

Development

COMMUNICATIONS

- Ethiopian Launches Digital Radio in Africa and Middle East** 3mins. 9secs. 9
New CD quality radio broadcasts now in Africa
- Access to News Media: The Internet Redefines Rules** 1min. 34secs. 7
The world's first public radio station on line.

ECONOMICS

- Satellites May Earn US\$50 billion in 2000** 1min. 38secs. 7
Space exploration begins to yield expected financial profits.

EDUCATION

- UNESCO Concludes General History of Africa** 3mins. 37secs. 11
*Thirty-five years of work to rediscover and documents
Africa's contribution to world history ends.*
- New Research Exposes Real Cause of 'Reading Difficulties'** 2mins. 22secs. 4
*Children with reading disability may have hope
of early detection and treatment.*

HEALTH

- Female Genital Mutilation Still Prevalent In Nigeria** 3mins. 48secs. 3
New study confirms that female circumcision is still widely practiced in Nigeria.
- Nigerian Organization Wins International
Sexual Education Award** 1min. 34secs. 6
Several years of work promoting sex education in Nigeria pays off.
- AIDS Still Problematic as World AIDS Day Approaches** 2mins. 36secs. 5
*Although AIDS is a global problem, nearly three
in every four cases are in Africa.*

URBAN PLANNING

- Khartoum's Facelift Renders Thousands Homeless** 2mins. 47secs. 10
Khartoum comes under criticism for making many families homeless.

WOMEN

- Communicating for Change Launches Film on Widowhood** 2mins. 15secs. 6
An exposition of the problems of widowhood in Nigeria.

Environment

CONSERVATION

Thousand Year Old Trees in one Book 1min. 33secs. 6
The world's longest living trees in living colour.

EDUCATION

The Niger Delta: Environmental Awareness Grows 2mins.50secs. 8
The Living Earth Foundation works to raise communities' awareness of the Niger Delta environment.

WASTE

New Approach to Urban Waste Management Starts in Argentina 2mins. 7secs. 4
A small city in Argentina develops a master plan for modern municipal waste management

WILDLIFE

New Discovery Boosts Conservation Awareness in Ghana 2mins. 14secs. 10
The chance discovery of a deer species previously thought to be extinct.
U.S. Judge Halts Logging to Protect Fish 51secs. 17
A U.S. federal court's decision boosts image of the Endangered Species Act.

SCIENCE

New Images Debunk Ancient Ocean Myth 1min. 5secs. 17
There may never have been an ocean on Mars.

TRADE

A New Alliance to Fight Trade Liberalization 1min. 3secs. 17
Former bitter foes find a common enemy.

Children's Section

Why the Cheeks of the Cheetah are Stained with Tears 4mins.49secs. 12
A Zulu folk tale explains the tear marks on the cheetah's cheeks.

How Long Can You Live if a Cobra Bites You? 1min. 50secs. 12
Just how poisonous to human beings is the bite of a cobra?

The Waterhole 10mins. 55secs. 14
Hare thinks that he can have his cake and eat it too. But tortoise proves him wrong.

Conservation Quotation 51secs. 16
Where would human beings go if we banished ourselves from this world?

How Many Times do Bees Produce Honey in a Year? 1min. 28secs. 16
How many flowering seasons do you have in a year?

News

Female Genital Mutilation Still Prevalent In Nigeria

3mins. 48secs.

Female circumcision is still practiced widely in Nigeria. This is according to a recent nationwide survey released just as Radio Nigeria reported early in November that the government of Ogun State has banned the practice.

One in three Nigerians over 18 years old admit they will circumcise their daughter. The figure is higher in western Nigeria where over 50 per cent of respondents to the survey said they would circumcise their daughter.

Recent research by Lagos-based Gallup Polls affiliate, RMS Media Services, showed that the practice might be carried over to the next generation of female children, particularly in the western region of the country.

The research company, RMS Media Services interviewed 5,000 people 18 years and above from 12 major tribes in all 36 states of the federation. The sample was equally divided between urban and rural people, and there were an equal number of men and women interviewed.

The results showed that about 70 percent of the respondents in western Nigeria showed awareness of female circumcision among their own people. Lagos followed with 50 percent. The East and North had 40 percent and 20 percent awareness respectively.

The figures were more impressive when examined on state and tribal bases, with nearly 90 percent awareness of the practice in Edo, Ondo and Bayelsa States, and about 80 per cent among the Urhobos, Ijaws, and Edos.

About one quarter of the respondents nationwide said that they were circumcised. But on a regional scale, about three in every four respondents from the west claimed to be circumcised. The East and Lagos had one in three people circumcised, while the North had just one out of every ten people.

Speaking during an interview, Ms. Margit Cleveland of RMS Media Services said that the reasons given for the practice were several, but nearly all the respondents said that it was tradition to circumcise male and female children in Nigeria. Other reasons were that it prevents promiscuity and abnormal growth of the clitoris, eases childbirth, is a part of initiation ceremonies, or subdues the woman to her husband.

“It is absolutely a fallacy that circumcision prevents promiscuity,” Cleveland said. “When you do a survey among commercial sex workers, majority of them are circumcised.”

RMS Media Services did not find out what respondents think about the practice of female genital mutilation in Nigeria. Although the research was the most comprehensive to date in Nigeria, Cleveland said she would like to explore other aspects of female circumcision in the future. These include surveying minority ethnic groups not included in this study, conducting similar studies with women only, and in adjoining countries like Cameroon and Ghana, gaining deeper insight into motives for female circumcision and formulating effective communications strategies for intervention.

“If no intervention in one form or another takes hold, this practice will continue for at least several generations. And it will not phase out. It is not a dying tradition,” Cleveland concluded.

RMS

New Approach to Urban Waste Management Starts in Argentina 2mins. 7secs.

The Argentine city of Salta, with a population of 500,000 people has joined the growing number of cities of the world that have devised techniques for managing their domestic waste.

Recently, the city which daily generates 250 tonnes of waste, mostly organic and degradable, developed a municipal plan for integrated solid waste management for the next 10 years. The key feature of the plan is the privatization of Salta's solid waste collection, sorting and disposal. The plan would be implemented in five consecutive phases beginning with a one-year public campaign phase, to raise awareness about the new municipal waste management plan. Each will run for between one to three years.

Other phases include a two-year period during which a private company takes over the daily waste collection services, after the introduction of a pilot scheme for sorting waste contents at source. The following two years would be for consolidating the gains made so far and ensure that at least half of the city's residents sort their organic waste at. Residents will also learn to sort their inorganic wastes (such as glass, metal, paper, plastic and aluminum) for recycling.

The final five years in the fourth and fifth phases will be spent to achieve about 100 percent sorting, collection, and recycling of all categories of waste.

Mr. Lucas Seghezze, a solid waste expert from Salta who may have been involved in the development of the city's waste management plan, said that the city is determined to ensure a successful implementation.

"The whole process, collection coverage, resource recovery, costs, etc., will be monitored on effectiveness and efficiency by means of a set of indicators," Seghezze said.

UWEP

New Research Exposes Real Cause of 'Reading Difficulties' 2mins. 22secs.

New research has shown that disorders of the nervous system are responsible for reading difficulties in people who are willing to read and have the opportunity to do so.

"If this result holds good...it will make it possible to confirm that someone is at risk of dyslexia as soon as the suspicion arises," stated The Economist.

Until recently, psychologists had thought that this disability, known as dyslexia, was an isolated problem. The victims were believed to lack the ability to understand what they were expected to read or write. This wrong notion was reinforced by the fact that dyslexics often had no difficulty communicating orally.

A new technique for diagnosing the disease has found that dyslexia now shows that the disability is the result of malfunctions in the nerve cells of some part of the brain. This malfunction slows down the speed with which the brain receives and processes information from the eyes or ears. John Gabrieli and Torkel Klingberg of Stanford University in the United States of America developed this new technique called diffusion tensor magnetic-resonance imaging (DTI).

The breakthrough in understanding dyslexia came after it was discovered that people with dyslexia often have subtle hearing difficulties. They were found to be unable to understand sentences that contain similar sounding words, especially if these followed one another too rapidly.

This discovery suggested to Dr. Gabrieli and Dr. Klingberg that dyslexia may have to do with the speed at which signals are transmitted along fibres of the nervous system.

DTI is a way of measuring the movement of water molecules within a tissue. And by studying the speed with which the water particles moved through the fibres of the nervous system of the brain, the scientists found out that they had well defined channels of movement in people who were non-dyslexic, and a random, ill-defined path in dyslexics.

The Economist

AIDS Still Problematic as World AIDS Day Approaches **2mins. 36secs.**

Africa has the largest number of people infected with the HIV virus or living with full-blown AIDS disease. This is according to the most recent information released by the United Nations. Of the 34 million cases of HIV/AIDS worldwide, sub-Saharan Africa alone accounts for nearly 23 million of them.

In a pamphlet released by the United Nations ahead of the World AIDS Day on 1st December 1999, Africa is shown to be leading in all categories of the AIDS pandemic. Nearly everyone who died of the sexually transmitted disease in 1998 was an African. Of the 600,000 children born with the disease, over 500,000 were African children. Africans also account for nearly all child AIDS infections and deaths and about 80 percent of all HIV infections and deaths to date. According to the pamphlet titled *HIV/AIDS The United Nations Response*, Africa also has the most women suffering from the disease. Nearly half of the sufferers on the continent are women!

Although Africa is most affected by the disease, it is not restricted to any particular continent, race or class. There are currently millions of cases of HIV/AIDS infection in every part of the world. This includes nearly 7 million cases in Asia, about two million in Latin America, one million in North America, and hundreds of thousands of cases in the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

“We must make people everywhere understand that this is not over; that this is not about a few foreign countries, far away; that this is a threat to an entire generation; that this is a threat to an entire civilization,” UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said recently, re-awakening global awareness of the continuing devastating effect of the pandemic.

The United Nations is hoping that the world would renew its determination to fight back against the disease at this year’s World AIDS Day. Among the approaches identified for combating the disease are: political commitment at the highest level; broad partnership between all actors in society; breaking the silence and stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS and increasing resources going to HIV prevention and care. Others include acceleration of research on an AIDS vaccine and more investment in programmes for young people.

HIV/AIDS More Than A Health Crisis

Thousand Year Old Trees in one Book

1min. 33secs.

On November 24 in London the WWF Forest for Life Campaign will introduce a unique publication to the world. The book with the title *Ancient Trees: Trees That Live for a Thousand Years* is a celebration of over 25 species of trees capable of living for at least 1,000 years. It also contains some new botanical discoveries in the world.

Fondly called the Millennium Trees book, *Ancient Trees* was compiled by photographer Edward Parker and Anna Lewington. Parker travelled around the world for years shooting stunning forest photographs.

Ancient Trees documents several tree species from around the world, highlighting their religious, cultural, historical and environmental significance, including mention of the size and age of the oldest trees in the world. They include collections from the tropical rainforest of the Amazonia to the arid wastes of the Namib Desert.

Referring to *Ancient Trees* as an amazing and beautiful book, a critic commented that “it encompasses some of Parker’s best photographs ever.” Copies can be ordered from Sonia Pugh at Collins and Brown Publishers in the United Kingdom (Tel: +44 171 924 2575).

WWF

Nigerian Organization Wins International Sexual Education Award 1min. 34secs.

Action Health Incorporated (AHI), a Nigerian non-governmental organization specializing in sex education has won the 1999 WAS Sexuality Education Award. The award, administered by the World Association of Sexology (WAS), was presented to Action Health Incorporated in Hong Kong during the 14th World Congress on Sexology, last August.

Action Health Incorporated was selected by the WAS Advisory Committee out of a shortlist of 20 nominations. Presenting the award, Dr. Eli Coleman, President of the World Association of Sexology explained its significance.

“The award is given to the best organization which has demonstrated the promotion of sexuality education in their country through innovative programmes...[It] is therefore meant to encourage institutions promoting sexuality education, while also hoping that other institutions will be motivated to do the same.”

The award came as a surprise to Action Health Incorporated which played an important role in the production of the Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Nigeria.

“We did not expect to be given (the award),” said an enthusiastic Dr. Uwem Esiet, a trustee of the organization, while receiving the award on its behalf. He said that the award would encourage the organization to continue advocating for improvements in young people’s access to comprehensive sexuality education in Nigeria.

Growing Up

Communicating for Change Launches Film on Widowhood

2mins. 15secs.

A 30-minute film, an exposition on the true condition of widowhood in Nigeria, will be launched at three separate locations in Nigeria this month. The film titled *Till Death Do Us Part* was shot in Eastern Nigeria where the problems of widowhood are most acute and resistant to change. It will be launched in Lagos, Enugu and PortHarcourt between November 29 and December 8.

Communicating for Change (CfC) produced the film last year to highlight a subject that had remained virtually a taboo. The film shows interviews with widows, widows' associations and individuals who are helping to alleviate their plight. Many widows had an opportunity to speak their minds about their conditions, and narrate experiences they have endured over several years. It is an exposition of shattered dreams, halted ambition, and physical and psychological abuse.

Till Death Do Us Part sheds light on traditional practices that subject widows to untold hardship. These include confinement for long periods, physical defacement such as hair scraping, extended mourning during which she must cry and express deep grief to exonerate herself from suspicions of murdering her husband, and ritual cleansing to sever all links with her late husband.

CfC produced the film with assistance from the U.K.-based Television Trust for the Environment (TVE) which received funding from the European Union.

Obasi Ogbonnaya

Satellites May Earn US\$50 billion in 2000

1min. 38secs.

Nearly four decades of active space exploration have begun to yield substantial financial and technological profits to the pioneering nations of Europe and America. An estimated US\$36 billion in commercial revenue was realized from manned space stations and unmanned artificial satellites last year. Likewise, increased application of technological innovations is expected to aid developing nations. This data emerged from the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) held in Vienna last July.

According to UNISPACE III an estimated revenue of about US\$50 billion is projected for 2000. This increasing significance of outer space for commercial activities shaped the deliberations of the conference in Vienna concerning the ways humans could use outer space.

The Vienna Declaration and Action Plan adopted at UNISPACE III included a programme for protecting the space environment and managing its resources for the benefit of human security and welfare. The programme is reportedly an improvement on programmes established earlier during UNISPACE I and II held in 1968 and 1982 respectively.

Discussions in Vienna included means of providing technical assistance and education to enable developing countries to benefit from outer space technologies. These include monitoring of meteorological, environmental and agricultural conditions, early warnings of impending natural disasters, Internet connections via satellite for places that lack telephone cables, navigation systems and development of new industrial processes and materials.

Development Update

Access to News Media: The Internet Redefines Rules

3mins. 9secs

Now you can tune-in to public radio programming from any part of the world, just at the click of the mouse on your computer. A leading U.S.-based provider of Internet and Web Application services, BiznessOnline.com, made this access possible by launching the world's first web-based public radio station last month in New York, U.S.A.

The station is now on line at (<http://www.thepublicradiostation.com>) and offering a variety of programming from across the U.S.A. and around the world. These include jazz, consumer reports, folk music, women's issues, the environment, and news and features. The web-site is designed, programmed and hosted by BiznessOnline.com that targets its product to medium sized businesses and households in the United States.

"With the increased use of the Internet, the rules are changing for the different media outlets," said Mark E. Munro, CEO of BiznessOnline.com. "We are currently working with many radio, television and print media companies, helping them to utilize the Internet as an extension of their medium."

Munro also said that the programming is scheduled so that a listener always knows when their favorite show is live on-line. There is an additional incentive. If a listener misses a show, they can simply click-on that programme and listen to an archived show.

Virtually all three traditional news media (print, radio and television) now use the Internet as an extension of their media. At the click of a mouse you can watch your favourite television programmes, read news and features journals or tune-in to your favourite radio programme. ThePublicRadioStation.com is, however, the world's first public radio station on-line.

PRNewswire/NEWSdesk

Features

The Niger Delta: Environmental Awareness Grows 2mins.50secs.

A Nigerian non-governmental organization, Living Earth Nigeria Foundation (LENF) is, for the first time providing opportunity for communities in the Niger Delta to express their views through innovative projects.

The projects include an environmental radio project featuring interviews in Pidgin English with the local people, a community theatre project based on the daily lives of the local people, and posters that depict the desired sustainable manner of interacting with their immediate environment. The immediate beneficiaries include Akipelai, Oloibiri and Biseni - a cluster of eight communities.

These projects which started in November 1998 had impressive effects on the audiences. The chief of Akipelai was enthusiastic after watching *A New Dawn*, the first ever public theatre staged in his village. At the end of the performance he reportedly exclaimed: "I have just seen my village in a mirror!" Living Earth Nigeria Foundation has followed it up by helping the community establish its very own theatre group called the 'Odioniobebh Dramatic Society of Akipelai.' Virtually all the villages of the three communities now have local theatre groups.

Two radio series of 13 parts each, titled *Time Don Come* and *Wetin De Happen* have been aired on three major radio stations in Bayelsa, Cross River and Delta States. Reacting to the radio series, Chief Amakime Ogu, the Amananowei of Egbebiri in Biseni said:

"This is one of the greatest things to happen to us. The programme has not only brought us to the limelight, it has exposed the problems of the community to the outside world." Edith Ikeni, a young girl in Akipelai observed that the radio interviews were "the first time women from rural villages of Bayelsa State (were) given the opportunity to freely express their opinions openly."

Mr. Aureol D. Vianana, Executive Chairman of the Bayelsa State Environment and Development Planning Authority showed that his agency appreciated the use of radio to raise community awareness of their environment.

“Through the radio programmes, Living Earth will profoundly affect the interaction of communities with their environment as we change habits and attitudes.” He promised that Radio Bayelsa would adopt the programme when it goes on air.

Although both tools of raising conservation awareness, including Living Earth posters have attracted good reactions from the target audiences, their long-term impacts are yet to be determined.

Living Earth Nigeria Foundation

Ethiopian Launches Digital Radio in Africa and Middle East 3mins. 9secs.

West Africans will start receiving radio broadcast clearly, everywhere in the region before the year 2000, using specialized radio sets that are built to receive and process satellite transmissions. This is courtesy of WorldSpace Corporation, the world’s largest digital audio broadcast system established to provide total coverage of the entire African continent for the first time.

The WorldSpace broadcast service, launched last month, is a first-of-its-kind satellite radio service that uses modern technology to ensure clear reception of radio signals even in remote areas where radio broadcasts are inaccessible. It will eventually transmit a wide array of multilingual radio programming across the entire African continent, starting with Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, Kenya, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt and Morocco.

The Broadcast is beamed from studios in London and Washington to Africa via WorldSpace’s solar-powered “AfriStar” satellite launched early this year. The “AfriStar” will supply more than 25 channels of news, music, entertainment and educational programming to an area covering more than 42 million square kilometers in Africa and the Middle East.

“This truly is an historic day in broadcasting,” said Noah A. Samara, WorldSpace Chairman and CEO at the launch of the system. “For 10 years we’ve worked towards this day. For the first time, crystal clear radio programming is being heard in areas that until now have been under-served by traditional radio sources. We are proud to have ushered in a new era with our digital audio service.”

WorldSpace broadcast system projects reaching as many as one billion listeners world wide. Special radio sets with flat antennas and devices that can process satellite transmissions are, however, needed to receive the signals from AfriStar. About 30,000 of these sets have been built by leading manufacturers of consumer electronics including Hitachi, JVC, Panasonic and Sanyo, and, by December, nearly 130,000 such radio sets would be built and sold in Africa. However, millions of sets will have to be built and distributed at affordable costs throughout rural Africa to make WorldSpace an effective development tool.

Services offered by WorldSpace include a selection of news programs from other global and national radio and television stations, broadcasts in several languages including English, French, Arabic and Afrikaans. Plans are under way to launch AsiaStar and AmeriStar satellite as parts of Worldspace’s aim to broadcast to all emerging and under -served markets of the world.

WorldSpace was founded by Samara in 1990. He presented his ideas the same year to a Nigerian audience in Lagos at the launch of the Children of Africa project coordinated by a Nigerian entrepreneur to raise global awareness of the plight of African children.

PRNewswire/NEWSdesk

New Discovery Boosts Conservation Awareness in Ghana **2mins. 14secs.**

The recent discovery of the sitatunga in Ghana has injected new life into a conservation awareness campaign in the country. The sitatunga belongs to the antelope family and is found in swamps and wetlands in East and Southern Africa and in Nigeria. It is extinct in most other West African countries including Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal and the Gambia, due to hunting.

The animal was until recently thought to be extinct in Ghana also. However, attempts to map out eco-tourism areas in the Volta River basin in Ghana's eastern region led to a chance discovery of the animal in Avu Lagoon area by Mr. Frank Koffigah, Volta Regional Tourism Manager.

The Wildlife Department, the Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC), and the Ghana Wetlands Project have expressed great interest in the discovery. Sitatunga was once a favorite game of Avu Lagoon hunters. But now their chief has declared that the animal must not be hunted.

"As long as we maintain our protected areas, such interesting animals will keep on attracting eco-tourists and bring in money," said Mr. Koffigah.

Other efforts are being made to protect the animal in its habitat. Mr. David Kpelle, Co-ordinator of the Ghana Wetlands Project has talked of plans for an environmental campaign to make the people aware that more can be obtained from eco-tourism related to the animal than to slaughter it for food.

In addition, the Wildlife Department plans to involve international conservation organizations in a field study to determine the distribution, population and the size of the animal, in the campaign for its conservation.

Edward Ameyibor

Khartoum's Facelift Renders Thousands Homeless **2mins. 47secs.**

An ambitious plan to give the sun-scourged Sudanese capital, Khartoum, a major facelift has displaced thousands of residents, mainly the poor.

A leading member of the Sudanese Human Rights Group, a non-governmental organization run by journalists, lawyers and teachers, said the plan to remove the poor from the capital to open new highways, broad avenues and public parks, has displaced more than 40,000 residents.

These homeless have joined the ranks of about three million people, living in makeshift shelters in shanty towns around the capital, where they have taken refuge after fleeing the 16-year civil war in the south of the country.

The eviction which is being carried out by the State Government of Khartoum, has, since the exercise began in 1998, led to the demolition of at least 200,000 houses, all belonging to the disadvantaged sectors of the community.

The Chairman of the Sudanese Human Rights Group, Ghazi Suleiman, has complained that the uprooted families from the capital, are crammed into desolate places, far from job opportunities and public services such as schools as well as from worship and healthcare centres.

The government, however, argues that the relocated families have been offered a land of their choice and that they are now enjoying better lives.

“Beautification and restructuring of Khartoum does not mean removing people by force,” said an official in the State government of Khartoum.

Khartoum State Governor, Mazoub Al Khalifa, announced recently that his government was planning to restructure the capital with the aim of making it a model for young African capitals. Khartoum will be one of the “most beautiful capitals in Africa if the plan to restructure it receives funding.”

According to the governor, Khartoum, established more than 100 years ago, and designed for two million residents, now hosts more than six million people, including the three million displaced by the conflict in southern Sudan. Al Khalifa says thousands of families will be transferred to new locations to open ways for big roads, parks and new avenues.

Last year, the central government created a body known as Khartoum Centre Development Authority [KCDA] to supervise the beautification of the capital, and compensate families displaced by such exercise.

IPS

UNESCO Concludes General History of Africa

3mins. 37secs.

The final volume of *A General History of Africa* has been published, marking the end of a project started in 1964 by UNESCO to document Africa’s history from prehistoric times to the modern day. The project was undertaken to correct the impression that African societies had no history, and were incapable of development unless they were spurred by external events such as military, social and cultural invasions.

Each of the eight volumes dealt with specific contributions of Africa to mankind’s common heritage, including the invention of iron, the domestication of agriculture and the fact that Ancient Egypt was a Black Africa civilization. The project was also able to establish that 40million Africans were carried away in the slave trade. But only one out of every four of them survived the long, cruel journey across the seas.

Volume VIII of the publications was presented at a ceremony held in Tripoli in May to mark the completion of the 35-year-old project.

The UNESCO General Conference of 1964 inaugurated the project in Paris, at a time when it planned to set up a dialogue between the different cultures of the world, so that different peoples can coexist in a climate of mutual understanding. Newly independent countries of Africa and Asia needed to confirm their cultural identities to the world and have them rehabilitated and better known.

According to the objective of the project, Africa needed “to correct the inaccuracies arising from Africa’s having been viewed through the distorting lens of colonial stereotypes.”

The project developed in a number of stages. The first five years, 1965 - 70 were used for research into the sources of African history. These were obtained from oral sources, archives, archaeology and linguistic records. In the second stage, 1970 - 80, the strategy for writing the history was formulated. This included setting up a 39-strong international scientific committee to oversee the entire process. One-third of them was non-African from the U.S.A., U.K., Brazil and the Caribbean. The structure of the volumes was mapped out, responsibility for photographs and other art works were assigned and authors for the various articles were sought, with a single director responsible for each volume.

The publication stage started in 1980. The completion of this stage was delayed due to the financial crisis that followed the departure of the United States and some other member states from UNESCO in 1990.

Volume VIII deals with contemporary Africa. It's director is the famous Ali Mazrui, a United States-based political historian from Kenya.

"It is essentially an analysis of liberation movements, de-colonization, the reconstruction of the continent, development problems and international relations," said Christopher Wondji, co-director of the volume and the one who is responsible for the entire series at UNESCO. Wondji's only regret is that the volume was unable to take the 1990s into account.

The Courier

Children's Section

How Long Can You Live if a Cobra Bites You?

1min. 50secs.

This is a difficult question to answer because you may not die at all if a cobra bites you. A cobra is a poisonous snake and when it bites it injects poison into its victim. The prey of a cobra is usually a baby bird and small mammals, like rats and mice. People are not its prey. In other words, we are not a part of the food it eats.

A cobra attacks and bites people when it is frightened it and is protecting itself. It only injects a little bit of poison or, maybe, none at all. If any poison is injected into your body you could become quite ill and may need hospital treatment. Even if no poison is injected, the wound may become infected with dirt from the snake's teeth. Scientists who study snakes say that most people bitten by snakes 'die of fright' and not from the amount of poison injected.

There are different species of cobras, one of which is the Egyptian cobra. It likes to live near a termite mound. If it is in danger it rears up and spreads its hood - the puffy part just below its head. It disappears down a hole as soon as the danger is gone. Sometimes the snake can even pretend to be dead. But people who know their behavior very well say that snakes are best left alone - dead or alive.

Chongololo

Why the Cheeks of the Cheetah are Stained with Tears

4mins.49secs.

Long ago a wicked and lazy hunter was sitting under a tree, gazing idly at a large clearing below where a herd of fat springbok were grazing peacefully. The hunter was thinking that it was far too hot to bother himself with a long and tiring stalk through the bushes, when suddenly he noticed a movement off to the right. It was a female cheetah which had also chosen this herd to hunt - and she was doing it very well.

Keeping downwind of the herd, she was moving closer to them very slowly, inch by inch, and keeping well under cover. The hunter watched, fascinated, as she crept closer and closer to a springbok that had unwisely wondered from the main herd.

Suddenly, she gathered her long legs under her, and sprang forward like an arrow. With dazzling speed she raced down upon the springbok and caught it just as it started to leap away.

Panting from her effort, the cheetah dragged her prize away to some shade on the edge of the clearing. The hunter watched, marveling at the speed and skill he had just witnessed. But as he watched, he saw to his surprise that three beautiful cheetah cubs had also been watching and waiting in the shade.

Now the hunter was filled with envy for the cubs, and wished that he, too, could have such a good hunter to provide for him. This gave him a wicked idea; he knew that cheetahs never attack men, and so he decided that it would be easy to take one of the cubs and train it to hunt for him. Chuckling to himself, he settled down to wait. (Afterall, he was cowardly too, and did not wish to find out whether a mother cheetah would defend her cubs.)

When the sun was setting, the mother cheetah left her cubs concealed in a bush and set off to the waterhole to drink. Quickly, the hunter grabbed his spear and trotted down to the bushes where the cubs were hidden. There he found the three cubs still too young to run away. He could not decide which one to take, and so he stole them all, thinking to himself that three cheetahs would undoubtedly be better than one.

When their mother came back half an hour later and found her babies gone, she was broken - hearted. The poor mother cheetah cried and cried until her tears made dark stains down her cheeks. She wept all night and all the next day. She cried so loudly, and was heard by an old man who came to see what all the noise was about.

Now, it so happened that this old man was very wise in the ways of the world, and he had a great knowledge of, and respect for, animals. When he found out what had happened, he became very angry, for not only had the lazy hunter become a thief, but had broken the tradition of the tribe. Everyone knew that the hunter must use his own strength and skill. Any other way of hunting was surely a dishonour.

The old man returned to the village and told the other elders what had happened. The villagers became angry, too, and the people found the lazy hunter and drove him away from the village for ever.

The old man collected the three cheetah cubs and returned them to their grateful mother. But the long weeping of the mother cheetah had stained her face permanently. And so, to this day, say the Zulu people of South Africa, the cheetah wears the tearstains on its face as a reminder to the hunters that it is not honorable to hunt in any other way than that which is traditional.

When Hippo Was Hairy

The Waterhole

10mins 55secs.

The drought was truly terrible. It was so dry that the animals stood by and watched as their waterholes dried up one by one. When they realized that there would be a long wait from the time the last waterhole dried up until the next rains fell, the animals decided that something must be done. So they called a meeting which was to be attended by at least one member of every species, so that every type of animal could make suggestions.

On the appointed day the animals gathered and a long discussion took place. By afternoon a decision had been reached and this was that all animals should together dig a well, a well so deep that it would not dry up even if the drought persisted for a few years. Each animal was to work to the best of his ability and the water would belong to each one equally.

So desperate were the animals that the decision was immediately accepted by all...that is, all except Hare.

“What! Me dig for someone else’s benefit?” he declared. “Most certainly not! I don’t need water myself. Why should I dig?”

“Very well, Hare,” said the elders. “You will not dig and you will not drink. Even when all the other pools have dried up you will be forbidden to drink from our well.”

This suited Hare. He lay down and sunned himself. He yawned and stretched and dozed, while all the other animals toiled. They dug, moved soil and rocks and grew more and more tired as the hole gradually deepened into the earth. Many days later, when the first shift of diggers arrived in the morning, they were overjoyed to find that at last they had struck water and in the night the well had filled up.

After so much work and effort, the animals were all very possessive of their well and even more determined that the lazy Hare must never taste their water and that no one must get more than his fair share. So a sentry was appointed to do guard duties day and night, starting with Leopard, whose fierce looks and suspicious nature would surely frighten away any intruder.

The drought had not eased as Hare expected. The waterholes had indeed dried up one by one and he could not go without water any longer. He must drink from the forbidden well after all. He trotted along to the site and then found that he would have to pass a guard.

“That won’t be difficult,” Hare mused to himself. “It will certainly be easier than digging under the hot sun.”

Soon Hare trotted back into the forest in search of a beehive. He found one and robbed it, putting the juicy, sweet combs into a pot. He returned to the waterhole and sat down in full view of Leopard. Then he dipped his paw into the honey while he engaged Leopard in a conversation like this: ‘Mmm, this looks good. It not only looks good, it smells good also. Just look at that sweet, golden colour! Oh, but I’m going to enjoy This!’ Then he licked his paw and smacked his lips with pleasure. Leopard could not help looking on and his mouth started watering as he imagined the flavour of that golden honey.

“Do you know, Leopard,” said Hare, “this is quite the best honey I’ve ever tasted. I’m sure you would like to taste a little.”

‘Oh, please!’ said Leopard who was about to suggest it himself. ‘I would love some.’ Hare held up a paw: ‘Not so fast - not so fast. This is such excellent honey that once you have tasted it you will want to eat all. To protect my honey I shall have to tie one of your paws first, so that you will have only one paw to eat with.

Hungrily, Leopard agreed and waited impatiently for Hare to tie up one paw so that he could dip the other into the longed-for honey, Now whether it was exceptionally, or whether Leopard’s anticipation just made it seem so, nobody knows. But he was so impressed with his first taste that he begged for more.

‘You see! You see!’ exclaimed Hare. ‘Didn’t I tell you so? Now to stop you from eating it all, I shall have to tie up your other paw and feed you myself.’ Leopard agreed. Anything to get more of that honey! As soon as Leopard was securely tied up, Hare bounded across to the well and had a long drink. Then he bathed - a forbidden luxury - in that water, which was all that was available for drinking.

When the animals discovered that Hare had tricked Leopard, Leopard was in disgrace and he stole away, deeply ashamed. The next guard chosen was Hyena. Surely, he was too cunning to be deceived by a scrawny Hare.

But that evening the same thing happened. Hyena gave in to the temptation of the honey and allowed Hare to tie up both his paws and then looked on helplessly while Hare drank and bathed in the well. Great was Hyena’s disgrace the next day and great was the animals’ agitation as they discussed how to keep that thieving Hare out of their well.

Suddenly Tortoise crawled forward and asked if he could take guard duty. The other animals scoffed. ‘You, Tortoise! Do you really think you will succeed where Leopard and Hyena have failed? What do you think you will do? But Tortoise persisted and finally he was given his chance.

Tortoise crawled off as fast as he could, calling his wife to help him. They went to the cactus tree and there his wife smeared bird lime thickly all over Tortoise’s shell. With a knowing smile on his small face, Tortoise then returned to the well. He dug a shallow hole and nestled down so that his feet and head were hidden and all that could be seen was his shell, looking just like a rounded stone.

When Hare came strolling down to the well and saw that there was no guard, he laughed until his whiskers quivered. ‘I knew it,’ he giggled, ‘I knew that I would use their water for nothing. The can’t outwit the clever little Hare!’ Very pleased with himself, Hare drank to his fill and then had a leisurely bath. When he was clean and refreshed, he splashed out of the water and looked about for a place to dry off in the sun.

‘Ah,’ he said, seeing Tortoise’s shell, ‘today is my lucky day. There is an excellent little stool just waiting for me to sit on it.’ So, Hare made himself comfortable on Tortoise’s shell and relaxed contentedly in the sun until his fur had dried and it was time to go home. But - what was this? He was stuck fast to his seat! He wriggled and pulled and struggled, but he was firmly attached to that stool.

Tortoise realized this as well and crawled out of his hole, and addressed his astonished passenger. “Well, well, well! I have you now, Hare. You will have to come along with me,” and he chuckled, delighted at his success.

Hare overcame his surprise and said in a confident voice to his captor, Tortoise, I advice you to let me go. You may not know it yet, but I have a powerful right arm and if you don’t set me free I shall smash your shell to pieces.”

Tortoise only chuckled some more and said, “Go ahead Hare.” So Hare raised his right arm and brought it down THUMP on the shell, and - of course - his paw stuck fast! “Tortoise,” he said, “be warned. I was just feeling sorry for you. My left arm is much stronger than my right. Don’t force me to use it, please, because it will crumble your shell into dust.”

“Carry on,” said Tortoise and SMACK, Hare’s left paw walloped down onto the shell - and stuck fast!

“Tortoise,” said Hare, “I am giving you your last chance. My two back legs are stronger than my arms and if I kick you I will send you flying into the clouds.”

“Please do as you wish,” replied Tortoise. So Hare lifted his two legs and brought them down in a hefty kick - and there they stayed, glued onto Tortoise’s shell.

Tortoise, with his prisoner now firmly secured, crawled along to the animal elders and delivered up Hare for the justice he so well deserved.

Shangani Folk Tales

Conservation Quotation

51secs.

“We are told that Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden into the world. We have - ever since we started walking upright - set about the task of banishing ourselves from our own Garden of Eden - our planet Earth. Perhaps banishment is the wrong word to use, for it assumes that there is somewhere to be banished to. In our case, once we have ruined and used up this Eden there is no other, no second world hanging in the sky that we can all blithely move to, as if we were changing houses. This beautiful and endangered planet is the only one we have.”

Gerald Durrell, Conservationist and writer.

How Many Times do Bees Produce Honey in a Year?

1min. 28secs.

Bees produce honey while trees and other plants are in flower. In some African countries, for instance, trees flower between December and February, and between March and May, giving two ‘honey seasons’.

Bees make honey from ‘nectar’, the sweet water that is found inside flowers. While they collect nectar, bees also fertilize flowers by passing pollen powder from one flower to another. Some flowers produce better tasting honey than others. The best honey tree in East Africa is called ‘Mutondo.’ It is also known as ‘Muchesa’ that flowers from March to May.

In Zambia most honey is produced from the North Western Provincial districts of Mwinilunga, Kambompo and Zambezi. These are traditional bee-keeping areas that have traded honey and beeswax (a byproduct of the process of making honey) for over 150 years.

Honey is one of the most delicious products we can get from nature. Do you know how it is made? Only bees can make it. They take one drop of nectar in their mouth, and a special chemical, blow a bubble into it to get rid of any water and what is left is a pure drop of honey.

Chongololo.

Useful Quick-facts

U.S. Judge Halts Logging to Protect Fish

51secs.

A United States' federal judge recently took a decision that would gladden the heart of the beneficiary, if only it could read. Last month, the judge in Seattle, Washington, halted the sale of timber from a federal forest in the Umpqua River basin in the northwest on the grounds that the government failed to adequately consider whether the logging would harm fish protected under the Endangered Species Act.

What does this mean? It means that government would now go back and take steps to obey the law. It has to do a thorough Environmental Impact Analysis (E.I.A.) which may, in the end prove that government ought not to log the forest.

ENN

A New Alliance to Fight Trade Liberalization

1min. 3secs.

The battle line has been drawn in the sand against international trade pacts that liberalize trade and put the developing and least developed countries at even greater disadvantage. The World Trade Organization, which is the largest and most powerful international trade pact has been criticized often for further impoverishing citizens of the developing nations and, as a result, forcing them to rely increasingly on diminishing natural resources for income and sustenance.

Now, WTO and trade liberalization appear to have encouraged the formation of an alliance of very strange bedfellows indeed. Labour Unions and environmental activists in the United States have announced the formation of an alliance for the purpose of fighting trade liberalization. The interesting thing about this development is that trade unions and environmental activists were often bitter foes in the battle over natural resources.

ENN/Worldwire

New Images Debunk Ancient Ocean Myth

1min. 5secs.

For several years scientists had believed that there were long, gigantic shorelines on planet Mars. To confirm this, and other ideas about Mars, the United States of America's National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) sent unmanned space probes called the Viking missions to the planet in the 1970s. Images of Mars sent back by these probes appeared to lend credence to this perception. The images suggested that great oceans once covered much of the planet's Northern Hemisphere, and they showed features that looked like ocean shorelines.

New evidence shows that this assumption was wrong. According to research published in the October 1 issue of Geophysical Research Letters in the U.S.A., new images of Mars done with improved technology, and high resolution images, show that there is no evidence of shorelines that would have surrounded ancient oceans on the red planet.

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