



Kenya launches Pneumococcal vaccine

Hundreds of infants in Kenya received their first shots against pneumococcal disease on 14 February 2011, at a special event to celebrate the global roll out of vaccines targeting the world's biggest child killer –pneumonia.

The ceremony held at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, was presided over by the President of Kenya, His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki.

Kenya is the first African country to roll out the ten valent Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV 10), which will save thousands of children in the



A nurse administering PCV 10 to a child during the launch © WHO,2011

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country.

In his speech, the President thanked all partners who had made the introduction, launch and roll out of the vaccine possible in the country, and expressed his Government's commitment in ensuring the sustainability of the vaccine. He urged all parents to ensure that their children under one year received the pneumococcal vaccine in addition to all the other vaccines, as per the country's immunization schedule.

"Today's introduction of the pneumococcal vaccine in Kenya is an historic step towards improved health for children in Kenya and in other developing countries," said Kenya's Minister for Public Health and Sanitation, Hon. Beth Mugo.

In her speech on behalf of the UN Secretary-General, the WHO Assistant Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, congratulated the country for introducing this life saving vaccine, and thanked the President for his leadership in working to achieve

the Millennium Development Goal 4 (MDG4). "Your presence this morning, Your Excellency, is a clear indication of the inspirational leadership you have provided to the country by taking this bold step towards the attainment of the MDG4 to reduce child mortality".

Dr. Moeti also appealed to the President to advocate for the introduction of new vaccines such as the pneumococcal conjugate and rotavirus vaccines among other Heads of State in the African Region, in order to accelerate the attainment of the MDG 4.

Others present at the launch were WHO's Country Representative, Dr. Abdoulie Jack and other officers from the WHO Country Office.

Preceding the launch were advocacy events carried out for public awareness and media sensitization. These included a media breakfast meeting, a press briefing and radio and TV spots announcing the introduction of the vaccine in the country.

UNEP Executive Director unveils a Green Campus Architectural Model



UNEP's Executive Director Mr. Achim Steiner (right) with the winners of the Green Campus model competition. From left, Cape Town based - Philip Young from WSP; Peter Stokes from DHK Architect (Pty) and John Adams of Land Use Consultants of the UK. © UNEP, 2011 (Photo: Josephat Kariuki)

The UNEP Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner has announced the winner of an Architectural Design Competition for a scheme of a model for a Green Campus. The ceremony for the award was held at the Louis Leakey Auditorium at the Nairobi National Museum on 16 February 2011.

The Green Campus, an ambitious initiative of Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Wangari Maathai and the University of Nairobi (UoN), will be built on a 50-acre piece of land at the University of Nairobi's College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, Kabete Campus. It will also host the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace

and Environmental Studies (WMI).

The WMI campus is meant to be a functional and inspirational hub of activities related to natural resource management and education for sustainable development, and is particularly appealing in its aesthetics and environmental considerations. Only a small proportion of the land is built-up. The bulk of it is left green with woody areas and wetlands.

In comparison to the recently opened UNEP Green building- the New Office Facility at UN's Gigiri Campus, the WMI Green Campus is expected to meet stringent carbon foot print criteria by achieving close to 100% carbon

neutrality. Although this might sound ambitious, the designers are convinced it could generate extra power into the grid.

Beglin Woods, K&M Archplans Limited, Pharos Architects, all based in Nairobi; and DHK Architects (Pty), based in Cape Town, South Africa were among the architects short listed to win this prestigious award. DHK Architects (Pty) produced the winning design of the Green Campus. All entries by finalists were reviewed anonymously by a panel of internationally experienced jurors, including UN-HABITAT. The winners received a cash award of Ksh. 750,000.

While receiving the cheque, Mr. Peter Stokes said that he was overwhelmed to have won the opportunity to design the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies. He commended his partners in the consortium, Land Use Consultants of the UK and WSP Group, a founding member of the Green Building Council of South Africa.

This design competition was endorsed and sanctioned by the Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK) and the Board of Registration of Architects of Quantity Surveyors (BORAQS), who also played an active role in the final adjudication.

Speaking through a pre-recorded video message, Professor Maathai thanked and congratulated the architects who entered the competition. She also thanked everyone for their devotion to contributing towards the creation of a better society in the African region, as well as being an inspiration to the world.

UNHCR hands over water purifiers and laptops to the host community in Turkana

On 16 February 2011, UNHCR, in partnership with Energias de Portugal (EDP), handed over twenty water purifiers to Tarach Women's Group and twenty laptops to Our Lady Girls Secondary School in Kakuma town, in Turkana West district.

The solar water purifiers will reduce water-borne diseases by providing clean drinking water especially for children. The beneficiaries of the water purifiers are from communities where there is no access to safe portable water and prone to chronic water-borne diseases in Kakuma division.

The laptops will upgrade the computer laboratory while reducing power usage by replacing the existing desktops. They are five times energy efficient, and will support close to 470 girls admitted at the school by utilising a 3-kilowatt solar system that has been installed and electrical connections made to the computer lab and adjacent classroom.

During the hand over ceremony conducted at Our Lady Girls School in Kakuma, the Senior Protection Officer, Jeff Savage applauded the host community for sharing their limited resources with refugees for the last 20 years since 1992. "The support to the host community is part of ensuring protection for refugees by giving back to the community in appreciation for its hospitality", said Mr. Savage.

Also present at the ceremony were District Officer 2 in-charge of Kakuma division, Mr. Samuel Osodo, the area's Education Officer, the Programme Coordinator for the National Council of Churches of Kenya that works with



Tarach Women's Group from Kakuma town admire one of the 'solar water purifiers' donated by UNHCR/EDP © UNHCR, 2011 (Photo: Emmanuel Nyabera)

vulnerable women in the community, local leaders, host community members and students.

Ms. Elizabeth Lowoi, a beneficiary of the purifiers summed it up, "we are lucky to have water purifiers. We used to drink unsafe water from the seasonal river but now we will protect our families from water-borne diseases".

One of the local leaders, Mr. Patrick Losike thanked UNHCR for providing support in education and livelihood programmes, which, he reiterated, was due to the host community support to the refugee programme. He observed, "this is a tangible project that is more valuable than relief food".

Energias de Portugal, a renewable energy company from Portugal, in

partnership with UNHCR, has also installed 10 street lights in Kakuma town to improve lighting and security. Solar power for computers and lighting has been provided for the Girls secondary school, Kakuma mission hospital and Government of Kenya offices. In addition, students in two primary schools within Kakuma town have benefited from solar lanterns which assist them to study at night. Other benefits include management of *prosopis juliflora* (mathenge) that can now be harvested by the community to supply firewood to the refugees and the provision of shallow wells for watering small-scale vegetable gardens for 100 families in Kakuma division, Turkana West district.

US Environment Protection Agency Administrator visits UN-HABITAT projects



US Administrator Lisa P Jackson and UN-HABITAT Executive Director Joan Clos in Kibera © UN-Habitat, 2011

Lisa P. Jackson, the Administrator for the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Joan Clos, the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT visited the UN agency's projects in Kibera, Nairobi where they met members of the local community.

In her recent visit, Administrator

Lisa P. Jackson met with Joan Clos at UN-HABITAT's administrative office in Soweto-East, Nairobi's largest slum. After a short briefing from UN-HABITAT staff and members of the community, Administrator Jackson visited the water, sanitation and youth projects in the area.

UN-HABITAT has been working

closely with the Government of Kenya to provide sanitation facilities, shower blocks and drainage systems in Soweto-East which is home to approximately 70,000 residents.

In addition, a stretch of road has been built with proper lighting and drainage, creating a safe environment for the community to meet and trade and for children to play. The road also allows access for emergency services into the densely populated area. When completed, the road will reach 1.2km into the settlement with residents already petitioning for an expansion.

Administrator Jackson was very excited to meet with the community members who are involved in the project and emphasised the importance the road would play. "Roads can help create a safe environment which not only reduces crime but allows communities to meet, ultimately allowing good governance to take place", she said.

Mr. Clos said, "the most important part of this project has been involving the community to enable them to solve their own problems. The facilities are now managed by the community which decides on the pricing and how to run the facilities."

WFP donates equipment worth US\$409,000 to Government to fight climate change in Kenya

The World Food Programme (WFP) on 17 February 2011 donated seventeen four-wheel-drive vehicles, computers and other equipment to the Ministry of State for Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands to enhance the government's capacity to assist communities developing

projects to improve their resilience against the impact of frequent and prolonged droughts.

The vehicles and equipment valued at US\$ 409,000 (Ksh. 33 million) will be distributed among 15 arid and semi-arid districts namely: Turkana, Mandera, Moyale, Isiolo, Garissa, Tharaka, Baringo, Tana

River, Malindi, Kilifi, Kwale, Taita Taveta, Makeni, Mwingi and Kitui Counties.

These are areas where WFP, in partnership with the Government of Kenya, is implementing Food for Assets (FFA) projects focusing on rainwater harvesting. The projects include water pans, water conserving

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bunds, soil and water conservation and small-scale irrigation. These are helping communities improve their food security and resilience to climate change.

“WFP is committed to working with the Government, communities and partners to mitigate the effects of climate change in areas that are most vulnerable,” said Burkard Oberle, WFP Kenya Country Director, as he handed over the donation to the Government at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre.

Mr. Oberle added that WFP is gradually scaling down short term relief interventions in favour of recovery activities such as FFA, which, together with the development of appropriate skills, enable communities to improve their resilience and encourages them to invest in their future.

Mr. Oberle called on communities to take ownership of the FFA projects and to replicate them as much as possible to ensure that the communities are prepared for the



Assistant Minister Hussein Sasura, flanked by WFP Country Director Burkard Oberle, flags off the vehicles © WFP, 2011

future.

The Ministry of State for Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands coordinates development in arid- and semi-arid

districts. Its partnership with WFP in FFA projects will help build resilience among the 430,000 people in 15 districts who benefit from FFA.

Goodwill Ambassador inspires journalists at a UNDP meeting

Edward Norton - Oscar-nominated actor of “American History X” and “Primal Fear” fame - and the UN Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity spoke to journalists on the importance of covering environmental issues, at a UNDP press event.

This media breakfast meeting was spearheaded by UNDP and the Ministry of Environment under the Africa Adaptation Programme. This is a new project geared at the building of capacities to handle climate change risks and opportunities through a national approach to adaptation.

Urging journalists to increase reportage on matters related to the environment, Norton asserted “when

people look back on this era that we’re living in... they will not assess many of the things that we consider political hot buttons of the day. They will assess this era based on how we responded to this particular crisis,” referring to climate change and biodiversity loss.

“Whether you are an actor, or a politician, doctor or lawyer -- I think people from all walks of life are going to need to engage in these issues, because these are issues that transcend national boundaries, transcend ways of life,” he emphasized.

As opposed to focusing on dated methods of conservation such as setting aside preserved areas of land, Norton said that bodies tasked with tackling

environmental challenges should focus on addressing human needs, which he asserted was “the key to long-term preservation.”

“People have recognized that fragmenting the ecosystems or creating protected pockets is not actually authentic to the way ecosystems work,” he said.

In addition to a successful career as an actor and filmmaker, Norton holds years of experience dedicated to conserving biodiversity. He actively garners support for conservation efforts in his capacity as the President of the American Board of the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT). In 2009, he ran in the New York City Marathon, helping to



Edward Norton addresses journalists at the Africa Adaptation Programme Media Breakfast meeting in Nairobi. © UNDP, 2011

raise more than \$1 million for local communities in Kenya.

When asked why he supports this particular Kenyan trust he pointed out that, “the mission of the Trust is to partner with the Maasai to figure out many different ways they can create sustainable economic benefits by managing their land wisely. For example, the development of ecotourism or getting lease payments for setting aside certain zones as conservancies...also, this particular ecosystem in the Chulu Hills is unique in that it acts as a vital water catchment that provides about 40% of Mombasa’s water supply”.

Norton emphasised that the Kenyan media has a responsibility to educate the public on climate change, biodiversity issues and ground breaking community projects like the MWCT in order to inspire, empower and advocate for community support in conservation efforts.

East African Model UN holds its 29th session at UNON

The East African Model United Nations (EAMUN) conference opened at UNON on 8 February 2011 with a total of 1000 delegates from about 64 secondary schools participating.

The UNON Director General Mr. Achim Steiner officially opened the conference, by highlighting the work of the UN amidst many challenges and opportunities. Mr. Steiner reiterated that for the UN to create a better world for all, it needed all the support from everyone, including governments, leaders, celebrities, non-governmental organizations and young people such

as the ones participating in the Model UN.

The Director General elaborated on the challenges faced by the UN in its endeavours to bring together the 192 member states, given their varying ideas, religions and morals. “The UN has to listen, accommodate and tolerate everyone’s views and then come to a mutual agreement when addressing global issues”, he said.

Mr. Steiner noted that the Organization had both successes and failures in its work but the failures were sometimes made to overshadow the achievements.

After the address, the delegates unanimously agreed that Mr. Steiner had “opened their eyes and helped them understand the scale of what the UN is working towards”.

“We are the future of the UN, our country and the world. We need to think about what we stand for, what we believe in and what we want, for not only our generation but for the generations to come”, the young delegates later commented.

During the course of the conference, the young delegates were addressed by various speakers who all reminded them how education was important for

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them to realize their vision of “building leadership for tomorrow” as per their slogan.

As part of their service to the community, the EAMUN delegates presented a cheque to teachers and students of Wairuri Primary School for stationery and any other needs for the rural school.

On Saturday, 12 February 2011, the delegates visited Kereita forest and planted 200 seedlings as part of their contribution to the preservation of the environment.

The EAMUN conference is held annually at UNON and comprises of high school students from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sweden, Tanzania and Uganda. This year marked the 29th anniversary of the EAMUN which came immediately after the Middle School Model UN Conference (MSMUN) held in January 2011.

There are three main Model UN conferences in Kenya, namely, the MSMUN for students aged from 11-14



Wairuri Primary School Displaying their cheque from EAMUN © UNIC,2011

years; the EAMUN for students from 14-19 years; and the Kenya Model UN for university students. Model UNs are an authentic simulation of the UN General Assembly, UN Security

Council or other multilateral bodies, which introduce students into the world of diplomacy and negotiation.

UNESCO Science Report 2010 launched in Kenya

Kenya is one of the three most prolific countries within sub-Saharan Africa in the production of scientific publications. According to the UNESCO Science Report 2010, South Africa takes the lead, representing 46.4% of the sub-continent’s share, followed by Nigeria (11.4%) and Kenya at 6.6%.

The UNESCO Science Report 2010 was launched in Nairobi on 24 February 2011, at a ceremony graced by Ms. Gretchen Kalonji, UNESCO’s Assistant Director General for Natural Sciences and Hon. Professor Hellen Sambili, Kenya’s Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology. The event was also attended by eminent

Kenyan scientists, representatives of scientific institutions and universities as well as senior staff from Government and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Technology in Africa.

In her speech, Ms. Gretchen Kalonji observed, “the centre of gravity of science is moving from developed countries to emerging economies but disparities still exist in access, human resource development and transfer of knowledge in the least developed countries”. She added that there was a need for increased participation in creation of knowledge especially for women.

The UNESCO Science Report was first launched in 1993. Published after

every five years, the Report analyses the status of science around the world, and examines the trends and developments that have shaped scientific research, innovation and higher education. The Report states that the main challenges facing development of science and technology in the region include little public investment in research and development, low enrolment in higher education, brain drain, gaps in legislation to protect intellectual property and the low wages earned by scientists.

In her remarks, Hon. Prof. Hellen Sambili called for higher investment in research and development. “It is widely recognized that a nation’s

ability to solve most developmental challenges of the 21st century, initiate and sustain economic growth depend largely on its capacity and capabilities in science, technology and innovation,” she advised.

Professor Sambili noted that Kenya’s expenditure on research and development, like in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, was still way below the minimum requirement of 1% of the Gross Development Product. Currently, the country’s expenditure on research and development is estimated to be about 0.3%.

This is the first time the Report was being launched in Kenya. It was also launched in several cities around the world between November 2010 (World Science Day) and the first months of 2011. The event was organized by UNESCO Nairobi Office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, and the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST).



Prof. Gretchen Kalonji, Assistant Director General, Natural Sciences presenting a copy of the UNESCO Science Report 2010 to Hon. Prof. Hellen Sambili, Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology (left). Looking on from left: Prof. Abdulrazak Shaukat, Secretary, National Council for Science and Technology, Prof. Harry Kaane, Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and Prof. Joseph Massaquoi, Director, UNESCO Nairobi Office.
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Upcoming Events

Director General (UNIDO) Visit to Kenya - April 03, 2011

Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide - April 07, 2011

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

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