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CONSERVATION

Healing Plant Nearly Extinct

6mins. 5

South Africa's winter impala lily is on the verge of extinction and this will prove a great loss to both conservationists and the medical community

Egypt battles to save its endangered tortoise

11mins. 9secs. 8

A conservation non governmental organisation is recording unprecedented success in the protection of Egypt's endangered tortoise population

Numbers...

HEALTH

How much does good health cost in Africa?

2mins. 11

A large number of African nations are yet to prioritize health issues.

DISASTER

Counting the cost of floods in Mozambique

4mins. 11

The UN World Food Programme paints a bleak picture of the destruction caused by the recent floods in Mozambique

Noted...

HEALTH

African Olympic athletes support Roll-Back Malaria

3mins. 9secs. 11

Taking advantage of the upcoming Olympics, the World Health Organization uses athletes to raise awareness on the scourge of malaria in the continent.

War against AIDS gets boost in Nigeria

2mins. 12

A UK based organization has pledged 7 million British pounds to support the fight against AIDS in Nigeria

Dateline...

POLLUTION

Canada to host Seminar on Cleaner production

1min. 12

Follow up to the Earth Summit in Rio, Canada will play host to the world at the 6th high level Seminar on Cleaner Production

Children's Section

The Clever Hare against the Elephant and the Hippopotamus

9mins. 5secs. 12

The Hare shows that brainpower is a formidable foe in the field of battle

Parting shots

Celebrate the wisdom of the African experience with some unforgettable proverbs 13

News

Liberian women threaten boycott

5mins. 6secs.

In Monrovia, Liberian women, including First Lady Jewel Howard-Taylor, have threatened to boycott all public functions to which they are invited until requisite laws concerning their inheritance rights are enacted. The women made the threat at the Capitol Building in a six-count petition presented to members of the Legislature. The strongly-worded petition was preceded by a mass solidarity march, under a heavy downpour of rain, through the streets of Monrovia.

The women, among other things, reasoned that the existence of separate laws to govern rights of statutory wives/widows and customary wives/widows is discriminatory and contrary to the principles of unity and equality as enshrined in the constitution. The women are therefore seeking the unification of all laws relating to widows of spouses of both statutory and customary marriages.

“We also want the marriageable ages for male and female under both statutory and customary marriages to be the full ages of 21 for males and 18 for females” the women stressed. The women further threatened that they will not support the election of men in any public office, particularly the legislature, if these men are not seen to seek and pursue the interest of women. First Lady Jewel Howard -Taylor, who spoke at the occasion, said the women are not happy because the petition has been with the law makers for over a year now.

Responding on behalf of the Legislature, House Speaker Nyudueh Morkonmana and Senate President Pro Tempore Keikura Kpoto assured the women that all will be done within their powers to enact the bill very soon. The parade and petition ceremonies, which marked the second anniversary of the Day of Action/awareness on Women’s Inheritance Rights, was held under the theme “Equal Rights For All.”

The News

EU donates 13million Euros towards the World Food Programme in Africa

3mins. 7secs.

The European Commission has announced the release of 13 million Euros as additional funding towards the World Food Programme (WFP) in various African countries. According to a statement yesterday the 13 million Euros was in addition to an earlier disbursement of 90 million Euros made available by the European Commission in July. The commission has also provided substantial amounts of food aid through channels other than WFP. On July 18, 2000, the Commission decided to allocate to WFP 90 million Euro aimed at covering the current food needs in Africa. This allocation will allow for the provision of 154,000 tonnes of cereals, 7,500 tonnes of vegetable oil and 1,000 tonnes of sugar as well as for other products, the statement read in part.

The release also stated that the commission has since last year to date provided over 3.73 million Euros through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees as humanitarian aid for refugees in Zambia from the Democratic Republic of Congo and those from Angola. The funding was in order to guarantee the UNHCR’s co-ordinated multisectoral assistance towards the provision of health care, water supplies for the refugees including transport.

The Post of Zambia

Misuse of agricultural chemicals decimates livestock

3mins. 9secs.

Burkina Faso’s government has banned the use of phytosanitary products for the treatment of livestock. The ban follows the death of about 100 heads of cattle as a result of poisoning between June and July in

Mouhoun area, according to the regional director of animal husbandry in the central-western zone. Alexandre Sawadogo said phytosanitary products were strictly meant for agricultural use, and warned that anyone disregarding the order would be punished.

In a statement broadcast over local radio stations, the regional department of animal resources said the animals died after undergoing treatment with or absorbing phytosanitary products. It said animal breeders used the products to treat domestic animals and to disinfect them against ticks. The department also drew the attention of animal breeders to the harmful effects of the products to the health of both animals and human beings. According to the regional veterinary office, 49 heads of cattle died in Kossi province, 360 km west of Ouagadougou, and 25 in Bale (250 km west of Ouagadougou) after being treated with 'Cypercal 50', a chemical meant for cotton plants. In Sourou province (about 300 km west of Ouagadougou), 28 cattle also died of poisoning after being treated with 'Bazudin 600' chemical.

Panafrican News Agency

The Poor are with us

7mins. 5secs.

Despite improved human living conditions over the last hundred years, rising global prosperity has not benefited all countries and regions, according to the World Economic Outlook, published by the International Monetary Fund, IMF. The improvement in living conditions came as a result of unprecedented technological and economic transformations. Global output according to the report, almost tripled in the first half of the 20th century and increased nine-fold in the second half, greatly outpacing population growth. In addition, life expectancy, education and other indicators of well-being also improved, particularly in poor countries.

But the global distribution of income - measured by average incomes across countries - remained skewed, the publication said. This failure to converge can be seen in longer term growth rates: 75 percent of developing countries recorded slower per capita income growth than in the industrial countries over the past three decades. It stated that per capita income fell in 32 countries in the sample, while only seven developing countries grew fast enough to reduce substantially the income gap with - and rapidly converge toward - the industrial countries as a group. It added that less than 10 percent of the developing world's population live in countries where average income declined, while 70 percent live in countries where per capita income growth exceeded that in the industrial countries.

However the poor are still very much with us. The report stated that the percentage of the population in developing countries living under \$1 per day line had declined from 30 percent to 24 percent during the past decade (largely reflecting poverty reduction in East Asia and to a lesser extent in South Asia). It, however, added that the incidence of poverty remains unacceptably high. The IMF insisted that there has been no progress in reducing poverty rates in Africa and in the Western Hemisphere. In fact, it argued that poverty rates actually increased in the transition countries and that "It should be noted that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, reflecting not only material deprivation but also, for example, lack of security and access to basic services, including health, education, and sanitation. Health measures (for example, life expectancies) have converged more rapidly across countries than average incomes, in part because of the diffusion of medical technology. This aspect of globalization has unambiguously helped the poorest countries."

AllAfrica.com

Zimbabwe to start testing AIDS drugs

4mins. 3secs.

Clinical trials will start in Zimbabwe in September on a series of cheap therapies that have been found to be effective in stopping and sometimes reversing the progress of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The therapies, based on locally available drugs such as aspirin, selen and multi-vitamins, have been found by the United

States-based Institute for Alternative Medicine to help AIDS sufferers improve their immune systems and slow the progression of the virus. Snorre Westgaard, the project officer of Hope Humana, an international non-governmental effort to produce the cheap therapies in Zimbabwe, this week said the department of medicine at the University of Zimbabwe would conduct the trials.

The first part of the three-phased trials will take at least three months but the entire programme might take as long as a full year, Westgaard told the Financial Gazette. Hope Humana intends to manufacture the drugs in Bindura once the tests are approved and has already been mobilising funding and equipment in Zimbabwe and internationally. The alternative therapy programme has been found to be just as effective as the costly triple therapies now common in the developed world for the treatment of AIDS.

Zimbabwe, reported by the World Health Organisation to have at least one HIV- positive person in every five adults, is one of the hardest hit in southern Africa.

The Financial Gazette

11 million children die of preventable diseases

5mins. 16secs.

Some 11 million children die every year in the world of preventable diseases and food deficiency, according to statistics presented to an international health workshop in the Malian capital, Bamako. Participants at the workshop for counseling on "Integrated Management of Child Disease," however, heard that infant mortality could be reduced by 10 to 50 percent through improved family and community practices. The Bamako meeting, was a joint initiative of the World Health Organisation's Regional Office for Africa and the Malian Health Ministry. It is to develop a reliable strategy for managing childhood diseases on the continent, by proposing concrete mechanisms to co-ordinate interventions by various stakeholders.

Comparing the current child mortality and morbidity situation in the world to an hourly crash of a Boeing 747 plane filled with under-five children, the health specialists revealed that in several countries, one out of every five children dies before the age of five from preventable diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, measles as well as malnutrition. WHO country representative in Mali, Helene Mabu Ma Disu, said if pneumonia is correctly managed, about a million children could be saved annually throughout the world. The stemming of diarrhoea and malaria, she said, could also help to protect 4.8 million and 500,000 children, respectively.

Abdrahmane Tounkara, Secretary General of Mali's Health Ministry expects that "through the results of this workshop, people will be able to move from a simple user passivity to co-responsibility, within the PCIME framework." The Bamako meeting was attended by health experts from Senegal, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso and host, Mali.

Pan African News Agency

Healing plant nearly extinct

6mins.

Southern Africa's most newly endangered species on the verge of extinction is the winter impala lily, a plant used by traditional healers to treat stomach ailments. Conservationists warn that agriculture and development have virtually wiped out the plant in the wild and unless drastic steps are taken it will soon be extinct.

Mpumalanga Parks Board conservationist, Gerhard Strydom, raised the alarm this week after a four-month survey of the Onderberg region in eastern Mpumalanga produced fewer than a dozen of the plants. "About 80% of the lily's habitat has already been wiped out by development, and the remaining 20% is being ploughed up for sugar cane and cassava," he says.

Southern Africa has the third-highest number of endangered plant species in the world, after the United States and Australia. At least 53 plants are known to have become extinct in the region over the past century. The winter impala lily is one of the 2 215 Southern African plants listed as threatened in the Red Data list, the global record of rare and endangered species managed by the IUCN-World Conservation Union.

Strydom's research shows the future survival of the winter impala lily, which is found in eastern Mpumalanga and parts of northern Swaziland and southern Mozambique only, is more tenuous than previously assumed. Winter impala lilies have pale mauve flowers and large underground tubers. They like heat and clay soil - prime growing conditions for sugar cane and cassava. Known also as the Swazi lily and nunankulu, the winter impala lily is popular among traditional healers. The tubers are poisonous, so the section between the roots and stem only is used.

Protected areas may be the lily's salvation, but even that is not guaranteed. Only about a dozen of the plants have been found in the southern part of the Kruger National Park, and the nearby Mawewe community reserve.

Mail and Guardian (Johannesburg)

Africa's women leaders discuss social agenda

11mins.

Close to 1,000 distinguished African and other international women who converged on the Namibian capital, Windhoek, in July left a conference hall determined to make a more positive impact to the changing social world. "For the modern woman, this is no longer an era for kitchen gossip or talking shop. It's an era to contribute positively to the fast changing social world," according Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund. The four-day agenda, which took place end of July, was the fourth Regional Conference of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians.

Held under the theme "Challenges To Meet Adolescence, Sexual And Productive Needs," the conference challenged African governments to initiate urgent action on wide-ranging issues, including the girl child, female circumcision, women soldiers, teenage pregnancies and the need for reasonable national budgets on health care. The women ministers and parliamentarians, from 45 African countries, supported by women executives from non- governmental and international organisations and resource persons, also spared no efforts in challenging African governments to avail opportunities for women to serve in higher political and decision making positions. They observed that apart from the Southern African Development Community countries, which have so far achieved an overall 17.9 percent of women representation in parliament, the rest of African states still lagged very much below 10 percent.

On the issues of practices such as female circumcision and which expose women to additional suffering and risk, Sadik said, "Tradition and custom are very valuable in protecting our heritage and passing on valuable lessons to the young. But tradition and custom have often been perverted to suit the interests of a small group," she argued. According to the World Health Organisation, about two million women in sub-Saharan Africa, mostly in West Africa, risk undergoing female genital mutilation, practised in about 27 countries in the region. In order to redress the situation, the WHO's Africa committee is already working with the governments of 10 sub-Saharan countries to end female circumcision by helping them implement plans for the elimination of the traditional practice.

Opening the meeting, Namibian President Sam Nujoma disclosed that 45 percent of the country's girls have had children by the age of 19. Quoting a recent demographic health survey, the president also told the meeting that 2 percent of 15-year-old girls also fell pregnant, blaming the grim statistics on inadequate health services, which always remained inaccessible to adolescents. Among the factors the president cited

were the fears that health workers would breach confidentiality, a lack of privacy in health facilities and unfriendly and negative attitudes by health workers, especially when requesting reproductive health information, condoms and family planning methods. He said his government was committed to improving the sexual and reproductive health status of the youth. To this effect it had established the national reproductive health programme to target the needs of Namibia's adolescent population.

The meeting further criticised Africa's leaders for spending far too little financial resources on health while putting so much money and energy on arming themselves against potential enemies. Statistics given at the meeting showed that Angola in 1997 spent 658 million US dollars or 8.8 percent of its GDP on arms. According to the 1998-99 Military Balance, published by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, Eritrea spent 65 million dollars or 8.3 percent of its GDP and little Lesotho munched up to 4.6 percent of its GDP on arms.

The productive nature of the meeting was stressed by Namibia's Women and Child Affairs Minister, Netumbo Nditwah, who said: "For the past four days we have succeeded in exchanging notes from various perspectives. We are going back to our respective parliaments and cabinets better equipped than ever before."

Pan African News Agency

Global warming a threat to sensitive ecosystems

5mins. 4secs.

The Earth's climate is warming so rapidly that many species of wildlife and plants cannot survive the rising mercury and will be wiped out, an environmental report has warned. Species loss could be as high as 20 percent in sensitive ecosystems such as northern Canada, the Tibetan Plateau and in southeastern Australia, according to the report released by the World Wildlife Fund and Canada's David Suzuki Foundation. The report warned that 35 percent of the Earth's existing natural habitat could be "fundamentally altered" in the next 100 years.

Scientists generally agree the Earth has been warming slowly for the last 100 years, but there is disagreement on the cause and whether it represents a long-term trend. The environmental groups who helped release the report at news conferences in Toronto and London said it was more evidence of the need to curb the production of greenhouse gasses that they blame for causing the climate to warm. "The pace of warming could be much greater than even 13,000 years ago when sabre-toothed tigers and woolly mammoth still roamed the Earth. We can't simply continue to sit by and accept this devastating loss," noted University of Toronto researcher and environmentalist, Dr. David Suzuki.

The report acknowledged that some more adaptable animals and plants will be able to extend their range with a warmer climate, but said many are "nuisance" species such as kudzu vines and Japanese honeysuckle. Representatives of 180 countries will meet in Lyons, France, next month to work out how the Kyoto Protocol international agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions will be made to work. The 1997 treaty will also be the subject of international ministerial talks in The Hague in November.

Reuters

UNEP undertakes multi-million dollar toxic project

8mins. 2secs.

To reach a better understanding of the environmental and health risks posed by persistent toxic substances and the measures needed to deal with them, UNEP Chemicals will execute a five-million-US-dollar project to assess these pollutants in all regions of the globe, Paul Whyllie, the project's manager, said. Results of the two-year project, scheduled to start in September, will contribute to future priority setting by

the Global Environment Facility or GEF, which gave final approval for starting the full-scale study in July. In the long term, the project's outcome should serve to guide international action to protect human health and the environment from persistent toxic substances, UNEP said in a news release.

The GEF is jointly implemented through UNEP, UN Development Programme and the World Bank. This study will be the first full-scale GEF project devoted to this class of chemicals. The assessment will complement the work being done in conjunction with negotiations for a global treaty on the list of 12 persistent organic pollutants or POPs now underway. These toxic chemicals were targeted for action by the UNEP governing council mandate in 1997. The new GEF project will assess problems associated with the broader category of persistent toxic substances. There is clearly a need for a scientifically based assessment of the nature and scale of the threats to the environment and public health from persistent toxic substances that goes beyond the list of 12 persistent organic pollutants, Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director, said. Conclusions from the full-scale project will assist GEF in establishing future priorities, help countries and regions in developing responses to risks from these pollutants, and, in the longer term, contribute to identifying additional POPs for international action.

Persistent toxic substances pose a serious threat to humans and the environment. They can last in the environment for a long time and be transported long distances far from their origin. They can accumulate in organisms through the food chain, and be present in food at levels of concern for human health. There is a growing awareness that substances similar to the 12 listed in the UNEP mandate may harm the environment and, through the environment, endanger human health. In addition, there is a growing recognition that effects of persistent toxic substances are likely to vary due to different use patterns and environmental factors affecting their deposition and distribution in the environment. At the same time, however, information on the use and effects of these substances in different regions is scarce. This project will help fill that critical information gap.

Pan African News Agency

Egypt battles to save its endangered tortoise

11mins. 9secs.

A tortoise laboriously pulls itself up to a thorny shrub in the arid desert, slowly plucking at the plant's stems in an attempt to suck out any moisture. The barren terrain, dotted with shriveled desert shrubs, offers thin pickings for the Egyptian Tortoise, which faces extinction in the wild. People are collecting and trading them as pets. Overgrazing and the expansion of agriculture and tourism threaten their existence and their natural habitat in the coastal deserts of Egypt, Eastern Libya and Israel's western Negev is being destroyed. "Their numbers have declined severely in the last 30 years," says Sherif Baha el-Din, scientific adviser at the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency. He said a thorough survey in Egypt in 1994 had failed to locate any wild tortoises at all.

The Egyptian Tortoise, scientifically known as *Testudo kleinmanni*, is one of the world's smallest and most endangered tortoises, with the largest specimen measuring 12.8 cm (five inches). Females are larger than males. It is found in both sandy and fairly rocky habitats and its light brown color blends in with the local soil color. In 1996, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature placed the Egyptian Tortoise on a list of threatened animals. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) bans international trade in the species except for scientific purposes. Egyptian law bans the sale, purchase and transporting of the species without permits but implementation is difficult.

In January 1997, police cracked down on illegal traders selling hundreds of tortoises collected from Libya in the Tunki pet market in central Cairo. Baha el-Din, who works in the Environmental Affairs Agency's nature conservation sector, was then approached by authorities with sacks of tortoises, many of which

were sick after being transported with no water or food for weeks. Asked if he could take them to use as the basis of a conservation programme, he accepted. This was the beginning of the Tortoise Care Egypt, a group of international and local organizations and individuals that came together to help conserve the Egyptian Tortoise. With a grant from the Dutch government the tortoises were treated with the help of the Zoological Society of London, but there was still the dilemma of where to find a suitable site to release them into the wild.

“We placed 10 radio-tracked tortoises on an island in the protectorate as a starting point for our re-introduction programme and monitored their behavior,” Baha el-Din said. At the same time, a captive breeding programme was begun for the tortoises. Out of 300 eggs laid, 200 hatched, which makes it the most successful such project for the species. Two more enclosures, each holding up to 50 tortoises, have since been set up, including one in the privately-owned Wadi Food farm on the Cairo-Alexandria desert road and the Sekem Farms, which are involved in organic farming and community development.

For the project to become financially self-supporting, the group came up with the idea of a bedouin craft project where bedouin women would make items like purses, bags and pillow cases with tortoise designs on them and sell them, with some of the proceeds going to help the tortoises. This helped generate interest among the Bedouins in helping to preserve the tortoise’s natural habitat and made them aware of the threat to their surroundings. They also made enough money to pay for the daily upkeep of the tortoises.

“More important habitats for the species need to be designated as protected areas,” Tortoise Care says on its website. “Protected areas are becoming the only natural areas in Egypt where the animals can live without man-made threats and disturbance.”

CNN.com

Small businesses as an engine for growth in Nigeria

11mins. 2secs.

For a casual observer of the international business environment, it would be easy to assume that the lion’s share of sales and profits are generated by large corporations. The reality, however, is quite the contrary. Small businesses, not big corporations, are the true backbone of any economy. To take the United States of America as an example, small businesses generate 50% of private production, 52% of the sales volume and employ over 50% of the private workforce. Global studies on the role of small and medium scale enterprises reveal that they produce twice as many innovations per employee as large firms. In addition, studies conducted in the United States reveal that small businesses played a critical role in leading the nation out of the economic downturn it experienced in the 1980s. According to the Small Business Administration, an institution funded by the U.S. government to support small businesses, between 1980 and 1990, firms with fewer than 20 employees created almost 4.1 billion new jobs while large firms lost over 500,000 jobs during the same period.

How were small businesses able to have such an impact on the American economy? Their growth was spurred by a series of complementary efforts from nonprofit organizations throughout the country, support from the financial sector and strategic activities and policies established by United States Government’s Small Business Administration.

In Nigeria, most small businesses operate in the informal sector which contributes as much as \$20 billion dollars to the entire GDP of Nigeria. Unfortunately, these small businesses have not experienced the same measure of growth and success as U.S. small businesses. This is primarily due to the fact that these businesses do not operate in a supportive business environment. They receive minimal recognition and

support from policy makers. Small business entrepreneurs have little access to financial capital from the formal banking sector and they have limited management and technical skills because they cannot afford to pay market rates for training. They also have limited networks and support and as a result operate far below their potential capacity. In addition, relative to larger business in society, their activities are particularly constrained by the deplorable state of infrastructure.

With the emergence of democracy, Nigeria is experiencing a rapid emergence of private and public sector initiatives focused on assisting small businesses in the country. One example of this trend is the FATE Foundation, one of Nigeria's newest nonprofit organizations. The Foundation is committed to fostering wealth creation by promoting business and entrepreneurial development among Nigerian youth. It aims at equipping Nigerians with the skills, tools, networks and financing to establish successful small businesses. Its vision is to foster the establishment of 1000 new businesses in Nigeria by 2005 and 5000 new businesses by 2015. To do this effectively, FATE combines entrepreneurship training, mentoring and loans support to Nigerians. Indeed, this novel initiative not only serves the purpose of assisting small businesses to succeed, but also serves as a weapon to combat the problems of poverty, unemployment and other social vices. With the emergence of nonprofit organizations similar to the FATE Foundation, increased policy support from Nigeria's local, state and federal governments, and assistance from the private sector, small businesses will be posed to play their rightful role in spurring growth and development in the nation.

To learn more about Entrepreneurship in general and the Fate Foundation in particular, visit their office at Water House, the Lagos State Water Corporation, Ijora Causeway, Ijora, Lagos, Nigeria.

The FATE Foundation, Lagos

UnPushing Industry To Help Avoid Pollution

9mins.7secs.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is now engaging an erstwhile adversary - industry - to counter pollution. A self-defining concept, cleaner production is a double-faceted option that lines corporate coffers with simultaneous environmental gains. This is a radical shift from the norm where environmentally-sound industrial practices have often eaten into the profit margin. Clearly, it is the United Nations making the proposal in this marriage as it seeks to woo industry to embrace cleaner production techniques, in sharp contrast with the command and control approach where the United Nations has only sought to engage governments. The new partnership aims at development co-operation for a win-win situation: enhanced profits through more efficient but environmentally-sound production and environmental gains through minimised pollution.

The first African roundtable on cleaner production (CP) was held at the UNEP headquarters in Gigiri, Kenya from 9th to 11th August. It brought together environmentalists, industrialists, researchers, representatives from non-governmental organisations and policy-makers drawn from 20 countries. Environmental measures must be linked to, and integrated with, development benefits if they are to gain currency. Forging this critical link is the job of the national cleaner production centres (CPCs) - to convince industry of the (long-term) benefits of investing in CP.

The Kenya Cleaner Production Centre (KCPC) is one of 22 CPCs worldwide that are supported by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). KCPC is hosted by the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute. It began operations in July this year and will be officially launched in October. Kenya was the 40th country to sign the International Declaration on Cleaner Production at the opening of the workshop on the 9th of August. "CP is a win-win situation for both industry and environment," says Mrs. Jane Nyakang'o the Director of KCPC. "We have so far worked with about 100 industries and all have registered gains averaging 65% after implementing CP options, mostly in the form of more efficient waste management." But what are the costs involved in switching over to CP?

“Sometimes none at all,” says Mrs. Nyakang’o. “It could be something as minor as tightening valves, sealing gaps, reducing spillages or recycling their own wastes for optimal production. Industrialists would be amazed by calculations that show how much they are losing by not implementing CP.”

Enhanced corporate profits could be the likely carrot that lures industry into cleaner production, but ironically, this might also be its undoing in terms of extending the concept to more corporate clients. Some of the firms that have benefited from implementing CP options are unwilling to have these widely publicised. Sharing the knowledge with industry colleagues is perceived as ‘sleeping with the enemy’ and CP is apparently viewed purely as an additional in-house tool for profit maximisation and not for the wider public good.

CP minimises or totally eliminates pollution at source by preventing it before it happens. It is a preventive rather than curative option as opposed to the usual ‘end-of-pipe’ post-pollution mop-ups, which also have a bigger price tag.

The Nation

Numbers...

How much does good health cost in Africa?

2mins.

A new UN survey on social spending revealed in 1999 that only three countries in Africa were allocating more than 20 percent of their budget funds for use on basic health care, education and nutrition, the goal set by the 1995 Social Summit in Copenhagen.

The survey, conducted jointly by the UNICEF and the UN Development Programme, shows that Namibia spends about 30 percent of its national budget on basic social services, Mali about 23 percent, and Kenya 20 percent. The rest of Africa’s poorer nations, including Cameroon (8 percent), Cote d’Ivoire (9 percent), Tanzania (10 percent), and Benin (18 percent) spend less than 20 percent.

Pan African News Agency

Counting the cost of floods in Mozambique

4mins.

The recent report by The UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) in Mozambique paints a bleak picture of destruction caused by the floods in the northern province of the country. In Gaza, the most affected province, the report said 480 people died and 252,025 were displaced out of the 604,200 people whose homes were flooded. The irrigation scheme in Chokwe, said the report, was drowned while 200,000 hectares of crops were lost. The INGC also said nine bridges were put out of action in the province and 1,603 km of roads were destroyed. “About 254 rural water sources and 30 dip tanks for livestock were damaged, while 742 shops and 58 hotels or restaurants destroyed or damaged,” added the report. Health and educational institutions, according to the INGC, also suffered with 245 schools damaged, affecting 74,830 pupils and 1,031 teachers. Two boarding schools with 958 pupils were destroyed and 46 literacy centres serving 2,786 students also suffered damage. Health institutions, among them one hospital, 8 health centres and 11 health posts were also destroyed, added the report.

Quoting Mozambique’s Minister of Public Works and Housing, Roberto White, the report said the floods have cost Mozambique US \$45 million in lost exports and over US \$245 million in lost production, while damage to property in the public and private sectors amounted to more than US \$270 million.

Integrated Regional Information Network

Noted...

African Olympic athletes Support roll back malaria

3mins. 9secs.

Tanzanian Olympic team captains Restituta Joseph and Fokasi Wilbroad Fullah are the first athletes to sign-up to an Africa-wide campaign to raise awareness about malaria, according to the World Health

Organisation. African Olympic athletes are being encouraged to pledge their support for the global Roll Back Malaria or RBM movement in a campaign that highlights how best to treat and prevent the disease that kills more than one million people a year, mainly in Africa.

In addition to the Tanzanian athletes, almost the entire Ugandan team, has also agreed to sign up to RBM and lend its voice to the initiative. The latest RBM sports ambassadors are currently in the final stages of training for the Sydney Olympics that start September 15. All Olympic committees throughout Africa have been approached to be involved in the campaign.

Acting RBM project manager Awash Teklehaimanot said the Olympics present the opportunity for one of the year's biggest global media audiences. National heroes and heroines are created and the power of their opinions should not be underestimated. Encouraging words from famous athletes have the power to convince hundreds of thousands of the benefits of mosquito nets and prompt treatment for malaria illness," he said.

Pan African News Agency

War against AIDS gets boost in Nigeria

2mins.

The fight against the HIV/AIDS scourge has received a further boost, as a United Kingdom based non governmental organisation Action/AID Tuesday announced a 7 million pounds package for Nigeria. The amount is to be drawn out of the 29 million pounds earmarked for Africa by the organisation.

Announcing the package in Abuja, the organisation's country director for Nigeria, Mr. Charles Abani said ACTION/AID selected Nigeria for its pilot projects due to Nigeria's population and its many un addressed problems. He said: "with one in every five Africans being Nigerian, it goes without saying that there are needs within Nigeria that need to be addressed."

Post Express

Dateline...

Canada to host seminar on Cleaner Production

1min.

The first African Roundtable on Cleaner Production which was held in Kenya in August is an off shoot of Agenda 21 (Chapter 4) from the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the African Ministerial Conference on the environment (AMCEN) held in Abuja in April 2000. It is a forerunner to UNEP's 6th High-Level Seminar on Cleaner Production (CP6) to be held in Montreal, Canada in October 2000. The goal is to change consumer and production patterns.

Children's Section

The Clever Hare against the Elephant and the Hippopotamus

9mins. 5secs.

Once upon a time, there lived very close to Izum, the Hare, Lalap, the Elephant and Nneg, the Hippopotamus. Izum, the Hare was very impressed by the strength and size of Lalap, the Elephant, who lived on land and was the king of all the animals on land because of his strength, Nneg, the Hippopotamus lived in the water and was equally a very big and strong animal.

Izum, the Hare, wondered which of the two was stronger. He decided to find out. He went to Lalap, the Elephant, and told him that he was a good-for-nothing animal boasting that, 'If you and I have a tug-of-war contest, I will defeat you.' Lalap, the Elephant, roared into laughter. He said, 'I cannot imagine a tiny animal like you, Izum, challenging me to a tug-of-war match.'

Izum twisted that he was capable of doing so and eventually Lalap, the Elephant, agreed to give Izum a chance. Izum brought out a long piece of rope, gave one end to Lalap, the Elephant to hold. He told him

he would shout to him when to start pulling. Izum, the Hare walked away with the other end of the rope. He walked to the stream where Nneg, the Hippopotamus lived.

He challenged the Hippopotamus to a tug-of-war contest as he did to the Elephant. The Hippopotamus looked at him and said,

‘What an insult! Such a small animal as you, Izum, to challenge me to a contest.’

Izum, the Hare confidently told him that he was sure to win. Nneg, the Hippopotamus after a while accepted the challenge. Izum, the Hare, gave him the other end of the rope and told him that he would shout to signal the beginning of the contest. He went to a safe distance and shouted to signal the start of the contest. They both started pulling, hoping that a little pull would beg Izum flying through the air. They pulled and pulled but they could not move. Each of them pulled with every strength he had, but nothing happened. The Elephant supposedly decided to find out if it was truly Izum, the Hare, that was pulling him. He carefully tied the rope around a huge tree. The he quietly moved towards the direction of the other end of the rope. When he got near the stream, he saw Nneg, the Hippopotamus pulling the other end of the rope instead of Izum, the Hare. Lalap, the Elephant exclaimed.

‘I knew it wasn’t Izum that was pulling me. Izum couldn’t possibly have that strength.’

The Hippopotamus looked up and saw Lalap, the Elephant by the riverside. He suddenly realized he had been tricked. He replied that he too did not believe it was Izum who was pulling him to a standstill in a tug-of-war. The two animals made peace with each other and both said that they would punish Izum, the Hare, for tricking them, but Izum, the Hare ran away.

Tarok Folk tales

Parting shots

Celebrate the wisdom of the African experience with these unforgettable proverbs

On Character

An antelope does not wear the shoes of an elephant
Ghana

A child that is encouraged grows up with confidence
Uganda

On Unity

Unity among the cattle makes the lion lie down hungry
Nigeria

One finger alone cannot carry a load
Sierra Leone

On Time

A ripe fruit will not hang forever on a tree branch
Cote d’ivoire

A son is today what his father was yesterday
Liberia

African Proverbs/More African Proverbs
