

A man is a man, a woman is a woman – British PM

PEOPLE cannot just choose to be any sex they want, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak proclaimed during this week's Conservative Party Conference. He added to a string of skeptical remarks by senior Tory officials about transgenderism throughout the four-day event.

"We shouldn't get bullied into believing that people can be any sex they want to be. They can't. A man is a man, and a woman is a woman. And that's just common sense," he said in his closing speech on Wednesday, as the audience erupted in applause.

The Tories, who have been in power in Britain for 13 years, are facing a tough battle at the ballot box next year. Contrasting their position towards transgender rights to that of the Labour Party was picked as a strategy for the election campaign, the Financial Times suggested on Tuesday, citing insider sources and the speeches during the conference in Manchester.

Home secretary Suella Braverman claimed that the

opposition was seeking to make Britain "woke," warning that "highly controversial ideas" were being pushed on the country, including "gender ideology, white privilege [and], anti-British history."

"The British people will get to decide if they want to curb woke with Rishi Sunak or let it run riot with Keir take-the-knee Starmer," she said, referring to the Labour leader.

Tory London Assembly member Andrew Botif was booted from the conference for heckling Braverman, after her remarks.

Health secretary Steve Barclay highlighted plans to "recognise the importance of different biological needs and protect the rights of women" in the National Health Service constitution. The review may result in women-only wards becoming off-limits to transgender women.

"As Conservatives, we know what a woman is," the secretary said in an apparent swipe at Starmer, who has suggested that some women have male

genitalia. Michelle Donelan, the science secretary, lashed out at the "slow creep of wokeism" during the party gathering. Kemi Badenoch, the business secretary, and Alistair Jack, the Scottish secretary, claimed credit for the Tories having blocked a gender self-recognition bill in Scotland in January.

However, a Tory minister, who discussed the party election strategy with FT, urged caution about the approach.

"We are on the right side of public opinion on this but there's a danger of overkill," the minister said.

Prime Minister Sunak's previous statements about the nature of womanhood had been less categorical. He repeatedly avoided defining what a woman was in an interview with Julia Hartley-Brewer in 2022, and when Piers Morgan inquired about the matter earlier this year he sidestepped the question and instead offered a message of support for transgender individuals. - RT

Ruto demotes his foreign minister

By Wycliffe Muia

KENYA'S foreign minister Alfred Mutua has been demoted as controversy rages over plans to deploy police to Haiti to fight gangs.

Main opposition leader Raila Odinga was the latest to oppose the move, saying the deployment would risk the lives of Kenyan police.

Mutua's demotion to tourism minister was part of the first major cabinet reshuffle by President William Ruto.

In August, the President criticised some of his ministers as clueless.

President Ruto took office in August last year with the promise to improve the economy and better the lives of lower-income earners.

But he has faced a series of

opposition-led protests over the high cost of living and tax hikes.

President Ruto said in a statement late on Wednesday that the reshuffle was meant to "optimise performance and enhance delivery as set out in the administration's manifesto".

On Tuesday, he cracked down on government spending and foreign travel, ordering ministries to cut their spending by 10 per cent.

President Ruto reassigned Mutua to the tourism ministry and put the foreign affairs ministry under the office of the Prime Cabinet Secretary, which falls under his close ally, Musalia Mudavadi.

The move is seen as an attempt to give President Ruto's inner circle more

influence over diplomatic affairs.

A senior member of the ruling party, senator Kiprotich Arap Cherargei, said the changes were "necessitated by performance".

"The writing is on the wall for the non-performing cabinet secretaries and those who perpetuate corruption and lethargy in their ministries," Cherargei posted on X, formerly Twitter.

As foreign minister, Mutua was a vocal supporter of a Kenyan-led peacekeeping mission to Haiti.

He recently said that about 1,000 police would be deployed "within a short time".

The UN Security Council approved the deployment of the force on Tuesday.

President Ruto welcomed its decision, but did not mention when the police would be sent.

Some Kenyan MPs have demanded parliamentary approval before the deployment.

The defence and security ministers, who have been quiet about the planned Haiti deployment, were not affected by the reshuffle.

If deployed, the Kenyan police would help tackle gangs that have taken control of large parts of Haiti, killing hundreds and disrupting public services.

Odinga, in an interview with privately-owned KTN News, said the situation in Haiti was too dangerous for Kenyan police.

"When coffins start arriving here, that's when we shall regret [it]. Haiti is dangerous and there's a possibility our police will encounter problems there," said Odinga.

Also affected is the former trade minister Moses Kuria, who will no longer head the public service ministry.

Kuria has in recent times faced criticism over what has been seen as his arrogant approach when addressing the high cost of living crisis in Kenya.

He has also previously stirred controversy over his remarks against a Chinese-owned shop selling cheap household goods in Kenya. He was also recently snubbed by the US trade representative during her recent visit to Kenya. - BBC

Climate change is a knowledge intensive arena, notes Chibamba

By Rhoda Nthara

GREEN economy permanent secretary Douy Chibamba says the Climate Smart Governance Dashboard (CSG) platform offers a dedicated source of knowledge in terms of climate risk and vulnerability profiles.

During the Climate Smart Governance Dashboard launch in Lusaka, Chibamba said the web-based climate change adaptation platform will provide a vital means of accessing and sharing climate change information to Zambian researchers and policy makers.

"This is crucial given that climate change is a knowledge intensive arena that requires huge quantities of data to support decision making for adaptation planning at local, national and transnational scales," he said. "...this is a tool that seems to address the lack of timely, context-specific, actionable information for researchers, policy makers and planners evidence-based policy formulation for climate action. Indeed, empirical data is the

foundation for evidence-based policy formulation process for supporting the implementation of the eighth national development plan (8NDP) and the national adaptation plan (NAP), including achieving the sustainable development goals."

Chibamba said the CGIAR ClimBER initiative was launched in six countries, Guatemala, Kenya, Morocco, the Philippines, Senegal and Zambia.

He further said the ultimate goal of the initiative is to increase the resilience of smallerholder production systems to withstand severe climate change effects like drought, flooding and high temperatures.

"As you are aware, the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment in collaboration with International Water Management Institute (IWMI) under the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR) ClimBER initiative began works in 2023 of developing the Climate Smart Governance Dashboard for Zambia,"

Chibamba said. He said the CSG online platform offers a dedicated source of knowledge in terms of climate risk and vulnerability profiles, adaptation and mitigation actions that are being implemented across the country, opportunities for climate financing and more over.

He said the data is desperately needed by the researchers and policy makers.

"The establishment of this platform is timely. It will complement the national climate change communication and advocacy strategy for our ministry," Chibamba said.

He said the platform would increase the knowledge base at country's disposal.

Chibamba said the platform would also enhance the speed and efficiency of climate action taken at national and sub-national levels.

He said it would also enhance climate change awareness and education thereby promoting the implementation of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and

national adaptation plan.

"As we launch the CSG dashboard, let us bear in mind that to sustain climate change knowledge and information sharing, the ministry will require support from all stakeholders through information provision and capacity development to ensure timely and effective CSG dashboard update, maintenance and hosting," said Chibamba.

"Again, we note that the dashboard has provided an online tool tailored to continuous updating and reporting on progress made towards climate actions in the country. It takes hardware to produce such a comprehensive and yet well elaborated climate change knowledge sharing platform.

"With this dashboard, my ministry will immediately commence the process to raise awareness on this tool."

International Water Management Institute (IWMI) director Mark Smith said climate change is a global issue that is experienced at the local level.

Dr Smith said in Zambia climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, changing weather patterns and driving temperature increases.

"All of these impacts have profound implications for communities for the environment and the economy," he said. "Our goal is to provide assistance to communities impacted by floods, droughts

and landslides before those events become disasters. Today in collaboration with the green economy and climate change department, the Ministry of Green Economy and the Environment are very proud to officially launch a climate smart governance dashboard; the first of its kind platform to integrate climate smart governance into national climate adaptation planning and development. This dashboard is a tool for decision makers in need of information and data on global impacts on change."

Dr Smith said with the dashboard, decision makers can better understand the costs and benefits of various adaptation solutions and the different climate change scenarios.

"You can access information on best practices, track and monitor projects at the national, local-scale and coordinate interventions across ministries and across the global partners," said Dr Smith. "Most important the dashboard can effectively mobilise and manage climate finance from national and international funding sources as well ensure funding mechanisms are accessible to those who mostly need them. The dashboard will directly assist agencies to support adaptation and mitigation projects to reduce the impact of climate change, reduce vulnerabilities and protect the well-being of their populations and ecosystems."

Tambatamba urges secretaries institute to woo men into the profession

By Edwin Mbulo in Livingstone

LABOUR minister Brenda Tambatamba says Zambia's key challenge is low productivity.

And Tambatamba has called for men to be admitted into secretarial training.

Meanwhile, Zambia Institute of Secretaries (ZIS) president Christabel Mwambazi says secretaries are not recognised and appreciated at workplaces.

Speaking at the first ZIS annual general meeting being held at Avani Hotel, Tambatamba asked the institute to help market the secretarial profession.

"I wish to urge the institute to extend this (capacity building) initiative to training institutions by enhancing linkages. That is one of the ways you can contribute to skills development. One of the key challenges that this country is facing is low productivity. As secretaries, you may not see your role in enhancing productivity but I am here to tell you that you have a very important role in enhancing productivity of the country," she said.

"But the productivity of the chief executive officers, directors and other staff that depend on your services is important." Tambatamba said secretaries improved work flow helps to contribute to Zambia's economy.

She urged the secretaries not to stigmatise

themselves. She said the ZIS should also find ways of onboarding the youth and students into the institute.

Tambatamba noted that traditionally the secretarial profession has been the domain of women, a trend that has continued to date.

"This is visible in this room. In the spirit of inclusivity, I call upon the institute to help market the profession to our male folk. I strongly believe that the institute and the profession can benefit from the inclusion of men," she said. "A good example is the increase of male nurses. A field that was previously the domain of the women, this is something that the institute can learn from as it expands the profession."

Tambatamba urged the secretaries to remain ethical and professional in their duties.

And Mwambazi said: "I am sure that my fellow secretaries will agree with me that most of us are not recognised and appreciated in our workplaces."

"Several secretaries are denied the opportunity to go for training so that they can get exposure and enhance their skills," said Mwambazi. "To succeed in our daily duties, we must remain focused and professional. Let us ensure that we actively keep developing and improving our skills in order to adopt and improve our work performances."

by the ever increasing fuel prices. Kalaba said the building of schools must be in conformity with the building of houses for teachers.

He also charged that some teachers are not receiving housing allowance despite being in houses which are not decent for their proper habitation in the name of it being a government house.

"In urban areas, housing allowance doesn't meet the rental demands," Kalaba said. He also lamented that most teachers have been in acting positions for many years

Confusion rocks L/stone CDF committee

By Edwin Mbulo in Livingstone

CONFUSION has rocked Livingstone's CDF committee over the non-issuance of the 2023 loans.

According to submissions by several CDF members on their WhatsApp page one member requested Livingstone UPND member of parliament who is also tourism minister Rodney Sikumba to change.

"Imwe bantu (people) what is happening to CDF loans in Livingstone for 2023? The year is coming to an end. Should people go on media or complain to the President as he comes to Livingstone? This is not fair at

all, when other people in other districts are getting. Southern Province is a lendown especially Livingstone," the member wrote.

"When will people use the money? Mr Sikumba work [wake] up because the same people you are not helping are the same people who vote. Unless you are not standing next time. As far as CDF is concerned there is nothing much to show in Livingstone."

The member reminded Sikumba that the rich people he was now embracing are few and sometimes don't even vote.

"But the poor masses out there control who to give power. Wait and see. Tourism doing good does not mean you have scored on everything, no. Tourists don't vote, those running tourism are all over Zambia but your ticket is in Livingstone. So watch your space and don't complain in future. It is never too late, change for the better," the CDF member wrote.

As of yesterday Sikumba, who is a member of the WhatsApp CDF group, had not responded to the members concerns.

Another CDF member wrote: "Dear colleagues, we have the mandate to ensure that concerns like these do not arise from the public. Secretariat, could we please have a roadmap on this

issue without further delay since we have the money in the bank. We can't afford more negative press."

Another wrote: "People are asking us in the wards and we don't have answers to give them. Maybe we should tell them that we have failed to handle [the] CDF loan component. Please advise."

Another adds: "This issue (loans), I had brought it on the 19th but I looked like I was confused. Now the community has started questioning what we are doing. Chair and secretariat can we have an answer to avoid feather (further) confusion in the communities."

Another indicated: "Morning colleagues, let someone give update on the current situation of loans, unlike keeping us in the dark."

And in an interview, a member who sought anonymity, said the CDF committee was being let down by council workers who are handling the fund.

The member also noted that many of the CDF projects are of poor quality and are over priced.

The member said it does not make business sense to give someone a loan almost a year after application as costs have fructuated from the time of application.

High cost of living demands salary increment – Kalaba

By Thomas Ngala

THE high cost of living demands a serious consideration of the salary increment as we face 2024 to enable our teachers to survive the excruciating economic hardships, says Citizens First (CF) president Harry Kalaba.

Commemorating the International Teachers' Day yesterday, Kalaba said the ever increasing fuel prices have affected the movement of teachers to their workplaces since accommodation is still a challenge.

He said the transport allowance is haunted

without being confirmed or upgraded. "Teachers work tirelessly in the areas they are assigned like marking examinations and co-curricular activities. However, they are paid less after marking and unpaid allowances has become the order of the day," he said.

"The Teaching Council of Zambia should also get interested in the welfare of teachers to cement the correlation between professionalism and societal image of a teacher."

Kalaba said rural hardship allowance must be 100 per cent of the basic pay to motivate teachers serving in rural areas.