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## Inspiring the Future: The Big Me Career Learning Fair



Participants at the BigMe Career Fair dress up as their dream professions, showcasing their aspirations and creativity.

On Saturday, September 21, 2024, ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK) hosted the inaugural Big Me Career Learning Fair at the Kasarani Sports Complex, bringing together over 1,000 children and their parents for an exciting career exploration and personal vision-building.

The event, designed to ignite young learners' imaginations, provided a unique platform for children to engage with professionals from various industries. From doctors, pilots, and IT experts to models, engineers, and more, attendees gained insights into the diverse careers shaping the world today.

Children, dressed in school uniforms, casual clothes, or even costumes reflecting their dream professions, were able to interact directly with these professionals.

Through hands-on experiences, they learned about the skills required, educational pathways, and the realities of these careers. One young participant from Jabali Christian Schools shared her enthusiasm for the event, saying:

"I enjoyed the Big Me Career Learning Fair. Speaking with over 20 professionals expanded my imagination and clarified my ideas. I even discovered that some people pursue multiple passions, like an accountant who is also a model or a teacher who is also an artist. I can't wait to come back next year!"



The future of careers is in the making: Attendees gather valuable insights from experts at the BigMe Career Learning Fair.

Another learner from Kathonzweni echoed similar sentiments, reflecting on how the fair broadened his career horizons:

“I had never heard of fields like travel and tours, IT, water engineering, or modeling. Thanks to this event, I’ve added many new options to my vision board and will keep researching them.

AAIK’s Executive Director, Susan Otieno, expressed her pride in the success of the event, particularly the active involvement of parents in supporting their children’s early career exploration:

“We’re inspired by the parents who have joined their children on this journey. This is just the beginning, and we look forward to an even bigger event next year. Our goal is to help children find direction early so they can transform society for the better.”

This inaugural event marks a significant step in helping children unlock their potential and inspires them to dream big.

By encouraging young learners to explore various career options early on, the Big Me Career Learning Fair is fostering a generation of young people ready to shape a brighter future for all.

The fair’s success is a reminder that nurturing the ambitions of the next generation is key to creating a more innovative, inclusive, and dynamic society.

The Big Me Career Learning Fair was made possible through the support of key partners, including the Standard Media Group, Gertrude’s Children’s Hospital, Davis & Shirliff, the Kenya Police Service, Guru Nanak hospital, SkyCraft Aviators among others. In addition, educational institutions such as Regis Runda Academy, Jabali Christian Schools, and Loreto Convent Msongari played a vital role in mentoring young participants.



## Tighten Nuts on Executives to Ward off Rogue Treaties like the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT)



Participants capture a memorable moment after the sensitization meeting with lawyers on ECT (Electronic Communication Technology) held on September 20, 2024, in Nairobi.

Parliament must enact robust public participation regulations to curb government officials from unilaterally committing Kenya to dubious treaties like the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). Officials appending their signatures to such agreements should be held personally liable to safeguard Kenya's sovereignty, environment, and public resources.

On September 20, 2024, ActionAid International Kenya (AAIK) sensitized over 50 advocates of the High Court of Kenya, alongside lawyers from various organizations, on the controversial ECT.

This treaty, signed in 2017 by former Cabinet Secretary for Energy Alfred Keter, aligns Kenya as an interested member of a pro-fossil fuel agreement, posing risks to the environment and the economy. If ratified, the ECT could derail Kenya's transition from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources.



Susan Otieno delivers her remarks on ECT during the sensitization meeting with lawyers held on September 20, 2024, in Nairobi.

According to Susan Otieno, Executive Director of AAIK, it is vital to enlist technical expertise to advocate for Kenya's withdrawal from the ECT.

"When we initiated conversations on the ECT, we were warned to avoid the subject. But we remain resolute. We can't tackle this alone, and we are enlisting technical partners to strengthen our efforts," she said.

Susan Otieno highlighted the ECT's origins as a far-reaching legal framework aimed at regulating energy trade, transit, investment, and dispute resolution. While the EU (European Union) has collectively exited the ECT, African countries lack such cohesion, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

Wycliffe Nyakina, an activist and constitutional litigation expert, stressed the importance of regional integration:

"Kenya and Africa must set the agenda. Treaties dictated by the Global North prioritize their interests, not ours. We must establish a legal environment that aligns with our laws and policies."

Caroline Khasoa, an advocate of the High Court and convener of LECC BARAZA, emphasized the need for stringent accountability measures.

"The best way to hold someone accountable is to establish minimum standard testing procedures. When things go wrong, Kenyans must have grounds to demand answers. Without this, resource plundering will continue," she said.

The advocates called for amendments to the Government Contracts Act Chapter 25 (Revised Edition 2022 [1956]), specifically Section Six, which absolves public officers from personal liability when acting on behalf of the government. This provision contradicts the Treaty Ratification Act, 2012, which criminalizes treaty ratification without parliamentary approval. Public officers must align with Kenya's constitutional and legal frameworks to avoid entering damaging agreements.

ActionAid is spearheading efforts to educate stakeholders and the public on treaties like the ECT. Key advocacy targets include judges, magistrates, members of Parliament, civil society organizations, and executives in the Department of International Treaties under the Attorney General's Office. AAIK is collaborating with LECC Baraza and Kituo Cha Sheria to amplify these efforts.

The Law Society of Kenya – Nairobi Branch pledged to provide legal expertise to prevent Kenya from advancing to full membership in the ECT. Advocacy efforts must continue to ensure Kenya's sovereignty, sustainable development, and alignment with its constitutional mandates.

By uniting regional and local stakeholders, Kenya can reject treaties that undermine its economic and environmental goals, while fostering partnerships that prioritize the interests of its citizens.



## Document Land Injustices to Strengthen Lawsuits, Communities Advised



Indigenous communities seeking justice for historical land injustices (HLI) have been urged to document evidence to bolster their legal claims. Human rights and land law experts emphasized that accurate documentation, including oral histories, photographs, and videos, can provide critical support in pursuing justice.

Caroline Khasoa of the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) and convener of the Land, Environment, and Climate Change (LECC) Baraza reassured attendees at a conference in Nairobi that even oral evidence is admissible in Kenyan courts. "Your forefathers may have died, but they passed down evidence through community stories.

Record these stories and photograph significant landmarks," Khasoa said, highlighting the constitutional protection of customary land tenure.

Citing the Mau Mau case, she noted how litigants successfully collected witness statements between 2006 and 2009, resulting in a 2013 ruling where the British government compensated claimants.



Hajj Mwakio (L) of Taita Taveta Human Rights Watch, an ActionAid Kenya talks to Commissioner Esther Murugi (R) of National Lands Commission during Historical Land Injustices 2024 Conference on September 12 in Nairobi.

The conference brought together communities from across Kenya, including Turkana, Maasai, Ogiek, and Endorois, among others. The National Land Commission's (NLC) Commissioner, Esther Murugi, pledged to resolve all HLI claims before the statutory deadline of 2026. Legislators Sarah Korema and Titus Lotee expressed their support for strengthening the NLC and addressing ongoing land injustices.

Faith Alubbe, CEO of the Kenya Land Alliance, stressed the importance of procedural justice, ensuring affected communities both directly and indirectly receive equitable remedies. "Justice must start on the right footing," Alubbe said, urging communities to engage spatial planners and surveyors in their cases, as the NLC acts on surveyed land.

She also encouraged communities to escalate unresolved issues to international mechanisms like the Human Rights Council, United Nations Special Rapporteurs, and other global human rights entities. She cited the Talai community's success in securing justice through the Human Rights Council in Geneva after local courts failed to implement awards effectively.

Challenges to resolving HLIs include limited access to information, conflicting laws, abuse of power, and a lack of political goodwill. The Ndung'u Report and the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) findings remain largely unimplemented. Alubbe also criticized procedural flaws, such as relocation efforts that disregard the Land Act of 2012, and skewed compensation initiatives.

During the conference, Amos Musyoka from the Ministry of Lands revealed that Lamu County is classified as public land, prompting calls for transparency. Communities demanded an inventory of public lands, regulation of land leases, and the abolition of colonial land titles.

Participants also pressed for the implementation of the TJRC and Ndung'u reports, along with a formal apology and justice from individuals and corporations responsible for HLIs.

"Admitting wrongdoing and serving justice are crucial steps toward reconciliation and resolution," attendees concluded, signaling their determination to pursue justice for historical grievances.



## ActionAid Kenya Hosts Climate Justice Concert and Launches Flagship Report During Global Week of Action



Participants at the Climate Justice Concert held at the Global Platform, advocating for a sustainable future.

To mark the Global Week of Action, which ran from September 13th to 20th, 2024, ActionAid Kenya, in collaboration with the Global Platform, convened a powerful Climate Justice Concert on September 18th. This event was a key highlight of the week, which focused on advocating for climate action and justice for the Global South.

During the week, ActionAid International launched its second flagship report, "How the Finance Flows: Corporate Capture of Public Finance Fueling the Climate Crisis in the Global South."

The report reveals a stark reality: countries in the Global South are disproportionately spending their public finance on subsidizing fossil fuels and industrial agriculture while neglecting climate solutions that are just, feminist, and community led. These solutions include agroecology and renewable energy, which are vital for a sustainable and equitable future.



Susan Otieno, Executive Director of ActionAid Kenya, highlights the impact of industries fueling the climate crisis during the Climate Justice Concert at the Global Platform.

ActionAid International Kenya has organized several events throughout the Global Week of Action in solidarity with young people and the communities it works with. The events called on the Global South to PayUp for Climate and demanded a green, just transition to a fossil-free world.

These efforts highlight the urgent need for a shift in funding priorities one that directs public finance toward sustainable, community-led climate solutions and away from the harmful industries that perpetuate the crisis. Through this report and the ongoing advocacy, ActionAid is amplifying the voices of those most affected by climate change, advocating for a fairer, more just climate future for the Global South.

According to the report, the industries that are driving the climate crisis are also successfully capturing the majority of public finance from governments in the Global South. As a result, vital resources that could be used for equitable climate solutions are being diverted toward industries that harm the environment and local communities.

Susan Otieno, Executive Director of ActionAid International Kenya, commented on the findings: “The industries fueling the climate crisis are draining public funds in the Global South. The same industries that are driving the climate crisis and harming communities are also successfully extracting the majority of public finance from Global South governments, diverting much needed resources away from just, equitable solutions.”



Communities affected by the climate crisis shared their stories at the Climate Justice Concert at the Global Platform, advocating for urgent action.



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