

Development

FOOD/NUTRITION

UN Agency Links Madagascar and Vietnam in Food Project	1min.51secs.	12
<i>Madagascar and Vietnam linked in South-South cooperation for sustainable development.</i>		
Man-made Disaster: Major Cause of Starvation	48secs.	18
<i>Facts from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)</i>		
African Women Adopt New Peas to Fight Hunger	3mins.13secs.	7
<i>Women in Kenya pioneer new agricultural approach.</i>		

HEALTH

Nigeria's Ex-Minister Urges Sustained Fight against AIDS	5mins.4secs.	8
<i>Former Minister of Health encourages Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo to revive the war against AIDS.</i>		
US\$750million Support for War against Childhood Diseases	2mins.15secs.	3
<i>Bill Gates injects substantial funds into vaccine research and administration..</i>		
Children Contribute to War against AIDS	2mins.18secs.	5
<i>Children find a way to express their concerns about AIDS.</i>		

PEOPLE

Number of African Orphans Increases	1min. 4secs.	17
<i>More African children are orphaned today than ever before.</i>		
UN Promotes Rights for Disabled Persons	42secs.	17
<i>There are half-a-billion disabled people in the world.</i>		

LABOUR

Kenya Plans to Privatize Its Only Seaport	1min. 2secs.	17
<i>Kenyan government contemplates privatizing only seaport due to rampant corruption.</i>		

TRADE

Kofi Annan Speaks Against Unfair Global Trade Relations	1min.58secs.	5
<i>Rich countries are warned that the poorer ones may kick against a world trade system that fails to improve their lot.</i>		

Environment

BUSINESS

U.K. Company Invests in South African Water Treatment	2mins. 40secs.	6
<i>U.K.'s leading water-treatment company buys out South African counterpart to enhance its prospects worldwide.</i>		

CONSERVATION

New World Heritage Site in South Africa	2mins.37secs.	11
<i>A South African Park in KwaZulu land becomes a world heritage site.</i>		
Proposed Law Threatens Worlds Largest Rainforest	1min.48secs.	4
<i>Farmers lobby threatens to overturn environmental gains in Brazil.</i>		

DISASTER

Nature Strikes Hard Against Indian State. 44secs. 14
Orissa, India's Coastal State, comes under the fury of nature's stormy weather.

POLLUTION

Community Waste Control Yields Multiple Benefits. 8mins. 22secs. 9
Research in eight developing countries shows that community participation in urban solid waste management yields benefits in many areas of community life.

WILDLIFE

Japanese Jailed in Thailand Spurs Butterfly Trade in Ghana 1min. 43secs. 13

Ghanaians learn about the lucrative trade in butterflies.

Disease Threatens South Africa's Lion Population 2mins.21secs. 3

South Africa's Kruger National Park deals with a tuberculosis epidemic.

Africa's Endangered Wolf Recovers 1min. 19secs. 7

The Ethiopian wolf now looks ready to leave the list of critically endangered wildlife.

Interesting Things to Do, See and Know 2mins.16secs. 18

A brief tour of diversity of life and activities in the wild

Children's Section

Hare and Lion's Cubs 7mins. 56secs. 14

Haughty lioness is humbled by little hare.

No Fish for the Hippo 2mins. 1sec. 13

Hippo makes a deal in order to live in its favourite home - the river.

How do Snakes Climb Trees Without Legs 29secs. 14

Sometimes scales serve as legs.

Conservation Quotation: A Finite Earth 36secs. 14

The earth could explode if overloaded...with people.

Why the Leopard Hides his Food up a Tree 1min. 55secs. 14

Once bitten, twice shy.

News

US\$750million Support for War against Childhood Diseases **2mins.15secs.**

The fight against killer diseases in infants of the developing world, by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), will be accelerated from January 31, thanks to improved funding. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation made a five-year grant of US\$150million - a total of US\$750million - to GAVI on 24th November.

Spurred by this injection of funds, GAVI plans to unveil a new, accelerated programme of activities on January 31. The key points of the programme would include:

- speedy efforts to create new vaccines and related products targeted to improving the health of children in developing countries;
- accelerated introduction of new vaccines;
- expanded use of all cost-effective vaccines;
- improved access to sustainable immunization services; and
- making immunization a central element in assessing international development efforts.

GAVI is made up of members that are dedicated to encouraging the expanded availability and use of traditional and new vaccines in developing countries. Its membership includes the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Children's Vaccine Programme, the Rockefeller Foundation, the vaccine industry, and other agencies.

Explaining GAVI's plans for accelerated immunization, UNICEF said that it was the most cost-effective means of preventing disease.

"Not only are hospital and treatment costs avoided but, when combined with adequate nutrition, immunization is the foundation of the basic health essential to optimal early childhood development," the United Nations Agency said.

Among the killer diseases preventable by vaccination are diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles and tuberculosis.

"Much of the investment in building the infrastructure for routine immunization has already been made," UNICEF said. "GAVI will support developing countries' efforts to tackle other potential killers, including hepatitis B and yellow fever."

UNICEF

Disease Threatens South Africa's Lion Population **2mins.21secs.**

The entire lion population in South Africa's Kruger National Park is at risk as tuberculosis disease spreads among the wildlife. The disease entered the park through domestic cattle in the 1960s, and has seriously infected the buffalo population in the southern sector of the park, where more than half of Kruger's 2,000 lions lives.

The number of lions or other wildlife species infected so far is not known. But buffalo are herding animals and spread the disease fast by coughing into each other's face, said Dr. Michael Woodford, chairman of the Veterinary Specialist Group of the World Conservation Union's Species Survival Commission.

"Lions are thought to rarely spread the disease to other lions. But they often lie around and feed in groups, so that several may become infected by eating a single sick buffalo," Woodford added. The infection rate among the lions is suspected to be high. Skin tests performed recently on about 30 thin, unhealthy lions showed that 90 percent of them were infected with the disease.

There is no immediate cure for the disease, and no vaccine to prevent spreading. Park officials are considering separating the sick from the healthy animals by fencing off the southern sector. Buffalo in the fenced zone would be killed to "cleanse" the area. Uninfected buffalo would later be used to repopulate the zone. Experiments would also be done to determine how long it would take to make the southern sector germ free after infected buffalo are eradicated. Alternatively, all the buffalo in Kruger National Park would be slaughtered.

Warning against panic reaction, Mark R. Stanely Price, Director of Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF's) African operations, said "under relatively undisturbed conditions, wildlife disease may be present but is only one cause of mortality among many." But the growing livestock population and lack of controls make disease outbreaks far more serious, he said.

AWF

Proposed Law Threatens World's Largest Rainforest

1min.48secs.

The government of Brazil has introduced a new law that could permit massive deforestation in the Amazonian rainforest, according to environmentalists. The new law will make it possible to convert natural forests into agricultural land with no official control. In addition, it will encourage the replacement of native forests by eucalyptus and other exotic species. It will also allow forest exploitation on steep slopes and riverine areas that are presently protected.

Critics say that this law would place the last remnants of Brazil's Atlantic Forests at great risk.

One third of the world's remaining rainforest is in Brazil. But Brazil has already lost nearly half of this.

"If this law passes, it will change the entire environmental legal framework," said Robert Buschbacher, WWF-Brazil Conservation Director. "Above all, it will expose all remaining Brazilian forests to massive destruction, because it encourages conversion of forest land into agriculture."

The proposed bill is reportedly the result of intense lobbying by the National Council for Agriculture - a farmers' organization. It was done so effectively that it took everyone by surprise. Brazil's influential Technical Chamber of the National Environment Council (CONAMA) was disregarded in the process. Even the Minister of Environment, José Sarney Filho did not take part in negotiating the proposed new law, and said he did not support it.

Environmentalists are lobbying to stop the law, although they have a very little chance of succeeding.

WWF

Kofi Annan Speaks Against Unfair Global Trade Relations

1min.58secs.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has urged rich, industrial nations to remove trade barriers and open up their markets to exports from developing countries, warning that a backlash against free trade by the third world will become irresistible.

In an address prepared for delivery to the World Trade Organization (WTO's) Third Ministerial Meeting in Seattle last November, the Secretary-General expressed hope that the conference would be the one that laid the foundation of a fair and free world trade system.

“Unless we convince developing countries that throwing open their markets really does benefit them, the backlash against it will become irresistible. That would be a tragedy for the developing world, and indeed for the world as a whole.”

Annan, who was prevented from delivering his message after protesters caused the cancellation of the meeting's opening ceremony, accused industrialized countries of continuing to exclude third world goods from their markets.

Some industrialized countries accuse developing countries of dumping practices, but in fact it is they who are dumping their surplus - heavily subsidized food - on world markets, threatening the livelihood of millions of poor farmers, the Secretary-General pointed out.

Noting that “trade is better than aid” Mr. Annan called for a substantial reduction in tariffs and other restrictions on developing countries' exports, “For those of the least developed countries, duties and quotas should be scrapped altogether,” he said.

Warning against blaming global trade for domestic policy failures, Annan urged the industrial world not to try to solve its own problems at the expense of the poor.

UNO

Children Contribute to War against AIDS

2mins.18secs.

The 12th annual World AIDS day was commemorated in December with a strong showing by children - the ~~most affected by this deadly scourge~~. A film, *Scenarios from the Sahel*, written by children, the first in a series of 30 was broadcast in at least 10 African countries including Nigeria. It tells the story of the ravages of AIDS through the eyes of children. The film contains three contemporary and witty AIDS awareness tales by the first three winners of a competition opened to children from all over the continent.

“*Scenarios from the Sahel* has a uniquely African focus and humour,” said Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), producers of the film. “It is produced in local languages and designed to be replicated in other cultural contexts.”

The competition was initiated by TVE to coincide with the theme of this year's World AIDS day: ‘*Children and Young People: Listen, Learn, Live.*’ More than 12,000 stories were received, a clear demonstration of the impact of the disease on the awareness of Africa's children. Thirty regional winners were eventually selected whose entries will all be made into short films. TVE will use all 12,000 entries one way or the other.

“None will be wasted. Ideas that are not used will be filed to form an archive of young people’s language, perspectives, concerns and proposed solutions to defeat this killer disease,” the NGO said in an introductory statement to *Scenarios from the Sahel*. According to TVE, the project attracted the participation and support of prominent African artistes. All 30 films will be made available on a compilation tape and accompanied by an education pack and distributed to organizations working in HIV prevention and care.

TVE produces awareness films of various lengths on environment and development issues and distributes worldwide through its international network. CFC is TVE’s representative in Nigeria.

TVE

U.K. Company Buys Into South African Market

2mins. 40secs.

Envig Holdings, a South African water-treatment company, has been sold for 3.7 million pounds sterling to Weir Westgarth of Glasgow, Scotland. Weir is a United Kingdom company that specializes in purifying salt water for domestic and industrial use.

The Weir group says the acquisition of Envig Holdings, based near Cape Town with offices in Johannesburg and Botswana, will lead to the formation of a new company to be known as Weir Envig, to bring together the specialist know-how of the two companies.

A spokesman said: “Under the deal a new company will be formed and headquartered in Glasgow which will supply complete water treatment systems that meet the needs of large water users such as power and water utilities, and a range of industrial processes. The systems will include Envig’s innovative technology known as bio-reactors and patented membrane products.”

Paul Capell, managing director of Weir Westgarth, who will also be chairman of the new Weir Envig company said: “The acquisition provides us with the technologies needed to tackle the rapidly growing industrial water and effluent clean-up market, in which we intend to participate actively. It also complements the skills available within Weir Westgarth and provides worldwide opportunities for Envig.

“The use of membrane bio-reactors and similar technologies is in its infancy, but the potential is vast, especially when you consider the international movement to protect the environment and to conserve water in a cost-effective manner.”

Weir says another spin-off of the agreement is that Envig and Weir Westgarth will work hand-in-hand to supply plants for purifying salt water (desalination plants) to the African market, using Weir’s special technique for purifying saline water, known as reverse osmosis and multi-stage flash (MSF) technology.

Envig, which had wide experience in solving wastewater problems and also manufactures its own membranes under the name of Membratek, has already worked with its new UK owner. The two have worked together over the past two years and recently supplied a treatment plant to Tukuta power station for Eskom, South African electricity generator. The plant produces 12,500 cubic metres a day of recycled process water.

London Press Service.

Africa's Endangered Wolf Recovers

1min. 19secs.

The Ethiopian wolf, Africa's only true wolf species looks set for recovery. Recent discovery of the species in several areas of the Wollo mountain range in northern Ethiopia has caused an impressive revision of its existing population from between 400 and 500 to as many as 650 animals. This has improved the chances of conservation plans for it.

Described by scientists as a rare and candid species, the Ethiopian wolf is also known as the Simien jackal. It was first seen in the early 19th century in the Simien Mountains where a population of less than 50 now exists. The largest population of up to 180 animals is to be found in the Bale Mountains National Park in southeastern Ethiopia.

"The latest discovery places Wollo as the second region in importance for wolf conservation after Bale," said Dr. Claudio Sillero-Zubiri of Oxford University who led the team that confirmed existence of the wolves at four locations in Wollo. "This significantly improves the overall conservation plans for the species."

AWF

Features

African Women Adopt New Peas to Fight Hunger

3mins.13secs

A women's organisation in Kenya, known locally as the *Ivuso ya Mayatta*, has proven to be a very effective vehicle for introducing improved crop technologies into poor communities. *Ivuso*, a local word meaning "the spirit of cooperation" has successfully promoted improved varieties of pigeonpeas for fighting malnutrition.

The Ivuso women first heard about the pigeonpea from scientists working at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) who were involved in the Pigeonpeas Improvement Project for Eastern and Southern Africa - funded by the African Development Bank. They learned that the grains are rich in minerals, vitamins, fats, and protein, and that cultivating them is beneficial to the arid land.

An estimated 30 percent of children under age five in sub-Sahara Africa are underweight, mainly due to a deficiency of energy and nutrients. They would benefit from eating pigeonpeas as they contain more minerals and 10 times more fat than ordinary peas, as well as five times more vitamin A and three times more vitamin C. The peas are a lot cheaper than meat and an equally good source of protein.

Armed with this new knowledge, Ivuso worked to improve nutrition by increasing pigeonpea consumption among the local communities. The women baked and sold cakes and biscuits containing high proportion of pigeonpea, sorghum and millet rather than wheat.

"We have improved the quality of food eaten here," said Diana Nzomo, Ivuso's founder.

ICRISAT has developed a training and awareness course for food technologists, processors and farmers, especially women, in India, Kenya, Malawi Tanzania, and Uganda to promote greater use of the crop.

Pigeonpea also makes a good cash crop, particularly as its awareness grows. There are export markets for it in Asia, North America and Europe, and there appears to be enough demand for about double what farmers now produce in Kenya.

Almost every part of the pea is useful. The woody stems provide fuel and fencing material. The pods may be used as animal feed; the green leaves as fodder. Pigeonpeas also absorb atmospheric nitrogen and convert it into soil nourishing nitrates.

Each hectare of pigeonpea provides benefits equivalent to 40 kg of fertilizer. Its deep rooting system helps bind the soil and reduce erosion. More important the plant can find enough water and nutrients to produce grain even in drought years.

The performance of the crop is such that scientists claim that no other crop offers such a remarkable combination of benefits for drought-prone areas of the semi-arid tropics.

CGIAR News

Nigeria's Ex-Minister Urges Sustained Fight against AIDS

5mins.4secs.

The Nigerian government has been urged to demonstrate commitment to stop and eradicate the AIDS scourge, through sustained funding, awareness campaigns and the reduction of the stigma against AIDS patients. Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, Nigeria's former Minister of Health and Human Resources, made this call while delivering the Annual Founder's Day lecture at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in December.

Speaking about "The Continuing Problem of the AIDS Epidemic in Nigeria and Africa," Professor Ransome-Kuti traced the history of the AIDS control programme in Nigeria, saying that funding rose annually from one to 5million Naira between 1986 to 1992. It dropped continuously from 1993, reaching its lowest of 300,000 Naira in 1999.

Meanwhile, the number of people who have AIDS in the country rose from about two percent of the population in 1993 to nearly six percent in 1999.

In comparison, Senegal recorded its first AIDS case in 1986, the same year as Nigeria, but has less than one percent of its population suffering from the disease. Ransome-Kuti recalled that prompt intervention by the President of Senegal, Abdou Diouf, and a notable religious leader helped to prevent the rapid spread of the disease in that country.

President Olusegun Obasanjo recently voted 50million Naira for the AIDS control programme in Nigeria. The National Assembly increased the vote to 100million Naira, a clear demonstration of total support for the President's vow to fight against the deadly disease in Nigeria.

Ransome-Kuti outlined areas of priority attention for a successful war against AIDS. These include pregnant women who are infected with the HIV/AIDS virus; corruption in the purchase and distribution of drugs; teenage prostitution; and ignorance about AIDS patients.

Nearly all the children born with AIDS in the world are Africans, although Africans constitute just one percent of the global population. The number of pregnant women with AIDS in Nigeria has grown from two percent in 1992 to nearly six percent in 1999. The highest number occurs in Oturkpo, Benue State. Geidam, Yobe State has the lowest number of pregnant women with AIDS. This means that many children are being born with AIDS. Nearly all of these children die before their fifth birthday. These figures may be higher because three out of every four pregnant women do not have access to medical attention, Ransome Kuti said.

AIDS infected teenagers who were not born with the disease are likely to be infected through prostitution and the ravages of poverty. This, according to Ransome-Kuti, is a worldwide problem. There are between 30 to 170 million street children in the world due to socioeconomic problems. About 80 percent of them use dangerous drugs. A study of street (or area) boys in Lagos showed that one in four of them has the HIV/AIDS virus. This is second only to the infection rate among prostitutes.

The AIDS problem is made worse by the attitude of the public to victims of the disease. Victims are ashamed of the disease and would not admit that they are infected. Relatives of dead victims plead with doctors not to record the cause of death in their death certificates. Victims are often avoided and abandoned to die unattended, and their families are regarded with suspicion. This stigma attached to the disease, due to ignorance, makes the AIDS sufferer to keep silent about his problem, dying in pain and shame.

In the address, Ransome-Kuti's rebuked African governments for misappropriating funds for the AIDS control programme.

"Proper spending could do more for AIDS patients in Africa, and many of our HIV/AIDS patients could still be saved," he said. He also cited a United Nations study showing that only USD12.00 reached the AIDS patient in Africa, out of every USD100.00 purportedly spent on drugs.

The AIDS control programme of the current administration has kicked off in Nigeria, with jingles on radio and television calling on Nigerians to help make life more bearable for AIDS victims, some of who were infected due to no fault of their own.

Obasi Ogbonnaya.

Community Waste Control Yields Multiple Benefits.

7mins. 53secs.

Recent research on urban solid waste management in developing countries shows that community participation in waste management yields several benefits, including health and social benefits such as:

- proper disposal of waste in special bins outside homes;
- reduction in the quantity of refuse dumped in rivers, on streets or burned; and
- reduction of the powerful stench arising from uncontrolled dumping of refuse in the neighborhood.

Other benefits include empowerment of residents for active participation in municipal affairs, noticeable decline in childhood diseases, increased use of toilets and public lavatories, and a drop in the number of children begging near dumpsites.

The research was based on nine projects established in West Africa and Asia by WASTE - the Netherlands-based Urban Waste Expertise Programme (UWEP), and funded by the Netherlands Directorate for Development Assistance (NEDA) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The projects document cases of community and small enterprise participation in the sanitation and disposal of urban solid waste, and assist to develop and mobilize local expertise for waste management in developing countries.

Community participation in urban waste disposal means involving key institutional actors in the process, such as micro and small enterprises (MSEs), district committees, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local authorities and market women associations. Others are traditional rulers, district heads, religious leaders, teachers, politicians and youths.

The project communities were informal housing areas (shanties) having between 1500 and 5000 residents. They were the Djicoroni Para district in Bamako, Mali; Gueule Tapée district in Dakar, Senegal; Médina Fass district in Thiès, Senegal; A district in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and Siddharthapura district in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Other districts were Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and India.

The introduction of community management of urban waste fostered cooperation between NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), micro and small enterprise and local authorities. Sanitation campaigns received the municipal authority's policy, technical and logistical support, and sanitation legislation and ordinances were enacted.

Problems of sanitation, waste management, population growth and inadequate manpower dogged all the communities before the intervention by WASTE. Municipal authorities lacked equipment and financial resources for policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Lack of trust among the stakeholders intensified the problems.

"This encouraged people to dump their refuse along the roads, in the courtyards and in rivers," WASTE's report stated. "As a result, uncontrolled dumps continued to grow in number."

The communities were highly disadvantaged, neglected and over-populated. They lacked roads, portable water, sewerage, and urban residential status. There were up to 30 people per household in the Gueule Tapée district of Dakar. And in Karachi, half the population of Ghousia was classified as squatters.

Decentralized management of waste occurs in West Africa. The involvement of micro and small enterprise, youth groups and neighborhood associations in waste collection, freed municipal authorities to grapple with other growing responsibilities of urban management. In Dakar and Bamako about 200 micro and small enterprise groups have been engaged in preliminary collection jobs, and organized themselves into federations to defend their common interest. In Bamako and Cebu City women spontaneously take initiatives for clean-up actions, sanitary awareness and healthcare.

"Understanding a project and the way it is formulated encourages participation," the WASTE report stated. "An active and sustained awareness campaign in Ghousia Colony earned its voluntary sanitary programme enthusiastic support. The campaign explained how the people were to participate and encouraged community organizations to debate the programme." A similar method was used equally successfully in Ouagadougou.

Also a democratic setting was found to be favourable to participatory management of urban waste.

The report by WASTE noted that: "Participation in a project and empowerment of the population are facilitated by a culture of public debating, dialogue and collective means of expression." It added that "Political discontinuity, lack of a democratic framework and electoral changes bring about a certain mistrust of community actions."

Poverty and deprivation of informal housing areas are, however, the most important conditions for participation. There are no stronger reasons for coming together to fight for their common interest than the threat of eviction, the quest for land ownership or recognition of urban status for residents.

One of the lessons learned is that people participate in community management of urban solid waste if doing so coincided with their individual or group interest. More people showed interest when there were prospects of being employed as sweepers or cart drivers. Their interest waned after all the job openings were taken, as observed in Ouagadougou, Patan city, Senegal and Mali.

Community waste management projects may fail if the residents cannot pay for the services. Difficulties may arise also if organizations, businesses, individuals and associations are unable to:

- supervise waste management projects they set up;
- involve residents in the project from the beginning;
- ensure proper role assignment among members;
- resolve conflicts between cart drivers and management staff;
- ensure adequate communications with the community; or
- ensure that cart drivers and sweepers are not overworked or poorly paid.

Clearly a multidisciplinary approach is needed to entrench sustainable waste management in developing countries. A sustainable programme is the one that integrates sanitary with social objectives, ensures a profitable project, guarantees reliable service and raises public awareness of its significance. In addition, it must:

- bring together the private, public and community-based actors and give them well defined responsibilities in the various fields - from preliminary collection to recycling waste;
- introduce new technologies in order to generate income and jobs; and
- involve the poorest neighbourhoods that are now untouched by urban management and lack basic services.

UWEP

A New World Heritage Site in South Africa

2mins.37secs.

South Africa's Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park in the KwaZulu-Natal has been approved to be a World Heritage Site, sparking off celebrations at the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service (NCS). It will be South Africa's first natural world heritage site. The park will now be given the highest form of protection and is expected to attract increased number of foreign tourists in view of its new global status.

"We are absolutely thrilled and delighted with the announcement" said Dr. Hans Grobler, NCS Deputy Chief Executive. "There are many South Africans and people from other countries who have a deep love of the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park and who have supported us in our efforts to ensure that the park and its natural systems are protected for all time," he said.

KwaZulu-Natal Minister of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs, Mr. Narend Singh, expressed his pleasure at the announcement. He said that it would provide great impetus for tourism to the province as a whole and that KwaZulu-Natal stood to benefit enormously from the job opportunities that would come from the development of sustainable eco-tourism.

“Our challenge for the future is to develop the infrastructure to allow visitors to enjoy that which makes St. Lucia such a special place - but to develop in such a way as not to impact on its natural values or to interfere with the essence of the place,” he added.

The 250,000hectare St. Lucia Wetlands Park incorporates the entire Lake St. Lucia, the St. Lucia and Maputaland Marine Reserves, the Coastal Forest Reserve and Kosi Bay Nature Reserve. It encompasses a vast array of habitats including coral reefs and beaches, coastal forests, salt and freshwater marshes, the open tidal waters of Lake St. Lucia itself, lush coastal plains and drier woodland areas.

The protected area is home to the largest, southernmost population of hippos and 1,000 crocodiles and a wealth of plant and bird life. Tourist activities in the park include fishing, boating, bird-watching, scuba-diving, hiking and camping. All these also offer good opportunities for photographs.

Ramsar.

UN Agency Links Madagascar and Vietnam in Food Project

1min.51secs.

In the spirit of South-South cooperation championed by the late ex-president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, the governments of Madagascar and Vietnam have agreed to work together to develop the agricultural sector of Madagascar’s economy. Both countries recently signed an agreement with the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to send Vietnamese experts to assist the agricultural sector in Madagascar.

According to the agreement, Vietnam will assist Madagascar for three years in identifying, formulating and executing a series of small rural projects tailored to the specific needs of Madagascar.

The projects will aim at eliminating all obstacles to the development of sustainable food production in the island nation. They will be supported by the governments of both countries and FAO.

A press release by the FAO explains that South-South cooperation of this nature provides an opportunity for strengthening cooperation among developing countries that are at different stages of development, with the support of interested donor countries and the FAO. It operates under the framework of FAO’s Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), helping countries benefit from the experience and expertise of more advanced developing countries. Dr. Jacques Diouf, FAO Director-General launched the initiative at the beginning of 1997.

The Special Programme for Food Security is operational in 51 countries - 30 in Africa, 12 in Asia and the Near East, 6 in Latin America, 2 in Europe and one in Oceania - which represents more than 60 per cent of the world’s poorest countries.

Fao.org

Japanese Jailed in Thailand Spurs Butterfly Trade in Ghana

1min. 43secs.

Ghana's Wildlife Department has embarked on a campaign to popularize trade in preserved and mounted butterflies collected from the wild.

About 20 butterfly species of commercial value have been identified in Ghana. These include endemic species like the *Diopetes kakumi*, *Mylothris atewa*, *Epitola asibeyi* and the West African butterfly, *Papilio antimachus*, with a wing span of 25cm. *Papilio antimachus* can sell for as much as USD100.00. Most of the other species can earn about USD2.00 each, which is quite a tidy sum of money in Ghanaian currency – the cedi.

The global trade in mounted butterflies is about USD100 million. And Ghana's wildlife department believes that it can earn as much as USD150,000.00 per annum from butterfly ranching.

This latest fad started after a private radio station reported the arrest of a Japanese butterfly poacher in Thailand by wildlife officials. He was put into prison custody pending identification of the butterflies by the zoology department of a Thai University.

The report became the butt of jokes in Ghana. But it also provided the opportunity for Ghana's acting Chief Wildlife Officer, Mr. Nick Ankudey to educate his countrymen about the values of nature conservation.

Nigeria is one of the richest African countries in butterfly species. There are about 1000 species of butterflies in Nigeria, and these are found mostly in the rainforests of the southeast.

Edward Ameyibor

Children's Section

No Fish for the Hippo

2mins. 1sec.

(This is a story of why Hippo scatters his dung about. The story is common to most tribes of Africa, although it started with the Bushman.)

When each animal was being given a place in the world, a pair of hippos begged to be allowed to live in the cool water that they so dearly loved.

There was a lot of doubt about letting them live in the water: their mouths were so large, their teeth so long and sharp, and their size and their appetites were so big that the other animals were afraid they would eat up all the fishes in the rivers. Besides, the place had been given to another animal to live in – the crocodile. It did not seem wise to have two kinds of large, hungry animals living in the rivers. So the request of the hippos was refused. They were told that they could live out on the open plains and grassland.

At this news, the two hippos began to weep and wail, making the most awful noise. They pleaded and pleaded and finally they got their hearts' desire. But in return, the hippos were made to promise that if they lived in the rivers, they must never harm any fish. They were to eat grass instead. The hippos promised solemnly, and rushed to the river, grunting with delight.

And to this day, hippos always scatter their dung on the riverbank, so that all animals could see that it contains no fish bones. And you can still hear them laughing with joy that they were allowed to live in the rivers after all.
When Hippo Was Hairy.

How do Snakes Climb Trees Without Legs

29secs.

A snake that climbs trees has very strong scales on its underside. These are called ‘ventral’ scales. These scales catch onto rough bark so that the snake can pull its body upwards. All snakes have powerful muscles attached to their ribs. As the muscles move the ribs, the rough ventral scales catch onto any uneven surface to help the snake move along.

Chongololo

Conservation Quotation: A Finite Earth

36secs.

“The globe which we are living on is like a huge spaceship...But its capacity and materials aboard are finite. In other words, the size of the ship will never grow, and resources are limited. If human beings do not keep population growth in check, and if they waste the earth’s energy, resources and soils, this spaceship together with its crew members will explode and perish at the threshold of the atmosphere, which means the total destruction of mankind.”

Ryoichi Sasakawa, Japanese philanthropist.

Hare and Lion’s Cubs

7mins. 56secs.

Lioness had five young cubs and once they started needing meat but were too young to accompany her on hunts, she decided to find them a nurse. One morning she strolled along a game trail, keeping a sharp look out for a likely animal. She passed Tortoise without even a pause – the tortoise was so slow he would test anyone’s patience. Hyena scurried out of her way, greeting her and cringing in that cowardly way of his, but Lioness paid no attention to him. The hyena could not be trusted with the smallest task, never mind attending to her children.

Impatient now, Lioness searched the bush with her keen eyes, eager to be on her way to hunt. Suddenly, a gray ball of fluff shot across her path in front of her...what was that, Ah – Hare!

“Stop!” she commanded. “Are you in such a hurry these days that you no longer greet me?”

“Good morning, Grandmother,” said Hare politely. “How are you and your five beautiful children?”

“It is about them that I want to speak,” Lioness told him. “Someone is going to have the honour and privilege of nursing children while I go hunting.

“How honoured that someone will be,” muttered Hare.

“Yes, YOU will be,” Lioness replied. “And you had better prove yourself worthy of the trust I place in you or watch out! I will bring you meat everyday and you are to divide it up and feed each child equally. I will check on them regularly, so mind you look after them properly. By the way, your duties start immediately and there is no-one watching them now, so you’d better hurry up.” So saying, Lioness turned around and disappeared into the bush – her problem solved.

Hare's problems had just begun. He stamped the ground in anger. "Honour, indeed!" he muttered crossly to himself. Well, there would be no breakfast for him this morning. He had better find a safe place to keep those wretched cubs. As he trotted along, Hare was not wasting his time. His sharp little brain was turning over plans to profit from the situation. After all, who was Lioness that she should get his services for nothing.

Hare found a large empty hole and deposited the cubs down inside where they would be safe. Every day Lioness brought meat and asked, "How are my children? Let me see them."

"They are growing big and strong," Hare would reply. He would put his paw down the hole and pull out a cub by its ear for her to see, then put that one back and pull another, and so on.

Meanwhile, Hare was making use of the meat himself and feeding the cubs only very little indeed. One by one they died until there was only one left. When Lioness came to see her children, Hare would pull out the one remaining cub and show it to her (very quickly, so that she would not notice how thin it was) and then put it back and pretended to find another one. But the same cub would be pulled out five times. Soon this cub too died. Hare knew that when Lioness found out she would make short work of him, so he thought very hard.

In a little while, Hare trotted away to a thorn bush and wriggled his way through it a few times, until his coat was ruffled and torn and he had several nasty scratches. Then he returned to the cubs hole and lay stretched out across it. When he heard Lioness approaching, he started moaning and whimpering, apparently in great pain and distress.

"What has happened?" growled Lioness. "Where are my children?"

"Oh dear, oh dear," wailed Hare. "I was watching over your children when a troop of baboons attacked and ate up your cubs. I tried to protect them, but what could I - poor hare that I am - do against all those baboons? I escaped, but only just as you can see."

Lioness was almost convinced of the truth of Hare's story. He looked as though baboons had mauled him - but she demanded proof. Hare said, "We will construct a little hide of grass and conceal you inside. Then I will strew groundnuts all around to attract the baboons and you will hear them confess their guilt. When you are sure of their guilt, you can pounce on them - but you must cut off their tails to prove to me how many you have killed."

Lioness agreed and was soon concealed in the hide. It wasn't long before the baboons arrived, attracted by the groundnuts lying around. Hare was sitting with his back up against a tree and he appeared not to notice the baboons. He idly picked up a nut and spun it between his fingers, chanting very softly:

"For the children we have eaten,
Nothing became of us."

Now baboons are great imitators. The big male leader watched Hare and listened to his song. Then he too picked up a nut, flicked it between his fingers until it spun and chanted with the little hare:

“For the children we have eaten...” and the entire troop sat on the ground and imitated their leader, spinning nuts and chanted back the chorus at the top of their raucous voices.

“Nothing became of us, nothing became of us.”

Lionesses did not hear Hare’s soft voice, but she heard the baboons. She started growling with anger and her tail flicked ominously from side to side as she bunched herself up to pounce. The baboons did not hear her through their chanting and were completely taken by surprise when she leapt among them, killing a great number and biting off their tails.

Hare was right behind her, picking up the tail as fast as she chopped them off. When she had killed all the baboons that had not managed to escape, Lioness sat down panting to regain her breath. Hare came strolling up from behind her, holding up a large bunch of tails in his hand.

“See how many baboons I have killed to revenge your cubs. How many have you killed?”

But Lioness had no tails to show.

Shangani Folktales

Why the Leopard Hides his Food up a Tree

1min. 55secs.

Africans tell their children this folklore that long ago, there were three friends: the beautiful leopard, the jackal and the hyena. They went everywhere together. Whenever Leopard killed an animal, he would always leave part of it for his friends so that they could have a good feed too.

One day it happened that Leopard was ill, and so he could not hunt. “Jackal,” he said, “Please catch some food for us, for I am not well.” But lazy Jackal said, “No. I am too weary. Ask Hyena.”

So, Leopard said, “Hyena, please hunt for us today, for I am not well enough to do so.” But Hyena, too, made an excuse: “No, I have a sore foot.”

At this Leopard roared in anger: “I thought you were my friends, but you are a no-good, lazy pair. Never again will I leave you meat when I make my kill. From this day on, I will make sure of it. I shall take what is left and hang it in a tree, when I have eaten all I want. Then neither of you will be able to get at it.”

Leopard was true to his word – for since that day he has never left any meat for his selfish friends. Up into a tree it goes, high out of reach of jackals and hyenas. They have become scavengers now instead, and they eat the scraps that other animals leave behind. It was a sad day for them when they lost Leopard’s friendship.

When Hippo was Hairly.

Useful Quick-facts

Nature Strikes Hard Against Indian State.

44secs.

Nearly 8,000 lives were lost recently in two large storms, called cyclones, that damaged more than 18,000 villages in the coastal districts of the Orissa in India. According to UNICEF’s estimates, three million households were affected, and more than 10 million people displaced from their homes. All crops were wiped out along the entire 140kilometer stretch of the coast.

UNICEF and other agencies from around the world have sent relief to the victims. The UN agency plans to be in Orissa up to the year 2002 by which time Orissa would have been fully reconstructed and rehabilitated.

UNICEF

Kenya Plans to Privatize Its Only Seaport

1min. 2secs.

The government of Kenya plans to privatize its only seaport, the Kilindini Harbour - commonly known as Mombasa Port due to rampant corruption in the Kenya Ports Authority. There have been long-held plans to privatize the port as a last resort, should government find it impossible to eradicate corrupt practices that riddle the Kenya Ports Authority.

According to recent press the Kenyan Ports Authority has been condemned for inefficient handling of heavy cargo, allowing goods to pass through untaxed, disappear in transit, or stolen the night before an auction of unclaimed goods.

But key stakeholders in the port have kicked against privatization plans. Politicians from the coastal region, the 8,000 strong Dock Workers Union and the locals have protested against it, even as they prepare for the inevitable sack letters that would accompany privatization.

Newslink Africa

Number of African Orphans Increases

1min. 4secs.

The number of children in Africa orphaned by AIDS is skyrocketing and by the end of next year there will be 13 million children worldwide who will lose at least one parent from the disease, says a new United Nations report launched during the World AIDS Day in December.

The report, "Children Orphaned by AIDS: Front-line responses from Eastern and Southern Africa" was compiled by UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, and the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

By the end of this year the world will have seen more than 11 million children orphaned by AIDS, 95 per cent of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

"The scale of the orphan crisis is almost unimaginable," said UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy. "Before AIDS, few children in developing countries were orphans. But now more than one out of 10 children are orphans.

UN News

UN Promotes Rights for Disabled Persons

42secs.

Did you know that there are about 500 million disabled people in the world today? This puts them among the first five most populous nations on earth. The United Nations (UN) has therefore called for deliberate policies to ensure equal access for the disabled to civil, political, social and cultural rights worldwide.

Describing the rights of disabled people as one of the vital issues facing humanity today, the UN urged nations of the world to grant them access to education, jobs and community life that have been otherwise denied them so far.

UN News

Facts from FAO

48secs.

- Two recent UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) reports indicate that food emergencies everywhere in the world are increasingly caused by humans rather than nature. "For the first time, human induced disasters such as civil strife and economic crises have more effect on food shortages than nature-induced crises," the reports said.
- Nearly 10 million people in sub-Saharan Africa need emergency food assistance now. In Somalia alone, one million people are facing serious shortages with over 400,000 at risk of starvation.
- Dr. Jacques Diouf of Senegal has been elected to a second six-year term as Director-General of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, with effect from January 2000.

Fao.org

Interesting Things to Do, See and Know

2mins.16secs.

- *Green hunting*. This is one of the world's newest sports, a cross between adrenalin-pumping adventure sport and conservation-minded ecotourism. You can pay to dart animals instead of kill them. Green hunters enable conservationists to transfer the animals to safer locations, fit them with radio-collars and treat them for injuries. The sport raises funds for conservation. But it is open to abuse that can endanger both the hunted and the hunter.
- *Bwindi Impenetrable Forest*. Known primarily for its population of mountain gorillas, Uganda's small Bwindi Forest actually supports some of Africa's richest plant and animal communities - 200 tree, 350 bird and 100 mammal species. Most visible of the inhabitants are the butterflies - 350 species - and most audible are the birds and monkeys. Most elusive are the forest elephants, melting into the vegetation and most sought after are those gorillas. The gorillas of Bwindi have a peculiar magnetism, probably due to the combination of their immense stature, their endangered status and the fascination of encountering at close quarters a creature so similar to human beings.
- *Weird and Wonderful Bats*. Maligned for their ugly appearance and for their legendary link to vampires, bats are little understood. A thorough study of bats - both the fruit-eaters and insect-eaters shows that:
 - Without these bats pollinating flowers and dispersing seeds, the diversity of tropical forest plants would be greatly reduced;
 - Without the bats, tropical forest regeneration would not take place;
 - Without fruit bats feeding on (the baobab's) flower nectar and cross pollinating in return, this majestic giant would die out;
 - 6,000 bats seen within 10 minutes one evening would have consumed 23 kilograms of insects - a very efficient pest control and without any threat to man or the environment.

Africa Environment & Wildlife

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