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Continental News

South Africa teens unable to land plane in Kenya

The U-Dream Global team of South African teenage pilots, who built their own Sling 4 aircraft, have arrived in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania en route to their final destination of Cairo.

The team left Zanzibar on Sunday, after spending the past few days unsuccessfully negotiating flight clearance with Kenyan authorities to land in Nairobi. "The authorities in Kenya say they were not happy with our routing and thus denied us entry," said team leader Des Werner, father of 17-year-old Megan Werner, founder of U-Dream Global. "We do have the option to change routings but we just don't have the time for it. Our feeling is that if they are difficult then we just don't go there. It is after all their own country that misses out in terms of our team interacting with and inspiring youth in their country." The team is due to depart for Uganda tomorrow but they are still awaiting their permit to fly into Addis

Ababa, which is currently following their scheduled stop.

"We are slightly behind schedule but will catch up. If all goes well we hope to be in Cairo around 7 July," Mr Werner added. The team is flying two four-seater Sling 4 aircraft - one flown by teenage

pilots who have swapped since departing Cape Town on 15 June, and another flown by an experienced support crew.

Mr Werner, who is flying in the support aircraft, says the team is in good spirits and that flying conditions have generally been good. -BBC



'Marching soldiers involved in Ethiopia coup attempt'

The prime minister ordered the protesting soldiers to do press-ups to defuse the tension in October

Some of the soldiers who marched to the Ethiopian prime minister's office in October last year, were involved in the recent regional coup attempt, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has said.

through guns and not the ballot box will take Ethiopia a hundred years backwards," he said.

In addition to reacting to the killings, Mr Abiy addressed issues of deteriorating security, the displacement of citizens and Ethiopia's plan to liberalise key state-run companies.



Speaking to the upper house of Parliament on Monday, Mr Abiy confirmed that the killings of five top military and government officials in the northern regional state of Amhara and the capital Addis Ababa in June were aimed at toppling the regional government.

"Any attempt to seize power

Telecommunications and sugar industries will be the first sectors to be open for private investment, the prime minister said.

He also rejected claims that some of the two million internally displaced Ethiopians, who have recently gone back to their homes, had been forced to return. -BBC

Nigerian pastor accused of rape

There were protests at the weekend in Nigeria after a woman accused a well-known pastor of twice raping her before she turned 18, several years ago.

The protests and social media discussions have led some to ask if this is Nigeria's #MeToo moment.

In a video, that has been circulating on Twitter, the woman said the first incident happened at her father's

house early one morning. The second incident happened on a secluded road. She gave detailed accounts of both attacks.

In a statement on Instagram, the pastor has said: "I have never in my life raped anybody even as an unbeliever and I am absolutely innocent of this." Sunday's protests took place outside different branches of the pastor's church as people held placards saying: "Thou shall not rape." C

Police and other security operatives protected the church in the capital, Abuja, and elsewhere congregants formed a ring around the church buildings stopping the protesters from entering.

On social media, people are sharing their experiences of alleged sexual assault at the hands of religious leaders, school teachers, housemaids, parents and neighbours.

They're using hashtags #MeToo, #ChurchToo and #SayNoToRape in what appears to be a shift in attitudes, with younger people feeling able to speak out about what's happened to them.

Of course, this is a discussion on social media, but Sunday's protests show that it is moving into the real world.

Nigeria has a huge Pentecostal Christian population, with some pastors often accused of extravagant lifestyles and flamboyance. Most of them have an overbearing influence on their followers.

People are now waiting to see what will be done in a country where rape is a criminal offence, but very few convictions have been obtained in court. -BBC



Protest group calls for stayaway in Zimbabwe



Emmerson Mnangagwa won Zimbabwe's presidential election in 2018 Image caption

A protest group in Zimbabwe has called for a five-day nationwide stayaway from Monday to protest against the worsening economic crisis in the country following the government's decision to outlaw the use of foreign currencies.

The Tajamuka Sesijikile Campaign group said it was demanding the resignation of President

Emmerson Mnangagwa, and the five-day protest would be peaceful.

"We do not anticipate any death or killing, as people will peacefully sit at home to register their disquiet over the escalating political and economic crisis," Promise Mkwanzu, the leader of the group said in a video published by VOA Zimbabwe. -BBC

EDITORIAL

Abraham Tumay's blood cries for justice

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED armed riot police shooting into angry protesters in Kingsville#7 Monday, 24 June 2019 near Fifteen Gate community along the Monrovia-Kakata highway resulting to several injuries and subsequent death of a 17-year-old lad, Abraham Tumey, is still being investigated but the deceased's blood is crying for justice.

ACCORDING TO MULTIPLE sources, including father of the deceased, the late Tumay was not part of the protest, as he had gone on the road to sell roasted corn when strayed bullet struck him in the head. He immediately lost conscious and was subsequently pronounced dead at Du-Side hospital in Harbel, Margibi County.

THE LIBERIA NATIONAL Police confirm the death and say it has begun an investigation into the incident that left two other persons seriously injured.

AS THE POLICE investigate themselves, we join the parents in demanding that the exercise should produce a culprit that would have his or her day in court to serve justice, for the death of an innocent life.

WE HOPE THIS would not be another endless police investigation intended to launder away the gravity of the situation and divert public attention.

THE POLICE SHOULD tell the public who ordered the discharge of live weapons into unarmed civilians protesting for the suspected murder of two of their sons on suspicion of ritualistic purposes.

IT WAS VERY unfortunate that an already aggrieved population lost another child from the hands of the police that should be protecting lives and property. The ongoing investigation would have to explain what was the clear danger that led to ordering use of live weapon against unarm civilians.

ABRAHAM TUMAY DID not deserve this, neither the people of Kingsville#7. Tumay's blood would only stop crying when someone is held accountable for sending him to his early grave.

IT IS ABOUT THAT armed security officers learn to use fire arm responsibly by only returning fire where fire is coming from. But in this case, empty shells recovered from the scene of the incident point to the police.

WE BELIEVE STRONGLY the police could have employed other means in dispersing road-blocking protesters rather than firing at them. This is not good and professional policing. People's lives matter, especially aggrieved citizens.

The New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

COMMENTARY

By Joschka Fischer

Trump's Lose-Lose Iran Strategy

As the Trump administration spins its wheels over Iran, the world is reminded of why the Obama administration and the Europeans went to such lengths to develop a new approach to dealing with the country. By resuscitating a failed strategy, Trump and his advisers are risking yet another catastrophic war in the Middle East.

BERLIN - One can only guess what US President Donald Trump hopes to achieve in Iran. Does he have designs on a "better" nuclear treaty than the 2015 deal from which he withdrew the United States? Are he and his advisers assuming that if they pile up enough demands, the regime will be forced to submit, or even abdicate? Or are they setting the stage for an attempt at regime change through military force?

In all likelihood, they themselves have no idea. That may be just as well, because none of the above is going to happen.

To be sure, Trump's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, as the 2015 nuclear deal is officially known) fulfilled one of his key campaign promises. The problem is that neither he nor his advisers seem to have considered what would come next.

One of the few constants of Trump's approach to policymaking is its focus on winning the approval of his core bloc of supporters. Given that he also campaigned against America's foreign entanglements, it is safe to assume that these voters do not want the US to launch another war in the Middle East. A military conflagration with Iran would result in even more casualties, and prove to be even less winnable, than the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

For his part, Trump most likely wants to avoid war while still maximizing the pressure on the Iranian regime. The problem is that in the political environment of the Persian Gulf, the line between these two options is not particularly clear. Past experience shows that maximum pressure often creates the conditions for military confrontation.

Trump, unlike his hawkish national security adviser, John Bolton, claims that violent regime change is not one of the objectives of his Iran policy. Yet he is acting exactly as if the neoconservatives who led former US President George W. Bush into Iraq are still calling the shots.

This situation is all the more dangerous considering that US policymakers' room to maneuver in the Middle East has shrunk significantly since 2003. Iran's strategic position today is much stronger than it was then, precisely because the Iraq war toppled its foremost regional rival. And far from being isolated in the event of a military escalation, Iran would receive material and diplomatic support from both Russia and China.

At least since the fall of the Shah in 1979, Western policy toward Iran has been based on illusions. The West, led by the US, has

long relied on economic sanctions to force the Iranian regime to alter its policies and behavior. But this approach, along with America's many other mistakes in the region, has actually strengthened Iran. The country's military forces or proxies now extend across Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon - all the way to the Mediterranean and Israel's northern border. And though the Iranian economy is bending under the weight of sanctions, it isn't breaking. And the security apparatus is showing no cracks whatsoever.

In response to Trump's decision to renege on the JCPOA and re-impose sanctions, Iran has threatened to restart enrichment of weapons-grade uranium. Should the regime acquire nuclear weapons, the likelihood of an immediate war or nuclear arms race in the region - and the threat to Europe's security - would be substantial.

Preventing such an outcome is precisely why the Europeans initiated nuclear negotiations with Iran in the early 2000s, following the US invasion of Iraq. But not until the arrival of US President Barack Obama did the overall Western strategy change. Now that Trump is reversing so much of the progress made during the Obama years, it is clear that Europe alone is too weak to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

It is worth remembering that in addition to its nonproliferation objectives, the JCPOA was also designed to reintegrate Iran into the international community. Like the Europeans, the Obama administration recognized that isolating Iran had not worked, and that another war in the region was not an option. By reversing course, Trump has sealed off the only viable path forward.¹

Iran has been a distinct political and cultural entity for more than 2,000 years; it isn't going anywhere. The only question is what role this ancient, proud civilization should play in the region and the wider world. Without a satisfactory answer to that question, the entire Middle East will remain unstable, and the risk of a war extending well beyond the region will continue to increase.

Since the US began its partial withdrawal from the Middle East under Obama, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel have been fighting for regional domination. And, because the JCPOA raised the prospect of a US rapprochement with Iran, it did not alleviate the tension between these longstanding rivals. In the meantime, Iran has enhanced its position and extended its regional presence through the Syrian civil war and other conflicts. With the Saudis and Israelis already on tenterhooks, a restoration of the Iranian nuclear-weapons program would put the region on the cusp of a major war.

O-PED

By Michael Bröning

Germany's Green Wave

BERLIN - If current polling trends continue, the next German chancellor could well be Robert Habeck, the co-leader of the Greens. His party has emerged as the strongest political force in the country in recent polls, and for weeks Habeck himself has ranked as one of Germany's most popular politicians.

The Greens owe this seismic shift in their favor to several factors; chief among them is the German public's growing frustration with the ruling "grand coalition" of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU); its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU); and the Social Democrats (SPD).

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who succeeded German Chancellor Angela Merkel as the leader of the CDU in December, has been trying to restore her party's popularity by emphasizing her conservative track record. But the CDU's star continues to fall, and recent polls indicate that a mere 13% of voters consider Kramp-Karrenbauer a suitable candidate for chancellor.

The SPD is faring even worse. Following a disastrous showing in the European Parliament election in May, the party is currently being administered by a trio of interim leaders. Not surprisingly, only a minority of Germans believe the grand coalition will survive the coming months.

As the coalition crumbles, the two parties that stand to gain are the Greens and the right-wing populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). Founded in 1980 as a pacifist environmental movement, the Greens have recast themselves as the natural political home of culturally liberal, economically pragmatic urban middle-class voters.

The new dispensation is embodied in the party's two leaders, Habeck and Annalena Baerbock, who both belong to the movement's "Realo" wing (as opposed to the "Fundis" faction of environmental hardliners). Since taking joint control in early 2018, Habeck and Baerbock have been quietly overhauling the organization's traditional image as the "party of prohibitions." The party's hallmark proposals - for example, vegetarian food in all workplace cafeterias and a tripling of fuel prices, among others - have largely disappeared.

Moreover, while the Greens have shifted to the center, the center has moved toward the Greens. Once-radical Green demands to phase out nuclear power and legalize same-sex marriage are now government policy and fully in keeping with mainstream views.

Likewise, following intense heat waves and global protests highlighting the threat of climate change, most German voters now believe the issue should top the political agenda. The Greens, of course, have been saying that for years, which is why they win in a landslide when survey respondents are asked: "Which party has the best answers to the questions of the future?"

And then there is Habeck himself. Despite having spent over a decade in politics, he is widely perceived as an anti-politician, combining authenticity and straightforward language with personal charisma. He holds a doctorate in philosophy and has published novels and children's books, as well as translated volumes of poetry, many with his wife. He has also defied left-wing orthodoxy by advocating a progressive form of patriotism (a sensitive topic in Germany), which could endear him further to voters in the center.

In light of Habeck's sudden rise to prominence, some leading media figures have already labeled him "Germany's next Kennedy." But a more appropriate comparison is to French President Emmanuel Macron. Like Macron, Habeck has captured the imagination of an enthusiastic voter base, and filled an ideological vacuum left by the political establishment. And while there are differences in style and substance, the two leaders hold similar views with respect to European integration, multilateralism, migration, and climate change.

Moreover, both men are, in their own way, polarizing figures. Since winning the French presidency two years ago, Macron's support has plummeted. Beyond the "yellow vest" (gilets jaunes) protests that have roiled Paris and other cities, two-thirds of French voters now say they are dissatisfied with Macron's performance.

Macron is learning the hard way that winning an election is not the same thing as winning the political debate. The German Greens should take note, especially given that some of their political ambitions remain unclear. The party has yet to present convincing positions on a wide range of foreign-policy and domestic issues that future German governments will have to address. Once in power, the Greens could thus find themselves facing a Macron-esque dilemma: moderate their agenda and risk alienating the base, or push through far-reaching reforms and risk a popular backlash.

To be sure, Germany is not in the same boat as France. Unemployment remains low, and a majority of Germans are content with their economic situation. But polarization between haves and the have-nots is growing, and the high social costs of the Greens' environmental and energy proposals could face stiff resistance. With the AfD waiting in the wings to exploit popular discontent, the Greens' favorable standing in current polls should not be taken for granted.

One way or another, a Green government would face opposition from its own supporters or from the broader public, depending on which route it chooses. Its success would depend in large part on its coalition partners. If support for the Greens persists, the party will have to decide between assembling a left-leaning alliance or reaching out to the center-right CDU/CSU.

That choice, assuming it becomes necessary, will belong not just to the Greens, but also to their constituents and the other parties. Habeck may well accede to the chancellorship, but it is impossible to predict the coalition he will have to work with, or the mood of the country he will govern.

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OPINION

By Jean Pisani-Ferry

Farewell, Flat World

PARIS - Fifty years ago, the conventional wisdom was that rich countries dominated poor countries, and it was widely assumed that the former would continue getting richer and the latter poorer, at least in relative terms. Economists like Gunnar Myrdal in Sweden, Andre Gunder Frank in the United States, and François Perroux in France warned of rising inequality among countries, the development of underdevelopment, and economic domination. Trade and foreign investment were regarded with suspicion.

History proved the conventional wisdom wrong. The single most important economic development of the last 50 years has been the catch-up in income of a significant group of poor countries. As Richard Baldwin of the Geneva Graduate Institute explains in his illuminating book *The Great Convergence*, the main engines of catch-up growth have been international trade and the dramatic fall in the cost of moving ideas - what he calls the "second unbundling" (of technology and production). It was Thomas L. Friedman of the *New York Times* who best summarized the essence of this new phase. The playing field, he claimed in 2005, is being leveled: The World is Flat.

This rather egalitarian picture of international economic relations did not apply only to knowledge, trade, and investment flows. Twenty years ago, most academics regarded floating exchange rates as another flattener: each country, big or small, could go its own monetary way, provided its domestic policy institutions were sound. The characteristic asymmetry of fixed exchange-rate systems was gone. Even capital flows were considered - if briefly - to be potential equalizers. The International Monetary Fund in 1997 envisaged making their liberalization a goal for all.

In this world, the US could be viewed merely as a more advanced, bigger country. This was an exaggeration, to be sure. But US leaders themselves often tended to play down their country's centrality and its correspondingly outsize responsibilities.

Things, however, have changed again: from intangible investments to digital networks to finance and exchange rates, there is a growing realization that transformations in the global economy have re-established centrality. The world that emerges from them no longer looks flat - it looks spiky.

One reason for this is that in an increasingly digitalized economy, where a growing part of services are provided at zero marginal cost, value creation and value appropriation concentrate in the innovation centers and where intangible investments are made. This leaves less and less for the production facilities where tangible goods are made.

Digital networks also contribute to asymmetry. A few years ago, it was often assumed that the Internet would become a global point-to-point network without a center. In fact, it has evolved into a much more hierarchical hub-and-spoke system, largely for technical reasons: the hub-and-spoke structure is simply more efficient. But as the political scientists Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman pointed out in a fascinating recent paper, a network structure provides considerable leverage to whoever controls its nodes.

The same hub-and-spoke structure can be found in many fields. Finance is perhaps the clearest case. The global financial crisis revealed the centrality of Wall Street: defaults in a remote corner of the US credit market could contaminate the entire European banking system. It also highlighted the international banks' addiction to the dollar, and the degree to which they had grown dependent on access to dollar liquidity. The swap lines extended by the Federal Reserve to selected partner central banks to help them cope with the corresponding demand for dollars were a vivid illustration of the hierarchical nature of the international monetary system.

This new reading of international interdependence has two major consequences. The first is that scholars have begun reassessing international economics in the light of growing asymmetry. Hélène Rey of the London Business School has debunked the prevailing view that floating exchange rates provided insulation from the consequences of the US monetary cycle. She claims that countries can protect themselves from destabilizing capital inflows and outflows only by monitoring credit very closely or resorting to capital controls.

In a similar vein, Gita Gopinath, now the IMF's chief economist, has emphasized how dependent most countries were on the US dollar exchange rate. Whereas the standard approach would make, say, the won-real exchange rate a prime determinant of trade between South Korea and Brazil, the reality is that because this trade is largely invoiced in dollars, the dollar exchange rate of the two countries' currencies matters more than their bilateral exchange rate. Again, this result highlights the centrality of US monetary policy for all countries, big and small.

In this context, the distribution of gains from openness and participation in the global economy is increasingly skewed. More countries wonder what's in it for them in a game that results in uneven distributive outcomes and a loss of macroeconomic and financial autonomy. True, protectionism remains a dangerous lunacy. But the case for openness has become harder to make.

The second major consequence of an un-flattened world is geopolitical: a more asymmetric global economic system undermines multilateralism and leads to a battle for control of the nodes of international networks. Farrell and Newman tellingly speak of "weaponized interdependence": the mutation of efficient economic structures into power-enhancing ones.

US President Donald Trump's ruthless use of the centrality of his country's financial system and the dollar to force economic partners to abide by his unilateral sanctions on Iran has forced the world to recognize the political price of asymmetric economic interdependence. In response, China (and perhaps Europe) will fight to establish their own networks and secure control of their nodes. Again, multilateralism could be the victim of this battle.

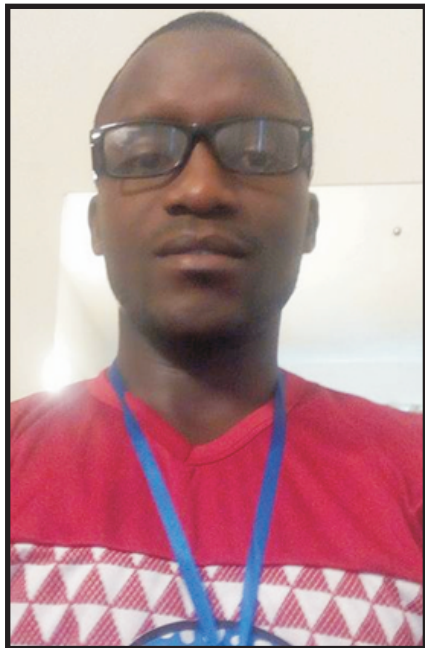
A new world is emerging, in which it will be much harder to separate economics from geopolitics. It's not the world according to Myrdal, Frank, and Perroux, and it's not Friedman's flat world, either. It's the world according to *Game of Thrones*.

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LIBERIANS DEBATE

With Sally Gaye

Liberians decry inmates' conditions at the Liberia National Police Headquarters in Monrovia, as compiled below.



"This is a breeding place for diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid, and other communicable diseases. Patrick Sudue relaxes in his cozy fabulous residence, and rides fully AC vehicle 24/7 supported by tax payers. These inmates are either taxpayers or their relatives are. They deserve a better cell. Stop the cruelty against inmates now! The government doesn't even care about our children being raped, abused and murdered."



"No normal human should be made to go thru this, no matter what. Police authority must step up to the challenge. It's a shame to IG Patrick Sudue and his men. I pray for innocent inmates. Keep posted as I finalize on a documentary on INMATES and HOLDING CELLS at the LNP headquarters. More scarring and appalling conditions to unearth soon."

"A simple code of decency for basic human rights is lacking in most, if not all of our prison system. Inmates have rights too. They deserve to be treated well whilst paying for their crimes. The country is in a bad state. This is serious oh Liberians. I think this should claim the attention of all human rights institutions in the country; imagine this is the cell of the National Police Headquarters, then what's about other places?"



"Not everyone that is alleged or arrested is a criminal. Okay, so this facility needs quick intervention, It's a complete violation of human safety. Has any of the senatorial hopeful addressed this? I forgot they don't have to. In fact, no one has to. After all, they are inmates so they don't matter. Or where is the respect for human rights in Liberia? This is an age-old problem and we need to work on it for the betterment of Liberians."



MONSU demands justice in Odell Sherman's death

By Ben P. Wesee

Montserrado County Students Union or MONSU, calls on the Liberia National Police (LNP) to fast track investigation surrounding the death of the late Odell Sherman, who was found unconscious at a friend's residence and subsequently pronounced dead at the ELWA hospital in Paynesville.

MONSU says if the police didn't carry on a speedy investigation and send all those involved to court for prosecution; its members would take the street to demand justice.

"At this point, we will ask that all civil right advocates, activists and students to remain peaceful till the autopsy is done, but if upon the completion of the autopsy, the government and police do not carry on speedy trial and prosecute all those that are involved, we the students of Montserrado and Liberia at large will come out in our numbers and demand justice. However, let it be clear that our demand for Justice will not be a friendly one," warns Yassah P. Robert, president of MONSU.

She says the group has been working behind the scene, making basic inquiries and investigation both at the school, hospital, and community with assistance of parents of the victim, who died at the resident of the Head of Liberia-Ghana Mission, Rev. Emmanuel Giddings.

"As per our findings especially, the three medical reports from the ELWA hospital with the following signatories, Learwellie P. Craig II-MD-L#729 (resident doctor), Ibrahim Sanoe-MD(resident doctor), Rick Sacra-MD, acting medical director," student Robert continues.

She notes the first medical report dated May 21, signed by Ibrahim Sanoe, put the cause of death as left Otorrhagia, meaning bleeding from the left ear, brain damage, (fall on the cranium) and sexual assault.

MONSU continues that second report dated May 24, and signed by Learwellie P. Craig stated that the patient Odell was brought to the hospital unconscious with bloody discharge from her ear and, hour later the late Odell was admitted, the patient sadly



MONSU President, Yassah P. Robert

lost her life and the probable cause of her death was, intracranial hemorrhage two degree trauma, ear infection two degree left Otorrhagia aspiration, meaning damage of the brain and heavy flow of blood from the left ear.

"The patient was noted to be unconscious with a copious flow of bright red blood from the ear canal, there was no response to pain stimuli, and vital signs were initially stable expect for rapid respiration oxygen saturation which were 99%. Initially, there was cement dust and visible bruise notes by the physician assistance, and the doctor on the left lower leg and nose. The neck seemed grossly normal on examination, the chest had rhonchi and the heart and abdomen were normal, the patient was deep in coma and unresponsive, over time the airway was filled with a lot of saliva, and due to the heavy bleeding, the left ear canal was packed with gauze, and the gauze was change several times. A small amount of blood was notes at her vaginal introits along with plentiful slippery fluid, and there was no percentage of alcohol found in her," MsYassah Robert quotes the medical report as detailing. She says it will shock the public to know that with all of these findings and reports, the police are yet to detain the prime suspect but rather, they have label Rev. Giddings and his children as people of interest. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

ERRATUM

Assignment Title: Individual Consultancy to develop a Carbon Policy that will facilitate the integration of green growth, environmental resilience and adaption into the PAPD

This is to inform the public that the deadline for submission of expressions of interest for Individual Consultancy to Develop a Carbon Policy that will facilitate the integration of green growth, environmental resilience and adaption into the PAPD is July 8, 2019 at 1700 hours GMT not July 21, 2019 as published in Monday, June 24, 2019, Vol. 9, No. 102 edition of the New Dawn Newspaper.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

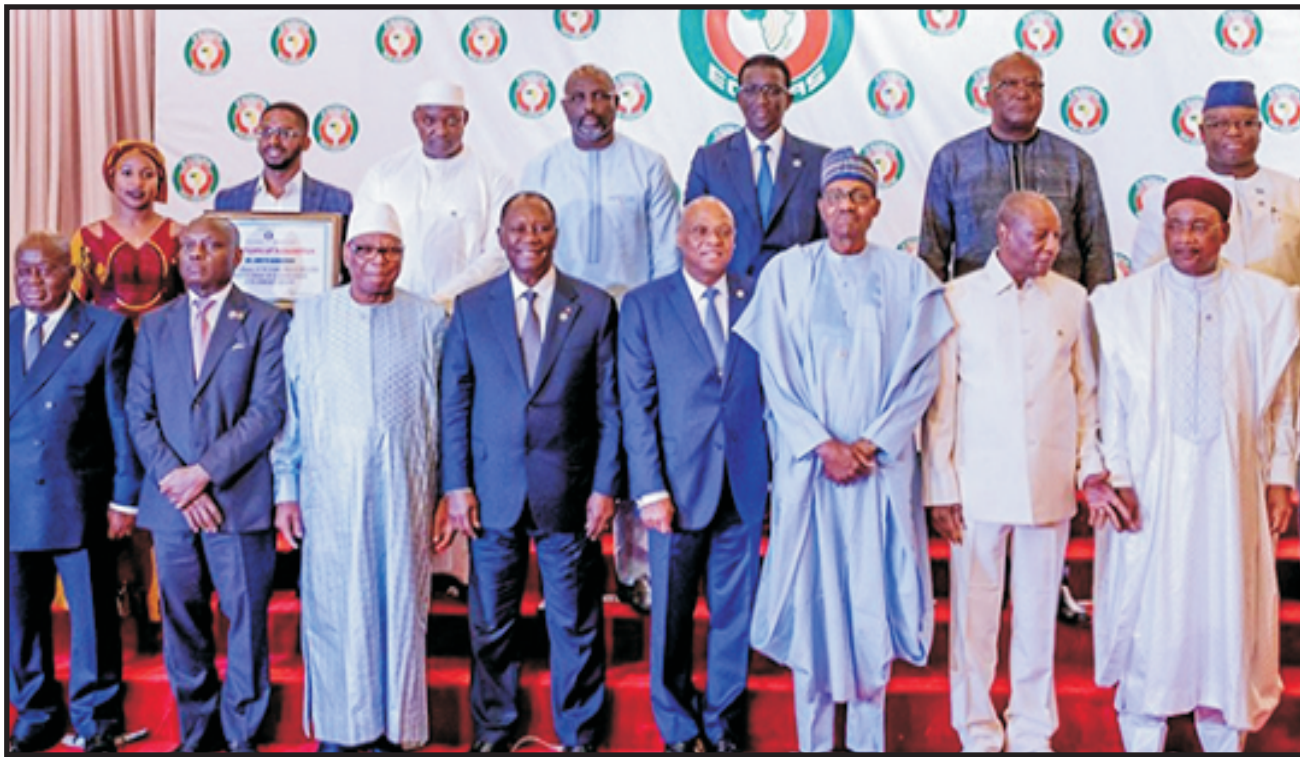
ECOWAS adopts common currency, ECO

Leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopt ECO, as the name of the proposed single currency to be issued in the region beginning January, 2020.

The Liberia News Agency reports that leaders at their 55th Ordinary Session in Abuja over the weekend endorsed the name, while congratulating the Ministerial Committee on the Single Currency for the considerable progress made in the implementation of the revised roadmap.

But following the announcement that January 2020 will see the ECO on the market, analysts have expressed concern over the feasibility of the time frame.

LINA quotes media reports as saying, despite this landmark stride, some sticking points remain and the leaders instructed the commission to work with the



West African Monetary Institute and central banks to accelerate the implementation of the revised roadmap with regard to the symbol of the single currency.

The reports say the commission and regional

central banks are also directed to accelerate the operation of the Special Fund for financing of programmes in the revised Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme.

An economist with the West African Monetary Institute

(WAMI) says 2020 would be an unrealistic timeframe to realize the single currency, given that several other things are yet to be met.

He opines that 2020 is not really feasible and for some countries, the issue of sovereignty is also at stake, given that the names of their currencies were legislated as entrenched clauses of their Constitutions so any adoption of the ECO should also have to be subjected to constitutional amendments.

The economist believes introducing a single currency if at all it materializes is a flawless idea which will optimize the potentials of West Africa as a single economic bloc.

"If you look at the world today size really matters in economics like we see with the United States, a country whose power in the world today rests with the size of its market consisting of many states," the report quoted the economist as saying. -LINA

School feeding enhances students' performance

-Gender Minister

Gender Minister Williametta Saydee-Tarr emphasizes here that school feeding is vital to improving retention, attendance and performance of children in school as well as creating economic growth.

Speaking at the official program in observance of African Day of School Feeding held at the Executive Pavilion in Monrovia under the theme: "Investing in home-grown school feeding for achieving zero hunger and sustaining inclusive education for all," Minister Tarr notes the Government of Liberia attaches seriousness

to the school feeding program as a means of increasing enrollment in schools.

According to the Liberia News Agency (LINA), the Minister points to teenage pregnancy and early child birth as major challenges school-going girls are confronted with in the country, adding that government is doing everything possible to see them enroll into school.

"About 3,322 children lost their parents during the Ebola crisis in 2014 and they do not have the means and necessary support to keep in school," the Gender Minister says.

"For me, inclusive education means every child should go to school whether

you are poor, rich, a girl or a boy, and this is why the government is attaching seriousness to education."

The Gender boss continues that, the school feeding initiative fulfills Goal #2 of the Sustainable Development Goals which talks about having zero hunger in the world.

School feeding, she said, is a significant instrument to the human capital formation of any nation, especially to early childhood development and the developmental process of school-going children.

According to Minister Tarr, Liberia as a least developed country is compounded with adverse social conditions, ranging from poverty, inequality, social injustice and limited opportunities, especially in vulnerable population such as at risk children, women, elderly and people living with disability.

She says these harsh social conditions continue to pose enormous challenges that undermine the livelihood of many Liberians, especially children.

She indicates that, with all of the challenges the country is faced with, the government through the Ministry of Education and other partners is attaching seriousness to school-feeding to improve enrollment and performance in school.

Minister Tarr thanks the Ministry of Education and all partners, including Mary's

Muslims Council urged to hold election

A member of the Muslims community of Liberia, Mohammed Massaley, calls on the National Muslim Council of Liberia to urgently organize an election to elect new corps of officers for the Muslim Council.

He says the tenure of the current leadership of the Council has expired, as such, it was time to have an election

Sunday while serving as keynote speaker at program marking of the outgoing African Union Official Ambassador to Liberia, Ibrahim M. Karama, held at the Gurley Street Mosque in central Monrovia.

He accuses the current leadership of the Muslim Council of Liberia of using the religion to solicit financial



to replace the late Sheikh KafumbaKonneh, who took the helm of power since the 1980s.

He recalls the late Sheikh KafumbaKonneh, died about three years ago at his home in Topoe Village community, outside Monrovia, following a period of illness.

Mr. Massaley made the call

assistance from people in government, including the President, George M. Weah.

"They have reduced our religion to a begging or a chopping organization just for their selfish gain; this is why they continue to perpetuate themselves into power without elections." -Editing by Jonathan Browne



Gender Minister Williametta Saydee-Tarr

Meal, World Food Programme (WFP), Save the Children, among others, for the initiative, adding that it is in

line with the government's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). LINA

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Saar Insurance, MCSS teachers sign LRD 2.5 Million loan

By Lewis S. Teh

Saar Insurance Liberia Incorporated, and the Monrovia Consolidated School System Teachers Association (MCSSTA) sign a loan agreement worth 2.5 million Liberian dollars to be given to all MCSS teachers across 17 electoral districts of Montserrado County.

Briefing reporters Monday, 01 July following the signing ceremony, MCSSTA President Veto V. Garway, describes the agreement as a dream come true for members of MCSSTA, noting that over the years, MCSS workers have been in dire need of loans, and were constrained to take loans from outside with interest rate as high as 25 percent.

"What you just observe was 2.5 million Liberian Dollars loan agreement being giving by Saar Insurance to MCSSTA, to be loaned out to MSCC teachers to enable them go thru their strenuous economic situation", Mr. Garway says.

He says members of the association are happy for the signing, disclosing that the company has given them the



loan for one year with interest of 8 percent.

"I think it is affordable for our teachers the association will manage it and give its own interest rate of 15 percent that will be given out to teachers as compared to other places where they were paying 25 percent interest rate.

Mr. Garway further explains that after the signing ceremony, a committee will be setup to determine who

gets the loan, saying "All we care about [is] paying loan back to Saar Insurance at the rate of 8 percent."

He indicates that the loan is only restricted to MCSS teachers or employees, including those who have accounts at GN Bank Liberia Limited, receiving first priority, because there will be salary deduction at the bank upon salary payment.

"We have boundaries; we can't cover everyone that's

why we are called the Monrovia Consolidated School System, moreover, we control within our own boundaries that is why we are dealing with employees within our system and not outside."

He discloses that about 1,200 teachers are to benefit from the loan program and hopes that all their teachers within the System will commit themselves to paying back the loan in order to benefit additional loan.

The Chief Executive Officer or CEO of Saar Insurance Liberia INC. Mr. NteguiaFodjo Jean Bernard says his company has been providing loans and other initiatives to MCSS for over four years, noting that this loan started way back, but lack of modalities cause the agreement to delay.

"We insurance companies operate as banks, we receive lots of money from people, and that money doesn't belong to us but you have to manage the people and the only way you can do it is to ensure that all of the mechanisms [are] in place, so you can receive the people's

money back."

CEO Bernard says this time with the involvement of the MCSS Superintendent, they are certain of giving out the loan, because "we are sure of getting it back through their salary payment from the bank, and this process is part of our job to give loan to our clients, not anyone."

When quizzed about collateral, he explains there were three levels of collateral, including being insured with the company. He says if somebody benefited from the loan and unfortunately died, "We will get our money from his death benefit."

He continues that phase two of the collateral is the Association due, detailing that if someone failed to pay for their loan, the Association will pay from the due, and the last option is salary payment thru the bank.

"I wish to congratulate them, but our expectation is for them to be committed to their loans, for the improvement of their lives", CEO Bernard concludes. -
Editing by Jonathan Browne

Police seek more citizens cooperation in Bong

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Bong County Police Superintendent Frederick Nepay has called for the more citizens cooperation with the police detachment in Bong as a way to reduce the commission of crimes there.

Speaking recently at a daylong training of over 50 community watch forum

members, Superintendent Nepay noted that community cooperation with the police must be the collective effort of everyone irrespective of location.

He says no matter the number of police officers deployed in the communities, crimes reduction can only be actualized when community residents provide police with the needed information

leading to the arrest of perpetrators of state crimes across the county.

Nepay is meanwhile appealing to community members to desist from promoting conflict of interest in the county if they want to live in a peaceful and saved environment.

The Bong County police commander also narrates that despite the numerous challenges the sector is faced with, his office is doing all to ensure the eradication of criminal activities in the county.

The Watch Forum is part of strategies by national government to reduce the commission of crimes across the Country.

Serving as guest speaker at the training, Civil Society activist Jesse Cole lauded the police and community dwellers for the bold step taken to minimizing the commission of crimes across the county.

Mr. Cole meanwhile underscored the need for more support to the forum by prominent citizens of the county and national government to ensure that the process is sustained across the county.--**Edited by Winston W. Parley**



Yallah wants support for vocational education

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Bong County Sen. Henry Yallah has underscored the need for more budgetary support to vocational education across the country.

Speaking recently in the county, Sen. Yallah suggested that doing so will eradicate abject poverty here.

Sen. Yallah notes that given the low enrollment at tertiary

countries across the world to the level of support given to vocational institutions by their governments.

Sen. Yallah discloses that his office is currently working with several institutions offering vocational training to citizens across Bong County.

He pledges to continue engaging relevant authorities



Bong County Sen. Henry Yallah

institutions across Liberia, vocational education is the best alternative in filling the gap of unemployment rate in the country.

According to him, Liberians can only become self-reliant when vocational education is given adequate support from government and partners.

Additionally he attributes the development of most

in government to ensure the allocation of needed support to smoothly the skill training institutions across the country.

Meanwhile, Sen. Yallah made available LRD\$35,000 and pledged two sewing machines to the Marcus Vision Vocational Training Center in Gbarmue Town, Jorquelleh District # 3.--**Edited by Winston W. Parley**

Français

Le HCDH remet en question la politique du gouvernement sur le tribunal des crimes de guerre

La Haut-Commissaire des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme, Michelle Bachelet, a mis en cause la feuille de route du gouvernement libérien en ce qui concerne la justice pour les victimes de la guerre civile Libérienne et la création du tribunal des crimes de guerre et crimes contre l'humanité pour le Libéria.

Mme Bachelet a également exprimé ses préoccupations concernant le faible soutien budgétaire accordé à la Commission nationale indépendante sur les droits de l'homme (INCHR) et a également exprimé son inquiétude face à la situation concernant la protection de la femme et les violences faites aux femmes et aux jeunes filles au Libéria.

Lapatronne du HCDH a profité d'une visite de courtoisie que lui a rendue la vice-présidente Jewel Howard Taylor au siège du HCDH à Genève pour faire part de ces préoccupations.

Selon une dépêche du bureau de la vice-présidente, Mme Bachelet a félicité le gouvernement du Libéria pour avoir respecté les droits des Libériens qui se sont rassemblés pacifiquement le 7 juin 2019 pour manifester.

Elle a remercié le gouvernement du Libéria pour l'adoption de la loi sur les

droits fonciers tout en appelant à la mise en œuvre de ladite loi et à la réactivation des agences de transparence pour lutter contre les problèmes de corruption et de violation des droits de l'homme.

En réponse, la vice-présidente libérienne a souligné l'adoption de la loi sur

la violence domestique par la législature, déplorant toutefois que la question des mutilations génitales féminines ne soit pas abordée dans la loi.

Elle a convenu que l'INCHR Libéria est effectivement confrontée à des difficultés sur le plan financier à l'instar de toute l'économie du pays qui est actuellement sous perfusion. Elle a lancé un appel au Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme pour un soutien financier à l'INCHR.

Le vice-présidente Howard-Taylor a souligné que les deux questions majeures qui ont été discutées depuis le gouvernement de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf au gouvernement actuel sont la corruption et l'établissement d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre.

En ce qui concerne la corruption, Mme Howard-Taylor a souligné la nécessité de créer un tribunal spécial de la corruption afin de juger rapidement les affaires de corruption.

Elle a rappelé que quand

elle était au Sénat, elle avait élaboré un projet de loi appelant à la création d'un tribunal spécial de la corruption, mais le projet de loi n'avait été adopté en raison de sa nature sensible.

En ce qui concerne le tribunal chargé des crimes de guerre, la vice-présidente a déclaré que le président Weah était préoccupé et avait chargé le ministère de la Justice d'élaborer une feuille de route et de faire les recommandations nécessaires au conseil des ministres afin de prendre une décision.

La vice-présidente Howard-Taylor a ensuite exprimé sa conviction qu'un "monument de guerre" pourrait être très utile car il s'agit d'un élément clé des systèmes de justice réparatrice et rétributive.

"Ce monument de guerre, une fois établi, à l'instar du cas du Rwanda, permettra de découvrir le nombre de victimes, l'identité des victimes et d'expliquer les événements historiques liés à la guerre civile libérienne", a expliqué le vice-président Howard-Taylor.



Le sénateur Cooper ne veut plus de manifestation

Le Sénateur Oscar A. Cooper rejette l'appel du Conseil des Patriotes à une nouvelle manifestation le 9 juillet, déclarant que le COP devrait protéger l'intérêt général du peuple libérien et non les intérêts personnels de ceux qui le composent.

Le Sénateur Oscar A. Cooper fut conseiller du Conseil des patriotes qui a

organisé la manifestation pacifique du 7 juin 2019 à Monrovia. Mais il a démissionné de ce poste il y a quelques semaines.

Pour lui, l'objectif premier du COP devrait être celui de créer un environnement favorable au peuple libérien et non de défendre des intentions égoïstes.

Il a démissionné du COP récemment à la suite de la

manifestation du 7 juin, invoquant une incohérence dans les activités du groupe.

S'adressant aux journalistes à son domicile dans la communauté de Bassa, à Kakata, dans le comté de Margibi, le sénateur a indiqué que l'objectif du groupe est de protéger les intérêts des citoyens et de plaider en faveur d'un environnement favorable pour eux.

Pour lui, une autre manifestation prévue pour le 09 juillet par le Conseil des Patriotes n'a aucune importance pour le peuple libérien, exhortant les partisans du Conseil à mettre fin à la manifestation continue.

Le sénateur Cooper, qui souhaite être réélu en 2020, est l'un des architectes à l'origine de la formation du Conseil des patriotes, qui a récemment mené la campagne « Save The State ».

Il est l'une des voix critiques du Sénat libérien et l'un des rares qui ont le courage de tenir tête aux députés du parti au pouvoir sur ses questions de gouvernance.



Côte d'Ivoire : la CNI peut être délivrée aux citoyens ivoiriens d'au moins cinq (05) ans

Le Président Alassane Ouattara a promulgué le 26 juin 2019, la nouvelle loi instituant une nouvelle carte nationale biométrique en Côte d'Ivoire, dont le coût sera de 5 000 FCFA.

Obligatoire à partir de 16 ans, la carte nationale d'identité ivoirienne, carte biométrique à puce électrique sécurisée et multi-application, pourra être délivrée aux citoyens ivoiriens âgés d'au moins cinq (05) ans, indique la loi promulguée.

Loi N° 2019-566 du 26 juin 2019 instituant une carte nationale d'identité biométrique :

L'assemblée nationale a adopté,

Le président de la république promulgue la loi dont la teneur suit :

Article 1 : il est institué une carte nationale d'identité biométrique

Article 2 : la carte nationale d'identité biométrique est une carte à puce électrique sécurisée et multi-application qui peut servir à plusieurs usages.

Article 3 : la carte nationale d'identité biométrique est obligatoire pour tout Ivoirien âgé d'au moins 16 ans.

Elle peut être délivrée aux citoyens ivoiriens âgés d'au moins cinq (05) ans.

Elle peut être délivrée aux citoyens ivoiriens âgés d'au moins 05 ans.

Article 4 : la carte nationale d'identité biométrique est valable pour une période de dix (10) ans à compter de sa date d'établissement.

Article 5 : un décret pris en conseil des ministres fixe les modalités d'application de la présente loi, notamment les spécifications techniques, les modalités d'établissement et le renouvellement de la carte nationale d'identité biométrique ainsi que la période transitoire de validité de la carte nationale d'identité biométrique actuellement en vigueur et dont la date d'expiration n'est pas échue.

Français

Éditorial

Le sang du petit Abraham Tumay réclame justice

Les circonstances qui ont poussé la police anti-émeute à tirer sur des manifestants en colère à Kingsville 7 le lundi 24 juin font toujours l'objet d'une enquête.

Des éléments de la brigade anti-émeute ont ouvert le feu sur des manifestants à Kingsville, près de la communauté de FifteenGate le long de la route reliant Monrovia à Kakata, le 24 juin, faisant un mort et plusieurs blessés.

Abraham Tumey, un garçon de 17 ans a reçu une balle dans la tête et est mort. Son sang réclame aujourd'hui justice.

Selon plusieurs sources, y compris le père du défunt, le regretté Tumay n'a pas pris part à la manifestation, car il s'était rendu sur la route pour vendre du maïs grillé quand il a reçu une balle perdue à la tête. Il a immédiatement perdu conscience et a été déclaré mort à l'hôpital de Du-Side à Harbel, dans le comté de Margibi.

La police nationale libérienne a confirmé le décès et a affirmé avoir ouvert une enquête sur l'incident qui a fait deux autres blessés graves.

Pendant que la police mène une enquête dans son propre camp, nous nous associons aux parents pour exiger que l'enquête débouche sur l'inculpation du coupable qui doit faire face à la justice pour le meurtre d'un enfant innocent.

Nous espérons qu'il ne s'agira pas d'une autre enquête policière sans fin qui ne fera que viser à atténuer la gravité de la situation et à détourner l'attention du public.

La police devrait informer le public de qui a donné l'ordre aux agents des forces de l'ordre d'ouvrir le feu sur des civils non armés qui ne faisaient qu'exprimer, mains nues, leur agacement face aux meurtres présumés de deux de leurs fils, qui seraient victimes des meurtres rituels.

Il est très regrettable qu'une population qui se sent déjà privée de justice perde un autre enfant tué par les forces de l'ordre et de sécurité qui étaient sensées protéger les vies et les biens. L'enquête en cours devrait expliquer en quoi les éléments des forces de l'ordre se sentaient-ils menacés pour faire usage des balles réelles contre des civils sans armes.

Abraham Tumay ne méritait pas cela, pas plus que le peuple de Kingsville # 7. Le sang de Tumay ne cessera de pleurer que si quelqu'un est tenu responsable de l'avoir envoyé dans sa tombe de sitôt.

Il est important que les agents des forces de l'ordre et de sécurité apprennent à utiliser les armes à feu de manière responsable. On ne peut pas faire usage de son arme comme bon le sent sur des civiles sans armes. Les balles récupérées sur les lieux de l'incident proviennent des armes de la police.

Nous croyons fermement que la police aurait pu employer d'autres moyens pour disperser les manifestants qui bloquaient la route, au lieu de leur tirer dessus. Ce n'est pas bon et professionnel de la part de la police. La vie des gens compte, en particulier les citoyens lésés.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Joschka Fischer

La stratégie perdant-perdant de Trump

BERLIN - Ce qu'espère obtenir le président des États-Unis Donald Trump en Iran demeure un mystère. A-t-il imaginé un « meilleur » traité sur le nucléaire que celui de 2015, dont il a retiré les États-Unis ? Pense-t-il, avec ses conseillers, qu'en accumulant les exigences il parviendra à faire plier le régime, voire provoquera sa chute ? Ou bien prépare-t-il le terrain à une intervention militaire ?

Selon toute vraisemblance, ni lui ni ses conseillers n'en ont la moindre idée. Peut-être parce que rien de tout cela n'arrivera.

Certes, le retrait opéré par Trump du Plan d'action global commun (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - JCPOA) remplit une de ses principales promesses de campagne. Le problème, c'est que ni lui ni ses conseillers ne semblent avoir réfléchi à ce qui se passerait après.

L'une des rares constantes de la méthode de gouvernement de Trump est sa détermination à s'assurer l'appui du cœur de son électorat. Et comme il a aussi fait campagne sur le désengagement de l'Amérique, on peut sans trop se risquer estimer que ses électeurs ne souhaitent pas voir les États-Unis se lancer dans une nouvelle guerre au Moyen-Orient. Une conflagration militaire avec l'Iran ferait encore plus de victimes - sans compter qu'elle serait encore moins susceptible de déboucher sur une victoire - que les guerres menées précédemment par les États-Unis en Afghanistan et en Irak.

Pour sa part, Trump souhaite sans doute éviter une guerre tout en continuant à augmenter les pressions sur le régime iranien. Toutefois, la ligne de partage entre les deux options, dans l'environnement politique du Golfe persique, n'est pas d'une grande netteté. Et l'expérience montre que les pressions, au-delà d'un certain seuil, créent souvent les conditions d'une confrontation militaire.

À l'inverse de son conseiller pour la sécurité nationale John Bolton, aux tendances bellicistes, Trump affirme que le changement de régime par la violence ne fait pas partie des objectifs de sa politique iranienne. Il agit pourtant exactement comme si les néoconservateurs qui conduisirent le président George W. Bush à intervenir en Irak dictaient encore leur loi.

Cette situation est d'autant plus dangereuse que les marges de manœuvre des dirigeants américains au Moyen-Orient se sont nettement réduites depuis 2003. La position stratégique de l'Iran est beaucoup plus solide qu'elle ne l'était alors, précisément parce que la guerre d'Irak a fait tomber son grand rival régional. Qui plus est, loin d'être isolé, l'Iran pourrait compter, dans l'éventualité d'une escalade militaire, sur le soutien matériel et diplomatique tant de la Russie que de la Chine.

La politique iranienne de l'Occident se berce d'illusions, au moins depuis la chute du shah, en 1979. Sous la houlette des États-Unis, elle n'a longtemps juré que par les sanctions, pour contraindre le régime iranien à changer d'orientations et de comportement. Mais la méthode, qu'aggravent les nombreuses autres erreurs commises dans la région par les Américains, a surtout servi à renforcer l'Iran, dont les forces militaires, propres ou à sa solde, sont désormais présentes en Irak, en Syrie, au Liban - jusqu'à la Méditerranée et à la frontière nord

d'Israël. Et si l'économie iranienne plie sous le poids des sanctions, elle ne rompt pas. Quant à l'appareil de sécurité, il ne montre pas la moindre fissure.

En réponse à la décision qu'a prise Trump de dénoncer le JCPOA et d'imposer de nouvelles sanctions, l'Iran a menacé de reprendre son programme d'enrichissement d'uranium à des fins militaires. Si le régime devait acquérir l'arme nucléaire, la probabilité immédiate d'une guerre ou d'une course aux armements dans la région - et la menace qu'elle ferait peser sur la sécurité de l'Europe - deviendrait non négligeable.

C'est précisément pour éviter d'en arriver là que les Européens avaient lancé les négociations avec l'Iran sur le nucléaire au début des années 2000, après l'invasion de l'Irak par les États-Unis. Mais dans l'ensemble, la stratégie occidentale n'évolua pas avant l'arrivée du président des États-Unis Barack Obama. Au regard de tant d'avancées réalisées dans les années Obama, les régressions consécutives à l'arrivée de Trump montrent clairement que l'Europe est à elle seule trop faible pour dissuader l'Iran de reprendre son programme d'armes nucléaires.

Outre la non-prolifération, il est utile de rappeler que le JCPOA avait aussi été conçu pour réintégrer l'Iran dans la communauté internationale. À l'instar des Européens, l'administration Obama reconnaissait que l'isolement de l'Iran ne résolvait rien et qu'il fallait absolument éviter une nouvelle guerre dans la région. En faisant machine arrière, Trump a condamné la seule voie qui permettait d'avancer.

L'Iran est depuis plus de deux mille ans une entité politique et culturelle distincte dans la région ; il ne va plus nulle part. La seule question qui vaille est celle du rôle que cette ancienne et fière civilisation devrait jouer dans la région et dans le monde en général. Faute d'une réponse satisfaisante, c'est tout le Moyen-Orient qui restera frappé d'instabilité, et le risque d'une guerre s'étendant bien au-delà des frontières régionales ne cessera de croître.

Depuis le début du retrait partiel des troupes américaines du Moyen-Orient, sous le mandat de Barack Obama, l'Iran, l'Arabie saoudite et Israël se disputent la domination régionale. Le JCPOA ayant pu laisser augurer d'un rapprochement des États-Unis avec l'Iran, il n'a pas calmé les tensions entre ces rivaux de longue date. Dans le même temps, l'Iran a renforcé sa position et étendu sa présence dans la zone lors de la guerre civile syrienne et des autres conflits qui s'y sont déclarés. Saoudiens et Israéliens étant eux-mêmes sur des charbons ardents, une reprise du programme iranien d'armement nucléaire pourrait faire basculer la région dans une guerre lourde.

Il faudra déployer de réels efforts diplomatiques pour dissuader l'Iran de se doter d'armes nucléaires et pour que se définisse un rôle régional et international constructif de la République islamique. Même alors, la stabilisation de la région devra venir de l'intérieur ; les expériences du siècle passé le montrent.

En se retirant sans bonne raison du JCPOA, Trump s'est perdu dans le dédale iranien. Il pourrait bientôt parvenir à la croisée des chemins, sans autre issue que perdre la face ou déclencher une confrontation militaire. Qu'il choisisse l'une ou l'autre voie, il mécontentera ses partisans et rendra le Moyen-Orient - donc le monde avec lui - plus dangereux.

PERSPECTIVES

PERSPECTIVES

Public Policy. Economics. Democratic Politics. Political/Economic Decentralization. Public Dishonesty. Dual Citizenship

NEW BUDGET LAW, COUNTY LEGISLATIVE CAUCUSES & HOW THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA PUBLIC FUNDS ARE SIPHONED INTO POCKETS OF POLITICAL RULERS

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr. (June 29, 2019)

According to the newspaper *Hot Pepper Liberia's* most recent investigative report entitled, “*LACC Investigation Reveals*”, detailed a planned, massive corruption activities by Bong County Administrative officials in collaboration with the Bong County Legislative Caucus in the theft of public resources of hundreds of millions of US dollars allocated by the National Government for construction/administration of the Bong County Technical College (*Hot Pepper Liberia*, June 28, 2019).

LACC BONG COUNTY INVESTIGATION Kenneth Y. Awadji (?)

LACC BONG COUNTY INVESTIGATION
County Legislative Caucus & County Administrative officials

This article lends support clarification and the source of the National Scheme for theft of public resources allocated consistent with prudent public policies, but end up in the pockets of government officials or the nation's political rulers.

The New Budget Law

This was, and is, an Act of the National Legislature passed and approved during FY July 1, 2012/June 30, 2013 with several, major provisions that are patent violations of prudent economic and financial management, particularly for a poor, small developing nation as our country. Extensive support citations are not, really necessary but, for emphasis and examples, we cite the following provisions:

Section 2, Liberian Currency Conversion Rate from Liberian dollars to US dollars (and others) at the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), (2017-2019) now stands at an average exchange rate of L\$ 196.7 to US\$ 1.00 dollar for the months going into more than a year immediately after the elections.

Section-3(a), Revenue Estimates by the Liberia Revenue Authority to support operation of the Government of Liberia have been, and are, deeply shrouded in corruption and management dishonesty.

Section 6[a(1)], Structure of National Budget even though Government Revenue and expenditure programs are planned for the short- to medium-term, Legislative approval will be required annually, because the core Administrative and over-riding, recurrent Budget has been for salaries and allowances. Recent IMF advice: reduce payroll and related costs!!

Section 9 (a), Management of County CDF/SDF Development Funds allocated directly to all county budgets, each county shall establish and manage a County Development Account in the name of the county at a local bank for the purpose of control and Section 9(b), Complementary to the terms and conditions of agreements pertaining to all funds allocated in a budget directly to a county as County Development Funds (CDF); Section 9(e), The Minister of Internal Affairs shall request allotments against the amounts appropriated in this budget as County Development and Social Development Funds for each county, taking into account the time of the year that is most conducive for execution or rural development activities in Liberia, based on Resolutions of each County Council; Section 9(f), Upon issuance of the allotments, the Minister of Internal Affairs shall raise the necessary vouchers and deposit the funds into existing Development Account of each county. The Minister of Internal Affairs shall also ensure that each County Council requests the entire amount appropriated as County and Social Development



Funds in this budget and have said amount deposited into the County Development Fund Account within the first six months of the fiscal year to prevent any portion of said appropriation lapsing at the end of the fiscal year.

Section 9(g), Access to the County Development Fund shall be upon Resolution of the County Council.

Section 9(h), Mandate of the County Council shall serve as the highest decision of the county on matters of development and fund-management.

Section 9(h (1), Decision of the County Council shall be expressed in the form of Resolutions, which shall be signed by the heads of delegations attending the sitting; the presiding officers of the sitting; witnessed by the County Superintendent or, in the stead, the County Assistant Superintendent for Fiscal and Financial Management; and attested by the Chairperson and majority members of the County Legislative Caucus.

Section 9(j), Once the Council has allocated funds to an area, it shall be the responsibility of the citizens of the targeted area to meet and appoint a Project Management Team (PMT), which shall coordinate the planning of all activities relating to the project(s) for their area, and the processing of documents to relevant and concerned entities. The PMT shall report to the citizens of their respective areas and to the PMC for onward submission to the County Superintendent, the County Legislative Caucus, and the County Council (in Session).

Section 9k (ii), The Chairperson of the County Legislative Caucus shall serve as Chairperson of the County Council. The County Superintendent shall issue citations for each sitting of the County Council.

Impact of the Budget Law with Legislative Caucus Control/Management

According to *The Perspective.org*, June 1, 2015, “Hold The Maryland County Legislative Caucus Accountable.” “The students of Cape Palmas High School . . . have been protesting, demanding renovation of their dilapidated school building”. Following the returned to classes later this month, they found their building in ruins, much to their anger. “We want a building”, reads a placard of the protesting students”.

“The problem must be the lack of sensitivity to the development needs of the county”, said an incredulous Marylander, who is knowledgeable of how the so-called county's development fund is allocated but who had never thought that the current ruling elites of Maryland County would grossly neglect health and education. He revealed that, like all other legislators in the country, Representative James P. Biney of the Harper District (where Cape Palmas High School is situated) has received \$20,000 for this Fiscal Year so that he can fund any development project, known as ‘Legislative Project’ in the district, while both Senators Dan Morais and Gbleh-bo Brown have received \$40,000 per district to carry out development projects in each of the districts in the county. Needless to say, the Maryland Legislators have received \$180,000 (apart from the annual \$200,000 for county development!) this year alone. Yet infrastructure in the county remain in tatters”.

“ . . . Hon. James Biney is currently sitting on US \$20,000 earmarked for the development of the Harper District, while students of Cape Palmas High School are forced to use umbrellas in class . . . Hon. Biney has the final say in how County Development Fund (CDF) is spent. Over the past nine years, more than 1.8 million US dollars of CDF has been “spent” in Maryland County, but there is nothing to show for the money”.

“It has even been alleged, quite recently, that Nathaniel Toe, the Development Superintendent of the county, has not been able to give account of \$85,000 (\$50,000 to build a bridge over the Nehdilloh Creek and \$35,000 allotted to Pleebo-Sodoken District). But the lawmakers are mute on the allegations against the development superintendent”.

“The people of Maryland County should therefore hold accountable their lawmakers and the county officials. The legislators must give full account of the county's development funds and the money set aside for the “Legislative Projects”. They are the ones standing in the way of infrastructure development in the county, and they must therefore be blamed for the dilapidated school.

The immediate renovation of Cape Palmas High School squarely lies with them. Requesting help from Liberians in the Diaspora might be a good idea, but the money will undoubtedly end up in the pockets of these corrupt lawmakers and county officials.”

The Problem of County Legislative Caucuses

This problem is not unique to Maryland County, multiply by this condition by 15 Counties. For example, there is the problem of the Bong County Technical College and County Legislative Caucus. Almost \$2 million US dollars was made available in 2010, but there are blame-games among the County Legislative Caucus over construction while makeshift classes are being held in the United Methodist High School with inadequate space for students and equipment.

Similarly, Grand Gedeh County faces the problem of the County Legislative Caucus and the local, County Administration, over Funds allocated for SDF/CDF development!!

Citizens nationwide are afraid to speak out because this Clique is composed of powerful personalities and powerful agencies of government - begins with the *Ministry of Finance & Development Planning (the “Paymaster who must chop something from the people he/she pays”); the County Legislative Caucuses (who are Chairs of the CDF & SDF County Councils, decide who gets on the County Council, distort and abuse the Budget Law & rules and decide who gets what and how much); and The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the local town & County chief who controls it all.*

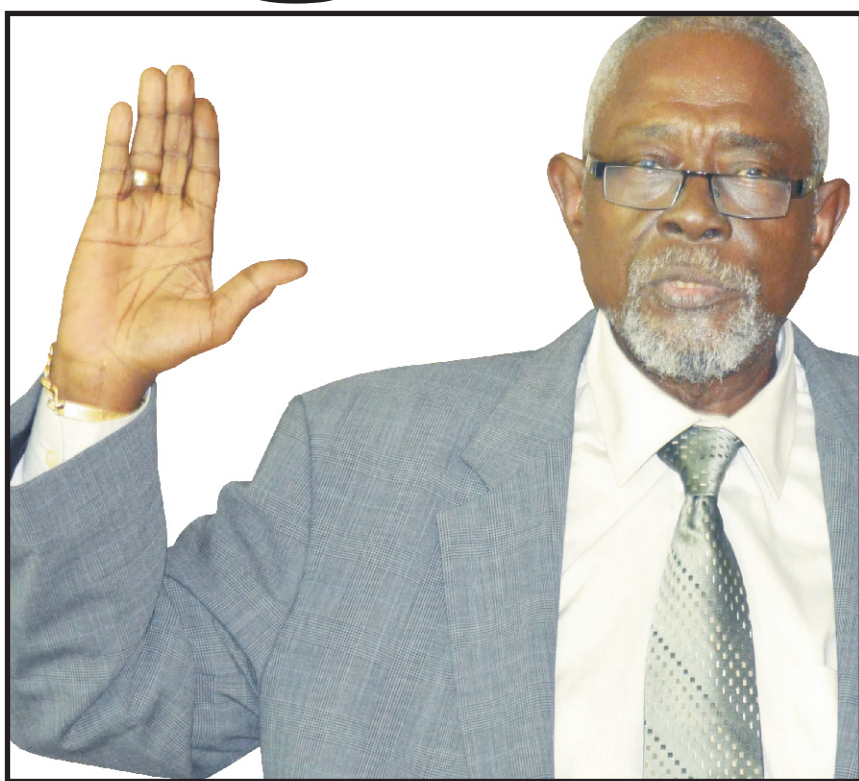
This approach is a finance & development monster - classic design for public dishonesty and corruption. The brains behind the craftsmanship of the Budget Law (an Act of Legislature) did an excellent job in creating several bureaucratic “run-arounds and tire-outs”, the basic requirements for bribes and kickbacks.

CBL begs for time

By Othello B. Garblah

The Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia or CBL here is pleading for an additional time to enable the bank review a request by the acting head of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission or LACC Charles L.I Gibson III to ensure that a list of interested individuals are turned over to the anti-graft commission for further probe into the USD25 million mop-up money.

Executive Governor Nathaniel Patray in a letter dated June 27, 2019 addressed to LACC Officer in Charge Gibson, indicated that the anti-graft agency's request was being reviewed to ensure that the primary function of the bank was not being overshadowed or undermined by the full scale



investigation into the General Auditing Commission's report.

This is the fourth investigation into the US\$25 million saga, one of the key

requests on the shopping list of the Council of Patriots who are demanding a criminal prosecution of Finance Minister Samuel Tweah and CBL

soon to be retired Executive Governor Patray.

Both initial investigations into the US\$25 million mop-up exercise by the Presidential Investigative Team (PIT) and Kroll, an audit firm hired by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the US embassy here had recommended further probe into the mop-up money.

However, further investigation by the General Auditing Commission confirmed several discrepancies and administrative flaws previously flagged by the two reports but also failed to point out the main culprits.

The LACC investigation is anticipated to establish who

bears the greatest responsibility if there are any and forward such individuals for criminal prosecutions as it looks into the full scale report of the Auditor General.

However, Governor Patray also requested that all communications relating to the investigation be directed to him by acting LACC boss Gibson.

Gibson is one of the commissioners at the LACC whose tenure had since expired for months now. He has been acting as Officer in Charge of the LACC. His acting position is political and the request by the CBL governor for direct communication between the two political appointees appears to be raising eyebrows.

Many are of the view that Gibson may as well want to play into the political gallery to enable him secure the LACC top post permanently.

Gov't, chiefs endorse suspension of Sande activities

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Council of Chiefs have endorsed a resolution by traditional leaders calling for a one year suspension of all traditional schools, especially the Sande groves in Liberia.

At the end of a consultative meeting among traditional leaders held in Gompa, Nimba County, June 24th - 25th, 2019, the participants resolved a temporary suspension of all Sande society practices and activities in order to address some aspects of the SANDE society (Traditional Women Bush School), often considered by Human Rights Organizations and some of international partners as "harmful tradition" in Liberia.

A release from the Internal Affairs Ministry said the endorsement was signed on Monday, July 1, 2019, in Monrovia by Internal Affairs

Minister, Honorable Varney A. Sirleaf and Chief ZangarKarwor, Chairman of the National Council of Chiefs.

The ceremony was graced by Honorable WilliamettaPisoSaydee-Tarr, Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, UN Women Country Representative Madam Marie GorethNizigama, Swedish Embassy's Head of Development Corporation Madam Elizabeth Harlemand and Dr. Hans Lambrecht of the European Union, including an array of traditional Chiefs, elders and tribal Governors.

According to the resolution, the traditional leaders say their attention have also been drawn particularly to the increase of Sande bushes/groves even after traditional leaders' commitment to conduct an inventory in order to address these problems.

The Internal Affairs Ministry

and the Council of Chiefs also endorsed that effective immediately a three-month ultimatum be given to all groves currently operating to conclude their activities and close in observance of the suspended timeframe.

During the suspension, all operating certificates and licenses will be withdrawn from traditional practitioners and a comprehensive National Inventory will be conducted of all Sande bushes and Zoes (traditional practitioners) in Liberia, following which trained Zoes will be re-licensed or re-registered before the resumption of operations after the suspension period.

The resolution warned that any traditional leader (traditional practitioner) or Sandezoe caught violating this pronouncement during the period of suspension shall be penalized in keeping with the traditional laws and policies of Liberia or be held liable on convention of a fine as provided for under Section 50.7 (c) of the Penal law.

At the same time, traditional leaders called on Government and partners to provide funding and logistical support for full implementation of the national inventory and monitoring of full adherence to the suspension.

Responding after the reading of the resolution, Internal Affairs Minister Varney A. Sirleaf appreciated the traditional leaders for the decision which is intended to promote the positive image of the Liberian tradition, committing the Government to helping to improve the system.



Commerce warns

Starts from back page

regulation mandating all businesses operating in the Republic of Liberia to carry on all commercial transactions in both Liberian Dollars and United States Dollars as legal tender.

Minister Tarpeh reveals that everything sold here will also be priced in Liberian Dollars, an application of the existing banking law of the Central Bank Act of 1999 which provides that the monetary unit of Liberia shall be the Liberian Dollar which is also the legal tender and currency of the country.

He narrates that the Act mandates that prices for all transactions in Liberia shall be indicated in Liberian Dollars and cents.

He warns that there shall be imposition of fines on individuals and businesses for violation of the regulation, and the fine shall be established and made known to the public, running from \$50,000 for first offense and to as high as US\$100,000 or more for second offense.

Beyond that, the Minister cautions that there could be suspension or revocation of business license.

According to Minister Tarpeh, consultation is done with the business community here over a long period before whatever regulation is put out to the public from the Ministry.

He boasts of a robust inspectorate at the Ministry as well as the public as the best supporters in ensuring that this regulation succeeds.

Minister Tarpeh tells the public that beginning August 1, when you walk into a store and somebody is selling something that costs US\$10.00, for instance, there must be a price in Liberian Dollars.

He calls on the public to inform the Ministry of

Commerce [via hotline 0886512224] if a business entity refuses to accept Liberian Dollars for a product that is being sold.

Concerning what will be the Ministry's intervention when sellers require higher exchange rates for customers that will want to transact in Liberian Dollars, Minister Tarpeh indicates that there are other measures that will be coming to ensure that the Central Bank's rate is used.

In this case, he indicates that a cushion will be added wherein if the rate is US\$1.00 to LD\$195, it can be put at about LD\$198 to US\$1.00 for those buying in Liberian Dollars.

Minister Tarpeh reveals that the administrative regulation being announced has been discussed and harmonized by the appropriate authorities including Finance Ministry and the Central Bank of Liberia and it takes effect as of August 1, 2019.

"We believe that these actions that are beginning to rollout will definitely improve the conditions of our people. Difficulties will be there, but [we] stand firm because the president is determined to improve the conditions of our people," he says.

Meanwhile, Minister Tarpeh discloses that the Ministry of Commerce has introduced an Import Notification Form (INF), an administrative document that serves only to notify the government through the Ministry of Commerce of any incoming shipment without the need for approval.

The INF helps government to monitor and regulate the current status of goods in the country, and to simplify and increase the efficiency of the import processes, among others.

Commerce warns against rejecting LRD

-threatens huge fines



Minister Wilson Tarpeh

By Winston W. Parley

Liberia's Commerce Minister Prof. Wilson Tarpeh has issued regulatory measures here, mandating all business transactions to consider and accept both Liberian and United States Dollars, warning of imposition of huge fines against those rejecting the local currency.

"We are taking this step as a government because this is

the normal practice around the world. You cannot operate in any country and reject its currency. The law requires that that is the case, and we intend to re-enforce that. This is not a refusal of the United States Dollars. No," he said Monday, 1 July in Monrovia.

This regulation comes as Liberians involved in petty trading perpetually suffer at the hands of both foreign and Liberian owned - businesses

who prefer financial transactions only in U.S. Dollars or sell at very high rates to those buying in Liberian Dollars due to lack of price control.

Minister Tarpeh says the regulation will take effect as of August 1 this year, and will cover transactions in Liberian Dollars for issuance of licenses, passports and paying of school fees, among other services.

"This government has realized that the vast majority of its citizens are [being] paid in Liberian Dollars, and yet there are some businesses [that] transact only in United States Dollars. This is creating serious commercial challenge for many of our people," Minister Tarpeh explains.

In order to deal with the situation here, Minister Tarpeh, flanked by his deputies announces the administrative



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