



# UN Newsletter

Published by the United Nations System in Kenya

June 2011

## New media frontiers reshaping the media landscape: commemorating the 20th anniversary of the World Press Freedom Day

The media has for the last century played a key role in spurring development especially in regard to facilitating public debate and access to information. Undoubtedly, the media continues to play a vital role in advocating for good governance, accountability and national cohesion. However since the road to a free media has not been without challenges, twenty years ago, the World Press Freedom



Journalists, Academics, UN and Government officials listens to one of the presentators during the World Press Freedom Day © UNESCO 2011

### What's Inside:

New media frontiers reshaping the media landscape: commemorating the 20th anniversary of the World Press Freedom Day

UN Women pushes for the implementation of gender equality and equity principles in the new constitution

IYV+10: Volunteering to improve livelihoods in the line of fire

UN Youth Champion experiences the plight of young people in Kenya

KENYA holds first national consultation on migration health

Monitoring cross-border timber trade

Day was established by the United Nations and dedicated to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom and to honoring journalists who have lost their lives in pursuit of their profession.

UNESCO, in partnership with UNDP Kenya and in close collaboration with the United Nations Communications Group, the Kenya Media Owners Association, the Kenya Editors Guild, the Media Council of Kenya and African Woman and Child Feature Service, as

well as other media stakeholders in the region, organized a two days regional conference on 3 and 4 May 2011. This was to mark this year's World Press Freedom Day and the twentieth anniversary since the Windhoek Declaration for the promotion of free and pluralistic media in 1991.

Media practitioners, UN and Government representatives from East Africa and South Eastern Africa gathered in Nairobi to deliberate on the media milestones. *This year's*

### Upcoming Events

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| June 5th, 2011  | - World Environment Day                              |
| June 20th, 2011 | - World Refugees Day                                 |
| July 6th, 2011  | - UN Women Launch                                    |
| July 11th, 2011 | - Millenium Development Goals Progress Report Launch |
|                 | - World Population Day                               |

theme, *21st Century Media: New Frontiers, New Barriers*, focused on the potential of the internet and digital platforms as the new alternative media, as well as more established forms of journalism in prompting social change and contributing towards freedom of expression and democratic governance.

The focus of the conference was on the role the media industry has played in the defense of freedom of expression, protection of journalists and in media development in the Eastern Africa region. It was also to assess how far achievements have been made since the Windhoek Declaration and trends in the digital age. “New frontiers have enriched news and information resources and reshaped what has traditionally been the realm of print, broadcasters and news agencies”, said the Kenyan Minister for Information in his statement presented by the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Bitange.

The Acting UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator at the time, Ms. Maya Harper, acknowledged the great paradox within the media. “We enjoy unprecedented opportunities for expression, thanks to new technologies and new media. More and more people are able to share information and exchange views within and across

national borders. This is a blessing for creativity, for healthy societies, for including everyone in new forms of dialogue”, she stated. However, Ms. Harper emphasized that the media revolution is triggering new debates about freedom of expression, the nature of regulation, and the balance between expression and responsibility. “We must not shy away from exploring all angles of these questions. We must all rise to the occasion and accept the responsibility of change”, she reiterated.

In a joint message by UN Secretary-General, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and UNESCO Director General, the United Nations emphasized its dedication to ensuring that the internet becomes a truly global public resource, to which all have access and where all voices are heard. This underlines the importance of quality content and calls for action to defend the integrity and safety of online reporters. The message emphasized that all principles of freedom of expression should be brought to the on-line world.

The regional conference called for laws that will mitigate the many risks that come with free flow of information from the internet. Experts, media scholars and editors also underscored the need to educate the public about online opportunities and risks.

Concurring that there are dangers in the use of new media, the experts advised that the risks can be mitigated if governments progressively facilitate regulatory schemes that allow universal access and protect rights to privacy and protection of personal data.

The conference participants agreed on a Nairobi Declaration with seven key recommendations that would boost the quest for media convergence and enhance freedom of the press. One of the key recommendations is that “progressive governments should not invest in surveillance, blocking and filtering technologies, for it is most likely to be a futile process. Such available resources could be invested towards universal access and reduction of connection costs.”

The conference participants also strongly condemned the continuing killing, jailing and harassment of journalists in the region and urged all governments to take action to safeguard press freedom and guarantee the safety and security of media practitioners.

In conclusion, the participants noted that new forms of media such as the internet and social sites like Facebook and Myspace have changed the media landscape in the region and triggered new debates on journalism practice and professional reporting.

## UN Women pushes for the implementation of gender equality and equity principles in the new constitution



Prime Minister Raila Odinga addressing the roundtable meeting on gender issues  
© UN WOMEN 2011

In order to stir discussions on the path towards implementation of the gender equality and equity principles enshrined in the new constitution, UN Women organized a round table meeting with Kenya’s Prime Minister, senior Government officials, development partners and gender experts on 24 May 2011 in Nairobi.

Speaking when he launched the Prime Minister’s roundtable meeting on gender affairs, Honourable Raila Odinga announced that beginning the next financial year the Government would supply all girls in schools with sanitary towels. He noted that it was disturbing that many girls missed school

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

for a number of days every month due to lack of sanitary towels and directed the Ministry of Finance to factor it in the budget that takes effect in July 2011.

The Prime Minister called on women in positions of responsibility to be role models and empower other women to enable them benefit from provisions of the new constitution.

Mr. Odinga said that the Government would continue to implement policies that would mainstream gender in all development processes and uplift women from positions of disadvantage.

“It is unfortunate that women represent the face of poverty in our

country yet they are the hardest working people”, he stated.

The Prime Minister explained that the round tables enabled Government to address bureaucracy and expressed confidence that through the forum, implementation of the programmes and projects would be done expeditiously.

Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo asked for the recalling of three bills which had been withdrawn from parliament to allow for further consultation and ratification by the Attorney General in light of the meeting’s deliberations. These include the Marriage, Family Protection and the

Matrimonial Property bills.

The UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Aeneas Chuma stressed the need for faster progress in the implementation of the constitution with regards to women empowerment. He called for capacity building for women to ensure their access to funds ahead of the 2012 general elections.

The Norwegian Ambassador to Kenya Mr. Ludving Magnus called for the inclusion of women in decision-making noting how under represented they were.

## IYV+10: Volunteering to improve livelihoods in the line of fire



*UNV Manderla Project Field Coordinator Hussein Alio displaying onions harvested from the Border Point One farm © UNV 2011*

With 2011 being the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10), the role that volunteers are playing in development is receiving increased focus. Often working under hard conditions, UN Volunteers and others are giving their best under strenuous circumstances to improve the livelihoods of people, and Hussein Mohammed Alio is a prime

example of this dedication.

Hussein has been a UNV since 2009, specializing in peace-building and conflict resolution in Northern Kenya’s border town of Mandera. The town borders both war-torn Somalia and Ethiopia, and has in recent days witnessed spill-over fighting between Al-Shabaab militants and the Transitional Government Forces of Somalia and Ethiopia. Yet this has not

deterred Hussein, as he seeks to play a role in bettering the livelihoods of the youth of Mandera.

With fragile livelihood opportunities mainly due to weather vagaries, nomadic pastoralism seems to be the only occupation known to the pastoralists and more specifically the youth. “It doesn’t help that Mandera County borders the politically fragile Somalia and Ethiopia, sharing a long porous border, making it a haven of small arms and light weapons traffickers”, bemoans Hussein. “As such, the easy availability of arms in this part of the country makes criminal activities attractive to the largely unemployed youths, including hundreds who have dropped from pastoralism either due to droughts or livestock raids.”

With this in mind, the Arid Lands Resource Management Project engaged the youth in discussing possible alternative livelihood opportunities, and Hussein joined the project as a UNV field coordinator for Mandera County, one of six in the region. The results have been promising:

One of the groups, Youths of Good Organization, was given a grant of 66,000 Ksh so as to enable the group equip and operate a barber shop. The effort has paid off and the group is making an average daily income of between 650 to 1,250 Ksh. Another

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

group, Border Point One, a water melon farmers group, was assisted by the project to expand its farming enterprise. The group was supported with an irrigation pump set to irrigate its farms.

“The irrigation pump set we were given by the Arid lands project and UNDP has changed our income status because the crops we have grown here like onions, sukuma wiki (kale) and watermelons helped us generate cash”, said Mr Issack, the group leader. “This

season we harvested about 600 water melons, about 4, 500kgs of onions, 1tonne of sukuma wiki and 11tonnes of tomatoes all with an estimated total sales of 280,000 Ksh”, he added.

Hussein has been impressed by what the groups have been able to do in such a short time and is excited about having taken the opportunity to volunteer: “I come from the region myself, and I’ve always wanted to be able to give something back to see the young people

do better for themselves...I’m so happy with the progress they’re making, and this shows that there’s hope. I’m glad I chose to be a UNV!”

Hussein is hoping that these projects will be the beginning of a shift of focus in the community in Mandera, as they embrace alternative livelihood options like marginal dry land farming to supplement their reliance on pastoralism.

## UN Youth Champion experiences the plight of young people in Kenya



*UN Youth Champion Monique Coleman (center) with students from Kakuma secondary school during her visit to Kenya. © UNIC 2011*

The UN Youth Champion and American Actress of the movie, High School Musical, Monique Coleman was recently in Nairobi to engage with young people in the country and promote the International Year of Youth (IYY). The Year was launched on 12 August 2010 and will end on 11 August 2011 under the theme Dialogue and Mutual Understanding.

Ms Coleman arrived in Kenya on 1 May 2011 and had meetings with the Minister of Education, Professor

Sam Ongeru and Assistant Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Wavinya Ndeti, who both highlighted the Government’s initiatives to include the young people in the development of the country.

“We know the potential of the youth and encourage them to excel in everything they do, whether academic or otherwise.....After all they are the majority and will take over from us and therefore need to be equipped to deal with challenges facing the country”, Professor

Ongeru said.

On her part, Ms Coleman expressed her passion and enthusiasm to work with as many youths in the world as she can and experience first hand the most pressing issues facing today’s youth.

“I believe that the youth aren’t just our future, they are the present, and with 85% of youth currently residing in the developing world, it is our global responsibility to access the untapped potential....I think ultimately youth all over the world have the same goal and intention, which is to find purpose in their lives,” she underlined.

The UN Youth Champion had an opportunity to visit UNON and meet with the Acting Director General, Achim Steiner. She then planted a tree in the complex at the nature trail.

In a programme organized by the Kenya Model UN, Ms. Coleman had an interactive discussion with youth from local universities and NGOs who presented both the challenges they face and solutions to the challenges. Later on the Youth Champion joined in a dance performed by a local artist.

On 5 May 2011, Ms Coleman traveled to Kakuma Refugee camp where she visited several institutions including Mogadisho Primary and Kakuma Secondary Schools,

as well as Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre, where she had lively discussions with the youth on various issues affecting them. Ms Coleman noted that the youth in the region lacked the capacity to realize their abilities due to scarcity of necessary facilities and policies that confined them to the camp.

“Take the talent of the youth and sell it outside these walls, the ability to contribute to society will not only

empower them but also give them a sense of responsibility”, she said.

The UN Youth Champion traveled to Nagis School in Lodwar where she was welcomed with songs and dance. She engaged with the students on their life experiences and aspirations before heading out to a sanitation project in Lodwar town where she met a group of women involved in making re-usable sanitary towels. She inspired the youth by narrating

her life story, amidst tears, telling of the many hurdles she had to go through before getting where she is now.

Monique Coleman was appointed the first ever Youth Champion by the UN on November 16 2010 to raise awareness about the challenges facing young people. Her programme in Kenya was organized by UNIC, in collaboration with UNHCR and UNICEF.

## KENYA holds first national consultation on migration health

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Health Organization (WHO), and partners, hosted a National Consultation on Migration Health to reach a common consensus on a way forward for securing quality and equitable health services for migrants and mobile populations in Kenya.

Migrants and mobile populations face many obstacles in accessing essential health care due to a number of factors, which include irregular immigration status, language barriers, a lack of migrant-inclusive health policies, and geographical inaccessibility of services. Such disparities are impacting upon the well-being of migrants and host communities, and undermine the realization of Kenya’s health goals, such as preventing HIV and containing tuberculosis.

“I want to urge all of you to think of migrants and mobile populations as people who deserve to live healthy lives among us. We must welcome and accommodate them in our laws, policies, and health care systems. We are a country that runs ahead of others, and it is our duty to show strong leadership in the area of migration health”, states Honorable Beth Mugo, Minister of Public Health and Sanitation.

Ashraf El Nour, the Regional Representative for IOM added: “With strong commitment, accountability and coordination from the Kenyan



*The National Consultation on Migration Health was attended by various ministries, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, migrant representatives and embassies. Dr James Gesami, Assistant Minister for Public Health and Sanitation, was the Guest of Honour (front row, centre right) © IOM 2011*

Government and partners this consultation will act as a concrete stepping stone for ensuring we make a real impact on securing quality health care for all those who reside within Kenya.”

The National Consultation on Migration Health, held in Mombasa from 4-6 May 2011, also served as a platform to operationalize the World Health Assembly Resolution 61.17 Health of Migrants, a resolution that calls upon Member States to ensure equitable access to health services.

Speaking at the consultation, Dr. Abdoulie Jack, the WHO Country Representative, called for multi-sectoral collaboration in addressing migration health issues. “The health of migrants

is by no means just the business of the health sector, or an agency like the World Health Organization, indeed, the management of migration health requires close cooperation and collaboration among sectors, and related institutions involved in the migration process”, he stated.

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, and partners, will continue to push for recommendations reached at the national consultation, including the mainstreaming of migration health in all legislation, policies, programmes and strategies, supporting the development of a national forum for coordinating migration health, and strengthening partnerships for developing and implementing a national plan of action.

## Monitoring cross-border timber trade



*The EAWS Director, Mr. Hunter Nigel signing the agreement. © FAO 2011*

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)-Kenya recently held a signing ceremony for two projects funded by the European Union (EU) under the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) programmes. The

FLEGT facility targets programmes in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific islands.

The ceremony was presided over by the Assistant FAO Representative in Kenya, Dr. Augusta Abate and was attended by the EU representative for the Kenya office, Mr. Thomas Yatich,

Senior Deputy Director of the Kenya Forest Service, Mr. Emilio Mugo and other dignitaries including the East African Wildlife Society (EAWS) and the Help Self Help Centre.

Meanwhile, another FAO-funded workshop was held focusing on strengthening the Small Scale Forest Producers Association in Kenya. Members from the Swedish Forest Owners Association and Mr. Fred Kafereo from FAO Rome were among the distinguished guests.

During the workshop the EAWS received 122,938 US dollars to help focus on monitoring cross border trade on timber and timber products between Kenya and Tanzania for one year. Recent open border policies in the region, have led to increased vulnerability of forests to illegal trade within East Africa. Thus it is important that mechanisms are put in place to control trade, enforce forest laws and reduce pressure on forest resources.

The Help Self Help Centre received 66,000 US dollars and will target capacity building for community forest associations working within the Mt Kenya forest.

\*\*\*\*\*

*This Newsletter is compiled by the UN Communications Group in Kenya and edited by the United Nations Information Centre, Nairobi.*

*For more information contact: UNCG Chair, P. O. Box 30552-00100 Nairobi, Kenya.  
Tel: 020-7621102, E-mail: [nairobi.unic@unon.org](mailto:nairobi.unic@unon.org)*