

Envoy challenges groups on integrity

By BEAUTTAH OMANGA

US Ambassador to Kenya Michael Ranneberger has issued a scathing attack on the work of civil societies, accusing them of being led by greed for quick money at the expense of acting as a bridge between the rulers and the ruled.

He expressed his regrets that there has been serious and credible criticism that the civil society is riddled with a disjointed membership that sometimes is subject to political manipulation.

"Others maintain that some organisations exist only for financial self-benefit without any benefits reaching the common Kenyan," said the envoy.

Addressing about 500 representatives of various NGOs, Ranneberger

challenged the participants to evaluate themselves on how their respective organisations had benefited the common man.

"You will only do so if you are honest with yourselves and if you can rise to the challenge by overcoming your divisions," he told the participants.

CULTURE OF IMPUNITY

The civil society has been weakened by the same problems affecting the country, he said, blaming the culture of impunity for lack of accountability in organisations.

"Few NGOs, if any, truly have national reach. Many are dominated by one ethnic group or another or are divided internally, based on ethnicity. Many NGO leaders seek to serve own interests," said Ranneberger.

He expressed concern that some

civil society organisations were being compromised by vested interests either through enticements about possible appointments or through outright corruption.

Others just focus on securing donor funding through "endless seminars and workshops directed to or at the national level", he said.

"How many NGOs truly cut across the political, ethnic, religious and social spectrum and reach the grassroots throughout the country?" he asked.

The envoy challenged the groups to remain bold and stick to taking decisive actions on national matters. He also advised them to develop roadmaps and specific action plans in their contribution to implementation of the new Constitution.

House not supposed to supervise Judiciary, MPs told

By BEAUTTAH OMANGA

Two MPs and the Law Society of Kenya have cautioned Parliament against any attempts to censure a High Court judge.

Gichugu MP Martha Karua, Mandera Central's Mohammed Abdikadir and LSK Chairman Kennedy Akide said the move was political.

"LSK will raise concerns about the judge when the vetting process kicks off. We have complaints against her conduct as a judge, but we don't want Parliament to handle judicial matters on the floor of the House, as that amounts to intimidation and gross interference," said Akide.

He said LSK was not in agreement

with the orders the judge issued concerning boundaries, saying she should have referred the matter to a constitutional court.

Ms Karua and Mr Abdikadir said MPs who were gearing up for the censure Motion to be moved by Benedict Gunda were all ignorant of the law.

"The law is clear that whenever anybody is aggrieved by a judgment or an order, the best option is to raise it through an appeal or have a lawyer who will respond appropriately at the appeal stage," she said.

Abdikadir said Parliament would be committing illegality by discussing the Judiciary, which must be independent. They spoke at the Civil Society National Congress in Nairobi.