

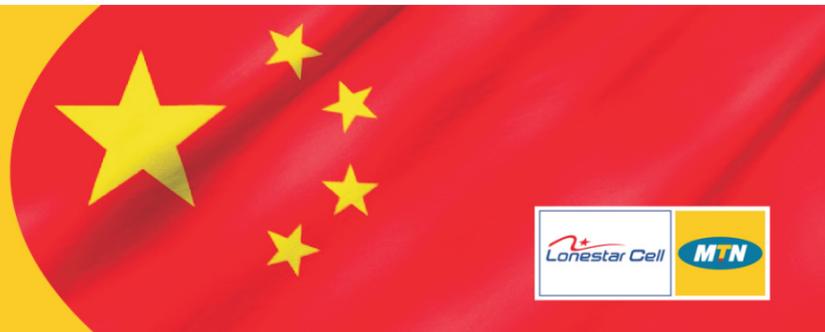
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TRULY INDEPENDENT

#Stop prioritizing foreign businesses over Liberian businesses!#

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Rogue identity?

-the inside story of Cellcom hack on Lonestar



Avi Zaidenberg (LISCR)

Avishal Marziano (Cellcom)

Daniel Kaye (the British hacker)

ARTICLE

A past that has narrowed Liberian lawyers' chances for the presidency

By Winston W. Parley

History tells that three presidents of Liberia who were lawyers have badly narrowed the chances for any lawyer becoming a president of Liberia any time soon.

The last time Liberia had a lawyer as chief executive was the days when the late President William V.S. Tubman was in power.

Tubman was preceded by Presidents Charles Dunbar Burgess King and Edward James Roye. All of these three presidents were lawyers before becoming presidents at separate times in Liberia.

But here's the thing about their rules that seem to put other Liberian lawyers at the extreme of ever winning the presidency again.

In dissecting the problems that King, Roye and Tubman caused for Liberian lawyers, newly inducted Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) president Cllr. Tiawan Gongloe says these three past presidents left very bad impressions on the minds of the people of Liberia and have made it difficult for the people to trust lawyers to lead this country.

Based on Cllr. Gongloe's historical judgment of how King, Roye and Tubman illegally ran things while working in their official capacities as presidents of Liberia, we will try to furnish you with few key events that legal pundits think are responsible for the rejection of Liberian lawyers at the ballot box for the presidency.

In recent Liberian history for instance, there have been some of Liberia's brightest minds who are also lawyers that have contested the presidency here unsuccessfully, including the likes of veteran lawyer Cllr. Senator H. Varney G. Sherman and veteran lawyer Cllr. Charles Walker Brumskine, among others.

Cllr. Sherman failed in the presidential race against former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf in 2005 before joining political alliances with Mrs. Sirleaf leading to the 2011 polls that the latter won.

For Cllr. Brumskine, he has failed the presidential race three times, and one cannot rule out the possibility of him making another return to battle for the presidency in the future, given his past accounts when he got defeated.

What remains to be seen is whether Liberians will be willing any time soon to entrust lawyers with the presidency, given the bitter history they have with Roye, King and Tubman.

It is not any debate here that perennial bad governance by successive governments of Liberia based on corruption, greed for wealth at the detriment of the governed, wanton disregard for the Constitution and statutory laws of Liberia, and the lack of transparency and accountability sparked Liberia's

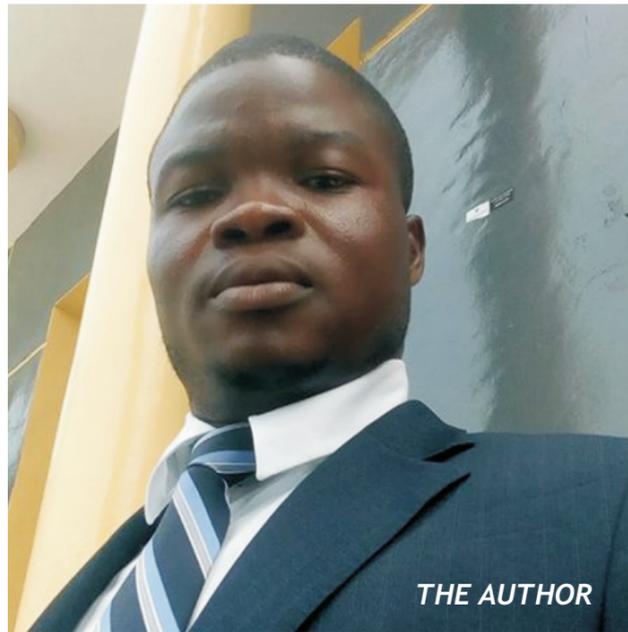
brutal civil conflict that killed more than 250,000 people, displaced millions and destroyed properties worth millions of dollars.

Corruption and the lack of respect for the law were accentuated under the administration of Presidents King, Roye and Tubman.

Instead of using their knowledge of the law to lay a firm foundation for good governance, these three lawyers used their knowledge for the purpose of perpetuating themselves in power and engaging in other forms of corruption.

Before becoming President of Liberia, Roye served as Speaker of the House of Representatives and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, two very important positions in the Liberian governance structure.

But the story as told by Cllr. Gongloe is that Roye tried to manipulate the law in such a manner to allow



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him to stay in power longer than provided by the Constitution.

In a special election in May 1870 for the amendment of the Constitution of Liberia to reflect a change in the term of office of the President from two years to four years, and the Senate from four years to eight years, Roye illegally announced the results of the special election and claimed that the amendment had been endorsed by the votes cast.

It was not Roye's place to announce the results, according to Cllr. Gongloe, because the Constitution provided for the Speaker of the House to perform that role.

When the Speaker subsequently announced that the amendment was not carried, Roye, in flagrant violation of the Constitution, stood his ground and insisted that his term of office had been extended in the votes cast in the special election.

In total defiance of the law, Roye announced that he would remain in office and therefore refused to hold presidential election.

Roye may be gone over a century ago, but the bad impression he gave Liberians about the capability of lawyers to entrench themselves in office when elected president continues to be fairly judged by history today.

For instance, it has been 149 years since Roye used his legal knowledge and power as president to extend his own presidential term, but lawyers coming after him today are testifying to the harm that his ruthless actions have caused them, especially when it comes to seeking the presidency.

He is being held on the wrong side of history today because as lawyer, his colleagues in the legal profession say he was aware that even if the people had voted for the amendment, he could not have benefited from it as an incumbent president.

Manipulating the special election is not the only illegal action that Roye carried out against Liberia as lawyer and president because in 1871, this president also obtained a loan from Britain in the amount of 100,000.00 pounds sterling.

The drama that ensued in this loan business is that before the Legislature could even approve the use of that money through the budgeting process, Roye took his share, gave some to others and even purchased goods in London.

In the end Roye was removed from power on October 26, 1871 based on corruption and his disregard for the Constitution of Liberia.

Constitutional crisis erupted because Roye was not removed through impeachment. But the aftermath of this crisis was the detention, brutal

treatment and death of President Roye, the first brutal coup d'etat in Liberia when some legislators met somewhere in Monrovia and issued a manifesto declaring Roye's removal.

The lesson that Cllr. Gongloe draws from these events in Roye's era is that they are a clear example of how corruption and disregard for the law by public officials can stimulate national crisis and civil conflict.

In spite of the tragedy that ended Roye's regime, another Liberian lawyer, former Attorney General and Secretary of State, the late President Charles D.B. King would rise to the presidency not for a change, but to similarly act in reckless disregard of the Constitution of Liberia and government's obligation under international law.

President King's name went down in history for a very wrong reason when he rigged the 1927 presidential election to unlawfully remain in power.

Historical accounts indicate that with less than 15,000 registered voters in the 1927 election, President King magically defeated his opponent T.J.R. Faulkner by obtaining 243,000 votes which constituted 96.43 percent while Faulkner obtained just 9,000 votes.

King sold slave labor to a Spanish plantation company located in Fernando Po, known today as Equatorial Guinea, in violation to Liberia's obligation under the League of Nations.

Additionally, the late President Williams V.S. Tubman also used his legal knowledge to manipulate and control the other two branches of government.

Prior to becoming president, Tubman had worked as a member of the Senate and Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

In spite of his legal knowledge, Tubman chose to engage in massive violation of the fundamental rights of other Liberians, especially journalists and other politicians in order to perpetuate himself in power.

Tubman's actions ran in violation of the Constitution of Liberia and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Having accentuated these corruptions and reckless disregard for the law by Roye, King and Tubman, Cllr. Gongloe says he did so to call the attention of his colleagues in the legal profession to the need for them to redeem the image of the legal profession in Liberia.

The new Bar president has concerns that the image of the legal profession was wrongly used by past Liberian "leaders" who were lawyers to violate the Constitution of Liberia to hinder democratic governance and respect for human rights.

He thinks that the Bar cannot remain silent and justify their silence with a narrow definition of their role as only providing legal services to clients and disregard current actions of government that could be inconsistent with governance by the rule of law.

About the Author:

Mr. Winston W. Parley is an Editor at the NewDawn newspaper who also has reportorial duties at the Judiciary and Executive Mansion.

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EDITORIAL

Many Liberians may die from diseases

THE HEALTH OF the 4.5 million people of Liberia is faced with uncertainty as President George Manneh Weah's two hours-long Annual Message to the 54th National Legislature Monday, January 28, dedicated only a sentence to the country's health sector.

HOW COULD HAVE the President done this! Nearly all major hospitals across the country are virtually empty and services there have been reduced to providing prescription, including the G.W. Harley Memorial Hospital in Sanniquellie, Nimba County, Phebe Hospital in Suakoko, Bong County and the Charles Henry Rennie Hospital in Kakata, Margibi County, among others, which have been reduced to mere structures due to acute shortage of drugs.

IN HIS ENTIRE address that lasted exactly two hours, President Weah only mentioned in passing as one of his successes for the first year in office, "sending medical doctors abroad to specialize; feasibility study of the 14th Military Hospital; upgrade of JFK."

THE PRESIDENT PRESENTED no comprehensive agenda for the health sector, but dwelled his speech of 83 pages on infrastructure, roads and construction of Bali Island, among others. As good as these programs are, if they are meant for the people, then their health should equally be treated as priority.

BEING A FATHER himself, has President Weah wondered what is the use of buying clothes, toys and everything for his children when they are in poor health, and lack physical strength to play or move around? But this is exactly the unfolding reality in Liberia.

THIS IS NO exaggeration; Liberians are dying in their numbers due to lack of basic drugs and essential equipment in our hospitals! Accessible and affordable health care has eluded the people for too long. One had thought this new administration would have made health a priority, not just building infrastructures.

WE CALL ON the new Minister of Health, Doctor Wilhelmina Jallah to draw up a comprehensive health strategy for the remaining five years of this administration, if she had not already done so, and bring it to the public.

BEING A PROFESSIONAL doctor herself, we challenge Minister Jallah to leave the administrative functions with her deputies and roll up her sleeves to tackle the technical challenges faced by the health sector, that have left major hospitals around the country without drugs.

OTHERS MAY ARGUE the government is beset by huge economic challenges, which is a reality. But we demand political will from those authorities concern, for we are also fully aware of enormous goodwill in the international community for this very important sector.

IT IS LEFT with the Government of Liberia to take the drive by packaging a comprehensive national health program that would encompass the Resilient Health System evolved by the previous administration in delivering accessible health care to our people.

COMMENTARY

By Kaushik Basu

The Sorry State of the World Economy

Data released in January paint a bleak picture of advanced-economy prospects. Even if some emerging economies - which face serious challenges of their own - manage to pick up some of the slack, the world economy will remain encumbered by the combination of economic interconnectedness and political balkanization.

NEW YORK - January is traditionally a time for assessing the developments of the previous year, in order to anticipate what the new one has in store. Unfortunately, even though we may be at a turning point for the better politically, the data that have emerged in the last month do not paint a promising picture of the global economy's short-term prospects.

The tone was set early in the month by the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects, along with the accompanying articles. The report paints a picture as bleak as its subtitle - "Darkening Skies" - and cuts the growth forecast for the advanced economies in 2020 to 1.6% (down from 2.2% in 2018).

Moreover, last week, the European Central Bank sounded the alarm over the eurozone economy. Between the prospect of a disorderly Brexit and rising protectionism, exemplified by the trade war between the United States and China, Europe is subject to increasing uncertainty.

Making matters worse, Germany is facing a growth slowdown. According to its own official data, the economy contracted by 0.2% in the third quarter of 2018, while the Purchasing Managers Index for manufacturing sank to 49.9 - a four-year low. Given Germany's role as the backbone of the eurozone economy, its economic struggles are likely to cascade beyond its borders.

This is particularly problematic, because, after more than a decade of fighting crisis and recession, the advanced economies have depleted their ammunition for countering a slowdown. With the ECB's benchmark interest rate at zero, there is little room for a cut. The Bank of England has not risked raising interest rates since August. Even the US Federal Reserve signaled that it was slowing down the pace of its rate hikes. A new crisis would thus leave the advanced economies fumbling for fresh monetary instruments.

The future is somewhat brighter for the emerging world, though dark clouds loom there, too. As the World Bank report emphasizes, emerging economies are increasingly strained by government debt, which has risen by 20 percentage points of GDP, on average, since 2013, with payments owed largely to private creditors demanding high interest rates.

Africa is on a promising trajectory. As the African Economic Outlook 2019 notes, the continent has had a challenging few years, with growth falling from close to 5% annually in 2010-2014 to only about 2% in 2016. Yet, last year, growth climbed back to 3.5% in 2018, and next year, it could surpass 4%, propelled by some of the world's fastest-growing economies, such as Ethiopia and Rwanda, which are posting annual growth rates well above 7%. Nonetheless, with major players like Nigeria and South Africa punching well below their weight, Africa is not yet in a position to pick up the slack left by the ailing advanced economies.

The situation is more promising in Asia. China has played a major role over the last 30 years, but currently it is clearly in an adjustment phase, as it shifts to a higher-wage lower-growth economy. In 2018, Bangladesh, India, and Indonesia grew by an impressive 7.9%, 7.3%, and 5.2%, respectively, and

the World Bank estimates that, in 2020, growth will exceed 7% in South Asia and 6% in East Asia.

But, again, there are serious challenges ahead. In India, an employment crisis is looming, rooted in the country's focus on the big players and its failure to convert economic growth into good jobs, particularly for its educated youth.

Given this, the budget that will be presented to India's parliament on February 1 - just months before the general election, expected to be held between April and May, - will require extremely skilled policy design that creates programs to boost demand and employment, without running up the deficit. I believe monetary policy also has a significant role at this juncture. With inflation under control, the Reserve Bank of India could help stimulate the economy with a small cut in interest rates.

In Indonesia, President Joko Widodo - commonly known as Jokowi - is facing mounting criticism for failing to achieve the 7% growth target he set when he took office in 2014. In fact, Jokowi's target was always overly ambitious for Indonesia, an economy with a per capita income of over \$10,000 (adjusted for purchasing power parity).

Still, the government has important tasks to carry out. For one, the central bank's response to the depreciation of the rupiah - six interest-rate hikes in the last three quarters - may have been excessive, even though the currency reached a 20-year low against the US dollar last year. Moreover, there needs to be better coordination of policies across local governments, which have been competitively raising the minimum wage, undermining Indonesia's ability to take over low-cost manufacturing from China.

Yet Jokowi - who will seek another five-year term in the April election - remains a source of hope. Illustrating his commitment to inclusivity, he is among the few political leaders in the developing world who have spoken up in favor of LGBTQ+ rights. If he is able to leverage his valuable personal qualities - which include a commitment to secularism and modesty that is becoming increasingly rare among political leaders - to push for needed structural reforms, Indonesia can achieve 6% annual GDP growth, making it a powerful driver of regional and global economic performance.

Even if some emerging economies manage to secure strong growth, however, the world economy will remain encumbered by the combination of economic interconnectedness and political balkanization. At a time when the world urgently needs to improve the coordination of monetary, fiscal, and trade policies, it has, instead, been rolling back what little coordination previously existed. This is a direct result of worsening leadership in major economies, especially the US under President Donald Trump.

It is impressive what US institutions - from the Fed and the judiciary to state governments, the media, and academia - have been attempting during these trying times. One also hopes voters globally will recognize the folly of nationalism and xenophobia in a deeply interconnected world.

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Lord, please let the Country Giant know da on this one, we not agree

Dear Father:

Hmmm, tell me the stories we are hearing is not true. Yes, please Father, tell me this is not true because the Country Giant can't be so heartless to do this. No, had it been another regime, I would have been the first person to jump to my feet and say yes, this person is capable of doing this-but for the Country Giant please tell me it's not true.

What is it again my son, what is happening that is not true?

Father, have you heard that our Country Giant has given the right to one of our neighboring villages to come and clear all our fishes from our waters for free after they finished harvesting all their own?

That's impossible my son!

Oh, the man has been visiting this village regularly not knowing he was secretly selling our village fishes to those greedy people who have succeeded in harvesting all the fishes in their waters. Now, our most celebrated Country Giant has given them the right to come and harvest our own and take it to their village because only they alone get mouth to eat fish or make money from fish and get rich-none sense!

In the first place, not that they are coming to bring a company here to harvest the fish and sell it from here or even sell it here. No, none of that, it's a free gift, it's like telling your friend who has run out of shoes to say you can come and look among my shoes and take some.

Tell me something!

Yes, Father that is our Country Giant for you. So he doesn't think about our future generations. How could he do this to the village he brag so much of loving? I mean, how could he? What is he profiting from these people so much that without hesitation he allowed them to convince him to come and harvest our fishes here for free?

That is nowhere near good neighborliness, it is call giving away one of your most treasured assets for free. You can only give something away that you have in surplus, with reserved for your unborn generations. But this one, imagine in the people village they can carry gun when they are going to fishing, talk less of what they will do in our territorial waters.

My son, I wonder your Country Giant knows that certain things are not just for sale-like inheritance, because it is not for you alone.

No Father, I don't think the Country Giant understands that and I don't know who talked him into doing that and whoever did, does not love him and this country- it's a rip off. And to tell you the truth had this been the previous regime, by this time all his followers would have been blasting the airwaves telling the entire world that the people had mortgage our village for selfish gain.

For sure my son, that would have been the case.

Yes, Father, indeed there is no justification for the action of this Country Giant, you can't do this to this village-forget good neighborliness it does not apply here.

Had the situation been in the reverse they will never and read my lips "I say they will never do that for you. These people taking us to be fools period! And come to think of it Father, those we elected at the Traditional Council to prevent matters like this will surely go ahead and rectify this.

You mean the chiefs from the Traditional Council?

Yes Father. Sometimes it's like they don't exist as an oversight body anymore. And they think it's only the Country Giant that will be accountable for what is going on here in our village they are lying every one of them will give account for the positions they occupy one day. They will have to tell us what they did with the powers that we entrusted with them.

You know, there is a saying that the easiest thing to do is to sit in your little corner and criticize everything somebody does, but when you come there to occupy that same seat you will do worse than that person ever did and I hope after the next five years we don't wake up one morning to think that we have made a mistake. My advice, Mr. Country Giant please tell your friend you made a mistake by offering he and his fish eating population free sea food. Tell them, your people say "they not go greed."

FEATURE

Russia Shows Interest in Sierra Leone's Economy

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

Sierra Leone, after the civil war, has been looking for foreign investors to assist overcome the challenges leveraging on resources, to resuscitate the economy, develop its infrastructure and invest in its agricultural and mining sectors.

Sierra Leone is cash-strapped and currently looking for external credit lines to fix its long-term planned development projects, and the new government has to fulfil its election campaign pledges and promises made to the electorate.

With these in mind, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Alie Kabba, went on a late January working visit to Moscow.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held talks with him, they agreed on invigorating political, trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Russia and Sierra Leone.

Lavrov and Kabba reviewed prospects for expanding bilateral business contacts as well as implementing new joint projects in the mining industry, fisheries and the fuel and energy sector.

Under the new leadership of the Sierra Leone People's Party, President Julius Maada Bio, it was necessary for continuity in bilateral cooperation, noted Lavrov, while stressing to take additional steps to implement promising projects in such areas as mining, energy, and fisheries.

The Russian Foreign Minister proposed that the research center for epidemiology and prevention of infectious diseases, which has been operating in Guinea with Russia's assistance since 2017, could extend its programs to the neighboring countries, including Sierra Leone.

An important aspect of cooperation is healthcare. For instance, Moscow finances the fight against Ebola in West African countries by allocating over US\$60 million.

With cooperation in fisheries, there are opportunities for assistance in organizing the educational process and raising the level of skills of local specialists in the special institute in Freetown.



He said that the sides agreed to continue cooperation in the preparing personnel for Sierra Leone in higher educational institutions in Russia. Already, more than 2,000 Sierra Leonean citizens graduated from higher educational institutions in Russia.

Both Ministers talked at length about the situation in Africa, and exchange opinions on pressing regional and international issues.

Lavrov underlined that "Russia believes the world community should be guided by the African problems - African solutions approach to any crises in Africa." In reality, it therefore means that African leaders have to determine the national priorities and strategies, destiny and fate of their own development for their respective African countries.

Experts, however, reiterated that the people of Sierra Leone have voted for a change. They suggested that the new government under the leadership of President Julius Maada Bio has to use its foreign policy to initiate and focus on improving the economic sectors especially infrastructure, modernizing agriculture and industrialization to create employment for the youth, the best way addressing sustainable development goals (SDCs).

Sierra Leone has relied on mining, especially diamonds, for its economic base. It is among the largest producers of titanium and bauxite, is a major producer gold, and has one of the world's largest deposits of rutile. Despite this natural wealth, 58% of its population lived in poverty in 2015. Sierra Leone is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

FINANCIAL MARKET

"Financial Markets reforms, a key to the promotion of Africa's growth

- the need to establish Stock Exchange Market in Liberia"

By Samora P.Z. Wolokolie, MBA, CFE, CA, CPA, CFIP, CTP.
Contributor

Commendable progress has made some countries in Africa to reform and liberalize their financial markets which is key to financial inclusion, economic development and capital raising.

This prevailed in the 2018 edition of the Absa Africa Financial market index, which ranks twenty countries in terms of the stage of majority, transparency and investors friendliness of financial markets.

Having being launched alongside the international monetary funds (IMF) meeting in Bali, Indonesia, this is the second edition of the index, independently prepared and published by the official Monetary and financial institution forum (OMFIF).

The index focused on six core pillars: market debt; access to foreign exchange; market transparency; capacity of local investors; macro economic opportunity; legality and enforceability of standard financial markets master agreements.

It is notably observed that overall, south Africa came top out of the 20 countries ranked in the following pillars: Scoring 100 out of 100 for market debt; legality and enforceability of standard financial markets master agreements(100); market transparency, tax and regulatory environment (94); capacity of local investors(95) and macro-economic opportunity (75). South Africa however, came second to Kenya (93) on access to foreign exchange.

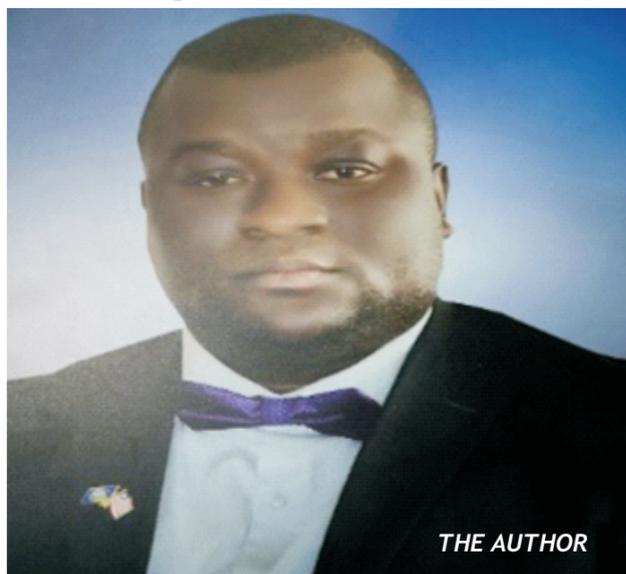
Africa Financial markets index is an important indicator of the progress and commitment of the countries ranked to reforms in the financial markets, without which economic development and access to both domestic and foreign capital is difficult if not impossible.

For Africa to experience grow, it needs a broad, all inclusive financial market that makes easy for investors. Therefore, the index is a very important tool which offers a blue-print on how we can build the continent from a financial markets perspective, and on how to price investment and also compete equally for the available funding needed to drive development on the continent.

Group Chief Executive Officers (CEO) agrees, saying the development of well regulated, deep and liquid financial markets is a key priority that should be at the top of Africa's development agenda. The index facilitates a meaningful and potential debate about the majority and accessibility of Africa's financial markets.

Some Countries, like Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria and SA have made steady progress towards reforms of their financial markets; yet others, such as Ethiopia and Mozambique still lagged behind particularly in the development of stock exchanges which are essential to the capital raising through listings; while Liberia has a zero effort in such venture.

Ethiopia lacks a securities exchange, apart from one for commodities; there are no equities listed on an Angola's exchange and both Cameroon and



THE AUTHOR

Mozambique have a market capitalization of less than 5% of GDP. South Africa is the only country where the total value of listed equities is more than \$100bn, at \$1.1tn.

He says there is need for accelerated reforms in Africa's financial markets, principally because they can be a source of capital raising given the significant funding needs to the continent, particularly for infrastructure projects.

Without a liberalized financial market, Africa is missing out and is currently unable to attract its fair share of capital. There is need to further liberalize the financial markets to achieve this."

As we note in the Absa Africa Financial Index, Africa's transformation requires significant resources. For example, to achieve universal energy access by 2025, there is a need to raise as much as up to US\$55bn annually in domestic and international capital, while as much as US\$50bn is needed to fund infrastructure projects across the continent," he says.

Asante says while some African countries are implementing policies to bolster regional stock markets integration and encourage expansion, they are still hamstrung by low liquidity, few prospects for new listings and lack of product diversity which present significant obstacles to capital market growth.

To date, only South Africa, Botswana and Ghana have a market capitalization greater than 100% of GDP. While in 14 others countries it is lower than 50%.

But it is not all doom and gloom, as the index has discovered. For example, Asante highlights the progress made by several countries to create a more transparent and well regulated market, supported by an improving tax environment.

This is vital for attracting foreign investment, encouraging domestic participation and aiding market development.

Equally impressive is the increased financial inclusion through better design, implementation and regulation of savings institutions. This has also widened opportunities for people in these countries to access capital markets.

He also notes progress made through policies that

have increased the size of assets held by local investors, creating opportunities to develop financial products and enhance liquidity.

Financial Managers say to accelerate financial markets reforms, there is a need for sustained economic growth in many countries. This requires policy initiatives to attract investors by for example playing more attention to infrastructure and trade diversification while ensuring financial transparency.

Given the evolution of the stock market, scholars have stock exchange as an organized market for the trading of stock, bonds and other securities. Stock exchange provides a mechanism through which companies can raise capital for expansion by swelling and issuing securities. In the word of Avadhani (2002), stock exchange means 'anybody or individuals whether incorporated or not, constituted for assisting, regulating or controlling the business of buying, selling or dealing in securities; it is an association of brokers to self-regulate and protect the interest of its members'.

The importance of stock exchange cannot be over emphasized. However, it is the world's most reliable market. The economy of the world relies on stock exchange to facilitate trade in the stock of companies by connecting people who seek money with those who can provide it. The primary objective of stock exchange is to raise funds for investment in long term assets to the investing public. Besides its primary purpose, stock exchange plays a key role in mobilizing saving for investment, redistribution of wealth, creating investment opportunities for small investors, raising government capital for development projects, control of company management, and serves a barometer of the Economy.

Stock exchange comes with several opportunities that drive the economy. Stock exchange will encourage investor by enabling unused money and savings to become productive by bringing borrower and lenders of money together at a low cost. It will provide easy access to long term financing and allow the government as well as industries to raise long-term capital to finance new projects. If established, the Liberian stock exchange will attract investors who wish to invest in new stock exchange. Stock exchange will encourage foreign direct investment, well organized market, huge capital mobilization, well-developed banking sector, market monitoring, and will enhance better education about market conditions through security analysis.

Establishing stock exchange in Liberia will have considerable benefits. The government and the business community alike need to focus their attention in this area in order to help boost the economy.

Why it is true that there are more challenges associated with the stock market, it provides better solution to enhance economic growth and development. Study has shown that the world economy relies on stock exchange to facilitate trade in the stock of companies by connecting people who seek money with those who can provide it. For an economy to grow, money needs to shift from less to more productive activities in a well-structured market system. In this way, the economic development agenda of the country can be achieved.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Commerce Ministry uncovers IPD scam

-Issues 10-day ultimatum to importers

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Minister of Commerce and Industry Professor Wilson Tarpeh, says the ministry has discovered an active and illegal practice in existence involving illicit issuance and manipulation of Import Permit Declaration (IPD) by local importers.

Professor Wilson told a news conference this week the scam is seriously reducing government revenues and also undermining the viability of local manufacturing companies in the country.

He said the illegal IPDs have resulted in the flooding of the local market with low quality flour, nails, chicken eggs, biscuits and other essential commodities with under-declared value, including smuggled flour, all of which are depriving government of legal revenues. The Minister added that many of the flour consignments are also being

illegally brought in with expired 'IPDs'

The Commerce boss disclosed that as part of the ministry's determination to protect government revenues and support 'job creating'

local enterprises, such as the two local flour milling corporations, as well as other local manufacturers, nails, biscuits, candies, insecticide and detergents, the public should take note immediately.

He said all outstanding flour IPDs, expired and unexpired,

should be returned to the ministry for renewal and re-authenticated, where appropriate.

According to Minister Tarpeh, BIVAC is mandated to stop issuing any pre-shipment or destination inspection numbers or permits; noting that all legally issued and still valid IPDs which are not surrounded to the Ministry of Commerce within 10 working days from the date of the pronouncement will become automatically 'voided' and thereby cancelled.

He said hence, any such commodities entering the Port of Monrovia under such IPDs will be denied clearance in keeping with law.

Professor Tarpeh said inspectors from the ministry will begin a through and vigilant inspection of all documents relating to flour importation, including nails, biscuits, candies, insecticides and detergents, among others, and importers are required to have in their possession for review, copies of IPDs, BIVAC CRF, and evidence of paid Customs Duties.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has further warned that any business or businesses found to be illegally importing goods into Liberia or in breach of these administrative regulations, will be subject to serious penalties in accordance with law, which include, but not limited to, revocation of business registration.

The Ministry revealed that results from test conducted on pig products brought into the country by Cheaitou Brothers Incorporated, show the products contain harmful substances.

He added that in line with the ministry's functions the importer has been invited to ensure the contaminated pig products are properly disposed off.

"If it is established that the company knowingly and willing imported the item here, the ministry will levy the necessary fines including one thousand United States dollars and business registration revoked by the government", Minister Tarpeh concluded. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Prof. Wilson Tarpeh

Gov't releases new transport, fuel prices

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Ministry of Transport announced new transportation fares for Monrovia and its environs on Thursday, 31 January, as Commerce Ministry releases new pump prices for gasoline and fuel oil here.

Commerce Ministry says the new pump price for gasoline is now LD\$525.00 while fuel oil is now LD\$585.00.

In the wake of these new prices, the Ministry of Transport announced Thursday the reduction of transport fare from Broad Street to the University of Liberia (UL) from LD\$30 to LD\$20 in taxi, and LD\$15 in bus.

From Broad Street to 72nd Junction passengers will now

pay a reduced fare of LD\$90 for taxi, and LD\$60 in bus.

Similar fare of LD\$90 is charged from Barnersville Estate to Broad Street in taxi, while in bus, passengers will now pay LD\$50 for the same distance.

The transport fares for various distances in and around Monrovia are contained in pages of document released Thursday by the Ministry of Transport.

Addressing a press conference, Minister Samuel Wlue discloses that predicated upon the new pump prices for gasoline at LRD525 and fuel oil at LRD585, transport fares are equally being reduced by the government.

Minister Wlue says the

Ministry of Transport and Commerce and Industry called a technical meeting on transportation fare on Thursday, 17 January with stakeholders.

According to him, those invited for the meeting included the Liberian National Police (LNP), the various road transport unions including the tricycle and motorcycle unions in a bid to review the arbitrary increase in the transportation fare for Monrovia and its environs by drivers in 2018.

He says they concluded the final discussion on the new transportation fare structure for Monrovia and its environs on 23 January 2019.

Minister Wlue promises that the new transportation fare structure for Monrovia and its environs will be monitored in line with the new pump price for gasoline at LRD525 and fuel oil at LRD585.

He adds that the LNP, being the arm of government charged with the responsibility to enforce law and order shall enforce the new transportation fares in partnership with inspectors from the Ministry of Transport.

He warns that any commercial driver overcharging passengers will be penalized, while also advising commuters and the public to report any violation to the Ministry or the nearby police station including transport inspectors.

He further warns that



Minister Samuel Wlue

CHANGE OF NAME



I, MATENGAY MASSARAN KENNEH WILL BE CHANGING MY NAME FROM MATENGAY MASSARAN KENNEH TO MATENGAY TURAY IN FULLMENT OF THE LIBERIA NATIONAL POLICE REQUIREMENT ON CHANGE OF NAME.

HENCE, MY NAME WILL BE OFFICIALLY CHANGE FROM MATENGAY MASSARAN KENNEH TO MATENGAY TURAY AS OF THE DATE OF THE PUBLICATION OF THIS INFPRMATION

#Revoke rock and sand mining licenses from Chinese and Lebanese#

penalty for violators ranges from US\$100.00 for first offense for Taxi to US\$200.00 for other categories.

According to Minister Wlue, these penalties will be paid into the Central Revenue Account at the Central Bank of Liberia within 24 hours of the violation.

Minister Wlue indicates that second offense for Taxi is US\$200.00 and US\$400.00 for other categories to be paid into the Central Revenue Account within the same

period.

For third offense, he says there is a two years suspension of the operator driver's license.

Meanwhile, Minister Wlue says these fares are subject to adjustments consistent with adjustments in the price of petroleum products on the local market.

The authorities have provided contact numbers: 0888960960/0888961961, encouraging commuters to call. *-Edited by Winston W. Parley*

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Samuel Tweah violates Budget Law

--Rep. Dopoh claims

By Bridgett Milton

River Gee County District #3 Rep. Francis S. Dopoh is accusing Finance

Minister Samuel Tweah of allegedly violating Section 4(b) of the Budget Law which requires the Ministry to submit to lawmakers a reconciliation statement of the Consolidated Funds Account at the Central Bank of Liberia.

The law quoted here states that "In order to validate the status of the Consolidated Funds Account at the Central Bank of Liberia as at June 30, 2018, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning is hereby mandated to have said Consolidated Funds Account reconciled and submit the reconciliation statement to the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate on or before December 31, 2018..."

The intent of the law is "to confirm the actual balances of the said Consolidated Fund account as at June 30, 2018."

But Rep. Dopoh complains that up to the time he raised the issue Thursday,

31 January, lawmakers had not received that report.

According to the River Gee

lawmaker, they don't know what the cash balance is as of July 1, 2018.

He laments that it is only the Executive that knows what they are spending, and expresses fears that the Executive could go and borrow without the Legislature knowing.

Rep. Dopoh expresses fear that this could lead to budget shortfall.

He has written a

communication to the House of Representatives requesting plenary to invite the Minister Tweah and the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) to discuss the performance of the budget for the last two quarters.

Meanwhile, the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) Montserrado

County District #7 Rep. Solomon George made a motion that the communication presented by Rep. Dopoh be discussed in

Executive Session.

But Rep. did not agree with his colleague on grounds that this matter is of public interest and must be discussed in executive.

Dopoh told a team of Legislative reporters after session Thursday that the importance of these fiscal outturns reports are intended to give the House of Representative an understanding of the performances of various budget lines.

Further, he says they are also intended to help them shape and guide the direction of the government's fiscal stance.

Rep. Dopoh continues that it beats his imagination that in a country where

the budget is a cash-based balance budget, the LRA is over performing in revenue

generations while expenditure lines are under performing as being reported.

He notes that for them to be able to support the Pro - Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), lawmakers must be able to perform the legislative oversight role.

According to Dopoh, there are some institutions around the country

that are complaining that they have not received allotments and some

have received allotments, even though full allotments were made for these institutions.

The River Gee lawmaker insists that if this matter cannot be discussed in the open, he will not discuss it in executive.--Edited by Winston W. Parley



Liberian Envoy in US to face Senate

By Ethel A. Tweh

In efforts to save Liberia's image in the diplomatic circle internationally, Senators here have invited the country's top envoy to the U.S. Mr. George S. W. Patten, Sr., to return from the mission and face proper Senate confirmation hearing, in spite of his nomination and commissioning by President George Manneh Weah.

President Weah nominated

and subsequently commissioned Mr. Patten in late December as Liberia's ambassador to U.S. while lawmakers here were still on their regular break.

President Weah's failure to allow his appointee to await confirmation before the Senate's Committee on Foreign Affairs before commissioning him as Liberia's Ambassador to the U.S. sparked yet another public outcry against the

controversial move.

Mr. Patten risked being recalled from the Mission to face the Senate based on a suggestion by one of the Senators during session on Thursday, 31 January.

Senators tussled over whether to say Mr. Patten should be "invited" or "recalled," as some expressed concerns that recalling him would make his appointment invalid.

Based on appeals from other senators, it was agreed finally that Mr. Patten be invited to face proper confirmation hearing.

In a motion made Thursday, Maryland County Sen. J. Gbleh-bo Brown suggested that Mr. Patten be recalled from the diplomatic mission in the U.S. to face the Senate back home.

But Grand Cape Mount County Sen. Varney Sherman expressed a concern that "recalling" the Ambassador means that the appointment is invalid.

"You can invite the Ambassador to come back for confirmation hearing because our rules say that the appointment can be made pending confirmation," Says

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Mr. George S. W. Patten, Sr. and Pres. Weah

Sherman.

"We want him to go through the confirmation hearing because recalling him invalidates our own rule," Sherman adds.

In support of Sen. Sherman's argument, Montserrado County Sen. Saah Joseph also urged Sen. Brown to change his terminology from "recalling" the Ambassador to "inviting" him for proper confirmation.

Sen. Brown accepted the amendment to his motion and called on the Senate to invite Mr. Patten.

In an interview with Legislative reporters after session, Senator J. Gbleh-bo Brown said the terminology doesn't matter.

He says what matters is that the Ambassador comes back and goes through the right procedure in line with the

Constitution of Liberia.

Sen. Brown argues that they have a task to uphold and maintain the integrity of the Liberian Senate and not to breach the Constitution.

According to him, the Ambassador must be called back and appear to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations so that proper procedures are followed.

The Maryland County Senator explains that after that, all the senators will vote if the Ambassador will be confirmed or not.

Meanwhile, Sen. Brown clarifies that the Senate has not come to any conclusion as to whether the President violated the Constitution or not.

He says violation of the Constitution is not before the Liberian Senate.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

Français

Le gouvernement tient une réunion de travail de haut niveau

Le gouvernement libérien devrait tenir une réunion de haut niveau d'une durée de deux jours à Gompa, dans le comté de Nimba, c'est au nord-ouest du pays, afin d'examiner les problèmes pressants auxquels le climat des affaires du pays est confronté.

Le dernier rapport de la Banque mondiale sur le Libéria met en exergue d'énormes difficultés dans le secteur des affaires du pays. Selon la Banque, par exemple, il faut en moyenne trois ans pour déposer une plainte et obtenir réparation en cas d'insolvabilité.

Le rapport de la Banque mondiale indique que les coûts nécessaires pour le recouvrement d'une dette semblent également peser lourd pour les créanciers en raison du coût élevé des différentes formes de frais juridiques, notamment les frais d'avocat et les frais d'administration.

La Banque indique en outre que la disponibilité des données sur les emprunteurs ainsi que sur d'autres sociétés est difficile d'accès, ce qui complique la tâche des

organismes de crédit en matière de diligence raisonnable.

La réunion de travail de haut niveau devrait réunir les chefs des trois pouvoirs de l'Etat, à savoir notamment le président George Weah, le président Bhofal Chambers et le juge en chef Francis Korkpor, ainsi que le président de la banque libérienne de développement,

John Davis, et plusieurs hauts responsables et des dignitaires du régime actuel.

La réunion, prévue du 1er au 2 février 2019, devrait être présidée par le ministre des Finances et de la Planification du développement, Samuel Tweah, qui préside également le groupe de travail sur les entreprises constitué par le président Weah en octobre

2018.

Pour rappel, en octobre dernier, le Président Weah avait constitué le Groupe de travail sur le climat des affaires afin d'identifier et de résoudre certains des problèmes qui entravent l'instauration d'un environnement propice aux affaires dans le pays. Depuis lors, le groupe a tenu plusieurs réunions de haut niveau et des réunions techniques pour identifier les « solutions rapides » face à certaines de ces contraintes.

C'est dans ce contexte que la réunion se tiendra. Elle aura pour but d'explorer les défis et les perspectives du climat des affaires au Libéria et d'élaborer des plans et des stratégies réalisables en vue d'une amélioration.

Les organisateurs ont déclaré que le forum de deux jours, qui aura lieu sur le thème « Résoudre les problèmes », portera sur trois indicateurs de Doing Business de la Banque mondiale : Obtenir des crédits, Résoudre l'insolvabilité et Faire respecter les contrats.

Le ministre des Finances et de la Planification du développement a indiqué que la réunion s'appuierait sur les expériences d'experts dans les domaines de la banque et des finances, du droit, de la politique publique et d'autres professions.

Selon une déclaration publiée par les organisateurs, M. Tweah aurait en outre déclaré : "Il était nécessaire de comprendre certains des problèmes qui empêchent le monde des affaires d'accéder à un financement, au remboursement d'un prêt par les débiteurs et à la lenteur des processus liés au système judiciaire du pays."

Le dernier rapport Doing Business de la Banque mondiale indique également

que la fragilité ou la souplesse de la loi sur les saisies, les garanties et la cession des avoirs des débiteurs doit être revue. Le rapport affirmait en outre que la force des systèmes d'établissement de rapports de crédit et l'efficacité des lois sur les garanties et les faillites en matière de facilitation des prêts devaient être examinées avec un regard légal et public afin de créer un climat propice aux affaires dans le pays. Un examen du rapport a révélé qu'il fallait en moyenne 1300 jours pour exécuter un contrat, du dépôt d'une plainte à une décision finale de la Cour suprême. Une partie du facteur responsable du retard prolongé peut être attribuée à l'absence de système d'automatisation ainsi qu'à la publication du jugement et à la gestion des cas.

Le ministre Tweah a déclaré que l'objectif de la réunion est de trouver des solutions à ces problèmes et non à réaffirmer les problèmes existants. « Nous espérons qu'avec la réunion des experts juridiques, du monde des affaires, des banquiers et des membres de la communauté des donateurs, notamment la Banque mondiale, le PNUD, la SIDA, l'USAID et d'autres, cette réunion sera un succès ».

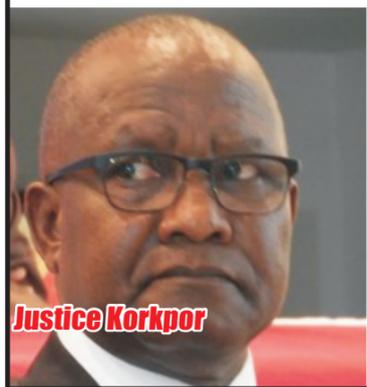
Avec la présence des hauts cadres de l'Etat dont des ministres et des directeurs des agences gouvernementales, les chefs des deux chambres du parlement, le président de la Cour suprême, des avocats, des banquiers, les médias et la société civile, le secteur privé, la Chambre du commerce du Libéria et d'autres, le résultat devrait permettre que les choses s'améliorent. Il devrait créer également un climat propice aux affaires qui attirera les investissements nationaux et étrangers au Libéria.



Pres. Weah



Speaker Chambers



Justice Korkpor



Finance Minister

George Weah en terrain difficile après un an au pouvoir

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf en avait rêvé, George Weah l'a fait. Mais comme pour le reste du programme du président libérien, l'application de la loi sur la propriété de la terre, adoptée pendant sa première année de mandat, bute sur des difficultés financières.

L'accession au pouvoir le 22

janvier 2018 de l'ancien attaquant du PSG et du Milan AC, succédant à Mme Sirleaf (2006-2018), première femme élue chef de l'Etat en Afrique, a soulevé un immense espoir dans ce pays pauvre d'Afrique de l'Ouest. C'est à George Weah, seulement deuxième président « indigène » de l'histoire du

pays, c'est-à-dire n'appartenant pas à l'élite « américano-libérienne » descendant d'esclaves affranchis monopolisant le pouvoir depuis 170 ans, qu'est revenu le privilège de promulguer en septembre la loi sur la propriété de la terre.

« Nous sommes très contents que le nouveau gouvernement ait adopté cette loi. Nous en attendons les retombées, parce que jusqu'à présent personne ne nous a consultés sur l'avenir de notre terre », a expliqué à l'AFP Juma Seah, le chef traditionnel de Siafa Curve, une bourgade de 3.000 habitants située à 120 km au nord de Monrovia.

C'est sur les terres de ce village et d'une dizaine d'autres des environs que le gouvernement a accordé dans les années 2000 au conglomérat malaisien Sime Darby, géant mondial de l'huile de palme, une concession de 63 ans, sans en aviser la population, essentiellement agricole, selon les habitants.

Les compensations financières de quelques centaines de dollars

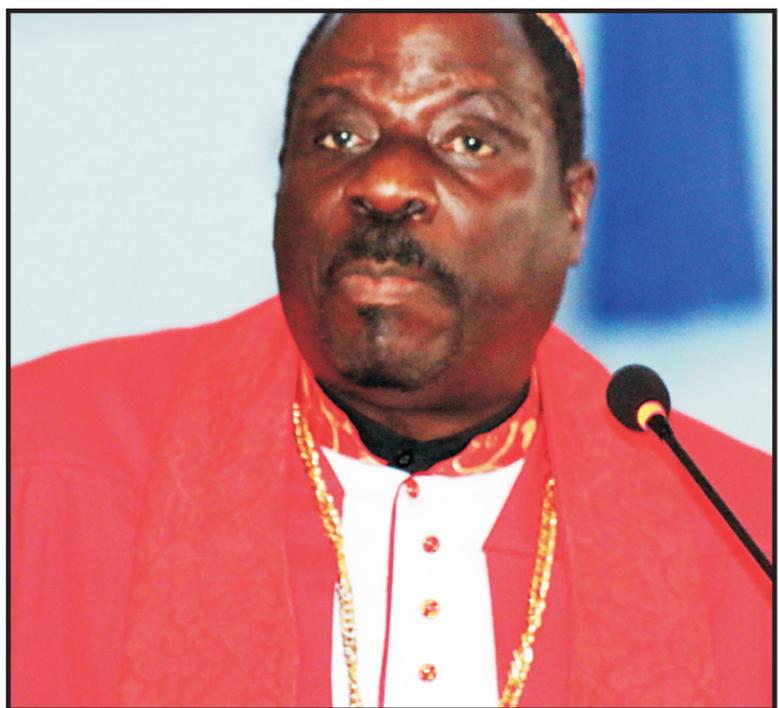
américains, la construction de latrines et d'un puits et l'embauche d'un membre de chaque famille par le groupe ne compensent pas la perte de leurs moyens de subsistance, estime le chef du village.

« Nous vivons ici comme des réfugiés », affirme Juma Seah.

L'une des principales innovations de la loi tient à l'attribution aux communautés villageoises de « droits

coutumiers » de propriété, et non plus seulement d'usage, sur leurs terres ancestrales.

« Une des racines profondes de la guerre civile au Libéria a été ces conflits fonciers endémiques », explique Stanley Toe, directeur exécutif de l'Autorité foncière du Libéria, chargée de la mise en oeuvre du texte, en référence à la guerre qui a fait quelque 250.000 morts entre 1989 et 2003.



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Français

Éditorial

Le président relègue la question de la santé publique au second plan

La santé des 4,5 millions d'habitants du Libéria est incertaine. Le Président George Manneh Weah, dans son discours annuel prononcé devant l'Assemblée législative libérienne le lundi 28 janvier, n'a consacré qu'une seule phrase au secteur de la santé du pays.

Comment le président a-t-il pu faire ça ? Presque tous les principaux hôpitaux du pays sont pratiquement vides et leurs services ont été réduits à prescrire des ordonnances comme c'est le cas dans les hôpitaux comme G.W. Harley Memorial Hospital à Sanniquellie dans le comté de Nimba, l'hôpital de Phebe à Suakoko dans le comté de Bong et hôpital Charles Henry Rennie à Kakata dans le comté de Margibi, entre autres. Ces hôpitaux font face à un manque criard de médicaments.

Tout au long de son allocution qui a duré exactement deux heures, le président Weah ne s'est contenté de faire mention de l'une de ses réussites au cours de la première année de son mandat dans le secteur de la santé, à savoir « envoyer des médecins à l'étranger se spécialiser, des études de faisabilité pour l'hôpital militaire et la rénovation de l'hôpital John F. Kennedy. »

Le président n'a présenté aucun programme complet pour le secteur de la santé, il n'a insisté que sur les infrastructures, les routes et la construction de l'île de Bali, entre autres. Aussi bons soient ces programmes, la question de la santé des populations auxquels ils sont destinés doit être prioritaire.

Étant lui-même père, le président Weah sait très bien qu'il ne sert à rien d'acheter des vêtements et des jouets à un enfant qui n'est pas en bonne santé et qui n'a pas assez de force physique pour jouer ou se déplacer. Il a plutôt besoin des médicaments. Mais hélas, c'est le cas pour le Libéria. Ce n'est du tout pas une exagération.

Oui, les Libériens meurent par milliers de maladies anodines par manque de médicaments de base et d'équipement essentiel dans nos hôpitaux ! la plupart d'entre eux n'ont pas accès aux soins médicaux. On avait pensé que cette nouvelle administration ferait de la santé l'une des priorités en plus de la construction des infrastructures.

Nous appelons la nouvelle ministre de la Santé, la Docteure Wilhelmina Jallah, à élaborer une stratégie de santé globale pour les cinq années restantes de cette administration, si elle ne l'a pas déjà fait, et à la rendre publique.

En tant que médecin professionnel, nous invitons la ministre Jallah à quitter ses fonctions administratives avec ses adjoints et à se retrousser les manches pour s'attaquer aux problèmes techniques du secteur de la santé, qui se caractérisent par le manque de médicaments dans les hôpitaux.

D'autres pourraient soutenir que le gouvernement est confronté à d'énormes défis économiques, ce qui est une réalité. Mais nous demandons une volonté politique de la part de ces autorités, car nous sommes également pleinement conscients de l'énorme volonté de la communauté internationale pour ce secteur très important.

Il appartient au gouvernement libérien de prendre l'initiative en préparant un programme de santé publique nationale qui englobera le système de santé résilient mis au point par l'administration précédente pour fournir des soins de santé abordables à notre population.

COMMENTAIRE

By Kaushik Basu

Le triste état de l'économie mondiale

NEW-YORK - Janvier est traditionnellement le mois où l'on fait le bilan de l'année précédente, tout en essayant de prévoir ce que réserve la nouvelle année. Malheureusement, alors que nous sommes peut-être à un tournant pour le mieux sur le plan politique, les chiffres du dernier mois dressent un tableau de l'économie mondiale qui est peu encourageant à court terme.

Le ton a été donné par les Perspectives de l'économie mondiale publiées début janvier par la Banque mondiale, et les articles qui l'accompagnent. Ce rapport, aussi inquiétant que son sous-titre, "Assombrissement des perspectives économiques", prévoit une baisse de la croissance des pays avancés (1,6% en 2020, alors qu'elle était de l'ordre de 2,2% en 2018).

La semaine dernière, la BCE (la Banque centrale européenne) a tiré le signal d'alarme quant à l'économie de la zone euro. Entre la perspective d'un Brexit chaotique et la montée du protectionnisme (ainsi qu'on le voit avec la guerre commerciale entre les USA et la Chine), l'Europe est confrontée à des incertitudes de plus en plus marquées.

Pire encore, la croissance allemande ralentit. D'après les chiffres officiels, son économie s'est contractée de 0,2% au cours du troisième trimestre 2018, et l'indice des directeurs d'achats manufacturiers a chuté à 49,9 - une baisse record sur les quatre dernières années. Étant donné que l'Allemagne est la colonne vertébrale de l'économie européenne, ses difficultés économiques pourraient se propager au-delà de ses frontières.

C'est d'autant plus problématique qu'après plus d'une décennie passée à combattre la crise et la récession, les pays avancés sont à court de munitions pour combattre un ralentissement. La BCE ayant fixé son principal taux directeur à zéro, elle ne dispose guère de marge de manœuvre pour le diminuer. Quant à La Banque d'Angleterre, depuis août elle ne s'est pas risquée à augmenter ses taux d'intérêt. Même la Réserve fédérale américaine a indiqué qu'elle ralentissait le rythme de la hausse de ses taux. Dans ces conditions, une nouvelle crise contraindrait les pays avancés à tâtonner pour trouver de nouveaux instruments monétaires.

L'avenir paraît plus engageant pour les pays émergents, malgré des nuages qui obscurcissent le ciel à l'horizon. Ainsi que le souligne le rapport de la Banque mondiale, la dette publique de ces pays est de plus en plus lourde. Sa valeur médiane a augmenté d'environ 20 points de pourcentage du PIB depuis 2013, les créanciers étant pour l'essentiel des organismes privés qui exigent des taux d'intérêt élevés.

La trajectoire de l'Afrique est prometteuse. Ainsi que le note le rapport 2019 Perspectives économiques en Afrique de la Banque africaine de développement, le continent a connu quelques années difficiles : son taux de croissance annuel a chuté en moyenne de presque 5% durant la période 2010-2014, à seulement 2% en 2016. Mais l'année dernière il est remonté à 3,5%, et l'année prochaine il pourrait dépasser 4%, notamment grâce à des locomotives économiques comme l'Éthiopie et au Rwanda qui battent des records mondiaux avec des taux de croissance supérieurs à 7%. Néanmoins, avec des acteurs économiques de premier plan comme le Nigéria et l'Afrique du Sud dont les résultats sont bien inférieurs à leur potentiel, l'Afrique n'est pas encore en position de rattraper son retard par rapport aux pays avancés, même s'ils se trouvent en difficulté sur le plan économique.

La situation prête davantage à l'optimisme en Asie. La Chine joue un rôle majeur depuis une trentaine d'années, mais elle est aujourd'hui dans une phase de transition, car elle bascule vers une économie à

croissance plus faible et à salaires plus élevés. L'année dernière, le Bangladesh, l'Inde et l'Indonésie ont connu des taux de croissance impressionnants - respectivement 7,9%, 7,3% et 5,2%. Selon la Banque mondiale, en 2020, le taux de croissance devrait dépasser 7% en Asie du Sud et 6% en Asie de l'Est.

Néanmoins l'Asie va être confrontée à de grands défis. L'Inde pourrait être touchée par un chômage de masse dû à l'intérêt presque exclusif du gouvernement pour les grands acteurs et à son incapacité à transformer la croissance économique en emplois décents, en particulier pour la jeunesse indienne éduquée.

Dans ce contexte, le budget qui sera présenté au Parlement le 1^{er} février - quelques mois seulement avant les élections législatives qui devraient avoir lieu en avril ou en mai - devra être élaboré avec un grand savoir-faire politique pour doper la demande et stimuler la création d'emplois sans accroître le déficit. Je crois que la politique monétaire peut avoir un rôle non négligeable. L'inflation étant sous contrôle, la banque centrale indienne (Reserve Bank of India) pourrait stimuler l'économie en diminuant légèrement ses taux d'intérêt.

En Indonésie, le président Joko Widodo (que tout le monde surnomme Jokowi) fait face à des critiques de plus en plus vives, car pour l'instant il n'a pas réussi à propulser le taux de croissance du pays à la valeur de 7% - objectif qu'il s'était fixé en 2014, lors de sa prise de fonction. C'était une cible trop ambitieuse pour un pays où le revenu par habitant dépasse 10 000 dollars par an (à parité de pouvoir d'achat).

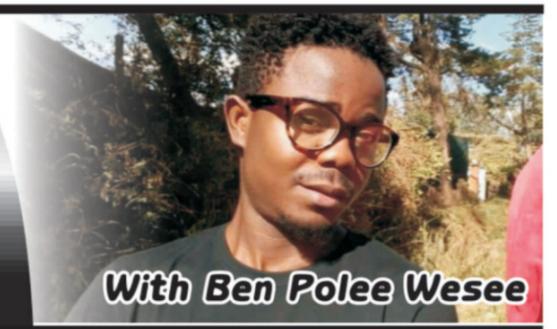
Le gouvernement indonésien a encore des tâches importantes à accomplir. Tout d'abord la banque centrale a peut-être réagi de manière excessive à la dépréciation de la roupie indonésienne (les taux d'intérêt ont augmenté à 6 reprises au cours des 3 derniers trimestres), bien que l'année dernière son taux de change par rapport au dollar ait plongé jusqu'à sa valeur plancher sur les 20 dernières années. Ensuite, il faut que les gouvernements locaux parviennent à une meilleure coordination. Au lieu de cela, ils se sont lancés dans une course à la hausse du salaire minimum, rendant plus difficile pour l'Indonésie de se substituer à la Chine dans le domaine de la production manufacturière à bas coût.

Jokowi qui se présentera à l'élection présidentielle d'avril pour un nouveau mandat de 5 ans reste une source d'espoir. Il s'engage clairement en faveur d'une société inclusive. Ainsi, il est l'un des rares dirigeants politiques d'un pays en développement à avoir parlé en faveur des droits des LGBTQ. S'il parvient à utiliser ses qualités personnelles (notamment son engagement pour la laïcité et une modestie de plus en plus rare parmi les dirigeants politiques) pour entreprendre les réformes structurelles indispensables, l'Indonésie pourrait atteindre un taux de croissance de 6%, ce qui ferait d'elle un moteur de l'économie régionale et mondiale.

Même si certains pays émergents parviennent à un taux de croissance élevé, l'économie mondiale continuera à souffrir de la combinaison d'une grande interconnexion économique avec une balkanisation politique. Au lieu d'améliorer de toute urgence la coordination des politiques monétaires, budgétaires et commerciales, le monde en revient au manque de coordination du passé. C'est la conséquence directe d'un leadership de plus en plus défaillant au sein des grandes puissances économiques - à commencer par les USA sous la présidence de Trump.

Ce que les institutions américaines essayent de faire (de la Réserve fédérale et de la Justice aux gouvernements des différents États, en passant par les médias et les universités) durant ces temps difficiles est impressionnant. Espérons qu'un peu partout les électeurs reconnaîtront les dangers du nationalisme et de la xénophobie dans un monde profondément interconnecté.

CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT



With Ben Polee Wese

USA Police investigating DenG?



The Brooklyn Park Police Department in the United States is now investigating a reported sexual assault case involving Liberian musician Daniel George alias DenG.

According to Musulyn Myers, her sister is now undergoing investigation since the case was filed two weeks ago.

"Actions have been taken... So, at this point, there has been a police report that has been filed that is, legal route has been taken," Myers, who is known by her stage name Sweetz, said.

"This is something that was told to him. We said that if we ever hear about this particular thing again and we hear that he has done something to other women, we will come out and speak and we will go the legal route."

Though lots of Liberian artists have been mute however, artist, 2C alias Mr. Mechanic of Senegalese Star Akon Convict Recordz, expressed deep sorrow towards the ladies.

He writes on social media: "Kadie Dickey Sweetz Musulyn Myers Menneh Menneh Gbalee Wia Togba Roda Starlet

and many other victims who have experienced such thing I'm sorry of what happened to you guys. Stay strong and pay no attention to the negativities. GOD is on your side!

Daniel George if you did these allegations you need to step up and apologize to these women!"

Meanwhile, Prakash Bestman (Pochano), a member of Sammy Gray Gboguy's team one of the presidential candidates in the Liberian Music Union pending election, has also condemned the alleged abuse.

"We straightly condemn all forms of abuse against our sisters and will hold anyone involved in such acts accountable to the fullest extent of the law regardless of who you may be. Under the Sammy Gray Gboguy administration, sexual abuse, harassment, or exploration is an important element under our artist's welfare program and we shall work with relevant government agencies to make sure that perpetrators be brought to book without any fear nor favor," Bestman added. -credit-FPA

asked: "How you came to Minnesota and you did not inform me? I want us to talk on several issues including how you can improve your music and also revisit the collaboration with me. He, in returns, apologized promising that when he is back, we will meet."

Upon his return, she further narrated, he contacted her via messenger on the last day of his stay in Minnesota.

Sweetz said she objected to his abrupt message but tried finding a way to meet him since it was his last day. "It was not successful because no one was available to drive me to him."

According to her she told him and immediately, he asked for her address and he came with a male friend to take her to his house.

She informed her mother that he was picking her up. "When he arrived, he sang for my ailing mother and also collected some food to take home."

Just as they arrived at his place, he received another visitor and he left Sweetz upstairs to attend to the guest. Few minutes later, he told her that his visitor was one of her fans and was requesting a picture with both of them.

According to her after the pictures, DenG asked her not to go back upstairs but to wait for him in a dark room.

"He told me I couldn't wait in the radio station lobby. He took me to another area that was dark but he left the door open so I thought there was no light in the room."

"I saw him as a brother and those kinds of negative things like sexual abuse did not click in my mind," she narrated.

Sweetz alleged that when he came back downstairs as soon as he entered the room, he closed the door behind him and at that moment she started thinking to herself what was the reason but decided to give him the benefit of the doubt.

She said it was not her first time being in a dark place with him.

According to her while she was on a long couch in the darkroom, DenG came and sat beside her and started expressing his intention of falling in love with her.

At some point during their talk, he began allegedly groping her thigh and rubbing her waist while expressing his love.

"I told him if you like someone that is not how you should express it."

Sweetz furthered that the tussle intensified between them when he aimed for her private areas.

"I was fighting to get off his lap where he had forced me to sit. He started holding my thighs down very tight. He managed to hook me to his lap. I was trying to get up but he kept holding me down. And the tussle lasted for about 30 minutes.

"I slipped from his lap, onto the couch. He turned over quickly and pinned me down. At this point, he tried kissing me. When he could not get his way, he held my hands above my head and tried to take my shirt off," she further explained her horrible ordeal.

"I locked my hands together to fight so my shirt would not come off. He then



stuck my hands up on the couch while grabbing my breasts. I then decided to use my legs and I was kicking for his private areas but he dodged my kicks."

"Then he said to me, 'Oh Sweetz, you want hurt me?' and then I told him, yes, if you don't get the f*** off me I will do worse than that."

At that moment, as she further told her ordeal, he tried showing seniority asking why she was acting stubborn and rude. "But he was not acting like an older brother," she quipped.

According to her, they were still tussling as they were talking. But at this moment, she has now grown tired and he had succeeded in removing her sneakers, taking her legs apart and removing her pantie.

She explained: "I just folded myself as a ball. He left me and pulled down his boxer and was about to put his penis in me. I was still determined that it won't happen; so with all my strength, I folded myself like a ball."

"He managed to pull my legs apart and tried to penetrate; the only thing that stopped him is that he saw the (sanitary pad) kortex. While hauling the pantie down, I had my thighs squeezed together so the kortex didn't stay in my pantie but it stayed between my legs," she said.

Then he said, "Oh Sweetz you receiving you couldn't tell me?" so I told him but you and I got that one before I will be explaining to you, then I hissed my teeth."

He rested for a while, woke up and turned the lights on. She was shocked from what she had just gone through and the lights coming on was a relief.

DenG's manager was upstairs but according to her, she didn't know what to do at the moment- whether to go and tell him or just get out of there as soon as she could. She was dropped back home by him and his manager.

Sweetz hesitated to inform her manager back home in Monrovia. However, she later told her manager and her mother.

"My manager contacted him and asked him to apologize and if he doesn't, legal actions would be taken against him," she said. "I tried pitying myself expressing how disappointed I was. I also requested an apology from him via messenger," she explained the psychological effect of the horrible ordeal had on her. According to her, almost everyone she told, none advised her to get to the media as such move will affect his career as a musician, some told her, ignoring what she had gone through.

Sweetz said the police was informed in the US but the responder told her that since there was no penetration, no charges can be brought on him but the allegation should be reported and put on file.

Sweetz on DenG's sexual assault claim

Musulyn Myers, alias Sweetz, a popular Liberian female musician, met Daniel George, commonly called DenG in the United States with the thought that they could do a collaboration on a song, but it allegedly turned out for the worst.

Sweetz complained of how DenG tried to rape her but she was saved when he noticed that she was menstruating.

In an interview with FPA, she said DenG is seen as a brother so when he went to the US, she wanted to hold talks with him on several issues, including the entertainment industry back home.

She recalled that both of them had

never had any consensual sexual discussion and was surprised that he attempted abusing her.

"He and I been cool. We've known each other for long. I took him as a big brother. It had been mutual and nothing else," she explained.

Sweetz and DenG did a song together in 2016, but it was not released. The studio, from which they should have released their work, got burnt and both of them lost their work in the flames.

According to her, DenG went to Minnesota in the US to perform. She stated that when she met him, she

Who really ordered the attack on Lonestar?

By Othello B. Garblah

Court documents available to this paper indicate that former Cellcom Chief Executive Officer Avishal Marziano ordered the cyber-attack against Lonestar Cell in 2016.

“When I say Avi, I mean Avishal Marziano,” jailed British hacker Daniel Kaye told British Prosecutors during an investigation.

Kaye made this clarification after a photograph of both Avi Zaidenberg of the Liberian Shipping Company (LISCR) and Avishal Marziano were presented to him by investigators. That was a day after he had mentioned that he was put in contact by one Avi who had introduced himself as someone who work at LISCR.

If the Kaye’s testimony is anything to go by it shows how desperate Avishal was to destroy Lonestar and rob the Liberian Government of needed revenue to the extent that he would even engage in identity theft.

Avishal’s motives



Avi Zaidenberg (LISCR)



Avishal Marziano (Cellcom)



Daniel Kaye (the British hacker)

According to Kaye, Avishal Marziano’s aimed was not just to infiltrate Lonestar Cell system and attack the network, but to also obtain customers’ databases and telephone numbers for subsequent publication. His sole purpose to have published Lonestar customers’ private text messages was to destroy the company’s reputation for

good.

According to Kaye’s testimony Avishal was introduced to him by Ran Polani, one of the co-defendants in the Lonestar Cell MTN’s lawsuit against several individuals, Cellcom and Orange who later purchase the former company.

“Avi (Avisal Marziano) knew the basic technical details of

the procedure (to launch the attack using DDoS). He also has a certain amount of technical background knowledge and was previously the CTO of Cellcom as far as I know,” said Kaye.

Kaye during his

interrogation revealed that Avishal had several goals. “Firstly, I was to carry out a DDoS attack. I also discussed parts of the intended basis of this with Avi, for example, the discussion about the 5m IP cameras seen yesterday as a screenshot relates to this-that was a theoretical discussion about how that could be done.

He also gave me order to infiltrate the Lonestar network. He suspected there was corruption between the government and Lonestar and I suppose to find evidence in the Lonestar files. He was also interested in customer data, databases regarding telephone numbers and the likes. A while later, we also spoke about damaging Lonestar’s reputation by publishing the abstracted data.”

The communication between Kaye and Avishal were done on Threema Messenger. The former Cellcom CEO uses the name Apoper on messenger.

Retirees reject NASSCORP paychecks

By Lewis S. Teh

Some angry retirees from various government institutions have staged a peaceful protest outside President George Manneh Weah’s office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting him to mandate the Ministry of Finance to issue pension checks instead of the National Social Security Corporation (NASSCORP).

The protesters who assembled outside the president’s office in Monrovia Thursday, 31 January are lamenting that a decision was taken unknown to them which places NASSCORP in a position to issue paychecks for retirees.

The protestors say they see no reason why Finance Ministry

should send them to NASSCORP to collect pensions, when NASSCORP is allegedly only responsible for benefits.

The NASSCORP Act published February 2017 mandates the Corporation to administer the Employee Injury Scheme, the National Pension Scheme and Welfare Scheme.

The angry protestors were seen holding placards’ with different inscription written on them.

Some read: “We don’t want NASSCORP; President Weah come to our aid,” among others.

According to the protesters, they started their peaceful demonstration since Monday, vowing to continue with it until the president can do something

about their situation.

The protesters are saying that they do not want to be issued pension checks, alleging that they won’t get their entire pension correctly.

They are pleading with President Weah to mandate the Ministry of Finance for the reissuance of their various paychecks instead of NASSCORP.

They explain that having worked for government at different institutions, they were pensioned due to old age or other issues.

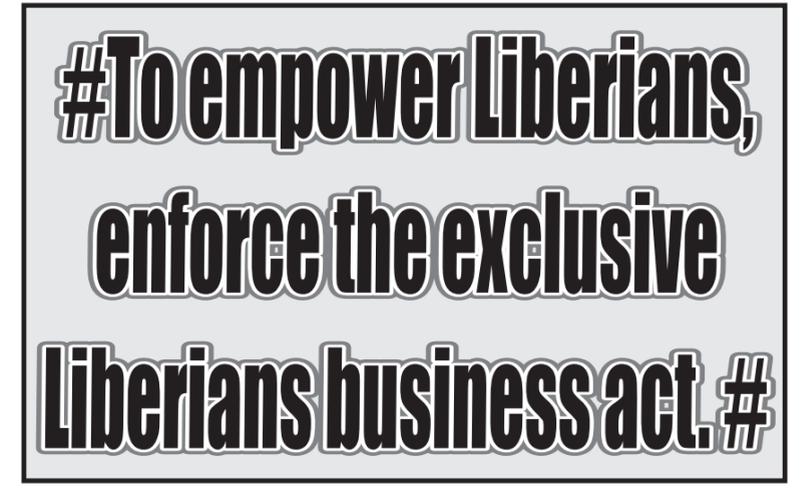
One of the protesters who spoke to our reporter outside President Weah’s office, Mr. Aaron C. Dennis says their protest was prompted by the decision taken by the Finance Ministry unknown to retirees to collect their pension checks from NASSCORP.

According to Mr. Dennis, they haven’t been collecting pension checks from NASSCORP.

“We are different pension group from various ministries and agencies of government who served this government, and after our retirement we were put under the direct supervision of Finance Ministry where we were collecting our pension checks,” Mr. Dennis tells this paper.

According to him, from the 70s, it has been like that, indicating that retirees always get their pension checks from Finance Ministry.

He explains that paying retirees through the Ministry



of Finance has been this way simply because the Ministry is the arm of government that is in charge of people in this category.

Mr. Dennis laments that unfortunately, this new year the Ministry told retirees to collect their documents and move to NASSCORP for the collection of their pensions.

He says the protest was meant to mainly get President Weah’s attention surrounding the decision taken by Finance Ministry.

“As we speak, there are divisions within the Ministry of Finance among officials regarding the transferring of our pension checks. Though NASSCORP [is] willing to do just what Finance Ministry has asked them to do, but we the protestors are saying no because we don’t trust their policies,” says Mr. Dennis.

The protester explains that one of the alleged bad policies that NASSCORP has is the issue of not honoring letter of authority.

According to Dennis, letter of authority means for example, if your father, or mother was an employee of

any governmental institution and gets retired before such person dies, Finance Ministry would issue an official letter with the signature of the person, instructing NASSCORP to issue the beneficiaries the pension check.

But he claims that when this is done, NASSCORP doesn’t allegedly honor that letter.

Meanwhile another protestor Martha S. Deshield says she was protesting because of her late husband who was former Executive Protection Service (EPS) officer.

According to Martha, her husband died in 2010, and all the time she has been collecting her late husband’s pension checks from Finance Ministry, not NASSCORP.

She says it is surprising that she has been sent to collect her husband’s pension check at NASSCORP.

Martha claims that the bad practices that are ongoing at NASSCORP regarding pensions and benefits are the main reason that protestors converged outside President Weah’s office.--**Edited by Winston W. Parley**



Arsenal sign Denis Suarez on loan



New Arsenal signing Denis Suarez has stated his intention to play as much as possible for the Gunners after joining on loan from Barcelona for the rest of the season.

The 25-year-old has managed only eight appearances for the Spanish champions in the current campaign but is hoping he can secure regular game time at the Emirates Stadium, per the

club's official website.

"I've come here to play as much as possible and try to help the team qualify for the Champions League," he said. "I'd like to win the Europa League with Arsenal too - why not? It's a trophy I won under Unai Emery at Sevilla and I'd love to win it again here."

The move sees Suarez reunited with manager Unai Emery. The pair worked together when the midfielder

was on loan at Sevilla for a season, and he's looking forward to playing for his compatriot again.

Suarez has seen his career stall at Barcelona since returning to the club from Villarreal in 2016 due to a lack of game time. Competition for places in the Barcelona midfield is fierce, and Suarez has been unable to convince manager Ernesto Valverde he deserves a regular place.

Football writer Simon Harrison highlighted what to expect from the midfielder.

A loan move to Arsenal offers Suarez the chance to revive his career, and he has prior experience of the Premier League. Suarez spent two years at Manchester City before signing for Barcelona B in 2013.

Suarez will be hoping to make his Premier League debut against Manchester City in Arsenal's next fixture on Sunday. The midfielder is available to play at the Etihad Stadium, according to Charles Watts at Football.London.

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Messi: 'My son Thiago criticises me'

Lionel Messi is not immune from being criticised - even by son Thiago.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is widely regarded as one of the finest footballers to have ever played the sport.

But the Barcelona captain, LaLiga's record goalscorer, confirmed in an interview that

Thiago is not always impressed.

"[He] understands football more because he's the biggest [of his children] and he talks about everything to do with football," Messi told World Soccer.

"I have already had some criticism from him! Barcelona, LaLiga, the Champions League... he follows it all. He

likes it, he asks questions and he gives me pointers when things don't go so well."

Messi added he previously did not like to talk about games he had lost, but Thiago's interest encourages him to analyse disappointing results.

"It's not like that anymore!" Messi added.



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