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## Development

### ECONOMY

**“We Should Not Think Africa Is Lost” - IMF Chief** 4mins. 6secs. 8  
*IMF Managing Director, Horst Kohler said Africa can solve its “homemade” problems of corruption and conflict.*

**Cameroon Gets US\$2 billion Debt Relief** 5mins. 10  
*The World Bank Group’s International Development Association (IDA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to support a comprehensive debt reduction package for Cameroon.*

### HEALTH

**African Leaders Must Break The “Wall Of Silence” On AIDS – Kaunda** 2mins. 8secs. 4  
*Former Zambian president calls on Africans to break the silence surrounding the scourge of AIDS to develop lasting solutions.*

### DISASTER

**WFP Calls for More Relief Aid to Drought-Stricken Uganda** 2mins. 5secs. 6  
*While announcing an expansion of its relief operation in drought-stricken Uganda, The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) also urges donors to come forward with the \$7.1 million needed to pay for the effort.*

**“Dirty” diamonds** 3mins. 4secs. 7  
*The UN Security Council, France and Great Britain are making moves to impose an embargo on “illegal exports” of diamonds from Sierra Leone.*

### MEDIA

**Nigeria hosts Africast 2000** 6mins. 22secs. 7  
*The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), of Nigeria recently hosted a continent wide conference for broadcasters tagged, “Africa in World Broadcasting – The Millennium Challenge.”*

### WOMEN AND YOUTH

**Gender Divide Stifles Women Entrepreneurs** 5mins. 9secs. 5  
*Gender divide is again identified as a major deterrent to women entrepreneurs, at the first millennium conference of African entrepreneurs in Ethiopia.*

**UNICEF Signs Child Protection Agreement With Botswana** 3mins. 6  
*Botswana has signed a funding agreement with UNICEF to improve the situation of children in the country.*

## Environment

### URBANISATION

**ECA Chief Decries Urban Problems in Africa** 5mins. 5  
*A senior UN economist has described the problems of urbanisation in Africa as a “time bomb,” that calls for careful and systematic solutions.*

### WILDLIFE

**Disease panic affects SA wildlife export** 6mins. 15secs. 4  
*Spain’s rejection of a shipload of wild animals from South Africa because of foot-and-mouth disease, threatens the country’s highly lucrative wildlife trade.*

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CONSERVATION

**Scientists Take Shortcut to Save an African Medicinal Tree** 8mins. 12secs. 3  
*Kenyan scientists are spearheading efforts to save a tree that remedies prostate disorders and is said to help prevent prostate cancer.*

**Useful Tips on Natural Beauty** 4mins. 8secs. 12  
*Some useful tips on how to make your own beauty products. Although they do not promise "eternal youth", at least they are not made from endangered species and do not need to be tested on animals.*

*Noted...*

WOMEN

**Egyptian wives win travel rights** 2mins. 7secs. 9  
*Egyptian High Court has ruled that an Interior Ministry decree allowing men to prevent their wives from traveling is unconstitutional.*

WATER

**World Water Watch launched** 1min. 8secs. 10  
*A new magazine has been launched to track developing issues in the global water crisis and advocate the sustainable use of this precious resource.*

*Point of View*

**Rich Or Poor, Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall** 6mins. 7secs. 8  
*Joachim Buvembo takes a look at the rains in Uganda and gives a graphic description of its effects on everyday life*

*Numbers...*

HEALTH

**HIV Epidemic Restructuring Africa's Population** 5mins. 7secs. 10  
*The year 2000 began with 24 million Africans infected with the HIV virus. In the absence of a medical miracle, nearly all will die before 2010. A look at the demographic implications of the epidemic in Africa.*

*Children's Section*

**The Living Stones** 7mins. 5secs. 11  
*This Swazi legend takes a look at the tortoise and explains why they hold a special place in the eyes of the Creator*

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**Scientists Take Shortcut to Save an African Medicinal Tree**

**8min. 12secs.**

Kenyan scientists are spearheading efforts to save a tree that remedies prostate disorders and is said to help prevent prostate cancer. Working with their counterparts at the Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI), scientists at the International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) are salvaging what remains of *Prunus africana*, a slow growing and evergreen medicinal tree.

The tree, also known as red stinkwood, grows one meter (3.3 feet) in diameter and between 10 and 24 meters (32.8 to 78.7 feet) high. It is a highland forest tree, and grows in the humid and semi humid highlands and humid midlands of Africa. According to ICRAF, poachers are earning fortunes by stealing the trees' rugged, blackish brown bark for illegal dealers. Liquid extracts from the bark are used in the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia and prostate gland hypertrophy.

Prostate disorders, which usually affect men over the age of 50, often make sufferers more susceptible to prostate cancer. *Prunus africana*'s leaves are used as an inhalant for fever or are drunk as an infusion to improve appetite. Water is added to pounded bark, and the red liquid is used as a remedy for stomach ache. When people first started to collect bark from *Prunus africana*, they did so sustainably. Small pieces or panels of bark were removed and the standing trees could easily regenerate the removed portion. But as larger quantities of bark are sought, sustainable practices are being overlooked or ignored. In Mount Kilum in Cameroon, for example, researchers have observed that 80 percent of mature trees die as a result of poor harvesting techniques. Indiscriminate poachers are either stripping the tree, which eventually leads to its death, or cutting down the tree entirely. The tree is found only in Africa and is being felled at an alarming rate to fuel a European and American market worth US\$220 million a year. The German market alone is worth US\$150 million. The demand for the bark is expected to increase as people in the developed world rely more on natural cures. Scientists are worried that the growing demand could lead to the tree's extinction within 10 years. In fact, The Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) lists *Prunus africana* under Category II, which means a controlled trade in the tree is allowed. Exporting countries must demonstrate that the tree has been obtained sustainably and legally.

The extract or powder from *Prunus africana*'s bark is widely packaged under the name pygeum and is sold in drug stores and health food outlets throughout Europe and North America. The annual harvest of the tree bark is estimated at 3,500 tonnes, with Cameroon the leading producer with an annual harvest of 2,000 tonnes, followed by Madagascar with 600 tonnes.

ICRAF's efforts to salvage the tree are being funded by the Rome based International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development. ICRAF is helping farmers to grow the tree and earn a living through sustainable harvesting of its bark. It is setting up a system by which the bark can be collectively marketed by small farmers to natural remedy producers in Europe and the U.S. under a "green" label. Normally, the tree takes 15 to 20 years to produce seeds, and between 12 and 15 years to produce bark that contains the prostate remedy's active ingredients. In a breakthrough that could be applied to other wild species of endangered trees, scientists have adapted a technology, mainly used for fruit trees, to shorten the time it takes the tree to produce seed to three years. The center hopes that farmers' cultivation of medicinal trees like *Prunus africana* will not only conserve biodiversity and natural resources, but have a positive impact on rural development.

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**African Leaders Must Break The “Wall Of Silence” On AIDS - Kaunda** **2mins. 8secs.**

In Africa there is a “deafening wall of silence on AIDS” that must be “broken,” former Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda told a session of the Africa Forum 2000 at World Bank headquarters. An “unnecessary stigma prevents testing, and discussing AIDS openly in Africa is not acceptable in many places, in fact, it’s taboo.” Mr. Kaunda warned, “If we don’t break this dangerous wall it will destroy Africa.”

The 1986 loss of his son Maguzgo to AIDS at age 30 first brought him into the fight against the disease which has taken the lives of tens of thousands in Zambia and millions in Africa. He became more active three months ago, organizing the Children of Africa Foundation to campaign against AIDS. “Four young people came up to me and said unless something was done about AIDS, Africa’s young people would perish.” The organization is registered in several African nations, Ireland and the United States. Kaunda hopes to use his influence to get African leaders to speak out more often and forcefully on AIDS and is already chalking up his first major victory with the support he won for his campaign at the meeting of SADC in Windhoek, Namibia this past August.

*AllAfrica.com*

**Disease panic affects SA wildlife export** **6mins. 15secs.**

A shipload of wild animals from South Africa has been turned away from a Spanish port because of foot-and-mouth disease, sparking fears the disease could ruin the country’s billion-rand wildlife trade. Spanish veterinary authorities refused to allow the shipment of 26 giraffes and three white rhinos to dock at Valencia port in November, despite guarantees that they were disease-free. Wildlife traders said this week they are worried the decision could influence other countries to reject South African game. “This disease has become very politicised and people in the industry are terribly concerned about the impact,” says veteran game trader Keith Micklejohn. “Already the Mediterranean shipping company that took these animals has said it won’t take another load.”

Foot-and-mouth disease affects cloven-hoofed animals, including wildlife such as buffalo, antelope and giraffe. Despite assurances from the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs’s veterinary services division that the animals were guaranteed disease-free, the Spanish authorities became nervous about the shipment when they learned about the outbreak of foot-and-mouth in early September. While the two countries negotiated over the deal, the animals were waiting in crates on the Durban docks for more than a week and one giraffe had to be euthanased after it dislocated a hip. They finally left for Spain on October 5, but on October 20 the Spanish authorities sent a fax to the exporters refusing to allow the animals to be offloaded. The refusal sparked panic among international conservation groups and diplomats because the animals’ food had already been thrown overboard, in compliance with shipping regulations, and they would not survive protracted negotiations. Last Saturday night the animals were transferred to another ship at Freeport in Malta, and this week - 10 weeks after their journey began - they were on their way back to South Africa.

Jeff Richmond, managing director of the exporters, Global Wildlife Logistics, says the animals were destined for safari parks in Spain and are worth about R3-million. “If the government does not control this disease in KwaZulu-Natal, it will have a serious impact on the industry,” Richmond says. The Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs’ veterinary services division this week downplayed the impact of the Spanish decision, calling it “highly unscientific” and “political”.

KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife Conservation Director Derek Potter says it appears the outbreak in Camperdown has not spread to game, but precautionary measures are being taken. “Fortunately there are no state or provincial parks near Camperdown, but there are a number of private reserves nearby,” says Potter. “It is not even clear yet exactly how the disease is spreading; it is possible it may be airborne.”

*Daily Mail & Guardian*

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### **ECA Chief Decries Urban Problems in Africa**

**5mins.**

A senior UN economist has described the problems of urbanisation in Africa as a “time bomb,” that calls for careful and systematic solutions. Most African cities are affected by a myriad of difficulties ranging from high unemployment, desperate vendors, gaping potholes and dilapidated infrastructures, according to Kingsley Amoako, the Executive Secretary of the Addis Ababa-based UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Opening a regional African Ministerial Conference on the implementation of a Habitat agenda drawn up four years ago, he said that “urban squalor and rural poverty were the painful plight of the African landscape, that calls for sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter.” Amoako noted that only 35 percent of people in Africa live in urban areas at present, but with an annual increase of urbanisation at a rate of 5 percent, Africa is recording the fastest urban growth rate. “About 52 percent of the continent’s population will be living in urban areas by the year 2020”, he said.

“Under current trends of widespread urban poverty and deprivation, contrasted with relative wealth, this represents a sea of social discontent and disorder in the making of a “time bomb,” Amoako observed. He suggested tackling the problems through higher rates of private investment and economic growth, private-public partnership, through the devolution of power to enhance good governance. Local governments in urban centres should also be involved for the transformation of the informal economy of cities into the formal economy and “harnessing” the energies of women. Amoako stated that women constitute the majority of the informal sector, the biggest source of income for most African urban dwellers.

The Executive Director of Habitat, the UN Centre for Human Settlement, Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, said in her keynote address that the conference would look into “increasing urbanisation and feminisation of poverty” in many African countries. “As we embark on the urban millennium, when half of humanity already lives in cities and towns, the task is ever more challenging,” she said.

The Conference will also draw up an African regional position for the Special UN General Assembly session in 2001, for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat agenda.

*Panafrican News*

### **Gender Divide Stifles Women Entrepreneurs**

**5mins. 9secs.**

Gender divide has been again identified as a major deterrent to women entrepreneurs. This was at the first millennium conference of African entrepreneurs in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. The meeting established the African Enterprise Network or AEN, which brings under one roof the East African Enterprise Network, West African Enterprise Network and the Southern African Enterprise Network. AEN’s role will be to act as a continental authority on behalf of the private sector on cross-cutting issues such as intra-African trade, financing, public and private sector dialogue and globalisation.

At the meeting, women entrepreneurs suggested that governments could promulgate laws that encourage women in business and establish public funds to enable them utilise for “business start up.” The women also called for deliberate government efforts to promote the acceptance of women entrepreneurs, access to credit, professional training and networking.

One of the women, Claude Ngendumwe, who owns “Fidodid mini market” in Bujumbura, said the prevailing civil strife in Burundi was not conducive for business. “Women, like men, have been trying hard to make it in business in recent years. But it has been extremely hard for women to make ends meet in their day to day small business of selling food stuff in community stalls,” she said. She suggested that African governments need to introduce mechanisms to enable women engage in business on an equal footing with their male

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counterparts. This could be done by creating incentives such as laws and special funds that favour women, Claudette added.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Rose Mazula, managing director of Zimbabwe Progress Fund Pvt Ltd. "We would like African governments to come up with policies supporting aspiring women entrepreneurs," she said. She complained that women were virtually excluded from male-dominated sectors such as finance, information technology and manufacturing. Rose also went on to comment that in many African countries, women have no access to investment credit, except for micro-business. "Banks ask for stiffer collateral. But women don't own property to have property registered under their name. This is registered under their husbands name or under the names of the couple, but the wife cannot on her own use this property as collateral. The husband can," she explained. "We would like African governments to come up with policies supporting aspiring entrepreneurs," she added. "The OAU and ECA should also move beyond more declarations of support, and should press member states to encourage the private sector, because globalisation requires business dynamism to know and compete in the world market."

*Panafrican News Agency*

### **UNICEF Signs Child Protection Agreement With Botswana**

**3mins.**

Botswana has signed a funding agreement with UNICEF to improve the situation of children in the country. Under the three-year agreement, the focus will be on health, education and the protection of children in the country. On health matters, the money availed under the agreement would focus on HIV/AIDS, especially the prevention of mother to child infection and provision of adolescent health friendly facilities. Others are integrated management of childhood illnesses and capacity building in district teams. In education, the money will be used to provide learning facilities to children in remote areas as well as pregnant students. For child protection support, the target will be the implementation of obligations under the convention on human rights of the child.

Also to be covered is the care of orphans and support of youth programmes. During the signing ceremony, Botswana finance minister Baledzi Gaolathe said that the agreement came at a time when the country is going through a traumatic phase in its development because of the HIV/AIDS scourge. UNICEF representative in Botswana Rosemary Feeth said that the first half of the year was spent on re-focussing the programme to concentrate exclusively on prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS. She added that there is no possibility of meeting programme goals unless a war is waged against the epidemic.

*AllAfrican.com*

### **WFP Urges More Relief Aid to Drought-Stricken Uganda**

**2mins. 5secs.**

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in November announced an expansion of its relief operation in drought-stricken Uganda, and urged donors to come forward with the \$7.1 million needed to pay for the effort. "WFP intervention helped avert famine earlier this year, but the crisis in Karamoja is far from over," said WFP official Burk Oberle, referring to the area where the agency is expanding its operation. "This renewed food aid is absolutely essential to maintain the livelihood of thousands of needy people living in the region," he added.

The six-month operation will provide 12,000 tonnes of emergency food rations to about 190,000 semi-nomadic people living in Karamoja, which has experienced widespread drought-induced crop failure. According to WFP, the Government of Uganda has begun to address chronic problems plaguing Karamoja, such as recurrent food shortages, cattle rustling, ethnic clashes and widespread insecurity.

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Under the expanded WFP operation, the most vulnerable people of the region will receive maize, beans, vegetable oil and blended fortified foods. The effort also includes expanded school feeding and food-for-work programmes.

*United Nations*

### **Nigeria hosts Africast 2000**

**6mins. 22secs.**

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), of Nigeria recently hosted a continentwide conference with the theme, "Africa in World Broadcasting – The Millennium Challenge." The conference dubbed Africast 2000 is the third biennial conference of broadcasters from across the continent. The conference is held every 2 years in Nigeria with the main aim of bringing African broadcasters together to address the immediate and pressing needs of the media on the continent and to help promote Africa in a better light.

Over 250 delegates attended the 3-day conference from 11 African countries, 5 European nations and the United States of America. About 35 exhibitors (both local and international) exhibited their wares including JVC, BBC, Voice of Nigeria, NTA, Channels Television, DBN Television, Worldspace, Communications Trend Ltd., DSTV/Multichoice Nigeria, ITPAN, Canal France International and Guaranty Trust Bank and Communicating for Change

At the opening ceremony, the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, represented by the Minister of Defence, Lt. General Theophilus Danjuma, urged African broadcasters to correct the recurring perception of Africa in the world broadcasting as disease and conflict-ridden, a poor and beggarly continent. He went on to encourage broadcasters to feature more local content in their programming drawing a parallel with the situation in France where over 80% of the programming is locally produced. The President encouraged broadcasters to assume fully their role as the "fourth estate" in the wave of democracy that is sweeping across the continent.

Mohammed Abdou of Egypt encouraged participants to benefit from Egypt's advanced satellite and network technology while Dr Olu Lafe of Copyquick spoke about the latest advances in digital technology and offered advice on how Africa could benefit. Many other papers were papers that looked at the continent within the broadcasting milieu of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many of the 17 papers delivered dealt with the state of broadcasting in Africa, the governance and development of civil society, broadcasting and the mediation of culture, and the advances in broadcast technology. The conference also emphasized broadcast financing which was highlighted by the presence of a major Nigerian commercial bank at the conference.

A communiqué was issued by the NBC at the end of the 3-day conference. Resolutions included such as the need to increase broadcasting capacity to include large populations in rural areas who are excluded from policy formulation and implementation. The conference also resolved that broadcasting should reinforce democracy and good governance, represent the African culture truthfully and focus on women and children issues. The conference also advocated collaboration amongst African countries in the area of programme production and distribution. The importance of plugging into the modern technology such as the third generation digital technology

*CFC*

### **"Dirty" diamonds**

**3mins. 4secs.**

The UN Security Council, France and Great Britain are considering imposing an embargo on "illegal exports" of diamonds from Sierra Leone. France confirms this, having stressed very early on the problem of Sierra Leone should be understood in terms of rival claims for control and exploitation of the country's natural resources, particularly its diamonds.

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Control of the diamond-producing areas is often put forward as the main objective of the Sierra Leonean rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and as one of the causes of the civil war which has ravaged the country for almost 10 years. UK Foreign Secretary Robin Cook appealed to the Security Council for an embargo on diamond imports from Sierra Leone to be set up. An embargo would, however, allow export of diamonds from areas controlled by the legal Sierra Leonean government. Moreover, the European Commission has released urgent supplementary humanitarian aid for Sierra Leone amounting to 12million Euros. After consulting Member States, the Commission set in motion the commitment procedure for this supplementary aid, which will be managed by the European Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and will be aimed at resident populations inside Sierra Leone and at displaced persons. The Commission is to increase its aid to health and food services for the 350,000 or so refugees living in neighbouring countries (Guinea, Liberia). It will also finance specific programmes aimed at women and children affected by the conflict and at the disabled and injured.

*The Courier*

**“We Should Not Think Africa Is Lost” - IMF Chief** **4mins. 6secs.**

In a speech that opened the Africa Forum 2000 in November in Washington DC, IMF Managing Director Horst Kohler said Africa can solve its “homemade” problems of corruption and conflict. But he linked the ability to do so to “faster, stronger and better institutional support” from the world community. To obtain that support, however, African nations must put into place the framework of good governance, fair and accessible judicial systems, a consistent and transparent regulatory framework and, most of all, a commitment to private sector development, Kohler said.

He acknowledged the “downside elements of globalization” and said they must be addressed, but he insisted that unless Africa is integrated into the global community in a considered and sequenced approach, the continent will not be able to achieve sustainable growth. “We should not think Africa is lost,” Kohler said. After visiting six African nations in July, he found many reasons to be hopeful, among them the initiatives of women. Despite formidable challenges he said, women “still worked productively. They tried to solve problems. They didn’t complain. They worked.”

The IMF chief said he is returning to Africa in February with World Bank President James Wolfensohn. The visits, and the increasing attention the sister organizations will be paying to African poverty issues, he said, show that “there is commitment on our side.” Joining Kohler in cutting the ribbon that formally opened the conference was Sue Esserman, the Deputy US Trade Representative, who read a statement by President Bill Clinton. Strengthening the American partnership with Africa has been one of the administration’s top priorities, the statement said.

The Forum was a five-day gathering sponsored by the World Bank Group-IMF Africa Club, an association of African and Africa-interested staff of the international financial organizations. Forum Coordinator Eric Chinje told journalists, dignitaries and conference participants at the opening ceremonies that the event is designed to support African economies by providing multiple platforms for sharing information on critical issues, including trade, procurement, investment and funding.

*allAfrican.com*

## *Point of View*

**Rich Or Poor, Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall** **6mins. 7secs.**

We have a powerful new leveller in Kampala. It is not death, that has been around for some time. It is not the Internet, for it is not widespread enough yet. It is water, dirty brown water, all over the place, thanks to the floods. The rains are here again. They know no status, no dignity. Within a few minutes of a downpour, which can start any time of the day, most low lying areas are flooded.

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This city, built on hills and swampy valleys, can become treacherous at such times. Many nice little houses just fill up with water. What was a pleasant home, the pride of its owner, becomes a half-submerged islet in a dirty lake as the occupants try to salvage some property before it is all washed away. The new homeowners, who built in valleys and the slum dwellers in their cardboard houses are all levelled by the rains. Partly to blame are the blocked drainage channels, which have filled with rubbish and soil over the years. The ongoing enlargement of the Nakivubo Channel, which conveys most of the city's sewage to the lake through a natural filter of papyrus swamp, should ease the problem when complete and possibly save a few hundred houses from "drowning" next year.

But even if you live in a big mansion on top of the exclusive hills, you still have to come into contact with the water, when you go down to your town office, drive to the shopping centre or take your children to school. Along the way, you need to struggle through gushing rivers of dirty brown water. This water, which sometimes rises as high as the car windows, carries a bit of everything from all over the city. The flotsam ranges from waste oil from motor garages to human waste from the thousands of shallow latrines all over the place. The question to ask is, do you and your passengers first put on gloves before touching your car door? If not, chances are that you have all indirectly touched the sickness of a sick slum dweller.

But there are also nice things to share in this season. These end-of-year rains traditionally bring with them the delicious, edible, locust-like green grasshoppers called nsenene. Like locusts, the nsenene swarm in the billions and are easy to collect in the mornings. As the day progresses, they fly wildly around in the sun and chasing them around can be dangerous. Many a child has been knocked down by a car chasing nsenene. Others have been bitten by snakes as they search for the delicious insects in the grass. A few are likely to die this coming month. Such deaths will come hot on the heels of the Ebola tragedy. Let's pray they will be few.

*Joachim Buwembo, The East African, Kampala, Uganda.*

## *Noted...*

### **Egyptian wives win travel rights**

**2mins. 7secs.**

The High Court in Egypt has ruled that an Interior Ministry decree that allows men to prevent their wives from travelling is unconstitutional. The ruling has been welcomed by Mervat Tellawi, who heads Egypt's high-powered Women's Council set up earlier this year. She said it was a step in the right direction for equality. Women activists have been fighting for the right to travel freely for several years. A prominent lawyer who has campaigned for legal improvements for women, Mona Zulficar, said the ruling was a great victory. She said the Interior Ministry decree had frequently been used abusively against women. Earlier this year Egypt's male-dominated parliament passed new legislation making it easier for women to divorce. But it balked at allowing women the right to travel abroad.

After the latest court ruling, Mervat Tellawi, told the BBC that the next battle was to fight for Egyptian women to be allowed to pass on their nationality. Currently the children of an Egyptian woman who marries a foreigner are not considered Egyptian. It may affect only a relatively small number of people, but it is another point of principle that Egyptian women are now challenging.

*BBC News*

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**World Water Watch launched**

**1mins. 8secs.**

A new magazine has been launched to track developing issues in the global water crisis and advocate the sustainable use of this precious commodity. Entitled *World Water Watch: the Magazine of the Freshwater Environment*, the publication is planned for four issues a year – the first appeared in January 2000, and the second, a special issue on the impending Second World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference in the Hague, appeared in early March. The 48-page second issue is well designed, edited, and illustrated, with a wide range of water-related content, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the WWF Living Water Campaign (both supporting the magazine's publication). Subscriptions are available from Argus Publishing Company, Laus Pahlisch Kefedergrund gasse 5/H2, A-1210 Vienna, Austria (fax+43 1 256 8815, e-mail [arquus@nexta.at](mailto:arquus@nexta.at)).

*Ramsar*

**Cameroon Gets US\$2 billion Debt Relief**

**5mins.**

The World Bank Group's International Development Association (IDA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to support a comprehensive debt reduction package for Cameroon under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. A statement released in Washington revealed that the total debt relief from all of Cameroon's creditors is worth around US\$2 billion in nominal terms. This is equivalent to about US\$1.26 billion in Net Present Value (NPV) terms - a discounted sum of all future debt-service obligations on existing debt. The NPV of debt is a measure that takes into account the degree of concessionality. It is defined as the sum of all future debt-service obligations on existing debt, discounted, under the HIPC Initiative, at the market interest rate. Whenever the interest rate on a loan is lower than the market rate, the resulting NPV of debt is smaller than its face value, with the difference reflecting the grant element. or approximately 27 percent of the total NPV of debt outstanding at end-June 1999 after the full use of traditional debt relief mechanisms. The Fund and IDA will provide interim debt relief soon after the decision point.

The debt relief under the enhanced HIPC framework reduces significantly Cameroon's annual debt service obligations, and immediately frees about \$100 million per year for the next three years for expenditures on health care, primary education HIV/AIDS prevention, and other critical social services. The overall impact on Cameroon's budget is substantial. Debt service as a percentage of government revenue will be reduced from more than 23 percent today to 12 percent in 2001 and under 10 percent by 2008. It slashes debt service as a percentage of export revenue from nearly 14 percent today to 8 percent in 2002, and the ratio of the total NPV of debt to exports from nearly 200 percent today to under 120 percent in 2001 and under 100 percent by 2007.

The statement said that under the enhanced HIPC Initiative, countries with a satisfactory track record of macroeconomic and structural policy implementation and a NPV of external debt exceeding 150 percent of exports are eligible to receive debt relief.

*Newslink Africa*

***Numbers...***

**HIV Epidemic Restructuring Africa's Population**

**5mins. 7secs.**

The year 2000 began with 24 million Africans infected with the HIV virus. In the absence of a medical miracle, nearly all will die before 2010. Each day, 6,000 Africans die from AIDS. Each day, an additional 11,000 are infected. The epidemic has proceeded much faster in some countries than in others. In Botswana, 36 percent of the adult population is HIV-positive. In Zimbabwe and Swaziland, the infection rate is 25

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percent. Lesotho is at 24 percent. In Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia, the figure is 20 percent. In none of these countries has the spread of the virus been checked. Life expectancy, a sentinel indicator of economic progress, is falling precipitously. In Zimbabwe, without AIDS, life expectancy in 2010 would be 70 years, but with AIDS, it is expected to fall below 35 years. Botswana's life expectancy is projected to fall from 66 years to 33 years by 2010. For South Africa, it will fall from 68 years to 48 years. And for Zambia, from 60 to 30 years. These life expectancies are more akin to those of the Middle Ages than of the modern age.

The demography of this epidemic is not well understood simply because, in contrast to most infectious diseases, which take their heaviest toll among the elderly and the very young, this virus takes its greatest toll among young adults. The effect on mortality is most easily understood. In the absence of a low-cost cure, infection leads to death. The time from infection until death for adults in Africa is estimated at 7 to 10 years. This means that Botswana can expect to lose the 36 percent of its adult population that is HIV-positive within this decade, plus the additional numbers who will be infected within the next year or two. The HIV toll, plus normal deaths among adults, means that close to half of the adults in Botswana today will be dead by 2010. Other countries with high infection rates, such as South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, will likely lose nearly a third of their adults by 2010.

Adults are not the only ones dying from AIDS. In Africa, infants of mothers who are HIV-positive have a 30 to 60 percent chance of being born with the virus. Their life expectancy is typically less than 2 years. Many more infants acquire the virus through breastfeeding. Few of them will reach school age.

*Newslink Africa*

## *Children's Section*

### **The Living Stones (A Swazi Legend)**

**7mins. 5secs.**

The Creator, who made all the animals, also made a pair of creatures known as living stones, because they looked so much like a pair of cracked, brown rocks. These, were, of course, Tortoise and his wife. The Tortoises lived together for many, many years. But to their sorrow, they didn't have any children. Year after year went by, and each year the Tortoise hoped that this would be the year that they would have young.

Finally, the husband Tortoise went to the Creator, and humbly asked if their greatest wish could be granted. Their long, long years together, he said, had been empty without any young of their own. The Creator told Tortoise that he and his wife were, by then, too old to have children. Tortoise's wife would surely die from the strain, He said. The Tortoises must be content with each other's companionship.

Tortoise and his wife were greatly disappointed. After a while, Tortoise thought to himself, "Surely the Great One is mistaken, If we do not have young ones, who will follow us? And like the rocks we resemble, surely we must be ageless." So back he went to the Creator. But his plea was met with the same reply.

Now Tortoise really was convinced that the Creator must be wrong. Finally he threw himself at the Great One's feet, for the third and the last time. The Creator was moved at Tortoise's courage, persistent and sorrow, so He let the couple have their young ones. He also gave Tortoise the following advice. "Tell your wife to take good care of herself. She is really much too old to produce eggs. But when her time comes for egg-laying, she must watch the eggs carefully. She must keep them warm, but not let them get too hot. She must protect them with her body until they hatch."

Old Tortoise was overjoyed, rushed home with the good news. But he did not mention that the strain might kill his wife. He instructed her on the care of her eggs, and she carefully followed the advice of the Creator. She ate well, took care to rest a lot, and did no heavy work. She managed to lay the eggs without too much

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trouble, and after the incubation time was over, and four lovely baby tortoises were hatched, she looked after them just as the Creator had advised.

However, as in all matters, the Great One was right. The old mother tortoise, taxed beyond her strength, died. The bereaved husband did his best to care for his young ones, but soon he too died, of a broken heart. The Great One looked down with pity upon the orphaned babies, and decided to care for them Himself. He guided each to food, and provided for them.

And now, no mother tortoise ever has to care for eggs, or her babies; for the Creator ordered the Sun to warm the eggs, and when tortoise babies are hatched, each one is able to take care of itself. The Creator shows it where to find food, and how to hide inside its shell when danger threatens.

*When the Hippo was hairy*

### **Useful Tips on Beauty**

**4mins. 8secs.**

For thousands of years, different cultures around the world have used products made from various plants and animals- rhinoceros horn, whale fat and turtle cream – to enhance beauty and to maintain a youthful appearance. In some cases, the large demand for such products has led to the over-exploitation of species that are now in danger of extinction. In addition, many beauty products are tested on animals before they are put on the market. Here we give you some useful tips on how to make your own beauty products. Although they do not promise “eternal youth”, at least they are not made from endangered species and do not need to be tested on animals.

Mashed avocado (purée) is an excellent conditioner for your hair and gives it great shine. It is also a good moisturizer for the scalp. How to use it – once you have washed and rinsed your hair, apply a generous amount of avocado purée and leave it to soak in. (Maximum application time is 30 minutes). Rinse your hair thoroughly and then brush or style.

To smooth away wrinkles and remove or lighten skin blemishes caused by the sun, wash and dry your face thoroughly. Apply some mashed avocado to your skin. Leave it on for 15 minutes and then rinse your face with plenty of cold water. Avocado is an excellent natural skin moisturizer. It is also cheap and does not contain harmful chemicals.

Aloe Vera is a medicinal plant with many different uses. Among its many wonders, this natural healer is an effective cure for burns and scars. How to use it – Cut off a leaf, place it in a jar of water and leave it in your refrigerator. When it is well chilled, remove the leaf from the jar of water and you will notice that the plant releases a kind of gel. This gel can be applied to burns on the skin or may simply be used as a moisturizer. You can also use Aloe Vera on your hair to give it elasticity and shine.

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## ***Parting Shots***

Celebrate the wisdom of the African experience with these unforgettable quotes

On character

*Rotten wood cannot be carved even by the best of carvers*

Nigeria

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*An empty sac will not stand upright*  
Ghana

*However far a stream flows it never forgets its source*  
Uganda

On Unity  
*If the right hand washes the left hand and the left hand washes the right hand, both hands will be clean*  
Lesotho

*The eyelids and the eyeballs should not quarrel*  
Ghana

*If spider webs unite they can tie up an elephant*  
Ethiopia  
*African Proverbs*

And a final word on conservation...

*We are passing through a time of unprecedented destruction of things of the spirit and of the natural order. We have been caught up by personal greed and national competition. The very body of life on this planet is now being threatened by the destruction of the earth's green mantle, the trees. The ancients believe the earth was a living being that felt the actions of people upon it. I submit that since we have no scientific evidence to the contrary, we accept this view and behave accordingly.*

Richard St Barbe Baker,  
Forester, author and conservationist, 1889-1982  
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