

# Africa *woman*

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN IN AFRICA

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## Ghetto living – for the rich

By Worldwoman staff

**ARE THE RICH** set to live in ghettos while the poor roam free? That's the spectacle conjured up by senior World Bank economist, Dr Milanovic who found that many of the world's richest 50 million people – who earn as much as the poorest 2.7 billion – feel forced to live in heavily protected gated communities to escape the resentment of the billions living below the poverty line.

The World Bank study doesn't reveal whether rich people regard giving away their wealth as a better solution than building more high fences and hiring more security guards. But the study does suggest the wider the gap between rich and poor the more tension will lead to problems over immigration and resentment leading to terrorism.

Even the poorest 10% of Americans are still better off than two thirds of the World's population. While the poorest 57% – the majority of them women – earn just as much as the top 1%.

But despite the pressing need to reduce global poverty, official development assistance continued to decline from the year 2000, with all kinds of state funding at their lowest levels since 1990.

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Robert Mugabe: "If you give the country back to the whites by voting for the MDC, you will see what will happen."

AFP

# Mugabe resorts to witchcraft

By Sandra Nyaira, Zimbabwe

**"EVEN IF I DIE,** I will turn in my grave if the MDC wins the presidential election. Let me warn you that even goblins will be unleashed on you if Morgan Tsvangirai wins."

This desperate threat was uttered by Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe at a pre-election rally in Manicaland province in the east of the country.

Mugabe faces his most formidable challenge since he led the southern African country to independence 27 years ago when Zimbabweans go to the polls on March 9 and 10. During the last elections in June 2000, Mugabe's ruling ZANU PF party only narrowly beat the opposition MDC amidst accusations of intimidation and corruption.

The two presidential hopefuls have launched their campaigns, with Mugabe kicking off his re-election bid in his rural stronghold of Mashonaland East province. Tsvangirai's inaugural rally was

*Goblins will be released if Tsvangirai wins, says embattled Zimbabwe president*

held in the city of Mutare, one of his major strongholds with an estimated 15,000 people in attendance.

The Zanu PF government, which recently enacted three repressive pieces of legislation – the Public Order and Security Act, the General Laws Amendment Act and the Access to Information Bill – to muzzle the media and the opposition is increasingly uncertain of its direction as the tide against its 22-year rule continues to grow.

Mugabe's service chiefs, led by the Commander of the Defence Forces, General Vitalis Zvinvashe, recently tried to scare off voters from backing Tsvangirai by saying they would not accept any new leader who does not have the requisite liberation war credentials.

Mugabe came into power following a long and bitter guerrilla war and 22 years later, relies heavily on

the military to keep the keys to State House and power.

Gen Zvinvashe says: "We will not accept, let alone support or salute, anyone with a different agenda."

Tsvangirai, a trade union leader widely seen as Mugabe's main challenger and who enjoys massive support in the urban areas, did not fight in the 1970s liberation war against the Ian Smith regime.

Michael Quintana, the editor of the Africa Defence Journal said of the army general's statement: "Mr Mugabe would be wise not to rely too heavily on the army to keep him in power if Zimbabwe's voters want him to go."

But Mugabe, who two years ago threatened the same Manicaland voters with death if they voted for MDC parliamentarians, may now be relying on the army to stop a

move towards his MDC rival.

Then, voters defied him by putting 57 opposition MDC into Parliament against 63 seats for Zanu PF.

After the increasingly paranoid 77-year old Zimbabwean leader told voters he would haunt the people of Manicaland if Tsvangirai won the March plebiscite, he made this threat to the province, which almost wiped his party out of power.

"If you give the country back to the whites by voting for the MDC, you will see what will happen."

"The country achieved independence through bloodshed. Who is Morgan Tsvangirai? He is being used by the whites to destroy the country's heritage," says Mugabe.

An estimated 100 opposition supporters have been killed so far this year as the election dates draw closer. It now remains to be seen if Mugabe's threats will be taken seriously by Zimbabwe's five million voters when they go to the polls next month.

# Mali football boss needs coaching from musicians

By Ropafadzo Mapimhidze,  
Zimbabwe  
& Sarah Namulondo, Uganda

**PERHAPS** outburst-prone football coaches should take a leaf from male musicians?

African musicians from Mali dominated the Awards for World Music held in London at the Ocean Hackney club last week – and confirmed the African state as the most internationally recognized African musical culture.

But last night – hours after his team's humiliating 3-0 defeat in the African Cup by champions Cam-

eroon – the Malian football coach let his country down by making dismissive remarks about fellow African teams.

After the resounding defeat by Cameroon, Mali coach Henry Kaspercak said only Nigeria and Cameroon have a real chance of success at the next World Cup, even though five African countries have qualified.

What an insult for South Africa, Tunisia and Senegal, and what a relief that Mali's male musicians are a little more generous, polite and – well – successful.

Maybe when musicians dedicate

their lives to making authentic roots music they are able to represent their countries with pride – and lift the mood of all Africans.

The Awards for World Music have different categories and nominees selected at the WOMEX festival and winners are voted through by a jury from BBC Radio 3 and its partner organizations.

The nominees for Africa category featured talented musicians Djelimady Tankara from Mali, Baaba Maal from Senegal; Habib Kolite from Mali and Rokya Traore also from Mali. Djelimady Tankara from Mali took the honours.

Not nearly as well known as compatriot Aliffarka Traore, Djelimady has been a driving force in Mali's rich musical scene since the early 1960's.

Originating from the strong community of Kita in western Mali, he began playing in the local orchestra. He later moved to the capital Bamako where he keenly absorbed the influence of Cuban and Congolese music from the radio and spent much of the 1960s building his reputation as a player in popular bands such as Misra Jazz and L'Orchestre National du Mali.

In the 1970s he was lead electric

guitarist with the legendary Rail Band. He has also backed Salif Keita and Mory Kante. Later Djelimady recorded the internationally popular compilation Big String Theory.

Last year, Djelimady Toukara released his debut solo album-Sigui, on which he showcases his remarkable guitar playing skills with traditional griot tunes and a number of classic songs from his Rail Band years.

Djelimady Toukara is also the main character in Banning Eyre's new book In Griot Time: an American guitarist in Mali.

## Uganda and Rwanda in stand-off

By Margaret Ziribaggwa, Uganda

**WOMEN** in the Great Lakes region have expressed fear at the sabre-rattling of Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni and his Rwandan counterpart, Paul Kagame.

Museveni has accused Rwanda of planning a covert war against Kampala by training and financing Ugandan dissidents.

Kigali has denied the charges, claiming instead that anti-Rwandan rebels have been given shelter in Kampala.

Women in the two countries have urged their two presidents to find common ground to avert yet another war.

### NEWS IN FOCUS

# Nigerian professor backs stoning as Euro-MPs appeal for mother's release

By Sarah Namulondo

A leading law Professor and academic in the Nigerian province of Sokoto, has said the sentence of stoning to death for adultery against Sufiyatu Huseini is justified because her pregnancy constitutes proof of guilt.

The Dean of Law at Dakar University in Sokoto says adultery is "an abomination abhorred by God and society because of the example it gives and because it creates bastards to be rejected by society."

Meanwhile Ms Huseini – known as Safiya – heard that Nigerian embassies around the world have been inundated with appeals for clemency, and today 77 Euro-MPs pleaded with Nigerian President Obasanjo to have her case thrown out.

"He promised to take care of the child. My father suggested that he should marry me, and he agreed."

This is what Sufiyatu Huseini – known as Safiya – says of the man who impregnated her and effectively sentenced her to death by stoning in the Muslim northern Nigerian province of Sokoto, while he walked free through lack of corroboration.

Had their affair happened before the introduction of the full sharia law, the families would have come to an arrangement supported by the village. Yakubu Abubakar, the man Safiya has named as father, would have had to care for the 35

year old woman and her daughter Adama – now 10 months old – even if he didn't actually marry her. But now the situation is out of their hands.

When Safiya's pregnancy began to show, Judge Muhammad Bello Sanyinlawal sentenced her to death by stoning.

The Islamic law's interpretation of adultery requires one to confess to it, or for the act to be witnessed by four males.

But in Safiya's case, the Muslim Sokoto state in Nigeria opted to follow the Maliki tradition, which emphasizes strict interpretation of the Koran. By this, pregnancy alone was sufficient evidence of adultery. The question is, why didn't prosecution produce four witnesses to pin Safiya down?

Because the State lacked witnesses, Abubakar was acquitted.

He has since run away from the village. This is ironical. When Safiya learnt of her predicament, she tried to escape, but was quickly apprehended.

This raises tough questions. Is the Sharia Law only applicable to women? Why does it seem to be

relatively lax on the men?

"Society is injured by her act. The danger is that it will teach other women to do the same thing," says Aliyu Abubakar Sanyinna, the attorney general of Sokoto State.

Echoing the same sentiments – and in a frightening warning to the young women students in his care – Mansur Ibrahim Said, Dean of the Law Faculty at Dakar University in Sokoto says adultery is "an abomination abhorred by God and society because of the example it gives and because it creates bastards to be rejected by society."

Some local people seem to support Safiya but cannot come out publicly for fear of retribution.

On the international scene, a group of 77 Euro-MPs has pleaded with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo that the case be thrown out.

However, they have come under heavy attack from Federal Government officials who say that the Sokoto Sharia Court handling the case is a legal and constitutional system and that the plea amounts to an interference in Nigeria's judicial process.

But Corrina Tertsakian, a Human Rights Watch specialist on Nigeria says the case is with the Appeals Court and will be heard in March.

She indicated that the Federal Government is against the death sentence although it's still not clear if their view can affect the outcome.



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# Catholics care about condoms, but do bishops?

By Stella Mhuri, Malawi

A GLOBAL campaign to end the Catholic bishops' ban on condom use has been launched by Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC). The unprecedented worldwide public education campaign seems to have caught Africa's clergy unprepared.

The highlights of the campaign include advertisements in the US and countries with either a significant Catholic population or an AIDS crisis.

Billboards will go up at prominent locations in Brussels, Cape Town, Nairobi, Harare, La Paz, Santiago, Mexico City and Manila condemning the ban.

Newspaper ads will be used to reinforce the message with slogans such as, "Catholic People Care – Do Our Bishops?" and "Banning Condoms Kills."

It is difficult to tell why the Catholic Church is so adamant on condom use. The Catholic bishops have taken the vow of celibacy and are therefore not expected not to have anything to do with sex.

"This attitude smacks of hypocrisy and dictatorship," argues one of the CFFC campaigners.

"With HIV/AIDS spreading with the speed of lightning, particularly in Africa, it is important for Catholics and non-Catholics to join in this aggressive campaign to make available to all who need it regardless of religion, race, class or age," another Free Choice campaigner said.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church has introduced new guidelines to handle paedophile accusations against priests.

The guidelines, which are apparently aimed at centralizing Vatican control over such cases, are intended by Catholic dioceses and religious institutions.

According to a letter by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, a close aide of the Pope, paedophile cases are now subject to pontifical secrecy and only priests, including those serving as judges, prosecutors or defense advocates in churches, should handle them.

The letter also directs that victims must make their accusations within 10 years after turning 18.

The letter, however, falls short of spelling out what action should be taken against guilty priests and does seem to be a covert admission that priests actually engage in sex.



Lesley Riddoch, editor of *Worldwoman* announces launch of *Africawoman* at Nairobi meeting.

## African news service launched at Nairobi meeting

PLANS FOR a women's news and radio service have been unveiled by the editor of the British Council and DFID sponsored *Worldwoman* web paper in Nairobi, Kenya. Lesley Riddoch, a BBC journalist and former deputy editor of the daily broadsheet *Scotsman* newspaper, said the web-paper – written by women journalists from all over the world – was now ready to set up an African sister paper, *Africawoman*.

Speaking after a three day training event in

Nairobi, involving women print and community radio journalists from Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia and the UK, Ms Riddoch said,

"The time is right for African women journalists to write their stories and create a different news agenda for the future. We aim to have news bulletins – written by women journalists – reaching women in rural parts of every sub-Saharan country by the end of 2003 through a

link-up with the growing network of women's community radio stations."

The founder and editor of the Scotland-based webpaper said the *Africawoman* webpaper would be launched this summer and edited by African journalists operating from a new headquarters in Nairobi – but involving journalists in Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana using the internet to create a news agenda.

## Bush set to break Sept. 11 pledge to the world's poor

By Ropa Mapimhidze, Zimbabwe

THE UNITED STATES is at odds with the rest of its partners in the G8 meeting in Ottawa, Canada over the aim of reducing world poverty by half in the next decade.

Has George W. Bush already abandoned the post Trade Centre promises to tackle the root causes of world poverty?

Do Tony Blair's comments in Ghana over the changing nature of British aid spell less cash for Africa or a more targeted use of foreign funds?

The issue was to have been discussed at the G8 meeting scheduled to take place in Canada.

The US has made it clear that Washington will not consider the ambitious target and commentators fear the world's richest countries will now put the issue of increased aid to developing countries on the backburner.

"The world has spent an enormous amount in the name of development without success," US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill told a World Bank/IMF meeting last November.

The American position is a snub



George W. Bush: Will he break pledge to poor?

to British Chancellor Gordon Brown and the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan who have both urged that rich nations should double aid flows to developing countries to achieve the UN goal of halving global poverty by 2015.

But British Prime Minister Tony Blair – speaking to the parliament in Accra used off-the-cuff remarks to flesh out his changing approach to financial aid for the region. Mr

Blair said he believes the traditional practice of simply offering cash as a "handout" is flawed and fails to lead to lasting change.

Instead he wants to tie such aid to good governance as a way of "empowering people" to get their economies on a sound footing. It is a "we help you best when you help yourselves" policy.

But will it mean more or less cash?

And which Africans will be hardest hit if the Bush line means less cash whether it is linked to "democratic reform" or not?

Women are the majority of the world's poor. According to a United Nations publication women constitute more than 50% of the world's population. They produce about 70% of the world's food but earn only 10% of the world's income and own just 1% of the world's property.

A political analyst from Africa said the American stance will be a big blow.

"The American Administration is sending a clear message to the world's women that they just do not care about the struggling and poor women, particularly those from Africa."



Telma: Kenya's Emmy winners

## Emmy for Kenyan kids' hit song

THREE YOUNG Kenyan women – Telma – have won an Emmy award for their hit song "Say yes for children/Sema ndio Kwa Watoto."

The song and video, which are dedicated to the children of the world, won the coveted award for their outstanding contribution to UNICEF's "Say yes for children" campaign.

The three teenagers, who together form the group "Tlma," decided not to use the obscene rap lyrics that characterize songs by many teenagers today.

Many parents hope they will now become role models for African youngsters and that other musicians will follow their example.

# Can women bring end to corruption in big business?

By Ruth Omukhang'o, Kenya

**T**he amount he may have "misaid" is staggering - \$750 million. It's half the amount needed to run the Kenyan government this year.

John Rusnak - a quiet family man - is suspected of defrauding All First - the American branch of the Allied Irish Bank - by buying money contracts over a 10-month period last year. How could such a large volume of activity be missed? Who knows?

Meanwhile the former boss of the disgraced multinational Enron has appeared on CNN denying that he knew of the energy giant's financial crisis when he resigned last year. And here in Kenya the Chairman of Ford Kenya and presidential hopeful Michael Walmalwa has said his political career is in the balance as he faces bankruptcy charges and the Constitutional Review Commission has heard a government minister suggest the President's power should be "devolved" to prevent corruption.

William ole Ntimama said, "A human being has weaknesses and giving too much power to one individual could end up corrupting the individual absolutely."

Is it a coincidence that the individuals most able to be corrupted absolutely are men? Would women

First there was Enron and Allied Irish. And now a contender in Kenya's Presidential race is facing bankruptcy and disgrace.

Could the common link in all these cases of high level corruption and mismanagement be the men at the top?

Would women in executive positions be more trustworthy?

leaders running African states, multinational corporations or world banks be any better?

With resources enough to feed the world, Africa still lags in economic growth due to corruption. One wonders if male leadership that has dominated governments in Africa has something to do with it. Is it time for change? Could women do a better job at leadership, stamp out corruption and steer Africa into an economic super-highway? A new World Bank Report believes women could.

'Engendering development' shows that countries with smaller gaps between women and men in areas of education, employment, and property rights not only have lower child malnutrition and mortality but also have more transparent business and government and faster economic growth.

What might that mean in Africa? The World Bank estimate that improving women's access to resources like education, land and fertilizer could increase agricultur-

al productivity by as much as a fifth.

And that could make an enormous difference to sub-Saharan Africa - one of the poorest regions of the world with 1% of the world's gross domestic product and 10% of its population. The current global economic slowdown is hitting Africa hard - foreign investments, desperately needed to develop infrastructure, telecommunications and to develop natural resources - are getting scarcer as many foreign firms go bust - like Belgian air carrier Sabena - or make major cut-backs. Africa needs to take the bull by the horns if it means to weed out corruption.

We can applaud the steps taken by Ghana's new President Kufor for pledging to stamp out corruption - and his recent honesty in admitting that he hardly knows where to start.

An honest statement of the scale of corruption in Africa is a necessary to spark such change as the Truth and Reconciliation Commit-

tee in South Africa.

Women in Asia have proved that given the opportunity they can turn around their countries' economies for the better. In Bangladesh for example, micro credit provided to women raises household income higher than the same credit provided to men.

Where women have greater rights and play a greater role in public life, levels of corruption in government are also lower. In the Soviet Republic of Georgia, firms owned or managed by women are significantly less likely to make unofficial payments to government than those owned by men.

That may be because women are brought up to be law-abiding - it may also be because they cannot be bribed - because they cannot own the very land they work. In much of sub-Saharan Africa women have limited rights to own land, even though they are the major producers of food crops. Do men fear that women landowners would suddenly start to act as shadily as themselves?

Who knows if powerful women would be more honest than men? There simply haven't been enough to judge properly. But, let's face it, with billions of dollars knocked off the stock markets by several multinational men, women executives could hardly do much worse.

## PM Blair brings message of hope to Africa

**TONY BLAIR** used his trip to Ghana and Nigeria to expand on his partnership theme - with specific reference to defence, arms and conflict resolution - though there was no mention made of weapons systems like the air surveillance system currently being sold to the Tanzanian government by a British arms firm.

In a speech after a two hour meeting with Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo, Blair defended the need for a British prime minister to travel abroad, following criticism at home about his "designer politics."

Blair's words were backed by Obasanjo who recently faced a parliamentary motion which said he should concentrate more on domestic issues and travel abroad a lot less. "Some of these criticisms are born out of ignorance," Obasanjo told reporters.

Later, addressing the Nigerian National Assembly in the capital Abuja, Blair said there is nowhere to hide from international terrorism, crime and drug traffickers.

"The cynics say, "why should we succeed now when we have failed before?" but that is what they have said throughout human history. If we listen to them we should still be in the dark ages."

Dictatorship, said Blair, has become unattractive in Africa with the progress made in many countries where democracy is the order of the day.

The second leg of his tour took him to Ghana where he was met at the airport by President Kuffuor. Blair said he was in Ghana to strengthen the good relations the two countries have had since colonial times.

President Kuffuor made reference to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries' initiative (HIPC) and asked the British prime minister to give Ghana the necessary push for the country to be on its feet again. This echoed Blair's view, held since he was leader of the opposition, that "increasingly we recognise in this world that we are interdependent so it is not only the right thing to do but is in our own interest."

Blair also visited Senegal and Sierra Leone, where Britain still has peacekeeping troops.

# Kenya women dealt blow by mystery fish deaths

By Ruth Omukhang'o, Kenya

**T**he economic implication of the massive deaths of fish and other marine animals goes beyond the mere fact that the tourism sector is in jeopardy. The unexplained death phenomenon which started recently has continued to baffle the locals as well as scientists. It has killed the thriving fishing industry, and poses severe economic consequences to the locals.

It could also have serious impact on food supply for local inhabitants and major economic impact on the fishing, aquarium, and tourist industries.

Kenya's economy is reasonably diversified, though most employment is dependent on agriculture, which contributes 26 percent of GDP. Tourism accounts for another 19 percent of Kenya's GDP. This

It may be a puzzle to scientists but the mystery toxin that has killed thousands of fish on the Kenyan coast could spell disaster for women trying to feed their families and sell fish.

Will government be forced to act because of the threat to the lucrative tourist trade?

would have a direct effect on Kenyan families who solely rely on fishing as the only source of income. Women, who sell fish to augment their income would go without jobs.

Thousands of dead fish and marine animals have washed up onto the Kenyan and Somali coastlines, probably poisoned by an off-season bloom of toxic algae, wildlife experts said.

Turtles, sharks, octopuses, tuna, manta ray, eels and other marine creatures have been found dead along a stretch of Indian Ocean

shore spanning about 600 miles in Kenya and Somalia, the WWF said.

"This is a big one. The extent points to an algal bloom," WWF spokeswoman Julie Church said. "We are seeing loads of dead fish being washed ashore. Nothing as large as this has ever been mapped in eastern Africa."

WWF suspects the deaths have been caused by an unusually big episode of red tide - an explosion of microscopic toxic algae that colours ocean waters reddish brown.

The phenomenon usually occurs

when ocean surface waters are warm, high in nutrients and calm - typical when wet weather is followed by sunny conditions.

Scientists were surprised because the affected area in the Indian ocean is currently windy and rough.

They are currently analysing samples of dead fish and ocean water in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

Fishermen along the coastline are reported to have stopped fishing for fear of poisoning.

Red tides have been known to devastate the fisheries off the U.S. coast, the Caribbean and South Pacific, Japan and Scandinavia, the WWF said. They occur annually off the South African coast.

Three small episodes, two of which occurred after the 1998 El Nino weather phenomenon, have been documented in Somalia, but none in Kenya.

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