

Title As part of efforts to make a positive impact and contribution to needy and less fortunate members within the society, the Charity and Welfare Committee of the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat organized an outreach event to Mercy Children's Home in Githurai at the outskirts of Nairobi City, Kenya on 17th December 2011. Food stuff, books, toys and other essential items were presented by the 15 Secretariat staff that visited the Children's Home. The team spent quality time playing with the kids and sharing gift items including colouring books on African vultures to create awareness on bird conservation. They also used the visit to encourage the children to grow up loving nature. Through the inspirational and motivational speeches by staff, the children were encouraged not lose hope but grow up knowing that they are loved. This visit gave staff a great opportunity to put a smile on the faces of these children, especially at this time of year when everyone is usually in a celebratory mood. Every year, staff members of the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat dedicate their time



and mobilize essential commodities to support a needy home.

House of Mercy Children's Home for orphaned and abandoned children was established more than ten years ago and is run by Mrs. Rose Tambasi. According to her, children at the home were formerly street kids or orphaned and abandoned children from Nairobi and Thika Counties. The youngest child, less than a year old baby was found in a polythene bag in a refuse dump. Some of the orphans at the home are victims of parents that died of pandemic AIDS disease. "Like a mustard seed story, this House of Mercy Home started small with just a few children put on a daily feeding programme before they became resident and we have seen it grow, with the eldest child pursuing a degree in the United States through a sponsor. In spite of the challenges, through the support we receive from members of the public and the partnerships with various institutions that has come to our help, we have been able to soldier on", she said. Many kids have gone through the home to become successful members in society. The home has been able to weather the storm of food shortages due to drought, fear of raising societal rejects by some of the neighbours and lack of resources. 2011 has been an eventful year for the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat Charity and Welfare Committee. The committee coordinated support to various charitable causes, including the Kenya Red Cross and the Kenyans for Kenya appeal to contribute to the nation-wide relief efforts to address the humanitarian crisis arising from one of the worst droughts in the country. The Committee aims to further upscale its charity work in 2012.