


Introducing a new service to ANSA-Africa stakeholders: *In the News*

From the approximately 100 items we posted in our news section for the period 5-16 April 2010, we have selected these articles for this first digest. The digest is intended to provide you with a quick and easy snapshot of key social accountability processes highlighted in the Africa news media. This edition has two predominant themes: budget monitoring and extractive industries.

We would be interested in hearing your comments on this new service. Remember that you can subscribe to the full set of news items, via our [RSS feed](#). 

Budget monitoring and decentralisation

Understanding the budget

New Era, 05 April 2010

Windhoek: Numbers are confusing complicated objects, more so when they are about money. Besides trained individuals, not everyone understands balance sheets, and income statements. National budgets are even more complicated to understand.

Kenya: Government dismisses CDF audit report

Daily Nation, 14 April 2010

Nairobi: The government has dismissed an audit by a lobby group detailing theft and misuse of Constituency Development Funds as misinformed and lacking in credibility. In a statement prepared on its behalf by the Constituency Development Fund Board, which is tasked to administer the programme, the government questioned authenticity of the audit carried out on 17 constituencies saying several of the projects described as 'ghost' "were in reality a case of reallocations."

Top CDF officials dismiss audit on missing millions

Daily Nation, 14 April 2010

Nairobi: Constituency Development Fund officials implicated in the loss of millions of shillings on Sunday dismissed an audit report that details the loss of the cash. The audit by the [National Taxpayers Association](#) accuses some CDF committees of failing to account for the funds, charges some MPs whose constituencies were mentioned have quickly denied.

Public service

The Post, 14 April 2010

Lusaka: We are citizens of Zambia by virtue of a social contract. That contract presupposes that we've agreed to govern ourselves according to certain norms and rules. Nothing is to be permitted in this place that we call our home, our country except that which conforms with the laws that govern us. What Secretary to the Cabinet Dr Joshua Kanganja has complained about is a matter that should concern every citizen. Dr Kanganja has complained about the challenge posed by public officers whose pre-occupation is personal gain at whatever cost at the expense of service delivery.

"Bring services closer..."

New Era, 15 April 2010

Swakopmund: Erongo Regional Governor, Samuel Nuuyoma, has called on constituency clerks to seriously deliver services in a more efficient and effective manner. He also urged them to enhance public participation in governance, saying this is the only way to ensure participatory democracy, which is one of the aims of decentralisation.

Progress is about quality of life, not concrete buildings

Daily Nation, 15 April 2010

Nairobi: I commend the National Tax Payers Association (NTA) for the work they are doing on the Constituency Development Fund. Kenya needs more of such associations to keep tabs on what the State is doing at the grassroots level. The strongest point of the association is its devolved structure; the fact that it has created a network of public-spirited grassroots of citizens all over the country to monitor projects by CDF committees.

Make decentralisation integral to development

Ghana News Agency, 15 April 2010

Accra: Nii Armah Ashietey, Greater Accra Regional Minister, on Tuesday called on local government functionaries to pursue socio-economic development agenda through effective decentralisation. "Decentralisation is the way forward but some people have refused to accept this and there are others who think by promoting decentralisation, their power and authority would be transferred from the central administration to the districts," he said.

There's need to overhaul the way devolved funds are run

Daily Nation, 16 April 2010

Nairobi: Revelations by researchers over the years that millions of devolved funds have been stolen are a pointer to two facts: that those under whose care such funds are placed are cynical plunderers, and that there is a dearth of capacity to manage such funds.

Extractive industries and budget issues

Zambia will not reduce mining taxes - Finance Minister

Reuters, 08 April 2010

Lusaka: Zambia will not reduce the higher mining taxes it introduced in 2009 after cancelling the long-term development agreements it had with foreign mining firms, Finance Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane said on Wednesday.

In Angola, health does not follow wealth

The Globe and Mail, 08 April 2010

Luanda: It's a beautiful new hospital, gleaming and modern, befitting the wealth of the oil-rich nation of Angola. Its rooms are furnished with X-ray machines, gurneys, chairs and pharmacy shelves. The signboards are up. The parking lots are ready. The grounds are immaculately landscaped with flowers and plants.

Government fumbling with our oil money already?

IMANI, 09 April 2010

Accra: We have to commend Government's recent efforts to loosen up a bit over the now contentious issue of Ghana's predicted oil revenues. The question is whether it's opening up enough.

How content would Ghana's local content policy be?

Modern Ghana, 09 April 2010

Accra: Inarguably, the issues bordering local content are increasingly gaining prominence and drawing wild attention. The idea to drive the participation of Ghanaians in the nascent oil and gas sector remains very crucial if Ghana is to elude the nagging challenges of the resource curse.

Before oil reserves dry up

Daily Independent, 13 April 2010

Lagos: The very fact that the recent report published by the authoritative Economic Confidential that the country's vast oil wells would dry up by 2040 is causing palpable apprehension in government quarters, underscores the gross dearth of visionary leadership in Nigeria's troubled political landscape over the decades.

Ghana reviews mining law

Public Agenda, 13 April 2010

Accra: Ghana's Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), which has been described as a perfect example of a "neo-colonial law" is being reviewed by a committee put together by the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology.

Africa to realise 200 billion dollars from oil in the next 10 years

Ghana News Agency, 15 April 2010

Accra: African countries are expected to generate about 200 billion dollars in revenue from oil production in the next 10 years as new oilfields open up throughout the Gulf of Guinea. Oil was expected to generate the largest inflow of revenue in the continent's history, and more than ten times funds provided through Western donors annually in aid for developmental projects.

Stakes are high in African investment race

Joongang Daily, 16 April 2010

Sharm El-Sheikh: The rush to exploit Africa's natural resources has kicked back into high gear in recent decades, with massive new investment from developing countries - especially China - desperate to feed their burgeoning industries. That influx made the continent the only one in the world to experience significant economic growth in 2009, even if it was modest at 2 percent.

Citizens to benefit from mineral wealth?

Concord Times, 16 April 2010

Freetown: The adoption of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) report by Sierra Leone, according to US-based firm Verdi Consulting, is a very important step towards greater transparency of revenues and payments between the government and the society. According to the Presidential and Public Affairs minister, Joseph Manor Koroma who doubles as minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources, the majority of citizens have not benefited from the mineral wealth as much as they could since its discovery in the 1930s and that the benefit was only restricted to a selected few, a situation he said fueled the country's eleven-year civil war.

General

Tough times push Kenyans to corruption

Business Daily Africa, 06 April 2010

Nairobi: Kenyans are more likely to engage in corrupt dealings during economic downturns to meet their growing personal budgets, a new survey indicates. The survey by market research firm Consumer Insight indicates that the incidence of corruption tends to scale up when the country's economy is on a downward trend.

Nigeria may collapse unless politics is about service, says Prof. Utomi

Vanguard, 06 April 2010

Lagos: Prof. Pat Utomi remains one of the best cerebral minds to emerge from this part of the world and his contributions to public discourse are always illuminating as can be seen in this interview with the Vanguard newspaper on issues ranging from Niger Delta crisis to power struggle in the presidency and poverty in Nigeria.

Excerpts:

UK: Agencies welcome new anti-bribery legislation

CAFOD, 10 April 2010

London: In the final days of business before the General Election, Parliament has passed new anti-bribery legislation, sending an unequivocal message that bribery by British companies will not be tolerated at home or abroad.

It is easier to create an army than fight corruption, says Museveni

Daily Monitor, 12 April 2010

Kampala: In the first of a two-part exclusive interview, President Museveni tells Monitor Managing Editor, DANIEL KALINAKI, about the icy relations with Buganda Kingdom and why it is easier to build an army than fight corruption. Excerpts:-

Angola needs to improve anti-corruption fight: report

IC Publications, 14 April 2010

Washington: Global watchdog group [Human Rights Watch](#) on Tuesday called on Angola's government to do more to fight corruption, saying Angolans were not benefitting from the state's immense oil-riches. "The government needs to take strong action to combat the corruption and secrecy that undermine Angolans' rights," said Arvind Ganesan, HRW's business and human rights program director, in a statement.

MDGs: Science to the rescue

ThisDay, 07 April 2010

Lagos: Africa is off-track in the race to meet the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for maternal and child health. Yearly, about 265,000 mothers die due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth. On the other hand, 1.2 million babies die before they reach one month of age, just as over three million children, who survive their first month of life, die before their fifth birthday.

Evaluating the Millennium Villages: responses, but few answers

CGD, 08 April 2010

Washington: I recently made a public plea for rigorous evaluation of the UN Millennium Village Project (MVP), an experimental effort to break African villages out of poverty traps with a large package of outside assistance. The public response from the MVP left me puzzled. Paul Pronyk, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation for the MVP, responds with two points. Pronyk's first point is:

MDG realisation: so far, not too good

ThisDay, 09 April 2010

Lagos: Most development activities and processes in Nigeria revolve around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which, among others, include eradication of poverty, access to adequate education and health, and environmental sustainability. Abimbola Akosile analyses efforts made at various levels to realise the global goals, which may translate to vital development.

African parliamentarians, CSOs launch network against poverty

Daily Independent, 09 April 2010

Lagos: Worried by the effect of the economic meltdown on the nation's projections to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target, African parliamentarians in collaboration with the Civil Societies Organisations (CSOs) last week, launched a new network towards achieving a poverty free continent by 2015.

The Nairobi Declaration on Taxation and Development

Tax Justice Network Africa, 10 April 2010

In March 2010 delegates from 17 countries and three continents met in Nairobi, Kenya for a Pan-African Conference on Tax and Development. Hosted by Tax Justice Network for Africa, the conference had three key themes: harnessing domestic tax policies for development; taxation of extractive sectors; and closing the floodgates on illicit financial flows.

Towards an aid quality index

Irin, 10 April 2010

Johannesburg: Donors regularly make grandiose claims and promises, but measuring whether or not they live up to them requires clear aid quality measurement indicators. A number of academics and institutions are working to create such indicators now that more development aid data is being made public.

Tracing the aid

Irin, 08 April 2010

Dakar: Donors have come a long way when it comes to [making their aid commitments public](#), but tracking these donations to calculate how much is spent where and on what, is still far too difficult, say analysts.

Nobel Laureate urges financial services for poor

VOA, 08 April 2010

Nairobi: Nobel Laureate Muhammed Yunus is calling on business, philanthropic and political leaders gathered in Nairobi to help eradicate poverty by providing the world's poor with access to financial services.

Listen to us, fragile states tell donors

Australia.to News, 10 April 2010

Dili: "Work with us, not against us" was the message for international donors that came out of the g7+ meeting of fragile states, which met in Dili this week to discuss how they can make better use of the foreign aid they get.

ICG calls Congo government a failure and warns of anarchy

The Huffington Post, 10 April 2010

The International Crisis Group's latest report, "Congo: A Stalled Democratic Agenda," scrutinizes the four year presidency of Joseph Kabila, calls it a failure, and warns that DRC risks anarchy without democracy and institutional reform.

Why is the Transparency Revolution not taking off in Africa?

CommGAP, 14 April 2010

Washington: When President Jimmy Carter opened the [Africa Regional Conference on the Right of Access to Information](#) in Accra on February 7, 2010, he explained why the Carter Center had organized the conference. The main reason, he pointed out, was that with regard to access to information 'Africa has lagged far behind'. South Africa was the only good example he cited. Yet this is at a time when the transparency revolution is sweeping through the rest of the world.

Sub-Saharan Africans want government focus on agriculture, jobs

Gallup, 16 April 2010

Washington DC: As the United Nations prepares for its September summit on the Millennium Development Goals, Gallup surveys in sub-Saharan Africa find residents are most likely to spontaneously mention agriculture (20%) and jobs (19%) as the most important issues their governments should address in the next 12 months. A median of 14% across 18 countries surveyed name poverty and 10% mention the economy in general.

ANSA-Africa contacts:

Mario Claasen (Project co-ordinator), Richard Humphries (ANSA-Africa web content, *In the News* editor)

Website: www.ansa-africa.net | E-mail: info@ansa-africa.net

ANSA-Africa is funded by the [World Bank Institute](#). It is a project of the Economic Governance Programme, [ldasa](#)