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Continental News

South African corruption fighter seen amplifying ANC battles

To allies of President Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's anti-corruption watchdog is a wrecking ball who is abusing her office and could derail efforts to clean up government and turn the economy around. To Ramaphosa's opponents, she is holding the country's top officials to account without fear or favor.

BusisiweMkhwebane, who was plucked from relative obscurity when she was appointed public protector in 2016, denies playing politics. She says some of her most attention-grabbing investigations were the result of complaints raised by members of the opposition, which she has a duty to scrutinize.

But her recommendations for disciplinary action against Ramaphosa and one of his closest allies, public enterprises minister Pravin Gordhan, have placed

her at the center of a bitter power rivalry in the governing African National Congress (ANC) between supporters of the president and his scandal-plagued predecessor Jacob Zuma.

Political analysts warn that

the powers of Mkhwebane's office, which played an important role in keeping Zuma in check, can just as easily be used to settle political scores.

The public protector has authority enshrined in the

constitution to investigate alleged wrongdoing by public officials and demand remedial action.

Because Ramaphosa and others are bound to comply, the consequences of her investigations can be far-reaching. One danger, analysts say, is that Mkhwebane will tie up Ramaphosa and his allies with questionable investigations, which will take them months to fight in the

courts.

"The public protector is polarising politics and exacerbating factionalism in the ANC," said Ebrahim Fakir, an analyst at the Johannesburg-based Auwal Socio-Economic Research Institute.

"She could distract Ramaphosa from critical tasks like creating jobs and attracting investment." - Reuters



FILE PHOTO: Public Protector BusisiweMkhwebane listens during a briefing at Parliament in Cape Town

Ghana 'exports rosewood timber illegally to China'

About six million rosewood trees have been cut down in Ghana for illegal export to China since 2012, an environmental group says.

The rare species, which takes 100 years to grow, is mostly used to make imperial-style furniture in China.

The report blames corrupt officials in Ghana for forging documents to allow the wood to leave the country.

Ghana's information

ministry has not yet responded to the BBC's request for comment.

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) said in a report that the illegal trade and felling of rosewood trees has continued despite a ban being in place since 2012 and which has since been tightened.

Ghana and other West African countries are the victims of China's insatiable and unchecked demand for rosewood, the EIA said.

"Since 2012, over 540,000 tons of rosewood - the equivalent of 23,478 twenty-foot containers or approximately six million trees - were illegally harvested and imported into China from Ghana while bans on harvest and trade have been in place," the group added.

Investigations found "a massive institutionalised timber trafficking scheme, enabled by high-level corruption and collusion", it said.

The campaign group also said that logging was contributing to the desertification crisis in Ghana.

It called for the trade in rosewood to be suspended across the West African region and for China to comply with international agreements on endangered species.

Rosewood is supposed to be protected by Cites, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, but the EIA says this protection is not enough.

In May, Gabon fired its vice-president and minister of forestry after 300 containers of kevazingo, also known as African rosewood, went missing. -BBC



Image copyright AFP: Rosewood trees grow across West Africa

Mauritania releases jailed 'blasphemy' blogger

Nouakchott (AFP) - Mauritania has released a blogger who drew international attention after being accused of blasphemy, his lawyer and the campaign group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said Tuesday.

CheikhOuld Mohamed OuldMkheitir, 36, had been initially sentenced to death but was then given a jail term on appeal.

He remained in detention despite having already served the sentence -- a situation that sparked a chorus of protest from rights groups.

"(He) was released yesterday

Mauritania in late 2016 and left for France via Senegal.

The French foreign ministry declined to comment on whether it was possible that Mkheitir might join them there.

RSF Secretary General Christophe Deloire said in a statement: "We are deeply relieved that he has finally been freed after being held for more than five and a half years in almost total isolation."

"For nothing more than a social network post, he was subjected to a terrible ordeal that violated a decision by his own country's judicial system. This blogger was francophone Africa's longest-held citizen-



A November 2017 decision by a Mauritanian appeals court to lessen Mkheitir's sentence to a two-year jail term sparked protests in the conservative nation (AFP Photo/STR)

from the place where he was under house arrest... (but) is not completely free in his movements," his attorney FatimataMbaye told AFP.

Mkheitir "is no longer in Nouakchott,"

the Mauritanian capital, Mbaye said, without giving further details.

A security official in neighbouring Senegal, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed Senegalese press reports that Mkheitir had entered the country on Monday.

Relatives of Mkheitir said his parents, fearing for their lives, had sold their possessions in

journalist."

Mkheitir's release came in the final days of the presidency of Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who had previously argued that to free Mkheitir would endanger the blogger as well as the public.

- Death sentence -

Mkheitir was sentenced to death for blasphemy in December 2014 after he wrote a blog that challenged decisions taken by the Prophet Mohammed and his companions during holy wars in the seventh century.

He repented after being given that sentence, prompting

EDITORIAL

Our students can do better

THE LIBERIA NATIONAL Office of the West African Examinations Council has released provisional results of the 2019 West African Senior School Certificate Examination or WASSCE for school candidates with this year's performance of candidates rated high above the previous year.

THIS IS WELCOME news, which indicates that Liberian students can ably write the regional examinations just as their colleagues in member countries, only if the requisite topics are taught by school authorities.

THE LIBERIA NATIONAL Office transitioned from the Liberia Senior High School Certificate Examination (LSHSCE) to WASSCE a year ago, making us the last country to get on par with the rest of the five Anglophone countries that make up the West African Examination Council or WAEC.

ACCORDING TO THE Head of the Liberia National Office Dale Gboto, "the 2019 candidates performed better than their counterparts in 2018 in all nine subjects taken for WASSCE for the period 2018-2019."

THE RESULTS SHOULD instill confidence in both students and teachers across the country to remain restless until total excellence is achieved in our educational system.

WE EXTEND A very big thanks to the Minister of Education Ansusonii, for vigorously initiating compulsory tutorial classes for all 12th graders across the country prior to the examination, which no doubt, helped in improvement of students' performance.

NOTWITHSTANDING, WE CALL on school authorities to establish standard science laboratories in their various institutions to adequately prepare students (12th graders) for the annual examination. This would also require employing qualified teachers and paying them well.

AS A NATION, it is not just enough to denigrate our students and make them feel inferior to basic academic works, especially the sciences. We must provide them learning materials and ensure they absolve their lessons by offering them tutorials.

THUMP UP TO Head of Office Dale Gboto and his entire staff at WAEC for the progress thus far. Mr. Gboto braved the storms and advocated for Liberia to get on par with member countries by introducing the WASSCE, at a time many educational authorities in the country thought the was not right.

WE BELIEVE SINCERELY if our students could do better in this year's examination than last year's, they can attain best and excellent in coming years to make the nation proud.

The New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

COMMENTARY

Who Will Win the Twenty-First Century?

For years, Europeans were lulled into thinking that the peace and prosperity of the immediate post-Cold War period would be self-sustaining. But, two decades into the twenty-first century, it is clear that the Old Continent miscalculated and now must catch up to the digital revolution.

BERLIN - The first two decades of the twenty-first century are beginning to cast a long shadow over the Western world. We have come a long way since the turn of the century, when people everywhere, but particularly in Europe, indulgently embraced the "end of history."

According to that illusory notion, the West's victory in the Cold War - the last of the three great wars of the twentieth century - had given rise to a global order for which there could be no alternatives. Thenceforth, it was thought, world history would march steadily toward the universalization of Western-style democracy and the market economy. The new century would merely be a continuation of the previous one, with a triumphant West extending its dominion.

The world is wiser now. The web of alliances and institutions that sustained the West's dominance is proving to be a product of the twentieth century, its future now in doubt. The global order is undergoing a fundamental change, as its center of gravity shifts from the North Atlantic to the Pacific and East Asia. China is on the threshold - economically, technologically, and politically - of becoming a world power and the sole challenger of the incumbent hegemon, the United States.

At the same time, the US is growing tired of its global leadership role. It began to step back under former President Barack Obama; but under Donald Trump, it has accelerated its withdrawal in a chaotic and dangerous manner. America's abdication of leadership poses a threat to the very existence of the transatlantic West, which rests on a foundation of shared values and political institutions. In the absence of any reasonable alternatives, the structure is crumbling.

Russia, meanwhile, is confronting the future by looking to its twentieth-century past. Like the Soviet Union, it is placing its bets entirely on nuclear weapons. Yet in the twenty-first century, power will be determined not by one's nuclear arsenal, but by a wider spectrum of technological capabilities based on digitization. Those who aren't at the forefront of artificial intelligence (AI) and Big Data will inexorably become dependent on, and ultimately controlled by, other powers. Data and technological sovereignty, not nuclear warheads, will determine the global distribution of power and wealth in this century. And in open societies, the same factors will also decide the future of democracy.

As for Europe, the Old Continent entered the new century in anything but optimal form. Living under the cozy post-historical illusion of everlasting peace, the European Union failed to complete the project of integration (though it did manage to expand eastward). The implicit withdrawal of the US security guarantee under Trump has struck Europe like a bolt from the blue.

The same could be said for the digital

revolution. The first phase of digitization - consumer-facing platforms - has been led almost entirely by the US and China. There are no competitive European platform firms to speak of, nor are there any European cloud-computing companies capable of keeping up with the behemoths in Silicon Valley and China.

The most important issue facing the new European Commission, then, is Europe's lack of digital sovereignty. Europe's command of AI, Big Data, and related technologies will determine its overall competitiveness in the twenty-first century. But Europeans must decide who will own the data needed to achieve digital sovereignty, and what conditions should govern its collection and use. These questions will determine the fate of democracy in Europe, and whether the Old Continent's future will be one of prosperity or decline. As such, they must be decided at the European level, not by individual nation-states. Equally important, these questions must be answered now. Europe needs to get the digital ball rolling - or be run over by it.

In the years ahead, automotive design and manufacturing, mechanical engineering, medicine, defense, energy, and private households will all be disrupted by digital technologies. The data generated from these sectors will largely be processed through the cloud, which means that control of the cloud will be vital to countries' long-term economic and strategic fortunes.

To safeguard its digital sovereignty, Europe will need to make massive investments in cloud-computing capacity and the other physical resources underpinning the digital revolution. Europe has been far too slow and indecisive in this respect. Its challenge now is to catch up to the US and China, lest it be left behind permanently.

Europeans should not harbor any illusions that the private sector will take care of things on its own. Europe's competitive disadvantage calls for a fundamental change in strategy at the highest level. The EU institutions will have to lead on setting regulations and, together with the member states, on providing the necessary financing. But securing Europe's digital sovereignty will require a much broader effort, involving businesses, researchers, and politicians.

Following the recent 50th anniversary of the first Moon landing, there has been much media discussion about a potential manned flight to Mars. For Europe, though, space travel can wait. The top priority must be to establish and safeguard digital sovereignty, and to do whatever is necessary to arrest its own decline and protect democracy. For better or worse, the twenty-first century is well underway.

OP-ED

By Lee Jong-Wha

Populism Takes Asia

SEOUL - The rise of populism across the West in recent years has been the subject of countless discussions, and for good reason: populists' misguided policies often have severely adverse political and economic consequences. Now, those risks are coming to Asia.

There is no straightforward definition of populism. It may be ideological, economic, social, or cultural. It may reflect left-wing or right-wing views. And it is often interpreted in a country-specific context.

But populism's various iterations tend to share common features. Populist parties are typically led by a charismatic individual, who pits "the corrupt elite" and "outsiders" against "the people," whose true will the populist purports to represent. This approach is most effective at times when the public is deeply frustrated with established leaders or political parties, owing to deepening economic and social disparities, rising insecurity, or overt corruption.

Once in power, however, populists end up making matters much worse. For starters, they frequently undermine the fundamental institutions of representative democracy, including the systems of checks and balances that restrain institutional excesses and prevent abuses of power. They claim that these institutions impede their ability to serve "the people."

In Latin America, Bolivia's Evo Morales, Colombia's Álvaro Uribe, and Venezuela's Hugo Chávez used referenda to implement major constitutional reforms that extended presidential term limits and constrained opposition parties, the judiciary, and media. As a result, rule of law and institutional quality deteriorated.

Populists' economic track records are similarly grim. A populist economic policy, according to the economists Rudi Dornbusch and Sebastián Edwards, mostly "emphasizes growth and income distribution," without regard for "the risks of inflation and deficit finance, external constraints, and the reaction of economic agents to aggressive nonmarket policies." It thus leads to weakening investment, economic efficiency, and productivity growth - trends that hurt the majority in the long run. The economic crises that many Latin American countries experienced in the 1970s and 1980s resulted from this dynamic.

Although today's populists are not pursuing wildly expansionary macroeconomic policies, they still rely on fiscal stimulus and government intervention in markets. For example, while US President Donald Trump preaches fiscal discipline, the combination of higher spending and lower revenues (owing especially to the massive tax cut for corporations enacted in 2017) is blowing up the federal budget deficit. Likewise, Trump advocates protectionist trade policies.

And yet, despite the damage populists have done in the West, Asian voters are increasingly falling victim to their blandishments. India's Narendra Modi, Indonesia's Joko Widodo, and the Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte can attest to that.

To be sure, populism is not a new phenomenon for Asia. In the Philippines, Joseph Estrada won the 1998 presidential election by presenting himself a defender of the poor - an image that was buttressed by his acting experience playing heroes of the lower classes. But while he did implement extensive poverty-reduction programs, most of them had little impact, not least because they were weighed down by pork-barrel politics.

Similarly, Thaksin Shinawatra, a self-made telecommunications mogul, became Thailand's prime minister in 2001, thanks to his carefully cultivated image as one of "the people," especially the rural poor. Once in power, he, too, implemented pro-poor policies, including universal health care; but design flaws led to surging deficits and low-quality services. Facing a raft of corruption charges, he was ousted by the military in 2006. And yet he remains highly popular among Thailand's poor.

But it is primarily cultural grievances that are driving support for today's crop of Asian populists. As Dani Rodrik has observed, in parts of Europe and the United States, powerful cultural trends - such as urbanization and "post-materialism" (the embrace of secularism, personal autonomy, and diversity) - are making older, socially conservative people feel like strangers in their own land.

This sense fuels support for populists, for whom "the people" are members of a native group, who must be defended against an out-group of immigrants, criminals, ethnic and religious minorities, and cosmopolitan elites. Concepts like religious traditionalism, law and order, and national sovereignty provide a useful pretext for discriminatory policies, like Trump's (legally dubious) immigration crackdown.

It is this type of cultural populism that has taken hold in Asia. Duterte sustains his popularity by casting criminals as enemies of the people. And, because enemies must be eliminated, extrajudicial killings of suspected drug users and dealers - nearly 5,000 at the hands of law enforcement from July 1, 2016 to September 30, 2018 - strengthen law and order. Modi's Hindu nationalism enabled his Bharatiya Janata Party to increase its parliamentary majority in this spring's elections, despite his government's failure to fulfill its promises to voters.

Now, Northeast Asia is being swept up by the populist tide. South Korean President Moon Jae-in was elected in 2017 by voters disgusted with the political establishment's collusion with business elites and failure to respond to their needs. His administration has pursued populist economic policies, including sharp increases in the minimum wage and social welfare expenditures.

A recent Asian Barometer Survey shows that citizens in Hong Kong and Taiwan, like those in South Korea, harbor high levels of anti-establishment sentiment and frustration with economic inequality. Conditions are thus ripe for populism to flourish.

To mitigate the populist risk, responsible Asian leaders must work to strengthen democratic institutions' resilience against potential disrupters, while ensuring that voters are informed about populism's dismal track record. Most important, they must take the wind out of the populists' sails by pursuing economic-development strategies focused on inclusive growth. Only by credibly addressing citizens' economic grievances can Asian leaders prevent their countries from falling prey to false promises and exploitation of cultural insecurities.

OPINION

By Hans-Werner Sinn

The End of ECB Restraint

MUNICH - Expectations - and, for many economists, rather bad ones - have been confirmed: the European Central Bank has decided to inflate the eurozone. Following the ECB's latest policy meeting on July 25, outgoing President Mario Draghi made it clear that the bank's seemingly harmless inflation target of 1.9% will in fact be the basis for a new phase of expansionary monetary policy over the next few years. This will go well beyond the ECB's stimulus measures to date, and is likely to pose further risks to the European economy.

We should remember that the Maastricht Treaty assigned the ECB the single, non-negotiable goal of maintaining stable prices, which, if taken literally, would mean an inflation rate of zero. This is very different from the mandate given to other central banks. The introduction of the euro, however, caused interest rates in southern Europe to fall, leading to an inflationary bubble that raised annual price growth to well over 2% in some countries. The ECB's Governing Council then argued that the goal of price stability could not be achieved exactly, and also pointed to several measurement errors that complicate policymaking. So, the authorities said, they would tolerate average inflation of up to 2% for the eurozone as a whole.

The Governing Council did not fancy a restrictive monetary policy aimed at reducing inflation, as it gave only little weight to the risk of reducing competitiveness in some countries and did not want to slow down countries in stagnation such as Germany.

Then came the euro crisis. With inflation plummeting, the ECB turned the still-tolerable upper limit for the inflation rate into its target. Suddenly, it was argued, the bank would seek to achieve inflation of "close to, but below 2%." Draghi even went before the television cameras to claim in all seriousness that this was the ECB's mandate.

And now, at the end of his term of office, Draghi is seeking to bind his successor, Christine Lagarde, to a Council decision that will force her to aim for 1.9% inflation with a symmetrical concern about potential deviations. In plain language, this means that the ECB will try to achieve this figure on average over time, netting out future above-average inflation rates with below-average inflation in recent years.

In seeking to justify the ECB's new phase of expansionary monetary policy, Draghi referred several times to the rapidly deteriorating situation in Europe's manufacturing sector. He wants monetary policy to come to the aid of a more expansive fiscal policy needed to revitalize the European economy.

Here, Draghi was probably mainly focusing on Germany, whose manufacturing sector has been in recession since the summer of 2018. And the ifo Business Climate Index, published on the same day that Draghi announced the ECB's new policy, added to the pile of bad economic news. It appears that the years of plenty for German industry are probably over for now. Looming Brexit, US President Donald Trump's imminent imposition of tariffs on more European goods, and the European Union's new CO2 directive (which will require electric cars to account for one-half or more of some carmakers' output by 2030), are significantly increasing costs for German (and European) industry.

But monetary and fiscal expansion in the eurozone cannot help the many manufacturing firms that do most of their business globally these days. Moreover, domestic demand in the eurozone is strong. Construction is booming in most countries, demand for services is strong, and wages are increasing rapidly, as Draghi noted with approval. Introducing further stimulus measures on top of that would create additional cost pressures that will make life even harder for firms facing both tough international competition in goods markets and domestic competition in labor markets. Stimulating the non-traded goods sectors through cheap credit typically incurs negative factor market effects for the traded goods sectors that are similar to those fueling the so-called Dutch disease - a term referring to the problems of Dutch manufacturers in the 1970s after gas revenues rapidly elevated the wage level.

Draghi complained in his speech that the passthrough of rising wages to prices was insufficient. But more wage pressure and increased passthrough would be poison for the global competitiveness of the manufacturing sector. It is not convincing to use the weakness of German manufacturing as an argument for looser monetary policy, for such policy will primarily stimulate those sectors that are in competition with manufacturing, such as construction and government.

True, industry must innovate to maintain its competitiveness, especially in turbulent economic times. But this will require measures that go far beyond the policy toolbox so revered by the New Keynesians who now populate central banks and international institutions. Europe needs structural policies that liberate market forces rather than continuing a policy of sustaining zombies and financing a new housing bubble and over-indebted government sectors with ever-cheaper credit. These sectors will not enable sustained economic growth for the continent.

Nor is it clear where the ECB will find the ammunition for the new battle it wants to fight. In the past four years, the bank has increased its money stock from €1.2 trillion (\$1.3 trillion) to €3.2 trillion. It has bought securities worth another €2.6 trillion, including €2.1 trillion of public sector bonds - a policy that is in conflict with article 123 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. And interest rates are currently zero and negative.

All this is adventurous enough. If the ECB now wants to go even further, Europe's economic system could become weaker and less sustainable.

PERSPECTIVES PERSPECTIVES

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

POLI-TRICKS

THE ADULTERATION OF POLITICS HAS CAPTURED THE ADMIRATION EFFECTIVE INDULGENCE IN AND COMMITMENT BY LIBERIA'S YOUNG GENERATION OF LEADERS: ALTHOUGH POLITICS IS THE HIGHEST VIRTUOUS CALLING/VOCATION BECAUSE OF ITS DEDICATION TO ACHIEVEMENT OF THE HIGHEST GOAL IN LIFE BY HUMAN ACTION – HAPPINESS.

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr. August 29, 2018

Introduction

The first, ancient Greek Philosopher to write on a wide range of subjects, including Ethics and Politics and to whom western Learning and academic Thought owe its greatness, Aristotle (384-322 BCE) argued that the proper, correct approach for study of what is just, beautiful and higher understanding is to begin with people of good up-bringing and experience in life to gain higher understanding.

Based upon this approach, Aristotle held and argued that the highest good for humans, the highest aim of all human practical thinking and endeavor are socio-economic and political "well-being and happiness" and that *Politics* is the highest, virtuous calling/profession because it is ordained, dedicated and committed to the achievement of the highest, greatest goal of good well-being or happiness in life by human action (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*).

Almost all later thinker-philosophers on *Politics, Economics, Theology, History, etc.*, particularly, such authors as John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emmanuel Kante, Thomas Aquinas, David Ricardo, John Kenneth Galbraith, Milton Friedman, etc. were influenced by Aristotle although they improved upon (explained) and perfected the virtuous qualities/theory of *Nicomachean Ethics*. But...

What do we mean by "adulteration of Politics"?

We define this phrase by the following: *Debase virtuous politics by introducing inferior, counterfeit arguments to falsify, corrupt, spoil, water down, weaken, dilute, bastardize, contaminate and pollute politics as an honest, truthful moral calling and the public standing of just and honorable personalities to achieve evil deeds in an effort to gain economic, personal and public benefits against the interests of the majority.*

We Argue

In the following pages, we flirt with the virtuous qualities of politics as the highest vocation in life and Politicians as the virtuous individuals that are committed to achievement of the highest goal by human action in the following manner, that:

- *Politics is the highest vocation because it is dedicated to achievement of the highest goal in life by human action - Happiness;*
- *Politicians possess excellent, enviable character of truth, honesty, caring for others, self-less and committed to the welfare of state and its citizens, the people;*
- *Politicians are courageous, determined, open, free, fair, reachable, loyal and patriotic; they are leaders, not followers; teachers, not leaners;*
- *Politicians are not con men & women; they are not crooks, liars, thieves, bandits or rascals;*
- *Politicians are not politically-connected lawyers or wheeler-dealers who accept corrupt "brown envelopes" for "conflict of interest" services;*
- *Politicians do not buy votes, nor use bags of imported rice, Party T-shirts, lappa suits and minimum of Liberian dollars for votes in the*

ghetto-slums of the City of Monrovia and elsewhere populated by hungry, un-employed and un-educated young Liberians who cannot read nor write their own names;

- Politicians who are members of the National Legislature are *Lawmakers and law-abiding; as such, they are not citizens of foreign countries and that they do not demand and receive bribes to change the nation's laws to please foreign companies;*
- Politicians who are Law-Lawmakers do not demand "cold water" or "kola" for confirmation of political nominees; for, such a demand is a bribe and unlawful;
- Politicians who are Law-Lawmakers do not demand payment labelled "Lobbying fees", or under any name, for ratification of treaties, agreements, etc., because lawmakers are paid for this kind of their work. This demand and receipt thereof, are unlawful; and
- *"Politics", the vocation of virtuous qualities dedicated to the achievement of the highest objective in life, is not "Poli-tricks".*

the nation which arose and continue to arise between and among individuals, farmers, communities and Counties (regional, political/administrative subdivisions) due to denial of Traditional, Customary Land Tenure Rights and deficient boundary demarcations, exacerbated by elements of the recent civil war tragedy (Kaba, 2010).

This Land, its People, Government and the Immigrant/Settlers

When the Settlers, arrived on this land mass, now known as Liberia, they met, recognized and accepted a People, their people, and a Polity or a system of government of Tribal Chiefs and Kings - *Chiefdoms & Kingdoms* - with laws and socio-cultural, traditional practices that regulated and governed their activities in peace and security, although with some level of differences from tribe to tribe. However, according to these laws and traditional norms and practices, land was owned and held in common by all citizens of the Chiefdoms/Kingdoms living in villages and towns, without personal rights of land possession/ownership. This approach was mutually agreed, accepted and binding, based on what the Settlers, our Forefathers, termed as "*building upon what existed*", known then and now, as "*Customary Land Tenure*".

Origin of Land Ownership Conflicts, Confusions & Disputes

The challenge to Liberian Aboriginal Title was discovered and disclosed later, that out of the eighty-three (83) Articles prepared by and originated from the Immigrant-settlers, only two (2) articles addressed the issue of Customary Land Tenure out of the 1923-1936 Conferences of the Settlers and the Tribal Chiefs/Kings, at Suehn-Mecca Chiefdom.

Although this was an attempt by the Immigrant-Settlers to "*order their own colonial relationship*" with native lands", but the prescriptions laid down and agreed upon by both the indigenous "native chiefs" and immigrant-settlers were based upon customary practice and that the deceptive attempt was clearly in violation of the Immigrant-Settlers' own "*building upon what existed*", an expressed recognition of the existing, tribal customs and traditions, as expressed, also, by the Hinterland Law of 1949.

The Law (*Hinterland Law of 1949*) provides "*right and title*" to tribal lands and, thus, *absolute ownership rights to indigenous Liberians*. But the *Aborigine Law of 1956*, an apparent revision of 1949, made fundamental changes by providing only "*rights of use and possession*", rather than "*ownership*" without consultation of or input by the indigenous, land owners.

In this way, the legal status of rural, indigenous Liberians and their communities was, and is, *landless tenants of the Liberian state or squatters on land that they own and held, based upon traditional, customary law, for more than the-then 109-year history of the Republic of Liberia*.

Now the Objective Case in Point - "Poli-Tricks"- of Nation-wide disputes

This contradiction was an apparent design to introduce and apply the notion of "*territorial sovereignty*" held by European, colonial states over and from real, "*collective ownership*" of land owned by African, indigenous peoples and their communities.



Liberian Political Enterprise

The Liberian Political enterprise of a century and half history since 1847 had been, and still is, morally decadent. Graft, Greed and public/private dishonesty rose to new exponential heights with a Culture of Impunity.

The Economic/Financial Position of the administration of retired President Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf inherited by the current President George Weah and dominated by loyalist/appointees of the retired President is ranked as the most corrupt and dishonest government/nation in world comparative analysis by International Economic/Financial Experts and worldwide watch-dog Specialists.

Moreover, the 12-year reign of Mrs. Sirleaf supported by the "International Community" as its *Puppet President* had been, and is, overwhelmingly condemned by the Liberian People for her alleged war crimes and historic acts of massive economic/financial corruption, second to none in the history of Liberia.

Now the Case in Point

One of the prevailing, critical issues at hand in Liberia is the denial of Traditional, Customary Land Tenure Rights. Historically, there had been, and still is, massive conflicts, confusions and disputes throughout

ARTICLE

Leymah Gbowee 172nd Independence Day Speech: “A Reality that Lacks Gratitude”.

After carefully going through the speech of this year's orator for our 172nd Independence Day anniversary, on the theme “Together We Are Stronger”, it is indeed worth acknowledging the effort she made in presenting a vivid view from a cross-section of our country on issues that are hindering the strength of our nation.

Her novel insight on the stratification of politics in Liberia that has been crafted by our so-called politicians over the years and perhaps unconsciously being lived and practiced by the populace especially those with the partisan mentality cannot be overemphasized but recognize with keenness as an underlying threat to our nascent democracy and socioeconomic development. Her speech was undeniably filled with ongoing realities that our society is entangled with daily.

She asserted receiving emails from individuals on diverse thematic concerns, ranging from how to be a good Christian to domestic violence issues, to speak the truth and to do the typical “Leymah-style speech, straight from the heart”. All of these sound good and beautiful but the truth always encapsulates everything both the good and the bad or ugly. The truth always remains holistic and balance! In her attempt to present the “truth” to Liberians, she forgot to appreciate and perhaps point out the gradual but steady signs of progress we are making as a nation. All is not “black and white” in Liberia, there are also other colors that are keeping us hopeful about the “new Liberia” we all envisage.

When Liberians in Liberia converge in cities, towns, villages, communities, and homes, while others around the globe get much closer to their televisions or various social media platforms to listen to a national orator on the nation's independence anniversary, they are doing so in the spirit of patriotism and nationalism. Attention given to such auspicious national event by the citizenry either strengthen their sense of belongingness or diminishes their commitment to Mama Liberia depending on the orator's message for the people on that day.

This year's independence day anniversary message seems to portray and unfold the truth about current happenings in our nation's history as was mentioned early especially with regards to its political status but it lacks gratitude about the immediate past and present progresses our country is making to uplift Liberians out of poverty to prosperity. It is conspicuous that over the months we have been challenged with harsh economic situations as a people and nation but this cannot blindfold us from identifying the ongoing signs of progress we are making in some areas like security, human resource development, infrastructural and road development, and others...all in the interest of Liberia.

Making Liberia's better and stronger also requires speaking with optimism about Liberia. For instance, a categorical remark like “...no form of justice” undermines the current reforms that are taking place in our judicial system and the continuous effort made by the Gender Ministry and other national and local groups in cropping gender-based violence in the country.

It is about the steady but progressive positive changes that are ongoing in our beloved Country-Liberia, of which many, if not nothing were mentioned to Liberians and the world at large; that ‘something good is coming out of Liberia’. Therefore, I vehemently say without any external force or interior motive nor political alliance, that the “172nd Independence Day Anniversary Speech” delivered by Madam LeymahGbowee lacks the substance and ingredients of gratitude to re-enforce the hope of Liberians and renew their love and commitment to Mama Liberia in the spirit of patriotism at this critical juncture in the nation's history.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Take the lead for your people

-Lawmaker urges colleagues

By Ramsey N. Singbeh, Jr in Margibi

Bong County District #6 Representative Moima Briggs Mensah urges her colleagues

to make the ultimate sacrifice by using some of their salaries to make meaningful contributions in their constituencies to put smiles on the faces of their people, while waiting for county development funds and legislative funds.

She says a little contribution by each lawmaker would make big difference in improving living conditions of the people they represent.

Representative Mensah made the urge on July 26, 2019 in Konoyea Clan, Salala District in Bong County when she dedicated two mini- town halls in Kototo and Foday's Town respectively, thru her personal funding.

During the dedication, the

lawmaker notes that in some of the bigger towns and villages in her district, people used churches to host political discussions and settle disputes, which she says is not appropriate.

The only female legislator in Bong explains the dedication was done in support of government's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development or PAPD.

"The fact is that we are part of the Liberian government, if they succeed, we succeed. It is our own business to push the agenda in our own little ways to put smiles on our people's faces."

In a related development, youth and women groups, elders, chiefs and zoes from the county laud Representative Mensah for the projects in their areas, not that that they did not believe that after failed promises by many politicians, Mensah would have done the town halls. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

4A1506/EP/026

Utility Training Consultant (UTC) for the Implementation of Training at Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC)

Background and Context

The United States of America, acting through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (“MCC”) and the Government of Liberia (the “Government” or “GoL”) have entered into a Millennium Challenge Compact for Millennium Challenge Account assistance to help facilitate poverty reduction through economic growth in Liberia (the “Compact”) in the amount of approximately 256,726,000 USD (“MCC Funding”). The Government, acting through Millennium Challenge Account - Liberia (the “MCA Entity”), intends to apply a portion of the MCC Funding to eligible payments under a contract for which this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is issued.

MCA-Liberia now invites proposals from legally constituted consulting firms to provide the consultant services referenced above (“Proposals”). More details on these consultant services are provided in the Terms of Reference and the RFP. The RFP is open to all eligible entities (“Consultants”) who wish to respond. Subject to restrictions noted in the RFP, consultants may associate with other consultants to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the assignment.

This RFP is for:

Utility Training Consultant (UTC) for the Implementation of Training at Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC)

How to Participate in the Process:

Interested consulting firms/businesses should send an email to MCALiberiaPA@cardno.com requesting a copy of the RFP, which is free of charge.

Important activities and dates:

| No. | Activity | Dates |
|-----|--|--|
| 1 | Release of RFP | July 24, 2019 |
| 2 | Pre-Proposal Conference | August 9, 2019 at 2:15pm (Liberia Time) |
| 3 | Last date for questions/clarifications | August 9, 2019 |
| 4 | MCA Response to Questions/Clarifications | August 23, 2019 |
| 5 | Deadline for Proposals Submission | September 13, 2019 at 2:30 pm (Liberia Time) |
| 6 | Proposal Opening | September 13, 2019 at 3:30 pm (Liberia Time) |

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

NEC prepares for Cape Mount by-election

The National Elections Commission or NEC acknowledges receipt of notification from the National Legislature to conduct senatorial by-election in Grand Cape

County, western Liberia.

NEC Chairman Cllr. Jerome George Korkoya, making the disclosure on OK FM, says a technical committee has been set up headed by Commissioner Dukuly to plan the Cape Mount by-election.



Speaking Tuesday, July 30, Chairman Korkoya did not give a specific date for the pending senatorial by-election but says the NEC is working on a budget to present formally to the government for the poll.

The pending by-election is to fill a vacant seat created by the recent death of Senator Edward B. Dagoseh died on June 1st in Monrovia, following a protracted sickness. He chaired the Committee on Ways, Means and Finance of the Liberian Senate up to his home-going.

Liberia has lost two senators and one representative this year, the former as a result of sickness and the latter in a car crash.

Meanwhile, the NEC will today announce provisional results of Monday's (July 29) senatorial and representative by-elections in Montserrado County, according to Chairman Korkoya. -Story by Jonathan Browne

Regional, monitoring officers end training in Gompa

A four-day result-base management training for Regional Development Officers and County Monitoring Officers climaxed over the weekend in Gompa city, Nimba County.

According to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the training was held under the Theme: Strengthening data collection platform for PAPD monitoring and evaluation to enhance reporting on SDGs and the Agenda 2063 Implementation Readiness.

The Ministry notes that the goal of the training is to strengthen Regional Development Officers and County Monitoring Officers' capacity in planning, data collection and reporting on the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) at the county level.

The exercise was organized and conducted by the Department of Budget and Development Planning with support from the United Nations International Children's Education Funds or UNICEF.

It brought together nine (9) Regional Development Officers and fifteen (15) County Monitoring Officers from all 15 counties along with directors and assistant directors to discuss how to strengthen data collection

platform for the PAPD monitoring and evaluation to enhance reporting on SDGs and the Agenda 2063.

Making remarks, Assistant Minister for Development Planning, Benedict Kolubah notes that the workshop will help to enhance regional development officers and

and County Monitoring Officers at the sub-national level will understand various roles in the coordination's process of the implementation of the PAPD, the importance of reporting especially PAPD progress report and understanding result based management framework, activities, output,



county monitoring officers understanding of the PAPD M&E Framework as well as acquire additional skills needed to support county administrations, ministries, and agencies in coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the PAPD at the sub-national level.

According to him at the end of the four-day training, all Regional Development Officers

outcome and impact in monitoring evaluation.

"In the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) which is the national plan, the training will help staff to be very effective with the tools needed to perform at the county level" Minister Kolubah concludes. -Press Release

46 schools risk closure, if...

-Education Minister

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Minister of Education of Liberia Prof. Ansu Sonni is seriously warning principals of 46 high schools that poorly performed in the 2019 West African Senior Certificate Examination (WASCE) that their schools risk closure if they attempt to graduate any of the students that failed the exams.

He made the statement during a recent press conference held at the premises of the West African

to the examination.

According to him, the Ministry of Education will also revoke the operational permits of any school involved.

Exams statistics released by the Monrovia Office of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) indicates that over 45 schools have failed the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), while results for 8714 candidates are being withheld for examination malpractices.

WAEC released the statistics on 24 July in Oldest Congo



Prof. Ansu Sonni

Examination Council (WAEC) in Oldest Congo Town, outside Monrovia.

Town after administering WASSCE to 237 centers across the

country from Wednesday, April 24 to Friday, May 20, 2019.

According to WAEC, the 2019 exams were administered at 237 centers without any form of leakage, but it notes that 8,714 candidates' results are being withheld for examination malpractices. --Edited by Winston W. Parley

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Français

LaymahGbowee ne fait pas de cadeau à la classe politique et aux leaders religieux

La lauréate du prix Nobel de la paix LaymahGbowee a craché ses quatre vérités vendredi, s'en prenant au pouvoir en place et à l'ensemble de la classe politique dans son discours du 172e anniversaire de l'indépendance du Libéria. Elle a invité les responsables gouvernementaux à faire avancer les discussions.

"M. le Président, messieurs et dames membres de la 54ème législature, membres du pouvoir judiciaire, membres du cabinet, la lutte contre la corruption ne se résume pas à des mots, il s'agit de poser des actes tangibles", a déclaré l'Oratrice.

« Il faut joindre l'acte à la parole. Vous ne pouvez pas prêcher contre la corruption et refuser de déclarer vos avoirs ou en faire un secret. Montrez-nous ce dont vous disposez avant de venir aux affaires afin que dans les

années à venir, quand vous aurez acquis deux maisons, nous sachions que vous disposiez déjà de ces ressources », a-t-il dit.

Sur l'invitation du président George MannehWeah, six chefs d'Etat africains ont pris part à la célébration du 172e

anniversaire de l'indépendance du Libéria à Monrovia. Il s'agit des présidents Roch Mar Christian Kaboredu Burkina Faso, MahamadouBuhari du Nigeria, Alassane Dramane Ouattara de la Côte d'Ivoire, Macky Sall du Sénégal, Julius Maada Bio de la Sierra Leone

et Alpha Condé de la Guinée.

L'ancienne présidente libérienne Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf et des membres du corps diplomatique ont aussi assisté à l'événement.

Mme Gbowee souligné la nécessité de s'attaquer à la difficile situation économique du Libéria, car les familles n'ont guère de nourriture et elles ne sont plus à même de payer les frais de scolarité de leurs enfants ou de s'offrir des produits de première nécessité.

Elle a fustigé le pouvoir et l'opposition qui se disputent jours et nuits sur des sujets à peu d'intérêt pendant que les jeunes se sentent de plus en plus désespérés et désœuvrés.

« Nous ne pouvons plus continuer à faire des affaires nous comme cela s'est fait depuis 1847, pendant que l'avenir des enfants est hypothéqué et que des ressources naturelles sont vendues à des groupes de personnes qui n'ont aucun programme de développement régional. La toxicomanie a envahi le pays et l'éducation est perçue comme un gâchis de part et d'autre.

Tandis que le pouvoir et l'opposition s'attaquent mutuellement, l'avenir de nos enfants est hypothéqué, les ressources naturelles sont vendues à ceux qui n'ont pas de plan de développement pour la République du Libéria », a-t-elle regretté.

Maada Gbowee a dénoncé une société où le

mensonge règne en maître absolu et s'en est également prise aux chefs religieux et aux chefs traditionnels.

« Les Libériens se sont écarter de la voie de la vérité, ils mentent pour gagner en notoriété et en position d'autorité, ils mentent sur leur mode de vie et font semblant d'avoir ce qu'ils n'ont pas. De génération en génération, les dirigeants libériens ont été dupés par les chefs religieux et les chefs traditionnels. Les évêques

sont devenus des militants des partis politiques, transformant les Écritures saintes et les prophéties en faveur de leurs partis politiques.

Les pasteurs et les imams sont devenus des griots, les chefs traditionnels tordent les pratiques culturelles pour plaire à quelques puissants. Ils attribuent un titre traditionnel à des personnes qui ne le méritent pas », s'est lamentée Madame Gbowee, avant d'ajouter : « Le Libéria n'est pas un parti politique, mais une nation qui appartient à tous les Libériens, d'où la nécessité de reconnaître que tous les citoyens font partie de cette société ».

Dans une allocution spéciale, le président Weah a remercié Mme Gbowee pour son discours « réfléchi et qui est une source d'inspiration », qui, selon lui, a permis de mieux comprendre l'importance de la paix dans le pays et de redonner espoir pour un meilleur Libéria.



La FIFA suspend Musa Bility pour 10 ans

La FIFA frappe fort sur le dossier Musa Bility. L'instance internationale vient de suspendre l'ex-président de la Fédération libérienne de football pour 10 ans.

Le fervent opposant à l'administration Ahmad Ahmad, qu'il a aidé à élire, est suspendu une dizaine d'année de toute activité liée au football. La sanction a été communiquée par la

FIFA ce 24 juillet 2019. Une suspension assortie d'une amende d'un peu plus de 300 millions de Frs Cfa (500.000 francs suisses et 455.000 euros environ).

Cette décision lourde est le fruit d'une longue enquête de la FIFA, débuté en mai 2018, et concernant la gestion des fonds alloués à Musa Bility, alors président de la fédération libérienne (LFA) de 2010 à 2018. La FIFA indique le

dirigeant libérien s'est rendu « coupable d'avoir détourné des fonds de la FIFA, d'avoir tiré des bénéfices, et s'est retrouvé dans une situation de conflits d'intérêts, et ce en violation avec le Code d'éthique de la FIFA ».

Les juges de Zurich accusent Musa Bility d'avoir détourné des fonds alloués à la LFA pour la campagne de sensibilisation et de lutte contre la propagation du virus Ebola, qui a fait plus de 11.000 morts en Guinée, au Libéria et en Sierra Leone. Une campagne lancée en novembre 2014, alors que M. Bility était encore aux affaires. Lui qui est également accusé d'avoir détourné d'autres fonds de la FIFA vers des entreprises sous son contrôle.

Bility victime de sa posture d'opposant ?

Musa Bility est loin d'être à sa première à la "UNE" du football international. Candidat à la succession de Sepp Blatter éconduit pour des problèmes d'éthique, le dirigeant libérien s'affiche comme un grand opposant à l'administration Ahmad



Articles traduits

Par Valéry G. Guhéna

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Ahmad qu'il avait lui-même soutenu. Bility a notamment critiqué le glissement de date au niveau de l'organisation des CAN de 2019 à 2023. De quoi ne pas de se faire des amis au comité exécutif de la CAF.

Le dernier fait d'arme de M. Bility reste son recours auprès du TAS pour rendre caduque la nomination de Fatma Samoura comme «

déléguée générale pour l'Afrique ». Cette nomination de la Secrétaire Générale de la FIFA est jugée par plusieurs observateurs comme la mise sous tutelle de la CAF, qui doit être auditee durant les prochains mois, à la suite de scandales financiers qui ont conduit à l'interpellation de son président, Ahmad Ahmad, en France, à quelques jours du début de la CAN 2019.

Français

Editorial

Nos élèves peuvent faire mieux

Le bureau national du Conseil des Examens de l'Afrique de l'Ouest a publié les résultats provisoires du WASSCE (Certificat des Etudes du Second Cycle de l'Afrique de l'Ouest).

Ces résultats, selon le bureau, sont nettement satisfaisants par rapport à ceux de l'année précédente. C'est une bonne nouvelle, car cela signifie que les élèves libériens, avec un peu plus d'efforts, peuvent mieux faire et compétir avec leurs camarades des pays membres. Encore faut-il que les sujets dans lesquels ils composent soient bien enseignés dans les différentes écoles par des enseignants compétents.

Le Libéria est le dernier pays anglophone à rejoindre les quatre autres pays anglophones de l'Afrique de l'Ouest membres du West African Examination Council (WAEC) - Conseil Ouest Africain des Examens.

A en croire M. Dale Gboto, chef du bureau national du Libéria, l'on constate une nette amélioration dans les résultats de l'année scolaire 2018-2019 par rapport aux résultats de l'année scolaire précédente dans les neuf sujets dans lesquels ils ont composé.

Ces résultats devraient donc stimuler la confiance tant des élèves que des enseignants du Libéria et les inciter à plus d'efforts de sorte que notre système éducatif atteigne l'excellence.

Nous remercions sincèrement le ministre de l'Éducation, Ansusonii, d'avoir mis en place un programme de révisions obligatoires pour tous les élèves de la 12e année dès le début de l'année scolaire 2018-2019. Ce programme a sans aucun doute contribué à l'amélioration des résultats des élèves.

Néanmoins, nous appelons les autorités scolaires à doter les établissements scolaires de laboratoires scientifiques standards afin de préparer adéquatement les élèves de la 12e année pour les examens de fin d'année. Il faut aussi recruter des enseignants qualifiés et compétents et bien les payer afin de sauver l'école libérienne.

Il ne s'agit pas de fustiger nos élèves comme quoi ils sont faibles dans les matières de base dont les matières scientifiques. Il s'agit au contraire de mettre à leur disposition tout le matériel didactique qu'il faut et de les encadrer afin que leur niveau s'améliore.

Nous disons également merci à M. Dale Gboto et à l'ensemble du personnel du WAEC pour les progrès accomplis jusqu'à présent. M. Gboto a bravé les tempêtes et plaidé pour que le Libéria rejoigne les autres pays membres du WAEC afin que le WASSCE soit soumis aux élèves libériens. Il a dû faire face à des autorités scolaires sceptiques.

Si nos élèves ont mieux réussi l'examen de cette année que l'an dernier, nous pensons qu'ils peuvent atteindre le meilleur et être excellents dans les années à venir et rendre le pays fier.

Articles traduits
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COMMENTAIRE

By Joschka Fischer

Qui sortira vainqueur du XXIe siècle ?

BERLIN - Les deux premières décennies du XXIe siècle commencent à projeter leur ombre, déjà longue, sur le monde occidental. Nous avons parcouru du chemin depuis le début du siècle, quand partout, mais surtout en Europe, résonnait complaisamment la chanson de la « fin de l'histoire ».

Son refrain trompeur affirmait que la victoire de l'Ouest à l'issue de la guerre froide - la dernière des trois grandes guerres du XXe siècle - avait accouché d'un ordre mondial qui ne laissait plus d'autre choix possible. Ainsi pensait-on que l'histoire du monde avançait d'un pas sûr vers la diffusion universelle du modèle de démocratie occidentale et de l'économie de marché. Le prochain siècle ne serait que le prolongement du précédent, l'Ouest vainqueur y étendant son empire.

Le monde est désormais plus circonspect. Le réseau d'alliances et d'institutions qui ont porté la domination de l'Ouest s'avère un produit du XXe siècle, à l'avenir incertain. L'ordre mondial, dont le centre de gravité se déplace de l'Atlantique nord au Pacifique et à l'Asie de l'est, est en pleine mutation. La Chine est au seuil - du point de vue économique, technologique et politique - de s'affirmer comme une puissance globale et comme l'unique prétendant face à l'hégémon sortant que sont les États-Unis.

Concomitamment, ces derniers apparaissent de plus en plus las de leur premier rôle sur la scène planétaire. Ils ont commencé à s'en départir sous le mandat du président Barack Obama, mais sous celui de Donald Trump, ils ont accéléré leur retrait, qui a pris un tour dangereux et chaotique. En abdiquant son rôle dirigeant, l'Amérique menace l'existence même de l'Ouest, fondé, de part et d'autre de l'Atlantique, sur des valeurs et des institutions politiques communes. En l'absence d'une solution de remplacement, la structure s'émiette.

Pendant ce temps, c'est le regard tourné vers son passé et vers son propre XXe siècle que la Russie fait face à l'avenir. Comme l'Union soviétique avant elle, elle mise tout sur son armement nucléaire. Au XXIe siècle, la puissance ne sera pourtant pas déterminée par l'arsenal nucléaire de l'un ou de l'autre, mais par un large éventail de capacités technologiques fondées sur le numérique. Ceux qui ne se tiennent pas à l'avant-garde de l'intelligence artificielle (IA) et des données de masse passeront inexorablement sous la dépendance d'autres puissances, et bientôt sous leur domination. Ce ne sont plus les têtes nucléaires, mais les données et la souveraineté technologique qui dicteront la répartition dans le monde du pouvoir et de la richesse au cours de ce siècle. Et dans les sociétés ouvertes, ces mêmes critères décideront de l'avenir des démocraties.

Le Vieux Continent, quant à lui, aborde le nouveau siècle dans une forme qui n'est pas, loin s'en faut, la meilleure. Bercée par la confortable illusion post-historique d'une paix éternelle, l'Union européenne n'est pas parvenue à parachever son projet d'intégration (bien qu'elle se soit étendue vers l'est). Le retrait implicite de la garantie américaine sur sa sécurité a frappé l'Europe comme un éclair dans un ciel bleu.

On pourrait en dire de même de la révolution numérique. La première phase de la numérisation

- les plateformes à disposition des consommateurs - fut presque entièrement conduite par les États-Unis et la Chine. Il n'existe pour ainsi dire pas d'entreprise de plateforme compétitive en Europe, pas plus que d'informatique en nuage capable de rivaliser avec les monstres qui prospèrent dans la Silicon Valley ou en Chine.

La question la plus aiguë qui se pose à la nouvelle Commission européenne est dès lors celle de la souveraineté numérique. Le degré de contrôle qu'exercera l'Europe sur l'IA, les données de masse et les technologies qui leur sont liées déterminera son degré de compétitivité au XXIe siècle. Mais les Européens doivent d'abord décider qui possédera les données leur permettant d'accéder à la souveraineté numérique et quels critères doivent régir leurs bases ou l'usage qui en sera fait. Ces questions détermineront le sort de la démocratie en Europe et l'orientation du Vieux Continent vers la prospérité ou, au contraire, le déclin. En tant que telles, c'est au niveau européen et non à celui des États-nations qu'elles doivent être tranchées. Il est tout aussi nécessaire d'y répondre dès maintenant. Sous peine d'en être définitivement exclue, l'Europe doit prendre part au jeu.

Dans les prochaines années, la conception et la fabrication des automobiles, le génie mécanique, l'énergie, les foyers eux-mêmes seront profondément bouleversés par les technologies numériques. Les données produites à partir de ces secteurs seront pour une bonne part traitées par l'intermédiaire du cloud, ce qui signifie que la maîtrise de cette externalisation, voire le pouvoir exercé sur celle-ci, aura pour l'avenir économique et stratégique d'un pays une importance vitale.

Pour construire et préserver sa souveraineté numérique, l'Europe devra consentir à des investissements énormes dans ses capacités d'informatique en nuage mais aussi dans d'autres ressources physiques qui sont au fondement de la révolution numérique. À cet égard, l'Europe s'est jusqu'à présent montrée beaucoup trop lente et indécise. Il lui faut maintenant relever le défi : rattraper les États-Unis et la Chine, de crainte de rester pour toujours en arrière.

Les Européens devraient renoncer à l'illusion d'un secteur privé qui prendrait à lui seul les choses en main. Le handicap compétitif de l'Europe plaide en faveur d'un changement radical de stratégie au plus haut niveau. C'est aux institutions de l'UE qu'il reviendra de prendre l'initiative en matière de régulation et de s'assurer, avec les États membres, des financements nécessaires. Mais l'affirmation de la souveraineté numérique de l'Europe requerra un effort beaucoup plus large, impliquant le monde de l'entreprise et de la recherche ainsi que le personnel politique.

À la suite du cinquantième anniversaire des premiers pas de l'homme sur la Lune, on a vu fleurir dans les médias des débats sur l'opportunité d'un vol habité à destination de la planète Mars. Pour l'Europe, néanmoins, les voyages spatiaux peuvent attendre. Elle doit par contre accorder la priorité absolue à la construction et la sauvegarde de sa souveraineté numérique, faire tout ce qu'il est possible pour enrayer son déclin et protéger la démocratie. Pour le meilleur et pour le pire, le XXIe siècle est bel et bien commencé.

Traduit de l'anglais par François Boisivon



Cont'd from page 5

One of the examples and primary results of "territorial sovereignty" in Liberia is the creation of "cities" in rural Liberia, decreed to be an eight-mile radius from imaginary "city center" and new jurisdictional areas over which Customary Land Leaders have no official authority by law, because acquiring land in the "city" no longer requires Tribal Certificate as required by Customary Land Tenure, but a "city" certificate. Accordingly, all lands, including villages and towns near the "city" that, inevitably, fall within the eight-mile radius of an ill-defined, extended boundary, are now under the mayor's jurisdiction with increased price of an acre of land in the "city" areas from \$0.50 (fifty US cents) to \$120.00 (US one hundred twenty dollars). Moreover, creations of "cities" in rural Liberia provide new opportunities for officially-protected encroachments upon customary lands by elite, wealthy city slickers from urban, coastal Liberia.

This new condition of cities in rural Liberia with Customary Land sale in rural Liberia prompted a Voinjama, Lofa County Elder to ask, "uh, and how I will buy this land, then, we must buy from who?" In other words, no one has the right to sell the land in the first place, because it was their forefathers who "had settled the land, cleared the bush, made it arable, usable and valuable". According to their "traditional" notions of making claims, what right has the government to ask for money for the land that was already, and is, theirs (Lomax, 2008).

Political Sovereignty versus Indigenous Ownership

It is necessary, indeed mandatory, to provide international interpretations of political (colonial) sovereignty versus Indigenous Ownership. On land ownership based on "Political sovereignty" versus "Indigenous Ownership", Wiley observed that it was only during the 1970s that positive and favorable, Supreme Court rulings on many continents began to take root regarding land laws - accepted possession of rural lands to be clearly and concretely re-interpreted and asserted (Wiley, 2007):

First, the New Zealand Supreme Court ruled, in 1847, that "it cannot be too solemnly asserted that indigenous 'native title' is to be respected that it cannot be extinguished other than by the free and informed consent of the occupiers".

Second, other courts, including the British Privy Council held, but ignored that "a mere change in Sovereignty is not to be presumed to disturb (the) rights of private owners".

Third, the Canadian Supreme Court concluded in 1973 that "pre-sovereignty, property rights of indigenous peoples cannot, forever, fail to be acknowledged; continued and current occupation today should be acknowledged as proof of possession and, possession to be proof of ownership".

And Fourth, to this, the Tanzanian Supreme Court observed, in 1994, that "to do otherwise (deny indigenous right to title and ownership) is to condemn Tanzanian citizens to being squatters on their own land - a very serious preposition".

Accordingly and back home in Liberia, it is extremely necessary that the National Decentralization & Local Governance Policy in Liberia take due note and include Land Rights administration/enforcement in the light of the following that:

1. The foregoing contradictions are the major sources of impediments to Boundary Demarcations, local, democratic governance and national reconciliation and peace;
2. Social, economic and political analysts and observers of recent Liberian history predict and conclude that failure of policy makers to address land disputes and the resulting conflicts through re-recognition of traditional, Customary Land Tenure, with application of fair and definitive boundary demarcations, could provide the incentive for another, devastating, national tragedy;
3. Denial of legitimate, property rights of indigenous populations is, in effect, colonialism, a practice against which the Immigrant-Settlers stood firmly by recognizing, accepting Customary Land Tenure and protecting indigenous, hinterland populations and their laws. However, they changed years later in the effort to capture and hold on to valuable assets (*land and forest thereon, legally-held by the hinterland, local communities*) through the concept of "*Hinterland as occupied Territory*", which had now become the "colony" of *Urban, Coastal Liberia* with Hinterland populations, the colonized. This issue has become abusive and violation of human rights.

Nation-wide Land Disputes

Nationwide, as indicated earlier - *North, South, East and West* - throughout the length and breadth of this troubled land, there has been, and are, conflicts, confusions and land disputes often leading to armed, deadly violence *among and between farmers, private landowners in the cities, towns, villages, and county authorities*.

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf referred to this condition in her Annual Message (January 28, 2013) as "... as if these statistics were not daunting enough, the boundaries of all these localities overlap, leading to confusion over jurisdiction and administrative authority...".

This alarming condition is due to illegal actions of the land-grabbers, encroachers/squatters of land not their own, exacerbated and compounded by rebels of the civil war.

The example is right here in our Capital City of Monrovia. We are sitting on potential time bomb which is likely to explode at any time, in the event that nothing is done about the illegal encroachers at the Cooper Beach Estate. Some of the illegal encroachers/squatters built shops, churches, homes and mansions on land which they do not own, refuse to vacate and render possession to lawful owners, even upon the nation's Supreme decision, with all necessary legal mandates in favor of the Cooper Beach Estate and the land owners who acquired their properties lawfully from the Estate.

The illegal encroachers/squatters depend, simply, upon their friends in high places in government, especially the courts, "Counselors-at-Law" and the Ministry of Justice, with its promise to intervene "because of the nature and volume of citizens involved". The lawful owners are still waiting for Ministry of Justice - it is now more than 10 years!!

Land is life

That Land is Life is so self-evident that it needs no expression or proof. But to give meaning and relevance to the critical importance of Land, particularly, to those us who live in the towns and villages of Rural Liberia, it is necessary to re-echo the fact that Land is everything.

Not only that land has been our only and major historical economic activity - subsistence agriculture - but also that land, to all living beings, has been, and is, the ultimate source of life.

That Land is human life or that human life depends on the Land is so obvious that it needs no lecture. It is such that there is no personal-private ownership of land is permitted in Rural Liberia in order to make land available to all households. A few examples are necessary for emphasis:

- a) From the Land come the food that we eat daily to sustain life; villages, towns and cities in which we live; the mud, timber, thatch, cement, zinc, iron and related materials used to build huts, houses, mansions in which we live for shelter; the clothes that we wear;
- b) The automobiles, trains and railroads, airplanes for rapid mobility are made from primary products from the land; and so are the telephones, television sets, computers and paper products, including the very (printed banknotes) money that we use as the medium of exchange for the acquisition of all of these life-supporters and life-givers from the land.

More important and a benefit, there is more land in Liberia than there are people; our small nation of less than 4 million people is, indeed, sparsely populated. Seriously then, our major responsibility is Education.

Historically, the Liberian People are courageous, determined, open, free, fair, caring, friendly, hospitable, loyal and patriotic, but poor, relatively uninformed on complexities of government and relatively uneducated.

To maintain these positive, enviable qualities, we must recapture our land. This responsibility, now, goes to Kaneh Gwede, Inc. of Grand Gedeh County for complete and comprehensive administration of the traditional, customary Land.

Land Commission (LC) & Liberia Land Authority Commission (LLAC)

The enactment by the National Legislature of the Land Commission (LC) and the Liberia Land Authority Commission (LLAC) is intended to resolve, reasonably, the prevailing conflicts, confusions and disputes throughout the nation between and among farm land owners, communities and the County (regional Political/administrative Sub-divisions) which arose and continue to arise from denial of traditional, customary Land Tenure rights and deficient and/or lack of boundary demarcations, a condition exacerbated by elements of the recent civil war.

The historical fragmentation of Land decision-making, often contradictory and/or illegal, an action by, between and among the National Investment Commission (NIC), Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy and the Registry of Land Records, Deeds, etc, regarding the issues of land ownership, are now centralized under the Land Commission (LC)/Liberia Land Authority Commission (LLAC) by the Land Rights Act of the Legislature.

But unfortunately, this Land Rights Act has become the proverbial "cart before the horse, rather than the horse before the cart" - the Land Rights Act & the Commissions. . The Act is still pending approval, passage and printed in Handbills, due to Poli-tricks and corruption. Now, at this initial point in time, the LLAC is deeply entrenched and involved in County "Poli-tricks".

For example, available evidence indicates that the LLAC ignores, disregards and disobeys the lawful appointment power-authority of the President of the nation by seeking to retain the official already removed by the President in total disregard of the Presidential appointee.

Victory for corruption?

Several Liberian officials and a Nigerian national indicted in 2016 on account of a Global Witness' claim of receiving bribes offered by British firm Sable Mining for a concession contract have been set free of all charges in Monrovia.

Supporters of former House Speaker Alex Tyler, Grand Cape Mount County Sen. Cllr. H. Varney G. Sherman, Bomi Sen. Morris Saytumah, former Mines Minister Eugene Shannon, E.C.B. Jones, Dr. Richard Tolbert, Willie Belleh and Nigerian national Christopher Onanuga flooded Criminal Court "C," interrupting the ruling with cheers on Tuesday, 30 July.

Key contentions in prosecution's argument include claims that Sable Mining gave bribes totaling US\$950,000 to Liberian officials including lawmakers to insert Section 75 in the Public Procurement and



Concession Commission (PPCC) Draft Act to give the company undue advantage over mineral deposits at the Wologisi Mountain in Lofa.

Former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's government indicted and commenced the trial, but it extended into the

regime of President George Manneh Weah, a time when the defendants' lawyers became key prosecutors at the Ministry of Justice.

Public outcry later saw some of the lawyers concerned avoiding the case.

In his final ruling at Criminal

Court "C" Tuesday, 30 July in Monrovia, Judge Peter W. Gbeneweleh said the defendants are not guilty of the crimes charged.

"They are hereby discharged from further answering the multiple offenses charged in the indictment without any delay, and their Constitutional and Statutory Rights are hereby restored with immediate effect," the Judge orders.

Judge Gbeneweleh recalls that prosecution's first witness Mr. Mark Kollie testified before the court that the investigative team read the Draft Act in passing.

However, the Judge determines "that the Draft Act should have been thoroughly read" by the investigators and compared with the enacted law before concluding that the enacted and restated PPCC Act of 2010 had been changed by inserting Section 75 in the enacted law.

Addressing the issue of bribery alleged by Global Witness and the Special Task Force, Judge Gbeneweleh indicates that it is a fact that Sherman and Sherman represented Sable Mining company in Liberia.

Further, he says the account for Sable Mining was created by and through Sherman and Sherman, [a law firm owned by co-defendant Sen. Varney G. Sherman].

The account was created to support the project of Sable Mining in Liberia.

However, Judge Gbeneweleh continues that the allegation of bribery as alleged primarily based on statement of account or spread sheet that co-defendant Varney Sherman sent to Sable Mining and

Emailed in August 2010.

The Judge reveals that the Task Force produced before the Court a statement of account or spread sheet as at 30 June 2010, wherein they alleged that co-defendant Sherman received from sable Mining US\$400,000 with which he paid bribes to top government officials.

He says the prosecution indicates that the bribes were offered to officials including defendants in the case to change the Amended and Restated PPCC Act by inserting Section 75.

The Judge notes Cllr. Sherman's denial and testimony against the prosecution's account, saying the prosecution did not deny or rebut defendant Sherman's denial.

According to him, the special presidential Task Force set up to probe the allegations failed to produce the account statement of co-defendant Sherman for August 10, 2010 upon which the allegation of bribery is based.

Instead, he says the prosecution produced the account statement of June 2010, insisting that the August 10, 2010 account statement should have been produced during trial in the case.

"This court says that the burden of proof rests upon the prosecution to prove the allegation contained in the indictment beyond reasonable doubt," Judge Gbeneweleh rules.

During interviews, the defendants did not give definite position if they are considering suing government for damage of character, but expressed thanks to God for their acquittal.

Visit: www.thenewdawnliberia.com

Opposition, CDC claim victory

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygor

Four collaborating opposition political parties here and the governing Coalition for Democratic Change are trading claims and counter-claims of victory in Monday's (July 29) Montserrado County by-elections ahead of official results from the National Elections Commission.

The two sides passionately believe they won both senatorial and District#15 by-elections in Montserrado ahead of official preliminary results today, Wednesday, by the NEC.

The collaborating opposition political parties including the former ruling Unity Party, the Liberty Party, the Alternative National Congress and the All Liberian

Party support Candidate Abraham Darius Dillon for the senatorial seat and Ms. Tellia Urey for Montserrado District#15, while President Weah's governing Coalition for Democratic Change supports Ms. Paulita Wie for the senate and Abu Kamara for District#15.

The opposition bloc is already celebrating victory from the polls based on tallied sheets posted by the NEC in polling centers across all 17 districts in the county, but Coalition spokesperson Representative Moses Acarous Grey equally insists they are instead, in a comfortable position.

Speaking at the Liberty Party headquarters at the St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital junction in Monrovia,

Chairman Steve Zargo says the opposition has made history by defeating the ruling establishment in what President George Manneh Weah refers to as 'home of the CDC.'

Chairman Zargo, who is Senator for Lofa County, explains the opposition candidates are in comforting lead adding, Candidate Abraham Datious Dillon has won the election for the senate by a margin of over 20,000 votes, while Ms. Telia Urey has a narrow win in District #15 against her rival, Abu Kamara.

Adding his voice to the claim, Unity Party chairman Wilmot Paye, warns that the results of the elections should not be tampered, saying, any attempt by the National Elections Commission to change results will lead to end of the Weah's administration, without saying how.

However, NEC Chairman Jerome Korkoya assures that the Commission's credibility is intact, evidenced by the number of presidential and legislative elections it has conducted for the country.

On the other hand, CDC Chairman Mulbah Morlu is also claiming reports in their possession show an authoritative lead in both by-elections and they will not follow the opposition's quest to undermine the truism of tally sheets signed by poll watchers and NEC workers.

"We want all of our supporters to remain calm and demonstrate a high level of patriotism during this period of opposition quest to claim a

victory that they don't have. The CDC has an unquestionable democratic credential that the Liberty Party and its collaborators don't have, so we will not choose the path of threats being issued by the chairpersons of LP and UP," he asserts.

Morlu continues that the collaborators are so 'desperate' for power and have begun media propaganda on their politically-owned news outlets to confuse the voting population.

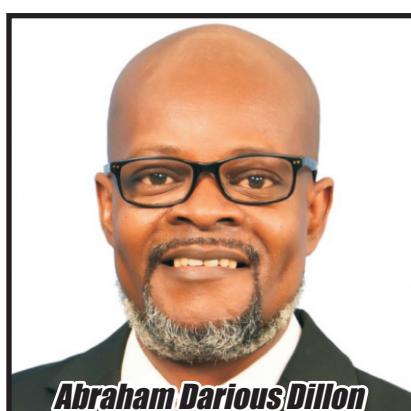
"We see such move by them as a recipe to create chaos and thus, we shall rise above pitfalls in the interest of maintaining the peace and stability of Liberia. While we recognize that the senatorial election shows a margin in our favor as we have tallied 90 percent of the votes, we can

also boastfully say that District #15 is overwhelmingly won by our candidate Abu Kamara after tallying 100 percent of votes cast," he claims.

However, Independent Candidate, Mr. Kimmie Weeks has already congratulated Mr. Dillon as winner of the senatorial by-election.

Meanwhile, the NEC is expected to release preliminary results of the polls today, July 31, Chairman Korkoya discloses to this paper via mobile phone.

The senatorial by-election is as a result of the death of Senator Geraldine Doe Sherif following a protracted battle with womb cancer and the demise of Montserrado County Electoral District#15 Representative Adolph Lawrence in a car crash. - Editing by Jonathan Browne



Abraham Darius Dillon



Ms. Tellia Urey



Ms. Paulita Wie



Abu Kamara

Mourinho: 'Full of fire' ahead of return



Jose Mourinho says he is "full of fire" ahead of a return to football management, but insists he is willing to wait for the right opportunity before making a decision on his future.

Mourinho has been out of work since leaving Manchester United in December and, despite receiving a number of offers to return to the game, he is currently spending time in his home city of Setubal rather

than being on the training pitch.

However, the warm weather and picturesque views of the Portuguese coast line provide little respite for Mourinho.

"This is basically the first time I have time to think, the first time I am in Setubal at the end of July or beginning of August in more than 20 years," Mourinho said in an exclusive interview with Sky Sports News.

"I have some time to think, to rethink, to analyse and what I

feel is exactly that 'Ze' (Mourinho's nickname as a boy) is full of fire!

"My friends tell me 'enjoy your time, enjoy your July, enjoy your August, enjoy what you never had'. Honestly, I can't enjoy. I am not happy enough to enjoy.

"I miss my football, I have the fire, I have a compromise with myself, with people that love me, with so many fans that I have around the world, so many people that I inspired.

"Ze has to be Ze and Ze until the last day, but I don't see the last day because my next move will be like the start! I don't feel it's just one more year in accumulation of how many years I've worked, how many titles I've won. That is history, that is the museum!

"My future will start in my next move and, as I was saying, it looks a little bit ridiculous with so many beautiful things around me and so many things I didn't [have] for so many years, but I can't really enjoy my free time."

Mourinho has not been short of offers since his departure from Old Trafford though.



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Nicolas Pepe arrives in London for Arsenal medical

Nicolas Pepe has arrived in London and will have a medical with Arsenal on Tuesday ahead of his club-record £72million switch from Lille.

The Ivorian winger touched down in the capital early on Tuesday morning and is expected to sign off on a five-year deal with the Gunners in the coming days.

Pepe showed up at the club's Colney training



complex for the medical already with a bag in his hand emblazoned with the Arsenal badge and stuffed full of club merchandise.

The 24-year-old was dressed sharply in a blue suit with a white t-shirt underneath, white trainers and sunglasses and accompanied by several of his entourage.

He then went on a tour around north London, the area he will shortly be calling home.

As reported by Sportsmail earlier this week, Arsenal will be given an extraordinary five years to pay the £72m fee, paying the French club just £20m up front in order to keep within their budget.

The signing will be an impressive coup for the Gunners hierarchy given Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester United and Napoli have all been credited with an interest.

It has been reported,

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