The 1992 United Nations Conference on Development and Environment (UNCED) or the Earth Summit, as it is popularly known, brought together heads of government, multinational organisations, non-governmental organisations and individuals in the city of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. It was the culmination of years of international negotiations for a development process that would fully integrate social, economic and environmental needs of all people on earth.

Earlier conferences and initiatives included the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and the 1983 World Commission on Environment and Development. The Stockholm conference took place against a background of the mounting threat of industrialisation to human health and the integrity of natural resources. Commitments made and the accompanying declarations in these and other conferences have not had much of an impact.

In 1993, the United Nations established the World Commission on Environment and Development to formulate global environment policies. It produced many reports, one of them being “Our Common Future”. Also known as the Brundtland Report of 1987, the report’s main focus was the threat...
Closest to land, furthest from cash
Poor women less likely to own land or have access to credit

By Nalubayi L. Wamboka, Uganda

The main focus of Agenda 21 was sustainable development and meeting the basic needs of the majority.

In the beginning there was …

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The main focus of Agenda 21 was the eradication of poverty by giving poor people access to resources for sustainable living. Various stakeholders, working in partnership with governments and civil society, have called upon to develop workable national strategies for sustainable development out of the Agenda. If harmonised, it was believed that these strategies would help eradicate poverty and reduce the disparities in living standards in different parts of the world.

Combating poverty falls under the Social and Economic Dimension of the first section of Agenda 21. It states in no uncertain term: “Poverty has so many causes, no one solution will solve all the problems in every country.” It implores that nations address the root causes of poverty, which include illiteracy, lack of basic education, lack of employment, population pressure and lack of access to land and natural resources. The United Nations and its members should make the reduction of poverty a major priority.”

— Susan Naa Sekyere

From Page 1

From Rio to Johannesburg

By Luke Maboe

Sustainable development is a major challenge on a continent dogged by poverty, natural disasters, HIV/AIDS and illiteracy. Rapid population growth and high fertility also pose major challenges to poverty eradication. Women are often closest to the land, collecting water, gathering firewood and producing chillies. Women are often closest to the land, collecting water, gathering firewood and producing chillies. They have the right to consent before their husbands sold land as much as possible, giving women the right to continuous access to land. The Alliance lobbied for the names of women to be entered on the certificates of ownership and title deeds. Sadiya Adoko, head of conservation at Oxfam, says: “We believe women to be entered on the certificates of ownership and title deeds.”

Unless gender imbalances are addressed, the World Summit on Sustainable Development may turn out to be like the proverbial chandelier. It is glamorous, glitters and shines bright in the room. But it can never be shared. Unless gender imbalances are addressed, the women will have many boys, you know you have security. School says: “Children are precious. If you can help but you can’t use it without the man’s knowledge. And he just won’t hear of it.”

— Jumaina Matsiko, a mother of four.
Kenya

Did you bring us our radio licence?

Mang’ele Community Radio Station is ready to go on air

By Grace Githaiga

In the small, dusty village of Thongoza in Kenya’s Eastern Province, a soloist in leading members of 34 women’s groups in song and dance.

“Did you bring us our broadcasting licence?”

“We just don’t want to hear about the voices of others, and the problems of others. We want to also hear in our radio station, about ourselves. We also have brains. We also have hopes and views of how to do better as families, as communities…”

The women are members of the Masioni Integrated Community Media Project and they have turned out to welcome Nominated MP Grace Mwewa, who is on a tour of the Mtito Andei-based Mang’ele Community Radio Station.

It has yet to go on air and the group has been pressing the government to grant it a licence to broadcast.

This has not deterred the women who own the station. They have gone ahead and installed broadcast equipment and are training in radio production techniques in anticipation of going on air.

The community radio station is an offshoot of a project in which the women discussed health and nutrition and recorded their views on cassettes, which they would then exchange between the different groups spread out in the vast Kibwezi. The excitement is intense. In the words of one old woman, “here, women create the radio!”

In what will be their transmission studio, Production Officer Lilian Mang’oka is at ease as she connects a jack here and another there, and in no time the soloist is leading members of 34 Mbouni Integrated Community Media Project groups, which owns Mang’ele Community Radio Station: “For us, participatory radio is a new model of communication. In this country, the mass media are not accessible to local people. Community radio is an option. Even if some of our people may not entirely understand it, they have a sense that it is theirs.”

In many parts of the world, community radio was born as a response to social, economic and cultural struggles – especially in places where freedom of speech is restricted. Community radio is often the only way to give voice to those who have been silenced, and also to help spread information far and wide.

“Its a channel of the Grassroots Female Communicators,” says Redempta Nthia, chair of Mbouni Women’s Group, which owns Mang’ele Community Radio Station: “For us, participatory radio is a new model of communication. In this country, the mass media are not accessible to local people. Community radio is an option. Even if some of our people may not entirely understand it, they have a sense that it is theirs.”

Community radio may be a new phenomenon in Kenya but have long been established in southern and western Africa. Bush Radio in South Africa received a licence to commence broadcasting in 1985 on August 9 – South Africa’s National Women’s Day – as a token of appreciation for the role women played during the struggle for liberation.

Zane Ibrahim, the station manager, describes a day at Bush Radio, popularly known as the Mother of Community Radio in Africa: “When Lungwina’s little seven-year-old daughter Thandi didn’t arrive home from school at the usual time, she ran to the school which was four miles away along a badly worn dirt trail through the bush. Everybody had left and a sick feeling overtook her. She hurried to the local store and, at exactly 2.31 pm, she called Bush Radio to report little Thandi missing. It went on air a minute later at 2.32 pm.

As a rule, all programming comes to a halt when a child goes missing in the community. We received the first call at 3.37 pm to say that Thandi was safe at a friend’s house, two miles in the other direction from where she lived. Why did it take 15 minutes to find out where she was? Because that’s how long it took to run, fast, to the nearest phone.”

Just like democracy, community radio is defined as a station for, by and about community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community. Community radio pursues a social agenda, is participatory in nature and allows people to capitalise on local knowledge.

Michelle Ntab, executive director of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC Africa), says that community radio ensures that communities have a sense that it is their own.

“The disease is being taken so seriously here that all tools used in cutting and handling the plants are sterilised with disinfectants. The farmers are required to wash their hands and boots using disinfectant in order to avoid further spreading.”

Famine looms as banana will strike

By Margaret Nankinga

MEN look on, dejected, as sobbing women hack away at their banana plantations. Soon, what used to be forest of banana trees will be no more.

The new bacterial wilt disease threatens the survival of the banana, the staple good in central and western Uganda, alongside the livelihood of many Ugandans. Researchers from the National Agricultural Research Organisation say little is known of this disease. The only solution is to cut down the entire infected crop and bury the stems, leaves and fruits.

Says Elizabeth Namuhiru, a widow mother of four: “It is my only source of income.” Her husband died in 2000, leaving her the piece of land on which she grows the bananas, her sole livelihood.

Scientists at the research organisation say the bacteria attacking the banana plant, Xanthomonas campestris, was first observed in Ethiopia. How it made the leap into Uganda remains a mystery.

When the bacterium attacks the plant, the fruit and the leaves turn yellow before they dry up. The infected fruit is yellow on the outside and black on the inside. Initially, people tried eating the banana anyway but gave up after outs of diarrhea. Not even cattle and goats are fed the bananas for fear that the bacteria will spread through their dung, used as manure.

The Ministry of Agriculture has imposed a quarantine in the areas affected and no bananas or banana products can be transported outside the central region.

Farmers in Mukono and Kayunga districts routinely inspect their plantations every morning, cutting down any infected plants.

The disease is being taken so seriously here that all tools used in cutting and handling the plants are sterilised with disinfectants. The farmers are required to wash their hands and boots using disinfectant in order to avoid further spreading.

Worse still, the spread of the disease raises the spectre of famine. “This will is of greater danger than the known Parasarum wilt, which attacks only exotic cultivars,” says a researcher.

Not only are rural incomes likely to be affected, but the national economy will feel the effects. Uganda exports bananas to Kenya, Egypt and Israel. All hope now lies in research being undertaken by CABI Bioscience of the United Kingdom.
O
ver 100 of the world’s leaders are expected to attend the World Summit for Sustainable Development. They are expected to put together a new global implementation plan and forge partnerships to promote sustainability.

This is at it should be, going by research undertaken by Environics International. The report of 25,000 people reveals that the world’s citizens expect their leaders to launch a concerted action on poverty by 2015.

When asked what should top the agenda of heads of state at this WSSD meeting, eight of every 10 respondents pointed to poverty ahead of arms and armed conflict – a surprising result, given the much-vaunted war on terrorism spearheaded by the United States of America.

This and other findings suggest that the public sees poverty reduction as the key to a more secure world. They contradict the views of experts on sustainable development, who rate water supply higher than poverty reduction.

For African women, there can be no doubt that poverty is the major handicap to development. Women are the majority in most African countries and also the backbone of agriculture and other economic sectors. They feel the bite of poverty most, especially because of the reproductive roles.

Yet many development programmes either ignore African women’s contributions or actively work against them. African women are thus especially susceptible to HIV/AIDS, maternal deaths and illnesses – all exacerbated by high illiteracy levels.

What the women of Africa expect is that leaders in Johannesburg do more than meet and agree to make promises that they know they cannot practically fulfill. Developing countries are increasingly confronted with the need to address policy issues related to trade in international agreements such as the World Trade Organisation. Determining how international trade agreements can support economic development is a major challenge for those genuinely concerned about self-reliance and less donor dependency for African countries. Even more important, stakeholders in developing countries must be informed on the issues and how their interests can be pursued through international cooperation.

The Rio summit came up with a detailed blueprint for sustainable development. It had a great deal going for it, including provisions for co-operation between governments, business and non-governmental organisations. A decade later, even the most committed believe that not much progress has been made.

Many of the articles in this special edition of Africa woman attest to this. We bring you a collection of news, analysis and commentary designed to live up to our reason for publishing: Giving African women a voice in all the international, national and local development debates that have become the hallmark of our times.

The Johannesburg Summit must go beyond rhetoric and come up with concrete and pragmatic outcomes that will break down the barriers that have handcuffed implementation of Agenda 21.
GHANA

We have failed our women and children

By Chispat Okutu

AMAA ASABA works in a quarry. Her husband, Kwoku Ansah, is a carpenter. After being married 13 years ago, they travelled to Accra in search of greener pastures.

They settled in one room at Malam suburb and proceeded to add another three children to the two they had before they arrived in the city.

In the true spirit of a woman born to struggle, she sought a job at a quarry. She has worked at chipping first for over three years. Her first child, Nsiah, is 12 and a dropout. They could not pay his school fees. He too ended up at the quarry.

Mother and son set off at 6.30am and return home at 7pm, too tired to do more than wash away the dust and sleep.

A visit to the quarry finds children aged from three to 18 exposed to serious health hazards. Some of the women come here with infants barely older than a week. They are placed in the sparse shade and are exposed to the scorching sun and the rumble of dynamite. Everyone inhales the dust that is constantly released as the rocks are broken up and loaded into trucks. Predictably, infant deaths are common. But parents unable or unwilling to understand the link between the environment and the deaths find it “logical” to blame their misfortunes on witchcraft.

Cracking stones

When you first enter the quarry, you are met with the sight of children cracking away at the stones – just like any hardened adult. Four teenage boys remain crouched on one knee all day, cracking stones into various sizes for building houses – the kind of which they will never own.

Infants grow into toddlers in this environment, sitting around their mothers or being cared for by siblings not much older. It is a hard life, and they are all here from dawn to dusk six days a week. Does the government care? What of the rest of society? Does anyone pay attention to all the conventions on the rights of the child?

The African Charter recognises key economic, social and cultural rights. It also places responsibility on the state to promote and protect these rights.

Under health, the charter states that the governments must take measures to protect everyone’s health and to ensure that all people, including those without money, receive adequate medical care.

The charter grants everyone the right to education and to participate freely in the cultural life of his or her community. It further states that governments must promote and protect the morals and traditional values recognised by the community.

Only God knows what all these charters and the rights declared therein are doing for mankind. For some, they are merely political gimmicks supported by paper work.

There is no implementation. Government officials seemingly prefer to buy big cars, wear designer suits and build big mansions instead of directing funding to children and families in need.

Free education

We have little choice but to invest in free and compulsory basic education if we are to set in motion action to salvage these children. Who knows? They might just grow up to become the best policy makers Africa ever has.

The government can also send mobile clinics to the quarries at least once a week to attend to the women and their children. They could do with crash helmets to protect their heads from injury.

A decade ago, government representatives meeting in Rio de Janeiro declared that human beings are the centre of sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

In Johannesburg, we must ask hard questions of our governments and remind them that they have not only failed to tackle poverty but also allowed the spiralling of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and others.

ZIMBABWE

City is choking in a cloud of dust

By Regina Njirenda

LOCATED in the eastern side of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe’s second largest city, Mahatshula is a residential suburb that was built in the early 1990s. The residents bought stands from the local city council and built their own structures, unaware of the problem that would dog them for a very long time.

Almost 12 years later, some of these structures are still at shabby level, some at roof level. Some residents have opted to build one or two-bedroomed cottages while others have not started at all.

Laiza Sibanda, a single mother of three, says she was overjoyed when she first heard that she had secured a stand in this medium low-density suburb. She had been on the city council housing waiting list for 10 years before she finally got a stand. After putting up a two-bedroomed cottage, she says she is disappointed to learn that she did not get the ‘best’. She explains: “My children and I cough all night. My neighbour says these coughs happen because of the dust that comes from the cement factory. The management, it seems, has an uncaring instinct for laying off workers who go below the ground in search of the cement at just the ‘right’ time.”

Managers have their residences to the south and east of the plant, while all the workers’ houses have been built either on the western or northern side of the plant – where all the cement dust is blown by the wind.

Besides, all the vegetation that was once the envy of motorists passing by en route to either Bulawayo or Beithbridge has turned a harsh brown. Shrubs have spiders’ webs full of dust and the rooftops of houses are an eyesore because they all look grey. With time, operations at the plant were scaled down due to lack of resources. Attention was then diverted to Cement Siding, where the bulk of the cement available nationwide is now produced.

Mahatshula is likely to go the same way, with the dust slowly but surely threatening to wipe out the entire vegetation. The once lush vegetation has also started turning brown and layers of dust can be seen on the rooftops of the houses. No matter how much they dust their furniture and other household belongings, residents complain, the dust settles in thick layers by the time the day ends.

A local councillor, who declined to be named for fear of victimisation, says it came as a surprise that people were given the go ahead to build homes in the area. Before independence, it had been made explicitly clear that the land could not be used for residential purposes, no matter the circumstances. Though exclusive to council members, he says, the reports should have been available for inspection by all stakeholders. The mayor of Bulawayo could not be reached for comment as he was said to be out of his office.

At the Rio summit, world leaders agreed that development should not take place at the expense of the environment. Agenda 21 is based on the understanding that human beings, through their actions, determine the nature of the environment in which they live. The environment, in turn, provides the resources and conditions necessary for development. It may be too late for the residents of Mahatshula, but the blueprint is there for those who care.
**Globalisation**

**Why is it so bad for Africa?**

By Florence Machio, Kenya

My grandmother cannot afford to buy sugar, yet the crop that produces it stretches as far as the eye can see in her home in Kenya’s Busia district. Selpha Maende Okweno is 87 and nostalgic about the days when she did not have to depend on her children for a living. Sugarcane was gold to her. “This ‘gold’ educated my sons and daughters,” she says. Once a rich woman, by local standards, she has been impoverished by the same ‘gold’ that made her the talk of the town.

Busia, in western Kenya, was once part of the agricultural hub of the country. But, according to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Busia is one of the districts on the decline. Expensive farm inputs, lack of credit and the collapse of irrigation schemes have conspired to turn sugarcane into an unrelable cash crop. Delays in the construction of the much-vaunted Busia Sugar Factory have not helped.

My grandmother was commissioned by the government to increase the amount of sugarcane she grew because a new factory was being built closer to her home. That was 12 years ago.

All sugarcane produced in Busia is crushed and processed at Mumias Sugar Company, which cannot handle the surplus resulting from the increased production. Mumias can only afford to buy from farmers what it can grind and sell.

Lately, Mumias has lost out on even its small share of the market. Why? There are cheaper imports coming from as far as Brazil. The cost of processing my grandmother’s sugarcane makes it very expensive and Mumias can barely afford to pay the price. This is all in the name of liberalisation, globalisation and free trade. The Kenya government gave in to pressure by World Trade Organisation and liberalised its economy in 1990. This has brought a myriad of problems to farmers what it can grind and sell.

Mumias has lost out on even its small share of the market. Why? There are cheaper imports coming from as far as Brazil. The cost of processing my grandmother’s sugarcane makes it very expensive and Mumias can barely afford to pay the price. This is all in the name of liberalisation, globalisation and free trade. The Kenya government gave in to pressure by World Trade Organisation and liberalised its economy in 1990.

While liberalisation has “spoiled” consumers with a wide variety of “pure white” imported sugar, thousands of sugarcane farmers have seen their dreams of a better life snatched away by the so-called free trade.

“Globalisation is a curse to many sectors, especially agriculture, in this country,” says Director of Internal Trade Seth Otieno. He adds that it is high time Kenya and Africans admitted that liberalisation is a “national disaster” in much the same way as HIV/AIDS.

Otieno shakes his head as he speaks. African markets were not ready for the kind of “free trade” everyone is talking about, he says. “We needed to prepare for things like inspection manpower to enable us sieve the imports that are coming in.”

But even inspection will not help. Globalisation cannot be divorced from the unequal relations that have long existed between rich countries and the poor. It is a change in terminology more than anything else. The Bretton Woods institutions insist that countries such as Kenya liberalise their markets to create room for globalisation if they are to receive foreign aid. Few governments in the developing world have the means to resist. Their hands are literally tied and they have no choice but to submit.

My grandmother has watched helplessly and hopelessly as her earning power is eroded systematically. Sugarcane Sugar Company would be celebrating its tenth anniversary had it taken off. Not that it would have made a difference in the long term. Liberalisation of the market would have seen it go the Mumias way — plenty of sugar and nowhere to sell it.

While liberalisation has “spoiled” consumers with a wide variety of “pure white” imported sugar, thousands of sugarcane farmers have seen their dreams of a better life snatched away by the so-called free trade.

Many farmers in Busia do not understand these dynamics. Trade in Kenya is handicapped by poor export promotion and marketing strategies, challenges for regional integration, high cost of doing business, lack of regulatory frameworks, poor infrastructure and insecurity. Kenya used to have the Import and Export and Sales Supplies Act that regulated what came into and left the country. It was scrapped to pave the way for liberalisation.

These days, Kenya and other African countries have been reduced to clutching at straws. For Kenya, the straw is in the form of a Counterfeit Committee that was recently launched to look into inferior quality products that are being dumped locally in the name of free trade.

According to Otieno, African countries should trade among themselves through regional integration initiatives. “Kenya’s economic growth is dependent on the African region,” he adds.

Yet some African countries would rather trade with developing countries than their own neighbours. A case in point is Tanzania’s refusal to allow in Kenyan tea. Western countries have locked African countries on the basis of issues such as “minimum residue levels.” They have set standards African economies cannot meet in what appears a deliberate move to take the best of Africa and leave it high and dry.

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development, which has been praised as the blueprint for Africa’s deliverance from poverty does not go far enough. The document, which the newly launched Africa Union proposes to push forward as its first agenda, fails to address the absence of a fair and just global market. Instead, it says: “We hold that it is within the capacity of the international community to create fair and just conditions.”

There are those, like John Mungwe, who believe that multinationals are setting the agenda. They want “cheap labour and cheap inputs from Africa by insisting on the continent opening up its doors, yet they leave us poorer than we were.”

Much as investments are necessary, let them be regulated. Let us not just agree to take in anyone who is willing to give us a few dollars. This is what economists call international sub-contracting or even neo-colonialism.

Executives of the sugar factories and farmers say “heavy and enforced” levies on imported sugar would make it economically unattractive to importers (and consequently consumers) and give Kenya’s six sugar factories a new lease of life.

Mungwe suggests that African countries slap the same tariffs on the developed countries when they bring in their goods. Is that possible? Not according to Otieno, who argues that we still need their money, no matter how little.

It seems that African countries will be attending Rio+10 as underdogs. If the ruling elite forge alliances with foreign corporations that want profitable investments, African countries are likely to leave the summit the same way they are going to it — as underdogs.

They will have no negotiating power. Even if they do, the fact that developed countries such as the United States have demonstrated little or no commitment to the summit does not augur well.

My grandmother awaits the day her sugarcane will once again be the “gold” that she once knew. After a long talk on globalisation, she has only one question: “Why should I plant sugarcane if there is no market for it?”
Poverty comes at a high price

Access to clean water makes life almost unbearable in informal neighbourhoods

By Ruth Omukhango

The Ghanaian Government has lately introduced what it calls “Private Participation in the Water Sector”. Some refer to it as “the borehole”. But the boreholes here, there is one behind every house, are fuelling fears of racketeering and corruption.

Poverty comes at a high price in her neighbourhood in Nairobi. Kibera, home to 800,000 people, is one of the largest informal settlements in Africa.

“I have to juggle to allocate my resources to be able to cater for my other family needs and also afford water,” she says.

“Every day I count how many times my children have gone to school without a bath or even having breakfast because we cannot afford water.”

She buys water from the nearest water kiosk at Sh2 (US$0.02) for a litre bucket. She needs about 15 buckets daily. She sells roasted maize and cigarettes alongside a road reserve, but makes only Sh100 (US$1.20) on a good day.

Her husband, who sells used clothes in the neighbourhood Toi Market, contributes little to the family’s upkeep. His earnings often end up in the nearest drinking den and he sometimes takes her cigarettes as well.

To make the best out of a difficult situation, Achiel and her children sometimes wash and bathe in the river that cuts through the settlement. Although she is aware of the threat of bilharzia and typhoid, she is resigned to her circumstances. “That is life,” she says philosophically, “there is nothing I can do about it.”

The 1999-2015 Poverty Eradication Plan acknowledges that inadequate access to water can have major adverse consequences on the length and hardships of a poor woman’s working day.

Paying more

Achiel’s life epitomises what thousands of poor Kenyan women living in informal settlements and semi-urban areas experience daily. Ironically, poor families end up paying more for their water than better-off city residents connected to the city council’s supply. When there are water shortages, Achiel can expect to pay five times more for her bucket of water.

Eric Makolka, executive director of Shelter Forum, an NGO working in informal settlements, says people living in better-endowed locations pay about Sh50 monthly compared with Sh100 for those living in slums.

The 1999 Human Development Report acknowledges that clean water is a basic need and a foundation to improving the well-being of individuals and communities. But only 12 percent of the plots in the city’s slums are connected to the water supply. Most slum dwellers depend on a few communal water points and vendors who charge 10 times the city council rate.

According to World Bank studies, low-income urban households pay as much as 10 times more per unit of 20 litres than high-income households. Other studies indicate that more than 85 percent of households in slums buy water from kiosks at more than five times the rate charged by the water utility.

Nairobi City Council has blocked rebates, which increase charges. For the first 10 cubic litres, consumers pay Sh10. Where there is communal sharing, the charges are as high as Sh717 for 20 cubic litres. Even then, there are no guarantees over the quality of the water. In most of the slum areas, the water supply line and the sewerage system run parallel and this often leads to contamination.

Other hazards

Apart from suffering the costs of ailments, women are exposed to other hazards. Achieng Mbui, operations analyst at the World Bank, says women are exposed to dangers of crime such as rape and theft, especially at night, as most of the water kiosks are situated more than 50 metres away.

For the past three years, Mbui says, the Nairobi City Council has not done anything to reduce the cost of water in the slums. Distribution networks have been increased, however, thus shortening the distances women have to cover to get water.

Although the Government promised to ensure access to clean and safe water for all by the year 2000, this target has yet to be met. More than 50% of Kenyan households have no access to clean water.

“Can’t this dream come true, when there is no clear policy to water and sanitation to the informal settlements?” Mbui asks.

Laws on water that were enacted recently do not mention supplying the informal settlements, which are not recognised formally. Although non-governmental organisations have made an effort to address the issue, this has been on an ad hoc basis. Besides, most of their efforts have been unco-ordinated.

The report, Solutions for a Water Short World, says Kenya is one of five countries likely to run short of water in the next 25 years, along with Nigeria, Ethiopia, India and Peru. Kenya’s water per capita will halve by 2025 as a result of the doubling in population.

The report says that in 1985, when the population was 27.2 million, water per capita was 1,112 cubic litres. By 2025, water per capita will decrease to 602 cubic metres. This poses a risk to Kenyans, particularly slum dwellers.

Ten years and still the suffering continues

By Susan Naa Sekyere, Ghana

Zara lives in northern Ghana. Every morning, her baby strapped on her back, she goes in search of drinking water from a gaseous worm-infested stream many kilometres away. “Look at the animals,” she says, tilting her strainer so the camera can pick the shot for a BBC documentary.

“There are fleas too. I know they suck blood. But the boreholes here, there is one for the rich and one for the poor. That makes the water too expensive. For me, it is either food or clean water.”

The Ghanaian Government has lately introduced what it calls “Private Participation in the Water Sector”. Some refer to it as “the borehole”. But the boreholes here, there is one behind every house, are fuelling fears of racketeering and corruption.

Whatever it is, questions have been raised about what this development will mean for poor people. The key question is how privatisation of the water sector is going to help eradicate poverty and reduce disparities in living standards – as per Ghana’s commitment to Agenda 21.

According to Prof Thelma Osei-Mawu of Netroight-Ghana, a network of non-governmental organisations, there is no way that Ghanaians living below the poverty line are going to catch up if water is privatised. It could be that the government has difficulty understanding this, but then it could also be that it is not in control.

When the present government assumed power, it pledged to reduce poverty and create wealth. It set up a poverty alleviation fund, which gives loans at 20 percent interest to women traders, fishermen and others. There is also the President’s Special Initiative, which has come in the wake of the African Growth and Opportunity Act. The government describes the President’s Special Initiative as a public and private sector partnership that will create about 100,000 jobs in the next four years.

With a mandate of only four years, the government is probably hard-pressed to stay on target, which probably explains why it has come up with all manner or “privatisation” strategies.

Together with several utility companies, it talks of maintaining international standards, competitive prices, and breaking even to at least bring the country at par with its counterparts in West Africa. In view of this, new tariffs amounting to a 70 percent increase announced for the Electricity Company of Ghana by the Public Utility Regulatory Commission have been in effect since August 1.

The government said it will pay a difference of 3,000 cedis as a subsidy to the electricity company.

This means that consumers of between one and 50 units of electricity will now pay 9,000 cedis, a little above US$1, instead of the 14,000 cedis announced by the regulatory commission. The government reckons the rebate will lessen the burden of low-income earners. That’s all very well, but it is neither here nor there for “no income earners” such as Zara.

Those challenging inequalities in the social and economic order in the developing world are not made easier by strategies such as the removal of subsidies for agricultural products even as the precise opposite pertains in countries such as the United States of America.

The multitudes of poor people in the developing countries probably have no idea what the Johannesburg summit is all about, but one thing is certain: The past decade has seen little progress in improving their circumstances.
By Sheila C. Kulubya

UGANDA

HELL

By Lilian Juma

Between a rock and a hard place

By Theresa Owusu Ako

GHANA

When the river dried up

The death knell for coffee farming

By Solome Namusoke

The coffee wilt disease, also known as coffee rosetting disease, has been growing robusta coffee with dismay. The coffee wilt disease previously occurred in several coffee-growing areas of Bundibugyo district in south-western Uganda. It is estimated that 47 percent of the robusta coffee trees in the district have been affected. The disease is caused by a fungal pathogen, Fusarium xylarioides, which enters the coffee plant through wounds or natural openings. The infected plant tissues become water-soaked and blackish in color. The disease can spread rapidly, causing massive losses to the coffee crop. To control the disease, farmers are encouraged to implement good farming practices such as crop rotation, use of resistant varieties, and proper sanitation of pruning materials. The government is also promoting the use of clean and healthy planting material to prevent the disease from spreading.

The government is striving to raise the living standards of its citizens by upgrading houses in some of the informal settlements, establishing food crops. This strategy is aimed at enhancing the income of the residents, particularly women and children. Government programmes like the National Rural Housing Programme are providing subsidies to low-income households to help them build or improve their homes. The initiative is expected to improve the living conditions of the residents, reduce poverty, and enhance the quality of life of the people in the informal settlements. However, the programme has faced challenges such as lack of resources, inadequate planning, and inadequate supervision. The government is working closely with residents of the informal settlements to ensure that the programme is effective.

The coffee wilt disease is a major threat to the coffee sector in Uganda, affecting the production and income of coffee farmers. The government is working to control the disease through various measures such as disease surveillance, injection of treated saplings, and crop rotation. The government is also providing technical assistance and training to farmers on the management of the disease. In addition, the government is promoting the use of disease-resistant coffee varieties and the establishment of coffee nurseries to provide healthy planting material to farmers.

The death knell for coffee farming

By Solome Namusoke

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**UGANDA**

**Commerce triumphs over local interests**

*By Edith Kimuli*

**RUTH NAKATO** is a bitter woman. “Before we started working in the forest, I earned less than Shs 4,000 a month as a porter, and I was always in debt,” she says. “My husband is a retired civil servant, so I am the sole breadwinner in my family.”

Nakato is one of many women who once depended on Butamira Forest Reserve in eastern Uganda for a livelihood. Their lives have been turned upside down by a decision early this year by Heraphene, which endorsed the allocation of 1,257 hectares to the Madhvani Group for growing of sugarcane.

Despite campaigning to stop a sugar milling company from taking over part of their forestland, the people of Butamira in eastern Uganda lost out to commerce after a four-year campaign.

Trouble began in 1998, when Kakira Sugar Works, owned by Madhvani, was allowed to cultivate more sugarcane on the land. The firm had cleared 700 hectares of forest before local residents protested, after which parliament cancelled the new lease.

**80 per cent women**

The residents, comprising 148 groups and 10 individuals, were allowed to replant the 700 hectares. They inter-cropped eucalyptus and food crops. With the reversal of the fortune, life will never be the same again.

About 80 percent of the local population that depends on the forest for a living are women, and they now have to travel long distances in search of water, firewood and food. A 30-year-old woman sits in front of her hut on the edges of the forest in Jinja district. She has five children, she says. She cannot cultivate the land she once had at Butamira because her family has been “compensated”. She was paid about US$200 for the crops she had planted but never had a chance to use the money. Her husband took it away.

She wonders where she will fetch water in the next few years since the springs are likely to dry up. Many women in Butamira depended on the forest for fuel, edible rats and fish. They also sold eucalyptus and maize. Now there is no forest, but the women still have the responsibility of feeding their families.

All they can do these days is recall the bountiful past. They did not only grow crops alongside the trees, but they also harvested herbs and weaving materials. They would make baskets and mats for the urban market in Jinja town, 20 kilometres away.

Butamira forest also served as a catchment area diluting the effluent from Kakira Sugar Works before the water flowed on to Kilo River and the Nile.

Gazetted by the Basoga monarch in the 1830s, Butamira was leased to Kakira Sugar Works in the 1940s. It was taken over by the central government in 1966 after monarchies were abolished. The lease expired in 1998, but the company managed to extend it for another 48 years and promptly cleared 700 hectares.

Locals formed the Butamira Environment Pressure Group to save the forest. Parliament cancelled the permit and also dismissed the forestry officer involved. The Forest department was ordered instead to permit the villagers to replant Butamira in 2000.

Two years later, Butamira had the largest eucalyptus tree nursery in Uganda, but this is expected to make way for sugarcane soon. Protests by local people and environmentalists have not done much good.

Minister for Lands and Environment Ruhakana Rugunda argues that Uganda needs to produce more sugar for export to Europe. Uganda’s quota in the European Union market has been supplied by Malaysia, he says. There is also a deficit of 50,000 tonnes on the local market.

Madhvani promises to pay US$5 million in taxes every year. Out-growers are also to be given a chance to grow 50 percent of the sugarcane used in the factory. “Sugar cannot be productive if they get raw material over 30 kilometres away,” says Richard Orr, marketing manager at Kakira Sugar Works.

**Immense power**

Foreign investors tend to wield immense power in poor countries such as Uganda. Butamira is not the only gazetted area that has been given to investors. Kakira has also reduced Waluhumbu Forest Reserve, also in eastern Uganda, from 2,868 hectares to only 118. In total, over 20,475 hectares of forest have been converted to either agriculture or industrialisation.

The Africa Environment Outlook report, launched in Kampala in July, says Uganda lost 20 percent of its forest cover in the last century – possibly the highest depletion rate in the world.

Between 1990 and 2000, Africa has experienced the clearing of 50 million hectares of forests. African people and economies depend largely on rain-fed agriculture. Yet records from 1900 show that the continent’s annual rainfall has dropped significantly due to global warming.

Besides, there are fresh threats of climate change in the next three decades due to the expansion of cities and pollution from cars and industries. All these factors are bound to aggravate the levels of poverty, environmental decline and ill health.

Crop yields in parts of southern Africa may fall by as much as 20 percent in the next decade if environmental degradation is not checked, the Africa Environment Outlook report says.

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro noted that the eradication of poverty is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Economic and social development priorities need to be integrated into forest conservation measures so that local communities can share in the management of resources and also benefit from trade in their products.

Developing countries are at a crossroads, caught between protecting what they have and attracting much-needed foreign investment. Whatever the priorities, there has to be political will to protect the environment. Africa must avoid being held hostage by investors if sustainable development is to be realised.

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**KENYA**

**Country prepares for return of the dreaded El Nino**

*By Joy Machau*

**RECENTLY**, Kenyans woke up to the news that they should brace themselves for another El Nino spell. And this at a time when the country is still feeling the effects of the last disaster in 1998/1999.

Director of Meteorological Services Joseph Mukabana blames it on the mild warming of surface temperatures in the southeast equatorial and the Pacific oceans. Weather centres are coming closer to issuing formal alerts advising local communities to prepare for the floods, drought and famine and shrinking food supplies that accompany the El Nino phenomenon.

Weather experts predict that the El Nino will hit the Eastern African region from October through to the first quarter of next year. This weather condition has a major impact on agriculture, the fishing industry and energy resources.

The last El Nino episode left a trail of destruction in the infrastructure and the economy in general. This time, we have been forewarned. Unlike in the West, the poor in Africa do not have insurance policies to compensate them for damage caused by bad weather and natural disasters.

In the UK, the Thames Barrier has been built to protect London from flooding. In Tokyo, millions of dollars have been spent on technology to predict when earthquakes will strike. Communities without adequate money suffer most from natural disasters and take longer time to recover. Because the exact timing and impact of El Nino is different each time, planning is made all the more difficult.

In 2000, the Office of the President set up the El Nino Emergency Project that works jointly with donors to fund projects that were severely affected by the last disaster.

Rural Kenya was hardest hit. Images of women and children fleeing their homes are still fresh in our minds. At least 86 people lost their lives, large numbers of livestock perished and electricity and telephone lines were destroyed. Many parts of the country were completely cut off. Families were forced to take refuge in schools and churches; some experienced disease outbreaks as a result of congestion and malnutrition.

Women, who traditionally grow the food crops that sustain their families, paid a high price for the displacement resulting from the last El Nino. The alert has been sounded early this time. The key question is whether they can expect better preparation from their government this time round.
UGANDA

Get the land ... the rest will follow
By Alice Emasau

Three ears ago, Ethics and Integrity Minister Miria Matembe said the law should be amended to include co-ownership of land. But her colleagues in the Cabinet suggested that it should be incorporated in the Domestic Relations Bill instead.

Before she came here, she made a living selling tomatoes. Nine years later, she has no regrets about joining the company. Though the work is low—she earns about US$0.50 a month—she is assured of the next meal. Because the company practises fair trade, she is also certain that she will not be sacked without good reason. “I will work here till God calls me,” she declares.

She has not, she said, but market developments in the European Union pose a threat to the job security she values so much. But for such trade restrictions, fair trade would have been the answer to poverty in the developing nations.

The Fair Trade movement was born in 1995 out of a growing awareness in the industrialised countries that the international trade was unfair. This is especially true for small-scale farmers and rural workers in developing countries, which produce food crops for export to the richer countries.

Fair Trade aims at paying producer groups a decent price and giving them stable markets for their produce. Fair Trade has three main aims: Market access for disadvantaged producers and workers, a long-term stable trade relationship and stable, fair prices that cover the real costs of production and includes a premium for investing in business development as well as social and environmental improvements.

In the long run, Fair Trade is expected to boost the capacity of developing countries to help themselves rather than depend on aid. Moreover, farmers gain control over industries in which they have had virtually no say. Bananas are exported each year under the Fair Trade Label from Latin America and Africa to nine European countries.

95 workers retrenched

Now the European Union has reduced Ghana’s quota of bananas from 6,400 cartons a week to an all-time low of 400 cartons, the first time since it was established in 1998, Volta River Estate wasompelled in January this year to retrench 95 workers due to the crisis. Production cannot stop overnight, however, and the company finds itself literally swamped with excess bananas. Unlike crops such as coffee, tea and cocoa, bananas have a short shelf life.

According to Anthony Blay, general manager of Volta River Estate, the only Ghanaian company that exports bananas before she came here, she made a living selling tomatoes. Nine years later, she has made no regrets about joining the company. Though the work is low—she earns about US$0.50 a month—she is assured of the next meal. Because the company practices fair trade, she is also certain that she will not be sacked without good reason. “I will work here till God calls me,” she declares.

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Fair Trade runs into trouble
By Charity Binka, Ghana

MERCY SABLAH smiles a great deal these days. The 40-year-old is one of about 100 women working in the Volta River Estate, the only Ghanaian company that exports bananas.

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Powering the lives of rural women

By Sibongile Ncube

Due to historical circumstances and tradition, women are the majority of the rural population in most developing countries. Zimbabwe, with 70 percent rural population, is no exception. The implication is that an energy crisis in the rural areas will mostly affect women by virtue of their role as household managers. The rural economy is rarely depicted in national statistics, an indication of the invisibility of women’s labour and their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product.

Energy in Zimbabwe has largely been defined as commercial or non-commercial for the urban areas and productive or non-productive for the rural areas. The result is that rural energy sources receive less capital investment and is the least developed.

National energy plans are biased towards commercial fuels, which involve foreign exchange and regional and world politics, at the expense of cheaper and environmentally friendly energy sources.

Energy plays a pivotal role in development and must be understood in the context of agriculture, income-generating activities, social gatherings for which food and drinks are essential, water-lifting, transportation and food processing and preparation as well as lighting. It is necessary to assess the role of women within the development context in which the different energy needs are to be addressed. Zimbabwe Electric Supply Authority Chairman Sidney Gata says his organisation has set aside $24 billion for an electrification programme targeting rural service centres and schools that will see thousands of rural households able to draw energy.

Regular energy supply

Hundreds of women in Matabeleland North Province have been empowered by a regular energy supply. Rural homes in the area now resemble houses in towns and the new programme has helped scores of women start business ventures.

Zvishavane, a mother of three, says access to energy sources has enabled her start a juice-making business, which has cushioned her family from the worst effects of the economic downturn.

Niika, 34, recently acquired an electric juicer as a result of a non-governmental organisation helping her in her business. “Now we are able to even do more agricultural projects like market gardening since it is now easy to draw water from the nearby dam using pumps,” she says.

Another group of local women have since embarked on a sewing project and are set to receive five industrial machines from an NGO working with women on self-help projects. Schoolchildren in the area can now study until late. The benefits are almost endless.

Under the Rural Electrification Programme, community initiated projects are eligible for a 40 percent capital subsidy.

The communities pay 40 percent of the cost of electrification work while 10 percent of the percentage is paid as deposit. More than 41 projects have been completed in Matabeleland region and more are in the pipeline. Gata says the power firms are able to establish multination-dollar power supply facilities in Lupane, a district in Zimbabwe’s Matabeleland North Province, because it is possible to expand electrification to other districts in the neighbourhood.

“The integrated customer service centre will be the first of its kind in the country and we are using Lupane as a demonstration before establishing similar facilities elsewhere,” says Gata. “We want to be able to support agricultural development and recognose Lupane as a provincial capital.”

The substation, which would boost power in the provincial capital, is expected to be the backbone of agricultural development programmes.

Women, being the majority farmers in the communal areas, need appropriate energy-related technologies for agricultural use in order to lessen their burden as they are often overloaded with domestic chores as well.

In developing these technologies, however, consideration must be given to the end-user. They have to be simple, requiring little maintenance and be able to eliminate energy operating by women so that they do not have to hire additional labour or rely on male members of the household.

Being capital intensive and usually dependent on foreign funding, the energy sector needs support from donors and other multilateral financing institutions. A local environmental research organisation, ZER0, commissioned a case study of two villages in Masvingo with the aim of getting a better understanding of rural women’s energy needs at the micro-level.

Rural energy needs

The study sought to contribute towards the development of a framework that would provide a basis for in-depth understanding of perceptions of rural energy needs and preferences.

According to the study, rural women’s energy needs fell in three categories: the household, income-generating and agricultural activities.

Also realising the need to protect the environment for sustainable development, organisations such as ZER0 have been in the forefront in the promotion of renewable energy technologies that are environmentally friendly, such as solar and wind energy.

The NGO, together with the department of energy and Powervision Ltd has set up 10 sites around the country where wind has generated energy for hundreds of communities. The ZER0 initiative is the result of the dogged persistence and belief in the ability of wind energy meeting some of the power needs of rural communities.

The wind turbine is likely to find a ready market both in Zimbabwe and the region, as the technology is competitive and relatively easy to use.

Other renewable sources of energy that have been promoted in Zimbabwe include the use of wood stoves, solar and hydro-energy.

Children come at a high price in rural Africa

By Anne Mugisa, Uganda

End Bahara gets up in the dead of night and walks 10 kilometers to her two-acre farm, where she grows food for her family. By the time she returns, it is the middle of the day.

Apart from Bwindi impenetrable forest and Mqahinga forest, land in Kabale district in southwest Uganda has been severely degraded. According to the National State of the Environment report, Kabale has had an annual temperature rise of 0.39 degrees per decade, which is way too high. The report says the micro-climatic warming could be due to massive land and swamp reclamation.

The major culprit in the degradation in this region is high fertility. The population explosion has exerted immense pressure on the land as the people, most of them peasant farmers, struggle to provide for their large families. The population and census report 4.1 children per woman compared with the national average of 6.9. The small holdings are constantly under cultivation in order to meet the needs of families.

Bwindi, which was turned into a national park a few years ago for its own protection, is one of the richest forests in the world in plant and animal species. Bwindi is now home to a number of rare and endangered species that have been depleted by the daily quest for water, fuel, cultivation and general land use, according to the environment report.

Bwindi is a storehouse of genetic wealth and a potential source of new foods, fibres, drugs and knowledge. Kabale’s population is growing at an alarming rate, compared with the national average.

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They include Koto and Moroto in the northeast and some parts of Mbarara in the west. Parts of Nebbi, Rakai, Masaka, Iganga and Busugumy are also heavily utilised.

Uganda’s rich biodiversity has declined since the 1960s and the problems are bound to continue unless steps are taken to address the population growth. Children in large families have fewer chances of education and suffer a higher incidence of ill health. They are constantly struggling to survive.

Women are often the worst affected by these circumstances, because their ideas may not carry weight within the family. Besides, they are the bulk of the least educated in society. In the largely patriarchal Ugandan communities, men make most of the decisions at the family level ranging from land to women’s sexuality. The frequent pregnancies severely affect women’s health.

Where women are educated, the conditions change dramatically. The population and census report indicates that women with no education had a fertility rate of 7.8 children while those with a secondary level education had 3.9. Studies have shown that men insist on large families for prestige, power, wealth, labour and security, says Ssentumwe Mugisa, the World Health Organisation family health and population adviser in Uganda.

“These clamouring for more children are unaware that numbers per se are counter-productive because they cause a family to become an expense in the final analysis,” she says. In the situation of poverty, high numbers of children consume more than they can produce in terms of labour.”
Dying for gold, however elusive

By Sifanele Ndlovu, Zimbabwe

FACED with starvation due to drought, controversial land reforms and a free-falling economy, many Zimbabweans are heading for the nearest river in the hope that they will pan their way into a meaningful amount of gold.

The more daring ones risk venturing into disused mine shafts to collect soil in the often fruitless search. It is a strenuous process that involves washing off the loose soil, pouding the ore and trying to separate whatever gold particles are available from the rubble. Many have lost their lives after the mine-shafts collapsed on them. But this has not deterred the desperate people, who continue panning the various panning sites.

In July, 15 miners were killed when the walls of a shaft they were working on collapsed and buried them alive. The miners had convinced with a security guard to allow them to sneak into the shaft in the night and dig up ore. Despite the potential for tragedy, the number of Zimbabweans panning for gold has risen dramatically in the past year. With unemployment at around 60 percent and subsistence agriculture ruled out as an option because of drought, people have very few options for survival. Over six million Zimbabweans have been affected by the drought.

Women are found in large numbers at panning sites. The speculators have set up haphazard settlements along riverbanks, from where they ply their trade. In some of these settlements, entire families — including women with babies – can be found digging incessantly all day in the hope of getting gold. Not only is their work a health threat, it also leads to environmental degradation and desertification and threatens water sources through pollution and siltation.

The situation is so serious that Zimbabwe’s second largest city, Bulawayo, has been forced to take measures to curb the panning activities in the catchment areas of its dams. The Bulawayo City Council resolved at a meeting in July to employ more rangers to police the catchment area and thwart panning activities, which are threatening the quality of water in the dams, particularly Umzingwane Dam. “The presence of large numbers of humans in the catchment areas without proper sanitary facilities will cause excessive quantities of nitrates in the water, which leads to algae growth,” says Job Jika Ndebele, acting chair of the environmental management and engineering services committee.

The council will be forced to spend more on chemicals to purify water to levels that comply with standards for human consumption if the pollution continues, he said.

The speculators pollute the water not just because of their lack of sanitary facilities, but through the introduction of chemicals such as mercury and cyanide that are used to purify or separate gold from other chemical residue found in ore. Although gold panning is not new in Zimbabwe, it was not until recently that Bulawayo began to feel the pinch. “In the past, gold panning activities were concentrated downstream of the dams, thus posing little danger to council water suppliers,” says Ndebele. “This has since changed and gold panning is taking place both upstream and downstream.”

The government relaxed mining laws three years ago and granted rural district councils the power to obtain mining concessions, which they would then sub-divide among small-scale miners.

The council would be responsible for ensuring that environmentally friendly methods of mining were used, thus addressing both poverty and environmental protection. In return, they would boost their revenue coffers by charging fees for permits.

The university devised an alluvial mining system that was mindful of the impact of mining activities on the environment and recommended that the council help permit holders obtain tools like wheelbarrows, sluice boxes and pumps to use in their activities. The jumps are used to draw water to the panning site, which ideally should be at least 30 metres off the riverbank to avoid siltation.

Some brick making enterprises have sprung up in Bulawayo, using soil from the panning process and ensuring that the soil does not silt the rivers. Water is an essential part of the panning process, which explains the concentration of panning activities along rivers. The projects officer for the Bulawayo Rural District Council, Pardon Moyo, says the council controlled the speculators’ activities by not renewing permits for people who damage the environment. “Our alluvial mining controller monitors all the sites and orders permit holders to cover up any pits they may have left open before their permits can be renewed each year,” he adds.

Revolving loans

As part of the package to encourage environmentally friendly mining methods, the council established a revolving loan fund to enable miners to buy equipment like pumps and wheelbarrows and sluice boxes that ensure efficiency in trapping gold particles. Although the funds were not enough to cover everyone, those who received them improved their scale of production and created jobs.

One of those that benefited from this scheme is Fanuel Dube, who now employs 10 people on his site and produces an average of five grams of gold a day. He says: “The new method of panning is very efficient. In the old days, we had no sluice boxes. We made makeshift boxes using sand and sacks but these were not very efficient in trapping gold.”

Very few women have benefited from the legalised mining, however, as they cannot raise the funds to buy equipment and pay for permits. The council charges a fee of $5,000 per year for a mining permit. As a result, women are counted among the illegal speculators whose activities have wreaked havoc on the environment.

The penalty for those convicted of illegal panning is a $500 (US$1 at the official exchange rate) and authoritaries have admitted that this is not deterrent enough. When they do strike gold, the speculators can sell it on the black market for up to $8,000 per gram.

Many miners are arrested, only to pay the fine and resume their activities. “The heavy-handed police approach has not worked so far and we do not see it working,” says Moyo.

Unemployment has driven women into the strenuous exercise of collecting soil from disused mineshafts

ZAMBIA

Misery

By Sibongile Ncube

Violence – a opción because of drought, people – earn just as much as men, according to a study by Glenda Moyo. The study highlighted the negative impact of the flood on the country’s economic and political life.

Zambia is on the verge of economic collapse. The World Bank economist, Dr Milan-Mlakadde, says poverty is likely to increase if the MDC wins the presidential elections this month. Even if I die, I will haunt the people, Mugabe was reported as saying a few days ago.

For and about women in Africa

ISSUE THREE

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN IN AFRICA

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