
Development

DISASTER

Flood hits Southern Somalia

1min. 37secs. 1

The long awaited rains in Southern Somalia is fast becoming a source of more suffering for the drought-hit populace

ECONOMY

EU votes N100m for Nigerian Trade unions

1min.18secs. 1

The European Union and a German foundation are to spend 1 million US dollars towards rebuilding the Trade Union movement in Nigeria

Money, Money, Money

3min. 8secs. 6

A non-governmental organization is making a bold attempt to link Nigeria's poorest of the poor with the country's most successful blue-chip companies through the bridge of micro – finance

New treaty of agreement to be signed by ACP/EU countries

2min. 26secs. 11

A new treaty between the European Union and the 71 countries of the ACP will be signed in June, bringing an end to the popular Lome treaty

HEALTH

Kenya to introduce courses on AIDS in Educational curriculum

1min. 11secs. 4

Kenya's Director of Education announces the introduction of the syllabus on AIDS for all learning institutions in the East African country

Caffeine may protect the brain from Parkinson's

1min. 24secs. 7

New research indicates suggests that drinking coffee may help prevent Parkinson's disease

Viagra fails big test to help women

1min. 1min. 8

Research is revealing that the anti impotency drug is not going to help women

New drug that targets genes may stop cancer

1min. 9

By focusing on precise genetic mutations of tumors, a new drug might offer hope for cancer patients

Good health goes global

1min. 59secs. 10

The issue of good health across the globe is the main focus at the 53rd World Health Assembly in Geneva

TECHNOLOGY

- E - mail virus poses a threat to the US** 1min. 32secs. 10
A new and dangerous computer software is spreading through e-mails that use the Microsoft software

Environment

CONSERVATION

- National Seminar On Land Tenure and Policy Ecology in Nigeria** 2min. 15secs. 5
A national workshop focuses on Nigeria's land use act of 1978, which many considered to have been unfavorable towards the environment and the entire ecosystems

- Conservationists mourn the demise of the Amazon** 1min. 2secs. 7
Brazilian environmentalists stage a mock funeral for the Amazon rainforest to warn against unbridled agricultural expansion

- Governments sound biodiversity alarm in Nairobi** 1min. 30secs. 7
With an estimated over 31 plant and animal species on the endangered list, governments are poised to address threats to biological diversity at a global convention

WILDLIFE

- Scents and science help to put cheetahs in the mood** 2min. 16secs. 5
The earth's fastest land animals are once again in the brink of extinction, however a breeding program is going to great lengths to reverse this alarming trend

- 138 of the world's primate species are endangered** 2min. 21secs. 8
Conservation International is calling for protected areas to ensure the survival of the rapidly diminishing population of primates

- WWF calls for concrete action to save rainforest diversity** 1min. 54secs. 9
The World Wide Fund for Nature has urged the Convention for Biological Diversity to concrete steps towards the protection of the world's forest biodiversity

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Events arising around the world

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News

Flood hits Southern Somalia

1min. 37secs.

The long awaited rains have arrived in Southern Somalia. Unfortunately, the rains are causing flooding in many towns and villages, thus adding to the sufferings of the drought-hit people.

According to the News Agency of Nigeria, the Jubba river which is the largest in Somalia and the Shabella river have been causing havoc on the neighbouring settlements. The floods from the Jubba river have caused heavy damages to the southern port town of Kismato, by cutting the road linking the town to Mogadishu, the capital.

All commercial movements via Terra between Mogadishu and Kismato have halted following increased threats by the floods. Eyewitnesses told VHF Radio, in Jilib, that hundreds of farms stretching across the river have been abandoned after the Jubba burst its banks. This was also the case three years ago, during the major flood disaster in Southern Somalia. Over 600 families who have fled their houses are currently scattered at the Chentoh Kuindisheh area.

Hassan Abdulleh, the Governor of Hawlwadag region where the flood is posing a major threat, said people who suffered from widespread malaria and cholera could not withstand the extra burden of displacement. He went on to appeal for quick intervention to help prevent his people from dying in their dozens for lack of food, shelter and medicine.

The Guardian

EU votes N100m for Nigerian Trade unions

1min. 18secs.

The European Union is to spend 1 million US dollars towards the rebuilding of the trade union movement in Nigeria. The president of the Nigerian Labor Congress stated that out of this fund, \$90,000 will come from the European Union and \$10,000 will be from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, FES, a Germany based foundation.

According to him, the project has seven areas of intervention, which include, establishment of pro-democracy networks, promotion of research, analysis and information capabilities, and trade union management. He went on to describe the project as the first collaboration between the Nigerian trade union and the EU, adding that it is a bold attempt to boost the vast potential of the trade union as a key player in the democratic process.

Mr. Shwenzesky, the country representative of the FES, stated that trade unions are entitled to some outside support “ in order to be in a position to make full benefit of all the options that the bureaucratic system of governance provides to organised interest groups”

The Guardian

Kenya to introduce courses on AIDS in Educational curriculum

1min. 11secs.

The syllabus on AIDS for learning institutions from primary schools to colleges will be introduced soon according to Kenya’s Director of Education, Sammy Kyungu. The Director said the ministry has held some courses for teachers to equip them with the necessary skills to tackle the subject effectively.

The ministry has taken these steps to realise the government’s goal to promote AIDS awareness in schools since last October. The Director went on to say that the ministry is compiling a report on orphans of AIDS in order to facilitate efforts to finance their education.

“With current economic hardship, public schools should consider the situation of children from poor families and avoid suspending their education due to non payment of school fees” Kyungu noted.

More than 12 percent of people aged between 15 and 49 are HIV positive in the East African country. About 100,000 children are among the estimated 2 million Kenyans infected with the virus.

Daily Nation/The Guardian

National Seminar On Land Tenure and Policy Ecology in Nigeria

2min. 15secs.

Community Conservation and Development Initiatives (CCDI) 2000 recently organised a national workshop on land tenure and policy ecology in Nigeria. The event, held at the Goethe Institute in Lagos, attracted speakers and participants spanning across the legal, journalistic, educational and NGO sectors. The focus fell primarily on the Land Use Act of 1978 that effectively made the government the owners of all Nigeria’s land.

Those presenting spoke extensively on the history of land ownership prior to this government decree and described the changes in the country’s ecology since it was introduced. The Act enabled the government to evict anybody off their land at any given time, only providing them with compensation and resettlement under certain conditions. Over the last 22 years the government has sold vast areas of natural resources to industries thrusting previous inhabitants into poverty and homelessness. Many landowners have become insecure in their status as government tenants and now take a short-term view of the land, leading to its exploitation and consequent damage for immediate gain.

This attitude not only harms community life, but also ruins entire ecosystems. And as the head of CCDI 2000, Mr. Ako Amadi, pointed out, despite the fact that multinationals had been exporting Nigerian resources for decades before the act was passed, the eradication of the Nigerian rainforest only began to gather real momentum after 1978. The negative effects of the Land Use Act on the state of wetlands and water bodies were also discussed.

Participants agreed that the Land Use Act, which has not been reviewed since its inception in 1978, needs to be abolished or at least radically altered. NGOs present were encouraged to lobby for such a change. CCDI 2000 is currently trying to raise financial and participatory support for such a scheme.

CFC

Scents and science help to put cheetahs in the mood

2min. 16secs.

Cheetahs, the fastest land animals are once again on the endangered species list. They are dying off in the wild as well as in captivity, where they are having trouble breeding. However a breeding program has gone to great lengths to improve the reproductive odds. The activities include drugging and pampering females and using scents to entice males.

Scientists have known for years that cheetahs are dying by the numbers in the wild. Captive populations are on the decline as well. In 1998, at least 40 cheetahs died in North American zoos alone, from old age and from an AIDS - like disease. Only 250 remain on the continent. Four cheetah cubs at the San Diego Wild Animal Park are a sign of hope for breeding programs.

“A number of facilities have found that their female cheetahs do not seem to be cycling anymore, so we are looking for alternate ways to stimulate that to happen”, said Susan Millard – Davis, who works at the San

Diego zoo. Hormone injections worked for a mother at the same zoo.

An effort is also being made to recreate the cheetah's living conditions in the wild, including offering more privacy. For instance the San Diego cheetah mom gave birth to her cubs at a special breeding centre, about a mile from the zoo, and away from public eye. Since the female live alone in the wild, another key to breeding success is keeping males and females separated in captivity. Researchers must then bring them together once a year during the ideal breeding period.

Cheetahs have been on the brink of extinction before and they came back. But with so few remaining, inbreeding has weakened their immune systems, making them vulnerable to disease. Only 12,000 cheetahs are left in the world.

CNN.com nature

Money, Money, Money

3min. 8secs.

The Growing Businesses Foundation (GBF), one of Nigeria's newest non-governmental organizations, held a conference on corporate social responsibility in May. GBF aims at linking Nigeria's poorest of the poor with the country's most successful blue chip companies through the bridge of micro-finance. The conference was sponsored by the United Bank of Africa, and was attended by the office of the Chief Economic Adviser to the Presidency, international donor agencies, banks and insurance companies, NGOs, as well as Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) such as the Development Exchange Centre, that provides small loans to women farmers in northern Nigeria.

GBF's Executive Director, Mrs. Ndidì Nnoli Edozien, kicked off the event by reading a philosophical passage about the "essence of money" – something that everyone strives for – and yet is finite and cannot in itself, improve livelihoods if it is not invested in people. United Bank of Africa's Executive Director, Alhaji Abba Kyari, encouraged fellow banks to invest in Nigeria's poor. UBA's has set aside 90million Naira as loan capital to Nigeria's poor, through GBF. Union Bank Chairman, Elder Kalu Uke Kalu supported UBA's visionary stance and gave an insight into present day banking inequities between the rich and poor. He explained how blue chip companies are able to negotiate bank interest rates that hover around 15%-20%, while small scale lenders who don't enjoy the same leverage, have to repay loans at 20% to 40%. Elder Kalu called for "a more even playing field" in the banking sector, in order for Nigeria's vast wealth to trickle down to the grass roots – a direct pathway to peace and stability in the country.

Mrs. Edna James-Ishaiya, Executive Director of the Development Exchange Centre, provided impressive statistics of how the organizations' loans have been repaid at an impressive rate of almost 99%, while it is common knowledge that the rich of Nigeria often default in their loan repayments. She gave impressive examples of how farmers who had received loans of N1000 to N2000, were able to make sometimes 300%-400% profit – enough to significantly change the way they did business, while making a significant impact on their very meagre incomes. Mrs. James-Ishaiya concluded with the wish that MFIs would no longer receive all their funding from international agencies, but rather, become "outreach units" for banks with a social consciousness.

GBF's mission is to harness the potential of the corporate sector in investing in the poor —and it is poised to become a real example of how Nigerians are the solution to their own development needs. The organization currently supports a waste management project and community lending project in Ikenne, as well as a black soap linkage project in Awe. Other initiatives include a micro-insurance project established with Aiico Insurance

Plc. to establish insurance policies and products that meet the needs of small-scale businesses and rural entrepreneurs. GBE is currently supported by UBA, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Mobil, Chevron and Aiico as well as other corporate bodies.

CFC

Caffeine may protect the brain from Parkinson's

1min. 24secs.

New research recorded in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggests drinking coffee may help prevent Parkinson's disease.

The research team studied more than 8,000 Japanese Americans over a period of 30 years and found that those who drank more than three cups of coffee a day had five times less chance of developing the disease.

Parkinson's is a degenerative disorder that destroys the cells that make the chemical dopamine in the brain. The disorder leads to damage in the nervous system, causing tremors and erratic body movements. Some patients also develop dementia.

Although not scientifically proven the conclusion of the study is that the caffeine in the coffee may have a protective effect on the brain.

Although the research took into account other factors that could explain the different incidence of Parkinson's – like cigarette smoking – it is too early to recommend caffeine as a treatment. The researchers hope the study will lead to more basic research on caffeine and its effect on the areas of the brain affected by the disease. This could lead to better treatments or even prevention.

CNN/AP

Conservationists mourn the demise of the Amazon

1min. 2secs.

Brazilian environmentalists staged a mock funeral for the Amazon rain forest to warn that unbridled agricultural expansion is suffocating the so called lungs of the world.

Hundreds of mourners followed a casket through Sao Paulo's Ibirapuera park, clutching seedlings of the native Ikpe tree to protest the devastation of the world's largest tropical forest. This is in the wake of the victory environmentalists scored in the preceding week when the US congress shelved a draft bill that would cut the legally protected Amazon reserve area to 50 percent from the 80 percent of the total in May.

The Amazon, twice the size of France, is home to 50 percent of the world's plant and animal species. Last year it lost a chunk larger than the US state of Hawaii to logging and farming.

Reuters

Governments sound biodiversity alarm in Nairobi

1min. 30secs.

The numbers alone are alarming. According to the United Nations Environment Program, species extinction since the year 1600 has occurred at a pace 50 to 100 times the natural rate. That pace is expected to accelerate between 1,000 to 10,000 times the natural pace.

Today, more than 31,000 plant and animal species are threatened with extinction.

With this global alarm ringing in their heads, the 177 member governments represented at the Convention on

Biological Diversity are gathering in Nairobi Kenya to heal the relationship between humanity and Earth's dwindling biodiversity.

The executive director of the UN Environment Program, Klaus Toepfer, said that the extraordinary rise in both human populations and consumption levels "leaves us no choice but to take innovative and ambitious actions to reverse the widespread destruction of species and ecosystems."

Launched at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity last convened in 1998.

This year's meeting will examine the progress made by countries in addressing threats to biological diversity. The ultimate aim is to come up with solutions that can be implemented across the board – at international and regional levels.

ENN

Viagra fails big test to help women

1min. 38secs.

While there is still a lot of controversy as to the relevance of Viagra, the anti impotence drug, to development, research is still ongoing concerning its efficacy. Many have claimed that impotence is an important health issue that must not be taken lightly in view of the implication of the condition to the procreation of the human race. As the debate goes on, the drug itself is not faring so well as it failed its first big test on women. This is according to a study sponsored by Pfizer Inc, the makers of the anti impotence drug.

The findings of the study were presented at the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in San Francisco. It also confirmed smaller studies that have already shown that the little blue pill did not help women with sexual dysfunctions.

Viagra, the first ever pill to treat impotence, was an instant splash in 1998 when it was approved in the US. The pill made more than \$1 billion in sales last year and Pfizer had hoped to increase profits by getting doctors to prescribe it to women.

This latest study has however dashed this hope. In the study of 583 women with various sexual disorders, prescribing Viagra proved to be about as effective as... well, a placebo.

Deseretnews.com/CFC

138 of the world's primate species are endangered

2min. 21secs.

More than 130 of the world's 600 primate species are endangered. These range from mountain gorillas of war torn Central Africa which are killed for their mythical powers to orphaned orangutans from Sumatra sold into the pet trade. But the habitat loss caused by logging, mining and encroachment by man may ultimately prove more devastating to the threatened species of apes, monkeys and other primates than outright slaughter.

"You've got to have protected areas to ensure the survival of these animals" said Russell Mittermeier, a biologist with specialty in primates and the head of Conservation International. He was among 400 primate experts that met at the Brookefield zoo near Chigago to discuss primates and their survival.

Among the threatened primates are the bonobos or pygmy chimpanzees, which live only in the Democratic Republic of Congo, (DRC). Currently, bonobos are caught in the middle of the fighting that has engulfed that part of the African continent. Some are killed and eaten by hungry refugees driven into the forest by the war.

The many sided conflict in the DRC, a country ranked fourth in the world in terms of biodiversity, also threatens populations of mountain and lowland gorillas and other species such as the okapi (forest giraffe).

Researchers say that primate populations can be very slow to recover as ape species have only three to four offspring over a lifetime.

Likewise, the illegal pet trade along with devastating fires two years ago, has been deadly to many orangutans in Sumatra and Borneo in Indonesia. Sumatra is losing 1,000 orangutans a year and has an estimated 6,000 left. Borneo was devastated by fires in 1997-98, leaving between 10,000 to 15,000 orangutans compared to 60,000 in 1980.

Other endangered primate species include the gold lion tamarin on the Atlantic coast of Brazil, the woolly spider monkey of Peru, and the lemurs of Madagascar.

CNN/Reuters

New drug that targets genes may stop cancer

1min

A new drug that focuses on the precise genetic mutations that make cancer tumours different from healthy tissue has shown promise in early tests on humans. The medicine helps to halt the growth of tumours and makes them more vulnerable to chemotherapy.

Although studies are still in early stages, the drug, codenamed IMC- C225, shows potential in victims of colon cancer and head and neck cancer who have failed standard treatments. By itself the drug appears to make tumours stop growing making them more open to the killing powers of standard chemotherapy. So far all the new studies seem to be toeing the line of going after the genetic disruptions that cause cancer to grow out of control. The hope is to characterize each tumour with DNA analysis to target the therapy directly.

AP

WWF calls for concrete action to save rainforest diversity

1min. 54secs.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has urged the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) to take more concrete steps towards the protection and preservation of the world's forest biodiversity.

Forest biodiversity is one of the important issues on the table at the fifth Conference of Parties holding in Nairobi. This is the follow-up to the meeting of the technical body of the CBD which had held in Montreal in January. The technical body had earlier submitted that the programme of work on forests was weak and must be strengthened. The Secretariat's report noted that the situation was already critical and pinpointed the need to focus on active work to stop the loss of forest biodiversity, rather than continuing to concentrate on methodologies for assessing its status.

WWF said that while the Convention has promoted many assessments and created good plans on paper, the assessments have not actually been carried out. It called for the measures necessary to maintain forest quality to be implemented. It also went on to encourage the parties to find a way to implement or enhance effective management of forests.

In addition, WWF wants countries to ratify the Biosafety Protocol as a step towards protecting forests rich in plants and animal wildlife from threats.

“It is not talk and analysis that will halt the alarming rate of forest degradation and loss of biodiversity,” said the head of WWF’s Forest Programme, Jean-Paul Jeanrenaud. “it’s action – and there is no time like the present for getting things underway”

WWF

E - mail virus poses a threat to the US

1min. 32secs.

The United States is waking up to a new and dangerous computer virus which is spreading through e-mails that use Microsoft software. A number of corporate systems are already reported to have been hit and some have been shut down. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has warned that many more systems could become infected in the near future.

Earlier this month, millions of computers around the world were closed down by the so called “Love bug” virus which originated in the Phillipines and has caused damage estimated at up to \$10billion.

The new virus is carried in a file attached to an e mail entitled “Resume – Janet Simons”, the name of an apparent job seeker. It invites employers to click on an attachment to check the phony applicant’s references. While only outlook users can spread the virus, any person with a computer running the Windows operating system that opens the infected Word document can have their files erased.

In the meantime, the FBI has advised computer users not to open emails with suspicious resume headlines and to deactivate the executive summary feature in the Microsoft outlook. In the meantime, efforts to stop the virus and its destructive effects continue.

BBCNews

Good health goes global

1min. 59secs.

The issue of good health for everyone is the main focus of 191 countries as they gather at the 53rd World Health Assembly in Geneva.

Among the most pressing in this issue is HIV/AIDS which has been nagging health specialists and governments around the world. From 95 percent of the cases around the world, Africa is the hardest hit with an estimated 23million people infected with the virus. Malaria was not left out since it accounts for millions of deaths annually on the continent. The spotlight of the World Health Assembly was also thrown on the elimination of leprosy, polio and tuberculosis.

Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO Director General, in her statement to the Assembly singled out four strategic areas for the WHO: reduction of mortality and disability, reduction of risks to human health, human systems development and putting health at the centre of economic and development policy.

Indeed, international health is no longer the exclusive domain of health professionals. “As Heads of States, including the G8 leaders debate the major political issues facing our world, health issues are prominent on the agenda” explained Dr Brundtland. “health is on the mind of finance ministers attending the IMF and the World Bank as they discuss debt relief.”

For the first time in its history, a health issue – HIV/AIDS has been discussed by the Security Council of the United Nations. Health is the major theme in the Millennium Report by the United Nations Secretary General, where the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been referred to as a “drama and tragedy of historic proportions.”

Newslink Africa

New treaty of agreement to be signed by ACP EU countries

2min. 26secs.

The new agreement of partnership of the ACP/EU will be solemnly signed at Suva, in the Fiji Islands on June 6, 2000. The agreement intends to renew the treaty of cooperation among the 15 member states of the European Union and the 71 countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, better known as the ACP countries.

The agreement known as the Suva treaty will be replacing the glorious Lome Convention treaty, which until recently represented the most complex and advanced instrument of North/South cooperation.

It was especially due to the gains attained by the ACP countries in the fields of finance and trade that made the Lome treaty such an advanced instrument able – in a way – to provide the necessary solidarity with the poorest countries. For example, Europe has up to now acknowledged for the 71 ACP countries the right to preferential access to the European market. The Lome agreement also made provisions for the EU to make good financial losses suffered by the ACP in the case of a collapse of prices in agricultural or general raw materials.

However all these will be history with the signing of the Suva treaty. The new treaty will no longer recognise, from 2008 onwards, the preferential trade treatment. In fact by that time, the creation of the Regional Economic Partnership Agreements (RIPA) will be in motion as laid down by the rules of the World Trade Organisation. This makes it illegal for any agreement like the Lome Treaty to exist.

While the agreement is ready for signing, the venue is not quite a given. On May 19, there was a coup attempt in Fiji. Observers believe this could jeopardise the signing ceremony. Whatever the outcome, there is no doubt that the Suva treaty has been devised as a springboard for launching Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific into world trade. The implication of this is yet to be seen.

NewslinkAfrica/CFC

Dateline

Coming up...

Kyoto Protocol on the agenda

48secs.

Now that over 80 countries have ratified the Kyoto protocol on carbon emissions in the environment, the European Union is pressing for it to enter into force in 2002, the tenth anniversary of the Rio Summit. A great deal remains to be cleared up at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in The Hague on 13-14 November, 2000. The previous session of the Conference took place in Buenos Aires and it concentrated on finalising all the technical details and guidelines destined for adoption at the Hague. This has also prepared the grounds for the expectations of the upcoming Conference of parties.

The Courier

Pan African Symposium on the sustainable use of Natural resources

44secs.

The second Pan African Symposium on the use of natural resources in Africa will be held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso between 24 –28 July, 2000. This is a joint event run by the World Conservation Union, IUCN and the African Resources Trust (ART) a southern African NGO headquartered in Zimbabwe and South

Africa.

The Environment Minister of the host country will open the Symposium. The programme is intended for people who work in wildlife, natural conservation and biodiversity. Participating individuals or corporate bodies can be government agencies, Non Governmental Organizations, donor communities and local development organizations

The Courier

Noted...

Environment prize to CODEFF Chile project

35secs.

The 1999 UNEP Environment prize "Saving the drylands" has been awarded to an EU subsidized project in Chile. The project is being managed by the Comité Nacional pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora (CODEFF) and has been going on since 1968 with 4,000 members. It has programs on biodiversity, forestry, environment and social affairs.

The project was one of 25 selected from more than 100 candidates as a model to initiate the management of dry lands.

The Courier

Yobe to legislate on fauna, flora depletion

59secs.

Yobe state, in Northern Nigeria is to enact an edict that will make the felling of trees, poaching and hunting of animals, including the endangered species illegal in the second half of the year.

When the edict is passed into law, an offender may be liable to a fine of 120,000 naira or a jail term of six months or both. In making the law, the state noted that massive felling of trees for firewood in the state has resulted in serious environmental degradation and abject poverty.

The action of this Nigerian state is applauded. While environmentalists look forward to the actual implementation of the law, the creation of sustainable energy to replace firewood would be a welcome addition that will help make the law more realistic.

The Guardian/CFC

Hope for the hopeless

1min. 42secs.

The respectability of The Economist has rarely been in doubt. However the zeal at which this much read magazine has currently taken to report on happenings on the African continent took a new turn in the May 21st to 25th edition. On the front cover of this edition of The Economist is a heavily armed soldier superimposed on the map of Africa. As if this was not enough, The Economist read boldly on its cover, "The hopeless continent". Rather than belabor the point, it might seem appropriate to quote a letter written to the editor of The economist in the subsequent edition by Chi Chi Okonjo from Lagos, Nigeria: "...Africa has many problems and they may be self inflicted but the gun you showed on your cover is not made in Africa"

The notion that a continent of 54 countries can be so sweepingly judged and discarded is distasteful. While we acknowledge the power of the press to bring about awareness of the situation in Africa, we urge a certain level of sensitivity, balance and restraint. After all, if we give in to The Economist's diagnosis of the continent, the question will be..."what is the point in going on?"

Referring to Africa as "a hopeless continent" is hardly the type of attitude that can lead to the change we all

If he was paid ten naira, he would use the money to buy a hen. If the hen hatched chicks, he would sell them all and buy a goat. And if the goat multiplied, he would put some to graze on his sister's pasture and some he would sell. With this money he would buy a cow. When he had the cow, he would wait until the horns were as long as his forearms, and...

The dream of riches was so real in his mind that Lisenga became excited. His feet kicked underneath him and he jumped up. He danced about with happiness. He leapt up for joy and as he leapt he kicked a stump and - all those eggs broke.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Lisenga. "Wealth stay behind me. Forget those thoughts you had" he told himself "they are bad thoughts".

Then Lisenga turned towards home and as he walked, he decided that he did not need wealth anyway. In fact, his friends would surely mock him if he was the only one with riches and he would rather have their friendship rather than cold money. Yes, he was better off without wealth.
Shangani folk tales

Parting shots

Unforgettable quotes on conservation and development

Celebrate the wisdom of the African experience with these quotes:

On conservation

Not all the trees in the forest make good firewood.

Sudanese proverb

If you want to know about the soil, ask the squirrel

Cameroonian proverb

On Unity

The strength of the soldier ants lie in their number

Nigerian proverb

On Justice and peace

Peace is costly but it is well worth its price

Kenyan Proverb

To get rid of anger, first weed out the bitter roots

Zambian proverb

Source: *African Proverbs*
and *More African Proverbs*

Cruelty to animals is as if man did not love God

Cardinal John Henry Newman,
Theologian and writer, 1801-1890

We cannot command nature except by obeying her
Francis Bacon
Essayist and Philosopher, 1561-1626

Man is endowed with the gift of speech and the ability to create...
but so far he has only destroyed...there are fewer and fewer forests,
the rivers are drying up, wild animals are as good as extinct, the climate
has been thrown out of balance and the world is growing poorer and uglier
by the minute.

Anton Chekhov
Russian Dramatist and Writer 1860 –1904
Uncle Vanya(1900)