

Local News 25th September 2010

Kenya calls for international support in Sudan

President Mwai Kibaki has called on the international community to extend genuine support to the people of Sudan within the IGAD framework during this time the country is preparing for the referendum and even thereafter.

President Kibaki's remarks were contained in a statement he delivered on Friday during a high level meeting on Sudan at the sidelines of the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. Thanking the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, for convening the meeting, President Kibaki noted that Sudan was at a defining moment on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). He affirmed that IGAD region had faith that the unprecedented political settlement holds the key to peace and stability not only in Sudan but also to its neighbours and the entire region. The President noted that Kenya's sustainable peace was significantly linked to stability in the Sudan.

Kenya bears brunt of Somalia conflict

Kenya continues to bear the greatest burden of the long-standing conflict in neighbouring Somalia. President Mwai Kibaki said the unrest in Somalia had now become a grave concern not just for Kenya but the larger horn of Africa region and beyond. In a statement read on his behalf by foreign affairs minister Moses Wetangula in the US, the president noted that Kenya continues to bear the heaviest responsibility in form of large numbers of refugees, piracy, influx of small arms and the growing terrorism threats. In his comments to a mini-summit on Somalia held on the sidelines of the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York City, he stated that as the international community delayed in action, resulting to extremist elements extending control over large territories of Somalia including Mogadishu and their ability to cause countless casualties increased by the day.

The Head of State noted that the capacity of the Al-Shabab to cause harm beyond the borders of Somalia was demonstrated by the Kampala bomb-attacks in July this year. The President emphasized that Somalia was at a critical period and called for a drive to prepare institutions as well as the ground for a new political dispensation in the war ravaged

Kenya wins at Japan tour expo

Kenya has won a trophy in the on-going Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) expo for displaying the best narrative brochure depicting the best tourism information available in Japanese language in 2010. Tourism Minister Najib Balala who attended the expo congratulated

Kenya Tourism Board and the Market Development Representative (MDR) for the magnificent display saying the award was a great honour to Kenya and a sign of good things to come. The JATA expo is the largest travel expo in Asia and has attracted 139 countries who compete for Japanese tourists. The overall winner was the Republic of Croatia.

Balala who is on an aggressive marketing campaign in Asia, is scheduled to leave Tokyo on Sunday for Guangzhou, China where he has been invited as a Chief Guest to the 2010 United Nations World Tourism day to be held on September 27.

Earlier, he held discussions with Toshiaki Koizumi, the Senior Vice Minister for Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism on the promotion of tourism in Kenya and Japan. The Minister called for closer collaboration and cooperation between the two countries noting that out of the 15million Japanese visiting other countries, Kenya only receives a very small figure of about 10,000 tourists.

IFC to invest Sh8b in energy projects

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) plans to invest close to Sh8 billion for sustainable energy projects in Kenya over the next five years. IFC Climate Change Investment Programme Manager Paul Kirai said the money aims at creating linkages between energy service providers and financial institutions. An IFC commissioned study showed that lack of appropriate finance options and weak market integration were the two most serious barriers slowing growth in Kenya's sustainable energy market.

Kirai said IFC was ready to partner with 14 local banks to finance viable energy projects across the country, adding that renewable energy would be favored but said each project would be assessed on an individual basis. Ministry of Energy states that the country has a geothermal potential of 7,000 megawatts and is targeting to tap 5,000 megawatts of geothermal by 2030.

25 years in jail for impregnating 13yr old

A twenty five year-old man has been handed a 25-year jail sentence by a Nyahururu court for defiling and impregnating a 13-year-old girl. Hosea Mwiko Githinji who was donning a religious white turban wept uncontrollably as he pleaded with the court to forgive him saying he was the sole breadwinner of his family and that they would suffer if he was jailed. But Principal Magistrate Teresiah Matheka said the accused had destroyed the life of a thirteen-year-old and ought to have thought of his responsibilities before he committed the offence. The prosecution led by Inspector Fredrick Makapila observed that the child borne out of the crime would always serve as a lifelong reminder of the rape, noting that the accused should fully bear the brunt of his actions and called for a stiff sentence to act as a deterrent.

ICT to focus on persons with disability

Information Permanent Secretary Dr Bitange Ndemo has pledged to champion the formulation of ICT policies that empower people living with disabilities through technology. Speaking after participating in a 30-minute workshop held in total darkness, the PS said the government should be proactive in taking measures that ensure a better future for the physically and mentally challenged. He pointed out that this was particularly vital because reading materials for such people were still very expensive.

He said the government lauds and welcomes the private sector such as an operator who will soon launch software that will enable the blind to access the Internet. The 'Dialogue in the Dark' workshop was organised by InABLE, a charitable organisation which has launched a computer lab program that will see them donate special computers in all the eight schools for the blind across the country. InABLE's Founder Irene Kirika said this initiative would go a long way towards enabling the country achieve its vision of providing quality education for all.

Africa: Women and Children the Focus of Achieving MDGs

With five years remaining to achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has made it clear that a concerted, multilateral effort to save the lives of over 16 million women and children, and improve the livelihoods of women and girls, will be the focus. He announced the launch of a U.S.\$40 Billion Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health at the UN Headquarters on Wednesday, the last day of the MDG summit. The strategy will integrate the actions of eight international health-related agencies to meet the health needs of women and children. The plan aims to prevent the deaths of more than 15 million children under five, as well as 33 million unwanted pregnancies and the deaths of 740,000 women from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. The MDG summit and last July's African Union summit in Kampala, Uganda, focused much of their time on the idea that a renewed commitment and investment in the lives of women and girls is not only the right thing to do, but also the economically prudent thing to do.

Africa: Campaign to Stop Somali Piracy

Thousands of signatures have been gathered in a campaign to end piracy that demands concrete action from governments. On World Maritime Day, a petition containing nearly one million signatures gathered from trade unions, ship owners' associations and insurers across the globe were handed over at the International Maritime Organisation in London, Britain. The petition was launched in May to persuade governments to commit resources necessary to end the Somalia-based piracy. It further calls for immediate steps from relevant governments to secure the release and safe return of kidnapped seafarers, and for work within international communities to secure a stable and peaceful future for Somalia. Somalia currently has no functioning government or criminal justice system part of the reason why many have opted for piracy that is considered a viable option for an income in a lawless country.

Regional News

Northern Nigeria flooding 'displaces two million'

About two million people in northern Nigeria have been displaced after authorities opened the floodgates on two dams, an official says. The flooding began suddenly when the gates on the Challawa and Tiga dams were opened, a spokesman for the Jigawa governor said. The dams are in Kano state, but about 5,000 villages in neighbouring Jigawa state have been affected. Several states in northern Nigeria have been hit by floods this year. It is not yet clear whether residents received a warning or if anyone was injured or went missing in the flooding. The floodgates are normally opened every year during the rainy season.

Court freezes Chile mine assets

A court in Chile has frozen the assets of the company which owns the mine where 33 men have been trapped for 50 days. The move was requested by the Chilean government, which wants the company to repay the cost of the miners' rescue. The San Esteban mining company was in financial trouble even before the main access tunnel to its copper and gold mine collapsed. And the rescue operation will add millions of dollars to its debts. The company reportedly owes creditors more than \$10m (£6.4m). An appraiser has been asked to report back to creditors in a month's time on whether the company should be declared bankrupt.

Sports News

Commonwealth Games head Fennell says more work needed

The president of the Commonwealth Games Federation says "extensive work" still needs to be done to prepare the athletes' village for the opening of the Games on 3 October. After visiting Games sites in Delhi, Michael Fennell said India had done much to resolve remaining problems.

But he said he was concerned about the safety of athletes and officials. Competing teams have complained about filthy accommodation and shoddy construction at the sites. The chaos surrounding the preparations for the Games had done a "lot of damage" to India's international image, Fennell said. He said that all 71 countries will take full part in the Games.