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TRULY INDEPENDENT  
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# The New Dawn

**French Version Inside**

TRULY INDEPENDENT

**Erratum:**

We reported in our Friday, 27 September Edition a front page sub-lead story captioned: "Chief Justice removes judge on CBL case." That was incorrect. Criminal Court "C" Judge A. Blamo Dixon recused himself from the trial; he wasn't removed.

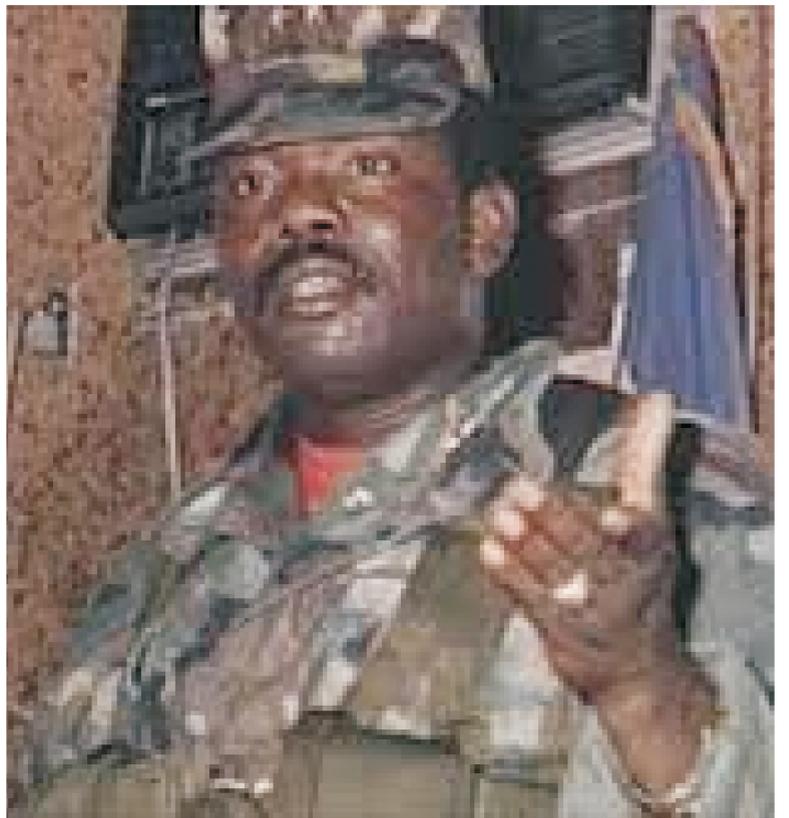
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# PYJ asked to take responsibility

## -For killing Doe



Flashback: Sen. Johnson then leader of the INPFL with one of his victim

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# Continental News

## Victim tells of living in 'torture house hellfire'

A survivor of the Nigerian "torture house" raided by police has described being there as "living in hellfire". "If you are praying they will beat you. If you are studying they will beat you," Isa Ibrahim, 29, told the BBC.

Nearly 500 men and boys were rescued from the building in Kaduna, which was being used as an Islamic school and correctional facility.

The police said it was a place of human slavery, with many detainees found in chains.

Some of the victims had been tortured and sexually abused, the authorities say. The BBC's Ishaq Khalid, who visited the building in northern Nigeria, says there are concerns that similar abuse may be occurring in other such institutions.

Many families in this mainly Muslim part of the country can't afford to send their children to school and those that can often enrol them in poorly regulated institutions like this one, he

says. A sign on the front of the building describes it as the Ahmad bin Hambal Centre for Islamic teachings but it was also used by some as a place to reform young men with behavioural problems.

Kaduna state police spokesman Yakubu Sabo said the "dehumanised treatment"

they discovered made it impossible to consider it an Islamic school, Reuters news agency reports. It was not registered as either a school, or a correctional facility, although it did charge fees to parents.

Seven people, including some staff, have been

arrested. The government says it will investigate other institutions which purport to provide Koranic studies. There have been numerous reports of abuse at Koranic schools across northern Nigeria, with students sometimes forced to spend their days begging on the streets. Mr Ibrahim said he was sent to the centre two weeks ago by his family, apparently to "correct his behaviour".

He said he had tried to escape the day before the police arrived.

He described being chained up to an old generator and also being subjected to a particularly cruel punishment, known as "Tarkila", where his hands were tied up and he was left hanging from the ceiling. "I have many injuries. Almost all parts of my body have injuries," he said. "Even if you are sleeping - they'll use [a] cane to wake you up."

He said he had been starved and was only given plain rice to eat. People kept at the centre "lose all of our energy", he added.

Children as young as five were among those rescued from the institution, which is believed to have been operating for several years. Most of the inmates were from northern Nigeria but two were reportedly from Burkina Faso. The pink two-storey building is a prison-like structure surrounded by high walls and barbed wire. It has an imposing gate, with more than a dozen rooms, with small windows for ventilation.

When I visited, the compound was littered with abandoned household items like mattresses, buckets, clothes and books - apparently left in the wake of the police raid. Kaduna state police spokesperson Yakubu Sabo told me most of the captives had been rescued with their shackles still on but I could still see some abandoned chains, as well as car wheels and petrol-powered generators to which the victims had allegedly been attached. People living nearby

have been left bewildered - some told me they couldn't believe the shocking discovery.

The "students" did not go out to beg on the streets as is the usual practice with traditional Koranic schools in this region. Nor had they been forced to do hard labour - some said they had not seen the outside world for years. Torture was used as a form of discipline - to correct perceived bad behaviour. Relatives are being reunited with their children at a camp in Kaduna where the victims were taken after being rescued.

Some said they had been prevented from seeing their children at the school.

"If we had known that this thing was happening in the school, we wouldn't have sent our children. We sent them to be people but they ended up being maltreated," said a parent named Ibrahim, who had identified his son. The Kaduna state government says it will now carry out checks on all Koranic schools across the state.

"This is an eye-opener for us," said Hafsat Baba, Kaduna State Commissioner of Human Services and Social Development. She added that if this scale of abuse was happening in the main city, she didn't know what might be going on in rural areas.

"We have to map all the schools. And we have to make sure that if they violate the government orders then they have to be closed down completely," she told the BBC. "If we find any facility that is torturing children or is harbouring these kind of horrific situations that we have just seen, they are going to be prosecuted." President Muhammadu Buhari has condemned reports of shocking abuse at the institution.

He also urged religious and traditional leaders to work with the authorities to "expose and stop all types of abuse that are widely known but ignored for many years by our communities". BBC



Some detainees were as young as five years old, police said

## Ghana woman hired by the UN

Ghana's first female brigadier-general, Constance Emeфа Edjeani-Afenu, has been appointed as deputy force commander of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Brigadier-General Edjeani-Afenu, therefore, becomes the first

woman to occupy such an office since Peace Support Operations began in Western Sahara in 1991. After the official ceremony to bestow the appointment on her was held on Thursday, September 19, 2019, she praised her predecessor for the good work done and gave an assurance that she would continue with

the peace process in Western Sahara.

The top military official again asked for the support of every member of the mission so that their tour would end in success.

Per a report by www.ghanapeacejournal.com, present at the ceremony were top military personalities such as Colin Stewart, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Major General Zia Ur Rehman, the Force Commander (FC) of MINURSO and Veneranda Jefferson, the Chief of Mission Support (CMS). Brigadier-General Edjeani-Afenu is the first woman to command the Forces Pay Regiment of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). She is also the first woman to be appointed a Brigadier General in GAF and the first woman to be appointed Deputy Military Adviser (DMILAD) at the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations in New York from 2013 to 2016.

Again, she is the first Ghanaian woman to be appointed as Team Leader in MONUSCO as Military Observer



Ghana's first female general grabs continental position; set to fly to disputed territory

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from 2003 to 2004.

In other news, YEN.com.gh has a video of Ghanaian school children singing a song of praise to Mohammed Salah, a footballer who plies his trade with the Egyptian national team and Liverpool Football Club.

In the video, the children are seen in a classroom and following the directions of an instructor, sing the song and act it out as well.

The video has gone viral and social media users have expressed their opinions about it. AFP

# EDITORIAL

## Avoiding another strike in government

**HEALTH WORKERS ACROSS** Liberia and the government thru the Ministry of Health reached a compromise last week Friday, 27 September which led the former to cut off a weeklong strike that nearly paralyzed the entire health sector of the country. The protesters under the banner, National Health Workers Union of Liberia or NAHWUL had demanded among others, salary, tools and improved working condition.

**THE PROTEST LED** a group of pregnant women to erect roadblocks in Du-Port Road community, Paynesville in demand of health services amid reports of deaths in some parts of the country because of absence of doctors and nurses.

**THE SITUATION FORCED** the Minister of Health Doctor Wilhelmina Jallah, who had formed part of President George MannehWeah's official delegation to the 74th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York to immediately return home in order to dialogue with the NAHWUL leadership on the strike.

**IT IS REGRETTABLE** that Liberia, already with a very poor health system had to suffer strike by aggrieved health workers either because of neglect or less attention. Worse still, the recent strike is not the first by health workers in the country in demand of better condition in the workplace and salary.

**DETAIL OF THE** dialogue that led to compromise by the two parties was not made public, but the secretary-general of the National Health Workers Union of Liberia George Poe Williams, appearing in a joint news conference with the Minister of Health Doctor Jallah Friday at the Ministry of Information in Monrovia, called on the entire membership to abandon the strike and immediately return to work.

**WE BELIEVE STRONGLY** the ugly situation could have been avoided, if the government had placed its priorities rightly. The health of the citizens of any nation is its wealth. Therefore, the health sector should be treated with priority in terms of skilled workforce, attractive salaries, incentives and supplies, including drugs.

**THE STRIKE WAS** not abrupt. Instead, it was the last resort, as the NAHWUL leadership had sought the authorities' attention on lack of drugs, fuel for generators and protective gears in health facilities across the country, but to no avail.

**MINISTER JALLAH PROMISED** to remain engaged with the leadership of the aggrieved health workers in providing them better incentives and supplying the various public hospitals and clinics in the country with drugs and equipment. We hope these are not mere promises. The government should fulfill its part of the bargain, as the health workers return to work.

**IF THE GOVERNMENT** had heeded the early warning from the health workers, innocent citizens would not have lost their lives because of the absence of doctors and nurses in hospitals on one hand, and the Health Minister wouldn't have abruptly ended her trip at the U.N. in New York just to return home to address something should have been addressed before leaving the country.

**RATHER THAN TAKING** 30, 40, or 50 members delegation abroad on an official travel at taxpayers' expense, the President should cut down his official delegation to international conferences especially, people who only go for sight-seen in order to divert some of the traveling budget to the health sector.

# COMMENTARY

By Joschka Fischer

## What's Freezing Europe-Russia Relations?

*French President Emmanuel Macron is right to worry about the disintegration of the global arms-control regime and a Russia that is increasingly tied to China. But given that the divide between Russia and the European Union is over fundamental values, there is no reason to think that the relationship can be improved anytime soon.*

**B**ERLIN - Although the European Union and Russia are part of the same landmass, they don't have all that much in common. In fact, Russians have yet even to decide where their country resides in the world. The bulk of its territory is in Asia, but over 70% of its people live west of the Ural Mountains. Russians have no interest in associating themselves with East Asia or the Islamic South, so their only choice is to go it alone or orient themselves toward Europe.

But going it alone is risky. Russia is a nuclear-armed colossus, yet it is declining demographically, economically, and technologically. The country still earns its living by exporting fossil fuels and other commodities, which is hardly sufficient for maintaining superpower status in the twenty-first century. It is increasingly at risk of becoming a junior partner to China.

The only alternative, then, is Europe. But both sides are prisoners of their respective histories. Memories of oppressive rule under the czars and the Soviets remain raw in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland and the Baltics, and Russian President Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea and military campaign in Eastern Ukraine have reinforced distrust of Russia across the region.

Russia's relationship with the rest of Europe is also determined by its history. Reeling from the Soviet collapse throughout the 1990s, Russia has adopted a nineteenth-century mentality since Putin came to power in 2000. The Russian elite, harking back to the Czarist period before the Bolshevik Revolution, regards their country as a European great power - even a hegemonic one, in the case of Eastern Europe - which pits it directly against the EU.

The EU's *raison d'être* is to transcend zones of influence in Europe, because that is the only way to prevent a return of the power struggles and catastrophic wars that culminated in the first half of the twentieth century. And yet Russia is simply too large to be integrated into the EU (indeed, it is unclear who would be integrating with whom).

Even if that were not the case, Russia - or at least its leadership - does not share the EU's values. In addition to championing democracy, judicial independence, and the rule of law, the EU has renounced any revision of borders by force. While geographic proximity demands that Russia and the EU manage their relationship in as mutually advantageous a manner as possible, the Kremlin's ongoing war in Ukraine's Donbas region makes this all but impossible.

Nonetheless, French President Emmanuel Macron has made renewed efforts to improve EU-Russian relations, not least by meeting with Putin in the run-up to the G7 summit in Biarritz last month. In Macron's view, it is not

in Europe's interest to drive Russia further into China's arms, or to stand by and watch the ongoing disintegration of US-Russian arms-control treaties. With respect to arms control, American and European interests are not the same, and today's US administration cares little about Europe or its views on any given issue.

But Macron's efforts raise many questions. For starters, it isn't obvious what role Europe could play in renewing the global arms-control regime. Without the US, Europe has little to offer Russia on the issue of intermediate missiles. It would be stuck in the position of trying to convince two unwilling parties to reach a new agreement. And that doesn't even account for China, which has also developed an intermediate-range-missile capacity.

Europe does have something to offer Russia economically. But improving economic relations is simply impossible without verifiable progress in the implementation of the Minsk Protocol to end the conflict in Donbas. It is unclear if Putin would be ready for that.

But the real problem between Russia and the EU is the issue of democracy. Putin and the Russian oligarchy's greatest fear is that Ukraine's 2014 Maidan revolution could be replicated on Moscow's Red Square. The Kremlin does not blame NATO for that possibility; it blames the EU. Anti-NATO rhetoric is a tried and true propaganda trope that exploits many Russians' ingrained fear of a Cold War bogeyman. But the real threat in the eyes of the Russian oligarchy is the EU and its promotion of democracy and the rule of law.

The Russian and European systems are fundamentally incompatible, representing contradictory values and vastly different approaches to foreign and domestic policy. In the nineteenth century, czarist Russia was the leader of the "Holy Alliance," a reactionary bulwark against the bourgeois revolutions sweeping in Europe. This dynamic was reversed under the Bolsheviks after 1917, when Russia became the cradle of revolution. But under Stalin, it returned to pursuing essentially the same aims as the czars, particularly when it came to crushing independence movements in Central and Eastern Europe.

Putin's regime has followed a similar trajectory, retreating to the nineteenth century, allying with the Orthodox Church, and launching attacks on the "decadent West," with tirades against homosexuality and liberalism. The Kremlin's active support for illiberal, nationalist forces in Europe and the United States is just one part of this larger picture.

As desirable as an improvement in relations between the EU and Russia would be, it will come neither quickly nor easily. On the main questions of Ukraine and democracy, Europe can scarcely give an inch.

**O-PED**

By Marina Silva

# The Hollow Consensus on the Amazon

**B**RASILIA - The Amazon rainforest will survive only if the will to preserve it is stronger than the desire to burn it down. And current signs are not positive. Clouds of rhetoric, controversy, and punditry, thicker than the smoke from forest fires, threaten to distract attention from the purposeful action required to protect the world's largest tropical forest. Meanwhile, its destruction continues unabated.

The apparent unanimity on the need to prevent the Amazon's annihilation is nothing more than a hollow consensus. Brazil's current political leaders talk of defending the rainforest, but do nothing to change the predatory development model that is destroying it. Most policymakers have little interest in combining growth and prosperity with social inclusiveness, the protection of forests, and the preservation of indigenous cultures. Instead of learning about the genuinely sustainable development already underway in the Amazon, they oppose every attempt to alter the perverse economic logic of exploitation.

There are already several initiatives to promote sustainable development in the region. They include the 2008 Sustainable Amazon Plan - with inputs from scientists, politicians, and civic leaders - and the more recent Amazônia 4.0, designed by a team of scientists led by the Brazilian climatologist Carlos Nobre.

Although awareness about the Amazon and its potential has advanced considerably, the smartest ideas have yet to be put into practice. And many of those who try to defend the forests are killed - including activists Chico Mendes, Dorothy Stang, José Cláudio, and Maria do Espírito Santo, and, in July this year, indigenous chief Emyra Wajãpi.

Following the most recent global outcry this summer against the fires in the Amazon, the hollow consensus has returned - this time as a dangerous masquerade. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has done little to hide his disdain for the environment and its defenders, both during the 2018 presidential election campaign and since taking office at the start of this year. He vowed on prime-time television to defend "our Amazon" and fight environmental crime, but his deeds fall well short of his words.

Today, Bolsonaro's government is busily dismantling hard-won environmental protections, preventing law-enforcement agencies from enforcing regulations, honoring environmental criminals as "hard-working people," attacking indigenous peoples, rebuking renowned scientists, and criticizing donors such as Norway and Germany that have supported the country's broadly successful Amazon Fund.

Here, Bolsonaro has the backing of Brazil's powerful rural lobby, which controls the Ministry of the Environment and whose representatives make up almost 40% of Congress. These rural interests are actively contributing to the hollow consensus by publicly claiming to support protection of the Amazon while encouraging deforestation.

Even some of the more progressive representatives of the agribusiness sector are participants in the charade. They join with environmentalists in declaring their support for the Amazon, but avoid lobbying their congressional representatives to adopt more enlightened approaches. As a result, many of these lawmakers are effectively siding with the government, the rural lobby, and many in the agribusiness sector who want to weaken environmental oversight, end protection of endangered species and regions, weaken environmental licensing rules, and roll back indigenous rights.

The only way to stop the destruction of the Amazon is through a determined fight against land grabbing, illegal logging and mining, and predatory cattle ranching. These practices are mutually reinforcing and financed by criminal networks, and they threaten to turn the vast rainforest into a degraded, unproductive pastureland.

Brazil's cattle industry is at the heart of the problem. Between 1975 and 2017, the country's herds increased by almost 70%, with much of the growth occurring in the Amazon. For every ten hectares of forest that are cut down, six are turned over to pasture.

Government and business need to take additional steps to disrupt environmental crime. For starters, the government must rapidly secure indigenous rights and provide these citizens with essential public services. And it must end widespread impunity for criminals, which acts as a powerful disincentive to respect the law, and stymies innovation and the adoption of more sustainable practices. The government also must modernize the country's agribusiness sector, which stands to gain from better stewardship of the Amazon - and must itself offer tangible solutions.

The hollow consensus is not restricted to Brazil: at the United Nations General Assembly meetings in New York this week, some world leaders' speeches about the environment offered make-believe remedies and false promises. Meanwhile, in the Amazon, indigenous peoples, riverside communities, smallholder farmers, environmentalists, and civil servants are being threatened and attacked by criminals and neglected by the state.

All of this makes me incredibly sad. I joined the fight to protect the Amazon when I was 18, and I walked alongside Chico Mendes to put an end to relentless deforestation. Our "weapons" were our own bodies. I continued the battle as a senator and then (from 2003 to 2008) as Brazil's environment minister. While in government, I helped to create and implement a national plan to prevent and control deforestation in the Amazon. This initiative helped to reduce deforestation by 83% between 2004 and 2012, prevented the release of four billion tons of carbon dioxide, and created more than 24 million hectares of protected natural areas.

We achieved this by crafting a real consensus based on hard science and solid partnerships. We promoted serious debate across society and tackled the structural causes of deforestation. And we worked together with every stakeholder that was prepared to help solve the Amazon's many social challenges instead of just talking about them.

With the rainforest under increasing threat, now is not the time to step back and take comfort in false promises. More than ever, Brazilian society needs to find its voice, and every sector must assume its responsibilities. By forging a genuine consensus to defend the Amazon, Brazil can once again serve as a role model for the world.



## FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT



FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS OVER THE REMAINS OF OUR BELOVED MOTHER, SISTER, DAUGHTER, WIFE, COUSIN, GRANDMOTHER, MRS. CYNTHIA NENYI DAVIES - GONGAR WHO WENT TO BE WITH THE LORD ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2019 AFTER A PROTRACTED ILLNESS IS AS FOLLOWS:

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2019, THERE WILL BE A SILENT WAKE KEEPING AT THE FAMILY HOUSE ON 9TH STREET.

ON FRIDAY OCTOBER 4, 2019, THE BODY SHALL BE REMOVED FROM THE ST. MOSES FUNERAL PARLOUR AT THE HOUR OF 9:00 A.M. AND SHALL BE TAKEN TO THE A. P. CAMPHOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CLARATOWN, BUSHROD ISLAND.

THE FUNERAL SERVICE SHALL COMMENCE SAME DAY AT 10:00 A.M AT THE A. P. CAMPHOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CLARATOWN, BUSHROD ISLAND.

INTERMENT SHALL FOLLOW THEREAFTER AT THE KAISER MEMORIAL CEMETERY IN BREWERVILLE.

THE DECEASED LEAVES TO MOURN HER LOSS HER CHILDREN, WARD AND SEVERAL GRANDCHILDREN:

MS. TRACY MONEH APPLETON  
MRS. BRENDA APPLETON-SENDOLO  
MR. ERASMUS DADDY APPLETON  
MS. JULIAN LITTLE GIRL APPLETON  
MR. LEO KAITHY APPLETON  
MR. BADIO GOE  
MS. ESTHER GONGAR

HER BROTHER AND SISTER:  
MR. HENRY KOFFA AND MRS. SARAH DAVIES-KENNEDY  
AND A HOST OF OTHER RELATIVES AND FRIENDS  
WITHIN LIBERIA AND THE USA.

THIS ANNOUNCE WAS BROUGHT IN BY THE APPLETON, DAVIES, GONGAR, SETTRO, WHETIE PORTEA FAMILIES ON BEHALF OF THE FAMILY.



# CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA (CBL)

## PRESS RELEASE



The Management of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) held a meeting with Members of the Board of Governors on several challenges facing the Bank, particularly restructuring and reforming the Bank to consider the way to fasttrack the reformation process. The follows were agreed upon:

- (1) The Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) will involve **Kroll** in the reformation process of the Bank.
- (2) The CBL will invite **Kroll** to Liberia for discussion at the end of which a contract will be signed between **Kroll** and the Bank with specific terms of reference.
- (3) The CBL will ensure that **Kroll** works with the Management and Members of the Board of Governors on the process for printing, movement and replacement of the Liberian Dollar currency.
- (4) The CBL will also ensure that **Kroll** is involved in the pending structural reformation of the Bank for effective, efficient and transparent operation. Doing so will require concentration on Departments and Sections with problems, among others.

Signed: Nathaniel R. Patray, III  
Chairman / Board of Governors



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**SPEECH DELIVERED BY**  
**NATHANIEL R. PATRAY, III**  
**EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR/CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA**  
**AT THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DIALOGUE**  
**(2019)**



**His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah**  
**President, Republic of Liberia**

The Chief Justice and members of the Judiciary  
 The Speaker and members of the Legislature  
 Officials of Government Present  
 Traditional Council (Chiefs and Elders)  
 Members of the Diplomatic Corp and Other Foreign Guests  
 Our Development Partners  
 Heads of Academic and Research Institutions  
 The Religious Community  
 Members of the Fourth Estate

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

I am honored to be here this morning as part of this all-important occasion. As a member of the Economic Management Team (EMT) of Liberia, I have been asked to speak on the monetary situation in Liberia, which I am glad to do. The timing of this occasion is relevant for the strengthening of policy in respect to the lingering macroeconomic challenges we face as a country.

Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, given the link amongst macroeconomic indicators, kindly allow me to present brief macroeconomic overview on the pre-shock era considering the period 2006 to 2013 and post shock era capturing the period from 2016 to 2019. The choice of the two periods, pre-shock and post shock, is explained by the Ebola, and commodity shocks, which began from 2014 and 2015, and UNMIL's departure, which started in 2017. These events are relevant for clearly engendering the necessary intervening mechanisms, because the impacts from these shocks still linger.

The Liberian economy recorded an average growth rate of 8.0 percent under an environment of relatively stable inflation and exchange rate from 2006 to 2013. Thanks to the huge international goodwill that stimulated capital inflows. There was massive external assistance, including UNMIL presence in the economy with average annual inflows of about US\$500 million dollars foreign exchange, from 2003-2018 and increased donor inflows of more than US\$2 billion dollars for capital and other investments over the period. These inflows largely explained the moderate pressure in the macroeconomic developments, translated into moderate inflationary pressures and low exchange rate volatility.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the price dynamics and output in Liberia have been more radically influenced by factors outside the control of monetary authorities, characterized by supply-side shocks, such as inadequate production of basic consumables, payments for fees and services in foreign currency, limited market access and storage facilities, high import costs, infrastructure deficit and low inflows of donor support ("donor fatigue"). These situations have often constrained and overwhelmed monetary policy from effectively and efficiently responding to the inflationary and exchange rate volatility. This is not to say that the story of the looming inflationary situation is totally non-monetary. Growth in broad money over the years has also been significant, partly explained by relative expansion in economic activity. Expansionary fiscal policy also explains part of the story.

More sustained efforts have been slow in promoting economic activities in manufacturing and agriculture, as well as reducing the importation of basic consumables that the country can or has the capacity to produce. Productivity has been low in agriculture and manufacturing, reflecting less than 3.0 percent growth on average from 2006 to 2014. Economic activity remains significantly concentrated around the enclave sector with limited linkages between the concession sector and the downstream economic activities for the enhancement of value chain production and job creation.

The vulnerabilities of the Liberian economy became evident by the drastic decline in economic activities as a result of the effects of the Ebola health crisis and the global commodity price slump and exacerbated by the departure of UNMIL. From 2014-2016, investments and other economic activities were subdued with economic growth recording a contraction, from the seemingly impressive growth trajectory of 8.0 percent to negative 0.3 percent.

The current pressures on the domestic currency is accentuated with the departure of UNMIL and slow recovery in commodity prices as well as slowdown in donor assistance. This situation has exerted significant stress on the economy, which grew by an estimated 1.2 percent in 2018, from a revised growth of 3.2 percent, and is expected to further slowdown to 0.4 percent in this year, partly explained by the lukewarm policy response to address the hidden pre-Ebola vulnerabilities.

Today, inflationary pressures have heightened to almost 30.0 percent, whilst the volatility in exchange rate is rapidly increasing, being the highest in the sub-region, adversely contributing to the increasing socio-economic challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, the exchange rate dynamics has emerged as the most predictable drivers of prices in several developing countries, including Liberia. Kindly permit me to highlight below some of the key drivers of exchange rate depreciation in Liberia:

(1) The growing demand for foreign exchange to facilitate imports. The demand for FX as a proxy for total amount needed to facilitate import payments for the first half of 2019 was US\$525.2 million, (imports value, CIF for first half, 2019) of which only 16.91 million (3.2 percent) was met through the CBL intervention, the remaining was acquired from the parallel

market, thereby causing pressure in the market;

(2) Low domestic production in basic food and manufacturing to substitute for basic imported consumables;

(3) Increased injections of Liberian dollars in the economy as a result of fiscal and monetary operations;

(4) Low supply of foreign exchange due to low export earnings and capital inflows; and

(5) Speculative factors driven by market perception about the future value of the Liberian dollar, thereby leading to a self-fulfilling "prophecy."

What is the CBL doing to mitigate the above challenges?

In view of the foregoing challenges, the following are being implemented.

(1) The Bank is currently in the process of reviewing its existing Act to strengthen its operational and goal independence, including governance.

(2) The Bank has developed a new Monetary Policy Framework and Charter to guide the operationalization of its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

(3) This institutional structure will serve as a platform for the formulation and implementation of a forward-looking monetary policy and create the necessary condition for effective assessment of macroeconomic conditions. The new Monetary Policy Framework also seeks to give greater attention to the use of Liberian dollar as a currency of choice as part of the overall de-dollarization strategy.

(4) The Bank, in collaboration with its development partners, is developing Forecasting and Policy Analysis System (FPAS). It is important to note that a result predictable and forward-looking monetary policies are guided by central forecasting systems that help quantify economic outlook. The CBL is also strengthening its data warehouse to enhance the conduct of empirical analysis and provide evidence-based policy advice.

(5) The CBL is collaborating with other Government institutions and development partners to ensure strengthening and full implementation of the de-dollarization Roadmap through a more market and financial based approach. The CBL is working with its partners, fiscal authority, the banking sector and other key actors to ease the liquidity pressures using a mix of money market instruments, such as the standing deposit facility, CBL's bills, CBL's Auctions and reserve requirement ratio, among others through the development of appropriate interest rate corridor.

(6) The CBL remains committed in the implementation of policies that would support the building of foreign exchange reserves to serve as buffer for the Economy. The CBL continues to work to restore public confidence in the financial sector and to attract money into the banking sector. This requires continual engagement with all stakeholders in the financial sector and strengthening our communication strategy.

(7) The CBL is working toward full digitization of the financial system in order to enhance the provision of inclusive financial services and ensure financial deepening. We are also working toward deepening credit intervention programs in the microfinance and agriculture sectors to enhance the capacity of local and encourage investment in cash crops. To promote a cash-lite economy:

(A) The CBL is working towards increasing financial education, to take banking services to the public;

(B) The CBL is holding discussions with development partners and other stakeholders about promulgating regulations indicating that all transactions above a given limit, with the exceptions of goods traded over the counter which can be settled in cash, should be paid through bank transfers and not by cheque or cash, to encourage individuals to open accounts and manage them. This would be more useful if among other things, the mobile banking services such as those provided by MTN and Orange Money can be linked to bank accounts.

(C) The CBL is promoting interconnection of banks and other financial institutions via a common switch where for instance an ATM card from one bank can be used across all banks at an affordable price.

**Monetary policy Developments**

Distinguish ladies and gentlemen, monetary policy implementation has continued to be constrained in the achievement of the core mandate of price stability by the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL). This mandate is dictated by the fact that inflation has implications for eroding the purchasing power of households, reducing the revenue base of the country as well as inhibiting investment inflows and undermining the competitiveness of the economy.

Inflationary and exchange rate pressures do not seem to dissipate. However, CBL continues to muster efforts through diverse monetary policy instruments for containing the rising inflationary trend and reverting the situation in the medium-term. These efforts will come at significant monetary costs to the CBL (or cost to the Government); but the benefits of ensuring a stable macroeconomic environment far exceed the costs.

Due to the unabated inflationary and exchange rate pressures since 2015, the CBL is in the process of shifting its monetary policy framework from intermediate exchange rate targeting to the use of monetary policy rate as the key policy instrument of the Bank. Before now, our monetary policy involved the use of several monetary policy instruments, including the reserve requirements and foreign exchange auctions.

Let me draw your attention to the fact that the transmission mechanism of interest rates in the economy has been relatively ineffective, as the interest rate spread between the lending and saving rates remains wide in the absence of effective monetary policy rate. These phenomena have induced the CBL to contemplate the introduction of a proxy monetary policy rate, the Standing Deposit Facility and the Central Bank notes to be issued at high interest rates to attract liquidity into the banking sector. At the moment, currency outside the banking sector accounts for 86 percent, which is not healthy to promote vibrant financial intermediation and

monetary stability.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we are all aware, a safe, sound and stable financial system is critical to macroeconomic stability and sustainable economic growth. This remains a major objective of the CBL. Despite the challenging macroeconomic environment, the banking industry remains relatively resilient, reflective of profitability, liquidity and capital. However, the high level of non-performing loans above the tolerable limit of 10 percent remains a constraint on the operations of the banking industry, and by extension credit to the private sector. The shallowness of the banking system, however, poses limitation on the effectiveness of monetary policy implementation.

Monetary policy has also been leveraging on other financial instruments to manage liquidity. As a way of increasing the fiscal space for short term cash needs of the government, the treasury bills have been operational with total issuance of 843 million Liberian dollars from January 2018 to end-June 2019 at an average yield of 4.38 percent per annum for 91 days. As a means of attracting retail investors into the money market, the CBL introduced its debt instrument called the CBL Bills, indexed against the exchange rate at a nominal rate of 7.0 percent per annum. The major challenge associated with operationalizing these instruments is the high rate of inflation vis-a-vis the yield on the instruments. In order to address these challenges, the Bank is considering increasing the SDF rate from 4 percent to 24.5 percent. Our major concern is the costs of about US\$9 million dollars required to finance the operation of this rate in one year.

Let me reaffirm that the Bank remains supportive of the Government's Pro-Poor Policy, especially the pillar emphasizing "Financial Inclusion." At the moment, access to financial services is estimated at 36 percent, significantly driven by mobile money. The Central Bank is in the process of strengthening efforts at promoting digitization of the financial system.

With this challenge, the CBL has proffered the following recommendations:

(1) Efforts should be made to add value to the primary products to lengthen the value chain, diversify to reduce exposure to commodity price shocks and explore geographically diverse markets.

(2) The Government is encouraged to strengthen their competitiveness and simplify its regulatory environments. The Government is also urged to develop digital ecosystems that are required to take advantage of the opportunity associated with digitalization.

(3) Efforts should be made to provide conducive and enabling environment especially trade-related infrastructure for the private sector to harness the opportunities of trade.

(4) The Government should apply measures aimed at lowering the cost of doing business i.e. ensuring regular supply of power, enhancing transport connectivity, and improving macroeconomic environment to lower the cost of capital.

(5) The Government should continue to work with the ECOWAS Commission in taking appropriate measures to lift tariff and non-tariff barriers which are usually instituted under the banner of protectionism.

(6) Regional trade integration protocols for the promotion of regional trade integration commitments should be encouraged to domesticate and implement.

The Bank is at an advanced stage in the finalization of important regulations, including rural financial services, mobile money, consumer protection, microfinance institutions, and payments system. All these policy initiatives are expected to deepen financial inclusion for the realization of stable financial environment and improved welfare.

Low financial access and services have continued to impose constraint on the implementation of monetary policy; hence the need for greater efforts to deepen the financial system, something that the CBL prioritizes as aptly articulated in the Financial Sector Development Implementation Plan (FSDIP) which was launched in 2014 with support from the World Bank.

The CBL, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Development (MFDP) recently developed a detailed Roadmap for the Digitization of the Liberian economy. The Roadmap intends to leapfrog the Liberian economy from the present stage to a more efficient, transparent and productive system. The digitization initiative will also promote financial inclusion, minimize fraud, reduce delay in payments, and deepen financial activities.

As part of the roadmap implementation, the Bank continues to engage the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) and the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) for the automation of all Government of Liberia's Revenue Collections and Disbursements. This integration will ensure the timely and seamless automation of payments of civil servants' salaries, pension benefits, vendor payments, and payments to other government ministries and agencies at the same time provide secure and efficient collection of Revenue.

The CBL is in readiness to implement, in collaboration with the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI) and the AFRIXEM Bank, the Regional Project for the integration of technological payment systems and the definition of a common framework for transacting, clearing and settling cross border transactions in domestic currencies. The project is expected to enhance trade in the sub-region, and to mitigate corresponding banking relationship difficulties, reaching to all market participants with financial services that are fast, reliable, simpler and affordable.

## Conclusion

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion please allow me to briefly outline some of the key challenges impacting effective monetary policy implementation in Liberia. They include:

- (1) Dual currency regime that limits monetary policy options by the CBL;
- (2) The shallowness of the financial system, as reflected by the lack of functioning financial markets where policy instruments are traded;

- (3) Excess liquidity outside the mainstream banking system, which is undermining intermediation;
- (4) Limited foreign reserves, thus inhibiting the CBL's ability to adequately respond to potential external shocks to the economy and help smoothen exchange rate volatility;
- (5) High imported cost push inflation that has adverse implications for real purchasing power;
- (6) Low credit to the private sector, especially agriculture and manufacturing;
- (7) High cash driven economy which increases the costs of financial transactions and risks; and
- (8) High non-performing loans which undermines the real liquidity positions of banks and the economy in general, which could negatively affect the real economy;

What is the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) doing to mitigate the challenges impacting effective monetary policy implementation in Liberia?

In view of the foregoing challenges, the following are being implemented by the CBL:

- (1) The CBL has reviewed its Act of 1999 in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to strengthen its operational and goal independence, including governance. The document has been submitted to the Board of Governors of the Bank;
- (2) The Bank has developed a new Monetary Policy Framework and Charter to guide the operationalization of its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). This institutional structure will serve as a platform for the formulation and implementation of a forward-looking monetary policy and create the necessary condition for effective assessment of macroeconomic conditions. The new Monetary Policy Framework also seeks to give greater attention to the use of Liberian dollar as a currency of choice as part of the overall de-dollarization strategy;
- (3) The Bank, in collaboration with its development partners, is developing Forecasting and Policy Analysis System (FPAS). It is important to note that a result predictable and forward-looking monetary policies are guided by central forecasting systems that help quantify economic outlook;
- (4) The CBL is also strengthening its data warehouse to enhance the conduct of empirical analysis and provide evidence-based policy advice;
- (5) The CBL is collaborating with other Government institutions and development partners to ensure strengthening and full implementation of the de-dollarization Roadmap through a more market and financial based approach;
- (6) The CBL is working with its partners, fiscal authority, the banking sector and other key actors to ease the liquidity pressures using a mix of money market instruments, such as the standing deposit facility, CBL's bills, CBL's Auctions and reserve requirement ratio, among others through the development of appropriate interest rate corridor;
- (7) The CBL remains committed in the implementation of policies that would support the building of foreign exchange reserves to serve as buffer for the economy;
- (8) The CBL continues to work to restore public confidence in the financial sector and to attract money into the banking sector. This requires continual engagement with all stakeholders in the financial sector and strengthening our communication strategy;
- (9) The CBL is working toward full digitization of the financial system in order to enhance the provision of inclusive financial services and ensure financial deepening;
- (10) We are also working toward deepening credit intervention programs in the microfinance and agriculture sectors to enhance the capacity of local farmers and encourage investments in cash crops;

To promote a cash-lite economy,

- (1) CBL is working towards increasing financial education, to take banking services to the public;
- (2) CBL is holding discussions with development partners and other stakeholders about promulgating regulations indicating that all transactions above a given limit, with the exceptions of goods traded over the counter which can be settled in cash, should be paid through bank transfers and not by cheque or cash, to encourage individuals to open accounts and manage them. This would be more useful if among other things, the mobile banking services such as those provided by MTN and Orange Money can be linked to bank accounts.
- (3) The CBL is promoting interconnection of banks and other financial institutions via a common switch where for instance an ATM card from one bank can be used across all banks at an affordable price.

At the just concluded Statutory meeting of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) in Conakry, Guinea, the CBL held a side meeting with the Central Bank of Nigeria with the aim of knowledge sharing on some of these initiatives and to promote intra-regional trade through the direct exchange of Liberia dollars for Naira and vis versa. I am glad to inform you that the scoping mission from Nigeria is expected in Liberia from September 7 to 12, 2019.

Before I close, let me extend my thanks and appreciation to all our partners, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and International Finance Corporation (IFC), USAID, UNDP, UNFPA, the diplomatic Missions accredited near Monrovia, ECOWAS, AU and MRU for their technical and financial support to the work of the CBL. We are also grateful to the various Ministries and Agencies of Government, financial institutions, and the Liberian people for their cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

# Français

## Nous préférons le Tribunal des crimes de guerre à l'arbre à palabre

Le président George Manneh Weaha dit préférer le dialogue sous un arbre à palabre par rapport à la création d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre et des crimes économiques au Libéria, comme il l'a si bien répété dans son discours à la 74<sup>ème</sup> Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, le mercredi 25 septembre. Cela témoigne de sa réticence à mettre un terme à la culture d'impunité et à promouvoir la justice dans le pays.

Pendant que des Libériens de tous horizons confondus, y compris les anciens et les chefs traditionnels, les chefs religieux et les parties prenantes clés, réclament ce tribunal, comme c'est le cas du récent Dialogue économique national tenu à Monrovia, le président, lui, semble jouer avec une chose dont le progrès du Libéria dépend.

Le Président a l'audace de demander à l'Assemblée



générale pourquoi les réclamations en faveur de la création d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre et des crimes économiques au Libéria se sont accentuées sous son administration comme s'il n'a pas vu les atrocités les plus

odieuses commises pendant la guerre civile.

Quoi de plus normal pour l'un des principaux acteurs des atrocités et principal suspect des crimes de guerre, le sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson, qui exulte

maintenant et exprime son soutien au prétendu dialogue consultatif du président Weah avec les législateurs du Capitole sur la question du tribunal des crimes de guerre, parce qu'il sait très bien que l'exercice est un simple coup publicitaire qui vise à contrecarrer tout effort honnête visant à mettre en place un tel tribunal.

On peut même se demander en quoi l'arbre à palabre qui est si cher au président est-il différent des auditions publiques qui ont été organisées par la Commission Vérité et Réconciliation du Libéria, il y a plus d'une dizaine d'années. A noter que des chefs de guerre et d'autres acteurs y ont témoigné et défendu leurs crimes atroces sans le moindre remord.

Le président Weah insiste sur la nécessité de convenir sur un mécanisme qui garantisse le maintien de la paix, de la stabilité, de la justice et de la réconciliation, tout en améliorant les perspectives de relance économique. Mais quel autre mécanisme existe-t-il pour garantir un tel climat si ce n'est la justice ou un tribunal compétent devant lequel les auteurs présumés auront l'occasion de prouver leur innocence et de s'en aller avec

fierté?

Nous invitons le président et tous ceux qui s'opposent à la création d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre et des crimes économiques au Libéria à jeter un coup d'œil sur la situation en Sierra Leone pour voir les avantages. Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que la justice suscite non seulement la confiance des partenaires internationaux, mais favorise également les investissements étrangers, la stabilité et sert de moyen de dissuasion à tous ceux qui seront tentés par le désir de conquérir le pouvoir par les armes.

Malgré l'ampleur colossale des appels à la création d'un tel tribunal tant au sein du gouvernement qu'à l'extérieur, nous commençons à croire que les législateurs et les magistrats contrôlés par le parti au pouvoir ne ménageront aucun effort pour contrecarrer tout effort sincère en faveur de la justice.

Pourtant, le régime de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique a beaucoup à gagner à approuver la création d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre. Il est grand temps de lutter contre l'impunité et de promouvoir la justice dans le pays. Encore faut-il qu'ils s'en rendent compte.

## Accusée de fomenter un coup contre le chef de l'Etat, la vice-présidente s'insurge

« Méchants et diaboliques », c'est en ces termes que la vice-présidente du Libéria, Mme Jewel Howard Taylor, a qualifié ceux qui l'accusent d'instiguer un soulèvement populaire contre le président George Weah.

La vice-présidente libérienne a nié tout lien avec le groupe de libériens qui réclament le départ du président George Weah. S'exprimant lors d'une

conférence de presse jeudi 26 septembre dans son bureau à Capitol Hill, Monrovia, elle s'est étonnée face à ces accusations, comme quoi il serait insensé de sa part, en tant que vice-présidente ou numéro deux du régime, d'affaiblir son gouvernement.

Le groupe qui a organisé la manifestation du 7 juin à Monrovia, le Conseil des patriotes (COP), a annoncé une nouvelle manifestation

pour décembre, cette fois-ci pour demander au président Weah de démissionner. Le groupe l'accuse d'être incompetent.

Ce n'est pas pour la première fois que Mme Taylor est accusée de tenter de déstabiliser le pouvoir en place. Elle avait été soupçonnée d'avoir des liens avec le COP et de lui avoir apporté son soutien financier lors de la première manifestation.

Avant la manifestation du 7 juin, le président Weah l'avait désignée publiquement pour recevoir les revendications des manifestants, mais elle ne s'était pas présentée à la dernière heure, invoquant des raisons de santé.

« J'ai bien fait de faire partie de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique et j'ai brigué le fauteuil de vice-président aux côtés du président et j'ai été élue. Je sais qu'il est préférable de faire partie du processus au lieu d'essayer de déstabiliser le gouvernement, et je pense que ceux qui propagent ces rumeurs sont des gens méchants et diaboliques », a dit la vice-présidente libérienne.



### Articles traduits

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Elle a dit avoir été victime de stigmatisation pendant de nombreuses années en raison de son association avec son ex-mari, l'ancien président emprisonné Charles Ghankay Taylor, d'où son refus de se laisser entraîner dans quelque chose qui finira par ternir son image.

« Je n'étais pas là pendant les années de guerres civiles et comme je me suis mariée avec M. Taylor, j'ai subi une stigmatisation. Et vous pensez que je vais vouloir mettre mes mains dans quelque chose qui va ternir mon image à la fin ? Non. Le Libéria est le seul pays dont je possède un passeport et le Libéria est le seul pays que mes enfants et mes petits-enfants ont comme patrie. C'est mon

gouvernement et la seule chose à faire est de soutenir le processus de bonne gouvernance pour le bien-être de tous », a-t-elle déclaré.

Le parti national patriotique fondé par son ex-mari Charles Taylor et dont elle était leader politique a formé une coalition politique en 2017 avec le congrès pour le changement démocratique de M. Weah pour donner naissance à la Coalition pour le changement démocratique, actuellement au pouvoir.

Mais les relations entre les deux leaders ne sont pas très agréables. Elle a une fois présenté ses excuses au président Weah pour s'être rendue à l'étranger à plusieurs reprises sans l'informer.

# Français

## Massacre du 28-septembre en Guinée : vers un procès ?

En Guinée, les auteurs en treillis de l'attaque du 28 septembre 2009 sous la junte du capitaine Moussa Dadis Camara contre des opposants réunis dans un stade de Conakry restent toujours impunis dix ans après leurs crimes.

Le 28 septembre 2009, des éléments des forces armées guinéennes sous la junte du capitaine Moussa Dadis Camara, prenaient d'assaut un stade de Conakry, la capitale, où s'étaient réunis plusieurs milliers d'opposants. Près de 160 personnes ont alors été tuées dans l'attaque et 1 400 autres blessées tandis que plus d'une centaine de femmes ont également été violées par les soldats.

Ce déchaînement de violences et des crimes est resté impuni depuis lors. D'où cet appel lancé ce 28 septembre 2019 par la Haute-commissaire de l'ONU aux droits de l'homme aux autorités guinéennes. Michelle Bachelet les presse d'« accélérer » l'organisation du procès tout en se disant inquiète qu'un certain nombre de hauts fonctionnaires mis en accusation ne soient pas encore traduits en justice.

« Beaucoup de progrès ont été faits, déclare Patrice Vahard, le représentant du Haut-commissariat en Guinée. Mais après dix ans, c'est insuffisant aux yeux des victimes. Il est vraiment temps que les victimes soient effectivement indemnisées, qu'il y ait une date précise pour ce procès et que le procès ait lieu pour que la vérité soit dite. Mais aussi dans l'intérêt de la paix et la stabilité du développement de ce pays ».

Le ministre de la Justice évoque plusieurs préalables, notamment rassembler l'argent pour indemniser les victimes ou la rénovation de la cour d'appel. « Si la volonté y est, je ne pense pas que l'obstacle financier doit être le principal pour le report du procès, estime Patrice Vahard. Depuis l'année dernière, la question budgétaire avait été discutée. Le gouvernement a indiqué une enveloppe financière pour la tenue ou au moins le démarrage des travaux. Peut-être que cela ne suffira pas pour avoir le tout, mais la communauté internationale aussi s'est dit prête à faire un accompagnement financier. La finance ne doit pas être un frein à la manifestation de la vérité ».

« Le procès n'a pas commencé en réalité et c'est déplorables, poursuit-il. Si les citoyens doivent côtoyer des personnes sur lesquelles pèsent des suspicions assez fortes, ce n'est bien ni pour ces fonctionnaires, ni pour la population. Cela envoie le signal que l'impunité est toujours de mise. Le

message à envoyer est que nul n'est au-dessus de la loi et que tout le monde doit répondre de ses actes, surtout quand il s'agit de personnes qui ont occupé de hautes fonctions. Il est vraiment temps que le procès ait lieu et que certains des présumés auteurs qui occupent encore des fonctions fassent face à la justice ». Rendre justice aux victimes Dans un communiqué conjoint, les ambassades de France et des États-Unis ainsi que la délégation de l'Union européenne en Guinée soulignent également « l'importance de la tenue d'un procès sans plus tarder » afin que les auteurs présumés de ces crimes puissent répondre dans les plus brefs délais de leurs actes devant la justice. Ils réitèrent leur « engagement à coopérer étroitement avec les autorités et la justice guinéennes en vue de garantir l'organisation d'un procès transparent et équitable ».

Du côté des autorités guinéennes, le Premier ministre Ibrahim Kassory Fofana s'est voulu rassurant quant à la tenue du procès. Il est intervenu le 27 septembre au soir à la télévision nationale guinéenne « au nom du président de la République Alpha Condé pour d'une part présenter les condoléances de la nation » aux victimes du massacre et pour promettre que ces crimes ne resteront pas impunis.

« Pour celles et ceux de nos compatriotes qui ont vécu dans leur chair, les viols, les outrages, les sévices, les coups et blessures ou les disparitions de proches du fait notamment de ces violences qui ont endeuillé la Guinée et consterné le monde entier, je veux les rassurer de notre détermination à œuvrer pour la manifestation de la vérité et pour la lutte contre l'impunité, a-t-il déclaré. Mon gouvernement réaffirme solennellement que tous les auteurs des injustices commises à l'occasion de ces événements tragiques du stade du 28 septembre seront jugés et les victimes indemnisées à la hauteur des préjudices qui leur ont été causés ». « Ce procès sera, nous l'espérons, et nous nous y engageons fermement, une occasion de rendre justice aux victimes, de relever concrètement le défi contre l'impunité pour construire durablement en Guinée, un modèle démocratique ancré sur les valeurs et les principes de l'état de droit », a ajouté Ibrahim Kassory Fofana.

Six organisations guinéennes et internationales de défense des droits humains dont HumanRights Watch et Amnesty International ont également dénoncé l'absence de procès des auteurs du massacre alors que « les familles attendent toujours qu'on leur rende justice ».

## COMMENTAIRE

By Joschka Fischer

## À quoi tient le gel des relations entre l'Europe et la Russie ?

**B**ERLIN - Bien que l'Union européenne et la Russie fassent partie de la même masse continentale, elles n'ont pas tant de choses en commun. En fait, les Russes n'ont pas encore décidé de l'endroit où leur pays se situe dans le monde. La majeure partie de son territoire est en Asie, mais plus de 70 % de sa population vit à l'Ouest de l'Oural. Les Russes n'ont aucun intérêt à s'associer à l'Asie de l'Est ou au Sud musulman, de sorte que leur seul choix consiste à faire cavalier seul ou à s'orienter vers l'Europe.

Mais faire cavalier seul est un choix risqué. La Russie est un colosse doté de l'arme nucléaire, mais connaît un déclin démographique, économique et technologique. Le pays vit encore de l'exportation de combustibles fossiles et d'autres produits de base, ce qui est à peine suffisant pour assurer le statut de superpuissance au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Elle risque de plus en plus de devenir un partenaire mineur de la Chine.

Son seul autre choix possible, c'est l'Europe. Mais les deux parties prenantes restent prisonnières de leur histoire respective. Le souvenir de l'oppression sous les tsars et les soviétiques reste vivace en Europe centrale et orientale, notamment en Pologne et dans les pays baltes. L'annexion de la Crimée et la campagne militaire dans l'Est de l'Ukraine par le président russe Poutine ont renforcé la méfiance à l'égard de la Russie dans la région.

Les relations entre la Russie et le reste de l'Europe sont également déterminées par son histoire. Sous le choc de l'effondrement soviétique tout au long des années 1990, la Russie a adopté une mentalité du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle depuis que Poutine est arrivé au pouvoir en 2000. L'élite russe, nostalgique de la période tsariste d'avant la révolution bolchevique, considère son pays comme une grande puissance européenne - voire même comme une puissance hégémonique, dans le cas d'Europe de l'Est - directement opposée à l'UE.

La raison d'être de l'UE est de transcender les zones d'influence en Europe, parce que c'est la seule manière de se prémunir contre le retour des luttes de pouvoir et contre les guerres catastrophiques qui ont connu leur paroxysme durant la première moitié du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Pourtant la Russie est tout simplement trop grande pour être intégrée au sein de l'UE (en effet, il est difficile de savoir qui intégrerait qui).

Même si ce n'était pas le cas, la Russie - ou du moins sa haute direction - ne partage pas les valeurs de l'UE. Non contente de défendre la démocratie, l'indépendance judiciaire et l'État de droit, l'UE a renoncé à toute révision des frontières par la force. Si la proximité géographique exige que la Russie et l'UE gèrent leurs relations mutuelles de manière aussi avantageuse que possible, la guerre continue du Kremlin dans la région du Donbass en Ukraine rend cela quasiment impossible.

Néanmoins le président français Emmanuel Macron a redoublé d'efforts pour améliorer les relations entre l'UE et la Russie, notamment en organisant sa rencontre avec Poutine à la veille du sommet du G7 à Biarritz le mois dernier. Selon Macron, il n'est pas dans l'intérêt de l'Europe de pousser davantage la Russie dans les bras de la

Chine, ni de rester passif face à la désintégration en cours des traités sur le contrôle des armements entre les États-Unis et la Russie. En ce qui concerne le contrôle des armements, les intérêts américains et européens ne sont pas les mêmes et l'administration américaine en place se soucie peu de l'Europe ou de ses points de vue éventuels.

Mais les efforts de Macron soulèvent de nombreuses questions. Tout d'abord, il n'est pas évident de déterminer le rôle que l'Europe pourrait jouer pour renouveler le régime de contrôle des armements à l'échelle mondiale. Sans les États-Unis, l'Europe a peu de choses à proposer à la Russie sur la question des missiles à portée intermédiaire. L'Europe serait coincée dans la position d'essayer de convaincre deux parties prenantes, apparemment peu enclines à parvenir à un nouvel accord. Tout cela sans même tenir compte de la Chine, qui a également mis au point sa capacité de missiles à portée intermédiaire.

L'Europe a bien quelque chose à proposer à la Russie sur le plan économique. Mais l'amélioration des relations économiques est tout simplement impossible sans des progrès avérés dans la mise en œuvre du Protocole de Minsk pour mettre fin au conflit dans la région du Donbass. Il n'est pas évident que Poutine soit prêt à en discuter.

Mais le vrai problème entre la Russie et l'UE, c'est la question de la démocratie. La plus grande peur de Poutine et de l'oligarchie russe est que la Révolution Maidan en Ukraine de 2014 puisse se reproduire sur la Place Rouge de Moscou. Le Kremlin ne rejette pas la faute sur l'OTAN pour cette possibilité : mais il la rejette sur l'UE. La rhétorique anti-OTAN est un trope de propagande éprouvé, qui exploite la crainte d'une Guerre froide enracinée chez de nombreux Russes. Mais la véritable menace aux yeux de l'oligarchie russe est l'UE et sa promotion de la démocratie et de l'État de droit.

Les systèmes russes et européens sont fondamentalement incompatibles, en ce qu'ils représentent des valeurs contradictoires et des approches très différentes de la politique étrangère et intérieure. Au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, la Russie tsariste était à la tête de la « Sainte alliance », un rempart réactionnaire contre les révolutions bourgeoises qui ont traversé l'Europe. Cette dynamique s'est inversée sous les Bolcheviks après 1917, lorsque la Russie est devenue le berceau de la révolution. Mais sous Staline, la Russie a recommencé à poursuivre essentiellement les mêmes objectifs que les tsars, en particulier en écrasant les mouvements d'indépendance en Europe centrale et orientale.

Le régime de Poutine poursuit la même trajectoire, en opérant un retrait vers le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, en s'alliant avec l'Église orthodoxe et en lançant des attaques contre « l'Occident décadent » avec des tirades contre l'homosexualité et le libéralisme. Le soutien actif du Kremlin en faveur des forces nationalistes et antilibérales en Europe et aux États-Unis n'est qu'une partie de ce contexte plus large.

Aussi souhaitable que soit une amélioration des relations entre l'UE et la Russie, elle ne sera ni rapide, ni facile. Sur les principales questions de l'Ukraine et de la démocratie, l'Europe peut difficilement céder un pouce de terrain.

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**UL launches new degree program on Environmental Studies**

A School of Environmental Studies and Climate Change has been inaugurated at the University of Liberia.

The School offers both undergraduate and graduate academic programs that support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on Climate Action.

It addresses the need for research, and capacity development that will contribute significantly to solving environmental issues in Liberia and its surroundings.

These professional programs also capture climate change adaptation and vulnerability, as well as, disaster management thereby, responding to increasing labor-market demand for professionals knowledgeable about these issues in Liberia and internationally.

This initiative supported by UNDP's National Adaptation Plans Project (NAPs) in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is funded by the Green Climate Fund.

The two-degree granting Environmental Studies and

Climate Change programme is to help promote and contribute to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) of Liberia.

The focus will be on developing a greater understanding of environmental disasters, related issues of climate change and biodiversity.

Speaking at the inauguration, University of

Liberia President, Ophelia Weeks, ecstatic about the fruition of this strategic endeavor, described the launch as a key milestone in the history of the Country.

Dr. Weeks expressed appreciation to development partners especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its continued support to Liberia's recovery process.

It was in 2018 that the President of the University of Liberia and UNDP Resident Representative signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the School of Environmental Studies & Climate Change.

At the level of UNDP, Dorsla Farcahy of the Sustainable Economic Transformation Pillar re-echo the global call for action to stem climate change. Farcahy at the launch of the program, proxy for UNDP Resident Representative Pa Lamin Beyai.

He pledged the agency's catalytic support, but hammered the need for a sustained budget by the government of Liberia to such initiative.

"A national response to action is ensuring mainstreaming and domestication of climate change issues through a budget system.

Similar call for budgetary support by the government, was made by the Deputy Director General of the EPA Randall Dobayou.

The official launch was performed by Representative Ivar Jones of the House's Committee on Lands, Mines, Natural Resources and Environment.

Representative Jones stressed that individual actions contribute substantially to climate change.

"Climate Change is not a myth, it is real," Jones emphasized.

He encouraged the need to turn disadvantages of climate change issues into opportunities that would help mitigate the effects.

Other Speakers included representatives from the EPA, World Bank, FAO, LISGIS, WHO, NIC, Ministries of Gender, Finance and Development Planning and Mines and Energy, among others.

Part of the school program is the development of three or six months of credit earned certificate programs.

Through these programs, the school will graduate professional whose qualifications, skills, and competencies will meet the community, county, national, and international needs.

Additionally, it will offer research, community capacity building (training & technical assistance), innovation (model demonstration) and information dissemination.

The structure and processes for governing the new School are modeled after those of other existing colleges and are consistent with the UL regulations.



**New group targets slum youth empowerment**

By Winston W. Parley

A non-profit organization named Action Against Societal Ills (ACASI) has been launched in Monrovia, with aim to give humanitarian support, education and provide capacity building programs to underprivileged youth living mostly in slum communities across Liberia.

The launch of ACASI on Friday, 27 September witnessed scores of young people marching through Vai Town on the Bushrod Island ahead of an indoor program held at the A.

Vamuyan Corneh Market facilities.

ACASI boasts of having partners all around the world, including in Europe, America and across Africa.

At its launch, the group says its objective is to continue to build an African ideology to support one another in all positive initiatives that will develop the African continent and its people.

The founder and president of ACASI, Mr. Ousman M.S. Dorley said in a keynote speech that the institution's membership and partnership

engagements cut across religion, sex, ethnicity, educational status, physical structure and nationality.

He says ACASI has partners all around the world, including in Europe, America and Africa.

According to Mr. Dorley, ACASI is a non-profit organization operating in Liberia with a singular aim to give humanitarian support, education and provide capacity building programs to underprivileged youth living mostly in slum communities towards sustainable empowerment and healthy living.

Further, Mr. Dorley indicates that ACASI envisions to innovatively champion developmental focus initiatives that will continue to improve, impact and sustain its smart goals to build sustainable, healthy and productive communities, educating the youth so that they can gain the confidence and skills to be reintegrated into mainstream society.

He says the institution's mission dwells on improving the quality of life for underprivileged young people, mostly living in slum communities of Liberia.

Dorley urges other young people to get on board as the organization moves forward.



**Students lack**

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relocate and retrieve some of the chairs stolen from his school.

According to him, through the process seven chairs donated to Williams V.S. Tubman High School by NASSACORP with the inscription at the back: "MCSS" have been identified at the Christian High School.

He said that the authorities are investigating as to how these chairs got in the possession of the Christian High School, noting that he does not believe that the school itself went to Tubman High to steal the armchairs.

Mr. Goldore says he wants to know who took the chairs away from his campus.

Mr. Goldore calls on the alumni of the school to do something about the problem of chairs shortage at WVST, lamenting that the few good chairs that the school has are insufficient for the students.

When contacted, the proprietor of the Christian High School Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Z. Liberty confirmed that he saw only three of the chairs in question at the entrance of his

school.

He however clarified that the chairs were not in his school as claimed by WVST Principal Mr. Goldore.

In another development, 210 students and 52 instructional staff at the WVST had their eyes tested, following which those with complications were provided glasses while those without any complication received medications from the Liberia School Health Program.

Mr. Goldore disclosed that a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) known as the Refuge Place International also visited the Tubman high and conducted eye screening for 10th and 12th graders free of charge.

Glasses were provided for those with minor eye problem, followed by another group which provided similar eye services to students.

He thanked the government for painting some of the external parts of the school building, changing damage doors and installing brand new commode. — *Edited by Winston W. Parley*

# PYJ asked to take responsibility

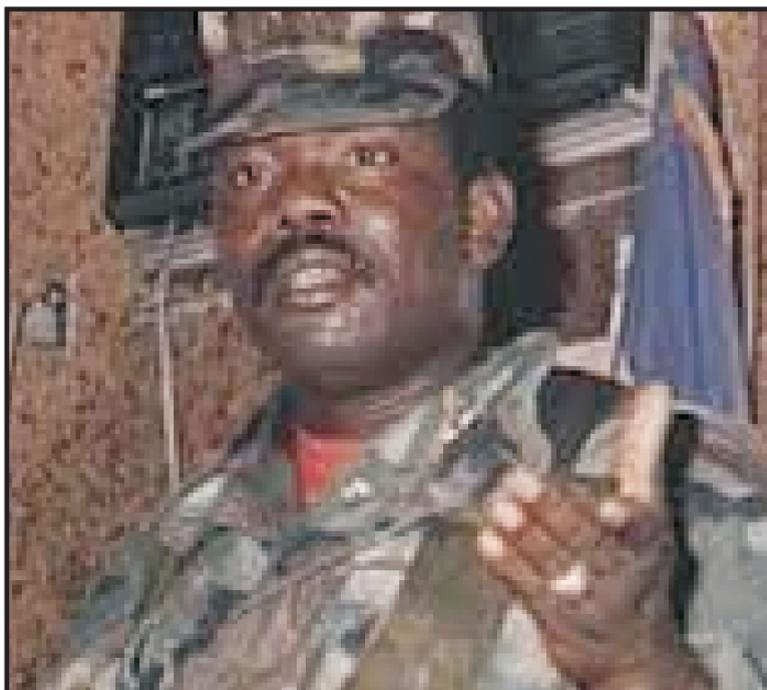
By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

**R**iver Gee County Senator Conmany B. Wesseh strongly warns Nimba County Senator and leader of the disbanded rebels Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) to take full responsibility for the killing of President Samuel Kanyon Doe on September 09, 1990, during the civil war in Liberia rather than bragging that the action was taken in defend of the people of Nimba County.

Speaking to the NewDawn in his office at the Capitol in Monrovia, Senator Wesseh calls on his colleague PYJ, dubbed as the political godfather of Nimba, to be man enough and take responsibility for his action instead of shifting blames.

PYJ, former Field Marshall, commanded the dreadful INPFL after he broke away from the main National Patriotic Front of Liberia that invaded the country from Ivory Coast thru Butuo, a border town in Nimba under the leadership of now jailed former President Charles Taylor to topple the Doe regime.

Last week, Senator Johnson bragged that he killed President Doe in revenge of his kinsmen in Nimba whom, according to him, were being murdered in cold blood on a daily basis. He argued the only option for the people to get constitutional and God-given freedom is to fight back.



But the comments did not sail well with Grand Gedeh County Electoral District #1 Representative and cousin of the slain president, Zoe Emmanuel Pennue, who immediately responded that the people of Grand Gedeh would not condone such assertion from the Cuban-trained guerrilla leader, PYJ.

"I hope [it] is not true that he (Johnson) bragged about the killing of former President Doe because [this] is nothing to brag about. I heard the reaction of Representative Zoe Pennue and I think the reaction is timely. I think it is time to end such exchanges that tend to speak on behalf of people when actually individuals should take responsibility for their

actions," Sen. Wesseh says.

"The Nimba people did not have a meeting to instruct Sen. Johnson to kill former President Doe; Johnson shouldn't link Nimba people to the death of Doe."

He notes the statement of Sen. Johnson's creates a scenario of retaliation for Nimba people, which should not be.

"The war was not for Grand Gedeh, the Krahn people nor was it for the people of Nimba; what Sen. Johnson is trying to do is to tribalize the war and it could create something we don't expect. We should deal with the war on who did what, where and why, and not on tribe," the River Gee Senator cautions.

He continues that PYJ and

other Liberian warlords should be proud of what they did during the crises. "They should say I did this and take proud in their past; their actions were [not] mandated by their respective counties or tribes."

Commenting on plan by the current administration to print new banknotes, Sen. Wesseh says printing of new banknotes may be accepted, but the government should provide full understanding as to what policy and mechanisms are being put in place to ensure proper management of the expected new currency.

According to him, the current managerial team at the Central Bank of Liberia lacks public confidence, so new mechanism and policy could help to restore such trust.

Senator Wesseh, a veteran Liberian progressive, reminds that the CBL board of governors and officials are yet to account for the missing LRD16 billion and the US\$25 million mop up exercise, respectively.

He says the country's financial and monetary authorities failed terribly to tell Liberians what actually happened, so the only option

they think is printing new currency.

According to Senator Wesseh, issues of the missing billions and US\$25 mop up exercise gives room for policymakers and many people to suspect that the confidence of the Central Bank has eroded massively.

He notes the essence of printing of new currency is based on the fact that about 86 percent of the current banknotes is outside the banking system thereby, causing uncontrollable inflation and daily escalation of the exchange rate.

"But the question is what [are] the new policy and technical mechanisms being put in place to avoid the occurrence of similar mess we are in today. This is my concern; the team lacks trust and confidence and managing our money requires [a] committed team", he underscores.

Liberia is in a quandary engulfed by unresolved issues of the past and current economic challenges that are taking a serious toll on its population with outcry for reform and justice. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

## Students lack sufficient chairs at Tubman High

By Emmanuel Mondaye

**S**tudents at the government - run William V. S. Tubman High School (WVST) in Sinkor, suburb of Monrovia are said to be facing serious constraints in sitting in classes at the institution due to lack of sufficient chairs.

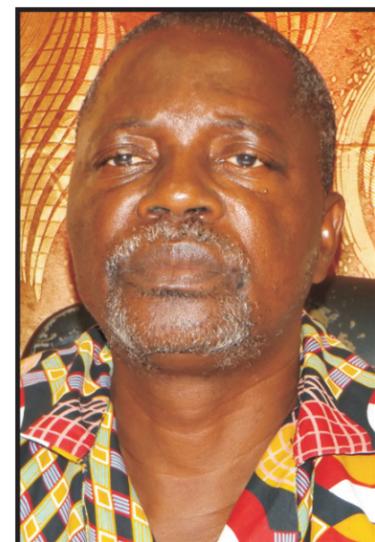
Addressing reporters over the weekend at his 12th Street office in Sinkor, the principal of the institution Mr. Alassis N. Goldore disclosed that it took the intervention of NASSACORP and LMA in 2018 to resolve the sitting constrains at the school.

However, he noted that most of those armchairs were either damaged or stolen from the school campus by some community dwellers living around the school's vicinity.

It can be recalled that in 2018, as part of its corporate responsibility, the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP) provided 200 armchairs.

In that same period, the school was rescued by the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA) that also provided 150 armchairs to the institution.

But some community dwellers that usually pass through the campus are



accused by the principal of allegedly stealing the school's armchairs.

According to him, several students at Tubman High do not have seats to sit, and that a lot of them sit on armless chairs which create difficulties for them to copy their lessons.

In its attempt to find solution for students this academic year, Mr. Goldore says the school has started repairing some of the damaged chairs to reduce the challenges faced by students.

Further to that he says he has instituted a serious security check in various schools within Sinkor to

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## EPA questions Gol's

Government's lack of investment of more money to maintain these scientists in the institution to create more of these programs in many schools here.

"So on this day, we are amplifying our voice and we are becoming the champion calling on our government to increase resources in the budget for climate change," he notes.

Meanwhile, Mr. Dobayou has lauded the University of Liberia (UL), saying the timing of the launch of the program could not have come anytime better than now, when it is scientifically clear that Liberia is highly vulnerable to coastal erosion and flood due to limited infrastructure, technology, knowledge and capacity gaps.

For his part, Margibi County Rep. Ivar Jones who launched the newly formed School of Environmental Studies and Climate Change at UL, indicated that because of human action, the forest is

depleting on a daily basis.

He adds that the ozone layer is depleting, saying "climate change is real; climate change is not a myth as perceived by non-believer."

As indicators that the world is nearing a critical point, Rep. Jones cites ocean and sea level rise, flooding and environmental issues.

Speaking earlier, UL president Dr. Ophelia Inez Weeks said it will take all of the agencies, students, faculty and staff to make the program successful, sustainable and beneficial to the country.

She terms the program as quite fitting at this point in time, having seen in real time some of the effects of climate change on nations around the world, in the neighborhoods and the communities.

Giving the overview of the Liberia National Action Plan (NAP), the Program Manager of NAP at the UNDP Mr. E. Abraham Tumbey described the launch of the program as a

beginning of a great milestone.

In 2018 when the NAP project was launched, Mr. Tumbey said the president of the University of Liberia Dr. Weeks made a very strong point at the inception meeting regarding the establishment of a graduate school in Environmental Science and Climate Change.

"Despite the fact that, that particular activity was not a part of the original project document, the statement she made resonated very well with the stakeholders sitting at that meeting," he recalls.

According to him, there was a consensus that indeed this program would be a flagship initiative of the National Adaptation Program.

Mr. Tumbey says UL is well positioned based on its mandate and the Act creating it to serve as a repository of knowledge based upon which climate change adaptation can be built in Liberia.



## EPA questions GoL's fight against Climate Change



By Winston W. Parley

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Deputy Executive Director Randall Dobayou has questioned the Liberian Government's support in the fight against climate change, pondering over government's seriousness in its quest to fight climate change when its budget doesn't show a cent allotted for this fight beside staff salaries.

"Where in the world we will say we are serious country, we are serious group. We fighting climate change and we don't have one cent to show in our quest to fight climate change?" Mr. Dobayou queried during the launch of the School of Environmental Science and Climate Change at the University of Liberia on Friday, 27 September.

The newly launched School of Environmental Studies and

Climate Change at the University of Liberia has Master's program in the School of Environmental Science and Climate Change and a Masters of Arts in Environmental Management.

The university has announced plans to also introduce a PhD program in Environmental Studies in the next five to ten years.

"Today we are here as a government very proud of this school. I mean what have we planned for this school today?" he continued during the event held at Fendall.

According to Mr. Dobayou, the only money that government has put in the budget is to pay salaries for staff at the EPA, narrating that that no operational money has been allotted in the budget for the entity.

However he warns that the EPA has scientists and other people who it may lose when World Bank and others that got money come and take the scientists away due to the Liberian



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## I'm not doubting himself - Solskjaer

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer insists he is the right man to lead Manchester United, despite his team being only three points off the relegation zone.

Since being made permanent boss in March, Solskjaer has overseen just five wins from the subsequent 18 matches.

The 46-year-old is second favourite to be the next



Premier League boss to lose his job - after Everton's Marco Silva.

"I'm not doubting myself, no," the Norwegian said. "If I doubt myself then the rest of

the world would as well."

United host Arsenal on Monday night and, having lost at home to Crystal Palace and away at West Ham this season, go into the match 13 points behind Liverpool, their tally of eight points from six matches just three ahead of Aston Villa in 18th.

"We have loads of discussions," Solskjaer said. "We believe in what we are doing."

The build-up to Arsenal's visit has been disrupted by the departure of goalkeeping coach Emilio Alvarez.

Alvarez, who had a close working relationship with David de Gea having previously worked with the United keeper at Atletico Madrid, had some of his power taken away by the summer appointment of Richard Hartis as the club's senior goalkeeping coach.

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