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House seizes corruption fight



House Speaker Dr. Bhofal Chambers

-As justice requests US\$2.1million



A flashback of Some Zogoes in Police custody

Zogoes plan demonstration

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Continental News

Ex-leader Zuma denies being 'king' of corruption

South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has told a judge-led inquiry that allegations of corruption against him were a "conspiracy" aimed at removing him from the political scene.

He was appearing for the first time at the inquiry, which is investigating allegations that he oversaw a web of corruption during his term in office. His supporters cheered when he entered the building. Mr Zuma, 77, was forced to resign as president in February 2018.

He was replaced by his then deputy Cyril Ramaphosa, who promised to tackle corruption in South Africa. Mr Ramaphosa described Mr Zuma's nine years in office as "wasted". The allegations against Mr Zuma focus on his relationship with the controversial Gupta family, which was accused of influencing cabinet appointments and winning lucrative state tenders through corruption.

He has also been accused of taking bribes from logistics firm Bosasa, run by the Watson family.

They all deny allegations of wrongdoing.

"I have been vilified, alleged to be the king of corrupt people," Mr Zuma told the inquiry led by Judge Ray

Zondo.

"I have been given every other name and I have never responded to those issues," he added. He lashed out, in detail - and with fury - at what he said was a decades-long conspiracy against him.

He implied that the UK and US had been - and still were -

part of an elaborate plot to discredit him, even as he tried to bring about political and economic change in South Africa. Mr Zuma alleged that former government minister Ngoako Ramatlhodi, who gave damning evidence against him, was part of the plot. Other foreign trained agents had tried to poison him, Mr Zuma said, without naming them.

In an interview with South Africa's privately owned News24 website, Mr Ramatlhodi denied being a spy.

He was prepared to undergo a lie detector test, and would challenge Mr Zuma to do likewise.

On the eve of the hearing Mr Zuma was in a good mood. He tweeted a video of himself laughing at the chant "Zuma must fall!" He said he found the Indian-born family "very friendly".

"I never did anything with them unlawfully. They just remained friends, as they were friends to everybody else," Mr Zuma said, adding that they had also been friends of former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.

He objected to allegations that he had allowed the state to be "captured" by the family, and had auctioned the country.

"Did I auction Table

Mountain? Did I auction Johannesburg?" he said. Many of the revelations from the inquiry concern the relationship between two families - the Zumas, centred on the former president, and the Guptas, three Indian-born brothers who moved to South Africa after the fall of apartheid.

The two families became so closely linked that a joint term was coined for them - the "Zuptas".

The Guptas owned a portfolio of companies that enjoyed lucrative contracts with South African government departments and state-owned conglomerates. They also employed several Zuma family members - including the president's son, Duduzane - in senior positions.

According to testimony heard at the inquiry, the Guptas went to great lengths to influence their most important client, the South African state. Public officials responsible for various state bodies say they were directly instructed by the Guptas to take decisions that would advance the brothers' business interests. It is alleged that compliance was rewarded with money and promotion, while disobedience was punished with dismissal. BBC



Ebola in DR Congo: Case confirmed in Goma

The Democratic Republic of Congo has confirmed the first case of Ebola in the eastern city of Goma, a major transport hub.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said the case could be a "game-changer" given the city's large population of more than two million people.

But the WHO expressed

confidence in plans to deal with the diagnosis.

The DR Congo health ministry said a pastor tested positive after arriving in the city by bus on Sunday.

More than 1,600 people have died since the Ebola outbreak began in eastern DR Congo a year ago - the second biggest outbreak ever.

The WHO director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,

said an emergency meeting is being convened.

He said: "We are confident in the measures we have put in place and hope that we will see no further transmission of Ebola in Goma. Nevertheless, we cannot be too careful."

The health ministry said in a statement that there was low risk of the disease spreading. It said all others on the bus - a driver and 18 other passengers - had been tracked down and they would be vaccinated on Monday.

"Because of the speed with which the patient has been identified and isolated, as well as the identification of all passengers from Butembo [where the bus came from], the risk of spreading to the rest of the city of Goma remains low," the statement said. The pastor travelled 200 km (125 miles) to Goma by bus from Butembo, where he had been with people with Ebola. Goma is a major commercial and cultural hub on DR Congo's border with Rwanda, with transport links to the wider region. Its health ministry has been preparing for an outbreak.

In November last year, it



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launched preparation and response activities. Some 3,000 health workers in the city have already been vaccinated. But fear of the deadly Ebola virus - which sees patients suffer gruesome symptoms and rules out customary burial rites - is a big challenge for health workers battling to contain the spread.

"People are still afraid to come to health clinics if they are experiencing Ebola symptoms," said the International Rescue Committee's Ebola emergency response director, Tariq Riebl.

Decades of conflict in eastern DR Congo have led to widespread mistrust of the authorities and this also has an impact on the disease spreading, according to authors of a recent report. The current outbreak in eastern DR Congo began in 2018 and is the 10th to hit the country since 1976, when the virus was first discovered.

It is dwarfed by the West African epidemic of 2014-16, which affected 28,616 people mainly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. About 11,310 people died in what was the largest outbreak of the virus ever recorded.

Ebola infects humans through close contact with infected animals, including chimpanzees, fruit bats and forest antelope.

It can then spread rapidly, through contact with even small amounts of bodily fluid of those infected - or indirectly through contact with contaminated environments.

Since the beginning of the current Ebola outbreak in eastern DR Congo, the WHO has on three occasions opted not to declare it a global health emergency. But the UK last week called on the global health body to formally call it an emergency - a technical definition - that would make it easier to raise money internationally. BBC

EDITORIAL

CBL's 'Economic Forum' misses the point

EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR NATHANIEL R. Patray, III of the Central Bank of Liberia didn't mince his words when he took over the helm of authority at the Central Bank last year, telling Liberians that he would set aside standards or bent the rules of the Bank to satisfy President George Manneh Weah. He did just that at the expense of the country's monetary policy, sending the exchange rate sky-rocketing with corresponding rise in prices.

NOW EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR Patray launches an Economic Forum at the Central Bank of Liberia with a public dialogue on the theme, "Taking Stock of the Central Bank of Liberia's Monetary Policy Regime and Operations over the Last Eighteen Years (2000 - 2018)."

WHY DOES THE Executive Governor want to take us back 18 years when the current dismal state of the economy, particularly the monetary system under his watch was never experienced in those periods even during the Liberian Civil War.

NO, NO, THE rate did not shoot up to over 200 Liberian dollars to One United States Dollars during the entire civil war and even after restoration of democratic governance not until when President Weah came to the Presidency. Instead, if Patray and the rest of the CBL authorities meant well, the public dialogue should focus on how the economy can be fixed.

LIBERIANS ARE YEARNING for solutions to salvage the bad state of the economy, not to take us to the past. We want to go forward with a healthy economy. The onus is on Governor Patray to tell Liberians how the US\$25 million was reportedly infused in the economy without any impact on our monetary system.

AT ONE POINT, the CBL under Governor Patray could not disburse money to commercial banks to serve the public, restricting customers to fixed withdrawals though they had more money in their accounts.

THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR also Co-chaired the Technical Economic Management Team (TEMT) with Finance Minister Samuel Tweah in the controversial US\$25 million mop-up of excess liquidity in the economy which outcome is still questionable in terms of transparency and accountability despite an audit by the General Auditing Commission.

PRESIDENT WEAH HAS resolved to honorably retire Patray with full benefits for contributing to messing up the economy by selfishly satisfying his (President Weah's) personal interest rather than the country at large. He will be rewarded with all benefits as a retiring Executive Governor for helping to crippling the economy.

THEREFORE, WE VIEW the launch of the so-called Economic Forum by Governor Patray as a clever attempt to divert public attention from the current degenerating state of the economy, because he lacks any workable strategy to advance.

BEING SO INEPT, as he has demonstrated at the CBL, Patray should just keep quiet and wait for his elaborate retirement package from President Weah, who he satisfied during his entire period as Executive Governor of the Central Bank rather than taking us to the past that was far better than now.

COMMENTARY

By Sami Mahroum

How an AI Utopia Would Work

After centuries of industrialism, we are now on the cusp of a technological revolution that has the potential to abolish all necessary work, giving rise to societies built around leisure and a classical ideal of freedom. The biggest hurdle to realizing such societies is cultural, not technological.

ANTWERP - It is more than 500 years since Sir Thomas More found inspiration for the "Kingdom of Utopia" while strolling the streets of Antwerp. So, when I traveled there from Dubai in May to speak about artificial intelligence (AI), I couldn't help but draw parallels to Raphael Hythloday, the character in Utopia who regales sixteenth-century Englanders with tales of a better world.

As home to the world's first Minister of AI, as well as museums, academies, and foundations dedicated to studying the future, Dubai is on its own Hythloday-esque voyage. Whereas Europe, in general, has grown increasingly anxious about technological threats to employment, the United Arab Emirates has enthusiastically embraced the labor-saving potential of AI and automation.

There are practical reasons for this. The ratio of indigenous-to-foreign labor in the Gulf states is highly imbalanced, ranging from a high of 67% in Saudi Arabia to a low of 11% in the UAE. And because the region's desert environment cannot support further population growth, the prospect of replacing people with machines has become increasingly attractive.

But there is also a deeper cultural difference between the two regions. Unlike Western Europe, the birthplace of both the Industrial Revolution and the "Protestant work ethic," Arab societies generally do not "live to work," but rather "work to live," placing a greater value on leisure time. Such attitudes are not particularly compatible with economic systems that require squeezing ever more productivity out of labor, but they are well suited for an age of AI and automation.

In the industrialized West, technological forces threaten social contracts that have long rested on the three pillars of capital, labor, and the state. For centuries, capital provided investment in machines, workers operated the machines to produce goods and services, and governments collected taxes, furnished public goods, and redistributed resources as needed. But this division of labor created a social system that is far more complicated than those of the Arab world and other non-industrialized economies.

For their part, Arab states have nationalized natural resources, managed major industries, traded internationally, and distributed surplus resources to society. Until recently, population growth and declining revenues from natural resources thus threatened the social contract. But with technologies that can produce and distribute most of the goods and services required by what is essentially a leisure society, the existing social contract could actually be enhanced, rather than disrupted.

Back in the West, the technological revolution appears to have widened the gap between capital owners and everyone else. While productivity has been increasing, labor's share of total income has shrunk. Apart from the capital owners, a leisure class of yuppies and heirs has also captured a sizable share of the surplus created by productivity-enhancing technologies. The biggest losers are those with low incomes and less education.

Yet, even here, focusing on AI's potential impact on the relationship between capital and employment is shortsighted. After all, populism has surged in many Western countries at a time of near-historic

lows in unemployment. Arguably, the current discontent reflects a desire for a better quality of life, not more work. The French "yellow vest" protesters were initially responding to policies that would have raised the costs of their commutes; the Britons who voted to leave the European Union were hoping that contributions to the bloc would be redirected to public services at home. Most anti-globalization and anti-immigration rhetoric is born of an anxiety about crime, cultural change, and other quality-of-life issues, not jobs.

The problem is that, under the Western social contract, a desire for more leisure can translate into mutually incompatible demands. Voters want reduced working hours but higher incomes, and they expect governments to continue generating enough tax revenue to provide health care, pensions, and education. It is little wonder that Western politics has come to an impasse.

Fortunately, AI and data-driven innovation could offer a way forward. In what could be perceived as a kind of AI utopia, the paradox of a bigger state with a smaller budget could be reconciled, because the government would have the tools to expand public goods and services at a very small cost.

The biggest hurdle would be cultural: As early as 1948, the German philosopher Joseph Pieper warned against the "proletarianization" of people and called for leisure to be the basis for culture. Westerners would have to abandon their obsession with the work ethic, as well as their deep-seated resentment toward "free riders." They would have to start differentiating between work that is necessary for a dignified existence, and work that is geared toward amassing wealth and achieving status. The former could potentially be all but eliminated.

With the right mindset, all societies could start to forge a new AI-driven social contract, wherein the state would capture a larger share of the return on assets, and distribute the surplus generated by AI and automation to residents. Publicly-owned machines would produce a wide range of goods and services, from generic drugs, food, clothes, and housing, to basic research, security, and transportation.

Some will view these outlays as unjustified market intervention; others will worry that the government might fail to meet public demand for various goods and services. But, again, such arguments are shortsighted. Given the pace of advances in AI and automation, state-owned production systems - operating nonstop - will have an almost unlimited supply capacity. The only limitation will be natural resources, a constraint that would continue to drive technological innovation in search of more sustainable management.

In an AI utopia, government intervention would be the norm, and private production the exception. The private sector would correct for government or collective failures, rather than the government correcting for market failures.

Imagine traveling forward in time to 2071, the UAE's centenary. A future Raphael Hythloday visiting Antwerp from Dubai would bear the following news: Where I live, the government owns and operates the machines that produce most necessary goods and services, allowing the people to spend their time on leisure, creative, and spiritual pursuits. All worries about employment and tax rates have been consigned to the past. That could be your world, too.

O-PED

By Shashi Tharoor

A Test Match with the Taliban

NEW DELHI - At the recent World Cup cricket tournament in England, a plucky Afghan team composed mainly of former refugees gave a surprisingly good account of themselves, including in matches against their neighbors, India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of two other Afghan teams - the Taliban and the government - that met in Doha, Qatar, earlier this month to agree on a "road map for peace."

The Afghan government officials who participated in the Doha talks could not even claim to be what they were, because their interlocutors, a murderous band of fanatics, do not recognize the Afghan government. Instead, the delegation was politely described as a group of representatives from Afghanistan, without saying whom exactly they represented.

After two days of talks, the participants agreed on eight points in a joint resolution, prompting Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, to tweet that the talks had "concluded on a very positive note." He congratulated the participants "for finding common ground."

Observers in India - Afghanistan's second-largest aid donor after the United States - could be forgiven for a dose of skepticism. For one thing, the two sides had agreed in Doha to reduce "civilian casualties to zero." But even while they were meeting, their "common ground" - the soil of Afghanistan - was being soaked in blood from relentless attacks by the Taliban, who had rejected a ceasefire for Eid al-Fitr, the traditional Muslim holiday at the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

The violence has not abated since, with a series of Taliban attacks leaving dozens dead and hundreds injured in recent days. On July 1, Taliban fighters killed up to 40 people in an attack on a government compound in Kabul. Six days later, the Taliban carried out a suicide bombing on a national intelligence complex in central Ghazni province, leaving at least a dozen people dead and some 180 wounded. In both attacks, a number of nearby buildings were damaged, including schools in the vicinity, killing and maiming children. According to the New York Times's weekly Afghan War Casualty Report, the death toll between June 28 and July 4 was the highest so far in 2019, with 264 government personnel and 58 civilians killed.

The conflict shows no signs of ending. Winston Churchill reportedly argued that "jaw-jaw is better than war-war," but the Taliban have perfected the art of talking while fighting. They have made no secret of their desire to restore their Islamic Emirate, which ruled - and brutalized - Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, until it collapsed under a hailstorm of US bombs in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

With that successful assault on a vicious regime, the US inherited the problems the Russians had tried to solve during their disastrous occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989. With the Soviet Union's departure, Afghanistan was plunged into years of civil war and fratricidal killing, culminating in the Taliban's takeover and establishment of a strict Islamic theocracy, featuring frequent executions, amputations, and stonings. Girls were barred from school, and women, forbidden to venture out of their homes without an accompanying male guardian, were rendered publicly invisible by the burka. Cinema, television, and music were abolished. Under the tutelage of Pakistan's military, the Taliban brought peace to Afghanistan, but it was the peace of the graveyard.

A month after 9/11, the US-led NATO mission "Operation Enduring Freedom" destroyed the Taliban government. The hope was that freedom would endure without an enduring American presence in Afghanistan. But, with significant assistance from their Pakistani patrons, the Taliban regrouped and embarked on a well-resourced campaign to take back their country from the occupiers. Eighteen years later, the US is still there, albeit under a new banner - "Operation Freedom's Sentinel," adopted in 2015. The international coalition has incurred some 3,500 casualties, and many of the countries that had been press-ganged by the US into participating have pulled out. The US would dearly like to do the same, rather than incurring more casualties, with no end in sight. But to withdraw under Taliban assault would be an admission of defeat.

Now, however, that calculus has evidently changed. Like his predecessor, Barack Obama, US President Donald Trump campaigned for his job on a promise to withdraw American troops from the country. Unlike Obama, however, Trump is determined to cut his losses, and has fully embraced peace talks with the Taliban, with the principal purpose being to permit the orderly - and complete - withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan.

India has watched with concern as this process has unfolded. The Taliban's Islamic Emirate was involved in the hijacking of an Air India plane to Kandahar in 1999, resulting in the loss of Indian lives and even greater loss of prestige, as India's government acceded to the hijackers' demand for the release of three Pakistani terrorists. The last thing India wants is the return of an Islamist Taliban regime in its neighborhood.

India's alarm is understandable. Encouraged by the security established by the international coalition forces, India has invested more than \$2 billion dollars in Afghanistan. It has helped to build the country's largest hospital for women and children, erect schools, construct the Afghan-India Friendship Dam (formerly known as the Salma Dam), carve the Delaram-Zaranj Highway across the country's southwest (to open trade routes to the West), ensure uninterrupted electricity in Kabul, and even build the new Parliament.

But no one in India believes the Afghans are anywhere near ready to manage their security without any international presence. After all, Taliban attacks have killed 1.4-2 million Afghans since 2001. The fact that the US is talking to the group, and even pressing the Afghan government to do so, without any credible assurances that the Taliban will lay down its weapons, is deeply dismaying, to say the least.

India's objective has been to stabilize Afghanistan's democracy and strengthen its civil society, so that Afghans are better able to take control of their own destiny. This is also why cricket-obsessed India gave Afghanistan's national team a home and watched, in admiration, as the players demonstrated their excellence at the World Cup. The last time the Taliban ruled, they banned cricket, too.

OPINION

By Alice Albright

An Education Crisis for All

WASHINGTON, DC - Aichetou, a 14-year-old girl, lives on the outskirts of Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, in Africa's Sahel region. Every day, she makes a difficult trek through the sand to get to a school with no drinking water or sanitation, where she barely learns, owing to a lack of textbooks and trained teachers. And she is not alone: tens of millions of schoolchildren worldwide face similar circumstances, while 262 million children and youth are not in school at all.

At a time when we should be progressing rapidly toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring "inclusive and equitable quality education" for all (SDG4), the world is facing a deepening education crisis. True, some countries are making strides: in France, every child receives a compulsory education, which will soon begin at age three.

But millions of children elsewhere will never set foot inside a classroom. If the status quo persists, more than half - 825 million - of the 1.6 billion young people alive in 2030 will not have the skills needed to thrive economically. Girls face particularly bleak prospects, owing to factors like cultural norms, gender-based violence, and early marriage.

Conflict and insecurity exacerbate the problem. In the Sahel region alone, attacks on schools and teachers by extremist groups have disrupted the education of more than 400,000 children

in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Some 2,000 schools have closed, and more than 10,000 teachers have fled or can't report to work.

The good news is that world leaders increasingly recognize the urgency of addressing the crisis. Education and development ministers from the G7 countries recently met with their counterparts from the Sahel countries in Paris, where they pledged to tackle inequality in developing countries through gender-responsive education and technical and vocational training.

To that end, the G7 representatives announced that they would continue to support 12 years of quality education for all, with a focus on the hardest-to-reach girls. Moreover, they vowed to work to end discriminatory practices like excluding pregnant or married girls from school, and to promote gender-responsive education through the France-led Gender at the Center initiative. And they committed to sustain efforts to help partner countries in the developing world to strengthen their technical and vocational education and training systems.

These laudable efforts will include a special focus on the Sahel. But achieving them will require that countries move beyond vague promises of support and offer concrete commitments that match the scale of the challenge.

The first step is finance. If current funding levels persist, it will take 100 years to reach SDG4 - far more than the 11 years we have. That is why the world's wealthiest countries must drastically increase their spending on education, particularly for the most marginalized communities in the poorest regions. For starters, G7 members and the European Union should heed France's call to double their education aid to the Sahel. Developing countries should also increase their education spending.

The additional financing should be used to strengthen national education systems, especially in terms of accountability and gender equality. This means making sure that schools have the resources they need, including clean water and sanitation, quality learning materials, and adequately trained (and compensated) teachers. It also means responding to the specific needs of disadvantaged students: for example, girls need to be guaranteed safety not only in school, but also on their daily commute. Governments will need to collect data, monitor outcomes, and make course corrections when appropriate.

Giving girls like Aichetou the chance to fulfill their potential is not only the right thing to do; it is also the smart thing to do. An educated society is a more peaceful and prosperous one, in which people are less likely to take up arms and more likely to participate in democratic processes. And, in today's globalized world, a more peaceful and prosperous society in one region, such as the Sahel, means increased stability and economic growth for all. That is why education belongs at the top of the G7's development agendas.

SPECIAL

ARTICLE

A Step in the Right Direction for Peace in Afghanistan

By R. Maxwell Bone

On July 7th and 8th of 2019 a broad delegation of representatives from Afghan society partook in an Intra-Afghan dialogue session with the militant group the Taliban. The talks in the Qatari capital which were jointly organized by the Gulf State and Germany marked the first time that such a diverse group formally engaged in dialogue with the Taliban. The Afghan delegation was composed of nearly fifty individuals from across society including civil society activists, journalists, representatives of political parties, and several individuals working for the administration of President Ashraf Ghani. Further, a substantial number of the participants were women, meeting a demand by many in Afghanistan and the international community alike that women be able to engage with the Taliban. However, all participants attended in their personal capacities, not as representatives of organizations that they are affiliated with. In doing so, the Taliban was able to meet with officials in the Afghan government without formally engaging the government, which the militant group has long refused to do.

The Intra-Afghan Dialogue is undoubtedly an achievement in the ongoing efforts to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan between the Taliban and the country's democratically elected government. Since the fall of 2018, the United States has engaged in a total of seven rounds of negotiations with the Taliban in order to reach a consensus to end war that has now been ravaging the South Asian country for nearly nineteen years. Yet, direct engagement regarding the peace process between Afghan citizens and the Taliban has been extremely limited. In fact, it has been limited to two sessions held in Moscow between the political opponents of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Taliban leaders. The two sessions occurred in the Russian capital in May and February of this year and both ended in gridlock without substantial progress being made.

Up to this point, all efforts to bring together a diverse and all-encompassing group of Afghans to engage with the Taliban have failed to materialize due to political infighting. In fact, in April a similar attempt to convene an Intra-Afghan dialogue fell apart at the last minute due to disagreements between the two sides regarding the size and composition of the Afghan delegation. Such failures to engage the Afghan government and civil society in the peace process with the Taliban led to anxiety, anticipation, and even conspiracies regarding the peace process. Some of these concerns were logical, including that the United States would rush to a final deal with the Taliban in order to withdraw troops from the South Asian country without regard for preserving the gains made during the past eighteen years. Others were met with outrage such as accusations the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad was intentionally excluded Afghans from the talks so that he could eventually become the South Asian country's president.

Nevertheless, the Intra-Afghan dialogue that occurred this past weekend can put some of these concerns to rest, at least temporarily. During the dialogue, the two sides were able to directly raise their concerns over issues ranging from women's rights to elections to the role of Islam in the governance of Afghanistan. Further, the two sides managed to come together and release a statement of principles at the conclusion of the dialogue that outlined their stances on a wide range of issues. Notably, the Afghan delegation was unanimously united in their demands to the Taliban. This was noted by Khalid Noor, an influential youth activist from Afghanistan's northern Balkh province who was also present in Moscow for the talks in May. Reflecting upon the talks, Mr. Noor indicated "All of us were united in what we were demanding from the Taliban, which is the preservation of the current system of government, a republic."



Notably, the talks in Doha were the first time this question has been directly raised with the Taliban. Currently, Afghanistan is governed under a constitutional republic, in which the government is democratically elected, as seen in the country's name the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Alternatively, the Taliban believe that Afghanistan must be governed under the monarchical system of an Islamic Emirate, which would resemble the governing structure of gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia or potentially the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

During the period that the Taliban controlled the country during the last decade of the twentieth century they renamed the country the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The Taliban has continued to insist that this is the only system of governance the militant group would accept in any peace agreement. Understandably, this issue has been at the forefront of the minds of many Afghans who value their democratic system of governance. This worry has been bolstered by the United States clearly stating that the system of governance is an issue to be decided directly between Afghans and the Taliban, not between the U.S. and the militant group.

The discussion between the Afghan delegation and the Taliban over this issue has yet to give anyone ease. Mr. Noor, present at the talks, indicated he asked them very directly, if they would support a republic with elections or not. "Given that the system as it is today has to change, would they be willing to become part of the democratic system and partake in elections or not?" he asked. Unsurprisingly, the Taliban refused to directly answer this question and continuously attempted to dodge it. In effect, this left the Afghan people with more questions than answers regarding the willingness of the Taliban to integrate into a democratic system of governance.

Another question that has yet to be answered is the stance of the Taliban on freedom of the press and the rights of journalists. This is particularly relevant given that only a few weeks ago the Taliban issued an order calling for major media outlets in Afghanistan to be attacked. This issue was brought up directly with the Taliban over the weekend in Doha. "It is somewhat confusing, but also very worrisome. They (Taliban) claim that they support journalists and freedom of the press but at the same time they recently threatened to attack media outlets that they say are spreading anti-Jihad propaganda" indicated Noor. He continued to say "I then asked them directly about the order that they issued to attack journalists. They claimed that this was only regarding advertisements calling for their

fighters to be killed, but to me that claim just does not add up."

These and other issues were addressed in a press statement released late into the night after the conclusion of the dialogue. Yet, this is merely an outline and broad agreement on several issues that unfortunately will likely not hold. The Taliban claimed that they will cease actively targeting civilians. However, it is unlikely that this claim will hold given the actions of the group over the nearly two decades that it has engaged in warfare with the government of Afghanistan. Other issues such as women's rights were agreed to in the overall context of being in accordance with Islamic Law. Understandably, this has caused concern as such a context could be used to impose draconian restrictions on women's rights that are commonplace in Islamic kingdoms such as Saudi Arabia.

In short, the Intra-Afghan dialogue that occurred in Qatar is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, yet it did not solidify anything and is only the beginning of a process that is likely going to be combative and long. Specifically, following an agreement between the United States and the Taliban on issues of military positioning and security, the Afghan government will have to engage in direct negotiations with the Taliban over the future of the country. This is immensely worrisome to Noor who fears that such a process might not be inclusive. He stated "Yes, the Intra-Afghan dialogue was very inclusive and representative of Afghan society. However, this is merely dialogue and the real test will be in formal negotiations." Noor strongly holds the conviction that all factions of Afghan society must make concessions in order to approach the peace process in a unified manner. He claims that "If the current government thinks that they can negotiate a peace accord with the Taliban that will last if they do not involve the political opposition they are lying to themselves. The same is true regarding the involvement of youth and women."

The Intra-Afghan dialogue was undoubtedly a step in the right direction to further the peace process in an attempt to bring an end to the decades long war in Afghanistan. However, there is still a significant time period and objectives that must be accomplished until formal negotiations even commence. Further, it is imperative that succeeding steps in the peace process are inclusive if one wishes to reach an agreement that is long lasting and sustainable.

R. Maxwell Bone is Vice President for Political Affairs, Democracy, and Governance at the International Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development (IIPDD). He lives in Washington, D.C. Follow him on Twitter @maxbone55.

Liberian police extol Gambian counterparts

By Winston W. Parley

The Liberia National Police (LNP) has extolled its Gambian counterpart during a visit here led by the head and deputies of The Gambia's police force.

On Monday, 15 July, LNP Inspector General Patrick Sudue said Gambian Police Inspector General Mr. MamourJobe and his deputies Samba Jawo and Abrahaim Bah were here in Liberia to know how the LNP moved from where it was to it has come today.

the Liberia National Police Training Academy (LNPTA) as an instructor while his two deputies worked separately with the immigration and the police.

Given Mr. Jobe's love for Liberia, Mr. Sudue says when the UN was trying to find a place in Africa where it could retrain its Formed Police Unit (FPU), Mr. Jobe thought on no other country but Liberia.

As an instructor, Mr. Sudue says the Gambian police chief while serving in the UN Mission here, worked at the LNPTA as a lecturer, adding that he was one of the UN founding members that opened the police academy here.

During Mr. Jobe's service here, Mr. Sudue recalls that they trained civilians and they have been reoriented and turned into professional police officers.

"He served this country diligently while he was serving with the UN," Mr. Sudue says.

For his part, Mr. MamourJobe says Liberia has undergone

security sector reform processes to an extent that he wants to come to Liberia to look at what is involved and make sure that the reforms take place in The Gambia.

Mr. Jobe extends gratitude to Mr. Sudue for the welcome accorded the delegation since its arrival on Sunday, 14 July.



According to Mr. Sudue, the visit of the Gambian Police authorities is intended to afford the delegation the opportunity to tap into the expertise of their Liberian counterparts, learn from their experience and go back to The Gambia to restructure their police unit.

Sudue notes that Mr. Jobe and his deputies are no strangers to Liberia, recalling how The Gambian Police chief served here in the UN Mission, working at

GOL reduces petroleum prices

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC) has announced with immediate effect, reduction of fifteen United States cents (0.15¢) in the pump prices of gasoline (PMS).

The government also announces an increase of ten United States cents (0.10¢) in the pump prices of diesel fuel (AGO) on the Liberian market.

According to a press release issued over the weekend, the petroleum price circular issued by the government is the current retail pump price for a gallon of gasoline.

The pronouncement indicates that the retail pump price for a gallon of gasoline has dropped from US\$3.30 to US\$3.15 or its equivalent of LD\$630.00, while the current retail pump price for a gallon of diesel fuel is increased to US\$3.80 or its Liberian dollar equivalent of LD\$760.00.

The release further adds that the prices in Liberian dollars were calculated using the Central Bank approved exchange rate of 1USD to LRD\$200.00.

The decision is as a result of a shift in the perimeter that is frequently used to determine the prices of these products in

the country.

Meanwhile the government has thanked all stakeholders in the Downstream Sector of Petroleum Industry for their commitment in adhering to the price adjustment formula.

However the circular warns that the Ministry of Commerce inspectorate will closely monitor the approved ceiling prices to avoid the arbitrary hike in the



pump prices of gasoline and fuel on the local market.

The circular further warns that the Ministry of Commerce will also be closely monitoring the effectiveness of the price circular to ensure that importers do not undercut fellow competitors on the market.--Press release

Section I. Invitation for Bids

Republic Of Liberia

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

P.O.BOX 9013

Broad & Mechlin Streets

1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia

Title of bid: **Supply and Delivery of Stationery**

Contract Identification No.: **IFB#: MFDP/NCB/001/2019-2020**

1. Ministry of Finance & Development Planning (MFDP) anticipates fund from the Government of Liberia National Budget Fiscal year 19-20 and intends to apportion some towards the cost of procuring stationery for the operation of the Ministry through a *framework agreement* during the Fiscal Year 2019/2020.
2. The MFDP now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the supply of stationery during the Fiscal Year 2019/2020. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding process in accordance with procedures specified in the Amended and Restated Public Procurement and Concessions Act (PPC Act) published and approved: September 18, 2010.
3. The supply of stationery as per the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning requirements is summarized in the below table in two (2) Lots; qualified and eligible bidder may choose to bid for all the lots or some of the lots:

Description	Lot #:	Number	Quantity	Delivery Schedule
Papers and Other Office Supplies	1	IFB#: /MFDP/NCB/001/2019-2020	See Schedule of Requirement for Items Listing	As per contract provision
Genuine Sealed Cartridges	2			

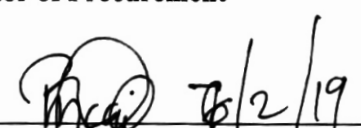
4. All Interested eligible bidders may obtain a complete set of the bidding documents from the address below upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **US\$50.00** beginning July 3, 2019, from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM daily, Mondays to Fridays.
5. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of US \$750.00 for lot one (1) and **US\$1,000.00** for lot two (2) in the form of a Manager's Check or Bank Guarantee, Authenticate.
6. All bids must be submitted at the address below on or before Wednesday, July 31, 2019 at or before 2:00 PM. Bid opening will be done within one (1) hour after bid submission at 2:00 PM, in the Conference room on the 10th Floor or in the Procurement Unit on the 3rd Floor of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, in the presence of bidders, their representatives or those who choose to attend. Bids shall be valid for a period of 90 days after the deadline of Bid submission. Late bids will be received as such but rejected and returned unopened. Electronic bidding will not be permitted.
7. Qualification requirements include the following:
 - I. **Articles of Incorporation (Where applicable)**
 - II. **Current Business Registration Certificate (Liberia Business Registry)**
 - III. **Current Tax Clearance Certificate (Liberia Revenue Authority)**
 - IV. **Statements of past performance satisfaction from at at three (3) previous and current clients - including the names and contact numbers of the clients**
 - V. **Capacity to pre-finance supplies for at least four (4) weeks**
 - VI. **Ability to respond to the MFDP schedule of supply**
 - VII. **Compliance with PPCC Vendor Registration procedures**

8. Submissions must be signed, sealed in an envelope and clearly marked, **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF STATIONERY -IFB No.MFDP/NCB/001/2019-2020**, and addressed to:

Director of Procurement
 Room 045- 3rd Floor
 Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
 Broad & Mechlin Streets
 1000 Monrovia 10, Liberia
 Mobile number: +231-886-579-455 / 770-191-202
 Web address: ebarkoi@mfdp.gov.lr / mgldaydor@mfdp.gov.lr

9. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning reserves the right to reject or accept any bid submitted and to annul the entire process at any time without incurring any liability and without assigning any reason thereof.

Signed: 
Director of Procurement

Approved:  8/2/19
Deputy Minister for Administration

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

25 NaFAA staff leaves for China today

As part of efforts to achieve the pro poor agenda of the CDC led government as its relates to capacity building, 25 Staffs of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority are expected to depart Liberia Tuesday July 16, 2019 for a month long training in China.

According to a press statement issued in Monrovia recently indicates, those expected to travel include technicians, enterprise supervisors and professional personnel engaged in mariculture and fisheries managers among others and they are to form part the 2019 Training Course on Mariculture Technology studies.

This training is aimed at enhancing participants' theoretical knowledge and practical skills in mariculture, strengthening the friendly exchanges between China and Liberia, and expanding cooperation between the two nations in the marine fishery.

The training will take place at the Fujian Institute of Oceanography (FJIO), located in Xiamen city - a special economic zone lying in the southeastern coast of China, is a full-funding public institution affiliated to Fujian Provincial Department



NaFAA Director General Mrs. Emma Metieh Glassco

of Science & Technology, as well as a non-profit comprehensive maritime research and development institution.

In the process of offering the main service to the governmental marine management and social marine development, Fujian Institute of Oceanography FJIO has accumulated rich technology and professional experience in the fields of Mariculture, Integrated Coastal Management, Marine Fisheries Management as well as Marine Economic

Sustainable Development.

The training course will focus on the culture technology for "Fish, Shrimps, Shellfish and Crabs", which will be conducted through lectures, teaching practice, field trips and so on.

The Lecturers are Scholars and Experts from universities and scientific research institutions such as Fujian Institute of Oceanography, Xiamen University, Fisheries Research Institute of Fujian, Guangdong Hisenor Group Co., Ltd. of Guangdong Haid Group, Xiamen Kehuan Marine

Biotechnology Co., Ltd.

And their lectures will cover a broad range of topics including: overview of China's mariculture; artificial breeding and net cage culture technology for marine fish; marine shellfish culture technology; artificial breeding and high-efficient farming technology for mud crab; artificial breeding and culture technology for groupers; artificial breeding and ecological culture technology for shrimps; basic farming process and culture modes for shrimps; disease diagnosis, prevention and treatment of marine fish and shrimps; and live feed cultivation and its application in aquatic breeding among others.

According to NaFAA press release the 25-member delegation from Liberia will be led on the tour of several cities including Beijing City; Wuyishan City, Jinjiang City, Quanzhou City, Dongshan County, Zhangpu County.

The head of the NaFAA delegation is expected to make presentation on the related training theme including, Basic national condition, administrative organs and managerial methods of governmental maritime sectors; fundamental profile of sea areas and marine fishery resources.

Other areas include, Fishery production, marine fishing, mariculture, fisheries

infrastructure construction, trade and processing of aquatic products, Marine economic development planning and strategy, Marine related policies, laws and regulations, International cooperation, main cooperative countries, present cooperation ways and management modes in marine related industries.

Meanwhile, some of those expected to travel to China for the month long training include John PekeyGlaylor Jr. Human Resource Officer, TeteBabyte Doe, Associate Fixed Assets Director, Patience Wilson Kennedy Customer Service Officer, ZubahKollieYennego Procurement Assistant, Anthony F. Williams Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, YarkpawoloKpasaquio Johnson, Manager Aquaculture Extension and Oscar DargbahDaryoue Aquaculture Extension Officer.

Other are John S. Morley Fisheries Observer, Fred B. Wright Aquaculture Technician, Glanedea Nancy Kolleh, Data Field Coordinator, Rachel LeelaSuah, Emmunerator, Zoe Yarwhere, Executive Secretary Director General Office, Emmanuel Tony Hallawangar, Receptionist and Tony Bright Cole Jr. Office Assistant.

The rest are Richard Nelson Kargbo, Fisheries Officer, George AdtuduArmah, Technical Officer, Alice Bropleh Weah, Deborah TarmenArmah, Annette M. Johnson, Abraham M. Johnson and Monibah Leo Keymah.

Rep. Cole reacts to dismissal of Agriculture Minister

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Bong County Electoral District #3 Rep. J. Marvin Cole has criticized dismissed Agriculture Minister Dr. MoganaFlomo, Jr., claiming that the latter's dismissal by President George Manneh Weah resulted from his alleged

incompetence.

Rep. Cole told a team of journalists recently that former Agriculture Minister Dr. Flomo allegedly lacks the academic credentials to merit the post of Agriculture Minister.

Cole's assertions come amid speculations that he allegedly influenced Dr. Flomo's dismissal.

He says he is not the president who appoints and dismisses, in response to journalists inquiry if played a role in Dr. Flomo's dismissal.

Mr. Cole explains that at no time did he ask the president to dismiss Minister Flomo.

"I only tried my best as a CDC lawmaker to appeal to the President for the appointment of Dr. MoganaFlomo, Jr., but not to ask the President to dismiss him," he explains.

Notwithstanding, Cole declares that "even if I had the opportunity to influence his dismissal, I would have done it."

He adds that he would have done it without regret because the dismissed Agriculture Minister lacks the experience and necessary qualification to serve the position.

Meanwhile, a recent Executive Mansion press release attributed Flomo's dismissal to his failure to support the government's pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

The release further said Dr. Flomo did not make any significant difference in the country's agriculture sector ever since Mr. Weah appointed him a year ago.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



Gender Ministry, Police summoned

—over high rate of prostitution

By Bridgett Milton

In the wake of reports of a high rate of prostitution in the country, the House of Representatives has summoned the Minister of Gender and the Inspector General of the Liberia Nation Police to provide reasons for non-enforcement of Chapter 18, Sub-sections 1-9 of the Penal Code of Liberia.

According to a communication filed by Bong County District #6 Rep. Moima Briggs-Mensah, the issue surrounding prostitution in Liberia is distressing and alarming to the extent that it has connected children of early teens.

According to Rep. Briggs - Mensah, prostitution has increased the spread of STDs [sexually transmitted diseases], encouraged rape and increased other violence

against woman to include human trafficking and abuse of human rights.

She says records of recent past have shown that the blatant refusal to combat prostitution has resulted to a form of encouragement for young girls to drop out of school since it is considered by them as one of the easiest means to generate money.

Briggs-Mensah laments the growing effects of prostitution in Monrovia and other major developing cities which violate Chapter 18, Sub-section 1-9 of the Panel Code of Liberia, titled "Offenses Against Public Morality."

However the full plenary has voted to summon the police along with Gender Minister to appear before its open session after the break.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Français

Lola : quand l'hôpital préfectoral devient un centre de référence pour des patients ivoiriens et libériens

Le nouvel hôpital préfectoral de Lola est devenu l'un des centres hospitaliers de référence de la région forestière voire de des villes frontalières ivoirienne et libérienne. Cet établissement sanitaire est de plus en plus convoité, dit-on, à cause de la qualité de traitement administré à ses patients.

Construit par l'Etat guinéen, ce centre est composé de plusieurs bâtiments et des centres d'isolement pour des maladies épidémiques. Autant de raisons qui amènent aujourd'hui beaucoup de patients à fréquenter cet hôpital de Lola qui est, en outre, doté de matériels de dernière génération.

Les patients viennent d'un peu partout, de la préfecture de Lola, de la Haute Guinée, d'autres localités de la Guinée Forestière ainsi que des pays voisins de la Guinée tels que

le Liberia et la Côte d'Ivoire, pour se faire soigner.

Pour mieux comprendre les raisons de ce regain d'affluence pour cet hôpital de Lola, GuinéeNews a interrogé Dr. Kaba Kéita, le directeur dudit hôpital.

« La cause de l'affluence des malades à l'hôpital

préfectoral de Lola, est essentiellement liée à la qualité des services et le traitement dont bénéficient les patients. L'autre facteur qui explique cet engouement pour Lola, c'est aussi l'accueil des patients. Depuis mon arrivée, j'ai organisé l'accueil entre l'agent de santé et les

patients. Il faudrait une certaine ouverture pour attirer plus de patients vers l'hôpital. L'emplacement géographique joue en faveur de Lola avec sa proximité avec le Liberia et la Côte d'Ivoire. C'est l'un des plus grands centres sanitaires, situé non loin du Liberia et de la Côte d'Ivoire. Lola est une zone stratégique en Guinée Forestière dans la mesure où une grande partie de l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire fait frontière avec la Guinée et le Liberia. C'est pourquoi nous recevons plus de 60 malades par semaine qui viennent de la Côte d'Ivoire pour se faire traiter et ils se retournent satisfaits chez eux. Le constat est le même avec le Libéria. Chez nous ici à Lola, c'est le médecin qui court vers les malades dès leurs arrivés. Tous les malades qui viennent à l'hôpital de Lola sont réceptionnés par des agents qui les accompagnent dans la salle. Avant mon arrivée à Lola, les 70% de la population se rendaient à N'Zérékoré pour se faire soigner. Avec une organisation des services d'accueil, l'hôpital de Lola est beaucoup fréquenté par les habitants de la préfecture qui partaient se faire soigner à N'Zérékoré. Pas seulement, il y a des Ivoiriens, Libériens et d'autres Guinéens d'autres régions de la Guinée.

Les services de la chirurgie, de la pédiatrie ainsi que d'autres services connexes, sont toujours remplis de patients au nombre desquels des étrangers surtout des Ivoiriens qui viennent en grand nombre pour se faire opérer à cause du coût de l'opération qui est très élevé. D'après nos informations, une intervention chirurgicale en Côte d'Ivoire peut coûter au patient jusqu'à 300 mille FCFA. Ce qui n'est pas à la portée des moins nantis. J'étais à N'Zérékoré comme chef chirurgien et je suis avec un groupe dynamique qui fait un maximum d'effort pour les patients actuellement à Lola. L'Etat a fait beaucoup mais beaucoup restent à faire. Nous avons des services d'échographie ; de radiographie... Il y a tout ce qui peut être dans un hôpital. L'Etat a mis le paquet mais, il manque encore des choses surtout la gratuité de la césarienne nous pose souvent des problèmes notamment ceux liés aux kits. A part ce problème, l'Etat a mis le paquet que nous saluons. Les

gens entendent d'un peu partout l'écho de ce qui nous faisons en Guinée et dans les pays voisins. Ce n'est pas seulement la Guinée forestière, les patients viennent de Kankan, de Labé même de Conakry pour venir se faire soigner à Lola. Il y a certaines pathologies, ce n'est pas tous les médecins qui peuvent les soigner... Un malade satisfait cherche toujours à envoyer trois personnes et un malade insatisfait, va décourager 15 patients », a fait savoir le docteur Kaba Kéita, le directeur préfectoral de Lola.

Pour sa part, Ouremba Konaté, un des patients venus de Boola, dans la préfecture de Beyla, nous a livré ici les raisons pour lesquelles il a fréquenté l'hôpital de Lola. « J'étais gravement malade. C'est à cause des personnes de bonne volonté qui m'ont indiqué Lola. J'ai été par trois fois à l'hôpital régional de N'Zérékoré et les gens m'ont dit de venir chez Dr Kaba Kéita, le directeur de l'hôpital de Lola. J'ai décidé de venir à Lola et J'ai pris les médicaments qu'il m'a prescrits. Aujourd'hui, je remercie Dieu et le personnel de l'hôpital de Lola qui m'a opéré avec succès », a-t-il confié.

Mamadi Camara est un guinéen vivant en Gambie. Celui-ci affirme être venu se faire soigner d'abord à Kankan. C'est là qu'il lui a été conseillé d'aller se faire consulter par Dr Kaba Kéita de l'hôpital de Lola. « Les médecins de Lola travaillent bien et j'y ai trouvé des soins qui m'ont soulagé. Je demande au gouvernement d'aider le personnel sanitaire de l'hôpital de Lola », a-t-il déclaré.

Quant à cette patiente venue d'Abidjan, les médecins de Lola sont des sauveurs. « Moi, je suis venue d'Abidjan, j'étais gravement malade et je souffrais du fibrome mais, pour faire l'opération en Côte d'Ivoire, ils m'ont demandée plus de 500 mille FCFA. Ce qui fait 7 millions francs guinéens. Heureusement, une cousine m'a dit de venir à Lola qui regorge de bons médecins. Aujourd'hui, cette maladie n'est que du passé pour moi et avec seulement moins de 150 milles francs guinéens. Arrivée chez moi en Côte d'Ivoire, je dirai à tous les malades de venir à Lola pour trouver la solution à leurs maladies », a témoigné la patiente ivoirienne qui a requis l'anonymat.



Le Président du Libéria est à Conakry

Le Président de la République du Libéria, Son excellence Georges Weah, est arrivé à Conakry ce jeudi 11 juillet 2019, pour une visite de travail et d'amitié de 48 heures. Une visite qui se situe dans le cadre du raffermissement des liens de coopération entre la République de Guinée et la République sœur du Liberia.

C'est à 11 heures 10 minutes que l'avion présidentiel a atterri à l'aéroport international de

Conakry-Gbéssia. Le Président Georges Weah a été accueilli par son frère et ami, le Président Alpha Condé, devant tous les corps constitués.

Après l'exécution des hymnes nationaux des deux pays, le Président Alpha Condé et son hôte de marque ont fait le salut aux corps constitués et à la communauté libérienne, sous des ovations nourries.

De là, les deux hommes d'Etat se sont rendus à l'hôtel Kaloum où résidera le Président libérien durant son séjour.

Après l'hôtel Kaloum, les deux chefs d'Etat ont visité le Port autonome de Conakry. Notamment le port container et le quai commercial.

Le port container ou Conakry-Terminal, a réalisé les travaux d'extension du quai - nouveau poste 12 / 340 m - et du terminal à containers de 12 hectares. Ces réalisations, avec la mise en place de deux nouveaux portiques de quai et d'une centrale électrique de 5.8 MGW, placent le Port de Conakry au niveau des meilleurs standards internationaux.

Conakry-Terminal a également le projet d'aménager un port sec avec sa connexion ferroviaire pour fluidifier le trafic des marchandises.

Bolloré-Ports, qui emploie 460 personnes à Conakry-Terminal, a pour objectif de créer une plateforme régionale de transbordement compétitive.

Le quai commercial quant à lui, possède deux grues de dernière génération pour le déchargement des marchandises. La première grue a une capacité de 80 tonnes de déchargement et la seconde en a 120.



Français

CEDEAO : LA MARCHÉ GRADUELLE VERS L'ECO

S'il ne tenait qu'au seul président ivoirien Alassane Dramane Ouattara, le franc CFA, dépouillé de son oripeau colonial et revêtu du manteau plus attractif de l'Eco, deviendrait la monnaie commune des 15 pays de la CEDEAO. Le 16 février dernier, comme en réponse au vice-président du Conseil italien Ligui Di Maio qui, quelques semaines auparavant, avait accusé la France » d'appauvrir l'Afrique au moyen du franc des colonies qu'elle imprime pour financer sa dette publique » il déclarait, au sortir d'un entretien avec Macron : » Le FCFA est notre monnaie. C'est la monnaie des pays qui l'ont librement choisie depuis leur indépendance en 1960 ». Et d'ajouter : » Je ne comprends pas ce faux débat sur le franc CFA qui est une monnaie solide, appréciée, bien gérée. Une monnaie qui contribue à la croissance et à la stabilité de l'espace

nouvel habillage, de la monnaie coloniale décriée. Ce qui, eu égard à la place prépondérante de son pays dans l'économie de l'espace UEMOA, pourrait être un facteur de compromission d'un projet d'importance historique.

La 21e session de la Conférence des chefs d'Etat de l'UEMOA, tenue le week-end dernier à Abidjan, aura permis à celui qui est aussi le président en exercice de cette organisation sous-régionale de lever l'équivoque sur sa démarche. Celle-ci ne consiste pas à terme une substitution de l'Eco au franc CFA en conservant toute l'architecture sur laquelle il repose. Mais ce sera bien le cas, dans un premier temps. En effet, partant du constat que ce sont les Etats de l'UEMOA qui satisfont le mieux les critères de convergence économique nécessaires pour lancer la monnaie unique, il en déduit qu'ils seront les premiers à



UEMOA ». Profitant de la visite de son homologue sénégalais Macky Sall à Abidjan, en juin, il précisait sa pensée relativement à la monnaie communautaire en gestation : » La monnaie unique de la CEDEAO doit fonctionner sur le modèle du FCFA qui a été performant ». Retour à Paris. A l'issue d'une nouvelle audience à l'Elysée, le 9 juillet, le président de la Côte d'Ivoire déclare aux journalistes : « Le FCFA se porte bien. Les chefs d'Etat de la CEDEAO ont décidé qu'ensemble, à 15, nous allons mettre en place une nouvelle monnaie qui s'appelle l'Eco. A terme le franc CFA s'appellera l'Eco » Formulée comme telle, sans explication complémentaire, la dernière phrase renforce chez les détracteurs du franc CFA et adversaires déclarés de Ouattara le sentiment que la monnaie communautaire annoncée ne sera, dans l'optique de ce dernier, qu'un prolongement, sous un

utiliser l'Eco, les autres devant le rejoindre au fur et à mesure qu'ils satisferont les mêmes critères. En attendant, l'Eco fonctionnera bien comme le Franc CFA : il sera arrimé à l'Euro et « garanti » par le Trésor français contre le dépôt dans ses caisses de 50% des avoirs extérieurs des Etats utilisateurs.

La donne changera lorsque le géant nigérian, le Ghana, la Guinée, la Sierra Leone et les autres membres de la CEDEAO adhéreront au système. L'Eco sera alors arrimé à un panier de monnaies (Euro, Dollar, Livre Sterling, Yen, Yuan etc) . Il sera flexible et gouverné par une Banque Centrale Communautaire.

Alassane Ouattara est donc bien en phase avec les décisions de la 55e session ordinaire de la Conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement tenu à Abuja le 29 juin dernier.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Sami Mahroum

Le fonctionnement d'une utopie de l'IA

ANVERS - Il y a maintenant plus de 500 ans que Sir Thomas More a trouvé son inspiration pour le « Royaume de l'Utopie » en flânant dans les rues d'Anvers. Lorsque j'ai voyagé de Dubaï à Anvers au mois de mai pour parler de l'intelligence artificielle (IA), je n'ai pas pu m'empêcher de faire des parallèles avec Raphael Hythloday, le personnage d'Utopie qui fait les délices des habitants de la Nouvelle-Angleterre du XVIème siècle avec ses récits d'un monde meilleur.

La ville de Dubaï, qui abrite le premier Ministère de l'IA, ainsi que des musées, des académies et des fondations consacrées à l'étude de l'avenir, poursuit son propre périple à l'image de celui de Hythloday. Alors que l'Europe, en général, se montre de plus en plus anxieuse quant aux menaces technologiques envers l'emploi, les Emirats Arabes Unis ont accueilli avec enthousiasme le potentiel d'économie de main-d'œuvre de l'IA et de l'automatisation.

Il y a des raisons pratiques à cela. Le ratio autochtone / étranger de main-d'œuvre dans les Etats du Golfe est fortement déséquilibré, allant d'un maximum de 67 % en Arabie saoudite à un minimum de 11 % dans les Emirats arabes unis. Parce que l'environnement désertique de la région ne peut pas soutenir davantage la croissance de la population, la perspective de remplacer les personnes par des machines est devenue de plus en plus séduisante.

Mais il existe également une différence culturelle entre les deux régions. Contrairement à l'Europe de l'Ouest, berceau de la révolution industrielle et de « l'éthique protestante du travail », les sociétés arabes en général ne « vivent pas pour travailler », mais plutôt « travaillent pour vivre », en accordant une plus grande valeur au temps de loisir. De telles attitudes ne sont pas particulièrement compatibles avec les systèmes économiques qui exigent d'extraire toujours plus de productivité de la main-d'œuvre, mais elles sont bien adaptées à l'âge de l'IA et de l'automatisation.

Dans l'Ouest industrialisé, les forces technologiques menacent des contrats sociaux qui ont longtemps reposé sur les trois piliers du capital, du travail et de l'Etat. Durant des siècles, le capital fournissait les investissements dans les machines, les travailleurs faisaient fonctionner les machines pour produire des biens et services et les gouvernements percevaient les impôts, fournissaient les biens publics et redistribuaient les ressources en fonction des besoins. Mais cette division du travail a créé un système social qui est beaucoup plus compliqué que celui du monde arabe et d'autres économies non industrialisées.

De leur côté, les Etats arabes ont nationalisé les ressources naturelles, ont géré d'importantes industries, ont fait du commerce international et ont distribué les excédents de ressources dans la société. Jusqu'à récemment, la croissance de la population et la baisse des revenus tirés des ressources naturelles ont menacé le contrat social. Mais avec des technologies capables de produire et de distribuer la plupart des biens et services requis par ce qui est essentiellement une société de loisirs, le contrat social existant pourrait être amélioré, plutôt que perturbé.

En Occident, la révolution technologique semble avoir creusé le fossé entre les détenteurs du capital et tous les autres. Si la productivité a augmenté, la part de la main-d'œuvre sur le revenu total a diminué. Outre les propriétaires du capital, une classe de loisirs de yuppies et d'héritiers a également pris une part importante du surplus créé par les technologies qui améliorent la productivité. Les plus grands perdants sont les personnes à faibles revenus et les moins éduquées.

Pourtant là encore, l'accent sur l'incidence potentielle de l'IA sur la relation entre le capital et l'emploi est à courte vue. Après tout, le populisme a augmenté dans de nombreux pays occidentaux, à une époque quasi-historique des plus bas taux de chômage. On peut dire que le mécontentement actuel reflète un désir d'une

meilleure qualité de vie - et non pas le désir de davantage de travail. Les manifestants français des « Gilets jaunes » ont d'abord répondu à des mesures qui étaient censées augmenter leurs frais de déplacements ; les Britanniques qui ont voté pour quitter l'Union européenne espéraient que les contributions à l'Union seraient réorientées vers les services publics au niveau national. La plus grande part de la rhétorique anti-mondialisation et anti-immigration est née d'une inquiétude quant à la criminalité, au changement culturel et à d'autres questions liées à la qualité de vie - pas à l'emploi.

Le problème est qu'en vertu du contrat social occidental, un désir de davantage de loisirs peut se traduire par des exigences incompatibles entre elles. Les électeurs veulent une réduction de la durée du travail mais des revenus plus élevés et s'attendent à ce que les gouvernements continuent de générer suffisamment de recettes fiscales pour fournir les services de santé, les retraites et l'éducation. Il n'est pas étonnant que la politique occidentale soit dans l'impasse.

Heureusement, l'IA et l'innovation fondée sur des données pourraient offrir une voie à suivre. Dans ce qui pourrait être perçu comme une sorte d'utopie de l'IA, le paradoxe d'un Etat plus grand avec un plus petit budget pourrait être réconcilié, parce que le gouvernement aurait les moyens de développer les biens et services à très faible coût.

Le principal obstacle serait culturel : dès 1948, le philosophe allemand Joseph Pieper a mis en garde contre la « prolétarianisation » des personnes et a exigé que le loisir soit placé à la base de la culture. Les Occidentaux devraient renoncer à leur obsession de l'éthique du travail, ainsi qu'à leur profond ressentiment envers les « resquilleurs ». Ils devraient commencer à faire la différence entre le travail qui est nécessaire à une existence digne - et le travail qui vise à amasser des richesses et à obtenir un statut. La première forme de travail pourrait être éliminée.

Avec la bonne mentalité, toutes les sociétés pourraient commencer à forger un nouveau contrat social axé sur l'IA, dans lequel l'Etat saisirait une plus grande part du rendement des actifs et distribuerait les surplus générés par l'IA et l'automatisation aux résidents. Les machines détenues par l'Etat produiraient une vaste gamme de produits et services, des médicaments génériques, des aliments, des vêtements, des logements, ainsi que de la recherche de base, de la sécurité et des transports.

Certains considèrent ces dépenses comme une intervention injustifiée du marché ; d'autres craignent que le gouvernement risque de ne pas satisfaire la demande du public pour les divers biens et services. Mais là encore, de tels arguments sont à courte vue. Étant donné le rythme des progrès de l'IA et de l'automatisation, les systèmes de production appartenant à l'Etat - fonctionnant sans relâche - auraient une capacité d'offre presque illimitée. La seule limite sera celle des ressources naturelles, une contrainte qui continuera à conduire l'innovation technologique vers la recherche d'une gestion plus durable.

Dans une utopie de l'IA, l'intervention du gouvernement serait la norme et la production privée l'exception. Le secteur privé pourrait corriger les échecs des pouvoirs publics ou les échecs collectifs, plutôt que le gouvernement n'aurait à corriger les défaillances du marché.

Imaginez un voyage dans le temps jusqu'en 2071, le centenaire des Emirats Arabes Unis. Un futur Raphaël Hythloday venant de Dubaï et visitant Anvers pourrait rapporter la dépêche suivante : Là où je vis, le gouvernement possède et exploite des machines qui produisent la plupart des biens et services nécessaires, ce qui permet aux gens de passer leur temps dans des activités de loisir, de créativité et dans des activités spirituelles. Tous les soucis au sujet de l'emploi et des taux d'imposition ont été relégués dans le passé. Ce monde pourrait également être le vôtre.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Garbage Overflow In The Streets Of Monrovia: The Impact On Human Health And The Environment.

By TaiyeeQuenneh, Ph.D.

The world has a garbage crisis. All nations generate an estimated 1.3 billion tons of garbage annually, and that number is expected to grow in the coming years. The United States, China, Brazil, Japan, and Germany account for the largest proportion of garbage generated, according to an LA Times story written by Ann Simmons. Overpopulation, urbanization, industrialization, the lack of regular trash collection and disposal are key drivers for the surging garbage crisis.

Middle to high-income countries like China, Brazil, Japan, Germany, and the United States can manage their garbage through an efficient collection and disposal system, coupled with bioconversion technologies that produce fuel for electricity generation. These countries are also able to collect and dispose of 90% of their waste. Unlike low-income countries, many of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, less than 30% of their waste is collected and disposed of. More than 2/3 of their waste is openly dumped.

What we are seeing in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, where garbage is swallowing up major streets and markets in Duala, West Point, Paynesville and other key parts of the city, is not an uncommon phenomenon; it is prevalent in Mombasa, Kenya, Lagos, Nigeria, and Beirut, Lebanon. The causes of this phenomenon cannot be separated from overpopulation, the lack of regular garbage collection and proper disposal. Monrovia was built to host less than 600,000 people. Now, more than 1.2 million people inhabit the city. The infrastructure (roads, sanitation, sewer system, electric grid, etc.) was built with limited consideration for population growth and urbanization. In addition to population dynamics, the lack of individual responsibility, the lack of a trash management system, limited or nonexistent regular trash collection and disposal, the unsustainable fix or Band-Aid solution that obscured Monrovia's garbage crisis in the last 13 years is now visible.

Liberia has to look within for solutions to this crisis. The country has to develop the inclination to pay the cost of cleaning after itself. Everyone pays for the cost to make phone calls. Everyone pays for the energy that lights up his or her home. Everyone pays for water for household use. Therefore, deferring the financial responsibility to clean up our waste to the sympathies of international donors is a poor strategy. Just as we pay for every other service we enjoy, let's pay to clean up our waste. The longer



Beirut, Lebanon

this crisis stays unsolved, the greater the risk it poses to human health and the environment.

Impact on human health and the environment

Exposure to bacteria and viruses

Open-air garbage exposure as seen in Monrovia today provides the perfect habitat for insects, bacteria, and vermin. The flies, rodents and stray dogs that scavenge the garbage sites also roam the neighborhoods. They come in contact with your food and water sources thus increasing the risk of contracting diseases like typhoid fever, enteric fever, food poisoning, gastroenteritis, and other illnesses.

The raining season compounds the health risk as well; garbage and liquid waste are flushed into waterways and drainage system which then seep into wells that serve as sources of drinking water in most communities in the city. The risk of contracting cholera, a bacterial disease that causes severe diarrhea and dehydration, increases as stormwater contaminates drinking water. The ecosystem is also affected as other hazardous household and commercial wastes enter nearby rivers and streams, poisoning water animals such as fish, crabs, scrimps, snail and "kiss meat."

Extreme caution must be taken to protect Monrovia City Corporation's staff who will be handling any cleanup efforts. They risk contracting skin and blood infections through existing wounds and from the bites of animals feeding on the waste.



The Author

Broken bottles, sharp objects, and other hazardous waste are potentially risky to waste collection staff.

Air pollution and respiratory diseases

Not only does the garbage emit bad smells, it also pollutes the air with toxic substances such as nitrous oxide, carbon dioxide, and methane. Breathing these substances can cause various respiratory diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), common cold, asthma, acute lower respiratory tract infections, and lung cancer. Children and the elderly are most susceptible to the derivatives of air pollution.

Black eye for Liberian tourism

Visitors and tourists like to visit clean and beautiful places to have fun and create memories. The beautiful the sites and scenes, the more money visitors and tourists will spend. That creates a huge benefit for local businesses and helps employment. On the other hand, a smelly city with piles of garbage all over the place is a repellent for both tourists and investors.

Liberia should use this garbage crisis and experience to create an efficient waste collection and management system. Do not wait until a molehill grows into a mountain.

About author

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Mombasa, Kenya

House seizes corruption fight

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives has announced the seizure of fight on retrieving monies reportedly belonging to government from individuals with immediate effect.

The decision of the committee came following public hearings on Monday, July 15, in the house's conference room on the grounds of the Capitol Building.

Making the disclosure, the committee's Chairman, Cllr. Jonathan FonatiKoffa, of Grand Kru County said that the seizure does not mean the house is putting hold on the entire exercise, instead, it indicates that the House of Representatives through the Judiciary Committee is closely monitoring process with keen interest.

Cllr. Koffa pointed out that the committee is paying key



House Speaker Dr. Bhofal Chambers

attention to the ongoing corruption fight launched by the solicitor general and the Liberian government, but added that the process should be done in lines with the Liberian Constitution.

The Grand Kru County

lawmaker noted that he has observed that the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and the Justice Ministry are not working together closely as anticipated in the fight against corruption.

He intimated that there's a

need for tension that is reportedly blowing between the two institutions to be handled before continuing with the prosecution.

Cllr. Koffa announced that his committee will next week invite officials of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to hear from them about the ongoing exercise and to seek professional opinion on the matter.

Earlier, the Solicitor General at the Justice Ministry told the hearings that the ministry was about to commence retrieving the monies from individuals who reportedly stole from government while serving in government.

Cllr. SyreniusCephus said that the government is working to ensure that stolen monies are retrieved legally, "there is no ocean, mountain, valley, and road that will appear difficult for the government in making sure that the nation's wealth are returned. The fight starts today, after the closed of this hearing," he said.

Cllr. Cephus further stated that there are billions of United States dollars in individuals' pockets that belong to the government and President George Manneh Weah and his team are relentlessly going after those individuals with consistent with the Liberian laws and statute.

Cllr. Cephus noted that the exercise under the banner of 'Assets Investigation, Recovering and Restitution Team comprising of the Justice Ministry and the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission is prepared to reaching every loom and corner in collecting funds intended for the state and its people.

The Liberian solicitor general said that his office has received 256 audit reports from the General Auditing Commission, of that figure; government had lost about

US\$4.6 billion to individual pockets through scandalous means according to the reports.

According to him, 15 of the audit reports are being reviewed by his office and other integral government institutions and that the 15 audit reports indicate that government lost about US\$400 million.

He added in order for his office and the entire prosecutorial arm of government to adequately perform in discharging its duties, US\$2.1 million is budgetary allotment needed for such task.

On June 18, 2019, Solicitor General Cephus made specific request for audit reports on the Executive Mansion Renovation; the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL) Sale of Oil Block 13 to ExxonMobile, the collapse of the National Oil Company of Liberia, the NASSCORP, and the Central Bank of Liberia Construction.

"As part of the mandate given us to practice and prosecute cases on behalf of the Government and people of Liberia, our attention is drawn to the wave of rampant corruption and misuse of public monies and assets by some government officials and private citizens aiding them," he asserted.

"In an effort to curb this economic epidemic, we have taken into consideration the need to review all GAC Audit Reports submitted to your august body for consideration," he stated in his communication.

The Assets Investigation, Recovering and Restitution Team comprising of the Justice Ministry and the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission is continuation of the solicitor general quest of battling corruption.

Zogoes plan demonstration

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

A group of less - fortunate youth under the banner the New Generation Organization in Gbarnga, Bong County has planned to stage serious demonstration in demand of justice for the alleged manhandling of their friend by a businessman called Puchue Harris.

"We will demonstrate. It will be very desperate if the Police do not quickly intervene and ensure the immediate arrest of suspect Harris," the head of the group Mr. Fofee Kamara told our correspondent in Gbarnga.

The less - fortunate youth also called Zogoes recently claimed that businessman Harris allegedly paid some unknown individuals to assault victim Prince Williams, one of their (Zogoes') members.

They claim that victim

Prince was ordered flogged for allegedly stealing some electrical wires from suspect Harris' business center.

But victim Prince has since denied stealing the wires in question.

The president of the less - fortunate youth Mr. Fofee Kamara told our correspondent in Gbarnga that Mr. Harris always allegedly paid unknown individuals to beat on members of less - fortunate youth organization.

He describes Harris' alleged action as very wicked.

"Puchue always in the constant habit of beating on people's children because he feels that the society they are in nobody can do anything to them," Mr. Kamara explains.

He reveals that the medical condition of one Sumo who was also allegedly manhandled on the alleged order of suspect Harris is also becoming terrible on a daily basis.

According to Kamara, Sumo

is allegedly urinating with blood and he is not hearing correctly.

Our Bong County correspondent says the situation has drawn the attention of the Liberia National Police (LNP) detachment in Bong County, and it has launched a man-hunt for suspect Harris' arrest.

Our correspondent notes that the head of the police detachment in Bong Supt. Fredrick Nappy has explained that the police had earlier arrested suspect Harris, but he escaped why they were preparing the charged sheet to forward him to Court.

According to Nappy, suspect Puchue is currently on the run and he is wanted by the Police in the County.

Additionally, Nappy says as soon Puchue Harris is arrested, he will be charged with attempted murder and aggravated assault.--Edited by Winston W. Parley



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Protocol officer charged with assault



Defendant Mrs. Musu Jensen Freeman



Victim Sunnyway Stewart with bruises

By Emmanuel Mondaye

A female staff of the protocol section at the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs Musu Jensen Freeman, has been charged with Disorderly Conduct, Aggravated Assault and Menacing by the Monrovia Magisterial Court at the Temple of Justice on Capitol Hill.

A writ of arrest from the court dated 8 July says private prosecutrix Madam Sunnyway Stewart, through the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) appears and complains under

oath that the defendant, said to be a resident of Jallah Town, Monrovia, on 8th July during morning hours with the intent to place private prosecutrix in fear and cause her serious public inconvenience jumped on her, beat, battled and cut her face, neck, and right hand finger, using a razor blade thereby, causing her to sustain bodily pain coupled with death threat.

The writ, signed by the Assistant Clerk of Court Pewee M. Zayzay discloses that the alleged act of the defendant being unlawful, wicked, illegal

and intentional violates section 14.21, 14.25 and 17.3 of the New Panel Law of Liberia.

The defendant, the writ explains, appeared before the court and was released on bail to re-appear Thursday, 18 July for further examination of the case.

Complainant Sunnyway Stewart was taken to a local hospital for medication for wounds sustained at the hand of defendant Freeman during the incident. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

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Griezmann undergoes medical tests as Barcelona career begins

Antoine Griezmann began the formalities of fitness and medical tests on his first day of pre-season as a Barcelona player on Sunday.

The World Cup winner visited his new club's training ground for routine examinations a day after arriving in Catalonia.

Griezmann, 28, joined Barca on a five-year deal after the LaLiga champions triggered his €120million release clause at Atletico



Madrid.

His next official duty will be to meet the media for a photo session and news conference before training begins on Monday.

Ernesto Valverde is expected to run the rule over more than a dozen first-team players, including €75m acquisition Frenkie de Jong, with one eye on the upcoming trip to Japan.

Barca face Chelsea and local club Vissel Kobe, now home to Andreas Iniesta, on July 23 and 27 respectively.

Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, Philippe Coutinho and the Blaugrana's other Copa America representatives will not be present for the start of pre-season training, having been afforded additional time to recuperate.

Coutinho's future remains uncertain amid claims from his agent that Barca are attempting to offload the Brazil international to Paris Saint-Germain in exchange for Neymar.

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