal and Papua New Guinea. Cholera is transmitted by water but also by food that had been contaminated by unclean water. Around 120,000 people die every year from cholera, according to WHO estimates.

Case against promulgation of Kenyan new law postponed

The case in which a Kenyan voter is seeking to have the promulgation of the new constitution postponed failed to kick today after the Attorney General and the Interim Independent Electoral Commission told the court that they were not ready to proceed with the matter. Mary Ariviza who was a church agent at Muthangari Polling Station on Thursday filed a case seeking to stop the promulgation of the new constitution.

She wants the much awaited for ceremony be put on claiming the publication of the results of the referendum in the Kenya gazette on August 6 was not done according to the law. According to Ariviza , the notice purports to be a certificate of results of the referendum yet it does not conform to the schedule of referendum regulations. Kenyans overwhelmingly voted for the new law on August 4 and it will be promulgated on August 27 by the President at a public function at Uhuru Park.

Kenyans seek business opportunities in Angola

Kenyan businessmen now want the government to open talks with Angola to enhance trade between the two countries. Speaking during the opening of the Angolan office of the national carrier Kenya Airways chief executive officer Titus Naikuni noted that it was difficult for Kenyans seeking visas to visit the country as there was no Angolan embassy in the country. At the same time there is no Kenyan embassy in Angola, making trade between the two countries nearly impossible.

Kenya remains the regional leader in manufacturing, tourism and horticulture industries. Angola which is among Africa's leading oil producer on the other hand is busy rebuilding after years of war and there is demand for construction materials, experts and a connection route to Asia. There has however been little or no collaboration between Kenya and Angola, a situation business men want taken care of.

Government asked to conduct a national census of albinos

The government has been put on the spot for neglecting the needs of albinos in the country. This follows this week incident where a Kenyan man was for 16 years for trying to sell an albino to Tanzanian witch doctors. Following the incident the government is being urged to conduct a national census of all people with albinism to determine their exact population in the country. The parliamentary committee on equal opportunities led by the chairman Mohammed Affey wants the planning minister to commission a national head count of albinos in every province for easy planning of their needs.

Tobacco Killing Hundreds of Millions

Over 3 000 international cancer experts are currently meeting in China to renew their fight against a disease which is killing millions every year and to renew their efforts to control tobacco. Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the world and according to the World Health Organisation if current trends continue tobacco use will cause one billion deaths worldwide during this century.

According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, much of the rise can be attributed to widespread tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. Several African countries are making progress in implementing smoke-free laws, but nearly 90 percent of people on the continent remain without meaningful protection from secondhand smoke.

Regional News

Don't celebrate Lockerbie bomber's release, Libya urged

The UK government has urged Libya not to celebrate the first anniversary of the release of the Lockerbie bomber. Scottish ministers released Abdelbasset Ali al-Megrahi, who has cancer, citing medical advice that three months was a "reasonable" life expectancy estimate. He got a hero's welcome in Tripoli and the Foreign Office said similar scenes would be deeply insensitive to families of the 270 people killed in 1988.

The Scottish government said the decision was taken in good faith. The decision by Scottish Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill to release Megrahi, who was jailed in 2001, prompted widespread criticism from political opponents and many of the US relatives of those who died. US president Barack Obama has described the decision as "a mistake", while UK Prime Minister David Cameron has also questioned the move.

Global News

Australia election rivals neck and neck

The election campaign in Australia has reached its final day with the two main parties neck and neck. An opinion poll suggested the governing Labor Party had lost its narrow lead to be tied with the opposition coalition. Julia Gillard, Australia's first female prime minister, is facing a

fight to the finish with conservative coalition leader Tony Abbott. Ms Gillard became prime minister in June after ousting her predecessor, Kevin Rudd. She faces a backlash at the ballot box over a range of issues including the way she replaced Rudd and her policy direction on climate change.

Flood aid builds up for Pakistan after UN appeals

Donors have pledged more money for flood-stricken Pakistan following appeals at an emergency meeting of the UN General Assembly. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said he had been assured that the UN's target of \$460m (£295m) would be "easily met". UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told the emergency session that the floods were like "a slow-motion tsunami".

The monsoon-triggered floods have affected about one-fifth of Pakistan. An estimated 20 million people are affected and experts say shelter, food and clean water are urgently needed to avert a humanitarian catastrophe. Before the meeting at the UN headquarters in New York, Mr Ban said not even half of the \$460m target needed for initial relief had been raised, and the response remained slow.

Sports News

Koech & Lagat hit jackpot

Kenya's Paul Kipsiele Koech ensured his diamond trophy despite finishing more than three seconds behind compatriot Ezekiel Kemboi on Thursday. Koech's most dangerous rival, Olympic champion Brimin Kiprop Kipruto, only managed seventh. Koech's compatriot Nancy Lagat had a straightforward victory in 4:01.01 in the women's 1500m, an event which she has dominated all season.

American sprint star Allyson Felix cruised to victory in the 400m at the penultimate meet in the IAAF's Diamond League in Zurich on Thursday to ensure she bagged a brace of trophies. Having already wrapped up the 200m, in which she is a three-time world champion, Felix timed 50.37 seconds, a gutsy final 30m seeing her past closest rivals Debbie Dunn and African champion Amantle Montsho of Botswana.

Felix's triumph was the highlight of a great night for a further six US athletes who scooped Diamond Trophies and 40,000 dollars apiece for dominating their events. The men's 5000m crown was claimed by Ethiopian Imane Merga, who finished second behind compatriot Tariku Bekele (12:55.03).

Kenya postal workers opt to retire

Four hundred Postal Corporation of Kenya employees are up for voluntary retirement as the company seeks to restructure itself and improve efficiency. Information and Communications Minister Samuel Poghisio says the move is not a retrenchment exercise but measures to make the

corporation lean as it makes room to grow its revenues. The decision to let the workers go was arrived at last year after consultations with the ministry. Poghio said the Postal Corporation is now charged with more responsibilities that encompass courier services and internet services that needed to be developed. The Minister spoke as he led corporation heads through a performance contract signing ceremony. He urged the parastatal heads to change with the times and usher in cutting edge strategies that would take their organizations forward.