
Development

	Time	Page
CRIME		
Wanted: Prisons with a Human Face	1min. 8secs.	13
<i>Nigerian prison system is not set up to reform inmates.</i>		
Workshop Exposes Nigerian Laws Supporting Wife Battery	3mins. 12secs.	7
<i>The Nigerian police is not arresting domestic violence against women and children</i>		
EDUCATION		
Niger Republic Finds a Way to Re-Integrate School Dropouts	3mins. 18secs.	7
<i>A West African country moves quickly to prevent emergence of social miscreants.</i>		
More Homes for the World's Needy Boys and Girls	26secs.	13
<i>Most countries of the world now have homes for abandoned children.</i>		
ENERGY		
Households are Leading Energy Consumers in Nigeria	1min. 53secs.	3
<i>Much of the fuel energy consumed in Nigeria is used for cooking food and boiling water.</i>		
FOOD		
Civil Conflict Heightens Food Supply Problems in East Africa	4mins. 17secs.	5
<i>Fifteen African countries entered the year 2000 with millions of their citizens unsure of their next meal.</i>		
HEALTH		
A.D. 2000 May Spell End To Poliomyelitis	2mins.42secs.	3
<i>UN's global 12 year polio-eradication campaign may hit the mark.</i>		
New Studies Highlight Growing Dangers of Tobacco Use	3mins. 38secs.	8
<i>Death toll from smoking is expected to soar in coming years.</i>		
AIDS Threatens Peace in Africa, UN Says	4mins. 30secs.	9
<i>AIDS is now a security problem for African governments.</i>		
COMMUNICATIONS		
Two African Films by Television Trust for the Environment Win Awards	2mins. 7secs.	4
<i>Africa's tragic developmental problems highlighted in award-winning films.</i>		

Environment

AGRICULTURE		
Ghanaian Village Adopts Organic Farming	5mins. 34secs.	5
<i>A village that stopped the ritual of bush-burning each planting season now boasts of richer soil and better harvests, than its neighbours.</i>		

CONSERVATION

United Kingdom Budgets US\$34 million for African Fisheries 2mins. 27secs. 4

Britain takes the first step towards redressing the depletion of African fisheries.

The World's Largest Inland Sea 24secs. 13

Three continents hug the world's largest inland sea.

DEFORESTATION

Tobacco's Role In Deforestation 1min. 7secs. 13

Cigarette-makers now contend with the allegation that they cause deforestation, in addition to fatal diseases.

China Bans Logging But Increases Timber Imports 25secs. 13

Neighbouring countries are being deforested to meet China's timber needs.

The World's Largest Desert 22secs. 12

More than eight countries the size of Nigeria can fit into the world's largest desert.

LOGGING

Greenpeace Co-founder Turns Timber Industry Spokesman 1min. 1secs. 13

Greenpeace co-founder who jumped ship may be making more money, but he is not laughing all the way to the bank.

TOURISM

The Bird Watching Industry 1min. 47secs. 12

What are the best conditions for developing a birding industry?

Children's Section

The Donkey and the Hippopotamus 4mins. 14secs. 10

Donkey's greed and Hippo's revenge

Why the Dassie [Rock Hyrax] Has no Tail 3mins. 55secs. 11

Laziness and disobedience cost Dassie her gift from the king

Conservation Quotation on Natural Disasters 47secs. 11

Can the global family live in harmony with the whole of nature?

Which is the Most Dangerous Animal 1min. 35secs. 12

Make three guesses before you read the text.

News

Households are Leading Energy Consumers in Nigeria

1min. 53secs.

The urban household sector in Nigeria consumes much of the energy produced in the country. The sector consumes nearly every traditional fuel like firewood, and a quarter of all commercial fuels. It is responsible for three-quarters of all kerosene consumption in the country. According to data gathered from research and publications from 1992, 1995 and 1997, it also uses more than a tenth of all electricity consumption and nearly all liquefied natural gas consumption. Research shows that this energy is used mostly for cooking and heating water.

Therefore, periodic disruptions in crude oil production or pricing systems affects urban households in the country more than transporters and commuters, contrary to popular perception. The bulk of energy produced in the country comes from fossil fuel, a good example of which is crude oil.

Also, fossil fuel consumption has risen ten-fold since the 1970s, and consumption by urban households accounts for a large percentage of the increase.

“A rapidly increasing population, increased urbanization, rapid industrial and economic development and an increased drive towards rural development” are some of the factors responsible for the increase in energy consumption.

According to researchers at the Ladoko Akintola University of Technology in Nigeria, the growth in urban household fossil fuel consumption is a good indicator of economic development. But it has not yet led to a reduction in fuel wood consumption even in urban centres. This is because supply of leading domestic fuel such as kerosene, liquefied gas and charcoal is still irregular and unpredictable.

Boiling point

A.D. 2000 May Spell End To Poliomyelitis

2mins.42secs.

There is great excitement at the United Nations this year as it prepares for a major public health victory over the deadly disease, poliomyelitis. The campaign launched in 1988 to eradicate polio by the year 2000, is in its final lap and the target is within reach. The number of polio cases has fallen drastically from 350,000 in 1988 to 5,200 reported cases in 1999 worldwide.

“We are on the verge of an historic public health victory: the eradication of poliomyelitis, a disease that has caused untold suffering to millions of children,” said Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General of the World Health Organization [WHO] in January.

Ms. Brundtland and Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF] have written to the leaders of the last 30 countries in Africa and Asia where the disease is still found. The leaders were urged to provide leadership for extra immunization activities, allocate resources for national immunization days and enable truces in areas of conflict.

“As long as a single new case of polio exists, children everywhere are at risk of this disease,” said Ms. Bellamy recently in New York. The global initiative to eradicate polio by the end of the year 2000 is led by WHO, UNICEF and Rotary International. India hosts about 70 percent of the world’s remaining polio cases. The drive to eliminate the disease by 2000 hinges very much on the efforts now under way to eradicate it from India.

“In the year 2000 - the target year for polio eradication - we have a window of opportunity to defeat this disease forever,” Dr. Brundtland said, at the launch of the ‘Final Push for Polio,’ in the Indian capital, attended by over 300 delegates including ambassadors from Africa and South Asia.

Since the launch of the polio eradication initiative in 1988, polio cases have dropped drastically. The proportion of the world’s children living in polio-infected areas has dropped from 90 percent to less than half, and the disease has been eradicated from the Americas, Europe, the Western Pacific, much of the Middle East and most of northern and southern Africa.

United Nations

United Kingdom Budgets US\$34 million for African Fisheries

2mins. 27secs.

The United Kingdom may have introduced a new approach to checking the economic consequences of the rapid depletion of fishes in Africa's offshore fisheries. It recently announced a US\$34 million programme to assist nearly five million poor fishermen in 24 African countries who are worst affected. This programme falls far short of the campaign by international conservation organizations to ensure the re-negotiation between African and European countries of international fishing agreements that have resulted in over fishing and the rapid depletion of the African offshore fisheries by Europeans. The conservation organizations had sought a new deal under the Lome Convention which would cut off governments' subsidies for the fisheries sector, reduce trawler sizes and modify technologies that allow fishing nets to sweep up everything from the Atlantic ocean. The new agreements would also put in place better monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and fair fees paid to African governments for fishing in their waters.

Britain's US\$34 million dollar Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme [SFL] will assist the more than five million poor people in participating countries who are directly employed in artisanal fisheries. The programme will promote sustainable use of fisheries resources and the importance of fisheries for the poor fishermen, fish processors and traders. It would also help participating countries to deal with some of the problems it identified to be associated with artisanal fishing. These include overexploitation of fisheries, destructive fishing practices, damage to natural habitats, post harvest losses, conflicts among fishers, pollution, waste, discarded bycatch and catching of non-target species.

The following countries are targets of the SFL: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra-Leone and Togo. The programme will be managed by the FAO, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development [DFID], and the African countries involved.

FAO/Obasi Ogbonnaya

Two African Films by Television Trust for the Environment Win Awards

2mins. 7secs.

The Cow Jumped Over the Moon and *When Good Men Do Nothing*, two films about major African tragedies of the 20th century, produced by the Television Trust for the Environment [TVE], have won awards on the eve of the new **millennium . One of them ,** *The Cow Jumped Over the Moon*, was awarded the 'Prix de l'Innovation' at the Toulon International Film Festival for Maritime and Exploration Films. The documentary, shot by Chris Walker, followed the nomadic Fulani of West Africa on a migratory journey as they battled against the ravages of nature, in search for suitable grazing pasture for their cattle. The documentary depicts how the struggle to locate diminishing pasture symbolizes a struggle to hold on to a vanishing traditional way of life. Help eventually came from an unexpected source, demonstrating how space technology could help to preserve a traditional way of life and the environment. *The Cow Jumped Over the Moon* was first screened at the Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival in New York. It has also been selected for the Washington D.C. Environmental Film Festival in March 2000.

The second film titled *When Good Men Do Nothing* won the 1999 Award for Outstanding International Investigative Reporting. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists [ICIJ] made the award in Europe. Steve Bradshaw and Mike Robinson shot the film, focusing on the tragic massacre of up to one million Tutsis in Rwanda in the last decade of the twentieth century. The film asks the question: why could the West do nothing to prevent the mad orgy even-though it was forewarned? The judges who made the award urged that the documentary be shown to students world-wide "to illustrate how political cowardice has allowed genocide back into the world community."

oneworld.org

Features

Civil Conflict Heightens Food Supply Problems in East Africa

4mins. 17secs.

About 15 African countries entered into the new year facing severe food emergencies. Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda Sierra-Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda are all suffering from recent or on-going civil conflict. A combination of long running civil wars and drought have affected crop cultivation and harvest in all of these countries.

Warning of the dire situation in the Sudan, the FAO - United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation - said in a recent report that war and drought have cut off nearly two million people from relief operations and that deaths from starvation have begun to occur.

“The drought compounded by an upsurge in civil strife led to large numbers of farm families being displaced. The conflict has also disrupted farming activities and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people who need it most. The escalation of violence has reduced the distribution of humanitarian relief assistance and a number of starvation-related deaths have been reported,” the report said.

The report was prepared by FAO’s Global Information and Early Warning Service. Mr. Mwitwa Rukandema, the Senior Economist of the service said: “The cumulative effects of recurrent droughts, the long-running civil strife, population displacement and uncontrolled crop pests have rendered Somalia’s population exceedingly food insecure.”

In other parts of eastern Africa dry spells and erratic rains have reduced cereal production in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, making many people dependent on food assistance. In Eritrea, half a million people displaced by the war with Ethiopia face severe food shortages while in Sudan, despite promising prospects, two million people in the south are depending on emergency food assistance because of the on-going civil war.

The report also noted that the Great Lakes region in central-eastern Africa still faces a critical food situation mostly because of the civil conflicts that are continuing in many parts of the region. For example, food supply difficulties have intensified in Burundi due to recent escalation of violence in some parts, resulting in renewed displacement of people and forcing the suspension of international humanitarian aid to nearly one million people in refugee camps.

“Living conditions in these camps are extremely poor, with no clean water and sanitary facilities,” the report said. It forecast that the current tight food situation would deteriorate in the coming months.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the report says civil strife has left some 10 million people uncertain of their next meal, while in the neighboring Republic of Congo civil strife has disrupted agriculture and marketing activities. Although Rwanda recorded increased food harvest during the year it would still need food assistance to feed over 900,000 returning refugees. And in Angola and Madagascar, food supply difficulties are made worse by civil war and locusts respectively. Elsewhere in southern Africa and throughout most of West Africa, the food supply situation is stable.

According to FAO, in West Africa the Sahelian region has harvested bumper crops in a number of countries, despite some serious localized flooding in The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad. Only Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra-Leone continue to experience food problems caused by earlier civil strife.

“However, the situation is improving in Sierra-Leone and especially in Liberia where a range of interventions in agriculture has led to a significant improvement in food production” the report concluded.

FAO

Ghanaian Village Adopts Organic Farming

5mins. 34secs.

Every year, the bush burns ferociously destroying property and vegetation in Ghana’s three northern regions. But in one village, Nwodua, 10 miles from the regional capital, Tamale, the bush does not burn and it stands as a proud example of what good environmental practice can achieve. “For nine years, there has been no single incident of bush burning at Nwodua,” says Issahaku Abubakar Sadiq, aged 41.

Learning from their teacher at an adult education class in 1988 on the evils of bush burning to the soil, vegetation and property, the people decided not to allow any bush fires in their area despite the annual fire festivals celebrated throughout the region.

Every year, fires are deliberately set to burn the bush to usher in the period of land preparation for the planting season to begin. Left uncontrolled, it has destroyed property which one estimate from the National Fire Service puts at one billion cedis in 1997 (about US\$350,000).

For the three northern regions, regular bush burning has led to decreasing soil fertility and low agricultural yields. This has gone on to the extent that many farmers believe it is their lot. But for Issahaku, there has been noticeable improvement in the yield of agricultural produce since his village abandoned bush burning and allowed nature to re-furnish the soil with nutrients.

He recalls, "in the past when bush burning was almost revered as an annual rite, farming here was very difficult. When I compare the texture of the soils here when I was a child to what prevails now, I know that stopping bush burning has really benefited this village. The soils used to be hard and coarse, The ground was hard to till, with wind and soil erosion very serious here as a result of the loose sandy soils and the top soils which normally support plant life.

"Now that the vegetation has been allowed to fallow without bush burning during the dry season, erosion has reduced, drastically increasing the organic matter content of the soil. Every year the land becomes richer". With green lush maize fields, no one can deny the land is indeed very fertile.

In Nwodua, nobody uses inorganic fertilizers. "We rely on nature to replenish what has been taken out of the soil by avoiding bush burning. We plough back into the soil when the land is being prepared for farming. We also use compost manure as well as animal manure".

The farmers also practice conservation methods like alley cropping and crop rotation with good results.

"Since 1992, we no longer need to spend our meagre financial resources on procurement of chemical fertilizers." So we have more money to do the actual farming.

This has attracted many young people into farming and the drift to Tamale or Accra in search of non-existing jobs is no longer attractive.

Another farmer, Paul Alhassan says although yields-per-acre are now around 10 to 12 bags of rice, it has yet to hit the previous levels of 20 bags in the 1970's.

"Before 1992, the yield was very low that I almost gave up farming," he said.

Another attraction of Nwodua is their tree populations that have increased not only in indigenous species like sheanuts and dawadawa but also in fruit trees like cashew, guava, mango and pawpaw. Other trees are neem and acacia.

With assistance from the United Nations Development Programme UNDP's Africa 2000 Environment Improvement Programme, Nwodua boasts a nursery from which other villages learning from its example collect their stock.

Alhassan says it was the trees that they planted which encouraged them not to burn their bush "since trees are the major casualties of bush-fires."

In 1993, the Nwodua Community Forestry Project won the Kumbungu district award for "outstanding contribution" to agricultural development awarded by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The following year, it won the regional award for its agro-forestry project and in 1997, they got another award topping it with a prize from the National Bushfire Prevention campaign last year. Good agricultural practices using organic methods has led to well-nourished children, more money for the villages and less worries with school fees.

With a population of 675, Nwodua boasts now of a primary school, a Junior Secondary School and a vocational centre offering courses in carpentry, masonry and typing for 380 students.

It is indeed a village worthy of emulation.

Edward Ameyibor

Niger Republic Finds a Way to Re-Integrate School Dropouts

3mins. 18secs.

How do you tackle the problem of dropout youths who, having left the school system, can't find their place in society, their rural environment, traditional family system or in the urban workplace?

In Niger, dropout youths were joining the ranks of the unemployed in the urban areas, reluctant to return in shame to their villages of origin. Those who did return to the rural communities did not have the skills to enter the workplace.

Parents observed that those students who were leaving the school system early were not easily re-integrated within the community. Those parents, perceiving that the school system had a negative effect on the community and family structure, became increasingly wary of the school system and were discouraged to send their children to school.

In response to this problem, the Ministry of Education and the French NGO, Aide et Action, initiated the project "Education companions" targeting the rural youths from 15 - 25 years who have attained a certain level of basic education.

The youths chosen as "Education companions" receive a basic education refresher course and are trained as student teachers. At the same time, they receive basic training in small business management. Each person chooses a profession and receives a small financial aid to help them get a small business off the ground. They could purchase tools, a boat engine or a sewing machine.

In exchange for this assistance, the young "Education companions" tutor children from the local primary schools in the evening. The companions help them with their home work, to understand and learn their lessons and to succeed in their schooling.

After a trial period, highly positive results were observed. There was a noted improvement in the school performance of the young students tutored by the companions.

In some of the villages where the pilot project had been implemented, the success rate in examinations rose to 100 percent. This improved the image of the young tutors, encouraging them in their new professional life and to stay in their family and community environment instead of moving to the urban centres.

The project reveals the importance of close community involvement and parent motivation in education, especially towards the goal of achieving Education For All [EFA].

"Within the village parents are more receptive to the school as they know that even if their children leave the school system, they will be useful to the community," says Hamissou Oumarou, National EFA 2000 Coordinator of the Ministry of Education in Niger Republic. Following the very positive evaluation of this experience, it is expected to spread to other regions of the country.

Africa News Online

Workshop Exposes Nigerian Laws Supporting Wife Battery

3mins. 12secs.

Domestic violence against women is not a criminal offence in Nigeria. Former Commissioner of Police Sunday Aghedo stated this at a workshop on "Reporting Domestic Violence as Crime in Nigeria," blaming it on existing laws that give tacit approval to the problem. The former Lagos State chief cop complained of legislative inhibitions to the ability of the Nigerian police to deter domestic violence effectively.

A Nigerian NGO, Project Alert on Violence Against Women organized the workshop in collaboration with the United Nations Fund for Women [UNIFEM] to raise awareness of the social problem and bring journalists, the police and NGOs into a good working relationship for reporting domestic violence as a crime in Nigeria.

Presenting the keynote address at the workshop held in Lagos, Mr. Aghedo pointed out that some provisions in the Criminal Code Act and the Penal Code Law give tacit approval to wife battery. He said that amendment of the two laws would enable the police to act decisively in cases of domestic violence.

“The Penal Code, particularly section 55(1), says nothing is an offence which does not amount to the infliction of grievous hurt upon any person and which is done by a parent, guardian, school teacher or a master, for the purpose of correcting his child, ward, student, or apprentice under 18 years.”

The same applies to a wife who is battered “by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife, such husband and wife being subject to any native or custom in which such correction is recognized as lawful.”

Mr. Aghedo added that Section 58 of the Penal Code also states that: “Nothing is an offence by reason that it causes or that it is intended to cause or that it is likely to cause any injury if that injury is so slight that no person of ordinary sense and temper would complain of such injury.”

However, journalists were blamed for not reporting domestic violence as crime or with the seriousness it deserves. And the police admitted that it does not always record reports made of domestic violence.

“Violence against women is a crime and must be treated as such including when it occurs in the family,” said Mrs. Regina Amadi-Njoku, UNIFEM Gender Advisor for West Africa, in her welcome address.

“Workshop participants decided to focus on some key areas in subsequent efforts to combat the pervasive ignorance of domestic violence from Nigeria,” said Mrs. Effah-Chukwuma, Executive Director of Project Alert. “These include enlightenment programmes, cooperative information sharing between police, NGOs and journalists and campaign for the review of laws that aid domestic violence.”

Project Alert.

New Studies Highlight Growing Dangers of Tobacco Use

3mins. 38secs.

Deaths related to smoking will more than triple worldwide in the next 25 years. Recent reports by the American Heart Association [AHA] fear that many Americans would be affected because the number of teenage smokers in the United States is on the rise - reaching over 4 million this year. About five million of these teenagers will eventually die from a disease attributed to smoking in coming years. Meanwhile major cigarette producers of the world are busy setting up very expensive and sturdy billboards seeking to lure Africans into the habit of smoking.

World Health Organization [WHO] statistics included in the AHA report indicate that global death toll from diseases associated with tobacco will grow to 10 million in 2025, up from three million in the 1990s.

“Anyone who sees these statistics should be very concerned,” said AHA president Lynn Smaha. “Smoking costs an estimated US\$130 billion annually in medical care in the USA alone. This includes costs related to smoking during pregnancy, which has been associated with low birth weight babies.”

The AHA report highlights other negative impacts related to smoking. These include missed workdays, lost productivity, disability, premature death and damages from fires caused by cigarettes.

There is hope for those willing to quite smoking. According to WHO, a smoker can decrease his chance of developing heart disease within one year of kicking the habit. An ex-smoker who stays away from the habit for 15 years would be almost totally free from any risk of dying from diseases related to their previous smoking habit.

Researchers are now focusing on the best ways to encourage teenagers to avoid smoking altogether. This approach is based on research that shows that most adult tobacco users began their habit before they were 18 years old. A recent study conducted in the U.S.A. indicates that active involvement in a programme that teaches teenagers how to

say no to cigarettes is much more effective than lecturing them on the health risks of smoking. According to Rick Petosa, co-author of the study, peer pressure rather than reason, is a very strong factor in initiating teenagers into the habit of smoking.

“Lecturing teenagers about the health risks of smoking does not discourage them from smoking. Social influence programmes on the other hand, focus specifically on the things that adolescents worry about,” said Petosa. “The successful programmes focus on social pressures and on developing the skills necessary to resist those pressures. It’s more appropriate to teach teenagers about short-term consequences. Other researchers have found that these kinds of programmes can cut the rate at which adolescents begin to smoke by 30 to 50 percent.”

The results of the study were published in a recent issue of Journal of School Health. Statistical contributions came from several groups including the WHO, Centre for Disease Control and the National Health Interview Survey.

ENN

AIDS Threatens Peace in Africa, UN Says

4mins. 30secs.

Africa’s wars have long been on the agenda of the United Nations’ Security Council. But never before has the council considered AIDS a threat to peace on the continent.

Last month the 15-member council was expected to debate a health issue for the first time, and United States Vice President Al Gore was scheduled to address the historic meeting. However, Russia and China - two of the five permanent members of the council opposed this unusual turn of events.

U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke told reporters the goal of the meeting was to highlight the toll AIDS has taken on Africa, attempt to reduce the disease’s stigma and to “begin to redefine security as broader in the post-Cold War era than it used to be.” The Cold War is a term used to describe the years when the USA and its Western European allies built up arms in readiness for a global war with the defunct Soviet Union and its East European allies.

As council president for the month of January, Holbrooke scheduled the open session and invited Gore to deliver a major policy address on the impact of AIDS. The vice president will also announce a new commitment of U.S. resources, Holbrooke said.

Ahead of the meeting, Gore spelled out what was at stake.

“More people are predicted to die of the AIDS epidemic in the first decade of this new century than all of the people who were killed as soldiers in wars during all the decades of the 20th century,” he said on a nation-wide television.

AIDS has devastated the economic and social fabric of Africa, taxing already poverty-stricken health systems, robbing countries of their most productive members and leaving more than 10 million AIDS orphans on the continent.

In 1998, wars in Africa killed 200,000 people. AIDS in Africa killed two million people. Eastern and southern Africa have been particularly hard hit. Home to just under five percent of the world’s population, the region has more than 50 percent of the 16.3 million lives lost to AIDS since the epidemic began. U.N. figures show.

High AIDS death rates among Africa’s elite, including public servants, threaten the ability of some countries to govern effectively, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in prepared remarks to the council. High infection rates among the police and armed forces also have left African countries ill equipped to face security threats, he said.

“In already unstable societies, this cocktail of disasters is a sure recipe for more conflict,” Annan said. “And conflict in turn provides fertile ground for further infections. “The breakdown of health and education services, the obstruction of humanitarian assistance, the displacement of whole populations and a high infection rate among soldiers - as in other groups which move back and forth across the continent: all these ensure that the epidemic spreads ever further and faster.”

Last month Annan invited dozens of representatives from Africa, UN agencies, donor governments, voluntary organizations and businesses to draw up a plan to reduce infection rates by one-quarter among Africans between ages 15 and 24 before 2005. He called for more information and prevention campaigns, the speedy development of a vaccine, affordable treatment for Africans and a commitment by wealthier countries to put up more money to fight the epidemic in Africa.

Annan had hoped that the Security Council would become a partner in that effort by working to ensure that armed conflict doesn't spread AIDS or prevent UN agencies and other groups from trying to control it, UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

Deseretnews

Children's Section

The Donkey and the Hippopotamus

4mins. 14secs.

Many years ago Donkey and Hippopotamus were good friends and used to graze together on the same riverbank. One day when the river was low, Donkey gazed across to the far side and saw enticing green crops. Before Hippopotamus joined him that morning, Donkey splashed through the shallow water and ate his fill on the tasty crops. When he returned that evening, Hippopotamus eyed his bulging stomach and asked, "Where have you been?"

"I crossed the river, my friend, where there are delicious crops growing. Why don't you come with me tomorrow?" "Surely," replied Hippopotamus, "don't go without me."

In the morning, Donkey and Hippopotamus met and crossed over the river. As they went Donkey advised Hippopotamus that there was a guard watching those crops day and night. "But you just relax and eat, my friend," Donkey assured him, "I will keep watch and bray when I see the guard coming. As soon as you hear me bray, get out of the fields as fast as you can." Hippopotamus thanked Donkey for his kindness and munched and chewed as fast as he could until he heard the donkey braying. The he crashed out of the field at full speed, down the river bank, across the river and back to the safety of his little pool, where he sank under the water and out of sight.

This happened again the following day and the next, until Hippopotamus realized that Donkey was not behind or in front of him when he fled from the supposed approach of the guard. Suddenly it dawned on him that his friend was trying to keep as much of the food for himself as he could, by letting Hippopotamus eat just a little and then braying to get him out of the fields. The guard was nowhere in sight and Donkey did not run - oh, no - he stayed behind alone, eating to his heart's content. Hippopotamus said nothing about his suspicion and they carried on in this way until the rains fell and the river rose again.

Now Donkey was forced to stay on the other side because the river was deep and fast flowing and he could not swim. He was getting thinner and hungrier everyday because there was little grass near the river and it did not taste nearly as good as cultivated crops.

Hippopotamus meanwhile grew fatter and fatter because he continued to graze on the cultivated fields, eating until he was full everyday. "You should come back to the crops, Donkey," he said. "Look at yourself, growing thinner everyday with all that lovely food just across the river." "I wish I could," Donkey sighed. "But you know I can't swim." "Oh, that's no problem," said Hippopotamus, "as you are my friend, I'll carry you across."

So Donkey climbed onto Hippopotamus' back and they started the crossing. All went well until the middle of the river when Hippopotamus called out, "It's very deep here and I can't touch the ground any more." He sank to the bottom, taking Donkey with him. Hippopotamus carried on walking over the bottom and out the other side but Donkey, who could neither swim nor hold his breath like Hippopotamus, drowned in the river.

To this day the friendship between donkeys and hippos has never been revived.

Shangani Folktales

Conservation Quotation on Natural Disasters

47secs.

“For we inherit but one earth. When people conspire against nature to destroy tree cover, or deplete the water table, or pollute our biosphere to the point that climatic changes occur, then the consequences, measured in terms of human suffering, are likely to be acute. Merely to bind up the wounds of suffering humanity is not enough. We must get at the root causes and reverse the trends of increasing poverty and environmental degradation before it is too late. A sustainable ecosystem must be our aim, one in which the global family can live in balanced harmony with the whole of nature.”

His Highness Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan (1985)

Why the Dassie [Rock Hyrax] Has no Tail

3mins. 55secs.

Long ago at the dawn of time, and long before man appeared, the Lion was King of all the animals, and furthermore, he was the only one to possess a tail.

Now, although he was very proud of the honour bestowed upon him by the Creator, he felt that his subjects should also have tails, as tails were so useful - and also because then Lion himself would not be such an odd man out. He made up his mind to make some tails himself and give them to his subjects.

So, setting to work, he made tails of all shapes, sizes and colours. When he had finished, he told Baboon to call all the animals together, so that they might choose for themselves. Baboon was asked to bring them all to Lion's Council Rock, and to make sure he forgot no one.

Baboon set off to call all, far and wide, and by nightfall they had started to assemble at the Council Rock. All, that is, except the lazy little Dassie. He felt that it was much too far to go. However, Dassie asked some passing monkeys to collect his present for him, and to explain to the king that he felt too ashamed to appear before Lion, as he was so small and humble. Satisfied that his message would be passed on safely, Dassie turned back into his cave and continued with his nap.

The old King Lion handed out tails to all the assembled animals, passing them over as each animal pointed to the one he had chosen. But Lion made many mistakes due to his failing eyesight, in spite of a full, bright moon. (That is why, today, the squirrel has a tail much longer than his own body, while the elephant has such an embarrassingly short thin tail.)

When most of the tails had been handed out, Lion noticed that Dassie was missing. The animals were all busy congratulating each other and comparing tails, when finally the monkeys, chattering noisily, remembered to pass on Dassie's message. The king was very angry at Dassie for disobeying the summons, but eventually he relented and picked out a small, furry tail for the monkeys to take back for Dassie. For after all, the King wanted all the animals to have a tail.

However, on their way back, the monkeys decided to teach lazy Dassie a lesson, for they thought that Dassie did not deserve his present. So they stuck the little furry on the end of their own brand new, long tails. They were rather pleased with the result.

On reaching Dassie's rocky home in a hill, the monkeys showed off their gifts, parading about this way and that. They told the lazy Dassie what they had done to teach him a lesson. In future, they said, the Dassie was to obey the King, and stop being so idle.

Poor Dassie was most upset - but was far too lazy to do anything about it. So that is why, to this day, the dassie still has no tail.

When Hippo was Hairy

Which is the Most Dangerous Animal

1min. 35secs.

The answer to this question will surprise you. You may even say: "But why didn't I think of that?" It is us, people. In the past we didn't know how nature really works. We thought that everything was put on earth for us to use as we pleased. We discovered we had the power to change, to use and to destroy... and that is what we did and what some people still do today. A famous conservationist, Gerald Durrell, describes our destruction of the earth like this:

"The world is as delicate as a spider's web. If you touch one thread you send shudders running through all the other threads. We are not just touching the web, we're tearing great holes in it." Here are some ways we can help to stop the destruction: "the first step we must take is to learn as much as we can about nature. Learning helps us to understand. When we understand, we will be able to take care of our earth and all its living things, including ourselves. We could be the ones who repair the broken spider's web. "

Do you think we can do it? We believe we can.

Chongololo.

Useful Quick-facts

The Bird Watching Industry

1min. 47secs.

Where in Africa can you go to find an entire industry devoted to bird watching? It is Africa's smallest mainland nation - the Gambia. The following assets make it a bird watching paradise.

- 550 bird species packed into a small size of about 11,300square kilometers.
- A well-developed tourist infrastructure, with inexpensive package holidays and a tourism industry that caters specially for birders.
- A safe and hassle free travel environment
- The only country in West Africa in which bird watching takes on the spirit of a holiday rather than a major excursion.
- The easiest place to find West African indigenous species, and
- You know exactly where to go for the birds. You can go to Abuko Nature Reserve for forest birds in an easily accessible forest; or Tanji for density of species, where you can find 300 species along a five-kilometer stretch of coast; or to Tendaba Camp for boat rides into the mangroves and a profusion of woodland birds.

But Africa does not monopolize the bird watching industry. Small Costa Rica in Central America is about 5 times the size of the Gambia, but has all it takes to be a haven for bird watchers. It can boast of 850 species of birds, a stable political situation, low cost of living and a variety of vegetation. A tourist visiting the nation said he spotted 460 species of bird in just three weeks.

Africa Birds and Birding

The World's Largest Desert

22secs.

With an area of 8,400,000sq.km., the Sahara desert is clearly the largest in the world, and it is growing. This is about the same size as all the other deserts of the world put together, and more than eight times the size of Nigeria.

Arbovitae

China Bans Logging But Increases Timber Imports

25secs.

China's official imports of logs nearly doubled to over 4.0 million square meters in the first half of 1999 following a logging ban imposed last year after severe flooding. Imports of processed woods also increased by about three-quarters. Conservationists are certain that the ban in China has increased timber felling in surrounding countries.

Arborvitae

Tobacco's Role In Deforestation

1min. 7secs.

An estimated 200,000ha of woodland are lost every year as a result of tobacco farming, amounting to about 2.0 percent of global deforestation according to new research published in a newsletter titled *Tobacco Control*. The forest loss is much more in tobacco growing countries; amounting to about five percent of each nation's forest. Wood is mainly used for curing tobacco, particularly in the developing world in southern Africa, and parts of the Middle East, South America and Asia. Between 1990 and 1995, 11.4 million tonnes of wood were used in tobacco production, mainly for curing.

Although some countries have encouraged farmers to establish wood lots for use in curing, most of the wood spent is still logged from natural forests. "The belief that deforestation from tobacco production does not have a significant negative effect has to be challenged," concluded the author of the study, Helmut Geist.

Arborvitae

Greenpeace's Co-founder Turns Timber Industry Spokesman

1min. 1secs.

Dr. Patrick More, co-founder of the militant pro-conservation group - Greenpeace - has since found another job with one of the groups he once opposed bitterly. He now works for the British Columbia Forest Alliance - an alliance of major multinational timber industries that are alleged to encourage unsustainable logging practices. Life has not been easier for him on the other side of the fence. At a recent conference where he spoke about proposed changes in land use practices, a pie was launched at him and it hit target. The pie made by the Santa Cruz Biotic Baking Brigade was thrown at him in protest of his selling out the environmental movement. In reaction, More punched the man who threw the pie at him and left the hall in a rage.

Agitprop

More Homes for the World's Needy Boys and Girls

26secs.

Did you know that Save Our Souls [SOS] Children's Village, started in the small Austrian town of Imst 50 years ago, by Dr. Hermann Gmeiner, has now grown to 385 SOS Villages in 131 nations of the world.

SOS Nigeria

Wanted: Prisons with a Human Face

1min. 8secs.

An increasing percentage of convicts in Nigeria are returning to prison as fourth, fifth and sixth time offenders. Data released recently by the Annual Abstract of Statistics [AAS] shows that about one in every ten convicts between 1986 and 1990 had been to prison on at least four other instances. There were more than 120,000 convicts sentenced to prison terms in those years.

Commenting on the data, which was released two years behind scheduled by AAS, a human rights group Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action [PRAWA] accused Nigerian prisons of failing to measure up to the United Nations minimum rules on the treatment of prisoners. It therefore urged government to make necessary changes to bring its prisons up to standard. Its recommendations include improved training opportunities for prison personnel, support services provided to ex-prisoners and public awareness on the need to accept released prisoners back into the community.

PRAWA

The World's Largest Inland Sea

24secs.

Did you know that the Mediterranean Sea is the largest inland sea in the world. It is 2,509,900sq.km., and is surrounded by three continents - Africa, Europe and Asia. This means that it has a unique biological diversity drawing from the species of wildlife that are indigenous to the surrounding continents.

Arborvitae