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## Development

### TECHNOLOGY

- Caution on Biotechnology** 5mins. 6secs. 6  
*If Africa does not get involved in scientific evaluation it could miss the benefits coming with technology.*

### MEDIA

- Editors Honored With Press Freedom Award** 12mins. 9secs. 3  
*The World Press Review has honored three Sierra Leonean newspapers editors for risking their lives to uphold press freedom and human rights in their war torn country*

- Media Activists Launch Pan-African Information Network** 9mins. 7  
*Two of the world's major media organizations launched a new pan African e-mail exchange network to support press freedom. But that is just the beginning...*

- WorldSpace Offers African Broadcasters New Technology** 6mins. 5secs. 4  
*African audio broadcasters can now exceed their boundaries and licensed areas to reach audiences world-wide, thanks to a new global satellite technology.*

### WOMEN

- Understanding the Female Genital Mutilation Situation (Editorial)** 10mins. 9  
*Can you ever over flog an issue? Not when it involves health, human rights and tradition. Despite the tons of information on FGM, it is amazing how little we really know...*

- New Report Highlights Gender Discrimination** 12mins. 8secs. 8  
*A United Nations report insists that inequality amongst the sexes is still very much a global phenomenon*

- Nigerian Women with an Agenda for 2003** 10mins. 5  
*Nigerian women gear up for greater participation in the next general elections*

### HEALTH

- Virologist Deplores Low Investment in AIDS Vaccine Research** 7mins. 4  
*The low priority being accorded to the search for a vaccine to curb HIV/AIDS in Africa has been deplored at a recent workshop in Senegal.*

## Environment

### POLLUTION

- Call for Ozone Protection Law** 4mins. 6  
*An NGO has called on the government of Ghana to enact Ozone regulations under the Montreal Protocol to protect the Ozone layer*

### DISASTER

- Landslide Kills 17 in Anambra, Renders 300 Homeless** 3mins. 7  
*A landslide resulting from massive erosion in a Nigerian village has culminated in a tragedy*

### CONSERVATION

- Tanzanians to Combat Deforestation On New Year Day** 6mins. 8  
*New measures are being effected in Tanzania to restock the country's depleted forest cover*

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| <b>Wildlife Service Backs Ban On Titanium</b><br><i>The Kenyan Wildlife Service has spoken out in support of the Government's decision to halt titanium mining in the Kwale district</i> | <b>6mins. 16secs.</b> | <b>10</b> |
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### *Point of View*

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| <b>'Thru the Eyes of a Woman'</b><br><i>Our new section looks at pertinent issues on environment and development from a personal perspective. Ms Owusua writes on Prostitution.</i> | <b>6mins. 6secs.</b> | <b>11</b> |
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### *Noted...*

#### MEDIA

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| <b>Voice of Nigeria Relaunched</b><br><i>Nigeria's external radio broadcast service has been relaunched with a new look and a more optimistic attitude</i> | <b>7mins. 6secs.</b> | <b>11</b> |
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#### CONSERVATION

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| <b>Sweden Donates Towards Namibia's Nature Conservation</b><br><i>The Swedish Ambassador to Namibia has signed a 750, 000 Namibian Dollar support for nature conservation</i> | <b>3mins.</b> | <b>12</b> |
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| <b>\$150million fund to save biological hotspots</b><br><i>The World Bank and two conservation organizations announce the launch of a new fund designed to better safeguard the world's threatened biological hotspots.</i> | <b>1mins. 5secs.</b> | <b>12</b> |
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#### HEALTH

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| <b>African AIDS Conference Postponed to December</b><br><i>A major African conference on AIDS and development, originally scheduled for Addis Ababa in October, has been postponed</i> | <b>5mins.</b> | <b>12</b> |
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#### GLOBALISATION

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| <b>African Conference on Penal reforms</b><br><i>Cameroon will be hosting a landmark conference on the effect of globalization on penal reforms</i> | <b>1mins.</b> | <b>13</b> |
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### *Children's Section*

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| <b>Mboma and the Donkey</b><br><i>The hippopotamus proves to the donkey that indeed he who laughs last laughs best!</i> | <b>10mins. 7secs.</b> | <b>13</b> |
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### *Parting Shots*

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| <i>Celebrate the wisdom of the African experience with unforgettable quotes plus a word on conservation</i> |  | <b>14</b> |
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**Editors Honored With Press Freedom Award**

**12min. 9secs.**

Three Sierra Leonean newspaper editors have been honored by the World Press Review for risking their lives to uphold press freedom and human rights during the past nine years of conflict in their country. Paul Kamara, editor of For Di People, Philip Neville, editor of Standard Times, and David Tam-Baryoh, editor of Punch, received the International Editor of the Year Award at the United Nations in New York from Olara Otunnu, UN Undersecretary General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. Otunnu said he could not imagine more deserving recipients of such an award. They and their country had suffered beyond description, yet courageous and committed journalists had encouraged and led the people to put a military junta under siege.

World Press Review editor Alice Chasan paid tribute to the professionalism of all three men: "Under the most horrific conditions, Paul Kamara, Philip Neville and David Tam Baryoh have persisted against the odds to uphold the highest standards of the profession. They have fully embraced the journalist's role in creating the conditions for democracy and rule of law in their land, and have braved mortal danger in pursuit of these goals. They are real heroes," she said. Philip Neville founded Standard Times in 1994 and was repeatedly arrested and detained in subsequent years. In 1997 he and his staff went underground but continued to publish although Neville was later forced into exile. When the overthrown government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was restored in 1998 he returned. But RUF rebels later invaded the capital Freetown and targeted the Standard Times for its reporting of rebel actions. The paper's offices were burned down and its news editor, Paul Mansaray was hacked to death, his wife raped and killed and their children murdered. Neville was forced back into exile, only returning to Sierra Leone last year.

Paul Kamara, who was unable to attend the ceremony, has been threatened and jailed for his journalistic independence. He was ambushed and shot by the military junta in 1996 resulting in severe injuries, particularly to his leg. When he returned from receiving medical treatment abroad in 1997 the democratically-elected government was overthrown, and he took his paper underground, evading capture by AFRC soldiers although his offices were bombed and his home taken over by rebels.

David Tam-Baryoh launched Punch newspaper in 1996 and was soon being targeted by both the military AFRC government and the RUF rebels. After being detained three times he was driven into hiding, and when journalists were being hunted down and killed for their war coverage he went into exile, first in Guinea and then Ghana. Receiving his award, Tam-Baryoh said he wanted to accept it on behalf of the 15 journalists who had died in the Sierra Leonean conflict - nine at the hands of the rebels, three in government cells, one executed and the others members of the foreign press corps. Speaking movingly about the way he as a journalist had been affected by what he had seen happen to his colleagues and his compatriots, Tam-Baryoh said he had a lot of heart-searching to do before he could write easily about reconciliation. For ten years he had been writing war stories and "telling the same story over and over again - of agony". He almost couldn't remember how to do the rest of a reporter's job: "Ask me to write an economic story - I'm in the bush," he joked.

The World Press Review magazine grants its Editor of the Year award annually to editors outside the US in recognition of "enterprise, courage and leadership in advancing the freedom and responsibility of the press, enhancing human rights and fostering excellence in journalism". Previous African recipients include Nigerian Dapo Olorunyomi, then editor of The News in Lagos, and Fred M'membe of The Post in Zambia, both in 1995. The New York-based magazine is published monthly by the Stanley Foundation of Muscatine, Iowa, which pursues peace, with freedom and justice, through media and educational programs.

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**Virologist Deplores Low Investment in AIDS Vaccine Research**

**7mins.**

The president of the West and Central African AIDS Research Network, Prof. Souleymane Mboup of Senegal, has deplored the low priority being accorded to the search for a vaccine to curb HIV/AIDS in Africa. The disease now affects an estimated 24.3 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. The senior virologist told participants at the opening of a three-day workshop for AIDS researchers from 14 West African countries in Dakar that hardly 1 percent of the investment being made in the fight against AIDS was being directed to the search for a vaccine. Mboup, recognised as one of the scientists who first isolated HIV type 2, which is predominantly found in West Africa and India, particularly regretted the lack of involvement by private companies in efforts to find a vaccine. He attributed the failure by scientists to discover an effective AIDS vaccine to the “great variety of HIV and sub-types” of the AIDS-causing virus that prevail in Africa. He noted, however, that more than a score of candidate AIDS vaccines were currently being studied and the preliminary results of the first phase three trials would be available within a year.

Turning to antiretrovirals, which had helped reduce AIDS-related mortality by a third in the developed countries of the North, Mboup said the drugs were not yet widely available in Africa because of their high cost of between 10,000 and 15,000 US dollars per patient each year. He welcomed the mid-May acceptance by five major pharmaceutical laboratories to significantly reduce the price of their drugs for poor countries. He commended the US Rockefeller Foundation, which financed the workshop, for its interest to learn from researchers in diverse African sub-regions so as to draw its programme of intervention in the continent’s HIV/AIDS sector.

Senegalese health Minister Abdou Fall, in a message, singled out poverty and armed conflicts as being among factors fanning the spread of HIV/AIDS. The minister challenged countries to find ways of eradicating the socio-economic conditions that help to propagate the pandemic. While citing Senegal and Uganda as countries with proven viable anti-AIDS programmes, Fall said a lot more needs to be done to concretely curb the disease at the level of each African country.

*Panafrican News Agency*

**WorldSpace Offers African Broadcasters New Technology**

**6mins. 5secs.**

African audio broadcasters can now exceed their boundaries and licensed areas to reach audiences worldwide, thanks to a new global satellite technology, developed by an American company, WorldSpace Corporation, that links reception direct from the satellite.

According to the company’s director of technical operations, Daniel Obam, WorldSpace is the first multi-media audio facility developed for and dedicated to Africa from the concept that radios have only been having local outreach. He told PANA Wednesday that WorldSpace technology has been developed with Africa in mind due to its remote countryside and under-developed infrastructure. “If there is a sky above you, you will receive, on your radio set, whatever channel you would want to listen to, and we are prepared to move African populations and communities into the 21st century,” Obam said.

The company, founded by Noah Samora in 1990 as AfriSpace to focus on Africa’s problems, especially HIV/AIDS, now provides direct satellite broadcast delivery of digital audio and multi-media programming services to the emerging and under-served markets of the world. Explaining how the technology works, Obam said the system uses global satellite audio direct transmission whereby digital format facilities including mobile audio, narrow-band video and multi-media reception are utilised to achieve direct satellite up-linking of broadcasts through small remote stations. While urging regional and national radio stations to make use of the new technology to by-pass their boundaries for a wider audience, Obam noted that

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existing technologies for information dissemination have very worrying limitations in this era of globalisation. "This would provide Africa with an opportunity to compete favourably with the rest of the world because information is power," he said.

Already, Afristar, the programme that covers Africa, offers the audience the choice of 42 African radio stations per beam, and even doubles or triples the number where the two or three beams inter-pass, with up-link stations in Benin, Egypt (Egyptian Radio and Television Union), Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa. Other up-link stations are located in Australia, China, France, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore and the UK.

*Panafrikan News Agency*

### **Nigerian Women with an Agenda for 2003**

**10mins.**

On September 14 and 15, 2000, the Community Partners for Development, CPD, organised a two-day workshop on the active participation of women in politics in Nigeria. The workshop came in preparation for the general elections scheduled for 2003. The workshop titled *Women Agenda 2003*, was attended by a cross section of the Nigerian populace including government officials, politicians, bankers, businesswomen, journalists, lawyers and representatives of NGOs.

The president of CPD, Ms. Ime Essien Udom, said the forum was called to seek ways of encouraging more women to join politics and hold very active positions. Highlights at the workshop included the viewing of the documentary film, *Against the Odds*. The film was produced by Communicating for Change as part of the Television trust for the Environment's *Rhetoric to Reality* series that showcase the challenges of women face in politics.

Women who are currently holding political positions at the national and state levels narrated their experiences as politicians in a male dominated area. One of them, Chief (Mrs.) Josephine Anenih, the National Woman Leader for the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), commented on the opposition she faced from her male counterparts within the party. Ironically, much of the opposition she encountered were from fellow women. Mrs. Anenih encouraged women to be more involved in politics and to stop waiting to be invited to join politics. She observed that though women had to fight three times as hard as the men, they should keep trying until they got it right. Another woman who narrated her story, Chief Mrs. Nkechi Nwaogwu from the Advanced Peoples Party (APP) stated the dangers of politics such as assassinations and violent threats from the opposition.

The workshop however praised the present administration for appointing women in very key and vital positions both at national and state level. The current data shows an increase and improvement in women participation in government, with two female cabinet ministers, four ministers of State, three women senators, fifteen female members of the Houses of Assembly in all the 36 states, and at least one woman commissioner in all the states. While the figures are encouraging, the consensus is that it is still too little.

In her address to the conference Nigeria's Minister of State for Women Affairs and Youth Development, Dr. Bekky Igwe, pointed that the participation of women in the last general elections (1998/99) was very low. She advised women to take advantage of the democratic dispensation and make their voices heard. Another speaker at the occasion, Dr. Reuben Abati, a journalist, said the media had contributed to the prejudices against women and in reporting about them. He therefore advised women groups to network with media organisations and co-opt with both male and female journalists. He also urged women to join politics early rather than join in the last minute. He said they should also be involved in legal and human rights activities.

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At the end of the two-day meeting, the participants adopted strategies that will increase the participation of women in the next general elections. These strategies include the early education of the girl child, the mobilization of women by women and orientation of men and family members to support women interested in politics.

*CFC*

### **Caution on Biotechnology**

**5mins. 6secs.**

Could Africa be missing on benefits coming with technology? A recent symposium in South Africa, on Food Biotechnology highlighted that safety systems should be put in place. Guidelines should be scientific, transparent and flexible. Biotechnology can increase efficiency in farming and ensure food security, but some scientists in the region have urged caution when implementing policies governing its use.

Biotechnology is the use of biological processes to develop various products using a wide range of techniques involving the use and manipulation of living organisms. These products can then be commercially exploited. It includes genetic engineering where genes are transferred and isolated to give certain super varieties of the end product. Some of the most common techniques are tissue or cell culture, cloning and fermentation methods, cell fusion and embryo transfer as well as gene technology (genetic engineering). Biotechnology is also used in producing antibiotics and fast-maturing varieties of crops.

Scientists attending a recent symposium on “Food Biotechnology: Facts, and the Future” in Midrand, South Africa, organised by Africabio, a non-governmental organisation, pointed out that there is need to put in place bio-safety systems at national and international levels. The scientists agreed that well-functioning safety systems are composed of guidelines, which involve peoples’ concerns, have a review process, and provide feedback. Since most countries in the region have not started bio-safety programmes, the symposium agreed that guidelines should also be scientific, transparent and flexible. There is a need to build competence and confidence in the people involved. Addressing the symposium, Dr John Kilama, president of the Global Biodiversity Institute based in the US said, “Africa must be involved in the scientific evaluation of biotechnology because if it is not, the continent may miss the benefits that may come with the technology”.

*Newslink Africa*

### **Call for Ozone Protection Law**

**4mins.**

Friends of the Earth (FOE), Ghana, and the National Association for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Workshop Owners (NARWOA) have called on the government to enact Ozone Regulations under the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer. In a press release, the organisations said these regulations would empower the Environmental Protection Agency to implement its programme of phasing out ozone depleting substances in the country. FOE said its investigations indicate that vested business interests are responsible for blocking such legislation, which has been in draft form for the last three years. FOE says these interests believe such legislation will prevent them from importing second-hand fridges and deep freezers. FOE said the government has benefited from grants of more than \$450,000 to enable it build the relevant capacity to implement such a programme, but has woefully failed to live up to expectations. NARWOA regretted that government has not shown the commitment and political will needed to tackle the problems and obligations associated with the Montreal Protocol. The two organisations urged the government to be alive to its responsibilities by reactivating the necessary processes that will lead to the eventual enactment of the relevant legislation. Under the Montreal Protocol, developing countries are obliged to freeze the use of all ozone depleting substances at 1999 levels and subsequently reduce until a complete phase-out is achieved by 2010.

*Accra Mail*

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**Landslide Kills 17 in Anambra, Renders 300 Homeless**

**3mins.**

A landslide has killed 17 people and left about 300 homeless in a Nigerian village. The disaster was set off by torrential rainfall, and erosion of residential areas has been blamed. The landslide hit the village of Amakor, Nanka, in the Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The rain washed several buildings into a gully. Besides the loss of lives, household property worth millions of naira was also destroyed in the tragedy, according to the councillor representing Nanka Ward II in the Orumba North Council, Mr. Peter Adakah. Mr. Adakah who conducted the council chairman, Chief Hyacinth Onwuchekwe round the affected areas lamented the huge loss caused by the lingering gully erosion. He expressed concern over the plight of the villagers and appealed to the council chairman to draw the attention of the federal and the state governments as well as international agencies to the problem for urgent assistance. The councillor noted that indigenes of Nanka community had in the past raised alarm over the threat of erosion which had been eating deep into residential areas and wondered why successive administrations in the country had not responded. The state Commissioner for Housing and Environment, Chief Nkwo Nnabuchi had at a press conference raised an alarm over the worsening erosion problem in the state. He made a passionate appeal to the Federal Government to come to the aid of the state urgently as the state had no financial resources needed to tackle the ecological problem.

*AllAfrica.com*

**Media Activists Launch Pan-African Information Network**

**9mins.**

Two of the world's major media advocacy organisations launched a new pan-African e-mail exchange network to support press freedom and build stronger independent media on the continent on Thursday. The World Association of Newspapers (WAN) and Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) said in a statement that the new RAP 21 network was the first continental discussion group of its kind and was created with the assistance of the Central African Union of Press Publishers to establish an Africa-wide exchange of ideas and information. The initiative follows the success of a similar regional initiative by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) linking newspapers and journalists in the Southern African Development Community. RAP 21, which is the French acronym for the African Press Network for the 21st Century, will include journalists and media executives working for the independent media and will provide the first ever 'live' link to the outside world for hundreds of professionals who currently work in complete isolation from their peers and colleagues elsewhere on the continent. The network will also, the statement said, act as an alert system for press freedom attacks on the continent and will provide information about management and training opportunities.

"The failure to create a community of interests and a dialogue among publishers, editors and journalists on the continent has been a serious problem for the independent press in Africa," said WAN Director General, Timothy Balding. "The extraordinarily rapid growth in the use of low cost e-mail and the internet can now be used to create permanent links among African media." RSF Secretary General, Robert Ménard, added that watchdog bodies could only improve reaction times and pressure on African governments with the help of African journalists and press activists.

RAP 21's 100 founding members have committed the organisation to proactively mobilise African journalists to defend and promote press freedom by adding their voices to protests. It will also administer an annual African media award recognising individuals or organisations which have made outstanding contributions to the cause of press freedom. Other priorities include assistance and moral support to imprisoned or threatened journalists, the creation of a permanent information exchange and a forum for editorial material between independent African newspapers. This would include encouraging African media to link their web sites. RAP 21's administrators, including WAN and RSF, will also provide technical and managerial

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advice and assistance to private African newspapers in a bid to boost readership, improve marketing and advertising strategies, financial management and human resources. Newspapers will be encouraged to engage in education projects and association building, while RAP 21 will provide a conduit for information from development agencies to the African press by providing regular information on external initiatives to help African press development. Prospective RAP 21 participants can request membership by sending an e-mail to Coordinator Gamal Niang at [rap21@wan.asso.fr](mailto:rap21@wan.asso.fr)

*African Eye News Service (South Africa)*

### **Tanzanians to Combat Deforestation On New Year Day**

**6mins.**

New measures are being affected in Tanzania to restock the country's pillaged forest cover that is constantly threatened by illegal timber trade and unsustainable exploitation of forest products. The government has designated 1 January, 2001 as a National Tree Planting Day in which nationals across the country would be expected to plant trees and engage in other reforestation activities.

Natural resources and tourism Minister Zakia Meghji said President Benjamin Mkapa's assent proclaiming the day, which incidentally falls on New Year, was being awaited. Tanzania's forest cover has been declining sharply, mainly due to illegal timber trade and unsustainable exploitation of forestry products. Wood is still by far the country's most important source of energy, exceeding 90 percent of the total national energy supply. Rampant fires started by ambitious farmers anxious to clear large tracts of land at one go have also been threatening the country's forest cover.

But now, things will change, Meghji noted, saying the national tree-planting day was the government's new focus and direction in reforestation measures. She said the tree-planting day would bolster the government's efforts in implementing the national tree planting campaign launched by Mkapa in April. The ambitious campaign was aimed at re-greening the country by 100 million trees by the end of 2000. Tanzania currently loses between 300,000 and 400, 000 hectares of forest annually due to rampant tree felling. Forest cover destruction is particularly alarming in the rural areas where shifting cultivation and livestock keeping form the key modes of life. The country's central and north-western areas are already threatened with accelerating desertification.

Meghji said the affected regions, some of them currently experiencing drought, were in danger of turning into desert if measures to reverse the threat were not effected immediately. Mkapa has stressed the importance of tree planting and maintenance as a way of enhancing environmental conservation and has challenged Tanzanians to plant more trees. Authorities have thrown the same challenge to thousands of refugees holed up in the western region of Kigoma, who like their Tanzanian hosts rely heavily on wood fuel for their daily energy requirements.

*Panafrican News Agency*

### **New Report Highlights Gender Discrimination**

**12mins. 8secs.**

Inequality between men and women limits the potential of individuals, families, communities and nations. This is according to a new report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Documenting the extent of gender discrimination in its 'State of the World's Population 2000', UNFPA said that ending gender discrimination was an urgent human rights and development priority. "Despite the tremendous changes of the 20th century, discrimination and violence against women and girls remain firmly rooted in cultures around the world. Passed down from one generation to the next, ideas about 'real men' and a 'woman's place' are instilled at an early age and difficult to change," UNFPA said.

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Girls and women the world over, the report said, are denied access to education and health care. Millions are subjected to abuse and violence, their legal rights are not protected, medical concerns are given less attention than men's are and they are denied opportunities in the work place and receive less pay than men for the same work. Speaking at the launch of the report in London, Dr Nafis Sadik the Executive Director of UNFPA said: "This year's State of the World's Population Report has a very simple message. It could be summed up as 'the price of inequality is too high to pay'". Sadik added: "It shows that in countries all over the world, gender inequality, discrimination and violence are holding back not only women but men. Not only families but communities and whole nations."

About 70 percent of people living in poverty are women and it is estimated that over a 20 year period the number of poor women in 41 developing countries will be 17 percent higher than the increase in poor men. There are twice as many illiterate women as men and on average women are paid 30-40 percent less than men for comparable work. Two-thirds of the 300 million children world-wide without access to education are girls. Globally, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into having sex or abused in some way or the other, the report said. It said that gender-based violence constituted a life-long threat for millions of girls and women around the world. It further stated that one of the most disturbing trends was that this violence was normally carried out by an intimate partner or family member.

"Justification for violence," the report said, "stems from gender norms, and distorted views about the roles and responsibilities of men and women in relationships." The report said that studies around the world have shown a "consistent pattern" of events triggering violent responses. It said these included "not obeying a husband, talking back, refusing sex, not having food ready on time, failing to care for the children or homes and questioning the man about money or girlfriends or going somewhere without his permission". For example a study in Ghana showed that an estimated 43 percent of men and about 50 percent of women said that a man was justified in beating his wife if she used contraceptives without his consent. Statistics released by the UN's World Health Organisation (WHO) in June this year said that interpersonal violence was the tenth leading cause of death for women aged 15-44 in 1998. The UNFPA report said that one in four women has been abused during pregnancy. In Nigeria an estimated 30 percent of women have been victims of some form of physical abuse and in Uganda this figure is an alarming 57 percent. But these are just the reported cases and despite the fact that rape and other forms of sexual violence are increasing, many rapes go unreported because of the stigma and trauma associated with them and the lack of sympathetic treatment from legal systems. The report said it was estimated that less than 3 percent of all rapes in South Africa were reported. South Africa has one of the highest incidents of rape in the world. The UNFPA report can be found at: <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/swpmain.htm>

*UN Integrated Regional Information Network*

### **Understanding the Female Genital Mutilation Situation (Editorial)**

**10mins.**

Many societies in Africa and western Asia practise Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), often referred to as female circumcision. World-wide, some 130 million girls and young woman have undergone this dangerous and painful practice, with an additional 2 million at risk each year. FGM is practised in about 28 countries in Africa where the prevalence varies widely, from 5 per cent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to 98 percent in Somalia and in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region. It also occurs among some minority groups in Asia, and among immigrant women in Europe, Canada and the United States.

Essentially, FGM refers to the removal of all or part of the clitoris and other genitalia. Those who perform the more extreme form, infibulation, remove the clitoris and both labia and sew together both sides of the vulva. This leaves only a small opening to allow passage for urine and menstrual blood. Infibulation accounts for an estimated 15 percent of all cases of FGM, and 80-90 percent of cases in Djibouti, Somalia and the

Sudan. Other, less extreme forms involve removing all or part of the clitoris (clitoridectomy), or the clitoris and inner lips (excision). About three quarters of all young girls subjected to this degrading procedure have undergone one or another of these less radical forms. This terrible violation of girls and young women's human rights is based on prevailing beliefs that female sexuality must be controlled, and the virginity of young girls preserved until marriage. Men in some cultures will not marry uncircumcised girls because they view them as 'unclean' or sexually permissive. Genital mutilation is nearly always carried out in unsanitary conditions without anaesthetic. It is also extremely painful and may result in severe infection, shock or even death. If the girl survives, she may experience painful sexual intercourse, degrading the quality of her life.

The reduction of a woman's sexual experience by FGM is both a physical and mental health problem for women and an impediment to the development of deeper and more satisfying relationships between the partners. The immediate health risks of FGM include haemorrhage of the clitoral artery, infection, urine retention, and blood poisoning from unsterile, often crude, cutting implements. Later complications are mainly due to the partial closing of the vaginal and urethral opening, which trigger chronic urinary tract infections, repeated reproductive tract infections and back and pelvic pain. Particularly where the more drastic forms of this practice have been carried out, the girl will be at increased risk of experiencing a difficult delivery and dying in childbirth. In some cases, FGM can lead to sterility. A study carried out in the Sudan found that women who had undergone FGM were twice as likely to be infertile as women who had not. This is due to pelvic inflammatory disease caused by repeated infections as a result of the retention of urine or menstrual blood that speed throughout the reproductive tract, causing inflammation and scarring of the fallopian tubes. In traditional societies, infertility is a particularly devastating condition, since a woman's worth in many of these cultures is measured by her ability to bear children.

*The Independent (Banjul)*

### **Wildlife Service Backs Ban On Titanium**

**6mins. 16secs.**

The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has spoken out in support of the Government's decision to halt Kwale's titanium mining. Speaking after a brief tour of Mwatate constituency's Kighombo dam, Taita Taveta District, KWS director Nehemiah Rotich said mining would cause serious environmental damage. Dr Rotich said independent parties should make and circulate an environmental impact assessment before the project takes off.

"In accordance with the Environmental Bill, any project which can have adverse effects on the environment, thus endangering human lives, must be subjected to a thorough and independent impact study," Dr Rotich said. "That is the KWS position." The impact assessment undertaken by Tiomin Resources, the Canadian firm interested in the mining, had not been distributed to all interested parties, including environmental experts and local leaders for evaluation. It could mean a conflict of interests. Thus, he said, it had raised suspicion that it does not reflect the true picture of the environmental damage the project might cause in the region. He said, "I have not had a chance to study Tiomin's assessment report, so I cannot exactly say whether it's biased or not. But it's important that such an impact study be undertaken by an independent group of environmental experts with no vested interests in the project. To base a judgment on Tiomin's study alone is to be ridiculous. It's like telling an accused to be his own judge".

The KWS boss said the titanium venture had not been "adequately described" to the relevant interested parties, including environmentalists and leaders, saying this had inspired suspicion over the firm's true motives. A fortnight ago, Cabinet Minister Marsden Madoka said the Government had decided that the mining project would not proceed as initially planned until all thorny issues are thrashed out. Madoka said he opposed the leasing of the land to the Canadian company, saying this would aggravate the already volatile squatter problem in the area.

*The Nation (Nairobi)*

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## *Point of View*

### **'Thru the Eyes of a Woman'**

**6mins. 6secs.**

When I see my 'sister' dressed in a micro mini skirt, a crop top with a plunging neck line that seems to want to meet the skirt's hemline, heels a storey high and more make up than a corpse, I think to myself "go get 'em, girl!". These are not words of encouragement, and yet I cannot afford to discourage or dissuade them from their profession - either chosen or thrust upon them. Yes, some professions are thrust upon you by default, or by prevailing circumstances; and there are a lot of prevailing circumstances in our society today. I see women who themselves do not believe in education, not encouraging their daughters to stay in school, but instead make subtle suggestions and say things like, "go and see old Mr. So and so, he works at the bank." What does your fifteen-year-old daughter who has quit school want with old Mr. So and so? Could she be looking for a job, perhaps? A job that needs just a body and no qualification whatsoever?

The other side? The mother is suffering from an incurable disease; the fifteen-year-old girl- child has become the sole bread winner; even if this child decides to stay in school, there is no way of paying her school fees, because mother also dropped out of school and was a teenage mother, therefore, not employable... (is this a good place to say history repeats itself?) Cruel though it may sound, it is the truth, and the truth hurts. As I said, I cannot afford to discourage them, because it is one thing to try to educate them both on the dangers of the journey they have embarked on, and quite another to actually do something about it. Supposing they went out onto the streets and they had no 'customers'? Maybe I'm asking too much of our men? No matter, the call is out; and in true democratic fashion, you can choose to be part of the solution or part of the problem.

*Akosua Owusua in the Accra Mail*

## *Noted...*

### **Voice of Nigeria Relunched**

**7mins. 6secs.**

Nigeria's external radio broadcast station, Voice of Nigeria, has been relaunched. The one-day ceremony was held on September 21, 2000, in Abuja, Nigeria's federal capital. The occasion was widely attended by representatives from all levels of the Nigerian government including the Vice-President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, broadcasters, and academics.

VON launched a new logo, a new station ID, new directions, new strategic global partnerships, new programs, and better global reception. The Director General of the Voice of Nigeria, Mr. Taiwo Allimi, said the vision of the new VON is to become the international radio broadcasting station of first choice for anyone genuinely interested in Nigeria and Africa. He also says the mission of the new VON "is to reflect Nigerian and African perspectives in our broadcasts...winning and sustaining the attention, respect and goodwill of listeners worldwide, particularly Nigerians and Africans in the Diaspora... making Nigeria's voice to be heard more positively in the shaping of our world."

Voice of Nigeria was founded in 1961. The nation's growing role in the affairs of the African continent informed the need to have an external channel through which authoritative information about the African situation could be disseminated to the entire world, with just a two-hour daily broadcast to West Africa. By 1990, VON became autonomous and in 1996, it started transmitting to the entire world. As part of its expansion process, VON has also forged joint cooperation in the areas of training for staff and exchange of programs with foreign media organizations such as Radio France International, Voice of America, and

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Germany's Deutsche Welle radio. It is already working with the WorldSpace technology to improve both local and international reception to reach a potential audience of about 4.6 billion people around the world.

Speaking on what informed the need for a new identity, Allimi says, "I realize that it is important in today's world that, one, you must enter into partnerships with global broadcasters to be able to have what I call a shared vision of what global broadcasting in the world should be. Having accepted that, I then felt it was important to dialogue with global broadcasters on this our vision that the concept of our broadcasting today must shift from accentuating wars and conflicts in the world to the promotion of development and peace in the world."

CFC

**Sweden Donates Towards Namibia's Nature Conservation** **3mins.**

Swedish ambassador to Namibia Gunilla Hesselmark and the Namibia Nature Foundation's Executive Director, Chris Brown, recently signed a 107,913.67 USdollar agreement for nature conservation. Hesselmark said the funds would be donated to Namibians and organisations interested in conserving their environments. She said the Swedish Local Environment Fund wants to provide small grants to local people in the country to enable them to address environmental issues within their own habitats through wildlife care and development. The ambassador challenged the local people to make a living by opening their own environmental projects, which could enable them to become self-employed. Hesselmark noted further that about 259 000 dollars, which include the 2000 budget, has so far been spent on environmental projects in Namibia. In 1999, about 65 project proposals were received and Namibia Nature Foundation, through the Swedish Embassy, gave grants to 18 of these, representing a total investment of 90, 459 dollars. The projects funded in the first phase included the development of a family park in Wanaheda, Windhoek, community nurseries and environmental education centres, and in developing the national botanical gardens.

*Panafrican News Agency*

**\$150million fund to save biological hotspots** **1min. 5secs.**

A new \$150 million fund designed to better safeguard the world's threatened biological hotspots in developing countries has been launched. This is a joint initiative of Conservation International (CI), the World Bank, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The fund named the Critical Ecosystem partnership Fund (CEPF) will focus primarily on biodiversity hotspots. These are highly threatened regions where some 60 percent of all terrestrial species diversity are found on only 1.4 percent of the planet's total surface area.

WWF

## *Dateline...*

**African AIDS Conference Postponed to December** **5mins.**

A major African conference on AIDS and development, originally scheduled for Addis Ababa in October, has been postponed to 3-7 December 2000. Known as the second African Development Forum (ADF 2000), under the theme "AIDS: The Great Leadership Challenge," the postponement is to enable a wide-section of African participants to take part. This was disclosed by the United Nations Economic Commission for African (ECA), co-organisers of the meeting. The conference, under the auspices of the ECA in collaboration with UN AIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, and the World Bank, among others, is designed to serve as "a launching pad for a renewed commitment to more concerted action against HIV/AIDS in Africa."

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Some 1,500 African leaders, policy-makers, civil society organisations including people living with HIV/AIDS, as well academics, the private sector and Africa's development partners, are expected to take part. According to ECA, the meeting will focus on "concrete roles and responsibilities of African leaders at all levels in galvanising an African-led response to the pandemic."

"The ADF 2000 process will build on the efforts already underway by African countries and their development partners towards combating HIV/AIDS, and will address what gaps remain," the agency added. It said the forum constitutes "a key opportunity" for Africa and its partners to build on the momentum gained from the recent international conference on AIDS in Durban, South Africa. It seeks to help Africans at all levels engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS to share experiences and learn from good policies on the pandemic in countries that have successfully risen to the challenges.

*Panafrican News Agency*

### **African Conference on Penal reforms**

**1min.**

An African Conference on Penal reforms is to take place in the capital of Cameroon from 23 to 25 November 2000. The theme of the conference will be "The effects of globalisation on the penal reforms in Africa". Further information can be obtained from the coordinator, Mukete Tahle Itoe at [www.geocities.com/tmukete](http://www.geocities.com/tmukete)

*The Courier*

## ***Children's Section***

### **Mboma and the Donkey**

**10mins. 7secs.**

Many years ago the Donkey and Mboma, the hippopotamus, were good friends and used to graze together on the same river bank. One day when the river was low, Donkey gazed across to the far side and saw enticing green crops. Before Mboma joined him that morning, Donkey splashed through the shallow water and ate his fill on the tasty crops. When he returned that evening, Mboma 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 Mboma, 'don't go without me.'

In the morning, Donkey and Mboma met and crossed over the river. As they went Donkey advised Mboma 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.'

Mboma 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 fields 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 Mboma 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 Mboma 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. Mboma said nothing about his suspicion and they carried on in this way until the rains fell and the river rose again.

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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. Mboma 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,' sighed Donkey, 'But you know I can't swim.'

'Oh, that's no problem,' said Mboma, 'as you're my friend, I'll carry you across'.

So Donkey climbed onto Mboma's back and they started the crossing. All went well until the middle of the river when Mboma 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. Mboma carried on walking over the bottom and out the other side but Donkey, who could neither swim nor hold his breath like Mboma, drowned in the river.

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

*Shangani folk tales*

## ***Parting Shots***

Celebrate the wisdom of the African experience with these unforgettable quotes

On consequences

*He who sells sand as salt is paid stones as money*

Nigeria

*He who volunteers his head for the breaking of the coconut should not expect to eat from it*

Nigeria

On deceit

*If you want to burn down your house, your enemy will lend you a match*

Zimbabwe

On friendship

*A smile is the strongest weapon in the battle of life*

Ghana

*More African Proverbs*

And a final word on conservation,

*There is a strong argument that creation has a right of its own to exist, independently of human use... There is also an aesthetic argument concerning the beauty of nature, but the conclusion is that beautiful or not, a species has a right to survive by simply being there.*

Peter Kramer,

WWF Conservation Director,

*The New Road, 1988*