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Continental News

Blast injures tourists near Giza pyramids

An explosion targeting a tourist bus has injured at least 16 people near the Grand Egyptian Museum, next to the pyramids in Giza.

South African tourists are among the injured. Most of those hurt suffered minor injuries, while three were treated in hospital, officials say. A device went off close to the museum fence as the bus was passing.

It is not yet known who was behind the bombing but Islamist militants have attacked tourists in Egypt in the past.

In December, three Vietnamese tourists and a local tour guide were killed after a roadside bomb hit their bus. A witness, Mohamed el-Mandouh, told Reuters news agency he had heard a "very loud explosion" while sitting in traffic near the site of the blast, which is close to the capital Cairo. The blast hit the bus which was carrying 28 passengers,

Egyptian Tourism Minister Rania AAl Mashat said.

Images taken after police cordoned the bus show a vehicle with windows blown out or shattered, and glass littering the aisle inside.

A private car was also damaged behind the

bus. According to state-run broadcaster Nile News TV, the bus was carrying 25 South African tourists and a security source confirmed for Reuters that South Africans had been aboard.

Seven South African tourists and 10 Egyptian civilians were

injured, Nile News TV says.

The tourism minister said all of the people affected by the blast were being "fully supported in their onward travels". Egyptian officials hurried to confirm everything is under control. No life-threatening injuries, all the wounded in a stable condition, and no damage caused to the strategic tourist site. They wanted to send a clear message of assurance.

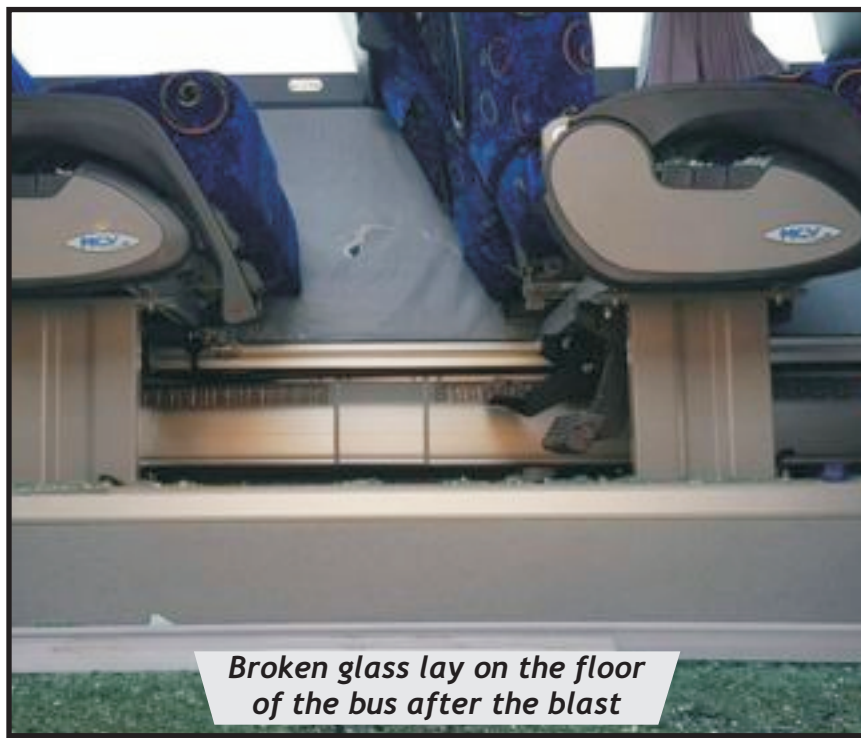
But it's the second explosion in nearly six months near Egypt's most important landmark, the Great Pyramids, and once again questions are raised about how adequate security measures are in such a strategic location.

The blast took place a few hundred metres away from the Grand Egyptian Museum, due to open next year. Officials confirm no damage was caused to the museum, expected to

house the country's top antiquities.

The timing of the explosion is quite critical. Egypt is getting ready to host the African Cup of Nations for football (Afcon) next month. Furthermore, the tourism industry, a lifeline to the struggling Egyptian economy, recently started to recover. Recent official figures show that growth rates are on the rise and tourists are coming back. This vital sector was hit hard in 2015 when a Russian plane was downed over the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, with 224 people on board killed.

So the message behind this recent attack may be discouraging. No tourist comes to Cairo without visiting the Great Pyramids, and perhaps some of them might think twice now before heading to this historic site. BBC



Broken glass lay on the floor of the bus after the blast

Zim leader asked to fix the economy

THE MDC has called on President Emmerson Mnangagwa to stop meddling in the popular opposition's affairs through attempts to link the party to non-existent terrorist plots.

This comes after the State controlled Herald newspaper has carried reports that party

leader Nelson Chamisa was planning to unleash acts of terrorism in the next coming months.

In a statement Friday, MDC spokesperson

Jacob Mafume accused the Zanu PF led government of attempts to create opposition discord while failing on its roles to confront the country's

challenges.

"We see this as an attempt to attack and annihilate dissent," Mafume said.

"The economy is crumbling, fuel shortages continue unabated,

cash shortages, electricity and water rationing is the order of the day, and the military government knows that people will complain," said Mafume.

The Herald wrote this past week,

that MDC had in recent months been plotting on acts of civil unrest in the coming few months adding that some foreign organisations were coordinating workshops and trainings in Zimbabwe.

It further wrote that after the trainings, the groups briefed Chamisa on their activities.

Mafume dismissed the claims. "The MDC places it on record that President Chamisa has not received any reports about any civil disobedience trainings." The President (Chamisa) only receives reports from party organs and his staff. AFP



Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa

UN peacekeeper killed in mali

A Nigerian peacekeeper was killed Saturday in an attack on the United Nations' stabilization mission in Mali, the UN said.

The victim "succumbed to his wounds following the armed attack by unidentified assailants" in Timbuktu, a statement said. A Nigerian peacekeeper was also

The UN's MINUSMA mission was established in Mali after radical Islamist militias seized the north of the country in 2012. They were pushed back by French troops in 2013. A peace agreement signed in 2015 by the Bamako government and armed groups was aimed at restoring stability. But the accord has



injured. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "deeply saddened" by the assault, which he said could amount to a war crime.

In a separate incident Saturday, three Chadian peacekeepers were wounded when their mine-protected vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in Tessalit, in Mali's Kidal region.

failed to stop the violence.

Since their deployment in 2013, more than 190 peacekeepers have died in Mali, including nearly 120 killed by hostile action -- making MINUSMA the UN's deadliest peacekeeping operation, accounting for more than half of blue helmets killed globally in the past five years. AFP

EDITORIAL

Tightening grip on all 3 branches

WITH SENATE PRESIDENT Pro-Tempore Albert Chie's declaration of membership for the governing Coalition for Democratic Change, the CDC has a firm grip on both the Executive and the Legislature, and is well on its way to presiding over the judiciary, if not already.

IT IS OBVIOUS that the ruling party automatically runs the Executive, while the Legislature provides check and balance in line with the Constitution, but not in this case right now.

NOW THAT BOTH the Speaker and the Senate Pro-Tempore are partisans of the ruling Coalition, absolute power is successfully being entrenched in Liberia. It is just matter of time when contrary views or thoughts would be crushed or silenced at all levels of our society.

THE JUDICIARY IS tilting on one toe, with the impeachment of Justice Kabina Ja'neh and his subsequent replacement by now Justice Joseph Nagbe from the governing CDC, and it is only a matter of time that a CDCian could emerge at the helm of the judiciary.

THIS SHOULD BE scaring for people with dissenting thoughts, as they just wouldn't have any place to express themselves and to be heard, not even at the 54th Legislature or the Judiciary.

WE CAN DEDUCE clearly where this is going: War and Economic Crimes Tribunal for Liberia? Not possible with CDCians at the control of all three branches of the Liberian government. Liberians should brace themselves for even more difficult times with the international community, as culture of impunity is on its way to become official policy here.

WHEN THE RULING establishment takes complete control of all three separate but coordinate branches of government, as is being hatched, then it loses sight of the plight of the people and instead, becomes cheering squad of the President.

UNDER SUCH LEADERSHIP style, tyranny and dictatorship become order of the day, as no one dares speak otherwise. Already, dissenting views from opposition lawmakers at the House are being crushed under the watch of Speaker Chambers, a stalwart of the ruling CDC.

LIBERIA RISKS REVERSING to the days of the grand old True Whig Party (TWP) that held onto power in this country for over a century, if care is not taken.

WHO IS THERE to thoroughly and independently scrutinize the national budget, including income and expenditure of the Executive when only CDCians preside over the affairs of State? Liberians should take cue from the current state of affairs in their country and think twice.

The
New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

COMMENTARY

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

America's Illusions of Growth

Many commentators have interpreted buoyant GDP and unemployment data in the United States as vindicating President Donald Trump's economic policies, and some suggest that his re-election chances have improved as a result. But these indicators fail to measure what really counts for the public.

NEW YORK - National politics in the United States has become enslaved to macroeconomic indicators that have little bearing on true wellbeing. For many commentators, the snapshot growth rate of 3.2% for the first quarter of 2019, coupled with a decline in the unemployment rate to 3.6% in April, implies that President Donald Trump's economic policies have been vindicated, and some suggest that his re-election chances have improved as a result.

But this interpretation overlooks what these indicators fail to measure. And what they fail to measure happens to be what really counts for the public.

In defending the 2017 tax cut, to which he attributes an additional 1.1% annual GDP growth for 2018-2019, Harvard economist Robert J. Barro writes, "I take it as self-evident that faster economic growth is better than slower economic growth," because "millions of people benefit from higher growth rates, which are typically accompanied by higher wages and lower unemployment, which especially help the worse-off."

Yet we should be on guard against "self-evident" truths. As a firm believer in the rationality of the public, Barro should consider what the public actually says. According to the most recent Gallup survey, 40% of the public approve of the 2017 tax cuts, while 49% disapprove - a net negative assessment confirmed by several other recent polls. The public is looking beyond any temporary boost in spending and is concerned about growing income and wealth inequality and the soaring budget deficit. Following Barro himself (via Ricardo), they most likely surmise that future tax hikes are on the way.

Continuing opposition to the tax cuts is not the only sign of public dismay. Others are even more notable. The country is evenly divided on overall economic conditions, with half describing them as "excellent" or "good," and half describing them as "only fair" or "poor." Some 49% of Americans believe the economic situation is improving, while 50% feel that it is worsening or staying the same. Overall, only 31% are satisfied with the direction of the country, while 67% are dissatisfied.

Macroeconomic indicators hide much about the quality of life. For example, even while the US economy has expanded during recent years, America's public health crisis has continued to mount. The US has experienced two consecutive years of declining life expectancy, in 2016 and 2017 - the longest consecutive decline since World War I and the subsequent flu epidemic. Yet the current decline is caused by despair, not by illness. Suicide rates and opioid overdoses are soaring.

Another alarming epidemic not captured by GDP or unemployment rates is the sharp rise in anxiety among Americans. Gallup put it this way: "Even as their economy roared, more Americans were stressed, angry, and worried last year than they have been at most points during the past

decade. Asked about their feelings the previous day, the majority of Americans (55%) in 2018 said they had experienced stress during a lot of the day, nearly half (45%) said they felt worried a lot, and more than one in five (22%) said they felt anger a lot." Stress, worry, and anger all hit ten-year US highs in 2018. The US was the seventh-most stressed population in the world in 2018, less stressed than Greece, the Philippines, and Iran, but more stressed than Uganda, Turkey, and Venezuela.

These stress measures are consistent with another notable finding: Americans' self-reported happiness also declined in 2018. Asked by Gallup how they would rate their life on a scale from zero (worst life) to ten (best life), Americans in 2018 responded with an average of 6.9, down from 7.0 in 2017, and 7.3 during 2006-2008. Self-reported life satisfaction has declined during the past decade, even as per capita GDP has risen. For the year 2018, the US ranked 20th worldwide and in the bottom half of the OECD countries, down from 19th in 2016-2018.

Even in their own terms, the GDP and employment data are much less impressive than the headlines suggest. First-quarter GDP growth, for example, showed a surge in inventories, which might portend slowing output growth in future quarters. And it is, in any event, a preliminary estimate. Likewise, while a lower unemployment rate is certainly heartening, part of the reported decline in April reflected a reduction in the labor force. Even more to the point, the employment rate remains far below its earlier peak. The civilian employment rate in April 2019 stood at 60.6% of the working-age population, down from its annual peak of 64.4% in 2000. Much of America's currently low unemployment rate reflects the withdrawal of many low-wage Americans from the labor force.

A majority of Americans are neither happy with the way things are going in their country nor naive enough to believe that the 2017 tax cut is a solution to their woes. Unlike many macroeconomists, they know there is more to life than a short-run increase in GDP growth or decline in the unemployment rate. These are at best blurred snapshots that neglect the future, overlook inequalities of outcomes, and fail to reflect the high and rising anxieties of Americans living with overpriced healthcare, massive student debts, and lack of job protection. Nor do they reflect falling life expectancy and the rising burdens of substance abuse, suicides, and depression.

It's time that economists, pundits, and politicians start looking holistically at life in our times, and take seriously the long-term structural changes needed to address the multiple crises of health care, despair, inequality, and stress in the US and many other countries. US citizens, in particular, should reflect on the fact that many other countries' people are happier and less worried, and are living longer. In general, those other countries' governments are not cutting taxes for the rich and slashing services for the rest. They are attending to the common good, instead of catering to the rich while pointing to illusory economic statistics that hide as much as they reveal.

O-PED

By Carl Manlan

Investing in Africans' Health

LOMÉ - Africa's health sector represents a massive investment opportunity, estimated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to be worth \$66 billion annually. Yet African leaders and donors continue to discuss Africa's health-care systems in terms of funding gaps. In fact, those gaps will close only when Africa is viewed as an investment destination, not a foreign-aid recipient.

A strong health-care system is a prerequisite for economic development. But the development aid to Africa that is designated for health is not predictable enough to sustain the kinds of long-term investments that are needed.

Importing pharmaceuticals, for example, costs Africa an estimated \$14 billion annually. Creating the conditions for local pharmaceutical manufacturing would not only slash that bill; it would also result in the creation of 16 million jobs. (This is yet another reason to support the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA.) Yet aid is often promised according to three-year timelines, with no guarantee that it will actually be delivered when needed to fund planned programs.

Of course, domestic public resources could be used for this purpose. But low economic growth and high debt-servicing costs have left many African governments with limited fiscal space. Yet, with a greater focus on improving tax collection, Africans stand a better chance of increasing their domestic revenues. And budgets are often subject to shifting political leadership and priorities, which can preclude consistent, long-term investment.

The result is that health-care spending in Africa is woefully inadequate. In 2015, the continent accounted for just 2% of the \$9.7 trillion in global health-care spending, even though it represents 16% of the global population and 26% of the global disease burden.

Increasing health-care spending in Africa is not a matter of ramping up aid; the limits of external generosity are clearly already being reached. Rather, it is about getting private actors - especially Africans - to seize the relevant business opportunities.

The scale of those opportunities should not be underestimated. Rapid population growth, coupled with longer life expectancy, means that countries' health-care needs will skyrocket in the coming years. By 2030, 14% of business opportunities in global health are expected to be in Africa, and the continent's health and wellbeing markets will be worth \$259 billion.

Meeting the health-care needs of a growing African population - and thereby ensuring that the continent has a healthy workforce to drive economic transformation - will require funding that is more predictable and sustainable, guided by reliable long-term strategies. Here, the African diaspora should take the lead.

As it stands, health-care spending funded by money from the African diaspora is more likely to be used to pay the medical bills of a sick relative (or, more broadly, on consumption) than to be invested in strengthening the system. Such investment would require pooling and channeling resources (via trusted intermediaries) toward projects that can meet the needs of entire communities at any given moment. And this presupposes a shift in focus from top-down solutions to the development of resilient systems that start at the community level.

For example, two million community health workers will be needed by 2020 to ensure that every African has access to quality care. This is not a new solution; community health workers were key to the health care received by my own parents in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1950s. But predictable funding is needed to build a system that can meet today's health-care needs, while creating two million jobs. Other targeted investments include disease management, a market estimated to be worth \$14 billion, and remote patient monitoring, estimated to be worth \$15 billion.

The more stable the investment environment is, the more willing private-sector actors will be to fund the kinds of large-scale interventions needed to unlock Africa's productive potential. Establishing special economic zones, which have been successful in countries like Ethiopia, will further boost predictability and confidence, driving further progress.

As leaders gear up for the World Health Organization's 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva this month, it is worth highlighting the limits of donor-driven development in Africa. To lay the foundations for economic transformation - including by implementing AfCFTA - Africans at home and abroad must step up.

In the long term, the economist John Maynard Keynes reminded us, we are all dead. But long-term health investment is for the living. It means that those whose lives are just beginning will be able to build a more prosperous future and ensure that future generations, too, enjoy longer, healthier, more productive lives.

OPINION

By Yanis Varoufakis

A Greek Canary in a Global Goldmine

ATHENS - The eurozone country that has become synonymous with insolvency is today proving to be a treasure-trove for some. Traders who bought Greek assets a few years ago have good reason to celebrate, having banked returns that no other market could have provided. But, as is often the case, an opportunity that seems too good to be true probably is. And this one could portend the next phase of our global crisis.

An investor who bought German government bonds in 2013 has, by now, gained a 7% return, whereas a buyer of a Greek government bond issued at the height of the country's debt crisis in 2012 would have earned a colossal 231% return. Two months ago, the price of the first ten-year bond issued since Greece's bailout in 2010 surged for seven consecutive days, rising by 2.8% in a week - a better performance than any other government bond issue worldwide. That bond rally created a psychological slipstream, which, in recent months, pulled the Athens Stock Exchange 26% higher, against the background of a European asset market inexorably bleeding capital.

On the strength of these impressive numbers, it is as tempting as it would be false to herald the end of Greece's crisis. The Greek bond and equity rally is obscuring a growing chasm between a gloomy economic reality and an unsustainably buoyant financial climate. Rather than reflecting Greece's recovery, the traders' high profit margins mirror continued deflationary pressures and fragmentation in Europe within a global environment of decreasing debt sustainability. The numbers from Greece, so exciting to investors far and wide, may well prove a harbinger of fresh troubles for Europe's economy, and perhaps for the world.

Given the gaping gap between Greece's nominal national income and its public debt, how is it possible that Greek bonds are soaring? Why is the Athens Stock Exchange rising while business remains hampered by punitive taxation, banks labor under a mountain of non-performing loans, declining unemployment reflects only emigration and some precarious jobs, net public investment is negative, and private investment in production of high value-added tradable goods is absent?

One reason is the proverbial dead-cat-bounce. Given how thin Greece's equity market is - total capitalization is €52 billion (\$58 billion) - the modest influx of capital that came in the wake of the bond rally was enough to drive the 26% rise in its index. But, despite this surge, the Greek market remains 81% below its 2009 level. As for the bond rally itself, the paradox quickly disappears once we recall how the first two bailouts shifted Greek public debt from the private sector to the shoulders of Europe's taxpayers.

With 85% of Greece's debt outside the markets, repayments deferred until after 2032, and another €30 billion of official loans extended to the Greek government to cover its repayments to all comers, investors can focus on the small slice of Greece debt that remains in private hands. As long as the Greek government is subservient to Europe's authorities, traders cannot lose money on bonds it issues at interest rates of more than 3%, at a time when German bund yields are hovering near zero.

Determined to remain upbeat, most commentators point out, for example, that average Greek debt maturity is 26 years, in sharp contrast to seven years for Italy and Spain or ten years for Portugal, giving Greece's economy the chance to recover properly. What they neglect to mention are the impossible austerity conditions that Greece's creditors attached to that extension: a permanent primary budget surplus (excluding debt repayment) of 2.2-3.5% of GDP until 2060. In other words, Greek businesses will have to continue paying 75% of their profits to the government (including social security contributions), on average, while the total tax burden in neighboring Bulgaria is no more than 22%.

In short, Greece has gone from being Ground Zero of the eurozone crisis, and the best example of its mismanagement by the EU authorities, to a perfect example of how financial exuberance can ride on the back of economic misery. This disparity's most worrying aspect is that profit-driven traders are not wrong to snap up the paper assets of a sinking country. From their short-term perspective, it's an irresistible play - and their bottom line confirms this. But it is wrong, even reckless, to conclude that, because traders are making a mint with Greek assets, the underlying reality must be improving.

The rest of the world would benefit from viewing this disconnect as a symptom of a global predicament. In June 2017, Argentina issued a 100-year bond worth \$2.75 billion that sold like hot cakes on the strength of great, and greatly mistaken, expectations of the Argentine economy's prospects under a new neoliberal administration. While those trades have already proved foolhardy, there is hard evidence that average total returns to investors are higher when they buy the debt of countries that default more frequently. But financiers' penchant for investing in low-quality debt and talking up non-existent opportunities is most dangerous when applied to private, as opposed to public, debt.

During the first three months of this year, a stupendous 40% of all loans to highly indebted companies in the United States went to the least solvent. According to the Federal Reserve, this over-leveraged lending increased 20.1% in 2018, while other sources report a deterioration in underwriting standards. Credit is being channeled to low-rated, heavily indebted companies, overshadowing the safer high-yield bond market as a source of financing. According to LCD, a division of S&P Global Market Intelligence, the leveraged loan market has now exceeded \$1.2 trillion, overtaking traditional junk bonds and undermining less risky covered bonds.

Greece is in the vanguard of this trend, attracting fair-weather, shallow, speculative trades, while patient investment in its economic recovery is nowhere to be seen. After 2008, Greece came to symbolize global capitalism's failure to balance credit and trade flows. Today, as the global mismatch between economic reality and financial returns grows, there is clear danger that, once again, the country is foreshadowing a new phase of the global crisis. When vultures grow fat on a corpse, they do not revive it.

ARTICLE

Good education is the foundation for effective female leadership

—Togolese politician **Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson**
By **Franck Kuwonu**

African women's restricted access to quality education, knowledge and resources is preventing them from gaining leadership positions on the continent, says Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson, a veteran West African women's rights activist. Another problem is that women—especially rural women—are allowed only limited control over finances, means of production and land.

Consequently the pace of women's empowerment remains slow, Ms. Adjamagbo-Johnson says.

In an interview with Africa Renewal, Ms. Adjamagbo-Johnson reflected on decades of women's political leadership, gender activism and professional engagement in Togo, her home country, and West Africa in general.

Ms. Adjamagbo-Johnson works with Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), a pan-African women's rights advocacy group with headquarters in Harare, Zimbabwe. The group operates in 27 countries across the continent.

In addition to her work with WiLDAF, she leads the largest coalition of political parties in her home country. Four years ago she vied for the presidency of Togo, but failed to achieve the post.

WiLDAF's mission is to empower women by promoting their rights and increasing their participation and influence at the community, national and international levels through initiating, promoting and strengthening strategies that link law and development. Ms. Adjamagbo-Johnson has over two decades' experience working with national networks of women's rights organizations on advocacy and empowerment.

On the current state of women's rights and leadership in Africa, she quips, "I like to think of stairs, if I may. Stairs because we have climbed a few steps, but a lot more steps remain to be climbed on the way up to the top."

She believes that despite political advances such as women acting as heads of state or participating in government in a few countries on the continent, women's rights are still not fully recognized, and their leadership is not promoted enough. There is currently no female head of state in Africa.

"There cannot be an alternative to access to education or knowledge," she says, adding, "It is a very good thing that parents have recognized that both boys and girls deserve the same chance at formal education."

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that sub-Saharan Africa accounts for half of the 130 million girls aged 6 to 17 who are out of school globally and half of another 15 million school-age girls who may never enroll.

"Getting girls into a classroom is not enough in itself; girls have to be able to stay in school and get proper education once enrolled," Ms. Adjamagbo-Johnson says.

UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore echoed those same concerns: "When [a] girl reaches school age, will her family be able to afford to send her to school—and keep her there? Or will they keep her home to do chores, while her brothers learn?"

Ms. Fore continued, "If lucky enough to go to school, will she have access to separate toilet facilities? And the information and facilities she needs to manage her menstrual cycle?"

"And when the now young lady is thinking of entering the workforce, will she have access to skill training—including digital skills? Or science, technology, engineering and math-based skills? Or will she be left out of these opportunities because of her gender?"

Having made it closer to the top of political leadership in her country, Ms. Adjamagbo-Johnson considers herself one of the luckiest of her generation. On her experience in politics, she cites entrenched patriarchy. "None of my political colleagues thought of me as not being qualified enough to be a political leader," she says. "They accepted me as an equal partner," yet "they were oblivious to the fact that as a woman, I have specific needs that needed accommodation."

Political and social participation in society require women to balance family and work life, she says. Together with the need for education, "That could be the single most challenging aspect of effective political leadership for women in Africa." -Africa Renewal

ARTICLE

Technology is a liberating force for African women

Innovative projects tackle entrenched gender inequality

By **Charles Onyango-Obbo**

As ride-hailing apps proliferate across the globe, the year-old AnNisa Taxi in Kenya is one of the standouts in Africa.

Developed by 33-year-old Mehnaz Sarwar, AnNisa is run by women and serves female passengers and children exclusively.

Ms. Sarwar sought to overcome two obstacles: limited job opportunities for women in a male-dominated industry and the reluctance of women to hail taxis, because physical abuse from drivers—including sexual abuse—is known to take place.

"An Nisa Taxi's priority is to offer safe, reliable, and trustworthy drivers, whether it's taking you home after a night out, starting your day with a ride to work, or picking up your children after school," the company states on its website.

In an article for Quartz, an online business publication, journalist Osman Mohamed Osman observes: "Unlike others in the market, which collect 25% of the driver's earnings, AnNisa charges just 10% of what the drivers earn from trips." Mr. Osman quotes Ms. Sarwar as saying she wanted to empower women who need "financial freedom."

New possibilities

AnNisa's successful launch demonstrates the possibilities new technologies offer African women in male-dominated industries. It also conveys a new ethos regarding how earnings are distributed and shows how services can be deployed to address important needs of women—safety in this case.

In Uganda, Brenda Katwesigye, a graduate of Makerere University, founded Wazi Vision, a company that provides eye-testing services and glasses. Ten percent of the money paid for each pair purchased online or through direct sales channels goes to helping a child in need acquire a pair of glasses. "To make this possible, we go directly to our communities, perform eye-testing exercises and give away eyeglasses to children whose parents cannot afford them," says Ms. Katwesigye.

The glasses, made from recycled plastic, are designed in Uganda and manufactured in Switzerland.

A virtual reality testing kit brings eye testing to communities that do not have optometrists or access to affordable eye-care services.

The company's operations reflect the sensibilities of female innovators as well as their concern for the environment, children and women. Wazi Vision says their glasses cost 80% less than similar competing products.

Turning to Nigeria, Chika Madubuko identified another vital service, that of caring for the elderly—a stressful and time-consuming task that African women are traditionally expected to perform for their family members.

Madubuko's Greymate Care is an online platform with over 500 experienced and vetted caregivers and 130 doctors and nurses. Services for the elderly are easily booked on the company's website, freeing up time for women to concentrate on their work and earn an income. The company uses GPS to monitor the movements of staff in the field.

Ms. Madubuko expects the company to grow beyond her country and to provide thousands of jobs on the continent in the future.

Temie Giwa-Tubosun, also from Nigeria, founded LifeBank (initially called One Percent Project), a blood sourcing and delivery service. LifeBank uses mobile and web technology and smart logistics to deliver blood from labs to patients and doctors in hospitals across Nigeria.

Nigeria needs about 1.8 million pints of blood every year, but its Ministry of Health can only collect 500,000 pints. LifeBank's intervention is timely, reports Nigeria's The Guardian newspaper. The company has 40 blood banks and services 300 hospitals. Blood boxes delivered by riders can only be opened by recipients via a preset Bluetooth connection.

"We're like Amazon for blood banks," Ms. Giwa-Tubosun says. "Once we have their order, we deploy it where it's needed, using motorbikes and trucks." Since 2015, LifeBank has delivered 11,000 pints and saved at least 2,500 lives. Ms. Giwa-Tubosun has already expanded into oxygen delivery and hopes to add vaccines and antivenoms.

In nearby Ghana, social entrepreneur Josephine Marie Godwyll is on a mission to bring engaging learning experiences to children, especially those in rural communities. Her company, Young at Heart Ghana, uses digital platforms to create such experiences.

The company has engaged over 5,000 children since 2013 through information and communication technology (ICT) outreaches and learning hubs, digital learning clubs, fairs and e-learning platforms.

Social media

Finally, social media have become a launchpad for successful initiatives led by women. Temraza Haute Couture is an award-winning Egyptian fashion house specializing in handmade evening and bridal dresses. Farida Temraza, CEO and designer in chief, has successfully used Facebook advertising to promote her company's brand internationally.

Temraza Haute Couture's video ads have gained thousands of views, enough to drive thousands of clients to her website. Her sales increased by 55% in six months.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Transport Ministry takes road safety message to rural Liberia

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Ministry of Transport and the National Road Accident Prevention Program have taken accident prevention and road safety messages to rural Liberia, aimed at saving lives in the country.

Speaking to the NewDawn in Monrovia recently, Transport Ministry Director of Press and Public Affairs Mr. Samuel G. Barjibo says a team of technocrats from the Ministry will be visiting Margibi and Bong counties this week to spread the road accident prevention message and its benefit to vehicle owners, operators, pedestrians, and rural dwellers.

He explains that the Ministry's outreach campaign is also intended to provide detailed information about the expected batch of jungle motorbikes, ambulances, and tow trucks, among others that are expected in the country to make things easier for Liberians.

Mr. Barjibo narrates that the jungle motorbikes are intended to provide constant

patrol of roads being used by vehicle operators and to also alert the ambulances about motor vehicle accidents for prompt intervention.

He notes that the National Road Accident Prevention Program (NRAPP) will take care of removing from the roads, all accident and broken down vehicles. According to him, this will save the cost of paying for towing services as well as the risk associated with

people trying to repair broken down vehicles on the road which could cause another oncoming vehicle to run into them and cause casualties.

Mr. Barjibo explains further that education will also be provided on the risk of leaving broken down vehicle on the road with the anticipation of removing it the following day.

According to Mr. Barjibo, this could cause thieves to break into the abandoned

vehicle and steal its important parts and other valuable items.

Barjibo disclosed that the NRAPP outreach campaign will further educate rural Liberians and owners of vehicles on the danger of sleeping in broken down vehicles on the highway at night.

He explains that this could cause armed robbers to attack occupants of the broken down vehicles. Mr. Barjibo adds that the NRAPP, the first of its kind in Africa, will be enjoyed by all

registered motor vehicles, heavy and light duty trucks operating in the country. He continues that the NRAPP project will also create employment opportunities for many qualified Liberians nationwide.

He encourages rural dwellers to come out in their numbers to participate in these events so as to be able to ask questions that they might have. --*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



WFP, GoL begin joint price monitoring training

The United Nations World Food Programme in Liberia and the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) conduct a two-day Joint Price Monitoring Technical Training in Bong County for 30 price monitoring technicians from the 15 subdivisions of the country.

According to a press release, the Price Monitoring Technical Training workshop is aimed at capturing and facilitating experience-sharing and equipping MoA and LISGIS field-level staff engaged in collection, analysis and reporting of market data. This is to better communicate, improve the

people and organizations in America and elsewhere but most importantly for Liberians at home.

WFP Liberia's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Officer, Emmanuel Anderson, lauds the Government of Liberia for its enduring partnership with the World Food Programme on price monitoring activities. He said WFP's work in the country is carefully aligned to the Government of Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) priorities, as WFP has a global mandate to support some of the most vulnerable members of society, with different social protection interventions.

Twenty-three (23) markets



Training participants from all 15 counties of Liberia

contents of the monthly market monitoring bulletins, and strengthen partnerships and networks.

Speaking in Gbarnga, Bong County at the start of the training session, Ministry of Agriculture's Acting Director of Food Security and Nutrition, Tarnue Koiwou notes; "We are being supported by our partners WFP and FAO. This is not their exercise. This is our responsibility and so we must take ownership of this going forward. WFP and other partners have been helping us to establish our market information system and we must sustain it and make price monitoring work well for this country."

He says the price monitoring bulletin is relevant to universities, development partners, regional partners,

are currently being monitored with approximately 20 food commodities and other non-food items involving 27 data collection personnel and enumerators from LISGIS field offices in all 15 counties. This includes markets as far away as Foya in Lofa County; Saclepea, Nimba County; Barclayville, Grand Kru County and as close as markets in Monrovia, among others.

Liberia is increasingly vulnerable to high food price shocks as has been witnessed since 2008. The government has been concerned about the rise in food prices and as such, it has been undertaking regular joint Government-WFP market monitoring exercise for which an MOU was signed between the Government of Liberia (MoA, LISGIS) and WFP.

CBL hosts regional financial reporting course

A regional course on Economic & Financial Report Writing Skills and Presentation Techniques will be held at the Central Bank of Liberia 20-24 May 2019. Organized by the West African Institute for Financial & Economic Management (WAIFEM), the course is designed to enable participants to structure, write and present more effective economic, financial and other technical reports.

The course will cover the communications process, grammar, writing styles,

verbal communications as well as features of technical report-writing. Data handling and analysis in technical reports, guidelines/formats for preparing financial and economic reports, computer applications and legal issues are also components of the course.

At the end of course, participants are expected to be equipped to: use correct grammar structures in the English Language in a clear and concise manner that is related to a specific purpose, audience and readership; organize information in a

logical form for both oral and written presentations; write and present better financial and economic reports.

The course is designed for senior/middle level officials in central banks, ministries with financial and economic functions, research institutions and other public and private organizations whose staff are involved in economic and financial reporting.

Participants will find the course very rewarding because of the growing importance of communications technology in responding to the ever-changing business environment.

Institutions that prepare themselves adequately by investing in both internal and external communications with stakeholders are more likely to be more equipped in dealing with the uncertainties of the modern business environment. The course is therefore designed to offer a mastery and proper articulation of oral, written and presentation skills which are necessary for attracting and retaining favorable audiences.

CBL Executive Governor Nathaniel R. Patray, III will make remarks during the opening ceremony. --*Press release*



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Pro-Tempore Chie joins CDC

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate Albert Chie joins the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change of President George Manneh Weah, making the government CDC to secure a strong grip on the entire leadership of the 54th Legislature.

Declaring his members officially on Friday, May 12, at the D. Tweh High School football field in the Borough of New Kru Town, a Monrovia suburb Pro-Tempore Chie calls on Liberians to work together in tackling economy.

Chie, who shares his native Grand Kru County with President Weah, notes that while the country faces one of its tough times in recent history with the economy, the problem developed since 2013, during the administration of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

According to him, it is appalling for some people in some quarters of the country to shift blame on the current CDC-led administration.

Senator Chie, once an executive member of the

former ruling Unity Party of Madam Sirleaf, stresses that the country started experiencing tough condition when prices of its natural resources on the world market started to drop, coupled with the departure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) the closure of many international companies and non-governmental organizations, including outbreak of the deadly Ebola

Virus Disease.

He continues that many concession agreements signed during the Johnson Sirleaf's administration barely exists, as most of the companies have returned probably due to other factors, noting that these are some of the contributing factors to the downward trend of the economy.

According to Liberia Extractive and Initiative Transparency Industry (LEITI)

report 2013, about 68 Concession Agreements were signed in Liberia, but only six (6) are in compliance with the law of Liberia. Meanwhile, Senator Chie has presented a twin cabin (4-door) pickup to the CDC national leadership for the two impending by-elections in Montserrado County. Friday's occasion also saw Mr. David Korte, former stalwart of the ex-ruling Unity Party taking up his full membership card with the CDC.

Also a former lawmaker from Lofa County, Mr. Korte notes that his decision to come

over is based on the developmental approach of President Weah especially, the President's focus on road connectivity.

With the declaration of membership by the Senate Pro-Tempore to the ruling establishment, it is now clear that three politically powerful officials namely; President Weah, Speaker Bhofal Chambers and now Pro-Tempore Chie are from southeast Liberia.

CDC national chairman Mulbah Morlu welcomes Senator Chie for the decision and assures him the party will utilize his expertise as deems necessary. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Senate Pro-Tempore Albert Chie

INCHRC official frowns at LDEA

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

An official at the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Mr. Sam McGill says the Commission's investigation has established that officers of the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA), Bong Detachment is perpetrating demeaning acts against peaceful citizens.

Speaking recently at the opening for the May Term of Court of the 9th Judicial Circuit, Mr. McGill says LDEA

officers in the County are constantly involved in the detention of Liberians and passengers who possess firearms and other items.

He argues that it is not forbidden by law for Liberians to bear firearm.

Mr. McGill narrates that Col. Alex Toweh and his agents have allegedly perpetrated several demeaning acts against inhabitants of Bong and its surroundings which have drawn the attention of the INCHR.

Sam McGill recounts that

human rights activists are yet to understand the law that prohibits the sale of firearms in the Country and as such, no citizen in possession of firearms is to be arrested by the LDEA.

Mr. McGill also used the opportunity to call on the requisite authority through the Ministry of Justice to establish the professional standard division at the LDEA Bong County Detachment office in Gbarnga for the reduction of some of these acts.

He maintains that since being assigned in the County, the LDEA has arrested about 30 firearms at the Gbarnga Check Point.

His comments have received huge public reaction in the County, with many citizens condemning them.

Some citizens are calling on the Liberia National Police (LNP) to investigate him.

"I am really disappointed in Sam's statement he made in the court yesterday. How will you say that the LDEA officers are not to arrest unauthorized individuals carrying firearms? That is altogether unacceptable," Jerry F. Jackson, a resident of Gbarnga told this paper.

"For me all I can say is that the police need to investigate

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Sam because I think he has different intention," Kumakeh Jackson, a former Chairman of Brooklyn Community adds.

Mr. Jackson indicates that McGill's statement encourages unlawful act, especially in the transport of firearms in Liberia.

It can be recalled that in 2006, the United Nations Security Council, in its Resolution 1521 and its subsequent resolutions on Liberia, decided that, with certain limited exceptions, all States should take the necessary measures to prevent the sale or supply to Liberia of arms and related material of all types.

The measure included weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment and spare parts destined for any recipient in Liberia.

In the wake of the UN decision, former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf in 2006 issued Executive Order Number #6, banning individual, group, organization or entity other

than the Government of Liberia from owning, possessing, or cause to be brought into Liberia any firearm of any type, caliber or design or any ammunition or parts for any firearm, or any tooling equipment intended for the purposes of manufacture, assembly, or re-tooling of firearms of any type.

The prohibition included any firearm previously registered under the provisions of the Firearms Traffic Act 1956.

When contacted, LDEA Bong County Commander Alex Toweh disputed the allegation and termed it as cartoon of fallacy.

He says the human rights actor has lost direction, evidenced by his action to have made derogatory statement against the LDEA.

Commander Toweh further maintains that besides drug dealers, the LDEA has the right to arrest violators of the law, urging human rights actors to carry on proper investigation before making public statements. --*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



Français

Le rapport sur l'opération monétaire controversée est disponible

La Commission générale des audits (GAC) a publié le rapport tant attendu sur la gestion des 25 millions de dollars américains décaissés pour freiner l'inflation. La commission cite des divergences en ce qui concerne 11 millions de dollars américains échangés à la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL).

Le rapport ne soupçonne aucun acte criminel, mais insiste plutôt sur le fait qu'aucun membre de l'équipe de gestion technique des affaires économiques, dont le ministre de l'économie et de la planification du développement, n'a participé à la transaction monétaire, à part le fait de donner son accord pour la distribution de l'argent. Cependant, le rapport d'audit met en exergue des divergences entre les rapports de synthèse et les rapports détaillés. Les auditeurs se disent convaincus qu'il s'agissait plutôt d'une erreur qui pourrait être attribuée aux problèmes de manque de compétence à la banque.

« L'argent en dollars

américain se extrait quotidiennement et versé aux bénéficiaires à partir du coffret opérationnel de la banque n'a pas été enregistré dans le système de comptabilité de la banque en temps réel. Par exemple, l'argent pris du coffre pendant la période du 17 au 31

juillet 2018 n'a été enregistré que le 1er août 2018 sous forme de montants forfaitaires », indique le rapport.

Le rapport de la GAC conteste également les informations selon lesquelles la totalité des 15 millions USD mis en circulation ont été échangés en

dehors de la banque. Selon le rapport, seulement 4 millions ont été échangés en dehors de la banque tandis que 11 millions ont été échangés à l'intérieur de la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL) et 2 millions de dollars américains vendus aux enchères à Total Liberia Inc.

Le montant total rapporté à la CBL s'élève à plus de 2,3 milliards de dollars libériens, qui ont été par la suite versés aux banques commerciales pendant la période de Noël, à en croire le rapport.

Le président George Weah a donné instruction à la GAC de procéder à une enquête plus approfondie sur l'opération d'éponger de l'excès de liquidité pour laquelle les 25 millions de dollars américains avaient été décaissés. L'ordre du Chef de l'Etat fait suite aux rapports publiés par la commission d'enquête présidentielle et les enquêteurs américains dans le cadre de la disparition présumée des 16 milliards de dollars libériens de la banque centrale du Libéria. Les rapports en question préconisaient un audit sur l'ensemble de l'opération de nettoyage de l'excès de liquidité en dollars libériens sur le marché.

La présidence avait expliqué en mars avoir commandé ce rapport en réponse aux recommandations de la commission d'enquête présidentielle et de l'audit du cabinet de conseil américain Kroll Associates sur la politique monétaire du pays et la CBL depuis 2016.

Bien que le rapport de la commission générale des audits ait fait état de divergences et d'écarts dans les sommes rapportées par la banque, il n'a pas pu dire si tout l'argent a été comptabilisé ou pas.

Toutefois, selon la GAC, un

écart de 1839 529,54 dollars américains a été constaté entre les montants vendus selon le rapport de synthèse fourni par la CBL pour les bénéficiaires et les montants effectivement confirmés par le bénéficiaire.

Selon le rapport, environ quatre-vingt-neuf (89) bénéficiaires qui auraient reçu un montant total de 5 670 880 USD n'ont pas pu confirmer avoir fait des transactions avec la CBL.

Cinq anciens dirigeants de la CBL, dont Charles Sirleaf, fils de l'ex-présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, ont été inculpés le 4 mars de "sabotage économique" à la suite de la publication des conclusions de Kroll Associates et de la commission d'enquête présidentielle. Il leur est notamment reproché d'avoir fait imprimer sans autorisation un excédent de billets pour un montant de 2,645 milliards de dollars libériens (14,4 milliards d'euros ou 16,3 M USD), dont ils ne peuvent justifier l'utilisation, selon l'accusation. Kroll Associates se montrait très critique de la méthode retenue par l'administration Weah pour "éponger la liquidité excessive" de dollars libériens, estimant qu'elle avait "augmenté le niveau de risque" de malversations et recommandant des vérifications supplémentaires.

Selon la GAC, des documents fournis par le Département de la recherche, des politiques et de la planification de la CBL ont recommandé que la vente aux enchères soit organisée avec des entreprises de ces catégories ; « Principaux importateurs 60%, petites entreprises libériennes 25% et bureaux de change 15%. Le montant devait être mis aux enchères à un taux de 155 L \$: 1 USD, approuvé par Charles E. Sirleaf, qui était à l'époque sous-gouverneur de la CBL chargé des opérations. Affaire à suivre.



Côte d'Ivoire : affrontements entre deux communautés près de Bouaké

En Côte d'Ivoire, la ville de Béoumi, proche de Bouaké, a été le théâtre ces derniers jours de violents affrontements, suite à un accrochage entre deux chauffeurs issus l'un de la communauté Baoulé, et l'autre de la communauté

Malinké. Le calme est revenu ce vendredi matin, mais les violences qui ont débuté mercredi matin ont fait une dizaine de morts et près d'une centaine de blessés, selon les autorités. Le médiateur de la République a lancé un appel « au calme et à la concertation »

et dépêché une délégation sur place.

C'est une « banale altercation » entre un jeune chauffeur de taxi-moto et le conducteur d'un véhicule de transport en commun massa qui a mis le feu aux poudres mercredi matin à Béoumi. Selon le préfet du département, c'est la rumeur du décès du jeune chauffeur de taxi-moto, appartenant à la communauté Baoulé, qui est à l'origine des affrontements qui ont embrasé la ville ces deux derniers jours.

Les autorités affirment que la confrontation entre jeunes des communautés Baoulé et Malinké a fait au moins neuf morts et près d'une centaine de blessés. Joint par téléphone, le préfet assure pourtant que « le jeune chauffeur de taxi-moto va bien » et qu'il est actuellement « pris en charge par le CHU de Bouaké ».

Bilan matériel lourd

De son côté, le maire de la ville, Jean-Marc Kouassi, dresse un bilan matériel très lourd : marché, magasins et boutiques ont été détruits.

Même s'il évoque « des petites tensions » depuis les élections municipales, l' élu se dit « extrêmement surpris » par l'ampleur de la violence et la rapidité de sa propagation. Pour tenter de sortir de la crise, des rencontres avec les représentants des deux communautés sont prévues.

Selon les autorités, 300 militaires sont déployés dans le département pour s'assurer notamment que les populations Baoulé des villages alentours ne

cherchent pas à rejoindre Béoumi, où la communauté Malinké est dominante. La préfecture a décrété un couvre-feu de 21h à 6h du matin, et ce jusqu'à lundi dans la ville. Des rencontres avec les chefs religieux et les chefs de villages sont prévues pour inciter « au dialogue » et à « la cohésion sociale ».

Le ministre de la Communication et des médias, Sidi Touré, lui-même originaire de Béoumi, s'est rendu sur place dès mercredi pour tenter d'apaiser les esprits.



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Français

La LTA risqued' enrichir l'opposition ?

Les nouveaux tarifs proposés par l'Autorité des télécommunications du Liberia (LTA) ne feront qu'enrichir l'opposition au régime de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC), craint le président national du parti au pouvoir, Mulbah Morlu.

Lors de l'une de ses sorties, M. Morlu a déclaré que les frais réglementaires de 5% et les 15% de taxes supplémentaires proposés vont suffisamment financer l'opposition pour tenter de renverser la coalition au pouvoir lors des élections présidentielle et législatives de 2023.

Les taxes supplémentaires qui devraient entrer en vigueur automatiquement le 15 octobre de cette année augmenteront les recettes publiques de 2 à 20 millions de dollars par an et augmenteront également le coût des appels téléphoniques et des données internet.

Cette proposition semble saper les mesures d'austérité mises en place par le gouvernement et qui visent à réduire le fardeau économique des citoyens ordinaires. Outre la politisation des nouveaux tarifs proposés par la LTA, les taxes supplémentaires affecteront les deux fournisseurs de services GSM dans la mesure où bon nombre de leurs clients ne seront plus à même d'utiliser leurs services du fait des coûts élevés.

Par exemple, selon les études, une taxe supplémentaire de 0,008 dollar américain sur chaque minute d'appel téléphonique entraînera une baisse de 42% du chiffre d'affaires de LonestarCell MTN, ce qui touchera également les clients de valeur inférieure à 1,00 USD, tandis qu'Orange enregistrera une baisse de 86% du trafic des consommateurs à faible revenu.

Toutefois, selon le rapport de la LTA du 20 février 2019 sur la consultation publique sur la fixation du prix plancher pour les services d'appel téléphoniques et les données internet et la

redevance réglementaire sur les biens et services de télécommunication, les nouvelles mesures visent à rééquilibrer le prix et la stabilisation du marché.

La LTA a déclaré dans son rapport que «les nouveaux prix sont une situation gagnant-gagnant pour toutes les parties», cela signifie une augmentation des revenus des entreprises de téléphonie mobile et des revenus du gouvernement, ainsi qu'un accès accru et un service de qualité pour les abonnés.

Dans son paquet proposé, la LTA a déclaré qu'une taxe de 5% serait perçue sur la vente totale de biens et services de télécommunications nationales ou sur la TPS, ce qui devrait augmenter les recettes de l'Etat de 2 à 20 millions de dollars par an.

Les deux sociétés de téléphonie mobile, LonestarCell MTN et Orange, ont approuvé les nouveaux tarifs en ce qui concerne les appels vocaux en ligne, les services internet et les frais réglementaires de 5%. Mais la question des taxes supplémentaires réglementaires est un sujet de discorde.

La section 4.1 de l'ordonnance de la LTA : 0016-02-25-19, stipule : « À compter du 15 octobre 2019, à la date anniversaire des six mois de cette ordonnance, une taxe supplémentaire de 0,008 USD sera automatiquement imposée sur chaque minute d'appel téléphonique. »

4.2 Il est indiqué ce qui suit :

«Le 15 octobre 2019, à la date anniversaire du sixième anniversaire de cette commande, un montant supplémentaire de 0,0065 USD sera appliqué aux données mobiles.»

4.3 Déclare que : « Les taxes supplémentaires imposées ... entreront en vigueur immédiatement à la date spécifiée sans préavis ni ordre supplémentaire, sous réserve de toute décision résultant d'un examen et d'une analyse des indicateurs de marché pouvant être conformes aux sections 5.1 et 5.2 à la seule discrétion de la LTA. » À suivre.

COMMENTAIRE

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

Les illusions de la croissance américaine

NEW YORK - La politique nationale aux États-Unis est devenue l'esclave d'indicateurs macroéconomiques sans véritable lien avec le bien-être réel. Pour de nombreux commentateurs, le taux de croissance ponctuel de 3,2 % observé au premier trimestre 2019, accompagné d'une baisse du taux chômage jusqu'à 3,6 % au mois d'avril, suffirait à prouver la bonne marche des politiques économiques du président Donald Trump, et serait pour certains synonyme par conséquent de meilleures chances de réélection.

Or, cette interprétation passe à la trappe ce que ces indicateurs ne parviennent pas à mesurer. Cette composante non mesurée constitue pourtant ce qui compte le plus pour l'opinion publique.

Lorsqu'il défend la baisse d'impôts de 2017, à laquelle il attribue une croissance annuelle du PIB supérieure de 1,1 % pour 2018-2019, l'économiste de Harvard Robert J. Barro écrit « Il va de soi qu'une plus forte croissance économique vaut mieux qu'une croissance économique faible », dans la mesure où « plusieurs millions de citoyens bénéficient d'une croissance élevée, qui s'accompagne généralement de salaires plus conséquents et d'un moindre chômage, ce qui favorise particulièrement les plus démunis. »

Or, nous devrions nous méfier de ces vérités qui « vont de soi ». Fervent adepte de la rationalité de l'opinion publique, Barro devrait se pencher plus attentivement sur ce que dit réellement l'opinion. D'après le dernier sondage Gallup, 40 % des citoyens approuvent les réductions d'impôts de 2017, que désapprouvent 49 % d'Américains - une évaluation négative nette confirmée par plusieurs autres sondages récents. Le public raisonne en effet au-delà d'une simple augmentation ponctuelle de son pouvoir d'achat, s'inquiétant davantage du creusement des inégalités de revenus et de richesse, ainsi que d'un déficit budgétaire en pleine explosion. En suivant le raisonnement de Barro lui-même (via Ricardo), les citoyens présumant probablement que de futures hausses d'impôts sont à prévoir.

L'opposition continue aux réductions d'impôts ne constitue pas l'unique signe de désarroi du public. D'autres signes s'avèrent encore plus notables. Le pays est divisé en proportions égales sur la question du contexte économique global, que la moitié des citoyens décrivent comme « excellent » ou « bon », l'autre moitié estimant le contexte « seulement satisfaisant » ou « mauvais ». Environ 49 % des Américains estiment que la situation économique s'améliore, 50 % des citoyens considérant au contraire qu'elle se dégrade ou n'évolue pas. Dans l'ensemble, seul 31 % sont satisfaits de la manière dont le pays est dirigé, pour 67 % d'insatisfaits.

Les indicateurs macroéconomiques dissimulent beaucoup de choses sur la qualité de vie. À titre d'illustration, alors même que l'économie des États-Unis s'est développée ces dernières années, la crise de la santé publique en Amérique n'a cessé d'empirer. Les États-Unis ont connu deux années consécutives de diminution de l'espérance de vie, en 2016 et 2017, soit la plus longue baisse consécutive observée depuis la Première Guerre mondiale, et l'épidémie de grippe qui l'a suivie. Or, l'actuel déclin de l'espérance de vie est le résultat d'un désespoir, pas de la maladie. Le nombre de suicides et d'overdoses aux opiacés grimpe aujourd'hui en flèche.

Une autre épidémie alarmante que ne parviennent pas à saisir les taux de PIB ou de chômage réside dans une forte augmentation de l'anxiété chez les Américains. Gallup le formule en ces termes : « Alors même que leur économie fleurissait, les Américains stressés, mécontents et inquiets ont été plus nombreux l'an dernier que la majorité du temps sur les dix dernières années. Interrogés sur leurs sentiments de la veille, la plupart des Américains (55 %) en 2018 expliquent avoir éprouvé du stress pendant une bonne partie de la

journée, près de la moitié (45 %) disent avoir été très inquiets, et plus d'un sur cinq (22 %) confient avoir ressenti une importante colère. » Le stress, l'inquiétude et la colère sont autant de sentiments qui ont atteint aux États-Unis un record décennal en 2018. L'Amérique figurait en 2018 au septième rang des populations les plus stressées au monde, derrière la Grèce, les Philippines et l'Iran, mais devant l'Ouganda, la Turquie et le Venezuela.

Ces chiffres sur l'anxiété s'inscrivent en cohérence avec une autre observation nette : le niveau de bonheur que disent ressentir les Américains a également diminué en 2018. Interrogés par Gallup sur la note qu'ils attribueraient à leur propre vie sur une échelle de zéro à dix (existence la plus malheureuse) à dix (existence la plus heureuse), les Américains ont exprimé en 2018 une moyenne de 6,9, contre 7,0 en 2017, et 7,3 en 2006-2008. Cette satisfaction quant à l'existence a diminué au cours de la dernière décennie alors même que le PIB par habitant a augmenté. Pour l'année 2018, les États-Unis figurent en 20e position mondiale et dans la moitié inférieure des pays de l'OCDE, en baisse par rapport à leur 19e place en 2016-2018.

Si l'on considère les mesures elles-mêmes, les chiffres du PIB et de l'emploi sont d'ailleurs beaucoup moins impressionnants que le suggèrent les gros titres. La croissance du PIB au premier trimestre a par exemple été caractérisée par une forte hausse des stocks, ce qui pourrait présager d'une moindre croissance de la production au cours des prochains trimestres. Et il s'agit en tout état de cause d'une estimation préliminaire. De même, si la diminution du taux de chômage est évidemment une bonne nouvelle, une part de la baisse rapportée au mois d'avril résulte d'une réduction du nombre de travailleurs. Aspect plus significatif encore, le taux d'emploi demeure aujourd'hui bien inférieur à son précédent pic. Le taux d'emploi dans le civil en avril 2019 atteignait 60,6 % de la population en âge de travailler, en baisse par rapport à son pic annuel de 64,4 % en l'an 2000. Le faible taux de chômage actuel aux États-Unis est en grande partie la conséquence de la sortie de nombreux Américains faiblement rémunérés hors de la catégorie des travailleurs.

Les Américains ne sont en majorité ni satisfaits de la situation de leur pays, ni suffisamment naïfs pour croire que les réductions d'impôts de 2017 constitueraient une solution à leurs difficultés. À la différence de nombreux macroéconomistes, ils savent que bien des choses sont plus importantes dans la vie qu'une brève augmentation de la croissance du PIB, ou qu'une baisse ponctuelle du taux de chômage. Ce ne sont là tout au plus que des photographies troubles qui négligent le futur, qui oublient les inégalités d'opportunités, et qui échouent à retranscrire le niveau élevé et croissant d'anxiété chez des Américains confrontés à un coût de la santé exorbitant, à des dettes étudiantes massives, ainsi qu'à un manque de protection de l'emploi. Ces photographies ne font pas non plus apparaître la baisse de l'espérance de vie ainsi que l'explosion du nombre d'abus de substances, de suicides et de dépressions.

Il est temps que les économistes, commentateurs et politiciens commencent à porter un regard global sur l'existence des individus à notre époque, et qu'ils s'intéressent sérieusement aux changements structurels nécessaires pour appréhender les multiples crises de la santé, du désespoir, des inégalités et de l'inquiétude aux États-Unis ainsi que dans de nombreux autres pays. Les citoyens américains devraient en particulier s'interroger sur le fait que les populations de nombreux autres pays vivent une existence plus heureuse, moins inquiète et plus longue. Dans l'ensemble, les gouvernements de ces autres pays ne procèdent ni à des réductions d'impôts pour les plus fortunés, ni au démantèlement des services pour le reste de leur population. Ils œuvrent pour le bien commun, plutôt que de satisfaire les riches tout en pointant des statistiques économiques illusoire, qui dissimulent autant de réalités qu'elles en révèlent.

FEATURE

FEATURE

Is There Any Cause to Protest On June 7 in Liberia? An Assessment of the Impacts and Consequences of Protests around Africa

By: Josephus Moses Gray

Assistant Professor of International Relations

Cont'd from last edition

The role of Religious Leaders during the crisis have played an essential role in speaking against ills and gross human rights abuses with the late Catholic Arch Bishop Michael France and other leaders of the religion community raising their voices to protect civilians during the entire 14-year crisis. Not only that but also they provide shelter and a place to hide, but also engaged in offering 'food, water, and health services, and in one instance helping in the safe evacuation of communities at risk. In the process, some were targeted and victimized by the ex-fighters.

As the historical review showed, the country has experienced numerous military coups and political conflicts from the days of the commonwealth rule, independence and second republic to post-conflict period. The unstable political situation made sustainable state-building impossible and it has been certainly due to political interests among changing elites that the Liberian state has remained fragmented until today. Especially in the post-colonial period, the Liberian leaders struggled to successfully govern the large territory with open heart and arm.

Due to the strong external interference into domestic affairs by other global powers especially the United States of America, Liberian successive administrations continued to struggle to build viable institutions in the state. The continuing political power struggles among elites, including military coups and rebellions, have led to the fact that the government has lost the monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

Looking at its early post-colonial history, one can conclude that the Liberia's first steps as an independent state were determined by power struggles and kleptocracy colonial masters who came to power mainly through a compromised election. Nevertheless, America had always maintained its influence in Liberia due to its position as Liberia's important strategic partner in the world. America assisted in the successful state situations building.

Due to the repressive and authoritarian rule of law, past leaders had to face resistance from the country's grassroots population, and through the indirect involvement of external powers, several past leaders have been overthrown becoming victims of another coup. State-building in the Liberia has been a difficult proposition from the dawn of its history and is since then facing slow progress due to frequent changing of governments and leader.

Since then, Liberia's postcolonial history was characterized by several military coups, elitist power struggles; the international community has continuously interfered since independence and the emergence of cleavages, which have made it difficult for state-building and the creation of a national identity to progress.

Meanwhile, during the 14-year dark era of Liberia, numerous gross atrocious and human rights abuses were committed without direct prosecution of the alleged perpetrators due to disagreement on which course to move forward with. For others, reconciliation is the best formula while others are calling for justice. The dynamics of the current disagreement among Liberians is driving another potential conflict which is undermining the co-existence, institutional building and governance exercises.

As a matter of reflection, Article XIII of the peace agreement states that Truth and Reconciliation Commission, shall be established to provide a forum



that will address issues of impunity, as well as an opportunity for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experiences, in order to get a clear picture of the past to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation.

The deal further states that in the spirit of national reconciliation, the Commission shall deal with the root causes of the crises in Liberia, including human rights violations and pinpoint cardinal issues that Commission shall, among other things, recommend measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of victims of human rights violations.

Liberia owes a duty under both international humanitarian and human rights laws to investigate and prosecute the heinous crimes, including torture, rape and extra-judicial killings of innocent civilians, committed in the country by the ex-warring parties in the course of 14 years of brutal conflict. In the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), our leaders need to display the confidence reposed in them by the people through their votes to bring to book all those responsible for the depopulation of the nation over the 14 years civil war to answer to the role they played in the long disturbing bloodbath. Justice is indeed precious and beneficial, but where it is being delayed, obviously what is implied is then that the latter is also being denied; the issue of TRC's recommendations must be addressed once and for all. The various ex- armed factions targeted civilians and were responsible for massacres and systematic human rights abuses, and none of which was fighting for any recognizable cause or ideology. Tens of thousands of innocent Liberians have been brutally murdered in cold blood by armed factions that fought to have state power by force. The war was also characterized by the extensive use of child soldiers, boys younger than fifteen years old who were easy prey for all the factions.

But can either of the two essential dynamics - reconciliation or justice ensure true unity and peaceful existence in the country? For other, war crimes court may contribute to justice, but this can be counterproductive for ensuring reconciliation between the alleged perpetrators of these gross human rights violations. Moreover, the issues of political alienation and the persistent political struggles remained serious problems.

Also the issue of large impunity for war criminals has not yet been tackled with clear modalities- something which sparked the recent separate demonstration by advocate of justice for war crimes

court. Equally, the 2004 DRR process has not produced many results so far beyond collecting small weapons and offering lucrative positions to ex-warring factions' leaders and heads of civil society organizations. In totality, the Accra Peace Accord is yet to be fully implemented almost 17 years now while the TRC recommendations for barring of certain individuals from holding political positions and the persecution of violators the processes nearly impossible.

Many of the opinions that, in short, the Liberian Government still struggles to implement TRC recommendation due to external factors, financial resources, confidence of the people and a lack of commitment by certain individuals whose fears of being targeted. For others, the TRC recommendation is hindered by the continued fears of cycle of violence, the security vacuum, and the nation's current economic stagnation.

The Accra peace accord process has shown that agreements were made between the government and the top ex-leaders of the main disbanded armed groups but failed to reach out to the majority of the population. The concluded peace agreements do not include the grassroots and middle-range organizations, institutions and average Liberian, as political elites and politicians wriggled for powers-occupations of positions in government.

The trustworthy religious and traditional leaders have a national duty to play a leading role in finding an amicable remedy to the planned "June 7 protest" and cement unity and peaceful co-existence in the country. It has been observed that that these leaders both traditional and religious have personal interests, therefore they have been silenced; except for few like Rev. Dr. Kortu K. Browne, a champion of good governance.

This involves the role of religious leaders in promoting unity and love among populations and respect for one another is highly important. The weaknesses of past peace-building efforts with the potential of religious leaders had in some meaningful way helped to answer the question of how religious leaders could be further involved improving the current impasse rapidly breeding disunity between the administration and oppositions political on one hand and the governors and vast majority of the governed in the country.

To conclude, in the interest of lasting peace and stability for the state and its peace loving people, President George Weah's administration and organizers of the June 7 protest must dialogue, which is a way of exploring the roots of the many crises that face humanity today. It enables inquiry into, and understanding of, the sorts of processes that fragment and interfere with real communication.

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CDC picks candidates for by-elections

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The ruling Coalition for Democratic Change endorses former Deputy Minister for Urban Affairs, Pulita Wie as its candidate for the senatorial by-election in Montserrado County and former Postal Affairs Assistant Minister Abu Kamara as its candidate for the Montserrado County District #15 by-election, respectively.

Pulita Wie is expected to challenge Abraham Darius Dillon of the four collaborating opposition political parties for the senate, while Abu Kamara will go all out against Ms Tella Urey of the four opposition political parties for electoral district #15.

The two by-elections scheduled for 2 July come as a result of the death of Senator Geraldine Doe Sherif, who died in February this year from a terminal ailment and Representative Adolph Lawrence who died in a tragic motor accident along the Robertsfield highway in March, respectively.

Ms Wie represents the party in the senatorial race



Pulita Wie



Abu Kamara

after defeating four other contestants in the primaries.

Others who contested the primaries against her are Josephine Davies, the current Inspector General at the Ministry of Commerce, Sabah Jomah, Phil Dixon, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Labor and Nancy Yollah, a market woman from the Liberian Marketing Association who proved to be a major contender to Wie, as she came

neck-to-neck during vote tabulation.

Wie obtained a total of 267 votes followed by Yollah with 219 votes, Josephine Davies, 7 votes; Sabah Jomah, a little known CDCian obtained 92 votes, respectively. Out of the expected 780 delegates, 685 delegates voted in the process. There were 100 invalid votes.

Abu won on white ballot after his fierce contender withdrew from the race at the

eleventh hours of the primaries. As a CDC candidate, he now has a challenge to face Miss Tella Urey who has also been brought forth by the four collaborating opposition political parties, including the former ruling Unity Party, Liberty Party, the Alternative National Congress and the All Liberian Party, headed by her father, businessman Benoni Urey.

During the 2017 Presidential and Legislative elections, Mr. Kamara attempted contesting against the late Adolph Lawrence, but was denied by the Supreme Court for failing

to comply with the Code of Conduct for public officials.

The Supreme Court ruled that he was an official of government, and as per the Code of Conduct, appointed officials wanting to contest national elections must resign two years ahead of the polls.

Abu worked as Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication during the administration of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Prior to the commencement of the primary, witnessed by thousands of CDCians dressed in their T-shirts and dancing to regular party songs. CDC Standard Bearer and President of Liberia George Weah encourages partisans to unite and reclaim the vacant seat in the Senate because, he says, it belongs to the ruling Coalition.

President Weah also commends the CDC for adhering to the rudiments of democracy, throwing jabs at the collaborating opposition bloc for choosing candidates by consensus.

“What we are doing here today is the beauty of democracy; we are not like the others, who elected their candidates outside of primaries,” the President asserts. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Free tuition backfires @ Senate

By Ethel A. Tweh

It appears Senators on Capitol Hill are unhappy with President George Weah's decision declaring free education for state run public tertiary schools here describing it as hasty.

A vast majority of them did not hold back on their disgust over the manner in which President Weah made the announcement in October 2018, frowning on the policy.

During a Senate debate last week on the president's free tuition policy, senators said the president's decision was hasty.

The Senate Committee on

Education and Public Administration chaired by RiverCess County Senator Dallas Gueh presented a report to the full plenary of the Senate, noting that there was no consultation on the introduction of such policy statement, leaving state - run University of Liberia to run in deficit.

In an initial debate on the matter, some Senators mentioned that the president was ill - advised on the introduction of the free tuition program without taking into consideration the source of revenue to fund the free tuition program.

Senators Varney Sherman

of Grand Cape Mount County, Milton Teahjay of Sinoe County, and Daniel Naatehn of Gbarpolu County argued that special criteria needs to be set up, acquainting beneficiaries of the free tuition program to contribute their quota upon completion of their university studies.

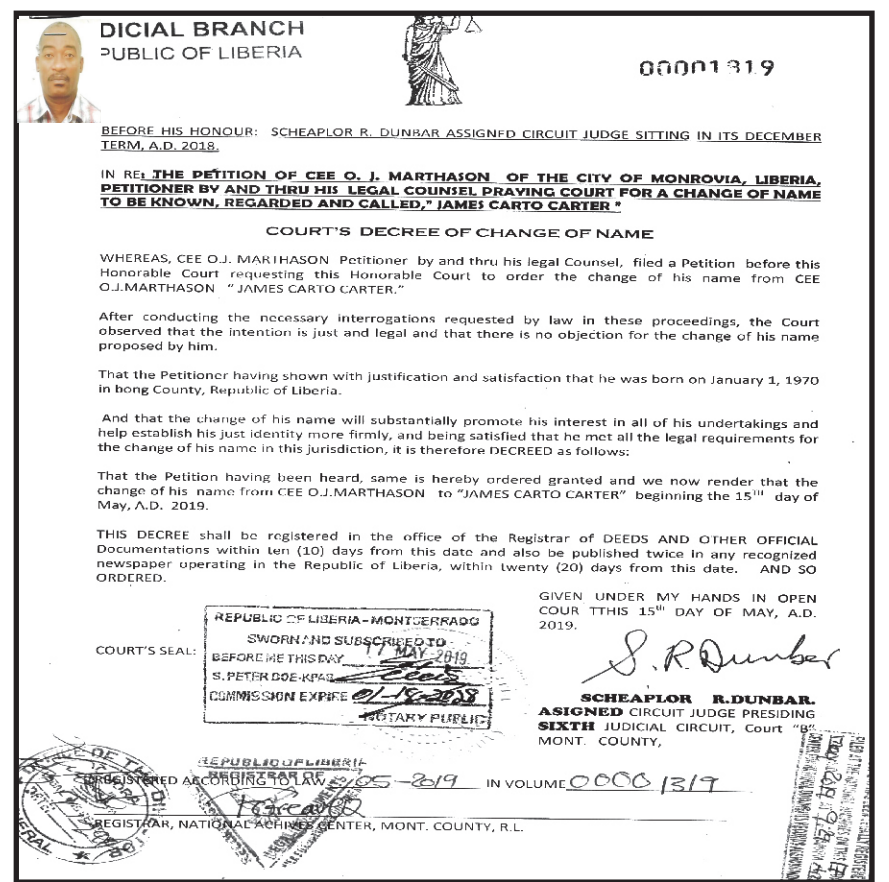
“We can't give the students free education and they leave Liberia and serve different countries or they go by themselves. If they will be educated free, there should be measures in place for those students to serve the country in the various counties for a year or two,” Sen. Sherman notes.

Senator Jonathan Kaipay of Grand Bassa County argues that it is not all the students at the state - run universities that are jobless or cannot afford to pay school fees.

He suggests that the free tuition program should benefit students that can't afford to pay tuition.

Meanwhile, Senator Henrique Tokpa of Bong County wants authorities at the Association of Tertiary Institutions invited to provide expert opinion on the matter.

However, plenary has mandated the Senate's Committee on Education and Public Administration to schedule a meeting with the Minister of Finance and Development Planning to give reason for the free tuition and



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how they intend to generate the funds.

In October 2018, President Weah made a pronouncement

of tuition free education at all government - run universities

Zidane not afraid to quit Madrid



Zinedine Zidane has warned Real Madrid he will not hesitate to quit for the second time if his team selections are met with interference from above.

Reports in Spain indicate Zidane is ready to make son Luca his second-choice goalkeeper behind Thibaut Courtois next term with long-term number one Keylor Navas seemingly close to leaving.

Doubts over the younger Zidane's readiness to fill such a role after just two LaLiga appearances in as many seasons have clouded the

issue and Spanish newspaper Marca suggests Madrid's board prefer 20-year-old Andriy Lunin, currently on loan at Leganes, as deputy to Courtois.

The level of support from Madrid's hierarchy was raised as a factor behind Zidane senior's shock departure at the end of last season and, having returned in March, the head coach would not shy away from making the decision again.

"I'll tell you next season who is going to be the first goalkeeper and second goalkeeper," Zidane told a

news conference on Saturday.

"It will be my decision, of course. Who do you think makes the decision for the team? That's clear as water.

"I'm the coach and I will make my own decisions. Otherwise, I'm leaving.

"I am referring to selecting the team. Regarding transfers and those things, there are also people who work on it, and we do it together.

"But picking the team, who is in, who is out, that's my decision, with my staff."

Zidane went on to reassert his faith in Luca's ability and denied making any demands over the 21-year-old's squad status.

"He came through the system, came here very young and he's proven he's a top-class goalkeeper," the Los Blancos boss said.

"I haven't asked the club for anything about him, I haven't asked for him to be number two next season.

"Everything will be clear but nothing will change just because he's my son."

Ronaldo pays tribute to departing Allegri

Cristiano Ronaldo paid tribute to Massimiliano Allegri and thanked him for an "exceptional" campaign after it was announced the head coach will leave Juventus at the end of the season.

Allegri's future had been in doubt ever since Juve were eliminated from the Champions League by Ajax in April, with the Old Lady initially billed as favourites following the signing of Ronaldo.

But on Friday, Juve announced Allegri would not be continuing next season, despite winning Serie A again and having a year left on his contract.

Allegri struggled to hold

back tears as he and president Andrea Agnelli addressed the media for the first time since the announcement.

Agnelli spoke glowingly about Allegri's work at the club and five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo also expressed gratitude for a strong season together.

Ronaldo wrote on his official Instagram account: "Thank you coach, we've only spent one year together but it was exceptional because you are a great manager and a great man. It was a pleasure to work with you."

Allegri's final matches in charge of Juve will see him face high-flying Atalanta and Sampdoria.



Kompany new Anderlecht player-manager

Vincent Kompany is to become the player-manager of Anderlecht after confirming his departure from Manchester City.

The City captain revealed he was leaving the club after 11 years on Sunday, a day after a 6-0 win over Watford in the FA Cup final saw them become the first English men's club to secure the domestic treble.

Kompany has now unveiled his plans for the future; he has signed a three-year deal with Belgian side Anderlecht, where he came through the ranks before joining Hamburg in 2006. The 33-year-old explained his decision on Facebook, writing: "I have decided to take up the challenge at RSC Anderlecht. Player-Manager. "I want to share my knowledge with the next purple generations. With

that, I will also put a bit of Manchester in the heart of Belgium.

"This may come as a surprise to you. It's the most passionate yet rational decision I've ever made.

"As a footballer, I was born and raised at RSC Anderlecht. Since the age of 6, I have been one with that club. A history of 34 league titles, they are second to none."

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