

# Africa *woman*

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN IN AFRICA ● APRIL 2002

*Polygamy may be biggest factor in forcing women into poverty*

## Do men need kids for status?

By Nabusayi L. Wamboka

**THERE** are two sayings among traditional Ugandan men, "The hands of one wife are not enough for prosperity and secure living," and "The more we are, the bigger I am." This thinking means more children and more wives and therefore more respect for men in society.

Polygamy in Uganda is legally acceptable and today many men have a town wife, village wife and social wife. Because infertility is still considered a curse, women compete on the number of children they bear.

According to Matovu I.D. Vero, a

researcher with the Department of Women Studies at Makerere University, "It not only proves to the people the man's sexual prowess, it gives men the assurance of economic and social protection." But polygamy – once considered a God-given right – may be the biggest factor forcing women into poverty. The newly-released *State of Uganda Population Report 2001* says the fertility rate is high and increasing, with the average rate at seven children per woman.

There is little women can do as they have no sexual rights and no access to family planning.

Lucy Alebo, of the internally displaced peoples camp in Katakwi in Eastern Uganda, has five children, is pregnant, and supports three brothers and four in-laws. "My husband forbids me to use family planning, so each year I have another baby," she says. Alebo says there is not enough food to feed them but 'what can I do?'

Ogwer Silver – also of Katakwi – sticks to the traditional Ugandan man's attitude, "We can't allow women to go astray and get diseases like AIDS; family planning spoils them. We must make them pregnant and have children until they are too old for other men."

Last year non-governmental organisations launched a campaign to involve men in reproductive health programmes since they are the decision makers as well as bread earners in most homes. The campaign has been given urgency by the spread of AIDS in the camps.

**The woman who may have made the difference – See page 4**



### Kiosk demolition: Political game to silence women?

An Archbishop has called on the Kenyan government to stop demolishing food kiosks or risk sparking chaos. The Catholic Archbishop Zacheus Okoth suggests the small wooden shops – most run by women – have been targeted for political reasons in the run-up to the Presidential election. The same pattern seems to be emerging in Uganda and Zimbabwe – all countries with Presidential elections this year. Are the grassroots women of the markets feared by African leaders?

– See Page 5

## Inside

**2. Kenyan women take bull by the horns**

**6. Zimbabwe women want food, not isolation**

**7. A giant tree has fallen: Tribute to Esther Ocloo**

## Nigeria attacks West as Safiya escapes stoning

**THE** Nigerian Women's Minister described Safiya's acquittal as "the greatest day of my life" and promised to give her accommodation and training for a new future.

Hussaini Tungar Tudu, the Nigerian Minister of Women Affairs said "Her victory is not just for her alone, but for all the women in this country."

If she had lost the case, the guilt and burden of adultery would have rubbed off on the womenfolk in this country."

### Appeal Court

The Appeal Court said the lower court erred in convicting Safiya by not ascertaining her sanity and

confirming whether she understood the meaning of Zina (adultery). But moments after Safiya's acquittal, Gov. Attahiru Bafarawa "Let me explain that the agitators for the immediate release of Safiya without the law taking its course are the ones who have prolonged the case because of their ignorance."

He said she could not have been stoned to death without her own permission.

"The Sharia system allows people to be free even when they are found guilty of any offence.

You would see that she went to court from her house not from any government detention. I want to

appeal to you gentlemen of the press to help us enlighten the entire world about the positive aspect of Sharia law.

### Never detained

"Even when the lower court passed judgement, Safiya was never detained by either the police or the law court, thus guaranteeing her rights under Islamic law.

Is Safiya's acquittal a triumph for human rights campaigners or a triumph for Sharia Law?

New cases due to be heard next month in the Northern territory of Sokoto, of women facing adultery charges and the same death penalty, will decide that.

# Kenya women take the bull by the horns

By Florence Machio and Ruth Omukhang'o, Kenya

**WOMEN** in Kenya have taken the bull by the horns and are pulling down illegal drinking dens across the country. They do not have guns or any powerful weapons, but earlier this year 500 women in the town of Muranga in Central Province destroyed several huts, chased away potential clients and even tore up licences.

Mary Njeri Murithi, leader of the Muranga group said: "We decided to use force because we are afraid many lives are in danger."

Police have been doing little to stop the brewing of the dangerous brew known locally as 'kumi kumi' (ten ten) – a reference to its selling price of 10n shillings (about 13 US cents.) Made from sorghum, maize or millet, the drink is then laced with ethanol, jet fuel or disinfectants. Other substances include methanol, car, battery acid and formalin – a poisonous chemical used to preserve dead bodies.



In January, police in Nairobi seized 15,000 litres of the illicit brew together with bottling equipment and machines used to package it into polythene bags. Ingredients used to manufacture the brew included jet fuel, hydrochloric acid, sisal juice and detergents for cleaning toilets and floors.

Two years ago, 'kumi kumi' reportedly killed more than 200 people and left dozens blind in Mukuru kwa Njenga and Mukuru Kayai-

ba, slum areas. This forced the government to form a task force – Kenyans are still awaiting its recommendations.

An activist who declined to be named says women are ashamed of their husbands behaviour after hours or even days at these drinking dens. "I have to hang our mattress and bed sheets outside in the sun to dry every day as my husband wets the bed after visits to the dens."

Murang'a District commissioner, Obondo Kajumbi has told police not to arrest the women. "We support what the women are doing; they are saving the lives of men."

This effort to destroy drinking dens is a follow-up to the Kangemi Women's Empowerment Programme, a local women's group in the slums of Nairobi which started the initiative.

But women are often involved – in the 2000 incident, 12 middle-aged women faced a variety of criminal charges including causing death through recklessness and negligence – many widows run the dens and rely on the income to live, competing with one another to produce the most powerful brew.

Doctors say very small quantities of methanol can bring about blindness, while more extensive exposure corrodes the stomach lining, and causes kidney and lung failure.

According to Dr. Callistus Omondi, Acting Director of Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), the victims

"suffer from severe blurred vision, nausea, stomach ache, headache, vomiting and diarrhea before dying."

But kumi kumi is far cheaper than any brands – a half-litre bottle of conventional legal beer, costs 55 shillings (nearly 70 cents). "I would say that in a country that outlawed traditional beer 20 years ago, people are bound to make alcohol under dangerous conditions," says Mukoma wa Ngugi, a Kenyan poet studying in the US. Given the extremely poor status of the economy, very few people can afford more 'sanitary beer'."

Bishop Joseph Wasonga of the Anglican Church of Kenya has called for chang'aa to be legalised to ensure the brews are manufactured to hygienic standards. "If the Government thinks alcohol is a good beverage for the people, then it should legalise traditional brews so as to make it affordable to both the rich and the poor. I believe God does not want sinners to die but to repent."

## Wives stay with dangerous men – is it time for new laws?

By Elizabeth Kameo, Uganda and Golda Armah, Ghana

**S**evere daily beatings from Miriam's husband nearly killed her. Today, she has a broken arm and several bruises to remind her of the suffering she went through at the hands of the man she'd always believed loved her.

Jane shared a home with a man for 12 years before he decided she was too old and threw her out replacing her with a younger woman. Today she scratches a living selling fruits by the roadside to educate her children.

Jane and Miriam ended up in the same hole as a result of the same problem: lack of legislation to define their rights. And both must now listen as commentators describe the bill that could change their lives as a threat to Africa.

The Domestic Relations Bill (DRB) is a one stop regulatory framework for sorting out power relations in the family but its chances of being tabled in Parliament now seem slim. It is over 10 years since it was drafted and several years since a female MP Salaamu Musumba vowed to move a private members bill if the DRB was not tabled by March 2000.

"We shall have sold the women of this country short," she said. But she was reckoning a backlash from the men who make the majority of the legislators in Uganda.

Work on the DRB started in 1990 by the legal division of the women ministry. Then women it would be ready for presentation at the Beijing conference as something positive from Africa.

That didn't happen. The key question of property rights – co-ownership – met with hostility from men, especially Muslims who described the provisions as an imposition of Christian values. As one leading Muslim cleric put it, "since Sharia Islam's code bestows on

### TALKING POINT

men the right to four wives any limitation of the right would amount to a gross violation of the freedom of religion."

A senior male journalist, Simwogerere Kyazze of *The Monitor* – Uganda's independent daily – wrote a story, "Run Men – the DRB is Here." He described the Domestic Relations Bill as "the sort of legislation whose intention is to disinfect marriage of its Africaness and clothe it in stilettos and minks made in any-time USA and the EU."

With opinions like these chances of getting the majority of Ugandan men who are majority legislators to support the family Bill are slim.

Ghanaians are still stunned after two bizarre killings in recent weeks.

In the first, Joseph Tetteh Quaynor, 51, shot his wife of 8 years, Svetlana. Joseph was a successful businessman but had been in financial crisis and this has brought anxiety and mistrust between the couple. He had been threatening his wife who is a banker to stop work. Svetlana insisted on working and despite suggestions by her family to leave her spouse, she stayed on.

"I killed her to serve as a lesson to all unfaithful women," said Kwabena Omari after shooting his 35-year-old wife, Jane Abena and his 28-year-old sister-in-law. The marriage was said to have broken down long ago, but she de-

**"Once you have vowed to stay together for better or for worse, you have no right to leave, even if being in the marriage feels like you are living in hell"**

ecided 'to hang in there.' The question is, why?

Many Ghanaian women have mixed feelings when it comes to choosing between leaving abuse and staying for the children's sake. Even women charged with promoting more progressive attitudes towards women hesitate when asked if they would stay or go.

Florence Nyanor is a secretary at the Ministry of Health in Ghana. "If you have to endure beatings here and there, so be it. Children need both parents and I will never leave my husband even if he abuses me." Florence says counselling would be a better option.

Rosemond Dapatem, a computer instructor, says, "It is not easy to leave one's marital home, especially when the marriage was ordained in church. It has religious, social and spiritual implications. Once you have vowed to stay together for better or for worse, you have no right to leave, even if being in the marriage feels like you are living in hell."

Mercy Abbey, a Research Officer of the Health Education Unit of Ghana's Ministry of Health says, "Certainly the children really matter. Therefore, a husband who either physically or emotionally abuses his wife needs to be reminded of the biblical stance on marriage."

Gloria Ofori Boadu, Executive Director of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) finds many women unwilling to use the laws that do exist to protect them. "Women come to seek redress when they are abused and initially are determined to follow the issue to its logical conclusion. But when the legalities of such cases are presented to them, they declare their intention to settle the case at home. Their only excuse is that "mbofrawo mu," literally meaning there are children in the marriage. Quite a number of them are even the breadwinners of their family, yet they would like to keep the marriage intact."



Check out the latest issue of **Worldwoman** Download your copy at: [www.worldwoman.net](http://www.worldwoman.net)





Aid agencies report a million people in post-election Zimbabwe are facing starvation as critical food shortages bite. Women are almost unable to work in the near-constant quest for food and the death of one old woman in a food queue prompted aid agencies to warn of a crisis ahead. Wholesale land seizures of white-owned farms slashed maize production and national grain reserves are now down to just two days' consumption, But President Mugabe says the situation is under control.



# Food shortages are new plight for African women

By Sifanele Ndlovu in Bulawayo.

**DOLLY NDLOVU** (65) has been coming to sit on the veranda of the same store everyday or the past five days hoping to buy a packet of mealie-meal for her and her five grandchildren, left in her care when her two children died of AIDS two years ago.

On the first and second day she waited all day but no mealie-meal was delivered. In the last two days it was delivered, but ran out before she could get any. Today, she decided to sleep on the veranda to be first if there is a delivery. She cannot believe her luck when at 2 p.m., a delivery truck winds its way to the back of the shop and starts offloading the stuff. With tears in her eyes, she takes her place in the queue and before long has a 20 kg package of mealie meal.

Overwhelmed, she is suddenly dizzy. For hours, she had sat waiting on an empty stomach and had not felt the gnawing hunger because she was too preoccupied with the idea of getting food. She blacks out and falls with a thud next to the counter. The storekeeper calls an ambulance but Mrs Ndlovu is pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

"Woman dies in mealie-meal queue" was the headline to a story tucked somewhere in the inside pages of the *Sunday News*, in February. The tragic death of the elderly woman, known to people in her area as Gogo (grandmother) Maduma, had high blood pressure but her tragic death shows the strain put on Zimbabwean society since the shortage of basic com-

modities started last year.

This is the stark reality of trying to survive in a country battling with an AIDS pandemic that is claiming 2000 lives per week and a shrinking economy characterised by an inflation rate above 100 percent. Since the election, Zimbabweans have to contend with a worsening shortage of basic commodities including maize-meal.

"When the children are hungry, it is I the mother whom they cry to, not the father. I have no choice but to ensure that there is mealie-meal in the home," said Anna Moyo, queuing for mealie meal at one of the supermarkets in the city centre.

She said since the shortage of basic commodities started, she was always on the streets looking for either sugar, mealie-meal or cooking oil and had no time to rest or spend with her family.

"The 10 kg packs that they make nowadays can only last for one week and that means you have to be back in the queue almost as soon as you get it. There is no time to rest. To make matters worse, it is not just mealie-meal that is in short supply. What that means is that immediately after you get mealie-meal you have to join another queue for cooking oil or sugar. I wish they would at least make 20 kg packs so that we can get some time off to rest. These 10 kgs are no use."

The pressure that comes with having to queue for basic commodities, is taking its toll on the family as partners end up quarrelling, sometimes leading to the break-up of relationships.

According to Mrs Gertrude Nyakudze, director of CONTACT, an or-

ganisation that specialises in family counselling, the pressures associated with eking out a living under the harsh economic climate is leading to quarrels.

"Imagine the man coming home from work. He expects food but the wife, who just spent the day running from one queue to another looking for mealie-meal has not yet cooked. Tempers easily flare in that situation."

She said when pressures mount, men usually vented their frustration on women, leading to domestic violence. Women in turn snapped at their children leading to a generally unhealthy family relationship and even family break-up.

"When the going gets tough, the man usually runs away leaving the woman to fend for the children alone," said Mrs Nyakudze.

Whenever a commodity is in short supply, it tends to surface on the black market at prices beyond the reach of many. Some use it as currency to exploit the weak.

As they say in street talk, "nowadays it is the guys with mealie-meal who get the girls." Although this is said as a joke, the use of mealie-meal and other commodities to ensnare vulnerable women is bound to be happening.

With unemployment at 70 percent, many women have already turned to prostitution and can be seen parading their bodies on the streets of Bulawayo at twilight.

For the woman who is fortunate enough to have a job, life is not any easier. To get food it means sneaking out from the office on some pretext, like going to the doctor's for example. There was a time

when working women thought it was an embarrassment to be seen walking across town with a 20 kg bag of mealie-meal slung on your shoulder. It messed up their expensive clothes and hairstyles.

Nowadays they are so desperate to get it they throw it over their shoulder or carry it on their head with no thought of that expensive hairstyle being ruined. Even men in expensive suits can be seen slogging across town with a pack of mealie-meal on their shoulder. After days of having tea and bread for supper, no one is above the indignity of carrying a 20-kg bag on mealie meal on their shoulder!

"There is no way that I can concentrate on my job when my children are hungry because there is no mealie-meal at home. Nowadays I spend half my time at work phoning friends to find out where I might be able to procure mealie meal or cooking oil," said Margaret, a secretary with a private firm in the city centre. When supplies run out she is forced to buy on the black market, where the commodities are going for as much as three times the controlled price. "With the cost of living so high, buying on the black market is just not sustainable but I have no choice," she said.

Like all other Zimbabweans, Margaret longs for the day when she can buy basic commodities off the shelf without having to go to the ends of the earth for it. With the shortage of foreign currency hampering efforts by the Government to import maize and the bulk of the maize crop planted this year written off due to drought, that prospect remains a remote possibility

## International newsbriefs

### UNITED STATES

#### Playboy calls on Enron women

**PLAYBOY** is seeking women staff at collapsed US energy giant Enron to pose for a special issue of the magazine. The edition would give a second chance to employees "whose working days have hit a snag", magazine bosses said. "We thought this would be something fun for them to do while they're looking for work," said a spokeswoman.

Candidates are being asked to send a recent full-figure photo in a bikini and a head-and-shoulders portrait to Playboy's Chicago headquarters.

"When one door closes, another one opens," said Gary Cole, the magazine's photography director. "Playboy is offering the women of Enron an exciting opportunity that may lead them down a new career path."

But few women appeared keen to reveal their assets.

"I'll be interested in seeing who ends up in it - I can't imagine anyone I worked with doing that," 25-year-old Enron recruiter Beth Miertschin told the New York Post. Jennifer Gallion, 30, said: "I want to be looked at for my intelligence, rather than for my naked body and the fact I got screwed by Enron."

### CZECH REPUBLIC

#### Woman trouble for Vaclav Havel

**THE** Czech president Vaclav Havel has run into trouble with Justice Minister Jaroslav Bures and the opposition Civic Democratic Party (ODS) by appointing two women to top legal jobs. Eliska Wagnerovala, hitherto chairwoman of the Supreme Court, is Constitutional Court deputy chairwoman today. She was replaced by Supreme Court judge Iva Brozova.

Havel said, "I firmly believe that leaning on your life experience, your professionalism, your wisdom and your female sensitivity you will strengthen the authority of both these top court institutions."

### SAUDI ARABIA

#### King calls for probe into student deaths

**SAUDI** King Fahd has called for a high-level commission to probe the deaths of 15 young students at a public girls school in the Muslim holy city of Mecca. The girls died in a stampede when they tried to escape after a fire broke out at their school amidst suggestions that teachers obstructed rescue operations for fear of "exposing females to male strangers."

## Alice's 31 kids may create a change of mind

**THE** story of one woman may have more impact than NGO campaigns to involve men in reproductive health programmes.

Alice Nabweteme of Nkokonjeru has reportedly given birth to 31 children. She is aged between 50 and 60 (she is not sure) was married at 20 and had a child every year. She says it was the decision of her man and God for her to have those children. Only one child died in infancy, while her youngest is 13. She has 8 boys and 22 girls.

"In our time, men made all the decisions," Nabweteme said. Her husband, Kisitu, is against family planning, has never educated his children and thinks as long as they are not sick and hungry there is no problem. Ironically, he wants government to help him raise some of them because he has sold most of the land that supported them. "If you have enough money you should produce as many children as possible. Family planning is for people who live in the city because they have one-roomed houses."

Urban housing has very high room occupancy with an average household of four people. Half the population live in one room but family planning is almost non-existent and NGOs contraceptive services have been threatened by the removal of cash by the U.S. Bush administration.

Dr. Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, The female Vice President of Uganda, says education is the key to improving women's lives. "It keeps them longer in schools and enables them to raise healthy children and manage their families."

The government's main strategy has been free primary school education for four children per family two of whom must be girls – but there are limited funds to achieve this. "Rapid population growth and high fertility pose major challenges to poverty eradication. We must adopt a manageable family size if we are to enhance the quality of life of our people," says Isaac Musumba the Minister of State in charge of Planning.

Whether that's possible with women in "bidding wars" to prove their place as number one wife is open to question.

DESIGNED AND PRODUCED BY



WWW.NEWSDESIGN.NET

# U M B E Y A

{ NOT THE OFFICIAL NEWS }

**M**argaret Ziribaggwa's rewrite of her February Cameroon v Senegal match report – when the lads in green won the Africa Cup of Nations for the fourth time – caused a bit of a stir!

The *Africawoman* editor had suggested more of a woman's angle on the game – little did she realise what a well of thinly repressed longing she had tapped into!

The report changed from a sober consideration of the German playing techniques brought in by new coach **Winifred Schafer** to a peon of praise for "the sexy, muscular and nice looking lads set to make history by bidding for an international treble after triumph in the African Nations Cup and the Olympics."

It seems the team known to men across the world as the Indomitable Lions is known to the women of Africa as the "sexy team."

Why? Here is Margaret's intellectual reasoning; "Women always want to associate with

success and for a winning team, they can't go wrong but just support it." Anything else?

Well ... "The physical fitness and muscular looks of the players also made them a big tick for ladies. Ladies wish to have strong men who they think can be protective. They look at well-built men as best not just for the public image but because they would also feel secure with them."

But clearly it's the braids that clinch it... "Captain **Rigobert Song** leads a back line that can at times be formidable and at others permeable. He is powerful physically and has braids."

Women and men of the world can come to their own conclusions when Cameroon take on Germany in the World Cup later this year. Clearly some Ugandan sisters will be unavailable for the duration!

● The *Africawoman* workshop in Ghana has had startling results. Many of the women who attended were so energised by meeting this collection of like-minded women that they've gone on to stellar heights in their careers.

**Sarah Namulondo, Elizabeth Kameo and Lindah Wamboka** all received the highest commendation in their yearly appraisals at *The Monitor* in Uganda.

In Kenya **Pamela Mburia** has been appointed Programme Co-ordinator for the Association of Media Women, with **Rita Maingi** her Programme Assistant. **Zorodzai Mache-kanyanga** has



**The braids clinch it: Cameroon captain Rigobert Song is the answer to an editor's dreams.**



**Happy couple: Africawoman editor Lesley Riddoch and her guy, Chris Smith.**

become Information and Advocacy Officer for the National Aids Council of Zimbabwe, a hugely important job in a country which loses 2000 people a week to AIDS.

And **Joy Njeri Machau** has bounced back from losing her job to gain a place on a course at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. For many months she had been part of a team working towards the re-organisation of her department. Unfortunately this involved eliminating her own position. But just when she was feeling really depressed, she got a letter saying she'd won a place on the prestigious course.

● *Africawoman* editor **Lesley Riddoch**, having swashbuckled her way through nightmare difficulties and bureaucracy to set up the world's first online newspaper by women, is taking an even greater step into the unknown. She plans to get married in May.

The lucky groom is IT consultant **Chris Smith** and the happy couple are planning a

Highland wedding on an island. Chris is a pretty courageous man too. Not only is he taking on the Diva of Development, he also turned up in a kilt for a Burns Night thrown by Women in Journalism (cutting a very dashing figure, I might add). He then went on to eat two portions of haggis, Scotland's national dish, made of oats, mince and spices boiled up in a sheep's intestine.

● Finally, **Rebecca Musoke** has been appointed Communications Co-ordinator for Action Aid Uganda. Normally she works with the poor, going into mud and grass thatched huts to meet people who've been displaced by war and cattle rustling.

But recently she was involved in the visit to Uganda of Action Aid Ambassador, Emma Thompson. An ITV crew were there to film the Oscar-winning British actress, who visited women and children's groups on her trip.

The rest of the world can be watching Emma Thompson, but here at Umbeya we'll all be looking out for Rebecca Musoke!

## NEPAD: action or still more talk?

by Susan Naa Sekyere

**THE** New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is meant to be about good governance, security and economic enhancement for Africa. It was born out of an OAU meeting of African leaders in July 2001.

But will it encourage integrated development on the continent in this era of globalisation or fail to deliver as so many other African structures appear to have done in the past? The Organisation of

African Unity, ECOWAS, and the South African Development Corporation have brought very little change to their people.

Indeed trade between Ecowas countries is still plagued with bottlenecks and barriers.

U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair is clearly keen to see NEPAD work – while touring Lagos, Nigeria, he said, "This is the best chance in a generation for us to make their partnership work."

But on the same day, U.S. President Bush made clear he wouldn't

honour the pledge of "increased aid" to developing countries, because "the world has spent an enormous amount in the name of development without success."

Prime Minister Tony Blair thinks, "There is a new generation of African leaders who are prepared to say 'it is our responsibility,' with their express determination to end famine and bloodshed on the continent."

Clinging on to Democracy and taking the war-path against corruption must be the focus to get

more agreements like the one at the 2000 OAU summit which excludes African governments who came to power through unconstitutional means.

There should also be a louder call to slumbering African heads and their governments who want to hang onto power forever to wake up.

African leaders must pull along all AFRICA, male or female, young or old, rich or poor in order to guarantee success.



The demolition of food kiosks by councils in major Kenyan cities is "creating space for gangs to butcher innocent Kenyans and destroy their properties," says a prominent Archbishop.

# Demolition of kiosks: a political game to silence outspoken women?

By Lilian Juma

Anna, a 43-year-old single mother of five thought she had just begun to enjoy the fruits of six years toil at her market stall after losing her civil service job during IMF induced cuts in 1996. To her dismay, she awoke to the biggest shock of her life as her premises, including all her property was flattened by a city council bulldozer.

She had been operating a foodstuff kiosk along Jogoo Road, near Nairobi's heavily populated residential area of Eastlands.

Like her fellow traders – most of them female – she was never warned of the impending destruction. She just woke up on the morning of February 7 to find her six year investment gone.

Why? Since the year began, councils in major Kenyan towns like Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret have been aggressively demolishing kiosks to rid the urban centres of "unhygienic and illegal structures."

Nairobi politician Cyrus Maina warned kiosk leaders against politicising the clearances. Maina said the structures were not owned by the poor as people thought adding that many belonged to very rich people. He said the kiosks had been built without planning and turned into dwelling places without sanitary facilities.

"We are not out to be inhuman. We are only out to enforce the law," he said.

He said kiosks near primary and secondary schools would not be spared as most sold drugs to school children.

"We will continue to demolish and I don't want anybody to cry to me over the issue. There is no debate."

But there is. The Archbishop of Kisumu, and vice-chairman of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Zacheus Okoth has said the government should stop the demolition of kiosks.

"This will not only perpetuate poverty

An Archbishop has called on the Kenyan government to stop demolishing food kiosks or risk sparking chaos. The Catholic Archbishop Zacheus Okoth has suggested the small wooden shops – most run by women – have been targeted for political reasons in the run-up to the Presidential election. The same pattern seems to be emerging in Uganda and Zimbabwe – all countries with Presidential elections this year. Are the grassroots women of the markets feared by African leaders?



but is a potentially volatile issue that can cause unrest, if not bloodshed."

He accused the Government of "creating space for gangs to butcher innocent Kenyans and destroy their properties" and asked why such attacks only occurred when national elections were nearing.

"Does a government that fails to guarantee the basic human right of life to citizens have a moral duty to exist?" he asked in the wake of a massacre at Kariobangi when 20 market traders and several senior police of-

icers were killed.

Politicians who have been vocal about the rights of the poor suddenly seem preoccupied with finding ways to move them in order to win the forthcoming elections.

Is it merely a campaign to improve the cleanliness status? It has come to be known that every time the country nears elections, many incidents of the kind, including tribal clashes are common. Some established politicians have been known to incite chaos and violence in different areas in the coun-

try in a bid to drive out people of different ethnic backgrounds whom they suspect are sympathetic to their rivals.

Maybe market traders and kiosk owners are also seen as radicals. Many Kenyans have lost their jobs due to massive retrenchment by companies no longer able to sustain a huge workforce. Having been propelled into poverty, these Kenyans have had no alternative but to resort to other means of feeding their children through small scale business activities like hawking and kiosk ownership. They maybe in a lowly position but their minds are sharp, they are often well educated and their influence over passing trade is seen as considerable.

Ironically that's why the Kenyan Ministry of Health has been using kiosks in a pioneering British backed pilot scheme to improve women's health.

The Market Day Midwives project supplies contraceptives and vaccines through wooden market kiosks. Funding from the British Department for International Development ended in 2000 but by then the service was self financing and the 38 qualified midwives had given AIDS information, family planning devices and child immunisation to 16,520 people and distributed 440,000 condoms – three times the target. Whether these kiosks have been included in the demolition is unclear.

It's the same story in Uganda where the government has agreed with Kampala City Council to remove all kiosks and newspaper vendors from Kampala streets, particularly around banks as a measure to increase security in the city, "There is an uncontrollable mushrooming of kiosks on our streets, particularly around banks and we think this has been one of the main reasons for the increased robberies in town." Minister of Internal Affairs Eria Kategaya said.

Meanwhile Anna must start again – and another kiosk is probably her only option. But maybe she'd be well advised to leave building till after the election.

**EDITORIAL**

Africawoman, c/o The African Women and Child Feature Service,  
P.O. Box 48197 (001000) Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: 254-2-724756, 720554  
Fax: 254-2-718469. E-mail: awcin@kenyaonline.com

Lesley Riddoch BBC, The Tun, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8JF, Scotland.  
Tel. 00 44 131 557 5677. E-mail: lesley.riddoch@bbc.co.uk

## Milosevic's trial : Lessons Africa should learn?

**A**s the world waits with abated breath over what is going to happen to former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, little has been said about current presidents or leaders who may be running roughshod over their people in the same way. Will lessons to be learned from a president elected twice by his people and once termed as saviour?

Kenya, Uganda, Madagascar and other African nations will soon be going to the polls - Zimbabwe has just emerged from another unsatisfactory election. The people need leaders who will avert chaos, by steering their countries to economic strength and avoiding corruption. Perhaps what most of the citizens of these countries are hoping for is peace and less violence meted to them by the police. Corruption has been the basis of collapse or the lack of growth in African government similar to the violence in Yugoslavia during Milosevic's reign.

Asked if Kenya and Zimbabwe had lessons to learn from Milosevic, Lawyer Patrick Lumumba in Nairobi said "reforming the constitution is one way, many of the current laws in Kenya especially on the powers of the executive should be streamlined to avoid such a scenario"

But it is true to say that some of the African dictators have been elected and re-elected to power by the same people who complain of bad governance.

Women are the majority of voters all over the world, Africa is not an exception. Could it be that women have elected the very old men they accuse of corruption, intimidation and bad violence? Are women making informed choices? In a recent radio talk show in Nairobi a woman said " We should have a press conference where all the presidential aspirants are quizzed so that the citizens are aware of what kind of a person they are choosing"

The ball was thrown in the court of journalists to dig up information on the aspirants as "they are responsible" for informing the public. Does that mean that if journalists had done their job better Yugoslavia would be a different story today?

It has always been history in Kenya that people are misplaced through violence from their homes just before the general elections. In 1997 the ethnic clashes in the rift valley and coast provinces were shifted to urban areas.

Should these clashes that cause loss of life be the responsibility of the current government? Or will the world wait until we have another Yugoslavia before anyone pays attention to these warning signs?

Maybe we should take a keen look at what Milosevic said in his defence.

"Everybody who lent support..The government, the parliament, various political organizations, the media...they all stand accused here. The citizens stand accused, citizens who lent their massive support and elected their representatives at free party elections"

## Mugabe and Zimbabwe's future

It remains to be seen whether Robert Mugabe, 78, will yield to international pressure and call for fresh elections or whether he will be able to hold on for the next six years as his country faces massive starvation and total economic decline. The "smart sanctions" and Commonwealth suspension imposed by the West have failed to alarm him - and the old men of the Africa have decided to deal with the devil they know. Why? How would intervention against Mugabe harm them? How can the flagrant abuse of human rights to anything other than damage the continent, its will to change and its desire to be free of corruption in the eyes of the world and its own people. The only "hope" for women may be that mass starvation topples him from power in total disgrace and that Tsvangirai is then voted into power in a free and fair election. Is this the best the international community can do?

## AIDS victory for South African mums

**A HIGH** court judge has ruled the South Africa government must provide women with an anti-AIDS drug that cuts the risk of passing the virus to their babies.

Thabo Mbeki's government - widely condemned for refusing to expand the Nevirapine pilot programme to all pregnant women - had appealed against a ruling ordering it to provide the drug.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has entered the argument saying South Africa should emulate poorer countries like Uganda which was reversing the AIDS pandemic, and "get its house in order."

The government was so worried about its uncaring image over the Nevirapine court battle it took out adverts in the South Africa press quoting the President's state of the Nation address.

No wonder. The country has the highest number of people in the world living with HIV and AIDS with an estimated one in nine South Africans infected -- around five million people -- and 70,000 to 100,000 babies born HIV-positive each year.

At the court case, Judge Chris Botha said Nevirapine must be given to HIV-positive pregnant women at all state hospitals and clin-

ics with the capacity to do so.

South Africa's Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Tutu has likened the fight against AIDS to the fight against apartheid white rule.

"We must fight these diseases with the same passion, the same commitment, the same determination," he said. Referring to the court ruling, he said: "Thank goodness for the decision. It's unnecessary for things to have gone that way at all. We have been made a laughing stock in the world."

The Anti-AIDS group, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), which launched the original court action over the drug, says 10 lives could be saved each day if the government implemented the ruling immediately.

The government was not immediately available for comment.

Experts say Nevirapine has limited side effects but is a life-saver, able to cut mother-to-child infection rates by half. Boehringer Ingelheim, which makes the drug, has offered to provide it free to South Africa for five years.

South African President Thabo Mbeki has taken a controversial stance by questioning the link between AIDS and HIV, the virus that causes it.

## US AIDS girl cheered by Ghana conference

By Theresa Owusu-Ako, Ghana

**DO** Ghanaians need a 17-year-old American girl to come all the way from the US to tell them there is light at the end of the tunnel for children living with HIV?

Hydeia Broadbent, 17, who is HIV positive visited Ghana as an ambassador for children with HIV. Born with the disease and with both parents dead, Hydeia has been supported by a foster mother and the Broadbent Foundation.

She was cheered when she told children at Ghana's National Theatre in Accra, "A little love will make all the difference. Having HIV is not the end of the world. It is the love that matters. You can make a choice, you abstain from sex, which is the best protection against contracting the disease."

In Ghana and across the world some money is now being channeled into HIV/AIDS programmes for support - what's needed is to get people to be caring and not to stigmatise victims. Do Ghanaians really care for people living with the disease? Or do suspicions arise because most people are not are

not sure if money pumped into the AIDS sector is being used for helping AIDS sufferers?

Families are disowning HIV+ members with parents abandoning their own children. It was considered more remarkable by delegates in Accra that Hydeia's foster mother had decided to adopt her.

Behavioural change and stigmatisation are the key factors igniting the flame of contracting HIV/AIDS. In Ghana a different flame has been lit to give hope to children living with AIDS. But Ghana's Minister for Basic, Secondary and Girl Child Education, Christine Churcher who hosted Hydeia, has also come up with a new catch phrase, "Secondary Virginity," meaning if you have "tasted" it before but escaped the virus don't try it again till you get married. Abstinence, she maintains, is the best protection for unmarried young women. Lighting the flame, she said a fund would be set up to help support HIV/AIDS children. But who is willing to care for a child living with HIV in a society that still shuns sufferers.

"Action not words," says Hydeia.

Women say they were teargassed and clubbed as they tried to vote in the March election that saw Robert Mugabe returned to power in Zimbabwe amidst allegations of violence and intimidation. Now Canada and the UK are set to withhold \$4 billion in development aid this year, but the Women's Coalition in Zimbabwe say the international community must give food not a cold shoulder to avert starvation

# Zimbabwe women want food, not isolation

By Sandra Nyaira, *Zimb.*

**SUSAN GOTO** and hundreds of thousands others persevered the long snaking queues that characterised most polling stations as Zimbabweans showed their determination to cast their ballot in the recent presidential elections.

Susan, 30, like many others, was a disappointed woman because after standing in the winding queues, going back for more than five kilometres, she was not able to cast her vote in the election that saw President Robert Mugabe re-elected to serve another six-year term.

Mugabe and his ruling Zanu PF party employed dirty tricks to disenfranchise thousands of voters in the urban areas, largely supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change whose leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, is his strongest challenger since Zimbabwe got independence from Britain in 1980.

Mugabe drastically reduced the number of polling stations in towns to make sure a small number of people voted there and increased the number of polling stations in the rural areas, largely perceived to be Zanu PF strongholds.

Mugabe won the vote by 56 per-

cent over Tsvangirai who got 42 percent in an election with five presidential candidates.

There was no woman candidate in the race for State House but The Women's Coalition (WC), an umbrella body of Zimbabwean women and women's non-governmental organisations, has rejected the outcome saying the poll was rigged in Mugabe's favour.

Isabella Matambanadzo, a WC spokesperson said women's participation in the election was severely limited by the political climate of intolerance, intimidation and violence – most of perpetrated by members and supporters of the ruling Zanu PF party.

**"My payment is teargas and I'm thrown behind bars for refusing to leave the polling station"**

Women like Susan were teargassed and clobbered as they remained determined to cast their ballot by Mugabe's riot police who tried to disperse them before they had voted.

"Can you imagine, we are facing massive starvation in this country because of archaic laws and bad

policies and I resolve to change the government through non-violent means and my payment is teargas and I'm thrown behind bars for refusing to leave the polling station," an angry Susan told *Africawoman*.

Politically-motivated violence since February 2000 has left more than 200 people dead in the country, most of them opposition supporters.

Thousands of women in the rural areas had their homes razed to the ground and left without food or clothes – but most African governments rushed to endorse the election as free and fair.

Stella Tsododo, 70, of Chipinge South in Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands, now lives under a bridge with her six orphaned grandchildren due to the massive retribution that started just after the announcement of the results. Her home was burnt down and she has nowhere to go. No-one wants to take her in because they also fear the politically-motivated violence. Her crime? Her grandson, Peter, supported the opposition and she had to pay the big price.

"I have lost everything that I have ever worked for in my life. I do not what to do. How could they pos-

sibly do something cruel like this to an old poor woman like me?"

The Women's Coalition say women are the silent victims of well orchestrated political violence that has been planned months before the recent poll.

Says Matambanadzo: "The youth militia and the war veterans forced women and young girls into sexual slavery. Cultural taboos around the issue of rape have silenced the women, many of whom will never tell their stories. The impact of this sexual violence will live with these women forever, especially given the HIV/Aids virus."

**"The youth militia and the war veterans forced women and young girls into sexual slavery"**

She said most women's choice was restricted by new laws rushed through Parliament just before the poll. Women were required to produce proof of residence when most of the bills showing proof of residence bore their husband's names – so they could not register to vote.

Another restrictive law asked people to renounce other citizenships to be able to register and

with 60 percent of women living in rural areas there was next to no access to information and education on citizens rights.

According to Lucia Beta, of the Women's Coalition: "This paranoid government banned NGOs, thought to be sympathetic to the opposition, from voter and civic education campaigns fearing they would campaign for the MDC."

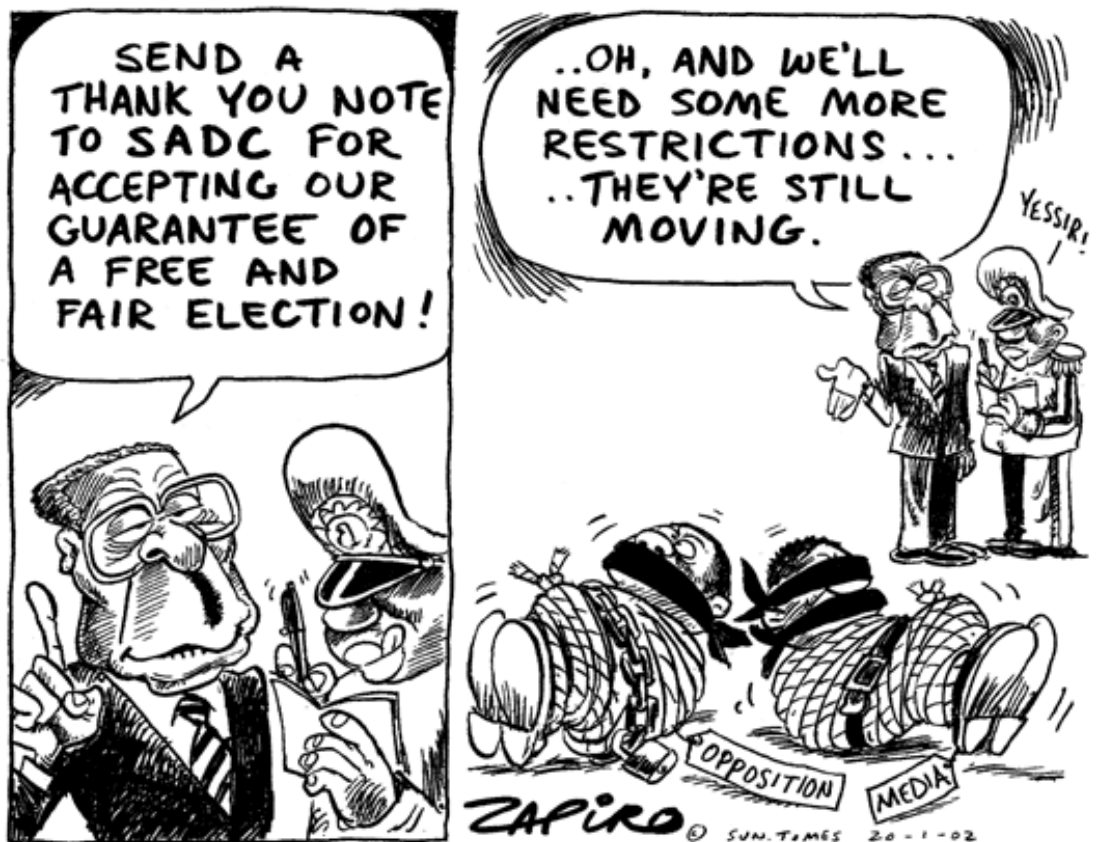
Beta also deplored the decision to reduce access to polling stations in urban areas,

"Women shoulder the burden of domestic, family and other responsibilities. Many were therefore forced to leave the queues."

Many Zimbabwean women are now facing the prospect of starvation as the international community clings onto its purse strings refusing to hear pleas for food aid because of Mugabe's flawed re-election.

A rigged election – half-hearted international intervention and now political isolation with Zimbabwe outside the Commonwealth. Can Zimbabwe's women expect any help now or will the violence go on for another six years while Europe dithers?

Cartoon: *Sunday Times, Johannesburg*



## Opposition campaign forces resignation of Taiwan economics minister

**THE** controversial Economics Minister of Taiwan Christine Tsung resigned after weeks of "torment" at the hands of opposition politicians and academics.

Tsung, 53, the first woman to head the economics ministry, had been under fire from opposition members who said she lacked a firm understanding of the economy. "She was the wrong person for

the job. It's better for the government to offload the burden sooner rather than later," said political scientist Emile Sheng. Strangely, though Tsung had proved her personal capacity to create wealth – she was widely thought to be the the richest cabinet member with personal assets of T\$1.2 billion (US\$34 million).

In her resignation letter, Tsung

likened herself to a rabbit which wrongly entered a political jungle, while her critics said she was promoted beyond her abilities in line with a government campaign promoting equal rights for women.

"I have the passion and ability to get things done," Tsung said in the statement. But the unique political language and culture will forever be my obstacles. Like a rabbit

which wrongly entered into a jungle, I am totally unaware of the political traps everywhere."

Even her dress style fell under the spotlight, with one opposition lawmaker attacking her for wearing exorbitant jewellery.

Tsung said "I hope my superiors will not lose confidence in promoting the best and brightest women."

## Annan's message

**KOFI ANNAN**, the UN Secretary General has asked rich nations to double their annual aid to halve the number of people suffering from hunger or a lack of drinking water – the majority women and children. Speaking at a conference in Mexico he also laid responsibility on political leaders in the developing world to live up to their obligations to bring their people out of poverty. "They have much to do to mobilize domestic resources in their own countries, as well as to attract and benefit from international private capital," he said.

The Kenyan authorities are to clamp down on unlicensed drivers of "matatus" minibuses packed with commuters.

Will this be enough to make Africawoman journalists return to Kenya after some hair-raising experiences on Nairobi roads?

Local writer Ruth Omukhango saw Nairobi through the eyes of her visitors - and it wasn't a pretty sight!

One needs a sixth sense to be able to drive on Kenyan roads. If I can drive here, I can drive in any country of the world!"

This is how a group of women journalists visiting Nairobi recently felt when they found themselves holding their breath during a taxi ride from the airport. The journalists from Ghana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Uganda were in Kenya to attend the Africawoman training workshop.

During a taxi ride from the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to their city hotel, the journalists were shocked at the taxi's speed and wondered how much worse it might have been if they had opted to use public transport.

As their taxi sped down the highway into the city, the women noticed hardly any road signs erected on the side of the roads. This -I had to explain - is partly because people have recycled them into pots and pans. Close behind them, a long truck of trailers manoeuvred for right of way.

## So you think you're smart, girl. Try driving on Kenyan roads

Once in the city the journalists were in for ear-splitting noise from all angles - shocked by the noise from hooting vehicles, each driver determined to get the right of way, especially at intersections without traffic lights. It was quite shocking to see some vehicles mount pavements to avoid wasting time in the jam.

There are also no zebra crossings and no sign of traffic policemen.

By the time they returned to their hotel, the women were scrambling for painkillers

to stave off their throbbing headaches.

Another problem for women behind the wheel are the "matatus" /minibuses. Most matatu drivers muscle their way in with total disregard to other road users. Woe betide you if you dare raise a voice questioning their behaviour. Your comments will be met by a torrent of insults from driver and assistant.

Driving behind a matatu? Keep your distance because without any warning a matatu driver will pull up to pick up or let

out a passenger.

"It is only in Kenya where one can drive a vehicle without a side mirror," True.

Although the former Assistant Commissioner of Police, Bakari Omari says they have increased the number of officers on the streets to curb the mess due to the failure of the traffic lights, this has only led to corruption as money changes hands when traffic offenders buy their way back to more careless driving.

Finally it is not unusual to find vehicles and trailers broken down and abandoned on the roadside with no warning at all.

The police move to check if a driver has taken proper driving lessons is a very welcome one. But unless the current climate of careless danger and corruption is changed, it'll only mean more sizeable backhanders to keep the buses on the road.

So ladies, whatever driving skills you have at home, you will unfortunately need them all in Nairobi to avoid being driven around the bend - for some time to come.

# A great tree has fallen

## A tribute to Esther Ocloo: 1919-2002

By Charity Binka, Florence Dolphyne & Susan Naa Sekyere, Ghana

Certainly 83 years is a long time to be around in a part of the world with so much poverty and disease. It should call for celebration. But at 83, we are mourning the death of Esther Ocloo, the renowned industrialist, advocate for gender equality and a great African happened when she died of pneumonia at the Military Hospital on March 8.

Esther Ocloo was born in 1919 at Peki-Dzake, a small town in the Volta Region of Ghana into a poor illiterate family. Her father was a blacksmith who died at the age of 35 leaving her mother to look after her and her mentally retarded sister as well as tending the farm. This was Esther's role model.

When Esther Ocloo finished Achimota school in Ghana back in the 1940s, her aunt gave her 10 shillings. With the money she produced 12 jars of marmalade and sold them, and continued the pattern until she had her own business going. In 1941 she started work at the Department of Horticulture, of the Long Ashton Research Station, Bristol University, England where she obtained a Diploma in Food Preservation.

She came back home to start the first food processing and preservation factory in Ghana called Nkulenu Industries Limited in 1942. It still produces jam and fruit juice for both local and foreign markets.

Though she was successful, she had trouble getting business loans. "Everybody thought I was crazy," she always said. "People were considered important only if they were employed in white-collar jobs. All my classmates, who saw me hawking marmalade on the street like an uneducat-

ed street vendor, ridiculed me. I went to a school with prestige, where the Ghanaians trying to mimic our colonizers looked down on the old fashioned traditions", she noted. So she set out to prove them wrong - to the point where her firm became a top food-processing company.

In 1957, she was elected the first president of the Ghana Manufacturers Association and remained president until 1961.

She was the founder and first president of the Federation of Ghana Industries, now Association of Ghanaian Industries and founding member and first chairman of the Board of Directors of Women's World Banking which has helped 70,000 women in 40 countries become self-reliant through independent loans.

Dr Ocloo believed a major constraint on women's emancipation was the lack of access to capital, primarily because they lacked collateral. That concern led to the establishment of Women's World banking, New York as a guarantee bank that would provide security for women to access loans from commercial banks, and to give skills and management training for women entrepreneurs.

In 1994, Dr Ocloo and the late Justice Annie Jiaage set up Women's World Banking Ghana (WWBG), now a savings and loans company, as an affiliate of the international organisation. This institution has survived to this day, primarily due to Dr Ocloo's continued energy in one organisation that can solve the problem of capital for low-income and small-scale women entrepreneurs.

In 1990 she was the co-winner of the Africa Leadership Prize for her project - the Sustainable End of Hunger. The Prize came with a \$50,000 stipend. She put all the

money toward a textile-training centre, farm project and a vocational training school for women and young people. She felt farming should be an enjoyable venture. "I wanted to create an environment that would entice youth to farming. With the grant money I bought 64 acres and built 16 houses on the land. We bought a tractor, some bicycles and a motorbike, a television set, and a radio. The idea was to invite students to manage and live on the farm. They were expected to pay back the money with their agriculture."

Undoubtedly one of the most decorated Ghanaians in the country's history, the late Dr. Ocloo will forever be remembered for her selfless and genuine advocacy role and her devotion to the cause of advancement and empowerment especially of women, both nationally and internationally.

Her long list of credentials includes a Grand Medal by the government in 1969 and an honorary doctorate degree by the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

Over 50 years, she helped start eight non-governmental organizations, she was the first woman to be appointed executive chairman of the National Food and Nutrition Board of Ghana (1964-66), a member of the Synod Committee of the E.P. Church, Ghana (1974-88), Adviser to the Council on Women and Development on small scale and cottage industries (1976-1986), a consultant to UNIDO (1976), a member of the Task Force for Economic Commission for Africa (1976) and Director of the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Societies (1977-82).

Auntie Esther, as she was popularly known, was a leader par excellence who believed that whatever was worth doing was worth doing now. She led by example.

"My motto is, Do-it-yourself," she often said. She was the first to be at every meeting and the last to leave. And she made sure she listened to everybody. She liked to keep things simple - when she taught business management skills to women cooking and selling food on the streets she would argue that keeping simple accounts and determining profit levels was all they needed to know.

Mrs Ocloo was also a politician. She once contested as a parliamentary candidate in the sixties and lost. She was also jailed for three months as a political detainee. During the year 2000 election, she started a new NGO, Ghanaian Women initiative Foundations (GAWIF), to encourage women to stand for parliamentary seats and influence policy at the highest decision-making level of government. She also raised funds to contribute to the campaign funds of women parliamentary candidates across ethnic, religious and party lines.

Ghana's Minister of Women and Children's Affairs, Mrs Gladys Asmah, who had known and worked with Mrs. Ocloo for 29 years, remembers her as a 'humble and hardworking woman who worked tirelessly for others'. Even on her deathbed, she was pleading with the Minister not to forget the women, particularly, rural women.

Her husband, Stephen remembers 'a woman with big dreams and visions who worked hard to the end'.

We shall greatly miss her. Rest in Peace, Auntie Esther.

*Florence Dolphyne is Acting Chairman, Women's World Banking, Ghana Savings and Loans Company Ltd. and former Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana*



South Africans want a national funeral for the remains of Saartjie Baartman, whose remains are due to be returned by the French government later this year after almost two centuries on display in French museums as a "sexual freak". Descendants of southern Africa's oldest known race say it will give new status to the Khoisan people and show respect to a woman degraded by racists in 18th century Europe.

# Baartman remains to rest in peace in South Africa

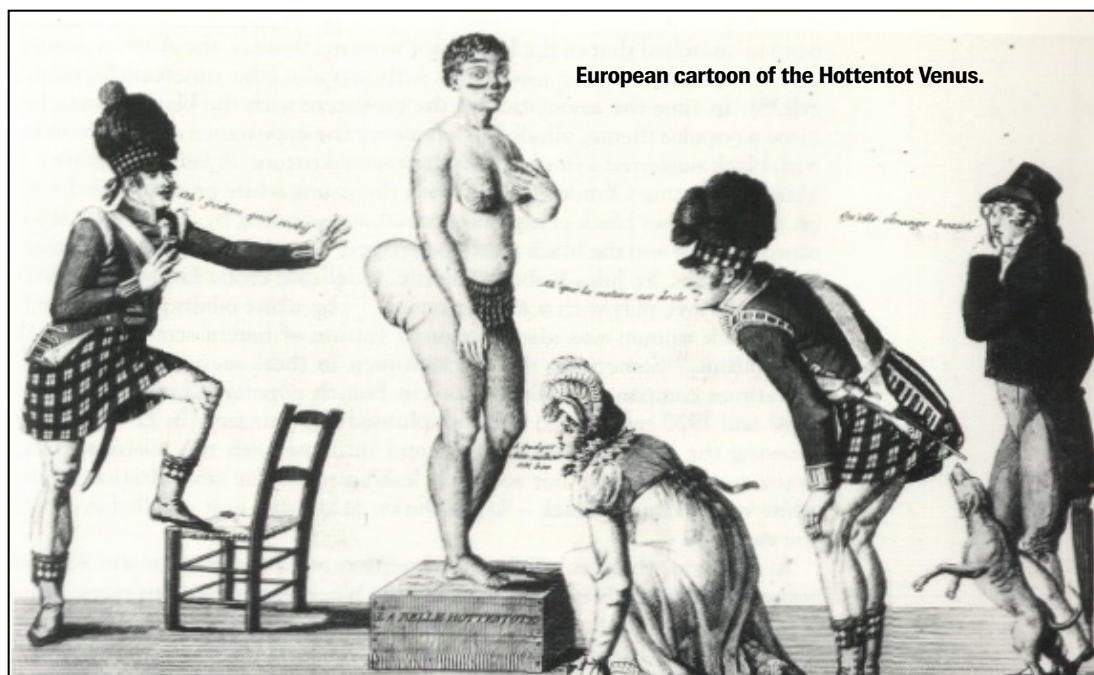
In 1815 the surgeon general to Napoleon Bonaparte was given the body of a Quena woman called Saartjie Baartman, who had died after living as a circus freak in England and France. The doctor made a plaster cast of the woman's corpse before he cut out her brains and genitals and preserved them in laboratory bottles.

Ten years ago these commodities were still on display at the Musee de l'Homme in Paris – now the National Assembly of France has ordered they be returned to South Africa where can be given the dignity in death she was denied in her lifetime.

Saartjie Baartman's was probably born in the 1780s and lived in the Cape Flats where records show she was living in a small shack in 1810 when she met a ship's doctor, William Dunlop. He persuaded her to travel to England with promises she would make a fortune exhibiting her body to Europeans. Baartman was put on display in a building in Piccadilly, exciting crowds of working-class Londoners who viewed her with a mixture of morbid curiosity and malice. Like all Quena woman, she had a protruding backside and large genital organs – billed by the show's promoters as resembling the skin that hangs from a turkey's throat.

Contemporary descriptions of her shows say Baartman was made to parade naked along a "stage two feet high, along which she was led by her keeper and exhibited like a wild beast, being obliged to walk, stand or sit as he ordered".

In 1814, after spending four years being paraded around the streets of London, Baartman was taken to Paris and handed to a "showman of



wild animals" in a travelling circus. Her body was analysed by scientists, including Cuvier, while she was alive and a number of pseudo-scientific articles were written about the superiority of European races.

According to South African Jeremy Nathan, one of the producers making a feature film on her life, Baartman was put on display as a naked and exotic savage dressed only in feathers at a ball organised by the Countess Du Barrie.

"This was the time of pre-Darwinist social anthropology and Cuvier believed she was the missing link, the highest form of animal life and the lowest form of human life," says Nathan.

Her anatomy even inspired a comic opera called *The Hottentot Venus* or *Hatred to French Women*. It appears Baartman

worked as a prostitute in Paris and drank heavily to cope with the humiliation she was subjected to. She died in 1815 of an "inflammatory and eruptive sickness," possibly syphilis. Cuvier made a plaster cast of her corpse before dissecting it. He removed her skeleton and cut out her brain and genitals, which he pickled in bottles that were put on display at the Musee de l'Homme for more than 150 years. Her remains were removed from public exhibition 10 years ago but remained the property of the museum.

When the bill passed through the French Senate last month, Khoisan rights activist Willa Boezak said: "We are feeling very positive and excited. Because of her sad story she became a symbol for us... of the subjugation and humiliation of Khoisan women

through all the ages. When we celebrate her homecoming it will be a spiritual ceremony. It will be a reburial."

In 1994, the Pretoria government and representatives of the Griqua people, who belong to the Khoisan group, asked for her remains to be returned.

As former exhibits in Paris' Museum of Man, the remains became the legal property of the French state, and a special act of parliament was required to return them.

"The symbolic importance of our gesture has been reinforced by the fact that we have voted unanimously to support in it both assemblies," said Jean Le Garrec, president of the French parliamentary social affairs commission.

The law gives the museum two months to prepare for Baartman's return. *Thanks to AFP*

## They said it!

*Quotes from Effective leaders? Views from East and Central Africa Research conducted by the British Council*

### Is it still a mans world?

"WHILE working in the lowlands during one of our maternal health programmes we put up shelters for pregnant women who were seriously anaemic. Our advice to the husbands was to provide spouses with milk and meat. One supplied milk but not meat. When I confronted him he said he couldn't kill any more animals because he could get another wife but not another cow. – Dr Abrehet Ghebrekidan, Lecturer University of Asmara, Eritrea

"ACCORDING to Islam it is taboo for women to be leaders. Only men should be leaders." – Market vendor, Kampala, Uganda

"WOMEN must surrender their household responsibilities if they want to be good leaders or politics if they want to be good mothers and wives." – Vegetable vendor, Kampala, Uganda.

CULTURE and tradition prescribe that women be quiet, obedient and confined to the home. There is great resistance to implementing programmes for women." – Catherine Munthali, Director Society for the Advancement of Women, Malawi.

### How effective are women leaders?

"WOMEN are more effective because they go to the field more. Men only like to drink beer." – James Mukupa, Senior Headman, Mungu Village, Zambia.

"MEN are made from raw materials - dust. Women are moulded from refined material - men." – Group discussion Zambia.

"I DON'T see the difference - women have done nothing special. They have been co-opted into the male structure." – Reverend Violet Sampa-Bredit, General Secretary, Christian Council of Zambia

"AS a woman you are followed in everything you do. Even junior men want to show you how to do things because they see you as a woman not a leader." – Madeline Dube, Head Radio Services Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corp.

"ARE we emancipating rural women or just ourselves?" – Zoe Bakoku-Bakoru, Minister for Gender Uganda.

# No cash for women filmmakers

By Ruth Gabi, Zimbabwe

THE winner of a prestigious Pan African Broadcasting Heritage Award says women film-makers are not being encouraged to develop.

Tsitsi Dangarembga, a Zimbabwean writer and filmmaker made the award winning film 'Everyone's Child' in 1995. Now she has five films to develop but no cash to proceed.

"Films are expensive to make and it becomes an economic issue as to whose story is important enough to distribute. Telling an African woman's story touches on political power and women do not have the domain as decision-makers in this area. A full-length feature film requires a lot of money for development, equipment and production. Many trained African women filmmakers have no access to the resources for making a film."

'Everyone's Child' is a docu-drama film that makes a compassionate appeal for communities to come together to care for AIDS orphans and fight the scourge. Although the film deals with very serious issues, there are some light moments with the 'street kids' in Harare and their quest for survival in the city.

Women in the Southern African Region have not succeeded in making more than ten full-length fea-

ture films. There are misconceptions that women's stories are 'unpleasant,' 'not cutting edge material' and therefore 'not entertaining' and that, according to 'the critics' is not what audiences want to see.

"Women have to fight to be in the industry," said Bridget Pickering a producer from South Africa. "The film industry is dominated by the white minority race and they are the ones who usually get funding for their films."