
Development

| | <u>Timing</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| ECONOMICS | | |
| Wanted: Good Economic Policy, Not Aid <i>Grant-seeking developing countries may find it more difficult to raise international funds for development.</i> | 1min. 53secs. | 5 |
| Is Government Spending a Good Thing? <i>Government spending in developing economies spells bad news for economic growth.</i> | 2mins. 8secs. | 3 |
| The East Got More Aid than the South in the 1990s <i>The dominant aid debate this decade is finally resolved.</i> | 2mins. 26secs | 4 |
| WOMEN | | |
| Five Years After Beijing <i>Women put last minute pressure on governments to show commitment to ending gender discrimination.</i> | 1min. 38secs. | 13 |
| The Rape Capital of the World. <i>South Africa earns the ignoble epithet of world rape capital.</i> | 1min. 31secs. | 14 |
| Violence Against Women Around the World <i>Shocking reports of abuse of women in other nations of the world.</i> | 1min. 26secs. | 14 |
| LABOUR | | |
| Workers in Mali Win Wage Increase <i>Malian workers come out of a strike season with good deals from government.</i> | 3mins. 30secs. | 8 |
| SOCIETY | | |
| NGOs Fight for Survival in Sri Lanka <i>Non-governmental organizations challenge government's attempt to emasculate them under the guise of checking fraud.</i> | 2mins. 17secs. | 13 |

Environment

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| CONSERVATION | | |
| Conservation Quotation <i>Ignorance and apathy threaten the natural world.</i> | 15secs. | 13 |
| Madagascar Launches New National Park <i>Andringitra in south-east Madagascar is ready for tourists.</i> | 3mins. 11secs. | 9 |
| Outstanding Nature Pictures at the Click of a Mouse <i>Now you can view one of the world's most impressive collection of nature photographs on the Internet.</i> | 1min. 30secs. | 3 |
| Illegal Logging Threatens Tanzanian Forests <i>Tanzania's 33 million hectares of pristine forest is under increasing threat.</i> | 2mins. 19secs. | 6 |

POLLUTION/WASTE

The Philippines Looks for New Waste Disposal Methods **2mins. 13secs.** **5**
Manila desperately looks for new methods of handling waste as traditional dumpsites fill up.

WILDLIFE

Rapid Decline of Fisheries Hits Ghana **4mins.** **7**
Growing competition and improvement of fishing techniques are rapidly depleting Ghana's fish stocks.

Tough Weeds Threaten East Africa's Grasslands **2mins. 12secs.** **7**
An insidious weed has gained a choke hold on East African grasslands.

Children's Section

The Days of the Hunting Buffalo **5mins. 10secs.** **10**
Greed causes Buffalo to cede his crown of King of Beasts to Lion.

Eagle's Razor **2mins. 7secs.** **12**
Cockerel and Eagle were once very good friends, but a lost razor split them up

Why and how Do Woodpeckers Make Holes in Dry Trees? **1min. 2secs.** **11**
Meet the bird that bores a hole in dead tree trunks for nesting.

How Does a Rhino Protect itself from Enemies? **1min. 11secs.** **12**
The rhino's worst enemy is man.

News

Is Government Spending a Good Thing?

2mins. 8secs.

It may surprise most Africans to learn that government spending is bad for economic growth. Research funded by U.K. – based Development Studies Association (DSA) has shown that public spending for non-productive or consumption purposes “has a detrimental effect on economic growth.” This is especially so in a country like Nigeria where business activities depend on contracts from government. Contracts stimulate importation of goods, equipment and expertise to execute them. And the economies have very little or no productive base.

The research into the effect of public spending was done in Tanzania, a model developing nation struggling against great odds such as rising public expectations in the face of scarce and dwindling resources. Among the findings was that “public spending in developing countries is often associated with budget deficit and slower growth rates.” The study also found that reduction of public spending will lead to higher economic growth.

The study found that there were three major types of public expenditure in a developing country, namely, productive or investment spending, non-productive or consumption spending and human capital expenditure.

Investment spending was found to have a consistently negative effect on developing economies. This was a surprise because this type of spending is expected to lead to economic growth. Consumption spending further depressed economic growth. However, human capital expenditure, including spending on health and education, led to economic growth.

To promote economic growth governments of developing countries were, therefore, urged to increase spending on education and health improvement. Private sector investment and commercial activity must also be encouraged. These new policy changes should be followed up with a campaign for a favourable environment to attract international aid and investments.

ID21/ Obasi Ogbonnaya

Outstanding Nature Pictures at the Click of a Mouse

1min. 30secs.

More than 10,000 outstanding nature photographs - perhaps the largest and most spectacular collection in the world - will soon be available to everyone anywhere in the world just at the click of a button. This is courtesy of WWF - the international conservation organization - and Canon, suppliers of business machines and optical products.

In a special ceremony at the Frankfurt Book Fair on the 15th October, both organizations launched what was called a specialized online environmental photolibrary. The collection would be accessible to the public via the Internet by mid - 2000. But the conservation organization’s global network can already use an in-house communications network called the Intranet to retrieve images for education and campaign work.

The Photolibrary contains thousands of nature photographs shot since 1964 by some 500 photographers around the world. A press release about the photolibrary said that this was just the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Illustrated features on conservation campaigns and projects, ecoregions and endangered species are currently being prepared.

WWF

The Philippines Looks for New Waste Disposal Methods

2mins. 13secs.

The city of Manila, capital of the Philippines in south-east Asia, has promulgated an edict for an environmentally friendly way of disposing waste generated by the city's households.

The edict requires all waste generators to separate their garbage into four colour-coded plastic bags. Green for organic waste; black for non-biodegradable waste; red for toxic and hazardous waste; and yellow for bio-medical infectious waste. Previously, these wastes were collected together and deposited in the city's earth dumps.

This new development comes as Manila's waste disposal sites are becoming full and about to be closed. Alternative dumpsites have not been found. Officials of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority resorted to legislation to regulate waste disposal and avoid the looming crisis of becoming overwhelmed by waste.

Critics have dismissed the new legislation as belated, desperate and panicked. They point out that methods of disposing of the sorted wastes have not been disclosed. Manila deals with much of its wastes by incineration and earth dumps. But the city plans to phase out its incinerators by the year 2003, and may create large composting plants for the organic waste.

Other problems envisaged include the cost to householders of the colour-coded bags (about USD1.00 for 20 bags), the erratic collection of waste, and the stiff penalty for bringing out the garbage bags before the arrival of the waste truck. Fines range from USD25.00 to six months imprisonment and community service.

These problems notwithstanding, most residents feel that the edict is long overdue. They are hoping that it would encourage the recovery, recycling and composting of much of the waste in the earth dumps. Some African cities may watch this development in waste management in Manila for new ideas.

UWEP

Wanted: Good Economic Policy, Not Aid

1min. 53secs.

Developing countries will have difficulty raising international aid to boost both national and local development programmes in the foreseeable future. They can expect less financial grants and more lessons about sound economic policies from creditor nations. This is due to a recent World Bank publication that argues that aid works only with sustained, sound economic policy in place. Most donor nations and institutions look to the World Bank for policy guidelines.

Recent research by the University of Nottingham, funded by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) supports the World Bank's position. The study found that instability in aid receipts was greater for countries subject to economic uncertainties.

"Financial aid is often intended for investment but investors lose confidence if donations are irregular," warned Oliver Morrissey, co-author of the report. "The greater the uncertainty, the greater the impact on economic performance." The research examined the relationship between aid instability and economic growth in a sample of 88 developing countries.

According to the study, aid instability can affect economic performance in two ways. First, it may indicate that the country is susceptible to economic uncertainty such as famine, flood or drastic fluctuation in commodity price. Secondly, instability can undermine policy and investment.

Additional findings of the research showed that instability reduces the effectiveness of aid and of economic growth.

Proposed corrective measures include improved economic policy in recipient countries, stable donor-recipient relationship and special attention given to countries that are vulnerable to causes of economic uncertainty.

ID21/Obasi Ogbonnaya

Illegal Logging Threatens Tanzanian Forests

2mins. 19secs.

Tanzania loses about 500,000 hectares of its pristine forest every year due to illegal timber trade. This is according to a new publication entitled "Cut and Run: Illegal Logging and Timber Trade in the Tropics." The book claimed that government officials are involved in this illegal activity which puts the country's 33.5 million hectares of forest increasingly at risk.

Illegal exploitation of forests and corruption in forestry administrations and customs services were also identified in other African countries including: Kenya, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon.

The book suggested that Tanzania lacks the means to ensure effective forest protection. Reacting to the report, Tanzania's Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye has vowed to deal with illegal timber merchants.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Philemon Luhanjo, has admitted that some forestry staff are guilty of engaging in illegal timber trade. They are also suspected of collusion in the decimation of endangered animal species. But he denied reports that officials in the Wildlife Department may be abetting poaching, as alleged by the Hunters Association of Tanzania. Other suspects in the illegal timber trade are timber product dealers, private individuals, saw-millers and logging companies.

Luhanjo says illegal exploitation continues almost all over the country both in forest reserves and in unreserved forest areas. Suspects deal in unlicensed harvesting of timber, wood fuel and charcoal.

As a means of halting the devastation, authorities have begun enlisting the help of communities living near forests. The lack of affordable alternative sources of energy causes these rural communities to resort to forests as an immediate source. They are being educated to help with forest conservation measures rather than exploiting the forests for short-term gain.

Police patrols have also been mounted on major roads in a bid to arrest suspects and impound illegal forest produce.

Environmental News Network

Tough Weeds Threaten East Africa's Grasslands

2mins. 12secs.

The East African rangelands, priceless for their capacity to support a wide range of savanna wildlife, are seriously threatened by a dangerous weed. The weed, *Tarchonantus camphoratus* is the grassland's equivalent of the water hyacinths which has plagued rivers, streams, lakes and lagoons in several West African countries for several decades.

Tarchonantus camphoratus, also known by its Masai name - leleshwa, was first noticed more than 30 years ago. Ecologists say that it has a remarkable ability to adapt to the environment but has no valuable use. It chokes off other plants of the grassland and is not consumed by domestic or wild animals.

"The shrub is highly adaptive to range soils," said a recent report in the East African, a Kenyan newspaper, "including hostile places like the rocky cliffs, where it grows in multiple stems forming tough root networks that render the soil poorer and unsuitable for other species, especially grasses and herbs."

Ecologists say that the extent of the weed has increased four-fold over the last 30 years, covering more than 130,000 hectares in Kenya alone, mainly in the Rift Valley. In Laikipia in the north-central region of Kenya, the spread of the shrub has forced wildlife to the edges of the protected areas, heightening conflicts with livestock owners as the animals compete for food. In the areas, where the leleshwa has virtually taken over the vegetation, wildlife has totally disappeared.

Some ecologists have warned that if the leleshwa is not controlled, some of East Africa's savannas could become barren deserts. However, it appears that the weed has some oil in it, and scientists are researching into its commercial value. This raises hope that the weed could be controlled through harvesting in the future.

AWF Wildlife News

Features

Rapid Decline of Fisheries Hits Ghana

4mins.

Ghana's fishing industry is in deep trouble due to over-fishing by coastal communities and the vastly improved fishing technology employed by deep sea fishing trawlers. The first signs of trouble were evident at the traditional fish based festivals during which riverine communities usually prepare several fish dishes.

"Apart from the cold winds, there was not much evidence that the fishing season has come and gone," reported a Ghanaian correspondent. "All the fishing festivals have been celebrated without much fish in the pots. Not even herrings." Not too long ago, herring harvest was so plentiful fishermen dumped what they could not sell back into the sea.

To explain the scarcity, the traditional African sense of humour has come to play. The fishermen in villages near Accra, the capital of Ghana, attribute their poor harvests to family planning among the fishes. The villagers have always disliked the campaign for family planning, and see this crisis as a means of getting back at it.

Meanwhile, jobs for about one in five Ghanaians are threatened. Most of them are engaged in fishing, fish processing and marketing. Ghana's Deputy Director of Fisheries, Mr. George Hutchful, painted a gloomy future for them.

“The number and weight of fish continue to decrease at an alarming rate as a result of their not reaching maturity before being harvested. This has led to a decline in fish stocks and financial losses to the fishing industry,” he said, blaming the crisis on improper management of marine fisheries that produce nearly all of Ghana’s fish stocks.

Mr. Hutchful said that government’s efforts to forestall the crisis by imposing a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) policy, to limit fish catch, was thwarted by intense competition and improvement in fishing technology. The total allowable catch for all types of fishing in Ghana is 210,000 tons per year. This ceiling has never been observed.

“For the past 10 years, annual domestic catches have been between 350,000 tons and 400,000 tons,” Hutchful said. Another 70,000 tons have been imported annually to meet domestic demand.

Fish is the major source of animal protein consumption in Ghana, particularly in the urban centers. The problem is bound to get worse, given demographic trends in Ghana. In 20 years time, more than half of Ghana’s 18 million people would be resident in urban centers. This, Hutchful said, means that fish consumption will certainly rise.

Local fishing associations have taken the bull by the horn. They have caused their members to swear to an oath prohibiting the use of explosives for fishing. According to the chief fisherman of Mumford community who administered the oath with bottles of local gin, violators will incur the wrath of the sea god. There are more than 9,000 canoes, half of which are motorized, operating from 189 fishing villages along Ghana’s 550 kilometres coastline.

For its part, the government now inspects fishing nets used by trawlers. Korean fishing companies reportedly own most of the trawlers. This monitoring technique has yielded some results. Four out of every five trawlers inspected at the Tema Fishing Harbour have had their fishing nets seized by the Fisheries Department.

Edward Ameyibor.

Workers in Mali Win Wage Increase

3mins. 30secs.

Workers in Mali have received a 7 percent pay rise, following a successful strike by the National Workers Union of Mali (UNTM), the country’s main labour union, and negotiations with government.

The strike achieved more than a wage increase that took effect from October. The entire salary scale for public sector workers will also be revised and go into effect in January. The revision will be worked out by a team of economists, and government and union representatives who would be selected by the country’s minister of Civil Service and Employment, Ousmane Oumarou Sidibe.

In addition the agreement reached with government addressed other areas of workers welfare including price controls on staple foods, which have risen on an average of up to 10 percent per year, and a reduction in the kilowatt/hour price of electricity sold to Malian workers. Most provisions in the agreement went into effect immediately, attracting favourable comments.

“This new system where contract provisions take effect immediately is very reassuring,” said a member of the labour group.

Nevertheless, some workers fear that the costs of basic goods will go up as soon as their salaries increase.

“We’ll have to see how merchants respond to the salary increase because if they do hike prices, we’ll be back to square one,” warned one UNTM member who remained skeptical in spite of the local press describing the contract as ‘historic.’ He recalled how in 1994 a 10 percent rise in salaries after devaluation of the CFA franc proved worthless after the price of basic goods went up even higher. So far, prices have remained steady in the market.

Mamadou Bathily, a UNTM negotiator, assured that price control will be upheld and that the government will be advised to take action if needed to hold them down.

“The wage increases are intended to solely benefit the public sector workers, who are presently under extreme pressure. It’ll be entirely unacceptable if the price of basic goods, such as rice, millet, milk, cooking oil, and gasoline, skyrocket and wipe out everything we’ve achieved,” said Bathily.

On his part, Sidibe has pledged to honour all contract provisions reached with the union leaders.

The pay rise has been welcomed by other labour groups such as the Confederation of Malian Workers’ Unions (CSTM), which had declined to participate in the general strike. Amadoun Amion Guindo, the CSTM president, said: “although the salary increase is the first step, it’s not enough, and the workers must continue to fight.”

The CSTM is preparing their own general strike to demand an end to the power shortages which regularly plague the country in the dry season. The private sector workers are also planning their own strike for higher wages, which they have failed to obtain through negotiations.

IPS

Madagascar Launches New National Park

3mins. 11secs.

Madagascar’s Andringitra National Park is ready for tourists. The park was launched in October and promises to be a success, according to various partners that have been canvassing for the creation of the park, including the National Association for the Management of Protected Areas (ANGAP), the Madagascar Government, the German Aid Agency KfW, and WWF.

Andringitra is 31,160 hectares and lies between two older protected areas - Ranomafana and Isalo National Parks. Among its attractions are a high diversity of plant and animal life, three types of vegetation namely; tropical moist forests, dense montane forests and high mountain prairies crowned by massive granite boulders. An additional attraction is the Boby Peak which, at 2658 meters above sea level is the country’s second highest mountain and highly accessible.

The area’s great tourism potential resides specifically in the possibility it offers for research, environmental education and sports like rock climbing and hiking.” About 40 km of hiking paths and four different camping sites have been prepared within the park.

The activities undertaken in Andringitra since 1993 have aimed at encouraging participatory approach to the conservation of protected areas. Local communities participated in the decision-making process required for conserving and developing this area in a sustainable manner.

The management plan for the National Park is to develop a type of tourism that will protect the natural wealth of the area and help the social and economic interests of the local people, while promoting their traditional interests.

“With the sole exception of the spiny dry forests of the south and south-west of the island, Andringitra is like a concentrated sample of all the natural wealth Madagascar has to offer,” explained Lantsoa Ramarojaona, Coordinator of Integrated Conservation Development Projects at the WWF Madagascar Programme Office.

More Than 15,000 people in 196 villages live around the national park, and they are fully included in the project.

“Perhaps the greatest strength of the project is the support it has received from the local Betsileo, Bara and Tanala communities,” says Joseph Ralaivivony, National Director of the project. “They have been a receptive audience and have allowed us to work within their rich social and cultural traditions to address conservation issues such as the need to prevent forest fires. Because of their great sense of community, their commitment is very strong.”

WWF

The East Got More Aid than the South in the 1990s

2mins. 26secs

Fears that aid resources shifted away from Africa and other developing countries to Eastern Europe, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, have been confirmed. This confirmation comes almost 10 years after African countries raised the alarm, which was denied by the industrialized nations of the West.

The confirmation came in a research paper presented at the 1999 annual meeting of the United Kingdom Development Studies Association (DSA). The paper analyzed major shifts in development aid disbursed by member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the 1990s. It concluded that there was a decline in official development aid (ODA) to the South as attention shifted to the East during the period, and that the OECD was unaware of it because of changes in OECD’s definition of official development aid.

(The developing countries of the world are generally referred to as the South because many of them are located south of the equator.)

“Official record from the OECD for 1990 – 94 support the view that there was no resource shift towards East Europe, but that aid to the East was additional. Closer examination, however, suggests that changes in reporting and recording disbursements artificially boosted aid figures, and hid the indications that there was a shift of aid disbursements from Africa to East Europe, and a decline in the volume of aid given to Africa.”

The Development Studies Association also discovered that changes were made in OECD definition of aid to include expenditures directed at solving ‘common global problems.’ This was a deviation from the traditional disbursement of aid strictly for meeting national developmental objectives. This change, in addition to the emergence of a new post-Cold War ideology among donors could be used to justify giving less aid to the South.

The Development Studies Association recommended a number of solutions to the problem, including:

- ? A separation of aid monies spent for solving ‘common global problems’ from those spent on national development goals;
- ? Alternatively, the OECD could change its definition of development aid to include money given to solve common global problems; and
- ? Allowing independent auditors, to audit the accounts of both donor and recipient countries rather than the donors doing it themselves.

DSA

Children’s Section

The Days of the Hunting Buffalo

5mins. 10secs.

(In the folklore of the ancient Bushmen of southern Africa, the buffalo was once a meat eater and a feared hunter)

There was once a particular Buffalo, a huge and fierce bull who lived near the great swamps. He was a hunter of great strength and skill, and had a huge appetite which all animals feared. So fierce was he that only the great elephant and Rhino were safe from his deadly attacks.

One day, Buffalo caught Lion unawares while he was drinking at a pan. Buffalo was about to kill Lion with one sweep of his mighty horns, when Lion begged for mercy. Buffalo agreed to spare his life on one condition: that Lion would become his slave, and hunt food for Buffalo. Of course, Lion agreed. What choice did he have?

So Buffalo commanded Lion to catch a fat springbok which was grazing on the other side of the pan. Lion obeyed, and dragged the prize back to Buffalo, who enjoyed a nice, easy meal. Buffalo thought to himself, “Well! This is a most excellent arrangement! I will now have time to enjoy my afternoon wallow, and sleep in the shade whenever I want!”

The next day, Buffalo called Lion again and ordered him to catch a tender young zebra, as he was hungry for his breakfast. Lion soon returned with the catch and Buffalo greedily devoured the whole zebra. He didn’t leave a scrap for Lion, not even a bone reward for his work.

After that, Buffalo found Lion every day and ordered him to kill more and more animals in order to satisfy his greed. Not once was there a morsel for Lion.

Meanwhile, because their pride leader was spending all his time hunting for Buffalo, Lion's wives and cubs were beginning to find it difficult to hunt, and some of the cubs were starving. As the pride grew thinner and weaker, Buffalo grew fatter and greedier. After a while, he was eating five times a day. Poor Lion wore himself out supplying food for dreadful Buffalo.

One day Buffalo found Lion lying wearily beneath a shady thorn tree. He ordered him to get up and prepare for a great hunt. Because of his easy life, Buffalo was now so huge and fat he could hardly walk. He had also developed a most astounding appetite.

"Today, Lion," said Buffalo, "you will go out and kill me one of every kind of animal in the bush!" Immediately, Lion knew that this was too much – an impossible task, especially as he was almost worn out. He protested: "O mighty one! Be reasonable! Even I could not manage such a thing." And he shook his great black mane in anger. "Do you not see my family? They are starving because I never have time to help them with the hunt. I beg you, Great Buffalo, release me from my promise."

But Buffalo's greed was enormous, and he had no pity. "I spared your life!" he roared, "Now you must do my bidding if you value your honour!" And he pounded the ground with his enormous front hoof, raising a cloud of dust.

Lion drew himself wearily to his feet. He knew there was no longer any honour in the situation, and had decided to act.

"O Buffalo," he said, "regrettably, I am indeed honour bound to agree to your request. As you command me, through sheer greed, to kill one of every beast in the bush, I shall obey. And I will begin with you!"

So saying, Lion sprang onto Buffalo's enormous back and sank his great teeth into his neck, killing him immediately.

At last, Lion and his family had a huge feast, and after that they took a liking to buffalo meat, and continued to hunt for it whenever possible. The other buffalo learned the lesson that Lion had taught them, and started to eat grass again. They also decided that it would be safer to live in herds, in order to protect themselves from the King of Beasts.

When Hippo Was Hairy

Why and how Do Woodpeckers Make Holes in Dry Trees? 1min. 2secs.

Woodpeckers are birds that have hard beaks attached to the very strong bones of their skull. This is God's way of making woodpeckers able to live better in a woodland habitat. While most birds make their nests with grass and twigs, woodpeckers make their nest holes in old tree trunks that are easier to peck at than living trees. They also use their beaks to break bark away to find insects and larvae to eat.

Several species of woodpeckers are found in Africa, including the Bearded Woodpecker and the Cardinal Woodpecker. The Bearded Woodpecker is known to do other things with its beak too. Each day it drums loudly by banging its beak on dry wood in its territory. The message it sends in this way is: "This is my home. I live here."

Chongololo

How Does a Rhino Protect Itself from Enemies?

1min. 11secs.

Rhinos have very small eyes and poor eyesight. So, how do they protect themselves? They have good hearing and sense of smell, however, which make up for their poor eyesight. They are also able to use their horns to protect their babies from predators such as lions.

As they grow, rhinos get too big to have natural enemies in the wild. Unfortunately, no animal can protect itself against a hunter with a gun or spear or a trap. In this manner, the two types of rhinos known in Africa have almost been hunted into extinction. They are the Black Rhino and the White Rhino. Poachers have hunted Black Rhinos for many years and sold their horns to traders overseas mostly in Arabia where they are used for traditional medicine, aphrodisiacs and for dagger heads. Unless we are very careful and look after the few that are left, Black rhinos will soon become extinct.

Chongololo.

Eagle's Razor

2mins. 7secs.

Once upon a time, there was a village where Eagle and his friend Cockerel both lived. One day, Cockerel went to Eagle's hut and called out, "Good day, Eagle. Would you please lend me your razor so I can cut my children's hair?"

Eagle obligingly handed Cockerel his razor and Cockerel returned home to cut his children's hair. When he had finished he put the razor down in a safe place, intending to return it later. However, it so happened that his youngest child found the razor, took it outside to play with it and lost it.

A few days later, when Eagle wanted to cut his own children's hair, he asked Cockerel, "Where's that razor I lent you? Can I have it back now?" Cockerel went and looked but it was not where he had left it. His wife called their children together and asked, "Where is Eagle's razor?" but the chicks did not know, and the smallest one who lost it had forgotten.

Eagle said, "Cockerel, I want my razor. If you don't give it back to me, there'll be trouble." All the chickens went out and searched and searched, but there was no sign of the razor. Then Eagle said, "Cockerel, if you have lost my razor I will eat your children."

And that is why today there is no longer friendship between Eagle and Cockerel. And that is why when Eagle is around Cockerel is so nervous and his wife shelters her children under her wings. Then, when Eagle has gone the chickens will rush about searching here, there and everywhere for the lost razor, which has still not been found.

Shangani Folktales

Special Section

Conservation Quotation

15secs.

"Nothing is more important than teaching the next generation about the value to people of the natural world around us – a world that is so gravely threatened by human ignorance and apathy."

Sir Peter Scott (Artist/Environmentalist)

NGOs Fight for Survival in Sri Lanka

2mins. 17secs.

Sri Lanka's Non-Governmental Organizations are up in arms to stop government from violating their right to freedom of association. The government of the country recently appointed an Interim Management Committee to oversee the affairs of the Sri Lanka Red Cross (SLRC). That was the second such committee appointed by the Ministry of Social Services to administer the Red Cross since March, following a series of allegations regarding fraud and mismanagement within the organization.

The new committee was appointed following government's amendment in May to the Voluntary Social Service Organizations (Registration and Regulation) Act of 1980, otherwise known as the NGO Act.

A petition calling for the rescinding of the amendment has been signed by more than 500 NGOs. The amendment of the Act, and appointment of an Interim Management Committee for the SLRC were condemned by NGOs for being retroactive.

"They constitute blatant interference in the internal affairs of non-governmental organizations," the NGO activists said, pointing out that existing laws are sufficient to investigate allegations of mismanagement and embezzlement within the NGO sector and to punish those responsible for such actions.

"Displacing persons holding authority within a voluntary social service organisation on the basis of allegations, and replacing them with persons picked by the Minister in charge of social services in the way that has been done with the SLRC creates a space for a wide range of abuses of power to take place," stated a press release by MIRJE, a Sri Lankan NGO.

Meanwhile, allegations were made against members of the first Interim Management Council appointed to the SLRC. They were alleged to have paid themselves large allowance, used official vehicles for personal travel and that family members of that council traveled abroad on scholarships that should have gone to longstanding members of the SLRC.

Baobab

Five Years After Beijing

1min. 38secs.

Representatives of governments will meet for a special session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2000 to review implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. However, NGOs dealing with women's issues have started calling on governments to go to that meeting with evidence that they have repealed laws that discriminate against women. Two of such NGOs is Equality Now, based in Washington D.C., U.S.A., and CEDAW - the Campaign to End Discrimination Against Women.

The call comes as women's liberation groups are convinced that such laws remain in force.

"Our campaign will call upon governments to repeal or amend these laws over the course of the upcoming year prior to the Beijing + 5 Special Session. At the Special Session these reforms can then be highlighted as a show of genuine commitment to (rather than disregard for) the words and spirit of the platform of action" which calls for the elimination of such laws, Equality Now said.

Brooke Ackerly, a woman activist and visiting Professor of Political Science at the University of California, U.S.A. believes that women's rights issues should look beyond laws that discriminate, and focus on the causes and contexts of discrimination and violence against women.

www.equalitynow.org

Violence Against Women Around the World

1min. 26secs.

- ? **India:** A 10 year old girl was rescued by a flight attendant who noticed that she was crying. The flight attendant later learnt that she was crying because her father had sold her to the 60 year old Saudi Arabian man sitting next to her for the equivalent of USD240
- ? **Kenya:** At a boarding school, 300 boys attacked the girls' dormitory. Seventy-one girls were raped. Nineteen were trampled to death in the stampede to escape. The schools vice principal later remarked that "The boys never meant any harm against the girls. They just wanted to rape.
- ? **Brazil:** A man who confessed to stabbing his wife and her lover to death was acquitted of murder for the second time by an all male jury. The acquittal was based on the argument that he acted in legitimate defense of his wronged honour.
- ? **United States:** A 51 year old woman was stabbed 19 times and killed by her former boyfriend as she waited inside a courthouse to extend an order of protection. Twice before he had been charged with harassment. Both times the charges were dropped.

Equality Now

The Rape Capital of the World.

1min. 31secs.

South Africa has just been declared the rape capital of the world. This is based on recent statistics from that country which shows that more than 50,000 rapes were committed last year. Police sources said that the number is not a reflection of the incidence of rape in the country. More than 93 percent of the cases are not reported, police said, because of fear or shame of the victim.

According to news report on the American radio channel Voice of America (VOA), the rape cases are accompanied with brutality by the rapists. The case that has caught the most attention is of a woman who was blindfolded and gang-raped for two days and later abandoned in an alley where neighbours found her. Her nose had been burned off, as were her lips. She also had several fractures and bruises all over her body. Medical sources said that she was in a critical condition and would need many sessions of corrective plastic surgery.

South Africa's Vice President, Dr. Jacob Zuma, appears to be the most concerned public officer about the incident. But government critics attribute his concern to the fact that his wife was recently raped at their home in Kwazulu Natal.

VOA

Acronyms

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| ANGAP | National Association for the Management of Protected Areas |
| CEDAW | Campaign to End Discrimination Against Women. |
| CFA | African Financial Community |
| CSTM | Confederation of Malian Workers' Unions |
| D.C. | District of Columbia |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| DSA | Development Studies Association |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| KfW | German Aid Agency |
| NCRC | Nature Conservation Research Center |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| ODA | Official Development Aid |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| TAC | Total Allowable Catch |
| UNTM | National Workers Union of Mali |
| U.K. | United Kingdom |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| UWEP | Urban Waste Expertise Programme |
| WWF | World Wide Fund for Nature |