

OPINION

QUOTED TODAY



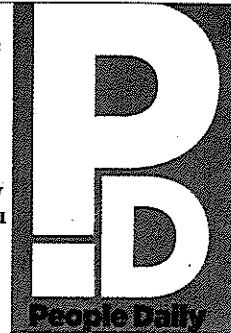
“How can I be bitter with somebody who is still far away from reaching where I am? Being a Deputy President today does not make him (Ruto) politically superior to me,” **UDP leader Cyrus Jirongo in response to DP William Ruto’s ‘jealousy’ remarks.**



“Kenya is at a crossroads. Solutions are need to end national challenges and prescribing jobs for certain people based on ethnicity is not the answer,” **Former DPP Philip Murgor on national challenges.**



“IPPG saved the country when there was need and it would be great if the leaders can solve this (IEBC) conundrum fast and with the finality it requires,” **Ex-Saku MP and IPPG deal co-architect Jillo Falana on IEBC reforms debate.**



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Editorial

Strategise sector goals to improve tourism fortunes

Tourism Cabinet secretary Najib Balala's work appears cut out for him after announcements that arrivals dropped by 19.5 per cent from 1.5 million in 2014 to 1.2 million last year, despite high expectations to the contrary.

Estimated tourism receipts for 2015 also declined by three per cent to record Sh84.6 billion from Sh87.1 billion in 2014, in what has been a consistent decline since 2011.

Last year's shock dip comes against the backdrop of high-level visitors such as that of the US President Barack Obama and Pope Francis both of whom brushed aside security concerns to make their maiden visits. The 10th World Trade Organisation's ministerial conference last December took place in Nairobi, the first time it was held in Africa, to wrap up what was an optimistic year putting the country on the global limelight.

Expectations were that it would mark the beginning

“With close to a billion people in a continent said to be world's fastest growing, better marketing in Africa could be local tourism sector's lifeline

of recovery of local tourism. The visits and global forums were a fresh breath for the sector and marketers should have leveraged on the occasions to drum up more visits since they happened as the high season peaked.

But, the ministry has since put in place various programmes, including charter incentives, review of park fees, fees waivers, improved facilitation for inbound travellers, downgrading of travel advisories and investment in key marketing programmes to shore up visits.

As per the ministry proposals, more should be done to particularly enhance tourism within East Africa and other emerging markets. But news that in the next budget the sector could receive Sh1.2 billion less than it bargained for is alarming and the ministry must move with speed to review its targets.

Going forward, therefore, the sector must be alive to the fact that in every generation, fundamental global changes create new patterns that affect existing enterprise and the sector is in such a situation.

In a constantly changing world, disruption is rife and high levels of complexity and pace imminent, and Kenya must stop looking either East or West to tap tourists for a change. With close to a billion people in a continent considered the fastest growing in the world, better marketing in Africa could be the ultimate lifeline.

The good news is that Africa contributed 26 per cent of the total arrivals last year, indicating that we have barely scratched the surface. By redirecting a good portion of its marketing budget to target Africa markets, the sector could set up a solid foundation for steady growth for a long time. While at it, more efforts to make Kenya more enticing to Kenyans would only spur growth.



Kennedy Buhere

Curriculum reform will indentify, nurture learners' abilities

One of the fundamental thinking underlying the curriculum reform the government launched a few months ago is that every learner has inherent abilities and talents that an education system ought to identify and nurture.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Education seeks to prescribe a balanced curriculum, a concept of curriculum design which reflects the philosophy and beliefs of educating the whole child and enabling the child to take an active role in constructing meaning from experiences.

Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 Reforming Education and Training Sectors in Kenya observes: “The content of basic education shall need to be designed to equip all learners with relevant knowledge, skills, competencies and values, enabling learners to develop to full capacity and enhance the quality of their lives—able to make informed decisions and predisposed to engage in life-long learning.”

The abilities and inclinations of children are as varied as there are children seeking to learn. They come into classroom with own unique set of intellectual strengths and weaknesses. It is for this reason that the policy on curriculum reform pays tribute to the diverse nature and inclinations of the learners. The envisaged curriculum will accordingly have parallel and complimentary tiers: Academic, vocational and technical curricular.

The government will consequently introduce a multi-track system of education at basic educational levels to take care of the learning needs of all the categories of education and provide a window for progression to higher education and the world of work through the three tiers.

One of the most glaring constraints associated with the current curriculum on learners and, therefore, on the country, is that it has emphasised intellectual abilities to the exclusion of other otherwise legitimate and functional abilities, talents and inclinations on learners.

Educational theory has been founded on classic psychometric and behaviourist assumptions which believed that intelligence was a single entity that was inherited; and that human beings—initially a blank slate—could be trained to learn any-

“The government will introduce a multi-track system of education to take care of all learning needs

thing, provided it was presented in an appropriate way.

A professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, Howard Gardner, challenged this idea of IQ in the early 1980s, saying there was more than one way to be smart or intelligent and introduced the concept of Multiple Intelligences. According to him, intelligence is the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings.

There are certain abilities and products that are not amenable to the traditional IQ, which, Gardner argues, can be broken down into two intelligences—linguistic intelligence and logical-

mathematical intelligence. The former involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals while the latter consists of the capacity to analyse problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically.

Those who don't have any of the two intelligences are condemned as uneducable.

In his multiple intelligence theory, we have, besides linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Talented musicians, artists, learners with athletic and other talents have not had the recognition they ought to have, nor have those with strong interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

According to Gardner, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. Indeed, it is here where technical and vocational disciplines find full play.

The Sessional Paper cited above observes: “At the heart of this vision is a curriculum which will provide knowledge, skills, competencies and values to enable learners to move seamlessly from the education system into the world of work, with further academic, technical and vocational education, adding value to what has been acquired through the education system.”

The curriculum the government is in the process of forging will assuredly meet the objectives that the Sessional Paper outlines.

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