Private Security Actors, Should Embrace Public Participation Forums

The Private Security Regulation Act, 2016 set forth regulations and a framework for cooperation between the private security services industry and the state agencies that deal with security in accordance with the values and principles set out in the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

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The
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Creative Rewards
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News>>PS Mworia Urges Youth To Train In TVET Practical Knowledge Skills

P. 8. The Principal Secretary for State Department for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Esther Mworia has advised the youth to engage in practical knowledge and hands-on skills

News>>DP Meets The Kenya-Colombia Technical Cooperation Team On Coffee Value Chain

P. 12. The Consultative Meeting Resolve To Among Other Things Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) That Will Create A Framework For Interventions That The Government Is Deploying To Restore The Coffee Sub-Sector

Gachagua Calls For Withdrawal Of Cases Frustrating Tea Reforms

The Deputy President said it is wrong for actors in the industry to file cases hampering efforts to make the sector more lucrative to the farmers who deserve better returns for their investments in the farms.

"Court cases have frustrated reforms in the sub-sector. I call upon stakeholders who genuinely mean well to withdraw the cases and allow these reforms to be implemented fully for the benefit of the Kenyan farmer," said Mr Gachagua.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua greeting KTDA Iria-ini Tea Factory director Kamau Ngatia after arriving at Tea House yesterday

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Pastor Dorcas Rallies The Clergy To Support The Vulnerable In Kilifi County

By:OSDP

Pastor Dorcas in a group photo with the clergy who attended the clergy meeting at a Kilifi hotel to discuss programs of uplifting the vulnerable in the region that include widows, orphans, those in addictions and people with disabilities yesterday. Photo/OSDP

Worth Noting:

- **The Office of the Spouse of the Deputy President (OSDP) held a widows meeting at Gede where 700 widows were expected to attend, but more than 2,000 attended.**
- **A trailer load of foodstuffs was distributed to the widows who complained of the deteriorating farming in the region, saying their mangoes were rotting in the shamba, korosho market destroyed by hawking and cotton growing no longer in existence.**

Clergy from the Christian and Muslim faith held a meeting with the spouse of the Deputy President Pastor Dorcas Rigathi on the fourth day of her working visit in Kilifi County.

The more than 60 clergy, led by Bishop Joseph Maisha and Sheikh Ustadh Hassan had a lengthy discussion on the state of the vulnerable in the county.

Pastor Dorcas raised her concerns about the killing of the elderly by the youth on suspicion of them being witches.

"The elderly, who have grey hair, dye their hair because the youth call their elderly fathers and mothers witches. Our children are breaking the commandments of God, and the law of the land," said Pastor Dorcas.

She also pointed to the high number of widows in the county, saying that the men were dying at a high rate.

The Office of the Spouse of the Deputy President (OSDP) held a widows meeting at Gede where 700 widows were expected to attend, but more than 2,000 attended.

A trailer load of foodstuffs was distributed to the widows who complained of the deteriorating farming in the region, saying their mangoes were rotting in the shamba, korosho market destroyed by hawking and cotton growing no longer in existence.

Pastor Dorcas urged the clergy not to lose hope but engage the widows, orphans, those in addictions and disabilities through their places of worship.

"Let us do the work God called us to do and engage our people through reaching out to them in the streets, mentorship, and discipleship," said Pastor Dorcas.

She added that the psychosocial spiritual model of rehabilitation was working with hundreds rehabilitated from alcohol, drugs and substances including some from the drug dens of Shimanzi in Mombasa.

She also told the clergy to watch out against western philosophies that were advocating for same sex marriage.

"Philosophies from abroad tell us women to marry women, and men to marry men. If we are not careful as the clergy, and watch this as it happens, we shall be judged harshly," she said.

Bishop Maisha urged the clergy from Kilifi County to adopt the programs of reaching the vulnerable and take them to their churches and the grassroots.

"Her Excellency has expressed her heart to us, and shared her vision. The boy child is dying at a first rate, and we are losing a generation, and if we don't reverse the trend, it shall be a big problem for us," said Bishop Maisha.

"Let's join hands with her and do this great work, that this vision may expand, and I know in a few years, we shall see a big change in this country."

Sheikh Hassan also acknowledged the ongoing work following the visit of Shimo la Tewa Borstal Institution where boys 15-18 years old are committed from the courts.

The problem of alcohol, drug, and substance abuse has affected the youth irrespective of religion, cutting across the Christian, Muslim and Hindu faithful.

Pastor Dorcas also had a meeting with the Kilifi Governor Gideo Mungaro about actualizing her programs in Kilifi County.

The First Lady, Kilifi County, Susan Mungaro accompanied Pastor Dorcas to the medical camp in Ganze Constituency, widows meeting in Gede, and Pwani University meeting.

The Association of Pentecostal and Evangelical Clergy of Kenya (APECK) Chair Kilifi County Bishop Amos Lewa also called on the support of all clergy in reaching the vulnerable and building the nation.

Churches and mosques are in the thousands in the Republic of Kenya and can reach thousands of people upon opening of their places of worship for the vulnerable.

Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has revealed a troubling trend in global estimates of child labour where it has increased for the first time in 20 years from 152 million in 2016 to 160 million in 2020.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 8.5 per cent of Kenya's children (1.3 million) are in child labour especially in the agricultural sector.

It is for this reason that Kisii County has unveiled a Child labour committee to spearhead activities geared towards ending child labour in critical value chains in the Coffee and tea sectors in the area.

This move is in line with ILO strategy dubbed Accelerating action for elimination of child labour in supply chains in Africa (ACCEL Africa).

Education stakeholders in Thika have proposed to have area day schools learn in shifts to avert crowding challenges that has been occasioned by the 100 per cent transition.

Led by Thika MP Alice Ng'ang'a, they said most of the secondary schools in the area have more than 1,000 learners, with day schools feeling the most heat due to the area's lack of enough schools and high population.

They proposed that the first group of pupils attend school from morning till Midday, while the second lot comes in from Midday till late afternoon.

This, she said, will ensure that all learners are given close supervision by teachers and that they have a conducive learning environment to perform well.

Speaking during a prize giving day at Chania Girls Secondary School for exemplary performance in last year's Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education (KCSE), the MP said teachers in the area have also been overwhelmed by the huge number of learners.

The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) has organised various sensitisation forums in Kirinyaga following the unfortunate event of an illicit brew that killed over 20 people.

Led by NACADA Central Region manager Amos Warui they conducted an open forum in Kirinyaga West Sub-County, Mwea Constituency, themed "Positive Parenting" targeting the residents since the incident affected different age groups, the youngest being 35 years and the oldest being over seventy years.

Mr Warui said the forum is one of the various interventions they are putting in place in the community because parents have a major role to play in the society's development.

"Majority of those passed on were parents and we have to remind them they have responsibilities and roles to play in the eradication of brews and drug substances," Warui said.

trained and sensitised on the rights of children by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR).

This has been necessitated by the increased cases of child abuse and neglect in the informal settlement according to the KNCHR Central Regional Office Coordinator Ruth Getobai.

She called for concerted efforts to fight child abuse while at the same time urging parents to vigilant and protect their children from falling prey to sexual predators.

At least 11 cases of child abuse and neglect have been reported this year alone in the area.

The Coast Association for Persons with Disabilities Executive Director Hamisa Zaja has jetted off to Washington DC, United States of America (USA), to receive an international award for her exemplary peace-building works.

Hamisa Zaja is among four women in the world nominated for the Women Building Peace Award 2023 by the US Institute of Peace (USIP) for her work in empowering youth, women and persons living with disability.

USIP is a national, nonpartisan, independent institute, founded by Congress working with local partners to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict.

According to the institute's website, it works with governments and civil societies to build local capacities to manage conflict peacefully. It links research, policy, training, analysis and direct action to support champions of peace in the world.

The award is yearly to a woman peacebuilder who has made a major contribution to preventing conflict, combatting violence and building peace in her country.


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The Changing Role Of Parenting Today's Child

By: Anthony Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- The role the 'responsible community' previously took in raising the child now mainly rests with schools and parents, who have to shoulder the huge responsibility of ensuring that the child grows into an all rounded adult, in the midst of a global community that may not have the best interest of the child at heart.
- A few decades back, parents were the dominant source of the instructional content that children absorbed.
- Today, anyone with access to an internet enabled smartphone, tablet, or computer can potentially send instructional content to your child.

I recently had a telephone conversation with an elderly uncle and he casually asked me if I knew the names assigned to the age-sets in my traditional community.

I told him that I did not pay too much attention to my traditional culture, adding that in today's world, we simply looked up everything on 'Google'.

Sure enough, I searched for information about the age-sets and there it was. Culture has changed a lot in the last few decades and so has the role of parenting. As parents, we need to evolve and strive to meet the child's needs according to the cultural standards that change from generation to generation.

In the past, children were raised by a 'responsible community' that provided all the emotional and social support that was needed. Today, children have a huge online community from where they receive all manner of information, some of which is toxic to their psycho-social development. The need to support and promote a child's spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and social development has gained more prominence.

The role the 'responsible community' previously took in raising the child now mainly rests with schools and parents, who have to shoulder the huge responsibility of ensuring that the child grows into an all rounded adult, in the midst of a global community that may not have the best interest of the child at heart.

A few decades back, parents were the dominant source of the instructional content that children absorbed.

Today, anyone with access to an internet enabled smartphone, tablet, or computer can potentially send instructional content to your child.

The people with the kind of conduct and character that our parents warned us against, can now interact with our children without even having to leave the house.

Surely, the need for parents to be actively involved in a child's digital world cannot be overemphasized. Promoting and supporting the requisite spiritual, cognitive, emotional and social development of the child requires a huge effort on the part of the parent. Establishing and cultivating a bond with the child and nurturing it through regular intentional hangouts and open conversations is so critical to their cognitive and social development.

In Kenya, the importance of cognitive development has been embedded in Section 53 of the Constitution which gives every child a right to free basic education. A parent is obligated to facilitate their child's education, either by taking him/her to school, or by showing evidence that the child is being home-schooled.

This role of parents has been pushed a little further in the recent years by requiring them to become more involved in their children's education. It is not enough to take a child to school, a parent is also expected to assist him/her with homework, discuss their progress with the teacher and be present during academic clinics to encourage the child. All this is backed by research that shows that this support helps the child perform better in academics and in other areas of life.

It is also important that parents provide an environment that allows for a child's social development. Children learn about their society and the proper ways to act within it. They learn to be kind, to share, to be helpful, be compassionate and have relationships.

Facilitating the child's interaction with other children helps to develop social-emotional skills such as problem-solving, self-regulation, impulse control, and empathy. This also improves academics, reduces negative social behaviors like bullying, and creates positive social behavior. Allowing a child to be constantly preoccupied with video games and other distractions impedes their psych-social development and may over time lead to a formal psychological disorder according to the American Psychiatric Association.

Parents and teachers play the biggest role in social-emotional development because they offer the most reliable relationships for the child. Parents who are home-schooling have to be very deliberate to ensure the children have an opportunity to interact with other children. Consistent experiences with family members, children and adults help to learn about relationships and explore emotions in predictable interactions.

These positive social and emotional interactions are important as they influence a child's self-confidence, the ability to develop meaningful and lasting friendships and a sense of importance and value to those around him/her.

Though the present day parents are busy, they must make time for quality interactions with their growing kids. Children love to show off their new achievements and skills and parents should support and encourage them. The presence and involvement of the parents has been proven to be the most valuable factor in developing an all rounded child.

Anthony Mwangi is a Leadership Teacher at Crawford International School

PS Mworia Urges Youth To Train In TVET Practical Knowledge Skills

By: Sharon Atieno and Muchiri Job
@themtkenyatimes

The Principal Secretary for State Department for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Esther Mworia has advised the youth to engage in practical knowledge and hands-on skills that are directly applicable to the job.

Mworia said TVET institutions were crucial because they major in offering practical skills and competence to the youths and stakeholders that enable them to become self-reliant and to create employment.

Mworia added that in today's rapidly changing and fast-paced world, traditional education does not always equip an individual with skills that enable them to thrive in their careers.

"These TVET programmes often collaborate with industries to ensure that graduates are ready for jobs and possess the ability demanded by the employers," said the PS.

The PS made the remarks in a speech read on her behalf by the Director of TVET in the Ministry of Education John Tuwei during the official opening of the 15th Higher Education Expo and Career Fair 2024 held at Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi.

The Expo that started yesterday and expected to end today creates a space where all youths could transition from TVET institutions to the job market.

The PS highlighted that the theme of 2024 is to educate, equip and empower which encapsulates the focus on future skills needed for the labour market in the 21st century.

Mworia said that the State Department for TVET is currently implementing competency-based education and training which focuses on 70 per cent industrial training and 30 per cent classroom training.

The PS said the 70 and 30 per cent models have an element of viewer training that ensures that trainees were mostly in industry, were gaining knowledge in classrooms and were also angled to give trainees absolute skills required in the industry.

Mworia noted that the traditional skills alone are no longer sufficient, adding that the advent of the 21st century has brought a new set of skills that are crucial for individuals to succeed in their chosen fields.

"These fields are not confined to technical expertise but rather encompass a broader range which includes critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication and digital interest," she said.

Director of TVET in the Ministry of Education John Tuwei addressing the forum yesterday.

The PS said the ability to adopt innovation is vital in this era for constant technological advancement as TVET focuses on gaining 21st-century skills.

"TVET must also pay attention to mental health, as competitive nature and pressure to succeed can take a toll on an individual. Stress, anxiety and burnout are increasingly prevalent affecting trainees and professionals," she added.

PS Mworia encouraged education institutions and workplaces to create an environment that prioritizes mental health, promotes work-life balance and offers resources for managing stress and seeking help when needed.

She urged entrepreneurs to educate, equip and nurture Kenyan youth to thrive and drive in their careers.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Executive Officer Kenya School of TVET Edwin Tarno said that the institution would ensure all youths transit to TVET to acquire skills and create job opportunities after completion.

He singled out Data Analyst, Artificial Intelligence, Data Scientists and Analysts, Remote and Hybrid work specialist, E-commerce and digital marketing professionals, software developers, Cyber Security, Renewable energy technicians, Environmental Science, Logistic and Supply Chain Manager are some of the jobs which will be in demand by 2025 and urged the youth to pursue them.

A Business Boost As Murang'a County Government Upgrade Roads

By: Bernard Munyao
@themtkenyatimes

Murang'a county government is on course in the construction of a total of 12-kilometre roads within eight local trading centres.

In the programme dubbed Smart City, the county administration is targeting to improve streets and roads within the towns and provide better conditions of doing business.

In the current financial year, the towns earmarked to get improved infrastructure include Ithanga, Kenol, Zabka, Mukuyu, Kanyenyaini, Kamune, Gacharage and Muthithi.

Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata said the programme is aimed at supporting the business community to conduct their economic activities in a better environment.

The roads, he said, will make accessibility of some business premises easier thus providing a fair competition.

Rehabilitation of one of the roads being launched

"Shops and stalls which are behind main streets will be easily accessed after the streets connecting them get tarmacked and installed with street lights. The smart city programme aims to provide better working conditions to our people," Kang'ata said as he launched the programme at Mukuyu market.

In the last financial year, the programme benefited eight other towns including Kangari, Kiriaini, Gatura, Kabati, Gakira, Kahatia, Maragua and Murang'a town.

He promised to tarmac streets in all towns within the county before the end of his five-year term.

"Improvement of infrastructure in our trading centres is crucial in growing the local economy and the county administration is committed to ensure streets and roads within the towns are upgraded," he stated.

The governor observed that apart from upgrading the roads, the programme also targets to install street lights so as to ensure traders could operate at night.

"The project will also cater for drainage services as currently many of our towns have poor drainage systems. Construction of markets is also being implemented in some of the centres," he noted.

The project, Kang'ata divulged, is funded by monies collected as levies from various services offered by his administration.

"The projects of tarmacking of roads within local towns are funded by your taxes. The county government since it assumed power in 2022, we employed strategies to effectively collect revenue and the monies have helped in implementation of various development projects," he explained.

Meanwhile, the governor underscored the subsidy programme the county government is implementing in the mango value chain sector.

He said currently mango farmers from lower parts of the county are getting Sh23 per kilo of mango. This is Sh16 offered by contracted buyers and Sh7 given by the county government as subsidy.

"The subsidy programme is helping mango farmers to benefit hugely from their produce. We linked the farmers with several buyers and we also topped up some money as subsidy to ensure the sector is lucrative," he added.

Gachagua Calls For Withdrawal Of Cases Frustrating Tea Reforms

By: DPCS

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has asked for withdrawal of court cases frustrating Tea reforms, saying they are hindering realisation of higher benefits for farmers.

The Deputy President said it is wrong for actors in the industry to file cases hampering efforts to make the sector more lucrative to the farmers who deserve better returns for their investments in the farms.

"Court cases have frustrated reforms in the subsector. I call upon stakeholders who genuinely mean well to withdraw the cases and allow these reforms to be implemented fully for the benefit of the Kenyan farmer," said Mr Gachagua.

The Deputy President spoke yesterday when he presided over the release of the Tea Industry Performance Report, 2023 by the Tea Board of Kenya at Tea House, Nairobi.

He added that members affiliated to the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) cannot run for elections for factories' Board of Directors if they have filed cases against the agency.

"People who are greedy for power have taken farmers to court and their lawyers are being paid from farmers' earnings. It is not right. It is unethical and immoral. You cannot say you mean well for the farmer yet you take the farmer to court and use their earnings to sustain the case against them," he said.

He said the government will provide adequate support through the national government administration during the upcoming directors' elections. He also called on the farmers to choose directors who will fight for their interests.

"As factories prepare for elections, we urge the farmer to put integrity first. Good leadership will promote and protect the reforms we are undertaking for a sane and productive Tea Subsector," he said.

Further, the Deputy President said the administrators have been asked to work with the Tea Board of Kenya to arrest those engaging in hawking of tea leaves.

"We have instructed the National Government Administration Officers to give every support to the Tea Board of Kenya to make sure those engaged in tea hawking are apprehended and charged in court because we cannot allow criminal elements to ruin the sector," he said.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua with tea stakeholders after officially opening the Tea House in Nairobi

From the report, in 2023, Kenya exported 522.92 million Kgs of tea which was an increase from 450.33 million Kgs recorded in 2022. This was an increase of 16% (72.58 million Kgs). The export earnings shot up to Kshs. 180.57 billion up from Kshs. 138.09 billion in 2022.

The increased production in 2023 has been attributed to good rainfall between April and December last year and distribution of subsidised fertiliser to the farmers by the government.

The Deputy President said that they were pushing for expansion of the Kenyan tea market globally to increase exports for more earnings.

"We will work hand-in-hand with the stakeholders in stamping our authority and presence on the world stage because our tea is the best in the world yet our presence is not felt to the level that it should be," Mr Gachagua said.

He said the reestablishment of the Tea Board of Kenya had brought sanity to the subsector struggling with many challenges that threatened to bring it down.

"The reestablishment of the Tea Board of Kenya as a regulatory authority to oversee the sub-sector has restored it. We are also re-establishing the Coffee Board of Kenya. These sectors are important to our economy. They should stand on their own. It was a wrong policy to collapse the sectors under one umbrella body," he emphasised.

The government will work with the counties and the factories to set up production lines for orthodox tea.

"Orthodox tea earns more. We will look into increasing production for ready markets," he said.

Use Of Customized Revenue Collection And Management Systems That Are Not Compatible With IFMIS Is Illegal, The Senate Committee Tell Governors

By: PSCU

The Senate Committee on Information, Communication and Technology has urged county governments to integrate their revenue collection and management systems to be compatible with the national Government's revenue management system.

This comes after the Controller of Budget Margaret Nyakang'o informed the Senators that many counties have developed customized revenue management systems through private developers, which aren't based on the Standard Charts of Accounts and aren't compatible with the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS).

While meeting with the Controller of Budget and the Auditor General earlier today, the Members of the

Dr Margaret Nyakang'o.

Senator Allan Chesang-led Committee were appalled to learn that some counties have procured stand-alone receipting systems instead of investing in complete Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions.

"Article 190 of the Constitution provides that counties should use financial management systems compatible with the national systems. The implementation of the customized revenue collection management systems by counties is unconstitutional," Senator Godfrey Osotsi decried.

They added that the county government's failure to automate and integrate its revenue collection and management systems is putting counties'

Senator Godfrey Osotsi

own-source revenue at apparent risk of abuse by the county bosses.

"Many counties don't have laws regulating the collection of their revenues of even the tariffs, which puts them at risk. The CRA has formulated a model tariff structure that the counties can use in formulating the necessary legislation," Senator Chesang added.

On her part, the controller of Budget informed the Senators that the National Treasury have formed a task force to support the design and prescribe an efficient County Integrated Revenue Management System to support full automation of the county own source revenue management.

"The standardized revenue collection and management systems will not only ensure uniformity in reporting by counties but also save counties the costs associated with purchase of independent systems," Dr. Margaret Nyakang'o informed Senators.

She added that the integration aims to facilitate monitoring and financial control of the own source revenue and facilitate oversight by the National Treasury.

The ICT Committee resolved to inquire into the status of County Revenue Collection and Management Systems in counties to ensure Kenyans get value for their money.

State Partners With ATIDI To Advance Renewable Energy Projects

By: Bernadette Khaduli
@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya government has signed the Regional Liquidity Support Facility (RLSF) Memorandum of Understanding with the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATIDI), to facilitate collaboration in identifying, developing and implementing renewable energy projects across the country.

Regional Liquidity Support Facility, a joint initiative of ATIDI, the KfW Development Bank and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), is a credit enhancement instrument provided by ATIDI to renewable energy Independent Power Producers (IPPs) that sell the electricity generated by their projects to State-owned power utilities.

ATIDI will issue liquidity instruments backed by cash collateral from KfW and NORAD, to renewable energy Independent Power Producers or private transmission companies for a maximum tenure of up to 15 years while each RLSF policy will cover up to a maximum of 12 months' worth of revenue for the project.

The memorandum will also enable ATIDI to engage with IPPs in Kenya with the expectation that advanced hydro, geothermal, solar, and wind projects may benefit from this instrument in the near future.

The RLSF cover which is available to renewable energy projects of up to 100 MW, and privately financed transmission projects not only focuses on leveraging the country's abundant natural resources to generate clean and sustainable energy, but also to reinforce power generation and transmission capacity.

In a press statement sent to newsrooms, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum Davis Chirchir who was speaking at the signing ceremony said the collaboration between ATIDI and the government through the country's power utilities that will include Geothermal Development Company, Kenya Electricity Transmission Company Limited and Kenya Power and Lighting Company should make a positive contribution towards the attainment of the country's long term development agenda the Vision 2030.

Chirchir said, "This will ensure Kenya becomes a newly-industrializing, middle-income economy, providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment," adding that the collaboration would also increase energy access and greater reliability.

In his remarks, the Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u said the government encourages the private sector participation in the financing of key infrastructure, such as the development of renewable energy power plants and key transmission infrastructure.

Displaying documents on Memorandum of Understanding

"The provision of RLSF policies will hopefully enable more projects to advance whilst reducing the need for government-backed credit enhancement tools," stated Prof. Ndungu.

ATIDI Chief Executive Officer Mr. Manuel Moses said they were looking forward to investing in Kenya's energy sector, noting that the company's support for new projects in Kenya via RLSF would build on its historical involvement in the country's energy sector, having in the past supported projects such as the Lake Turkana and Kipeto wind projects.

"We are pleased to be crossing this key milestone with the Kenya government. Not only does this send out a positive message to project developers and lenders, but also to other prospective stakeholders," he said.

Kenya becomes the tenth ATIDI member state to sign the RLSF MoU after Benin, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

To date, RLSF policies have been issued in support of six renewable energy projects in Burundi, Malawi and Uganda enabling total financing of USD 207.5m and a total installed electricity generation capacity of 136.3 MW.

ATIDI was founded in 2001 by African States to cover trade and investment risks of companies doing business in Africa. The company also provides political risk, credit insurance and, surety insurance.

AG's Advisory Opinion On Affordable Housing Plan Bound To Raise Queries

By: **Joseph Mutua Ndonga**
mutuandonga@yahoo.com

Sometimes back the Director-General of Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) wrote a letter to the Attorney General Justin Muturi seeking his advisory opinion on Affordable Housing Plan.

This came in the wake of a decision by the Court of Appeal stopping the government from collecting the housing levy.

The move contradicted the orders issued earlier by the same court. A three-judge bench had upheld the orders issued by the High Court allowing the state to continue deducting levy from payslips of salaried Kenyans until the case is heard and determined.

In his advisory opinion, the AG sided with the Court of Appeal. The housing levy was declared illegal and unconstitutional. This is the correct position. The government should hence forth stop collecting the levy.

The state has filed an appeal and aver that they have built a water-tight case. If they win the case, the housing levy will be reinstated.

However, it will not be reinstated in the current form. The government will be required to fully comply with the orders issued earlier by the two courts.

Parliament had been directed to initiate a process that would culminate to the amendment of certain provisions of the Housing Act.

Parliament has already completed the work which started with public participation. The new bill is now before Senate for concurrence.

In light of this, AG sounded biased in his opinion. He only trained his gun on executive. I would have expected him to equally criticize the decisions of the Court of Appeal.

Initially, you allowed the government to continue collecting the levy. Later, you shifted the goal-posts and suspended deductions.

The matter is still in court. Nothing has changed. So one my pose. Were your decisions based on law or were being dictated and influenced by outside forces. The AG failed to do this. He would not point an accusing finger at the Judiciary.

I had earlier written an article in this column. These were my observations. President William Ruto has once again strongly defended his affordable housing plan vowing to face his opponents head-on.

I know that my critics, particularly those in Azimio La Umoja One Kenya Coalition, have been burning midnight oil trying to sabotage and derail my development agenda.

I want to tell them that they will not succeed. Kenyans have come a long way. They know how to discern and separate wheat and chaff. They fully support this project.

The project is also enjoying the backing of the constitution as Shelter is a basic right.

Speaking in Western Kenya, the President therefore did not mince any word in calling on contractors to continue building affordable houses. This is until the matter in court is heard and determined. He said he was optimistic that the government will win the case.

The judges are Kenyans. They know the housing project have created almost 130,000 jobs for Kenyans. This resonates with our manifesto.

The Azimio leader Raila Odinga and his brigade would on the other hand resort to politicizing the President's remarks.

The Court of Appeal had stopped the collection of housing levy but they would not want Kenyans to know the same the court had allowed the government to continue collecting the levy.

So, by insisting the building of houses will continue, Azimio wanted Kenyans to believe that Dr Ruto had violated the law. This did not hold any water.

It is worth noting that the President only asked the contractors to continue doing thier job. He did not mention the housing levy because he knew this was main issue cited by those who had moved to court. This showed the President respected the constitution and other laws.

Notably, just like his predecessors, President William Ruto is leaving nothing to chance in building and unveiling his legacy projects.

There is no doubt that the affordable housing plan is his signature legacy project.

As the war between the two arms of government intensified, Dr Ruto always shifted the blame to his political detractors.

The 'corrupt' judicial officers were helping them (his critics) to have thier way after 'bribing and compromising them'.

A few days later, the President held a meeting with Chief Justice Martha Koome and Speaker of national assembly Moses Wetangula. The Speaker joined them later.

Sources indicated that the President took unprecedented move when he declassified some intelligence reports which he shared with CJ. He disclosed that corrupt judges were working hand in hand with corrupt and rogue lawyers.

As the CJ, the buck stops with you. The people of Kenya expect you to tame members of your team. The corrupt riddled judges must be shown the door.

On his part, the President assured the CJ of his commitment to eradicate corruption in the executive.

The three-judge bench of Court of Appeal had earlier ruled in favor of an application filed by Treasury Cabinet Secretary Njuguna Ndungu.

So, the change of heart by the bench was bound to raise queries. Was the decision based on law or it was an escalation of the ongoing war. What has changed?

It is worth noting that when the two bulls fight, it is the grass that suffers. So, in this case, it is the people of Kenya.

The earlier decision of the court of appeal was yet another setback to Senator Okiya Omtata and other activists who had moved to court seeking to stop the government from collecting the housing levy. This is until their case is heard and determined.

The petitioners' key prayers were. The court should declare the levy unconstitutional and illegal.

They would not however convince the judges that they had a strong and watertight case. This is because the case was not anchored on the provisions of the constitution and other written laws of Kenya that were relevant and well grounded.

I had earlier listened to President William Ruto's interview when he hosted journalists from different media houses at State House Nairobi. The President minced no word in responding to all the issues and questions raised.

One of the journalist told him. You rode to power on a platform of promising to respect and uphold the constitution and other laws of the land but today you are doing the opposite.

He cited the housing levy. The court declared this law unconstitutional but we have been hearing you maintaining that the levy is there to stay.

The President told him. What you are saying is not true. I have been walking the talk in terms of respecting the constitution and decisions of the courts.

On housing levy, you the people of the media are to blame for misinterpreting that ruling. The problem of unconstitutional was indeed created by you.

That is not what the bench of the three judges stated. The bench only took issue with what they termed as discriminative aspects of the law.

This is because it is only employed people whose salaries were being subjected to a deduction of 1.5 percent.

The Judges heard our prayers and allowed the government to continue collecting the levy until January next year. This will give you an opportunity to review and align this law. You would not have expected the judges to do this if the housing levy is unconstitutional.

It is worth noting the housing levy is a key pillar of the Finance Act of 2023.

When the judges delivered the ruling, President William Ruto stated. We believe in the rule of law. So, my government will fully comply with the orders issued.

We will take the necessary steps to ensure this law is aligned. Dr Ruto reiterated this during interview. He said that the majority leader Kimani Ichungwah have already drafted the bill and presented it to parliament.

Attorney General Justin Muturi .

The president further stated. The housing plan is a noble idea whose time has come. As I speak, It has created 120,000 jobs. The job opportunities are set to increase to 200,000 and 500,000 in coming days.

The mega project resonated very well with Ruto's concept of bottom up economic model. It is designed to address two main challenges: joblessness and lack of decent houses.

The President announced that 250,000 affordable housing units will be constructed in the first phase.

At one point during a visit to Busia county, he told the 'hustlers'.

The housing project is being opposed by those employed who received a payslip every month.

They do not want 1.5 per cent to be deducted from thier salaries.

The same case applies to the top leaders of the Azimio La Umoja One Kenya Opposition coalition.

Each one pockets a pension of more than 1 million from the National Treasury every month.

These are the same personalities who say they love you and were ready to die for you. Really, do they?

When they oppose a deduction of 1.5 percent from their payslips, what message are they sending?

They don't care. They want you to continue being poor and to live in a state of desperation and hopelessness.

When selling the units, the state will give priority to the hustlers.

President Ruto have been reiterating. This will be a key milestone. For the first time in our history, the sons and daughters of the hustlers will own decent houses.

This will elevate them to the class of the wealthier and rich families.

Listen to the critics. President Ruto's position is that the deductions are compulsory. He is therefore pushing the levy down the throat of Kenyans.

I totally disagree. The president had no legal mandate to pass this proposal into law. This power is exercised by parliament.

The members will debate and thereafter each vote either in favor or against each of the clauses.

The process starts with the drafting of the Bill which is then presented to the house for the first reading. No debate at this stage.

First, the Bill has to be subjected to public participation. The relevant committees of house organize the forums, collect and collate the views of the people. This was done.

For starters, the government is made up of three main arms: parliament, executive and Judiciary.

Though each is independent, the law requires them to always embrace the principle of interdependence and complementarity.

Majorly, the role of a Member of Parliament is three pronged: Legislation, oversight and representation.

The President was in fore front of drumming support for Finance Bill 2023. Does this amount to overstepping his legal mandate? No, he is not.

I would have expected Raila to be the last person to oppose this proposal. Why? During the campaigns, the house plan proposal stood out as one of his main election pledges.

If elected President, I will rollout a massive affordable housing plan. Majority of our people, who migrated to urban centers, were living in poor and highly deplorable conditions in slums. 'My government' will build decent houses for them. This is a commitment I have given to you.

Raila would add: A lion share of housing fund will come from employed, civil servants, state officers and other workers. The Government will deduct 1.5 per cent from the payslip of each. President Ruto's administration is collecting the same amount.

Joseph Mutua Ndonga is a writer and political analyst based in Nairobi

DP Meets The Kenya-Colombia Technical Cooperation Team On Coffee Value Chain

The Consultative Meeting Resolve To Among Other Things Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) That Will Create A Framework For Interventions That The Government Is Deploying To Restore The Coffee Sub-Sector

By: DPCS

Worth Noting:

- "On behalf of our President William Ruto and the government, we are grateful for your visit and sharing knowledge and insights with our farmers. We hope there will be improvement on yields, research and marketing," he told the delegation, which has been in the country for five days.
- He continued, "on our cooperative movement, we would like it to embrace the model of the Colombia National Federation of Coffee Growers. We are amending the Cooperatives Act to deal with integrity issues and create transparent and accountable systems. A strong cooperative movement is good for the sector, farmers and the country."

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua chairing the meeting yesterday.

Kenya and Colombia are set to sign agreements to facilitate knowledge exchange on coffee farming and research, Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua said yesterday.

Acknowledging that Colombia is a global top producer of high quality and premium coffee flavours, the Deputy President said the two nations are preparing to strike a formula that will facilitate cooperation between Kenya's Coffee Research Institute and its equivalent body in Colombia.

"The Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) will create a framework for interventions that the government is deploying to restore the coffee sub-sector.

Coffee farmers in Colombia are our big brothers," he said. The MoUs will be signed within the next three months.

The Deputy President spoke at the Official Residence, Karen, when he hosted visiting members of the Colombia National Federation of Coffee Growers and a team working on the Kenya-Colombia Technical Cooperation on Coffee Value Chain.

"On behalf of our President William Ruto and the government, we are grateful for your visit and sharing knowledge and insights with our farmers. We hope there will be improvement on yields, research and marketing," he told the delegation, which has been in the country for five days.

He continued, "on our cooperative movement, we would like it to embrace the model of the Colombia National Federation of Coffee Growers. We are amending the Cooperatives Act to deal with integrity issues and create transparent and accountable systems. A strong cooperative movement is good for the sector, farmers and the country."

Data from the State department of Cooperatives indicate that there are 28,000 registered cooperatives in Kenya and a membership surpassing 14 million.

The Memorandums, DP Gachagua said, will also strengthen the bonds between farmers of the two nations, boost marketing of the Kenyan produce at the international arena and help to shore up the bilateral relations.

The Deputy President said the partnership of the two nations is part of interventions rolled out by President Ruto-led administration to revive the coffee sub-sector and foster the rural economy, since coffee is a crop of smallholder farmers.

Other interventions include amendment of the laws governing the sector, distribution of subsidized fertilizer to farmers, enhancing the Coffee Cherry Fund by Sh6 billion, re-opening the Nairobi Coffee Exchange and upgrading of the coffee quality lab at AFA Coffee Directorate.

"Our Administration has a Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), which empowers people at the bottom. Farmers are central to that model. Coffee is important to our foreign outreach and a major forex exchanger for our country. In the 1980s we were doing well. We want to restore the sub-sector. I visited Colombia last year to see what they are doing and we can embrace their farming practices," said the Deputy President.

He added that the government plans to make the coffee sub-sector semi-autonomous and the Coffee Research Institute (CRI) is being re-energized so that the scientists and researchers can come up with great varieties of the crop.

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Cooperatives and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Simon Chelugui, Colombian Ambassador to Kenya Pedro Leon Cortes Ruiz, Chairperson of the National Assembly Committee on Agriculture and Livestock John Mutunga, New-KPCU chairman Daniel Chemno, Nairobi Coffee Exchange Acting CEO Risper Ndung'u and farmers' representatives were also present at the meeting.

The Deputy President has been spearheading the reforms of the sector.

According to CS Chelugui, the MoUs will touch on collaboration on research which will involve fighting of coffee diseases, management of coffee farming process by CRI and the Colombia coffee growers federation.

"They (Colombians) have an institution that is similar to CRI, which is a facilitative body of the coffee farmers. It is not for profit but the intention is to support farmers to produce high volumes and earn high returns. They have a pricing system that is devoid of manipulation and price-fixing. We want to join the list of top coffee producers in the world," said CS Chelugui.

He continued, "we will begin in earnest and we are requesting them to hold us and push us to be champions in Africa and the region in coffee farming. In less than three months, we will prepare and sign the MoUs. They can send their research scientist to be based at CRI Ruiru to support our researchers and technical team".

Colombian Ambassador to Kenya Pedro Leon Cortes Ruiz said the two nations will collaborate for economic growth.

"Coffee is what we have offered the world for a long time. We are demonstrating we can develop as one. We have also been advancing and building a solid and strong framework working for the good of the two nations. We will continue to offer the best," said the ambassador.

CS Kindiki Reinstates Family Prison Visits

By: Mabel Keya – Shikuku
@themtkenyatimes

Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration Prof. Abraham Kithure Kindiki has ordered the recommencement of regulated family visits in all prisons and correctional facilities in the country.

Prof. Kindiki said the move would allow inmates to interact with their families since Covid-19 which led to the banning of the visits was no longer a threat.

The government had imposed a ban on all prison visits after the first case of coronavirus was confirmed in Kenya on March 13, 2020 where all institutions of learning were also closed for nearly a year.

The ban was initially meant to last for 30 days but was however extended and had not been lifted until the CS made this pronouncement in Naivasha.

Speaking when he visited Naivasha Maximum facility where he commissioned a multi-million milling plant, Kindiki noted that prisoners should have at least one day when their families could visit them, but added that more communication would be made on the matter.

Cabinet Secretary Prof. Kithure Kindiki officially opening the Naivasha prison milling plant.

The multi-million plant will be used to mill flour used by the inmates and other products such as animal feeds which would help bring in some income for the facility.

"When I look at you today, I can see all of you are well. Looking at the ban that was imposed earlier, I don't see the need and why we shouldn't involve you in prison visits by your families and we are therefore going to resume the family reunions and family visitation meetings in all our facilities including Naivasha Maximum Security prison for both male and female inmates," the CS said amid cheers from the inmates.

He also announced that through the 'Power of Mercy' policy, the government proposes to decongest prisons and other correctional facilities by 50 per cent by facilitating virtual court sessions and remodeling the Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure in prisons countrywide to enable expeditious conclusion of pending matters.

"I will be consulting with the Attorney General (AG) so that the plan of Power of Mercy helps to decongest our prisons and all categories of our inmates will be covered by that programme of mercy," Prof. Kindiki stated.

He also reiterated the Government's plan to modernize equipment in all the country`s penal institutions and urged the inmates to submit a proposal on how many computers or laptops and other equipment they required so that the inmates and their paralegals could be supported as they appeared before courts virtually in order to expedite their cases.

Prof. Kindiki also announced that plans were underway to help inmates who acquired some skills while serving their terms to get a small startup capital incentive when they leave prisons in order for them to be able to make use of the skills acquired to make a living so that they don't lapse back into crime.

Data gathered by the Judiciary in 2022 shows that there were close to 60,000 inmates (both on remand and convicted) in Kenya`s about 118 penal institutions of which 115 were for adult offenders whilst three (two of them being Borstal and one youth correctional training centre) were primarily for youth offenders. The Naivasha Maximum Prison has the largest inmates' population in Kenya of approximately 3,000 from all over the country.

CBC Retooling: APBET's Dimension

By: John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

The Alternative Providers of Basic Education and Training (APBET) schools led by their National Chairman Moses Wokono have hailed the Competence-Based Curriculum as the game changer in Kenya's education system.

In education context, retooling is a process that is meant to increase professional knowledge and skills to teachers so that students' learning is improved.

Under a program known as CBC Retooling, several teachers are undergoing a three-days training so as to acquaint themselves with the new curriculum.

This comes after the Government announced that some 56,000 teachers recruited by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) this year will be retrained (retooled) to ensure compliance with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

"The Commission celebrates the pre-primary and primary schoolteachers who have embraced the implementation of CBC and are tirelessly assisting the Kenyan learners to acquire the required core competencies and values," TSC said.

Mr Wokono, addressing the journalists noted that the retooling is critical so as to address some of the teething problems the new system has been facing.

The retooling initiative, particularly for APBET schools, underscores the importance of adapting to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya's education system. It aims to enhance teachers' professional knowledge and skills to better support student learning. This proactive approach reflects a commitment to addressing challenges and ensuring effective implementation of the new curriculum.

The Government's decision to retrain 56,000 teachers recruited by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) this year underscores the commitment to ensuring compliance with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). According to TSC, this move aims to address the challenges encountered in implementing the new system, with Dr. Moses Wokono emphasizing its importance in tackling teething problems.

Dr. Moses Wokono, APBET Chair.

Towards The Goal

Enter immediately without thinking
Don't say tomorrow
What do you do?
Use and appreciate.

Take care of everyone
Don't be sad
Believing in yourself
By winning victories.

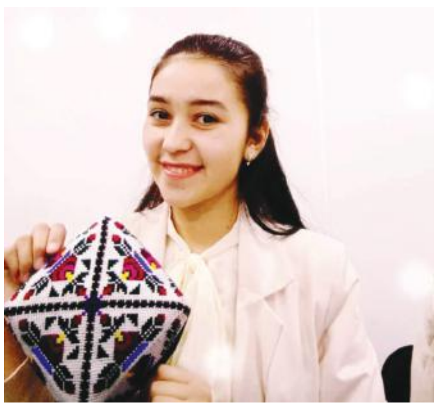
By dividing the time correctly
Do in on time
If you are struggling
Don't stop, keep going.

Withstand the test
Struggle and be patient
Constantly searching
Striving for goals.

✍Ruzmetova Zuhra

Ruzmetova Zuhra Vyacheslavovna November 30, 2006 I was born Uzbekistan in the city Urgench Khorezm region. I am currently a student of the 11th grade of School 14 in the Uzbekistan Urgench city. Appeared on the international website "Synchronized chaos "and I am coordinator of the this international site. and Germany magazine coordinator. My poems have been recognized in more 10 countries. I am the winner of competitions of more 100 national and international organizations. I am the holder of badge "For the international Services"🎖 by the bi wing poets writers association. I have many future dream goals.

Asra, God



He drank from the fountain of Tashkent,
I'm sad, the village stream...
Our nights were bright,
I miss the full moon...

I can't go, it's been two months,
The day I go, I'm waiting...
Tears filled his eyes when he said to cry,
I am quietly laughing...

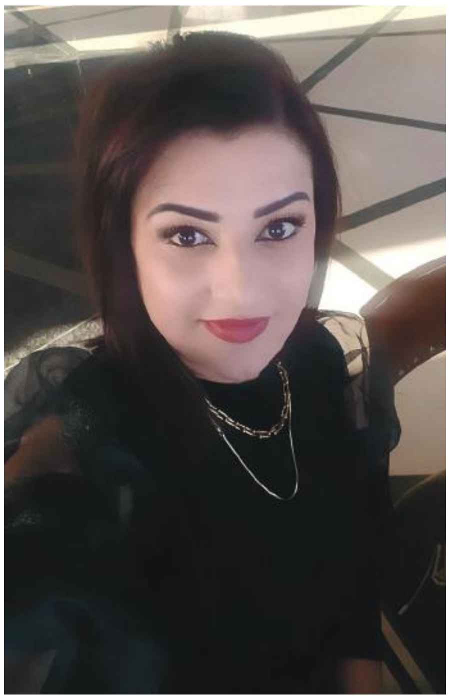
I miss my loved ones
I want to see, I want to go...
I miss you
I want to share my feelings...

Come, spring is fast,
God bless you...
Have a nice day, see you soon,
God bless you...
My dear loved ones...
Keep me in your shelter, God!

Daughter of Saidova Madinabonu Abduhakim is a 1st year student of the Faculty of Uzbek Language and Literature of Tashkent International Financial Management and Technologies University...

Since childhood, Madinabonu loves to write poems and stories. His creative works have also been published in magazines and newspapers. We wish him great success in the future!

Holy Woman!



Carrying the burdens of life on his shoulders,
He did not stop, he forgot the secret of happiness.
Sometimes a thousand sufferings are overcome in patience,
Thought full of gratitude,
The most dear, holy woman in the world!

Interest is poured on every step he takes,
Rays are planted in Nigohin's gaze.
The beauty of the future is sewn on her,
Thought full of gratitude,
The most dear, holy woman in the world!

We cannot travel without the female race, which is an incomparable miracle of our creation.
When we think of a woman, we first of all think of our respectable mother, our dear grandmothers, our munis sisters. No matter how much attention and care we give them, how much we try to make them happy, it is still little. Because these women are the ones who are causing new babies to be heard in the world. There is such a breed in the world that even if we honor him every day and try to make his hearts happy, we cannot do him justice. This is a noble mother.
In our holy religion of Islam, there are many commands to do good to the mother and many warnings about not hurting the mother's tongue. Let's give just one example.
Allah Almighty says in the 23rd verse of Surah Isra:
"Your Lord commanded that you worship Him alone and do good to your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your presence, then do not say "off" to them, do not harm them and speak good words to them!
This sentence has two meanings depending on the word "ugh". The first meaning is that you should not say bad words and disrespect your parents, and the second meaning is that you should not say "ugh" in front of your parents, they will be annoyed because my child has become ill. .
"...don't hurt them and say goodbye to them!"
Don't hurt your parents! If you have a good word, show it to your parents! Rasulullah (s.a.w.) also ordered many times to do good to parents. In addition, in several hadiths, it has been said that the right of the mother is more than the right of the father.
The attention and care given to women in our country is also commendable. Women living in our country have all the conditions they want. As a practical proof of the high respect and concern for women in our country, in the following years, more than 80 measures aimed at strengthening the role and influence of women in the life of society, protecting their legal, social, economic and spiritual interests It should be noted that more national and international documents have been adopted.

On the occasion of the first holiday of spring, March 8 - International Women's Day, I congratulate all our women and sisters, as well as the women's team of general secondary education school No. 32 of Termiz district!
The first holiday of this charming and beautiful season begins with the holiday of our honorable women. Since ancient times, high respect has been shown to women in the East. A woman is a unique miracle of nature, the greatest creation. Actually it is. A woman is a great and honorable being.

Author: Normamatova Mohichekhra, Deputy Director of Spiritual Education, General Secondary School No. 32, Termiz District

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Zoho Announces Partnership With J-Hub Africa To Promote Innovation Among Entrepreneurs And Upskill Students At Zoholics Kenya

By: John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Veerakumar Natarajan, Zoho Kenya Country Head and Premanand Velumani, Regional Manager MEA, Zoho.

Worth Noting:

- As part of the partnership with J-Hub Africa, Zoho will support individuals and startups associated with the hub, by providing them Zoho Wallet Credits up to KES 100,000.
- Zoho Sign, a digital signature app, has partnered with E-CSP TendaWorld Limited, licenced by the Communications Authority of Kenya, to offer legally valid digital signatures.
- In 2023, Zoho has increased its employee count by 33% and partner network by 212% in Kenya. The growth has been driven by Zoho One (a unified platform of over 55 products), Zoho Workplace (enterprise collaboration platform), Zoho CRM Plus (customer experience platform), and Zoho Books (TIMS-compliant, accounting software).

Zoho, a global technology company, yesterday announced its partnership with J-Hub Africa, the digital innovation hub that supports budding innovators and entrepreneurs at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). The company has also partnered with Electronic Certification Service Providers (E-CSP) in order to help local businesses digitally sign legally-valid contracts, and integrated its solutions with Safaricom M-PESA, a Kenyan payment gateway provider. Zoho grew by 41% in Kenya in 2023, making this one of the fastest growing markets in Africa. The announcements were made on the sidelines of Zoholics Kenya, the company's annual user conference, being held at Hyatt Regency in Nairobi.

"Growing with local communities is as important for us as delivering value for our customers through our solutions. We actively endeavour to contribute to overall community progress in Kenya by collaborating with local and hyper-local bodies. Our partnership with J-Hub promotes technology adoption among young innovators and early stage startups, and provides upskilling for students who are about to join the workforce. We are also investing in localising our products to ensure businesses here can easily leverage our solutions while staying compliant with local and global laws," said Veerakumar Natarajan, Country Head, Zoho Kenya.

Partnership with J-Hub

As part of the partnership with J-Hub Africa, Zoho will support individuals and startups associated with the hub, by providing them Zoho Wallet Credits up to KES 100,000. These credits can be used to purchase any of Zoho's 55+ cloud products for any business function such as sales, marketing, HR, accounting, communication, and collaboration. They can also access Zoho One, the operating system for business, wherein they can access multiple Zoho solutions from a single platform. As all Zoho products have been built on the same technology stack, they easily integrate with each other, creating a seamless flow of contextual data.

Furthermore, through this partnership, Zoho will provide training to JKUAT students from technology streams on how to leverage cloud-based business tech to gain a competitive advantage. This will include training on Zoho Creator, a low code platform that can help them create custom apps for various business needs, Zoho CRM, customer relationship management platform for managing sales and marketing, and Zoho Books that will help companies manage their finances, while staying compliant with the TIMS and VAT regulations. The upskilling initiative will help empower students with technology skills for when they join the workforce, irrespective of the industry.

Dr. Lawrence Nderu, Chairman of the Department of Computing at JKUAT, said, 'We are delighted to embark on this transformative journey with Zoho. This is a collaboration that promises to significantly enhance the innovation landscape both within and outside the JKUAT campus. Furthermore, this alliance opens a pathway for our IT division students to gain technical skills in the context of various business functions. This initiative is a testament to our commitment to integrating practical skillsets with our academic curriculum, ensuring our students are well-equipped to navigate and excel in the ever-evolving tech industry."

Zoho Sign partnership with E-CSP

Zoho Sign, a digital signature app, has partnered with E-CSP TendaWorld Limited, licenced by the Communications Authority of Kenya, to offer legally valid digital signatures. With this, Kenyan businesses can execute digital signatures for contracts and agreements, compliant with both Kenyan and global laws. Zoho Sign integrates with over 100 third-party applications such as Zoho CRM, Zoho Recruit, Zoho Books, Microsoft Teams, Google Workspace, Zapier, and more. This integration allows companies to use Zoho Sign from within the application of their choice. Zoho Sign offers blockchain timestamping, generative AI capabilities, and controls for life-sciences. Zoho will provide free migration and onboarding assistance for Kenyan businesses who want to switch to Zoho Sign.

Integration with Safaricom M-PESA

Offering customers the option to pay online helps businesses get paid sooner, thereby improving cash flow. The integration of Safaricom M-PESA with Zoho's finance suite of applications like Zoho Books (TIMS-compliant accounting software), Zoho Inventory (order and inventory management software), and Zoho Billing (end-to-end billing solution) will assist businesses in accepting online payments. Customers can make payments through customer portal or via the provided payment link. Once the payments are made, the corresponding invoices will be automatically marked as paid within these applications, eliminating the need for manual entry.

Growth in Kenya

In 2023, Zoho has increased its employee count by 33% and partner network by 212% in Kenya. The growth has been driven by Zoho One (a unified platform of over 55 products), Zoho Workplace (enterprise collaboration platform), Zoho CRM Plus (customer experience platform), and Zoho Books (TIMS-compliant, accounting software). The top industries driving this growth are: retail, insurance, financial services, IT hardware and IT related services.

"Kenya's growing digital economy and the resulting uptick in cloud adoption among businesses have largely contributed to Zoho's growth in the country. Our customers particularly value the localisation in our products, such as robust integrations with regional vendors for e-signing, online payments, and other business operations, and the ability to buy Zoho apps in KES. As the needs of Kenyan businesses continue to increase and evolve in this digital era, Zoho is well-placed and committed to supporting and empowering them with its robust tech stack," said Premanand Velumani, Regional Manager, Middle East and Africa, Zoho.

CS Chirchir Promises To Ensure Compensation To Victims Of Embakasi Gas Explosion

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

Nyeri County Senator Wahome Wamatinga during yesterday's session.

Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir making a point during yesterday's session.

Energy Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir has assured the Senate that the victims of the recent gas explosion in Embakasi, Nairobi, will receive compensation.

The CS told Members of Energy Committee that the matter of compensation of the victims is under consideration but cautioned that the matter could be delayed because disaster management is not under is docket.

The National Disaster Committee is situated in the Office of the Deputy President and according to CS Chirchir it should have facilitated the compensation to the victims of the tragedy within a short time.

The CS promised to take up the matter with the Disaster committee and urge them to expedite the process since most survivors are still homeless.

"I will engage the National Disaster Committee to know where they have reached with the compensation to the victims," said Chirchir when he gave the committee, chaired by Senator Wahome Wamatinga, the commitment.

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna had wanted to know why the National Government had failed to compensate the victims who either lost their lives or got injured in the explosion.

"There are victims who lost their lives and have been buried, those who went to the hospital have been discharged but the government is yet to compensate the victims," complained senator Sifuna.

Mr Daniel Kiptoo, the Director General of Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) accused the owner of the gas refilling station, Mr Dedan Kimathi, for diverting a tanker from offloading the gas into a licensed operator in the middle of the night and instead had it offloaded in to his facility straight from the manhole of the tanker.

According to EPRA, 32 out of 138 gas filling stations operating in various parts of the country had been closed down as they scored less than 50 per cent technical audit score while others did not meet the requirement to operate such a facility.

National Assembly Committee Concludes Scrutiny Of Social Health Insurance Regulations

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the stakeholders during the forum.

The National Assembly Delegated Legislation Committee, chaired by Samuel Chepkonga (Ainabkoi), has completed its scrutiny of the proposed new Social Health Insurance Regulations.

Members of the House team yesterday wrapped up a two-day pre-publication scrutiny of the draft Social Health Insurance (General) Regulations, 2024, and Social Health (Dispute Resolutions Tribunal) Regulations, 2024.

The conclusion of this important legislative exercise now paves the way for the Office of the Attorney General to publish the regulations.

Should the Attorney General publish the regulations, Health CS Susan Nakhumicha will then be required to submit them to parliament within seven sitting days for further scrutiny to ensure their conformity with the constitution and relevant statutes.

During the scrutiny of the draft Social Health Insurance (General) Regulations, 2024, a contentious issue emerged regarding the requirement for each spouse to contribute to the new Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF) scheme.

Chepkonga questioned the rationale behind an additional premium for each additional spouse.

"If there is no limit on the number of beneficiaries one can list under their cover, why is a contributor required to pay an additional premium for each additional spouse?" posed the Committee chairperson.

Mary Muthoni, the PS for the State Department of Public Health and Professionals Standards, addressed the concern.

"In the spirit of equity and equitability, it is only fair that the contributor makes an additional payment for each spouse. The income is that of a household, which means it is the total income of all spouses," explained the PS.

Additionally, Members sought clarification on the proof of marriage required before registering a spouse as a beneficiary. MPs warned against requesting a marriage certificate, as it could exclude many Kenyans who haven't formalized their unions.

The Health CS reassured lawmakers that the original provision requiring a marriage certificate under the Marriage Act as proof of marriage has been amended.

"There was an outcry from the public during countrywide public participation. This led to the amendment to require proof of marriage only," stated CS Nakhumicha.

Private Security Actors, Should Embrace Public Participation Forums

By: Dennis Wendo
Email:dambehi@gmail.com

The Private Security Regulation Act, 2016 set forth regulations and a framework for cooperation between the private security services industry and the state agencies that deal with security in accordance with the values and principles set out in the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

The industry now anchored under the Ministry of Interior and National Administration established Private Security Regulatory Authority (PSRA), whose mandate is to ensure effective administration, supervision, regulation and control of all the private security services as well as formulate and enforce standards for the conduct in the republic of Kenya.

In November 2019, the parliamentary committee on delegated legislation annulled the proposed Private Security (General) Guidelines, 2019 drawn by the Ministry of Interior and meant to operationalize the Private Security Regulation Act, 2016. The committee cited a lack of public participation in the process of formulating the guidelines as the principal rationale for declining the regulations in entirety. The report was adopted by parliament.

Judiciously, chapter 8 of the Constitution of Kenya, establishes the legislature as the grand law-making body. Article 94(5) precludes all other persons or bodies from making provisions except under authority conferred by the Constitution or by legislation. It is only in certain isolated cases that parliament may pass an Act without making provisions relating to the essential matters of implementation. In such a scenario with the law in force, it is left to the executing body to propose provisions for the Act. Notably, parliament under strict supervision may also delegate its legislative authority to certain Government agencies for purposes of coming up with subsidiary legislation.

For close to 5 years, the operations of the private security industry in the country have appeared to be in vacuity. Sectoral actors have continued to apportion unending incriminations against each other and to the Government at large. These rifts and wrangles including court battles have deterred reforms in the industry.

The majority of private security service providers operate below the required minimum threshold standards. The trickle down effect has yielded preferential non- competitive tendering processes through under-cutting, minimum concern to the general welfare of workers and corruption among other vices in the sector.

Whether viewed as escapism or not, stakeholders continue to attribute the challenges and impunity in place as an output of non- existence of sectoral guidelines.

The Ministry of Interior and National Administration is re-envisioning the establishment of private security (General) guidelines, 2024 as provided for under the provisions of the Private Security Regulation Act No.13 of 2016. This is a fresh opportunity for the private security providers, employers, employees, consumers of private security services, Unions and the general public to mold the desired footpath by actively submitting their views, proposals and memoranda to the cabinet Secretary, Ministry of interior and National Administration or at any of County Commissioners offices in the 47 Counties. The window for submission is bound to elapse by 12th March 2024. All actors are on notice to provide their input in particular on clauses touching on the procedure for the appointment of members of PSRA board, the general guidelines, fidelity fund operations and use of animals in private security services.

The gravity of public participation is captured in Article 118 of the Constitution. It is therefore salient for employer associations such as KSIA, PROSAK, MSIA, PSIA, the workers Union; KNPSWU and the labor Centre; COTU(K) to conceptualize and embrace public participation as a foundational principle of democracy. It is fundamental to the functioning of a democratic system of governance as stated in chapter 1 of the Constitution of Kenya.

Notably, citizenry public participation both at the county and national government levels remains a grey area of concern and continues to be an outcry to a majority with many citing lack of awareness, involvement and deliberate skewing of such forums for self-interests. Citizen involvement in policy-making and implementation strengthens and deepens good governance. International and regional accords to which Kenya is a signatory are spurring governments to take steps to improve transparency and accountability through public participation.

Stakeholders need not to be at the fence but actively engage, critic the proposed new regulations and adopt that which is objectively addressing the concerns of the private security sector in fairness.This will go along way in realizing good governance, mechanisms of checks and balances as well as avenues of sealing corruption loopholes. It will further encourage the players to have meaningful input into the decision-making process and provide the opportunity for communication between agencies making decisions and the public.

Dennis Wendo
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Integrated Development Network (IDN-Kenya) - Champions of Warfare Against Terrorism and Violent Extremism

By: Our Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

Integrated Development Network is an international NGO headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.

It is an independent, not for profit making organization that is providing cutting edge research and monitoring on governance, security, peace and cohesion as well as youths and women empowerment.

Their reports, policy briefs and the overall works have added value to reform processes locally and globally by stimulating policy discussions and supporting evidence-based awareness and campaigns to address the emerging structural challenges.

The NGO is among the leading organizations in the region and Africa in the forefront towards the fight against radicalization, terrorism, violent extremism and SGBV.

Led by Dennis Wendo; IDN-Kenya regional co-ordinator, the NGO paid a courtesy call to CMD-Kenya HeadQuarters in Nairobi.The consultative deliberations zeroed on progressive engagement in the areas of Governance, Research, Cohesion, Policy Advocacy and Awareness .

The talks delved further on Youths and Women empowerment & training programs including but not limited to the upcoming People's Dialogue Festival (PDF) scheduled to take place from 6th -9th March, 2024 at the University of Nairobi grounds and the Gumzo mtaani event(s).

The NGO intends to collaborate with CMD-Kenya and other like-minded social partners either state or non-state actors by supporting programs geared towards engaging the youths and women that largely remain vulnerable and victims of target.

L-R : Dennis Wendo, IDN-Kenya Regional Co-ordinator, Grace Wanjiru, IDN-Kenya Executive Administration Officer and Range Mwita, CMD-Kenya Programs Officer.

Trans Nzoia: Reviving "The Black Gold" As Coffee Farmers Call For Full Actualization Of The Reforms

By: Sefu Sabila
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Black gold as famously known, coffee farming was indespansable in the contribution to growth of the country's economic, which is agricultural based. Although, for decades, the coffee sector has been dwindling and a decline in production recorded.

In between 1960s to late1980s, coffee farming was a luxurious source of income and cash crop for the country. Affirming of the great contribution of coffee in many development projects, Cooperatives and Micro Small Enterprises MSMEs Simon Chelugui while speaking in Cooperatives meeting in December said, that proceeds from the coffee, led to realization of many projects in the country.

The Fall of the Coffee Sector

"Between 1960s and mid-1980s, the industry was booming and most of the impressive development prospects was realized in coffee growing counties due to proceeds from the cash crop before the export earnings plunged and started recording a decline since 1987/88 crop year when it attained 129, 637 metric tonnes, "said Chelugui during a Cooperative leaders meeting.

The sector has been malled with a lot of challenges, Mrs. Barasa a retired teacher from Nabisawa Ward Saboti Constituency in Trans Nzoia County, ventured into small scale coffee farming in 2002. Born and raised by coffee parents, it was not a new thing for her, as she had prior knowledge about coffee farming.

Coffee according to her is a golden source of income, as payments are made through dollars. But the sector has been neglected and affected by many issues in the country, including cartels and middlemen, to fluctuation of prices in the recent years.

"I was raised through coffee farming, through the returns received. Coffee was known for many years as black gold. It is a very potential source of income. For a while we have been exploited by the cartels and brokers, this really affected the morale of farmers in production as the returns were less as compared to the input." Mrs Barasa said.

"As compared to a farmer investing in maize production in one acre, to one producing coffee, the returns from coffee are high, as compared to the maize. And interestingly, we were paid through dollars. We all know the value of dollar. It is a potential sector that needs to be watched. However, this doesn't mean we neglect venturing into other sectors of production." Mrs. Barasa further explained.

Governor George Natembeya and Cooperatives CS Simon Chelugui during the coffee Cherry Advance Revolving Fund in Trans Nzoia County in January.

Apart from the fluctuation of prices and Middlemen who were reaping more than the farmers as acknowledged by Mrs. Barasa, other challenges that the sector faced leading to its downfall included;

- Poor leadership
- Lack of finances
- Competition from other beverages like tea
- Splitting of Coffee Cooperative societies into small units resulting to coffee farmers moving into other sectors.

However, in June 2023, the enthusiasm and optimism by the Kenya Kwanza government to restore the lost glory of coffee production began in Meru, during a two-day National Coffee Conference led by the Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.

During the conference, the DP expressed the government's commitment to revive the luxurious cash crop in small and larger producing coffee farmers across all 47 Counties. In the conference, key resolutions to reform the sector were made, in which the DP said was the government will work on ensuring the implementation of the reforms. He affirmed his efforts to ensure the Coffee Bill to be presented in the Senate, currently at the second reading stage, is passed and fully implemented by the sector.

"This conference is not a talk show. This sub-sector must be turned around urgently. The secretariat will put together the recommendations and ensure they come up with the necessary pieces of legislation, policies and administrative actions to be undertaken," The DP said during the conference.

The Coffee Bill 2023 and Coffee Policy before the Senate, seeks to re-establish the Coffee Board of Kenya and The Coffee Research Institute as independent bodies. This among major Milestones made in reviving the sector.

Reforms Implemented in The Coffee Sector

Expressing his absolute confidence in the proposed reforms to revive the deteriorating sector, CS Chelugui says the Kenya Kwanza is committed to create wealth as deep into the rural are easy in the country, where agriculture is the major of livelihood.

"Creation of wealth in rural areas is one key targetted agenda of the Kenya Kwanza government, agriculture as one the economic drive sub-sector, through empowering farmers in access of affordable financing for coffee farmers, through Coffee Cherry Advance Revolving Fund." CS Chelugui said.

Other recent reforms in the 2023 efforts to restore the lost glory of the sector include;

- Rise in price of a kilo of coffee from Kshs 20 to Kshs 80 per kilo
- Increasing production from 51,000 tonnes to 100,000 tonnes annually
- Provide affordable financing for farmers through Coffee Cherry Advance Revolving Fund
- Licensing coffee value chain participants
- Empower Pest Control Board to regulate pesticides to fight coffee pests

According to Christine Barasa, a small scale coffee farmer in Nabiswa ward Trans Nzoia County, the new reforms are a win to the coffee sector, if all reforms are actualized farmers will smile at the end of the day. Many farmers have been selling their coffee through the New Kenya Planters Cooperatives Union (KPCU), which is mandated to manage and offer the cherry funds to farmers

Farmers attending the meeting to revive coffee pledging to work on more coffee production in the county.

"While the CS was around in January, he urged farmers to go for the cherry funds. But this is given according to what the farmers have produced. It's voluntarily, and I can appreciate that a majority of farmers have are going for the funds at the new KPCU, where they are getting the funds." Mrs. Barasa said.

The funds according to the CS, is meant to help coffee farmers access credit and guarantee minimum returns, so as to boost the morale of farmers in producing more coffee.

The creation of the licensing coffee value chain participants that will involve county government, Capital Market's Authority (CMA), Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) established will help farmers, through their coffee broker companies to access and participate in commodity marketing and auction, as long as their broker is licensed.

According to Mrs. Barasa, the new reforms to revive the sector are a bitter sweet move. With the sector full of policies and procedures, a lot is set to be done including thorough education of farmers to understand the new policies.

"One thing about the new reforms is that farmers, we farmers are able to sell our coffee directly to the millers that are licensed. We are glad that we can do the negotiates of our produce, unlike previously where middlemen were the beneficiaries of our efforts. Honestly Kshs. 80 is a step to coffee farmers, it is way better than the previous amount of Kshs. 20." Mrs. Barasa explained.

With the reforms geared towards stabilizing the sector in the country to meet global standards, Mrs. Barasa says the large scale producers will be disadvantage as the small scale farmers are making sure their coffee meet the global set standards before selling it, yielding higher sales.

As of December, according to Nairobi Coffee Exchange (NCE), CEO Lisper Ndungu, the average prices during the auction was USD 194.22 equivalent to Kshs 29,90.88 highest, as compared to previously USD 186.55 equated to Kshs 28,728.70, in just three months after the reopening in August by DP Rigathi Gachagua.

"For now exporters are getting a tough competition for those selling their coffee locally, let's use the pricing at the NCE, those farmers from around from Mt. Kenya region can benefit from it instead if selling it abroad. It's undoubtedly that local farmers will benefit from these reforms as compared to exporters."Mrs.Barasa said.

However, the new reforms haven't been shielded from shortcomings, according to Mrs. Barasa:

- Some policies have not been finalized thus
- Lack of clarity and confusion in a majority of farmers over the policies, the new change of policies are not clear to farmers
- Some farmers have not sold their coffee yet as their brokerage company have not been licenced.
- A Lot of documentation and policies to access the cherry funds.

With reforms welcomed by coffee farmers and stakeholders, Mrs. Barasa says the implementation process and the actualization in fully, as the sector is a potential economic sector in the country, she says Trans Nzoia County in areas such as Mt. Elgon and Cherangany have a great potential to produce coffee in large scale.

With optimism from the government that the new reforms will restore the status of coffee 'black gold', Mrs. Barasa says she is in bid to promote coffee production and consumption among Kenyans.

"It is very funny that some farmers do not know the taste of their produce, they all do for commercial purposes, but we are trying to promote not only production, but also consumption among residents of Kenya, Kenyans are not consumers of coffee in large, but we want to encourage that of consuming our local made products." Mrs. Barasa stated.

Nakuru Unveils Sh117 Billion County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027

By: Anne Mwale
@themtkenyatimes

Nakuru county government has unveiled its County Integrated Development Programme (CIDP) that will guide the implementation of development projects on time and within the budget in the next five years.

The Sh117 billion CIDP is largely focused on achieving industrialisation by transforming the region's economic structure of subsistence farming to agricultural-led industrialisation.

Governor Susan Kihika indicated that the CIDP 2023-2027 would also guide her economic development agenda for the next five years.

The 3rd generation CIDP is in line with the constitutional requirement that no government resources should be appropriated outside a planning framework.

Speaking during the launch at Nyayo Gardens in Nakuru, Ms Kihika said the document had been subjected to scrutiny by various stakeholders, including the public, and the County Assembly.

Guided by the CIDP, Ms Kihika pledged that her administration would promote sustainable agricultural practices, support smallholder farmers, and create value-addition opportunities to ensure food security and boost the agro-based economy.

In the infrastructure sector, the county boss indicated that priority would be made on the expansion and maintenance of road networks through the Imarisha Barabara programme, and the enhancement of digital superhighway in the county.

"Grading and gravelling of 2000 kilometres of earth road through the Imarisha Barabara programme and tarmacking 66 kilometres of roads within urban centres are among the plans contained in the document," Kihika said.

She said her administration would explore the use of solar energy to power 80 percent of street lights under the County Street Lighting master plan programme.

The governor added, "The county will further seek to improve the healthcare facilities to enhance access to quality and affordable healthcare services. The county government is committed to invest in quality education and skills development initiatives in order to improve the transition rate in Early Child Development Education and graduation rate in Vocational Training Centres."

Ms. Kihika who was flanked by Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba, Governors Ken Lusaka (Bungoma), Wesley Rotich (Elgeyo Marakwet), Nakuru Town East MP David Gikaria, County Executive Committee Member (CECM) in charge of Finance and Economic Planning Mr Stephen Iribe Njogu and Nakuru County Assembly Speaker Joel Karuri affirmed that her government would further endeavour to improve the water access and coverage and achieve sustainable environmental management.

"My administration is dedicated to fostering a conducive business environment, promoting entrepreneurship, and positioning Nakuru County as an attractive destination for local and international investors. In addition, the County is committed to empowering vulnerable and marginalised groups to ensure that no one is left behind," stated the governor.

The formulation of the CIDP III was spearheaded by the County Division of Economic Planning, with guidance from the State Department for Economic Planning.

The process focused on the core functions of the county government and applied a consultative approach to ensure the interests of various stakeholders are captured.

The governor noted that the document has taken into consideration her manifesto, the national government manifesto, the Vision 2030 blueprint, and the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda.

Ms Kihika also launched the County Statistical Abstract (CSA), which serves as a comprehensive compilation of key statistics relating to the social, political, and economic aspects of the county.

She said the document also plays a crucial role in providing reliable and up-to-date statistical information for policymakers and planners.

Under the social sector, the plan outlines health, water and sanitation, education, wealth creation, food security, social development and good governance as major issues that the devolved unit's administration will deal with.

In the productive sectors, the County Government aspires to upscale investment opportunities to create employment.

The plan aims at improving the productivity of farmers by a number of interventions which include adoption of a productive agri-business model, revamping of extension services, use of improved seedlings and provision of better agricultural infrastructure.

The Governor singled out eight vital development areas to be implemented within the said period, with emphasis on completing projects and programmes initiated by her predecessor in the last five years.

"It would be foolish to fail to complete projects that were initiated by my predecessor. It would be a waste of tax-payers money," she said, adding that her decision was informed by good governance practice.

The CIDP aims to operationalise and upgrade eight sub-county health facilities into Level Four hospitals offering standard quality healthcare.

The healthcare plan also includes recruiting and placing health workers and sustainably increasing the budget for preventive-curative medical services.

There will be significant investments in sports infrastructure too, as well as promotion of youth talents. The new plan aims at leaving no one behind by mainstreaming crucial issues around gender, youth, and disability.

On Education, Kihika plans to complete ongoing Early Childhood Education Centres (EDEC), construct nine model ECD centres, recruit and post 350 teachers annually, and recruit, and post 300 Vocational Training Centre instructors.

The document contains a plan to increase access to market services, through renovating 23 existing markets and the construction of 25 new ones.

The county plans to increase food security through the induction of farmers on best agricultural practices that will enhance food production.

The plan will give an overall framework for development, and integrate the long-term spatial, sector and urban plans with inputs from the governor's manifesto, national government programmes, past county development performance, and expectations from the public of other development actors.

Dr Lusaka described the CIDP as an important document to align Kihika's manifesto to the county development agenda.

"Kihika will succeed in implementing the manifesto in five years, but she needs the support of senior county officials who she has employed to support her vision and mission for the county," he said.

The Bungoma Governor challenged county officials to be loyal and supportive of the governor for her to succeed in transforming the county.

"We are here today as witnesses that she will succeed in her agenda for the county," he said.

Lusaka urged the National Treasury to expedite the release of funds for counties to avert a shutdown.

"We call upon the National Treasury to ensure timely and predictable disbursement of equitable share to all the 47 counties in line with the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act 2017 that dictates that funds be received by counties by the 15th of every month," he said.

Governor Rotich said the plan is impressive and will go a long way in improving service delivery and economic growth of Nakuru County.

He hailed Kihika for being among the first female governors in the Rift Valley, saying she has shown a good example of leadership to girls across the region.

Gikaria said after serving as a mayor and a councillor in the defunct Nakuru Municipality, he was confident that the CIDP was well-developed and focused on key areas of development.

"I have served this city as a mayor and a councillor, and I know that this CIDP will be key in Kihika's development agenda," he said.

To effectively finance CIDP III, the County Government is keen on deepening Public-Private partnerships in addition to improving revenue collections through automation to seal gaps through which leakages happen.

Njogu stated that the devolved unit's mission entails a re-invigoration of the county's economic landscape, orchestrating perpetual market and street illumination to foster a round-the-clock economy for the business community.

The CECM affirmed that the county's pursuit of the outlined development plan would seamlessly integrate with overarching global frameworks.

This includes the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, Africa's Agenda 2063, and the Fourth Medium Plan of Kenya Vision 2030.

"We shall augment investments in micro, small, and medium enterprises. To spur growth, we are working with the national government to establish an industrial park to help achieve the infrastructural economies of scale and aggression," Mr Njogu stated.

He further reiterated the county's commitment to proactive measures against climate change and its repercussions, demonstrating an amplified dedication to climate resilience and endorsing sustainable practices as a means of mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Nakuru county governor Susan Kihika flanked by Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba, Governors Ken Lusaka (Bungoma), Wesley Rotich (Elgeyo Marakwet), Nakuru Town East MP David Gikaria, County Executive Committee Member (CECM) in charge of Finance and Economic Planning Mr Stephen Iribe Njogu and Nakuru County Assembly Speaker Joel Karuri during the launching of the CIDP...

Worth Noting:

- **Guided by the CIDP, Ms Kihika pledged that her administration would promote sustainable agricultural practices, support smallholder farmers, and create value-addition opportunities to ensure food security and boost the agro-based economy.**
- **In the infrastructure sector, the county boss indicated that priority would be made on the expansion and maintenance of road networks through the Imarisha Barabara programme, and the enhancement of digital superhighway in the county.**
- **"Grading and gravelling of 2000 kilometres of earth road through the Imarisha Barabara programme and tarmacking 66 kilometres of roads within urban centres are among the plans contained in the document," Kihika said.**

Sports >> *Al-Nassr forward Cristiano Ronaldo has been banned for one match for "provoking fans" following the Saudi Pro League win over Al-Shabab.

Cristiano Ronaldo Banned And Fined For Gesture To Fans After 'Messi' Chants

Al-Nassr forward Cristiano Ronaldo has been banned for one match for "provoking fans" following the Saudi Pro League win over Al-Shabab.

Al Shabab supporters chanted "Messi" – Ronaldo's long-term rival Lionel Messi – after Sunday's 3-2 defeat in Riyadh.

Portugal captain Ronaldo, 39, cupped his hand to his ear and made a gesture to the fans.

He has also been fined 30,000 Saudi Riyals (Approx Sh1.2mn) by the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF).

The SAFF disciplinary and ethics committee said Ronaldo cannot appeal against the decision.

Ronaldo opened the scoring from the penalty spot, but Al-Shabab twice came from behind before Talisca scored an 87th-minute winner.

Ronaldo joined Al-Nassr on a free transfer from Manchester United in December 2022 for reportedly the biggest football salary in history.

He has scored 20 goals in 22 league games this season for Al-Nassr, who are second in the table behind Al-Hilal.

BBC

Cristiano Ronaldo during a past match. PHOTO/BR Football/Twitter

Sports >> *Wayne Rooney says he is aiming for a quick return to management in order to help fulfil his dream of taking charge of Manchester United or Everton.

Legend Wayne Rooney Dreams Of Managing Man Utd Or Everton In The Next 10 Years

England's Wayne Rooney.

Wayne Rooney says he is aiming for a quick return to management in order to help fulfil his dream of taking charge of Manchester United or Everton.

The ex-United and Everton striker was sacked by Championship side Birmingham in January after 83 days in charge.

Rooney previously had spells in charge of Derby County and MLS side DC United.

"Managing Manchester United or Everton is the aim, these big jobs are where you want to get to," the ex-England captain said on Match of the Day.

"But it's a process," added Rooney, 38. "I have got to go through the steps and get myself back on track."

Speaking while he was working as a pundit on United's FA Cup tie at Nottingham Forest, he said: "I want to get myself back into management to make sure in the next 10 years I'm hopefully in a position to go into one of the big jobs."

Rooney was appointed as Birmingham boss on 11 October, following the controversial decision to dismiss John Eustace with Blues sixth in the Championship.

Under the former forward, they lost nine of 15 games and dropped to 20th in the table.

Rooney was sacked after a 3-0 loss at Leeds United on 2 January.

"I definitely want to get back into management. It was a setback what happened at Birmingham but I'm a fighter and I want to get back into it," he said.

"You know as a manager [being sacked] is part of the job and you will have setbacks. It's about how you bounce back.

"I've had some good time to reflect and will make sure I get it right next time."

BBC

SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

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Government Partners With St. John`S Ambulance To Build Trauma Centres

By: Mabel Keya – Shikuku
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- The trauma centre at Karai is one of the two establishments dedicated to offer emergency medical services to stabilize accident victims before being referred to health facilities for further treatment.
- Speaking during the launch of the centre, St. Johns Ambulance Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. James Njagi said the move to set up the centre was informed by the high number of accidents reported along the stretch.
- In order to save more lives on the roads in times of accidents, Njagi appeals to other stakeholders to come on board and support St. Johns Ambulance set up more trauma centres across the country to offer emergency response in times of accidents.

During a First Aid training session.

Road safety in the country has been a priority for both the government and private sector, with stakeholders trying to come up with different mechanisms to reduce the number of road accidents that have claimed many lives and left many other victims with life-threatening injuries.

According to data from the 2023 Economic Survey, 4,690 deaths were reported on our roads in 2022 as compared to 4,579 in 2021, presenting an increase of 111 fatalities representing an increase of 2.4 percent.

Further statistics from the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) show that as of October 2023, the country reported 3,609 deaths marking an 8.9 per cent drop compared to 2022 where 3,936 fatalities were reported in the same period. This can be attributed to efforts being put in by stakeholders to tame road carnage.

Following the spike in accidents, the government together with St. Johns Ambulance have partnered to set up an emergency trauma centre at the Karai area in Naivasha, a major blackspot along the A104 road.

The trauma centre at Karai is one of the two establishments dedicated to offer emergency medical services to stabilize accident victims before being referred to health facilities for further treatment.

Speaking during the launch of the centre, St. Johns Ambulance Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. James Njagi said the move to set up the centre was informed by the high number of accidents reported along the stretch.

In order to save more lives on the roads in times of accidents, Njagi appeals to other stakeholders to come on board and support St. Johns Ambulance set up more trauma centres across the country to offer emergency response in times of accidents.

"We are appealing to other partners to assist us so that we can open more trauma centres along our major roads and this will save tens of lives," he says.

The CEO said there were currently 19 highway stations on the northern corridor stretch from Mombasa to Malaba but plans were underway to increase the number to 200.

NTSA estimates that more than 3,000 Kenyans died from road accidents every year – costing the country anywhere between 3-5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). 83 per cent of the fatalities were men, with individuals aged between 30-34 years being most at risk, thus robbing the country of a very productive age bracket. But the World Health Organization (WHO) puts the figures at much higher. Sadly and clearly as the statistics from NTSA are showing, these numbers have been increasing every year.

Many of the accidents occur over the weekends and holidays with the hours 5:00pm-8:00am being considered as peak accident hours with drunk driving and carelessness being cited as some of the major causes.

The majority of these people who die in these accidents are vulnerable road users – pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists. In addition, nearly one-third of deaths are among passengers – many of whom are killed in unsafe forms of public transportation.

The A104 Nairobi – Malaba road which is part of the northern corridor despite being an economic lifeline not only for Kenya but for the entire East Africa region, connecting the port of Mombasa to neighbouring land locked countries like Uganda and DRC Congo, has unfortunately also been a major contributor to road carnage in the country.

Aside from the cargo transported on this route from the port of Mombasa, thousands of travelers ply this highway that connects the capital of Kenya to the western part of the country and its neighbouring countries.

However, with the many benefits accruing from this road and just like many other roads in the country, incidences of accidents have been on the rise with some being very fatal leading to loss of lives.

In a report released by the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), over 4,000 people lost their lives in the country last year alone as a result of road accidents and as of February this year, 659 people had already died in road accidents, 252 of them being pedestrians.

The Government and other stakeholders have put in place several mitigation measures, in a bid to curb the rising incidences of road accidents in the country that have caused untold suffering to many families and victims of road carnage.

Among the initiatives include the erection of road signs in blackspot areas, re-designing road infrastructure and the installation of speed cameras on major highways to monitor rogue drivers, all these geared towards ensuring that cases of road accidents are reduced by 50 per cent.

The installation of speed cameras has been hailed as a game changer, especially in the counties of Nairobi, Nakuru, Kiambu and Machakos that lead in deaths as a result of road accidents, representing 36 per cent of the total fatalities recorded in 2022.

According to NTSA Director of Road Safety Dr. Andrew Kiplagat, the initiatives have started bearing fruits noting that there is a slight decline in the number of deaths witnessed last year.

"Last year, we lost over 4,000 people which was a decline compared to the previous year where we lost over 4,600 people on our roads but we are still concerned about the high number of accidents involving pedestrians," he says.

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