

In the News: Issue 10

In the News 10 highlights a selection of social accountability news articles posted to the ANSA-Africa website during the period 13 - 27 August 2010. This issue covers articles on the themes of service delivery; governance; anti-corruption and gender.

1. Service delivery

CSOs call for due consideration of their input

Public Agenda

Accra: Civil society organizations working on issues of public policy, budget and poverty alleviation have called on the government to consider their inputs in the preparation of the 2011 national budget. They believe that their input will not only ensure equity in resource allocation, but will also embolden them to monitor and track implementation especially in areas where they work.

Ghana: Economic policy and inputs of CSOs in the 2011 Budget Statement

Public Agenda

Accra: We, the undersigned representatives of civil society groups in Ghana, having participated in a national forum to collate inputs into the 2011 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government, coordinated by the Centre for Budget Advocacy of the Integrated Social Development Centre in collaboration with UNDP, Ghana; having listened to presentations on issues of concern to us as citizens of Ghana, especially as the country makes bold attempts to improve the lives of the citizenry through various policies and interventions.

Veep tasks Audit Service

PeaceFM

Accra: Vice President John Dramani Mahama has tasked the Audit Service to devise strategies for establishing basic public understanding and the requisite attitudes towards ensuring accountability and transparency in public office. "Much of public dissatisfaction with governance has to do with issues of trust and a gap between what the public expects and what is actually delivered," he noted. The AS, the Vice President urged, should, therefore, help to foster a common understanding on accountability and its related issues among policy makers, government employees and the public.

Service pacts should improve performance

The Citizen

Dar es Salaam: With the launch of its customer service charter, the ministry of Infrastructure Development has once again underlined its commitment to improving service delivery. The charter, to be implemented over a period of three years, will also help to enhance and promote accountability among the public service providers. Service charters are essentially social pacts between the providers and users.

Uganda: Development partners reduce 2010/11 budget support contributions

JBS Development Partners

Kampala: A group of Development Partners that jointly finance Uganda's budget have determined their planned contributions to the 2010/11 budget. The 2010/11 budget support commitments have been informed by the findings of an appraisal of the Government's performance in 2008/09, concluded in early 2010.

Hitting them where it hurts?

The Independent

Kampala: Donors under the Joint Budget Support partners announced a cut of Shs80 billion from their Shs756 billion (\$360 million) aid to Uganda on Aug 9. The cut stems from government's failure to effectively respond to the theft of hundreds of billions of shillings during the Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting in November 2007. Donors have since been calling on government to act on the corrupt individuals cited in the CHOGM audit reports.

Empty House, 2011 polls and the budget deadline

Daily Monitor

Kampala: Disappointing reports of an empty Parliament last week in the middle of the budget process threw a spanner into the works and set off the political fever ahead of the 2011 general elections. It's evident that most of the MPs are running again; some are optimistic while others only stand a microscopic chance of retaining their seats and others will have to rely on luck to play its part. But one big question that lingers in the corridors of Parliament is: Will the figures in this year's budget be trusted since MPs across the political band have deserted the House for campaigns? In fact, some MPs have been absent so many times that it's even hard to remember when they were last present.

Finance will not disburse funds to ministries without plans - Bbumba

Daily Monitor

Kampala: The Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development will not disburse funds to ministries and agencies without strategic work plans. "All ministries must submit their strategic work plans or else funds will not be disbursed for their operations," Finance Minister Syda Bbumba told Business Power after the signing of a loan agreement with World Bank last week.

MPs wary of delays in "big" ministries scrutiny

Daily Nation

Nairobi: MPs suspect mischief in the government's delay to schedule budgetary votes of the bigger ministries before Parliament. On Tuesday, they accused the government of deliberately scheduling the smaller votes for scrutiny, leaving out the "ministries that count."

Kenya: Work with experts to create ministries

Business Daily Africa

Nairobi: Under the new Constitution, the maximum number of government ministries will be 22. Whereas no modality is spelt out on how to re-align the ministries, it helps to open early debate on the most effective structures that will catalyse socio-economic developments and give early growth impacts. This will also avoid the surprises which greet Kenyans on the day of a new government inauguration with announcements of new ministries.

Contract teachers move criticised

Daily Nation

Nairobi: MPs on Wednesday criticised the government's move to hire 18,000 teachers to work on three-year contracts. The exercise kicked off this week at the constituency and district level. The MPs said while the recruitment will reduce the current shortage of 66,000 teachers countrywide, the government should employ them on a permanent basis. Education Committee chairman David Koech was the first to criticise the move when he rose to present the team's report on the ministry's budget.

Days when one teacher taught all lessons numbered

Daily Nation

Nairobi: Primary school headteachers may have more work if a new study is implemented. This is particularly so in poor performing schools, the report compiled after four-years of study in five provinces shows. The report will be handed over to the Ministry of Education on Wednesday. In poor performing schools, the researchers found a link between poor lesson supervision by the headteachers and a high rate of teacher absenteeism.

Kenya: Budget Office raises queries over tax plans

Business Daily Africa

Nairobi: Access to public information is one of the key subjects that have defined the clamour for reforms in Kenya. The process of national budgeting has been top on the agenda and the creation of the Parliamentary Budget Office must have come as good news. So far, analysts are hailing the development but are pressing for increased vigilance in an effort to make the systems more water-tight. [Experts at the PBO](#) mandated to scrutinise the national budget are alive to the challenges they are facing in ensuring that the Treasury gets the activity right.

Poor cash use ails NHIF: report

Daily Nation

Nairobi: As the government turns to high taxation to try and provide medical care to the poor, an internal report by the two health ministries shows that tackling inefficiency in use of allocated funds could be a better tool. By addressing the inadequacies, the report says, the government will "release about 10% more resources into the healthcare services" translating to about Sh8.3 billion in 2010 and about Sh10.5 billion in 2012.

New laws will allow access to information held by State

Business Daily Africa

Nairobi: The operations of the Kenyan government in the past 47 years can be summarised as secretive and opaque. However, this will soon be a thing of the past. However, the promulgation of the New Constitution on Friday will immediately allow Kenyans to demand disclosure of any information held by the State as provided for in Article 35.

"Health, education should be investigated"

Daily Dispatch

East London: The provincial legislature wants the Eastern Cape provincial administration to take tougher action against civil servants who mismanage taxpayers' money. This emerged on Tuesday following public hearings by the standing committee on public accounts last week, where eight departments were scrutinised for their 2008-9 audit reports.

Health MEC talks of "banana department"

The Times

Cape Town: Phumulo Masualle, the Eastern Cape's MEC for health, yesterday admitted that his department will either be a "banana department" or a place where staff do what is expected of them. Masualle and other Eastern Cape health officials appeared before Parliament's health committee yesterday for the second time this month.

East Cape education in critical condition

Daily Dispatch

East London: Eastern Cape Auditor-General Singa Ngqwala yesterday called for the urgent takeover of the provincial education department, saying it was "literally in an intensive care unit situation. If you look at the history of the department, I don't think they deserve to be given a budget," Ngqwala bluntly told the standing committee on public accounts in the Bhisho Legislature yesterday.

Where to for provincial education? Reviewing provincial education budgets 2006-2012

IDASA

Cape Town: South Africa's provincial education departments have been reduced to provincial administrations, for reasons that include the powerful role national government plays in delivering education services. The 2010 [spending proposals](#) highlight this.

2. Governance

Parliament "has right to summons minister"

Business Day,

Cape Town: National Assembly Speaker Max Sisulu yesterday agreed with Defence Minister Lindiwe Sisulu that she had to hand over interim reports of the National Defence Force Service Commission to Parliament's defence committee only once they had been processed by the Cabinet. However, Mr Sisulu recognised that Parliament had the right to summon any person to give evidence and to require any person or institution to produce documents.

Sisulu "contemptuous" of Parliament

News24

Cape Town: A senior ANC MP and NEC member confronted Lindiwe Sisulu, minister of defence, on Wednesday and said her contempt for Parliament is threatening to strip the institution of its authority. Mnyami Boo, chair of the Parliamentary portfolio committee on defence, said (without referring to Sisulu by name) that the empowerment of ministers at the cost of their MPs and their supervisory role can "kill" Parliament.

Editors get court order against Parliament

Business Day

Johannesburg: In an unprecedented move, the media yesterday forced Parliament - through an interim high court order - to halt a committee meeting about the renewed crisis in the SABC that it was determined to hold in secret.

Warning of "predator state"

The Times

Johannesburg: An angry COSATU has warned that it will no longer give "a blank cheque" to the ANC in elections, and that no "corrupt and lazy" ruling-party candidate will get its blessing in next year's local-government polls.

Tanzania: 70% of active CCM MPs shown the door

The Citizen

Dar es Salaam: About 70% of the most active Chama Cha Mapinduzi MPs in the outgoing Parliament were defeated in the party's nominations and will, therefore, not defend their seats in the October 31 general election. The losers made the most contributions in the National Assembly in Dodoma during the 19 sessions of the August House's 2005-2010 tenure, a new survey titled, 'Do People Prefer Active MPs?' has revealed.

Post election monitoring project takes off in Ghana

GhanaWeb

Kumasi: A post-election monitoring project, aimed at holding politicians and government accountable to their manifestoes and promises, has been launched in Kumasi. Dubbed "Ghana's post elections intervention project", it seeks to set up mechanisms that will provide up-to-date information and well-designed indications to assist in tracking the performance of politicians and governments, including local governance.

Dr Afari-Gyan outlines steps to combat electoral challenges in Africa

African Elections Project

Accra: Dr Afari-Gyan, chairman of Ghana Electoral Commission, has enumerated efforts being taken by electoral administrators in the continent to help deal with common challenges facing the electoral process in many countries. In a keynote address at a just ended Africa Media and Democracy Conference held in Accra, the electoral commissioner said, "practically everywhere in Africa, electoral commissions face challenges in trying to achieve credible elections."

Electoral commissions, Africa's new kingmakers

The Independent

Kampala: On May 26 President Museveni gave a rare speech about Uganda's opposition. He acknowledged that opposition parties too can generate debate and policies that spark development. The president was speaking at the opening ceremony of the Africa Regional Conference on the Electoral Cycle and Democratic Reforms at Munyonyo Resort hosted by the interparty organisations dialogue.

Democracy and development can both be possible in the new Kenya

Daily Nation

Nairobi: Under the new Constitution, Kenya enters a phase in which it intends to pursue simultaneously the paths of rapid economic growth under Kenya Vision 2030 and democratic governance at national and county level. When the grand celebration is over, Kenyans will face the difficult part of turning good intentions into reality. For whether it can succeed in achieving both goals will depend on our discipline on both fronts.

Coalition calls for speedy passage of RTI Bill to law

GhanaWeb

Bolgatanga: The Coalition on the Right to Information has reiterated its call on civil society organizations and individuals to join the advocacy train and demand for the Right to Information bill to be passed into law. "The coalition maintains that the right to information is fundamental to the realization of economic and social rights as well as civil and political rights. It seeks to promote accountability and empowerment of the citizenry in a democratic society".

NANGOF rues "missed opportunity"

New Era

Windhoek: The Namibia Non-Governmental Organisations Forum (NANGOF) Trust has criticised the manner in which the police prevented planned demonstrations by southern Africa civil society organisations that converged on Windhoek during the just-ended Southern Africa Development Community Summit. NANGOF challenged the ban of demonstrations in the High Court, and emerged victorious on Tuesday when Judge Nate Ndauendapo, after hearing arguments from lawyers of both NANGOF and those representing the Inspector-General of the Namibian Police, declared the ban unconstitutional.

Legislators set climate change demands

The Observer

Kampala: A new deadline to formulate Uganda's national policy on climate change was one of the major breakthroughs as parliamentarians from east and southern Africa met in Kampala last week to seek solutions on how to slow down the devastating effects of the changes in the weather cycle.

3. Anti-corruption

Effects of corruption more severe on poor citizens - Munkombwe

The Post

Lusaka: Southern Province minister Daniel Munkombwe has said the effects of corruption are more severe on the poor citizens who cannot afford alternative public services. And National Council for Construction standards officer Sali Kancheya observed that Transparency International's 2008 Bribe Payer's Index ranks construction as the sector mostly likely to bribe officials and contribute financially to politicians and political parties to achieve undue influence over policies, laws and regulations.

Business titans strike out at their own and vow to fight corruption

Business Report

Johannesburg: Big business yesterday took uncharacteristic aim at members of its own community involved in controversial deals. At a press briefing in Johannesburg, which followed a Business Leadership SA council meeting, chairman Bobby Godsell and chief executive Michael Spicer announced that the BLSA, which has 80 top corporates as members, would draw up an "anti-corruption" code to govern members' behaviour.

Global war on graft shifts to private sector and how firms can eliminate rot

Global Renewal

The United Nations Global Compact is an initiative to encourage businesses to voluntarily adhere to ethical standards. Launched a decade ago, the initiative now has about 7,700 corporate participants and stakeholders in 130 countries, including 297 firms in 29 sub-Saharan African nations. Africa Renewal spoke with Executive Director Georg Kell about the Compact's anti-corruption work.

Fight against corruption: debate on strategic plan

Agencia de Informação de Moçambique

Maputo: The Strategic Plan on Institutional Development of Mozambique's Central Office for the Fight against Corruption is to be the object of public consultation prior to the preparation of its final version. This was announced on Wednesday in Maputo by Prime Minister Aires Ali in a ceremony swearing in new members of the National Forum of the African Peer Review Mechanism, reports the daily paper "Noticias".

Desist corrupt practices, government tells contractors

The Citizen

Dar es Salaam: The permanent secretary in the ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement, Mr Patrick Rutabanzibwa, yesterday lashed out at professionals in the construction industry for embracing corruption. The PS called on experts in the industry to provide their fellow citizens with quality services without soliciting for bribes from their customers.

Queries as public firms defy procurement body

The Citizen

Dar es Salaam: The Tanzania Revenue Authority has defied an order requiring it to float afresh a \$3.18 million (Sh5.7bn) tender for supply of heavy-duty container scanners. The scanners are to be used at Dar es Salaam and Tanga ports when TRA's contract with Tanzania International Container Terminal Services expires in December. TRA has gone ahead and imported the two scanners despite a ruling by the Public Procurement Appeals Authority barring the transaction.

EAC wants stronger anti-corruption laws

The New Times

Kampala: Officials from EAC partner states have called on the regional bloc to ensure that there are strict laws that will pave way for recovery of government funds stolen by corrupt government officials in the region. The recommendation was made during the just concluded two-day, 2nd EAC Good Governance conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

HRW: Police corruption, threat to 2011 polls

THISDAY

Lagos: United States-based human rights body, Human Rights Watch, yesterday released a report in which it identified the Nigeria Police as the most corrupt government institution, the effects of which a community of civil society organisations said, would undermine the 2011 General Elections. This was revealed at the Lagos Airport Hotel, Ikeja where the organisation presented a 102-page report titled "[Everyone's in on the Game: Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force](#)," citing police corruption, arbitrariness and extra-judicial killings as threats to credible elections.

Crisis rocks NEITI over alleged corruption

THISDAY

Abuja: The secretariat of Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) in Abuja is now embroiled in a crisis over allegations of corruption, *THISDAY* has learnt. Following the allegations, Nigeria risks losing its place among the member countries of the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Analysts monitor new African oil states for corruption

VOA

Washington: Human rights organizations and other monitoring groups are keeping close tabs on frameworks to manage oil revenues in several African countries that are hoping to become major petroleum producers. The newcomers to an often opaque and corrupt sector of Africa's economy include Sao Tome, Ghana and Uganda.

4. Gender

Kenya: Now women can enjoy true citizenship

Daily Nation

Nairobi: What does citizenship mean? Why is it so important? At a basic level, it implies belonging. In a legal sense, it implies belonging to a given State - with all the rights and responsibilities that arise. When one belongs, one has a right not just to be present, but to engage with that State - and engage in a manner akin to that with one's own functional family. One can demand, expect - and contribute. Visitors to a home obviously also can engage - but rather more politely, without the same demands or expectations. And certainly without the obligation to contribute.

Arming women for national development

THISDAY

Lagos: Women participation in politics and national development remain very low and some experts argue that it is because Nigerian women have the wrong attitude towards these critical areas of nation building. But efforts are being made to address the trend and properly arm women for national development. A recent national summit is one of such efforts, writes Chimeme Akafor.

Climate change policy ignores women farmers

Inter Press Service

Cape Town: When asked if they have already felt the effects of climate change, Mary-Anne Zimri and Katrina Scheepers eagerly nod their heads. The two small-scale farmers say lack of rain this winter has foiled their planting season, ruined their harvest - and drastically slashed their income. "We have been hit on all sides," says Zimri, who together with Scheepers belongs to a farming cooperative in Wuppertal, a small hamlet in South Africa's Western Cape province. The coop specialises in rooibos tea, but also plants vegetables and keeps livestock.

Global economic crisis hits educated and unemployed women

CISA

Nairobi: In many Middle Eastern and North African countries, the reliance on labour-based markets has long put women at a disadvantage for employment, an independent media organisation has said. The global economic crisis has hit young women in the developing world particularly hard, says MediaGlobal. The organisation says that participation rates for women have always been low, 21.5 and 22.9% in the respective regions.

Churches urged not to condone gender based violence

Ghana News Agency

Accra: The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa, on Saturday urged ministers of the gospel not to condone or connive with gender based violence perpetrators. "The church must not cover up for wrong doings but must report cases of violence to the appropriate authorities for legal redress," FECCIWA stated in a communiqué issued in Accra after a four-day regional conference.

When childbirth becomes a deadly gamble

Daily Monitor

In Uganda, childbirth can be deadly. With 435 deaths for every 100,000 births, lack of modern family planning methods, a poor health care system and battered infrastructure means every pregnancy is a gamble, writes Evelyn Lirri: Ms Margaret Ajok is expecting her sixth child. The 26-year-old resident of Awere Sub-county in Pader District had come for antenatal checkup when I met her at Awere Health Centre. It is her fourth visit since she became pregnant.

5. General

Malawi: Missing out on online technology for transparency

Global Voices

If there is one online tool that has attracted many Malawians, then it is Facebook. It appears to be the "in thing" for many who are increasingly accessing the Internet. Then there are tweets. In the 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections, Twitter was heavily used for the first time to share developments in Malawi. The same applies to blogs - at least a hundred and fifty Malawians have personal online diaries. Such new media tools help "net" citizens connect with others throughout the world, enabling online civic engagement. While Malawi seems to be doing well in terms of online social networks, it has yet to make progress in using these tools for transparency and accountability.

Website to publish assets of senior government officials

The Phnom Penh Post

Phnom Penh: The government's Anti-corruption Unit plans to set up a website to publicise the asset declarations of government officials and other materials related to the Kingdom's anti-graft strategy, the body's chairman said yesterday. Speaking on the sidelines of a symposium hosted in part by anti-graft group Transparency International, ACU head Om Yentieng said the website would help to publicise the government's fight against corruption.

India: Will hiking MP pay reduce corruption?

Wall Street Journal (India)

New Delhi: The government has agreed to further hike earnings for MPs by increasing their office and constituency allowances by 5,000 rupees each a month. This is in addition to the earlier increase in these allowances to 40,000 rupees from 20,000 rupees, and on top of the increase in their basic pay to 50,000 rupees, [reported PTI](#).

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Organisations involved in social accountability work are encouraged to [submit their reports to ANSA-Africa](#) for posting on our website - thereby reaching a much wider audience in Africa and internationally.

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