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# The New Dawn

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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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VOL.10 NO. 06

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2020

PRICE LD\$40.00

# Liberian students stranded in China

## -Hit by fear, food crisis over Coronavirus



Foreign Min. Gbehzohngar Milton Findley



Mr. Alexander B. Cumming

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# Continental News

## Billionaire sorry for 'Africa loves Trump' remark

South African mining tycoon Patrice Motsepe has apologised for telling US President Donald Trump that Africans love him.

The billionaire made the statement following a backlash, with critics saying he had no right to assume the role of Africa's spokesman.

"I have a duty to listen to these differing views and would like to apologise," Mr Motsepe said. He had praised Mr Trump at a dinner in Davos, Switzerland.

"Africa loves America. Africa loves you... We want America to do well. We want you to do well," the tycoon told Mr Trump at the World Economic Forum event earlier this month. South Africa's opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) said Mr Motsepe had been motivated by "selfish business interests".

"Motsepe's statement is an insult to the African-Americans who have been directly affected by Trump's racism," the EFF said at the time.

Mr Motsepe said his comments to the US president were partly aimed at

encouraging discussions between the Trump administration and African political and business leaders because of the perception "that South Africa and some African countries are anti-America and its political leadership". "This perception has had an impact on our ability to attract foreign investments and create jobs," he said in a statement.

His comments had triggered a "lively, diverse and at times emotional debate",

exposing him to the views of Africans who disagreed with him.

"I do not have the right to speak on behalf of anybody except myself," Mr Motsepe added. Mr Motsepe, 57, is one of South Africa's most influential businessmen and is close to President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Forbes magazine listed him in 2008 as a billionaire and said he had become the first black African on its list of the world's wealthiest people. It

estimates his current wealth at \$2.4bn (£1.85bn).

At the dinner, Mr Motsepe told Mr Trump it was an honour to meet him as they were both listed in a 2017 Forbes magazine profile of the Greatest Living Business Minds.

"You're doing a good job," Mr Trump replied. A poll published earlier this month by the US-based Pew Research Center found that while people in most countries had low confidence in Mr Trump to do the right thing in world affairs, he garnered 65% support in Kenya and 58% in Nigeria.

South Africa, the only other country from sub-Saharan Africa to be included in the poll, recorded 42% confidence in Mr Trump.

The US president is yet to visit Africa and has made comments that have

disparaged the continent. In 2018, he denied that he was racist, after a row broke out over his alleged use of the word "shithole" to describe African nations. The African Union later demanded that Mr Trump apologise for his "clearly racist" remarks.

But days after Mr Trump's reported comment Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni said in a speech: "I love Trump, he tells Africans frankly. The Africans need to solve their problems."

He recently raised eyebrows on the continent for suggesting that he, not Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, deserved to win the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. Last year, the American leader told four US congresswomen to go back to the "crime infested places from which they came".

The women were all born in the US apart from Ilhan Omar, who was born in Somalia and moved to the US as a child. BBC



Patrice Motsepe says his aim was to improve relations with the Trump administration

## Mass Ethiopia protests over abducted students

Demonstrations have taken place across northern Ethiopia about the failure of the authorities to find a group of 27 students abducted 50 days ago.

The students - from the Amhara community - were kidnapped as they fled an outbreak of ethnic violence at Dembi Dolo University in the Oromia region.

It is not clear who is behind

the abduction of the students, believed to be mainly young women, but local officials say armed men are active in the area.

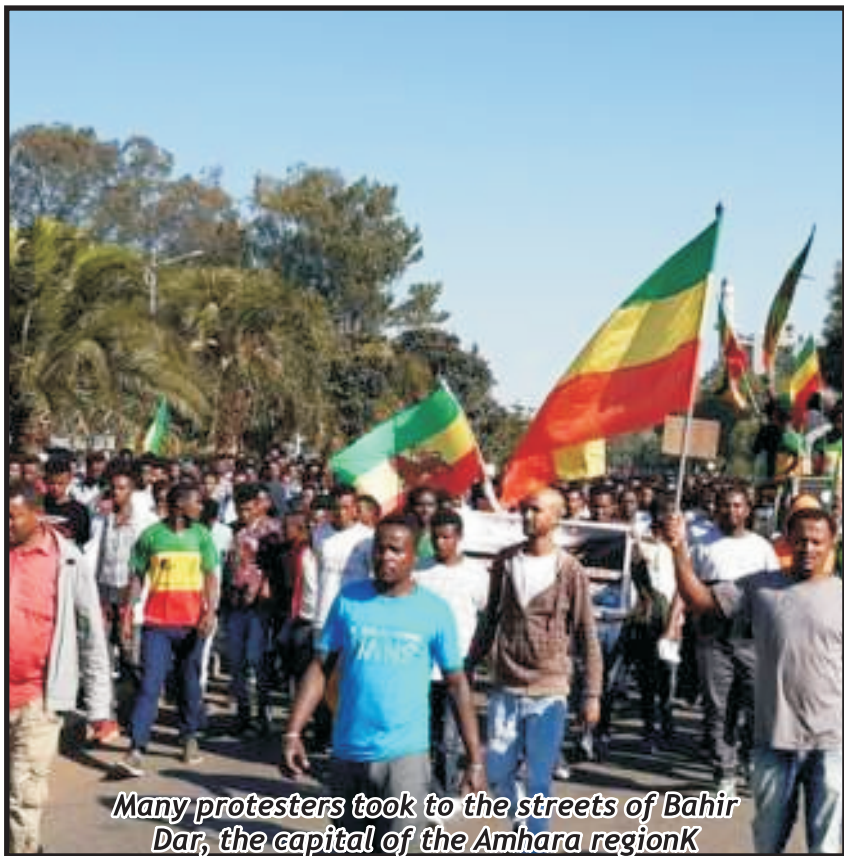
Tens of thousands took to the streets on Tuesday across the northern Amhara region, following an intensive social media campaign.

They chanted anti-government slogans, accusing Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of not doing enough to secure the students' release.

It comes more than two weeks after the authorities said they had secured the release of 21 students, but their families say nothing has been heard from them.

Mergeta Yeneh Adugna, the father of one of the abducted girls, told the BBC that he feared for his daughter.

"I'm afraid they have killed them. I wish they tell us the truth if that is the case. It's affecting our mental health. My wife is already sick because she is worried too much. I wish they tell us the truth, even if they are killed." BBC



Many protesters took to the streets of Bahir Dar, the capital of the Amhara region

## Attack kills 15 in eastern DR Congo

Fifteen people have been killed in the eastern DR Congo region of Beni, where hundreds have died in militia violence since November, a local official said Wednesday, giving a provisional toll. In the past 24 hours, "14 bodies have been found hacked to death," while a pastor was killed in a separate attack, the administrator for the Beni region, Donat Kibwana, told

a civil society organisation, the Kivu Security Tracker (KST), 265 people have now been killed in the Beni region since the army began a crackdown on an armed group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), on October 30.

The massacres seem to be a tactic by the ADF to frighten the population into silence, say local commentators.

The group has also disrupted



Photo-A soldier from the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

AFP. Two people with skull fractures caused by machetes have been admitted to the hospital in Oicha for surgery, an AFP reporter there said. The main attack took place late Tuesday in Manzingi, a village 20 kilometres (12 miles) northwest from Oicha, while the pastor was killed in Eringeti.

According to a toll compiled by

operations to curb an outbreak of Ebola in North Kivu province Tuesday's massacre occurred to the west of the ADF's usual area of operations, which is closer to the Ugandan border.

The army offensive, unfolding in thick forest and jungle, has led to what the military say is the capture of the group's headquarters and the killing of five of its six leaders. AFP

# EDITORIAL

## Fighting the Coronavirus

**LIBERIA IS** A tiny country on the West Coast of Africa with a small population of 4.5 million people. Liberians heavily rely on cross border trade with three densely populated countries: Guinea, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, which makes the country vulnerable to the coronavirus in Wuhan, China that has killed over 100 persons in that country, and is rapidly spreading across the world.

**THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT** of Liberia thru the National Public Health Institute of Liberia or NPHIL is assuring the public that its surveillance system is on the alert, thousands of Liberians travel to China from time to time for trade, education and other purposes, who risk contracting the virus and bringing it to the country, like it has happened in Australia, France, the United States and other countries.

**THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF NPHIL**, Dr. Mosoka Fallah, told a news conference last week that the Ministry of Health through the NPHIL will be strict on screening passengers onboard flights from Wuhan, China arriving at the Roberts International Airport (RIA) in Margibi County, Liberia.

**BUT WE THINK** the screening exercise should be extended to various entry points across the country, because while attention is concentrated on flights arriving at the RIA, local business people and other travelers passing thru our borders need to be checked as well for the coronavirus.

**THE VOICE OF America** quotes Chinese National Health Commission Minister Ma Xiaowei as saying, little is known about the virus. "But doctors do know it has an incubation period that can range from one to 14 days" and that the virus is infectious during the incubation period, when no signs or symptoms of the disease are present.

**THIS MAKES IT** very complicated because within two weeks the virus might have infected an unsuspected victim before signs or symptoms begin to physically appear.

**ACCORDING TO DR. FALLAH**, the virus is transmitted between animals and people, and common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. He says in severe cases, an infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and death.

**LIBERIANS GENERALLY SHOULD** be on full alert to avoid another major health calamity like we experienced from the Ebola virus that killed thousands of our fellow compatriots and devastated the national economy. This country is yet to fully recover from the nightmare.

**OFFICIAL REPORT FROM China** puts the death toll at over 100 with nearly 3,000 confirmed cases. Even more sophisticated health institutions like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention respiratory disease office, says health officials in the U.S. are investigating more about the virus, while handling about 100 suspected cases in 26 states.

**CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING** has reportedly declared his country faces a "grave situation", and that experts, and other resources would be concentrated at specific hospitals to treat severe cases of the illness.

**AMID THE INTENSIFICATION** of surveillance by the Liberian authorities, we think other options that should be placed on the table is to consider preparing a special flight to evacuate Liberian students and other citizens in currently in China, while promoting WHO's recommended steps against acute respiratory infections such as avoiding close contact with infected persons, unprotected contact with farm animals and wild animals and frequent hand-washing.

# COMMENTARY

By Anne-Marie Slaughter  
& Monica Chellam

## The War on Talent

*A growing body of research suggests that CEOs share more relevant traits with Chief Human Resources Officers than with those of any other C-Suite position. But while CHROs may have a seat at the table, that seat's occupant - more often than not a woman - is still least likely to become CEO.*

**W**ASHINGTON, DC - In the 1950s, during a very tight postwar labor market, American business executives voted Human Resources (HR) the most glamorous area in business. As Wharton School professor Peter Cappelli recounts, "90% of positions (and virtually all those in the top ranks) were filled from within - and 96% of large companies dedicated an entire department to planning for workforce needs." When companies need talent, he argues, the prestige of HR goes up; when labor markets go slack, HR returns to benefits administration.

The labor market is very tight today, with unemployment rates in the United States at or below 4% since March 2018. In their popular 2018 book *Talent Wins*, former McKinsey global managing director Dominic Barton and his coauthors urge every aspiring CEO to gain serious HR experience and every corporate board to spend significant time on talent issues. Likewise, Ellie Filler of the consulting firm Korn Ferry and Dave Ulrich of the University of Michigan have found that CEOs' relevant traits are more closely matched with those of Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs) than with those of any other C-Suite position. CHROs, they suggest, should be considered when selecting CEOs.

This war for talent should be great news for women, because women dominate HR. In the US, there is also a much higher percentage of women of color in HR than in any other corporate department.

Overall, despite advances, women still account for only about 10% of top executive positions in US corporations. Only 4% of C-Suite leaders are women of color. In HR, by contrast, women are actually in the majority: 73% of HR managers, and 55% of CHROs. Roughly one-third of US HR professionals identify as non-white, and more than 10% of Fortune 100 CHROs are women of color.

So we have our solution to the women's leadership gap, right?

Not so fast. The groundbreaking McKinsey study that predicted talent would be the most valuable corporate resource - and in short supply - was published more than 20 years ago. Growing appreciation for the value of talent has not been matched by growing appreciation for the value of HR. Despite efforts at rebranding (as "People," "Employee Experience," or simply "Talent"), HR's reputation as a functional backwater persists. CHROs may have a seat at the table, but that seat's occupant is still least likely to become CEO.

Moreover, HR leaders are paid far less than their C-Suite peers, indicating that they are valued far less. According to the Chief Executive Group, CHROs at public companies earn less than 10% of what their C-level counterparts earn.

In short, human capital is highly valued, but the people in charge of human resources are not. One likely reason is that HR professionals are viewed as lacking business acumen. There is some merit to this perception. A historical focus on functions like employee relations and benefits administration has left HR with a reputation for

straddling the line between risk-averse and mundane, hardly the function you'd want to lead innovative and forward-looking efforts that might determine the fate of the business. And relatively low pay has made it harder for HR - a rare path for graduates of top business schools - to attract top talent.

HR is also the functional embodiment of "office housework." It is a discipline that has been asked to manage the lion's share of hard-to-measure administrative tasks that advance the business but not the careers of those who perform them. It's not surprising, then, that CEOs are only too happy to increase diversity (marginally) by hiring women, including a large number of women of color, for the housework job, one that requires lots of focus on messy relationships among employees. And, like all other professions dominated by women, it is then paid less and valued less. Under-resourced and inundated with transactional work, HR leaders have historically struggled to perform the strategic work now demanded of them.

The good news is that HR's role is changing. For starters, it is much more quantitative. People analytics, popularized by former Google executive Laszlo Bock, is now an established tool, and HR departments routinely hire data scientists to inform critical business decisions. In addition, the HR tech field has exploded, creating an ecosystem of more than 4,000 software providers catering to HR professionals. This evolution, along with a trend toward outsourcing benefits administration, is fundamentally reshaping the HR function.

But when more technology and data are involved, requiring more quantitative skills, CEOs turn to men. Instead of tapping into the talent pool of women in HR, business leaders are tilting toward hiring "strategic" HR executives from non-HR backgrounds. Job descriptions for HR leadership roles increasingly cite "business acumen" as a necessary prerequisite.

Other companies have responded to a perceived talent gap in the HR field by taking pieces of the function and distributing them to other, male-dominated functions: payroll and benefits to the CFO, analytics to the CTO, software systems to the CIO, and so on.

Bringing fresh talent into the HR field and increasing cross-functional involvement in and support for HR is not all bad. It could mean more resources devoted to HR, more attention paid to what HR leaders actually do, and more competition for top HR roles. But it could also mean that we squander an opportunity to recognize the talent that already exists among HR leaders who have been systematically undervalued, and to empower and upskill the existing HR talent pool.

Last August, the US Business Roundtable announced its members' intention to pursue "an economy that serves all Americans." Central to that vision is an investment in fostering diverse and inclusive workforces.

As talent takes center stage, and as stakeholder capitalism gains momentum, women in HR, the most diverse function in corporate America, are poised to rise. It is up to their bosses to let them.

**New Dawn**  
TRULY INDEPENDENT

# OP-ED

By Sławomir Sierakowski

## The Twilight of EU Foreign Policy

*Following decisions by both Russia and Turkey to involve themselves in Libya's civil war, Germany and France have responded with their own diplomatic initiatives, and the European Union has been left playing a bit part. But by violating the spirit, if not the letter, of the Treaty of Lisbon, EU member states merely weaken themselves.*

**B**ERLIN - Reporting on a recent conference in Berlin to discuss the conflict in Libya, one of Germany's largest newspapers, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, notes that, "the days when America dominated the Middle East are over." For more than a decade, the United States has been pulling back, forcing Europe to unfurl its own protective umbrella, either through the European Union or through the foreign policies of individual member states. It is now clear that the second option is winning out. Recent developments in Iran and Libya show that the EU has ceased to be a relevant force in international affairs.

After all, it is generally forgotten that the 2015 Iran nuclear deal included not only the P5+1 - the US, China, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council) plus Germany - but also the EU. And for good reason: while the EU regards that deal as its greatest diplomatic victory, since the US abandoned the agreement in May 2018, France, Germany, and the UK have been the ones working to salvage it. The EU has mostly stuck to issuing bland press statements, which have the unintended effect of confirming its lack of real influence.

The situation in Libya is symptomatic of the larger problem. Both Turkey and Russia have now involved themselves in that country's civil war (on opposing sides) to further their own national interests, in the process threatening to unleash a flood of refugees.

How have European leaders responded to these developments? German Chancellor Angela Merkel traveled to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron consulted with Putin over the phone, and no one bothered with the EU. As the Financial Times explains, "Germany is keen to send a broader message by showing that multilateral peace efforts can still deliver results, despite the growing disconnect between the US and Europe and the influence of authoritarian leaders such as Mr. Putin and [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan."

One might think that the shortest road to multilateralism leads through the EU. But at the talks in Berlin this month, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, were cast as extras. The arriving foreign dignitaries were greeted by Merkel and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. To be sure, the UN absolutely should assume a central (if symbolic) position in a summit geared toward international cooperation; but why couldn't the EU play that role, too?

The problem is that Merkel faces few obstacles in circumventing the EU and taking direct action. If Germany were to pursue its policy goals through the fractious 28-member bloc, it would not secure its desired result. Yet this wasn't always the case. As recently as 2016, the EU concluded a deal with Turkey to stem the flow of refugees into Europe, even though Germany had a significant stake in the outcome. Now, Germany prefers to act directly, as does France under Macron.

Nonetheless, in engaging with Putin and Erdogan bilaterally, Merkel and Macron are each in a significantly weaker position than the EU would be if it were taking the lead. In the case of Libya, a unified EU effort could have exploited Russia and Turkey's divergent interests. And more broadly, simply by applying economic pressure, the EU could wield significant influence over any individual third country anywhere in the world. But to do so, it would need a common agenda and representatives who are empowered to pursue common EU interests, even when doing so might come at expense of individual member states. Without a united front, the EU cannot act effectively on the world stage.

In this respect, European leaders openly ignore the Treaty of Lisbon's provisions on defense and security. The treaty explicitly obliges member states to conduct a common foreign policy through the European Commission, the European Council, and the Office of the High Representative. Moreover, the EU itself has a duty not only to "ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies," but also to "conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy, based on the development of mutual political solidarity among Member States."

Former Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski is not exaggerating when he argues that EU institutions are abandoning their obligation to conduct foreign policy for the bloc. Following the latest round of unilateral French and German diplomacy, he points out that "the leaders of the largest countries in Western Europe didn't even think to act in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty."

Far from uniting Europe or safeguarding its interests, the current geopolitical confusion has deepened existing divisions among states that, individually, are losing influence in global affairs. And while American and Chinese nationalist projects may yet blow back on those countries, unilateralism on the part of European countries could break the EU altogether.

By openly eclipsing the EU's role in foreign policy, Germany and France are weakening themselves and strengthening the likes of Russia, Turkey, and China. The recent summit in Berlin has been heralded as a success. It was also a symptom of decay.

# OPINION

By Dominique Moisi

## The Geopolitics of Holocaust Memory

*The 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz comes at a time when populism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism are again on the rise. The duty to remember the Holocaust is threatened both by its political instrumentalization, and by the natural human proclivity to forget the past or become indifferent to the suffering of others.*

**P**ARIS - The 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army is an occasion marked by angst as well as sadness. Anti-Semitism is back with a vengeance around the world, as if the lessons of the Holocaust had evaporated with time - or, even worse, had never been fully integrated into our collective consciousness.

This unprecedented crime, perpetrated by one of the most advanced and cultivated societies on Earth, was the most extreme example of the horrors humans can inflict on one another. When pushed by a combination of fear and hatred, people can become monsters.

The current resurgence of populism and nationalism makes it all the more important to commemorate the victims of Auschwitz. But, 75 years on, the duty to remember is doubly threatened: by the political instrumentalization of the Holocaust, and by the natural human proclivity to forget the past or become indifferent to the suffering of others.

More than ever, we are witnessing what could be called the geopolitics of Holocaust memory. Five years ago, in 2015, the only commemoration of the camp's liberation took place in situ at Auschwitz, under the aegis of the Polish government. (In the immediate aftermath of Russia's seizure of Crimea, Russian President Vladimir Putin was not invited to address the gathering.) This year, however, there has been a competition between two commemorations: one in Jerusalem at the behest of the Israeli government and the European Jewish Congress, and the other, sought by the Polish government, at Auschwitz.

Poland, where the horror took place, sent no delegate to the Jerusalem ceremony, after its president, Andrzej Duda, refused to attend. Duda had not been invited to speak at the event, whereas Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and Britain's Prince Charles were.

Having to choose between Russia and Poland, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu did not hesitate - even though Russia now considers World War II to have started in 1941 instead of 1939, when the Soviet Union seized Polish territory under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Nazi Germany. Poland's increasingly nationalistic treatment of history in recent years also no doubt influenced Netanyahu's decision.

The Jerusalem commemoration represented an undeniable diplomatic victory for Israel. Not since the 1995 funeral of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had so many world leaders gathered in the city. But the event also constituted a success for Russia, with Putin's presence confirming his country's new indispensable status in the Middle East.

With the passage of time, the real heroes of the Auschwitz commemorations are becoming ever fewer. But they are in no position to resist this instrumentalization of their suffering.

Of course, instrumentalizing the memory of the Holocaust is nothing new. During the Cold War, Eastern and Central Europe's communist regimes emphasized the crimes that had been committed by fascists against anti-fascist patriots, thereby relativizing or even denying the Jewish origin of the overwhelming majority of the victims. Today, with the rise of populism, any sort of criticisms of "local populations," or of their "complicity" in the crimes committed by Nazi Germany, have become punishable offenses - starting in Poland.

This approach shows no respect for historical truth - and often contradicts it. It suits people who also have suffered deeply, but do not want to confront their responsibility for the suffering of others. Since Netanyahu has been prime minister, the instrumentalization of the memory of the Holocaust has played a central role in Israeli diplomacy as well, while the Iranian regime, with its repeated calls for Israel's destruction, seems to be doing its best to encourage such a stance.

The memory of the past is threatened not only by its instrumentalization, but also by a powerful combination of ignorance and forgetfulness, not to mention the Holocaust-denial camp. One-fifth of young people in France under the age of 24 have no idea what the Holocaust was. And the ignorance of some feeds the fear of others: polls indicate that 34% of French Jews feel threatened in their country.

Tackling this problem is above all a question of education. But there is a broader issue as well, namely the contrast among young people between their legitimate preoccupation with the planet and their lack of interest in politics. The young climate activist Greta Thunberg, for example, has helped to mobilize millions of people. But how can we convince them that ecological awareness is not a substitute for concern about freedom and democracy, but rather complementary to it?

The memory of the Holocaust should be seen as a kind of ultimate bulwark against the politics of hatred at a time when democracy and its institutions are being eroded. But it is not easy to defend the principle of "never again" when social networks are spreading so much atavism and ignorance.

Immediately before the Jerusalem events, I was in Berlin, the city where the "Final Solution" was conceived. When the rebuilding of the Stadtschloss (city palace) is complete, it will house the Humboldt Forum, a cultural center named in honor of brothers Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, who embodied the Enlightenment spirit. It has taken 75 years to erase the physical traces of Hitler's genocidal folly. Is that the time it also takes to forget the lessons of history?

I have recently been wondering what my father, prisoner number 159721 at Auschwitz, would have made of these 75th anniversary commemorations. He probably would have felt pride at not being forgotten, and sadness at how the Holocaust has become an event to be "spun" for political gain in a world that has learned virtually nothing.



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**PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
**REQUEST FOR QUOTATION**

4A1506/ME/027

**Supply and Delivery of Two Insulated Bucket Trucks for Asset and Customer Mapping Study (ACMS) of 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 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 the Request for Quotation (“RFQ”) is issued.

MCA-Liberia now invites priced quotation from eligible firms/suppliers for the Supply and Delivery of Two Insulated Bucket Trucks for Asset and Customer Mapping Study (ACMS) of Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC).

The RFQ is for:

**Supply and Delivery of Two Insulated Bucket Trucks for Asset and Customer Mapping Study (ACMS) of Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC)**

How to Participate in the Process:

Interested firms/suppliers should send an email to [MCALiberiaPA@cardno.com](mailto:MCALiberiaPA@cardno.com) requesting a copy of the RFQ, which is free of charge.

Important dates:

| No. | Activity                              | Dates                        |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1   | Release of RFQ                        | January 21, 2020             |
| 4   | Deadline for Submission of Quotations | February 06, 2020 at 3:00 pm |



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**SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
**LETTER OF INVITATION**

4A1506/EP/016

**Recruitment of Individual Consultant- Contract Management Consultant**

**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 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 the Letter of Invitation (“LOI”) is issued.

MCA-Liberia now invites applications from eligible Individual Consultants for **Recruitment of Individual Consultant to serve as Contract Management Consultant**. This requirement is only for individual consultants. Submissions from consulting firms will not be accepted. Individual consultants are also not allowed to subcontract any part of this work to other individuals or firms.

The LOI is for:

**Recruitment of Individual Consultant- Contract Management Consultant**

How to Participate in the Process:

Interested individual consultants should send an email to [MCALiberiaPA@cardno.com](mailto:MCALiberiaPA@cardno.com) requesting a copy of the LOI, which is free of charge.

Important dates:

| No. | Activity                                 | Dates                        |
|-----|--|------------------------------|
| 1   | Release of LOI                           | January 28, 2020             |
| 2   | Last date for questions/clarifications   | February 7, 2020 at 5:00 pm  |
| 3   | MCA Response to Questions/Clarifications | February 12, 2020            |
| 4   | Deadline for Submission of Applications  | February 20, 2020 at 5:00 pm |

# UK reaffirms commitment to Africa’s economic transformation

The United Kingdom is the top donor to the African Development Fund (ADF), the Bank’s concessional lending arm for its next three-year cycle, ADF-15 (2020 - 2022), a position it has held for the last three replenishments.

ADF-15 will focus its operations around investing in quality and sustainable infrastructure aimed at strengthening regional integration and human, governance and institutional capacity development for increased decent job creation and inclusive growth. The next cycle will prioritise bold and transformative projects with the view to achieve ambitious development results. ADF-15 will address root causes of vulnerability by systematically applying a fragility lens

For example, the UK has been a strong supporter of the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA), a multi-donor facility also funded by the governments of Denmark, the U.S., Italy, Norway and Spain. The fund supports the sustainable energy agenda in Africa through grants and concessional investment to facilitate the preparation of green baseload, green mini-grid and energy efficiency projects; equity investments to bridge the financing gap for small- and medium-scale renewable energy generation projects; and support to the public sector to improve the enabling environment for private investments in sustainable energy.

As the world faces global climate emergency, the Bank is looking to



in all its operations.

The UK is a long-standing strategic partner of the African Development Bank Group and its contribution to both the replenishment of the Fund and the capital increase of the Bank sends a strong signal of mutual trust.

This growing partnership between the Bank and the UK was consolidated by the Bank’s participation in the UK-Africa Investment Summit in London earlier this month, at which a new infrastructure financing partnership was announced between the Bank and the Department for International Development (DFID).

Already, the UK’s contribution to several Bank’s projects has impacted the lives of millions in Africa’s poorest nations.

redouble its efforts to promote renewable energy across the continent and expects this transition will be a high priority during COP 26 which will be held in Glasgow in November - hosted with Italy.

Last August, the UK pledged £30 million for women’s economic empowerment through the Bank’s Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA) initiative. AFAWA is a pan-African initiative, led by the Bank, that aims to close the gender credit gap for women in Africa.

“Without any doubt, DFID and the UK government’s investment in the African Development Bank pays off and delivers huge impacts in Africa,” Bank president Akinwumi Adesina said.

## PROMOTION

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**GoL, AfDB sign USD33 million financing agreement**

The Government of Liberia and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have signed Financing Agreements for two Projects valued over US\$33 million. The two projects are the "Renewable Energy for Electrification of Liberia (REEL Project) and Support to Investment Promotion Agencies in Transition Countries".

The signing ceremony which took place on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, saw Finance Minister Samuel D.

Tweah, Jr. signed for the Government of Liberia, while the AfDB's Liberia Country Manager, Dr. Orison M. Amu signed for the Bank.

According to the Agreement, the value of the REEL Project is US\$33.74 million and is expected to be implemented over a 4-year period.

The Agreement mentions the development of a hydro power plant on the Gbedin Falls on the St. John River in Nimba County as the main objective of the REEL Project. The dam is expected to have a capacity of 9.34 mega watts and will serve as a source of

reliable, sustainable and affordable power in the region thus enabling the power grid expansion to isolated localities and remote areas, and encourage the connection of a increased number of households, schools, health centers, businesses and industries to the national grid.

It also named increased access to electricity and fostering the use of renewable energy sources; improved annual electricity generation; increased access to reliable electricity; contribution to the reduction of electricity generation cost; reducing fossil energy consumption; and jobs creation as expected outcomes of the Project.

Additionally, according to the Agreement for the "Support to Investment Promotion Agencies in Transition Countries Project" supported by the AfDB under its "ADF-14 Transition Support Facility (TSF)" it is valued at US\$1 million and is expected to be implemented over the course of three years. The TSF Project will support the Government of Liberia's efforts in improving the business environment and investment climate.

Specifically, the Bank's financing under this Project is intended to support the National Investment Commission (NIC) investment promotion efforts and position the institution in achieving

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MFD P Tweah & AFDB Dr. Amu

**TOTAL hikes gasoline price? -Workers deny claim**

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Some commercial drivers and motorcyclists in Monrovia are accusing the French petroleum company TOTAL Liberia of allegedly hiking the price of gasoline, but the company's workers have denied the claim.

This paper has spoken to several drivers and motorcyclists at three of the company's filling stations including Waterside, 2nd Street, Sinkor and Freeport.

Those interviewed allege that the workers of the company sell the gasoline to some of their colleagues at US\$5.00, contrary to the Ministry of Commerce's mandate on the petroleum crisis that has engulfed the country.

Johnson Richards Lawson, a 42 year-old-commercial driver, claim that the workers at the filling stations request buyers to be patient while

others are provided gasoline.

He says it makes it difficult for them who troop to the filling stations in the early morning hours to get gasoline pumped into their vehicles.

According to Mr. Lawson,

someday the workers would inform buyers to return at certain hour, but when they do, the filling stations would not make gasoline available as promised.

He also claim that the situation has resulted into

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**County Meet**

Starts from back page

will deny many Liberians who hail from the county an opportunity to participate in such event, considered to be a unifier of the country that had suffered 14 years of bitter civil unrest.

The Senate's Committee on Youth and Sports had invited officials of the ministry to explain what really transpired at the Samuel K. Doe Sports Complex on Sunday, 26 January that led to the Nimba County football team walking out of the finals with Grand Kru County.

The Chairman of the Committee, Senator Conmany Wesseh of River Gee County emphasizes the hearing was important to enable members of the committee to provide detail information to plenary of the Liberian Senate.

Making his presentation before the committee, Youth and Sports Minister, Zeogar Wilson, narrates that prior to the holding of the tournament, rules were carved as guiding tools for the playing time since the tournament does not fall within the preview of the Liberia Football Association's regulations.

He says penalty for any team walking out of the field during any game, is a fine of US\$1,500 and technical staff said county is banned for two years, which the head coach of Nimba County football team suffers.

Minister Wilson cites Section 19.1 of the rules that states, "Any county team that behaves rudely on the field of play and brings the match to a halt or disrepute, according to the match official's report, shall be fined the amount of One Thousand Five Hundred United States Dollars (US\$1,500.00)," while Section 16.5 of the rules says, "Any county player, coach or official of a county obstructing,

delaying or compelling a game to come to a halt shall be fined the amount of Two Hundred United States Dollars (\$200.00) [and] Five Hundred United States Dollars (\$500.00) for a second offence. The fine shall be paid before the county's next scheduled match, suspension for two years from National County Sports Meet."

There have been several concerns following the ministry's decision to suspend coach Fofana, who is also the head coach of second-division club BYC, from all football activities, when the rules of the county meet state only: "Suspension for two years from National County Sports Meet." But, according to Min. Wilson, the decision was reached in consultation with the Liberia Football Association (LFA).

Meanwhile, the Ministries of Youth and Sports and Internal Affairs, joint organizers of the National County Sports Meet (NCSM) announced that "Grand Kru County is the winner of the 2019/2020 National County Sports Meet."

The decision comes two days after the grand final of the tournament's football category ended in a deadlock due to a spot-kick controversy at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville.

Grand Kru County were a goal ahead from a spot-kick scored by captain Rufus Kennedy in the first half, until the controversy erupted five minutes into the second half, when referee Hassan Corneh pointed to the spot, awarding Grand Kru County a second spot-kick, protested by Nimba.

Meanwhile, Senator Wesseh says findings from the hearing will be forwarded to the plenary of the Liberian Senate for better understanding of issues surrounding the county meet tournament. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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# New CBL boss meets commercial banks execs

The Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia, J. Aloysius Tarlue, has reiterated his desire of working with commercial banks in the country to ease some of the problems in the banking system.

Although he said the banking sector is safe and sound, the CBL Executive Governor highlighted several operational challenges which remain inimical to the performance of the banking

operating in Liberia, Governor Tarlue lauded the institutions for their continued support and understanding during the December festive season. The banks, he emphasized, were instrumental in collaborating to ease the liquidity pressure in the economy. "Without your support, the situation could have gotten out of hand." Executive Governor Tarlue recalled.

He also stressed the need to ease the long queues at banks

commended the CBL for the level of cooperation, support and collaboration, especially during the Christmas festive season to ease the liquidity problem. Mr. Davies, who is also the President/CEO of the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI), welcomed the meeting and reassured the Governor and his team of the Bankers Association's support in tackling the challenges confronting the banking sector.



CBL Executive Governor in group photo with Commercial banks Executives

sector. Prominent among the challenges he noted is the high level of non-performing loans, a factor he described as disturbing.

"We have to work together to ensure that we bring it down and that we reduce the level of non-performance loans. This will help us to give loans to individuals worthy of loans, so that we can try to create jobs in the country," the Governor added.

Speaking during an acquaintance meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, with Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of commercial banks

to make them more accessible and efficient for customers. The new CBL Executive Governor also highlighted the need for the persistent promotion of digital banking to ease the demand for cash on the system for the actualization of cashless economy. The CBL, he said will continue to support all efforts by the commercial banks geared toward digital banking.

The president of the Liberia Bankers Association (LBA), Mr. John B. Davies, III, congratulated Executive Governor Tarlue on his ascendency to the post, and

Tuesday's meeting, the first between Executive Governor Tarlue and commercial banks since his induction a month ago, was also attended by senior executives of the CBL, including the Acting Deputy Governor for Operations, Madam Nyemadi D. Pearson; the Deputy Governor for Economic Policy, Dr. Musa Dukuly; and directors of departments at the CBL, as well as Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and other senior officials of commercial banks in the country.

# Civil Society Union rejects site for Coronavirus observation

The Independent Civil Society Union of Liberia (ICSUL) rejects decision by the National Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) and the Ministry of Health to run a quarantine and observation center at the Redemption Hospital in New Kru Town, Bushrod Island for the Corona-virus.

The government here has announced plan to set up an observation center at the

Redemption Hospital for suspected cases of the deadly virus from China.

But the civil society group, in a press release issued Wednesday in Monrovia,



# GoL, AfDB sign

Cont'd from page 6

some of its critical goals and targets.

Speaking during the Signing Ceremony, Finance and Development Planning Minister, Hon. Samuel D. Tweah Jr., lauded the African Development Bank for supporting the government's development agenda. He added that the Bank's support to the administration of President Weah remains strong.

Minister Tweah also revealed that the AfDB continues to be a key player in electricity, roads, governance and other sectors of the country.

The Finance Minister who also expressed delight about the signing of the Agreements

said that electricity and roads connectivity are significant factors for economic growth and are crucial to the success of the PAPD vision of President Weah.

He told the gathering that budget support discussed with the Bank will be used for key areas in the agriculture sector of the country. He also praised the Bank for passing the Country Paper for Liberia, and disclosed that the Paper which focuses on roads, energy and agriculture will see the country moving in the right direction.

For his part, AfDB Country Manager, Dr. Orison M. Amu underscored that the Projects are in support of Liberia's development agenda.

# TOTAL hikes

Cont'd from page 6

vehicles being abandoned in the streets by operators due to lack of gasoline to move them.

Mohammed J. Seleke, a commercial motorcyclist at the filling station in Sinkor tells our reporter that bike riders have for several days now been struggling to buy gasoline for their motorcycles, but to no avail.

He alleges that gasoline is being sold at US\$5.00, adding that his bike has been reportedly parked for a week because he cannot get gasoline to buy at TOTAL filling stations.

Seleke explains that those that can afford the US\$5.00 per gallon of gasoline are served while those who cannot afford the price are allegedly compelled to look for the product elsewhere.

Vehicles and motorcycles are parked daily at TOTAL filling stations to obtain gasoline, but many of them would not get some either due to lack of petroleum or insufficient quantity of the commodity to serve everyone trooping at the filling stations.

But staff of the French

company TOTAL term version of the rivers and motorcyclists as erroneous claim, noting that since the gasoline crisis started, the company has and continues to distribute gasoline to its filling stations.

The staff who only identified themselves as Phil, Mooreland, and Geoffrey, disclose that contrary to the claims, TOTAL is selling its gasoline for US\$321.00 and fuel oil for US\$380.00.

They counter argue that the information being circulated by individuals does not represent the true picture.

They wonder how can TOTAL hike price when it is assisting government to address the current gasoline situation with regular meetings being held with the management of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC), petroleum customers, and the Ministry of Commerce (MOC).

There has been no evidence produced by those making the allegations as investigation into the gasoline crisis continues.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

describes the pronouncement as potentially dangerous and a product of poor judgment that should be reversed.

ICSUL believes setting up a quarantine and observation center in a densely populated community such as the Borough of New Kru Town for a highly contagious epidemic like the Corona-Virus, is a potential threat for mass infection that could spell a national disaster.

Instead, it recommends to the Government of Liberia to select a less populated area for the construction of an

emergency facility.

It says this can be achieved by collaborating with health partners through an early preparation framework that would avoid or minimize the disastrous effect experienced during the EBOLA outbreak in the country.

Meanwhile, the group calls on Representative Dixon W. Seboe of Montserrado County District 16, where the Redemption Hospital is situated, to lead efforts aimed at getting relevant government functionaries to reverse the decision.

# Français

## « Weah n'a pas été véridique », l'opposition

Le président George Weah n'a pas fait preuve d'honnêteté dans son adresse annuelle à la nation devant une séance conjointe des deux chambres du parlement libérien, a fait observer mardi une plateforme de l'opposition libérienne.

« Il n'a pas du tout été honnête pour avoir déclaré qu'il a tenu sa promesse de la baisse de son salaire de 25% et qu'il a été le premier à harmoniser son salaire. Malheureusement, le président a encore menté pour

avoir déclaré que des citoyens ont librement exercé leurs droits sous cette administration et qu'il n'y a eu ni arrestation ni coup de feu en réponse aux protestations », a déclaré M. Alexander B. Cummings qui a lu la déclaration des partis de l'opposition mardi.

M. Cummings accuse le gouvernement Weah d'aggraver plutôt les souffrances des Libériens qui travaillent dur. L'opposition a indiqué que la décision du régime de Weah de réduire les salaires des fonctionnaires de

30 à 50%, alors que les prix des produits de première nécessité - riz, huile, poulet, transports, - ont augmenté de 30% est inacceptable.

« Ce n'est pas de l'harmonisation. Il s'agit d'une attaque malsaine et malveillante contre le niveau de vie de notre peuple », a déclaré Cummings, ajoutant : « Au lieu d'harmoniser les salaires des travailleurs, il est temps pour le président d'harmoniser ses nombreux voyages en jet privé, d'arrêter de se construire davantage de palais et de réduire la corruption qui occupe désormais le devant de la scène dans son gouvernement ».

« Chers Libériens, il est intéressant de noter qu'après avoir examiné le budget du président, en particulier la composante salariale du budget du président pour 2018-2019 et 2019-2020, il n'y a eu absolument aucune réduction du salaire du président Weah. En fait, notre recherche a révélé que la portion rémunération du budget de ce président actuel, qui était de 381414 USD en 2018-2019, a été portée à 494949 USD en 2019-2020. Pourtant, le Président, dans son message,

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## Pétrole et gaz : Weah annonce un appel d'offres pour la reprise de l'exploration

Le président libérien George Weah a annoncé lundi que son pays allait lancer en avril un appel d'offres pour la reprise de l'exploration pétrolière et gazière au large de ses côtes après une longue inertie.

L'appel d'offres concernera neuf des 33 blocs libériens et permettra « à des compagnies pétrolières et gazières internationales à la compétence reconnue de faire acte de candidature, en espérant une relance des programmes d'exploration après des années d'inaction », a dit le chef de l'Etat lors de son traditionnel discours annuel devant le Parlement sur l'Etat de la nation.

M. Weah, à son poste depuis deux ans, a rappelé qu'à sa prise de fonctions il avait promis de favoriser la recherche de pétrole et de gaz, potentielles sources de revenus dans un pays affligé par la pauvreté. Des amendements apportés en 2019 à la loi sur le pétrole permettent à présent de lancer des appels d'offres



internationaux, a-t-il dit. Le bassin dans lequel se trouvent les neuf blocs fait partie des dernières régions au large de l'Afrique de l'Ouest inexplorées pour leurs réserves potentielles, indiquent des experts.

Dans une vue d'ensemble datée de 2019, l'International Trade Administration soutenant les entreprises américaines à l'international écrivait que l'exploration à la

recherche d'hydrocarbures avait commencé dans les eaux territoriales libériennes à la fin des années 1960 et avait cessé pour une série de raisons. M. Weah, confronté à la déception d'une partie de ceux qui ont porté à la présidence l'ancienne star du football, s'est aussi livré à une défense de son action, plaidant à la fois pour la patience et la confiance des Libériens.

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## Liberia : deux suspects interpellés après le meurtre d'un homme d'affaires allemand

Deux suspects libériens ont été interpellés dans le cadre de l'enquête sur le meurtre d'un homme d'affaires allemand la semaine dernière dans ce pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest, a indiqué un responsable local.

« Deux personnes ont été arrêtées en lien avec le meurtre horrible commis par sept hommes armés, qui ont attaqué et tué Juergen Schedema, un ressortissant allemand » résidant à Buchanan, à une cinquantaine de kilomètres au sud de la capitale, Monrovia, a déclaré lors d'une conférence de presse le préfet de la région, Janjay Baikpeh. Juergen Schedema, 44 ans, l'un des responsables d'une firme de consultance établie au Liberia, a été retrouvé mort le 22 janvier en pleine nuit après l'intrusion dans sa propriété d'hommes lourdement armés, a expliqué à la presse son épouse, Linda Schedema.

« Je rentrais chez moi vers minuit

et demi quand j'ai entendu des coups de feu. Les gens criaient que des bandits armés étaient dans la propriété. Tout le monde a paniqué et s'est caché quand on a entendu les vitres éclater. Quand les tirs ont cessé, je suis partie à la recherche de mon mari et je l'ai trouvé à 04H00 du matin dans la partie du jardin où il garde ses animaux », a déclaré Mme Schedema.

Le président libérien, l'ancien footballeur George Weah, qui cherche à attirer des investisseurs pour relancer l'économie de son pays, l'un des plus pauvres au monde, avait condamné le meurtre de l'homme d'affaires et présenté ses condoléances à l'Allemagne. « Une telle sauvagerie n'est pas à l'image des Libériens. Nous sommes un peuple hospitalier, toujours prêt à aider ceux qui visitent notre pays », avait-il dit. Africa N°1.

## Soro : « inacceptable » de modifier la Constitution à 9 mois de la présidentielle ivoirienne

L'ancien chef de la rébellion ivoirienne et candidat à la présidentielle d'octobre, Guillaume Soro, actuellement en exil, a annoncé mercredi à l'AFP qu'il s'opposerait à toute modification de la Constitution dans son pays, jugeant « inacceptable » de « changer les règles du jeu » à quelques mois du scrutin.

« Je suis totalement opposé et nous nous opposerons pacifiquement au changement de la Constitution », a lancé l'ex-Premier ministre ivoirien (2007-2012) et ex-président de l'Assemblée nationale (2012-2019), dans un entretien avec l'AFP à Paris. Sous le coup d'un mandat d'arrêt dans son pays, M. Soro vit actuellement en exil.

« C'est tout de même inacceptable (...) qu'on veuille changer les règles du jeu; nous sommes outrés qu'en Afrique, à six mois d'élections, à chaque fois on essaie de « traficoter » nos Constitutions pour flouer le citoyen », a dénoncé avec véhémence mercredi M. Soro.

Le président ivoirien Alassane Ouattara, 78 ans, élu en 2010, puis réélu en 2015, laisse planer le mystère sur une possible candidature à un troisième mandat, bien que la Constitution n'en autorise que deux.

Début janvier, il a annoncé qu'il proposerait au Parlement « des modifications de la Constitution », assurant qu'il ne s'agirait pas d'éliminer « qui que ce soit » de la course à la

présidentielle. M. Ouattara estime avoir le droit de se représenter en raison d'un changement de Constitution en 2016, ce que conteste l'opposition.

Le climat politique est tendu en Côte d'Ivoire à neuf mois de la présidentielle, qui se tiendra dix ans après la crise post-électorale de 2010-2011 qui avait fait 3.000 morts. Les élections municipales et régionales de 2018 ont été marquées par de nombreuses violences et des fraudes.

« J'ai déclaré ma candidature en octobre 2019 sur la base de la Constitution ivoirienne; comment (...) admettre qu'en cours de jeu on change les règles ? », a martelé M. Soro.

Guillaume Soro, 47 ans, toujours député en Côte d'Ivoire, avait tenté le 23 décembre de revenir dans son pays, après six mois à l'étranger. Mais il était reparti vers l'Europe après avoir appris qu'il faisait l'objet d'un mandat d'arrêt. Plusieurs de ses proches, dont des députés, ont été ensuite arrêtés.

M. Soro est notamment accusé par la justice ivoirienne d'avoir fomenté « une insurrection civile et militaire », ce qu'il nie.

- 'devenir président' -

Jusqu'à cette affaire, il était vu comme un challenger sérieux pour la présidentielle par les analystes politiques, qui le disent populaire, notamment auprès de la jeunesse.



# Français

## « Weah n'a pas été

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vous a remercié de votre patience et de votre compréhension durant cette harmonisation qu'il promet de poursuivre, tandis que son budget et sa richesse se multiplient », a ajouté l'opposition.

L'opposition s'est en outre dite alarmée par le rapport du président concernant l'augmentation de la dette du pays qui est passée de 987,8 millions fin 2018 à 1,27 milliard fin 2019, soit une augmentation de 282 millions en un an seulement.

La plateforme de l'opposition a également dénoncé une érosion de la liberté civile sous l'administration Weah, affirmant que "les opposants et les critiques du président et du gouvernement sont régulièrement intimidés et menacés".

« Malheureusement, le président a de nouveau mentipour avoir déclaré que les citoyens jouissaient de leurs droits sous cette administration et qu'il n'y a eu ni arrestation ni coup de feu en réponse aux protestations. Au contraire, une action civile pacifique, qui est le fondement de la démocratie, a été empêchée comme nous l'avons vu avec la dispersion injustifiable de citoyens pacifiques protestant contre les difficultés économiques actuelles et la corruption gouvernementale, comme l'a noté la Commission nationale indépendante des droits de l'homme », a ajouté l'opposition.

« En ce qui concerne la corruption et le manque de reddition des comptes du point de vue gouvernance

politique, ils restent les principales caractéristiques de ce gouvernement. Cela est même confirmé par le rapport de l'indice de perception de la corruption 2019 publié la semaine dernière, classant le Libéria comme l'un des pires déclinés dans la lutte contre la corruption dans le monde. La preuve en est la gestion des 25 millions de dollars US pour l'opération de réduction de l'excès de liquidité et la saga de 16 milliards de dollars LD. Un an après ces scandales, le gouvernement n'a pas encore jugé tous les coupables, comme l'indiquent divers rapports. Le président n'a montré aucune intention de ralentir la construction de ses palais et ses duplex, surtout après avoir refusé de publier la déclaration de ses avoirs. Nous n'avons d'autre choix que de considérer que la source de la nouvelle richesse retrouvée du président est douteuse.

Pourtant, le président veut nous faire croire qu'il est sérieux dans la lutte contre la corruption. Il promet une législation pour conférer à la commission anti-corruption du Libéria (LACC) des pouvoirs de poursuite mais nomme à tête des partisans et des amis purs et durs du CDC à la LACC.

Le président prétend lutter contre la corruption, mais n'a pas réfuté l'enregistrement audio dans lequel on entendait le président national de son parti faire des allégations de corruption contre lui en tant que président. Cette contradiction dans ce que dit et fait le président est suffisant pour nous faire savoir que tout cela n'est que « du bavardage », a dit l'opposition.

## Pétrole et gaz : Weah

Cont'd from page 8

"Beaucoup des problèmes dont mon gouvernement a hérité viennent de l'extérieur" et certains "existent depuis des décennies", a-t-il dit. "Le changement que j'ai promis se fait sentir", a-t-il assuré sans nier l'ampleur des difficultés

tout en disant ressentir et comprendre "l'impatience" de ses compatriotes. "Je vous demande d'être indulgents avec moi et, comme nous disons, nous autres Libériens : « Donnez-moi une petite chance de réparer, ouais », a-t-il dit. Africa N° 1

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Anne-Marie Slaughter & Monica Chellam

## La Guerre aux talents

**W**ASHINGTON - Dans les années 1950, alors que le marché du travail se tendait, les ressources humaines (RH) étaient, de l'avis général des cadres des entreprises américaines, l'activité la plus gratifiante au sein d'une société. Comme le rappelle Peter Capelli, professeur à la Wharton School : « 90 % des postes (et pour ainsi dire tous les postes de haut niveau) étaient pourvus par recrutement interne - et 96 % des grandes entreprises avaient un département entier chargé de pourvoir aux besoins du recrutement. » Lorsque les entreprises ont besoin de talents, affirme-t-il, le prestige des RH augmente ; lorsque le marché du travail se détend, les RH retournent à la gestion des primes et avantages.

Le marché du travail est aujourd'hui très tendu, avec un taux de chômage aux États-Unis de 4 % ou moins depuis mars 2018. Dans leur livre à succès Talent wins, Dominic Barton, ancien directeur général monde du cabinet McKinsey, et ses coauteurs exhortent chaque aspirant P.-D. G. à se doter d'une solide expérience dans les RH et recommandent à chaque conseil d'administration de ne pas se montrer avare de son temps lorsqu'il s'agit de s'assurer la collaboration de nouveaux talents. De même, Ellie Filler, du cabinet de consultants Korn Ferry, et Dave Ulrich, de l'université du Michigan, concluent que les caractéristiques qui définissent un bon P.-D. G. se rapprochent plus de celles qui s'appliquent au directeur des ressources humaines (DRH) qu'aux autres cadres dirigeants. Le ou la DRH, suggèrent-ils, devrait être pris en considération lorsqu'est choisi le P.-D. G.

Cette mise en concurrence des talents - ou cette guerre des talents - devrait être pour les femmes un bon présage, car ces dernières dominent dans les RH. Aux États-Unis, on compte également une plus forte proportion de femmes de couleur dans les RH que dans tout autre département de l'entreprise.

Globalement, malgré certains progrès, les femmes n'occupent encore que 10 % des postes de direction dans les grandes entreprises américaines, et 4 % seulement des cadres dirigeants sont des femmes noires. Dans les RH, les femmes sont en revanche nettement majoritaires : elles représentent 73 % des cadres des RH et 55 % des DRH. Un tiers environ des professionnels des RH s'identifient comme non blancs, et plus de 10 % du classement des 100 DRH les plus importants réalisé par le magazine Fortune sont des femmes de couleur.

Nous avons donc trouvé la solution du problème de l'écart de la représentation hommes / femmes au sein des instances dirigeantes de l'entreprise, semble-t-il ?

Pas si vite. L'étude novatrice publiée par McKinsey qui prévoyait que les talents seraient la plus précieuse ressource des entreprises - et la plus facilement épuisable - a été publiée voici plus de vingt ans. La prise en compte croissante des talents ne s'est pas accompagnée d'une reconnaissance croissante des RH. Malgré les efforts entrepris sur leur dénomination (« promotion de la relation », gestion de l'« expérience employé », ou tout simplement des « talents »), leur réputation de voie de garage dans les fonctions de l'entreprise persiste. Le directeur ou la directrice des ressources humaines a peut-être son siège à la table du conseil d'administration, mais toujours aussi peu de chances de devenir P.-D. G.

En outre, les cadres des relations humaines sont moins bien payés que leurs pairs de la direction de l'entreprise, car ils sont beaucoup moins valorisés. Selon le groupe Chief Executive, qui produit le magazine du même nom, les DRH des sociétés cotées ont une rémunération inférieure de 10 % à celle de leurs homologues aux fonctions de direction.

En bref, le capital humain est valorisé, mais ceux qui sont en charge des ressources humaines ne le sont pas. On peut voir là une conséquence de l'idée répandue qui voudrait que les professionnels des RH n'aient guère le sens des affaires. Cette perception n'est pas totalement dénuée de fondement. Historiquement liées aux relations dans l'entreprise et à la gestion des primes et gratifications, les RH ont la réputation de se tenir à cheval entre le terre à terre du quotidien et l'aversion au risque, ce qui n'est pas ce qu'on met en avant lorsqu'on cherche un profil qui conduise l'effort

d'innovation et qui ait la vision de l'avenir capable de décider du sort d'une entreprise. Sans compter qu'une rémunération relativement moins élevée rend les RH moins attractives aux meilleurs talents - elles comptent peu parmi les carrières recherchées chez les diplômés des grandes écoles de commerce.

Les RH incarnent aussi, par leur fonction même, l'office housework, les relations informelles dans l'entreprise, difficiles à quantifier, dont elles assument une grande part, essentielles mais de peu d'utilité dans l'avancement d'une carrière. Il n'est donc guère surprenant de voir les P.-D. G. trop heureux d'y trouver le terrain d'un accroissement (marginal) de la diversité, qui leur permettra, à moindres frais, d'engager des femmes, y compris bon nombre de femmes de couleur, pour ces relations informelles exigeant que l'on consacre une grande attention aux rapports compliqués des employés entre eux. Manquant de ressources et surchargés par ce travail transactionnel, les dirigeants des RH ont longtemps dû se batailler pour pouvoir effectuer le travail stratégique qui leur est aujourd'hui demandé.

Bonne nouvelle : le rôle des RH est en train de changer. Pour commencer, il s'appuie beaucoup plus sur des données quantifiables. L'analyse des données de masse, disponibles dans et hors l'entreprise, en rapport avec ses effectifs - les people analytics, popularisées par l'ancien DRH de Google Laszlo Bock - compte désormais parmi les outils communément utilisés dans les départements de RH, qui embauchent régulièrement des experts en mégadonnées pour orienter leurs décisions stratégiques. Sans compter que le champ technologique des RH a explosé, et vu se créer un écosystème de plus de 4 000 fournisseurs de logiciels, qui approvisionnent les professionnels de la ressource humaine. Cette évolution, couplée à la tendance à l'externalisation des gratifications, est en train de reconfigurer durablement la fonction RH.

Mais en même temps que s'y insèrent la technologie et les données de masse, et avec elles des compétences mieux quantifiées, les P.-D. G. se tournent, lorsqu'ils veulent pourvoir un poste au sein de leur département RH, vers les hommes. Plutôt que de puiser dans le vivier de talents déjà constitué par les femmes, les dirigeants d'entreprise ont tendance à engager des cadres « stratégiques » pour les RH, n'ayant pas fait carrière auparavant dans ce domaine. Les définitions de poste aux fonctions de direction des RH font de plus en plus référence au « sens des affaires » comme prérequis indispensable.

D'autres entreprises répondent à la pénurie de talents perçue dans ce domaine en fractionnant les fonctions et en les ventilant : fiches de paie et gestion des compléments de salaire au directeur financier, analyses au directeur de la technologie, logiciels au directeur informatique, etc.

L'apport de nouveaux talents au domaine des RH, tout comme l'importance donnée à une implication transfonctionnelle dans les RH et en soutien de celles-ci ne sont pas nécessairement de mauvaises choses. Cela peut signifier que davantage de ressources leur seront consacrées, que l'action réelle des dirigeants des RH recevra plus d'attention, et que la concurrence pour les principales responsabilités dans les RH en sortira renforcée. Mais c'est peut-être aussi le signe que nous passons à côté de la possibilité offerte de reconnaître le talent qui existe déjà parmi les cadres dirigeants des RH, depuis longtemps sous-évalués, et de donner les moyens à ce vivier déjà existant, tout en lui permettant de monter en compétences.

En août dernier, la Business Roundtable, un groupe de pression pro-entreprise, annonçait à ses membres son intention de défendre « une économie au service de tous les Américains ». L'investissement dans la promotion de ressources humaines ouvertes à la diversité et inclusives est au cœur de ce projet.

À l'heure où la question du talent tient le devant de la scène et où le capitalisme des parties prenantes gagne en reconnaissance, les femmes dans les RH, la fonction des entreprises américaines la plus ouverte à la diversité, sont censées occuper une place plus importante. Il ne tient qu'à leurs patrons de la leur confier.

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# PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH WEAH ANNUAL MESSAGE

*Cont'd from last edition*

Thanks to our partners, feasibility studies have already begun for the development of a Special Economic Zone in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. In the meantime, we intend to test a pilot project in the Free Zone Area located within the vicinity of the National Port Authority in Monrovia.

Madam Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pro-Tempore and Members of the 54th Legislature:

During the year under review, visits were made to the following countries and conferences:

State visit to the State of Israel  
State visit to the United Arab Emirates  
?State Visit to the Republic of Guinea  
?Official Visit to the Republic of Gabon  
Abuja, Nigeria to attend that country's Democracy Day, subsequently to participate in the 55th Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS

Yokohama, Japan for the Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development (TICAD7)  
New York, the United States of America for the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Paris, France to participate in the Second Paris Peace Forum  
Niamey, Niger to attend an Extraordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso to attend an Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS on Counter-Terrorism  
Madam Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pro-Tempore and Members of the 54th Legislature:

During the period under review, our country also paid host to several high-ranking officials of the international community. Those who visited us included the following, amongst others:  
His Excellency Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire

His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

His Excellency Professor Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea  
His Excellency Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal  
His Excellency Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, President of the Republic of Burkina Faso

His Excellency Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone  
Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel

H.E. Dr. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Ms. Marie Royce, U.S. Asst. Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Dr. Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina, President, African Development Bank  
Official Visit of a Bipartisan Delegation from the United States Congress, House Democracy Partnership, headed by the Honorable David Price of North Carolina.

Members included the Hon. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma, Hon. Dina Titus of Nevada, Hon. Alma Adams of North Carolina, Hon. Diana DeGette of Colorado, Hon. Barbara Lee of California, and Hon. Andre Carson of Indiana.  
Madam Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pro-Tempore and Members of the 54th Legislature:

On a somber note, a number of officials of the past and present Governments, as well as several prominent Liberian citizens, passed from earthly labor to eternal rest. They include, but are not limited to:  
Hon. Edward Dagoseh, Senator of Grand Cape Mount County  
Hon. Geraldine Doe-Sheriff, Senator of Montserrado County  
Hon. Adolph A. Lawrence, Representative of District 15, Montserrado County

Hon. Charles Walker Brumskine, Former President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate, and Political Leader  
?Honorable David Straz, Ambassador-At-Large  
Honorable Vinicious Hodges, former Representative from Grand Bassa County  
Honorable Federick Cherue, Former Senator of River Gee County and Former Minister of Justice

A full list of all deceased officials and prominent citizens is published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Liberia.  
May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in perfect peace. Amen  
Madam Vice President and President of the Senate, Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro-Tempore and Members of the 54th Legislature:

I would now like to break with tradition, and respectfully beg your kind permission to allow me to speak directly to the Liberian people. I will assume that your silence means consent, and so I will proceed accordingly. Thank you.  
My fellow Liberians, it has been just over twenty-four months since you voted me and the Coalition for Democratic Change into office. Before that resounding victory, we were all out there together in the political wilderness, struggling for social justice, and for improvement in our economic conditions, improvement in our lives and livelihoods, and hoping for a brighter future for ourselves and our children.

It is against this backdrop of social injustice that I, out of my love and concern for my country and people, was motivated to present myself as a catalyst of hope, peace, and change, to lead a mass movement that would challenge the status quo, and become a voice for the voiceless, and offer hope to the hopeless.

It is out of these aspirations that 16 years ago, at 38 years of age, I was inspired to found the Liberia National Congress (LINC), which was later to become the Congress for Democratic Change, as a political movement, with the objective of challenging the existing political order PEACEFULLY, through the BALLOT BOX, in order to seek justice for the poor, the disadvantaged, and the marginalized in our society.

Together, we dreamed the impossible dream, and after 12 years of NON-VIOLENT struggle, our dreams were realized. The rest is now a part of Liberian political history: the now Coalition for Democratic Change was swept into office by a landslide of 61.5% of the popular vote, decisively defeating the ruling party that had been in office for 12 years.

My Fellow Liberians:

I am fully aware, and will never forget, that this resounding victory was born out of trust and confidence that you had in me, and was based on a yearning for change and betterment.  
I am sure that you are beginning to see that your confidence in me was well-placed and justified, as some of the fruits of my labor begin to emerge, in just two short years. Although we have had economic issues, the change that I promised can still be felt.

I know that you would like to see these changes take place more rapidly, and this is completely understandable. But what is important is that the change has already begun.  
I was very aware, when I offered myself for leadership, that many things were wrong with this country, many things were broken in this economy, and many things would need to be corrected, revised, reversed, cancelled, and otherwise rectified before real progress could be made.

There is no doubt in my mind, and there has never been any such doubt, that I have the ability to meet these challenges head-on, to deal with them decisively and successfully, and thereby justify the confidence that you have reposed in me.  
Without trying to make any excuses, let me explain that many of the problems that my Government has inherited are exogenous, and require solutions which must include global and innovative approaches.

Again, some of the problems are structural in nature, and have been around for many decades. We are currently carrying out structural adjustments to our economy, but we will not reap the benefits in the short term, but rather in the medium to long term.

I sense your impatience. But I would like to tell you today, my dear fellow Liberians, that I am fully pre-occupied in the search for lasting solutions to the problems that we have all faced as a Nation and as a People for so long.

Development and transformation is a process which takes place over time. It is not an overnight event. Progress and growth always take time.

However, in spite of this, I have used the few months that I have been in Office to utilize the limited resources that are available to me to implement several projects and programs that are beginning to have a quick and direct impact on the lives of our people in the short term. I have already enumerated some of them earlier in this Address, so there is no need to mention them now.

But what I am very pleased and excited about, is that the confidence that you reposed in me that brought me to the leadership of this Nation, has been seen and felt by the international community globally, both institutionally and bilaterally.

Because of the trust that produced our overwhelming victory, our international partners are standing with us to make sure that your hope of a better life becomes a reality. They have wholeheartedly embraced me and my Government as Agents of Change.

During the first trimester of my tenure, they have worked closely with my Administration, and have been convinced of our sincerity and determination to provide a better life for the Liberian people, and have accordingly responded in a positive manner. I have expressed my thanks and gratitude to them earlier in this message, and there is no need to do so again. But please allow me to do so again, anyhow.

THANK YOU, MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, BOTH INSTITUTIONAL, BILATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL, FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR LIBERIA, AND ARE STILL DOING, TO ASSIST MY GOVERNMENT TO BRING DEVELOPMENT, GROWTH, TRANSFORMATION, AND PROSPERITY TO THE LIBERIAN PEOPLE.

Our international partners have fully supported my vision and plans for the transformation and development of Liberia, and have provided this Government with hundreds of millions of dollars in loans and grants, professional advice and guidance, as well as technical support, to make our dreams for you come true.

Accordingly, many projects have already been funded and have either started, or are about to start. These projects represent the seeds of infrastructural development which have been planted in this first season. They will soon germinate and become green shoots of progress, and many of them are expected to come to full bloom in the next two years, and will make a lasting and positive impact on your lives and your future.

If we continue to work together and avoid the things that can disrupt the economy, we will see higher levels of growth in 2022, 2023 and beyond. But we must work together as Liberians to achieve this. We must put aside our political differences. No matter what your political affiliation, we are all Liberians. We have one country - Liberia - and unless we work together despite our differences, our Country will not go forward.

And so I ask you to bear with me, and, as we say in our Liberian way: "give me small chance, yah, so I can fix it." No one amongst us here is perfect, and I am no exception. I am sure that since you voted me into office, there are some things that I have done that I could have done better, or differently. But again, as we say in our Liberian parlance, "I on it!"

I want you to know that I wake up eagerly every morning to work hard for Liberia, so that each night I can go to sleep with the satisfaction and confidence that Liberia has moved a little higher and a little further through our leadership.

Madam Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pro-Tempore and

Members of the 54th Legislature:

One of the accomplishments of my Administration of which I am MOST proud, is that we have kept the peace in Liberia from Day One until now, BY OURSELVES.

I want to say to you all Liberians congratulations!!!!

For almost twelve years before we came to Office, the peace in Liberia was maintained by thousands of foreign soldiers on our soil, protecting us from each other, protecting the people from the Government, and the Government from the people.

Since the departure of the peacekeepers, WE HAVE KEPT THE PEACE, not by force of arms or military might, but by the sheer political will of the Government and its calm and professional approach to the management and resolution of conflicts.

This is a proud achievement, especially in view of the fact that there have been many dissident voices and differences of view since we came to office, some of which resulted in peaceful street protests.

Our human rights record is pristine clean. In two years, not a single bullet has been fired in anger by this Government at any of our citizens, and consequently, there have been no deaths from street protests.

No persons have been arrested for exercising their constitutional rights of peaceable assembly, and above all, there are no persons who have been jailed because of their political beliefs or associations.

Every citizen has the right under our Constitution to have dissenting views, and to express them freely and peacefully under the guidelines provided therein. And so we welcome these exercises of democratic rights and freedoms, and consider them as positive proof of a healthy and functioning democracy.

We, as a Government, are duty-bound by the relevant Articles of our Constitution, to protect the rights of our citizen, including those that are not involved in the demonstrations and protests, and will continue to do so under the Oath that I swore.

Let me assure you that I will always look for ways and opportunities, and create the necessary forums, for peaceful dialogue among our citizens who may have differing points of view, where, even if these differences cannot be resolved, we can agree, amicably, to disagree.

I therefore call upon you, my fellow Liberians, to work with me towards achieving a reconciled, united, and prosperous nation.

Without peace, there can be no progress.

Without peace, there can be no development.

Without peace, there can be no growth.

Without peace there can be no prosperity.

Whatever we do, whatever our differences, let us always take the path of peace.

We want peace in our land.

And so, my fellow Liberians, this is my pledge that I make to you today: Under my leadership, Liberia will prosper!

I will provide you with quality leadership - a leadership of inclusive participation, openness, and accountability - aimed at reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for all.

This, in essence, is the true meaning and purpose of the Pro-Poor Agenda.

And so I say to you: Bravo, Fellow Liberians!! Bravo!!!

God bless you all.

And God bless Mama Liberia, so that she will become a Glorious Land of Liberty, by God's command!!!

I thank you.

# Liberian students stranded in China

By Winston W. Parley

Six Liberian students studying computer science on partial scholarship unrelated to governments' arrangements in China have told a live interview with local broadcaster Prime FM their ordeal, saying they live in total fear and allegedly being denied access by Chinese dealers to the only supermarket available to buy food.

The students based in Wuhan, China, include Magretta Tarplah from Matadii; Sheikh from Parker Corner, Brewerville; Saah Hilton Johnson, Jr., from Kebbah, Barnerville; Ambrose John Gbormi, Jr., from Bunja Community in Thinkers' Village, Paynesville; Decontee from New Kru Town; and another male student from Pipeline Road Community in Paynesville.

"We are locked up in our dormitory and we [were] told by our school that we are not allowed to get out because of this virus," Sheikh said on Wednesday morning, 29 January.

"And then, moreover, we are living in total fear because we don't move freely, we don't do anything freely. Like, last week, we went to buy food and the



Chinese started to practice something like racism," he explains on.

According to sheikh, since the outbreak of the Coronavirus, things have shut down, businesses are not running like before and transportation is shut down.

He says they had little cash with them before the outbreak of the virus which they are trying to manage.

Sheikh explains that they went on a partial scholarship gotten through the internet in which those benefiting from this program are responsible

for 30 percent of the requirements, while the remaining 70 percent is undertaken by the scholarship provider.

Their program is not part of scholarship arrangements between the governments of Liberia and China, according to him.

In the wake of the outbreak, Sheikh says the Chinese have refused to sell food to him and his fellow Liberians and foreign students, accusing the supermarket operators of claiming there is no food even though food

could be seen in the supermarket.

He laments that the sellers chose to only sell food to Chinese instead of foreign students.

He says they are responsible to feed themselves, but they are starving now because getting food is hard for them during the outbreak.

In the same school they are attending, he says there are other students from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Angola, Ivory Coast and Guinea, adding that their respective governments are sending in planes to evacuate them.

Due to the outbreak, Sheikh adds that their school has been shut down indefinitely, and students have been asked to keep in doors and avoid crowded places for their safety.

He says he has contacted his family back home concerning the outbreak, adding that he and his colleagues at the school have contacted the Liberian Embassy in China through social media app WeChat, but they were told that the Embassy would get back to them.

Unfortunately, he says since then they haven't heard from the Embassy.

For her part, Magretta Tarplah explains that what they are experiencing in China is really worse than the Ebola Virus.

"This virus is really deadly. They should carry on awareness in Liberia because I am deeply worrying about Liberia. If this virus reaches Liberia it will be too bad because we are not even used to using mask in Liberia, so when it happens to go [to] Liberia it will be too bad, I'm telling you," she says.

She further expresses fear that people are travelling and spreading the virus, and it doesn't show any sign or symptom before being

transmitted to other persons.

"If I have the virus in me, I can transmit the virus to another person before I get sick. So once I get sick and [you're] focusing on me, you don't even know how many persons I have transmitted this virus to," Magretta explains.

Also speaking, student Decontee says even though the Liberian Government is not aware of their scholarship program to China, but they are calling on the government for its aid.

"We are on campus, our school [has] dormitory and we are within the dormitory," she says, adding that students are responsible for their own feeding including electricity and Wi-Fi.

According to Decontee, they bought their own protective gears because no one has provided them such.

Before the outbreak, she says she bought food and a little amount of that food is left which she thinks may not be able to sustain her up to this weekend.

"And we have reached the matter to the school, but they are just telling us wait. Y'all be patient, we will come to your aid. Be patient. But they haven't really answered to our call yet," says Decontee.

Further, Ambrose John Gbormi, Jr., laments that foreign students are being denied of using the only supermarket available in the area and food is very limited there. He says the food they have may carry them for probably one or two weeks.

Saah Hilton Johnson, Jr., another Liberian student adds that they need Liberia's rescue at this point, as there is no enough food in the supermarket and the Chinese in that city are many, buying almost all the food in the supermarket. He says they have been denied twice to enter the supermarket.

## Incompetent!

The George Weah regime exposed its incompetency in handling of economic governance over the last 2 years, as it tries to fix unemployment through public sector hire, the opposition political parties have asserted.

"On employment, attempts by this administration to fix unemployment through public sector hiring shows how incompetent their

handling of economic governance has been over the last 2 years," Mr. Alexander B. Cummings told journalists on Tuesday when he read out the opposition Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) response to President George Weah's Annual Message on Tuesday.

President Weah in his annual address boasted of his government being able to absorb 15,000 employees into the government, something he said had reduced the unemployment rate in the

country by that number.

But the CPP argues that government is not the place to grow jobs and reduce unemployment for political supporters.

"The President admits to employing about 15,000 in just over 2 years. Government is not the place to grow jobs and reduce unemployment for political supporters and cronies. Instead, this government needs to create an enabling environment for the private sector to thrive and create jobs, but this government has failed to enable the private sector in the last two years," Mr. Cummings added.

Mr. Cummings statement comes as many private companies are either shutting down or laying off hundreds of staff in the wake of economic stagnation.

He describes the president's claim of Liberian construction firms' participation in the feeder roads as a joke.

"The President cites the participation of Liberian construction firms in the construction of feeder roads as his achievement in keeping his inaugural promise that Liberians will no longer be

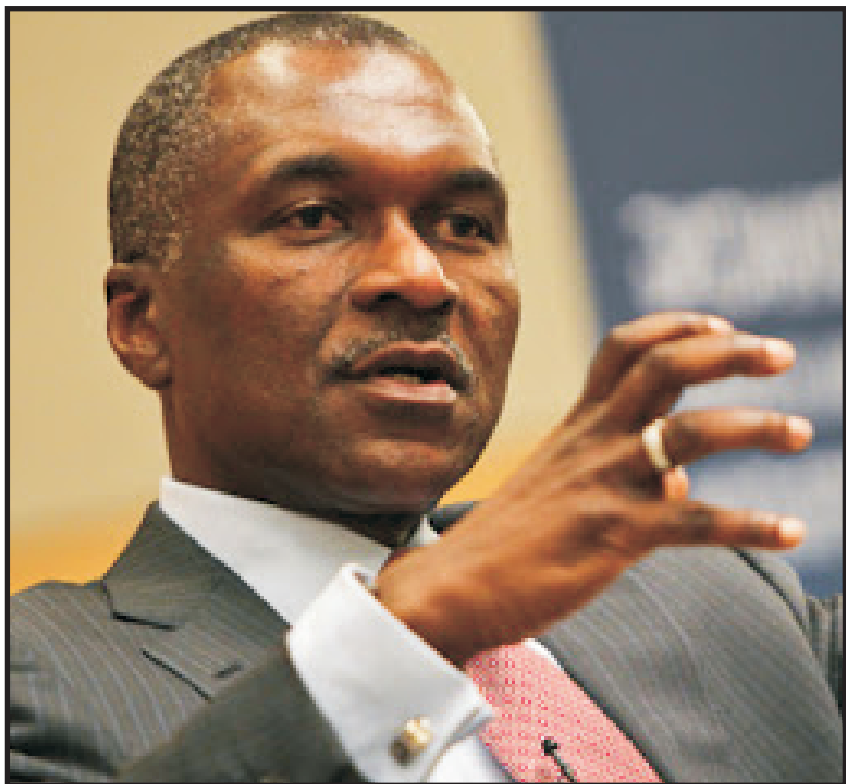
spectators in their economy. On the contrary, Liberians continue to struggle to get financing to start a business or expand existing businesses and fully compete and participate in their own economy," he said.

Mr. Cummings further intimated that under this Weah administration, Liberians are not even spectators to their own economy because they cannot afford to enter the stadium to watch the economy

game but rather are stuck at home.

He, however, commended the president for the promise to invest in youth empowerment programs.

"While we note this as one of his many promises, we hope that this promise can be fulfilled in order to impact the lives of our young people and provide trainings and job opportunities for them," the CPP said.



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# County Meet is political game

## -MYS admits

By E. J. Nathaniel Daybor

The Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports, Andy Quanie says the annual soccer tournament, County Meet, is a political game that is played with the involvement of political actors and counties' officials.

Appearing before the Senate's Committee on Youth and Sports, Minister Quanie explains that the County Meet does not meet standards of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the Federation of International Football Association or FIFA; instead, it is a political tournament intended to unify the people.

He continues that the county meet is not supervised by officials of the Liberia Football Association, but is directly administered by authorities of the Ministry Youth and Sports, which gives the political favor.

During the just ended County Meet, many spectators and actors accused the Sports Ministry of cheating other counties in favor of President George Weah's native Grand Kru County, was declared winner of the tournament.

However, Nimba County Senator Thomas Grupee notes that the recent decision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports against Nimba County is a complete sabotage and unacceptable.

Speaking during public hearings held in the conference room of the Liberian Senate on Wednesday, January 29, Senator Grupee argues that Nimba County has about 1.5 million population, which constitutes a huge percentage of the nation's 4.5 million people and during so



Minister of Youth & Sports, Dester Zeogar Wilson

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

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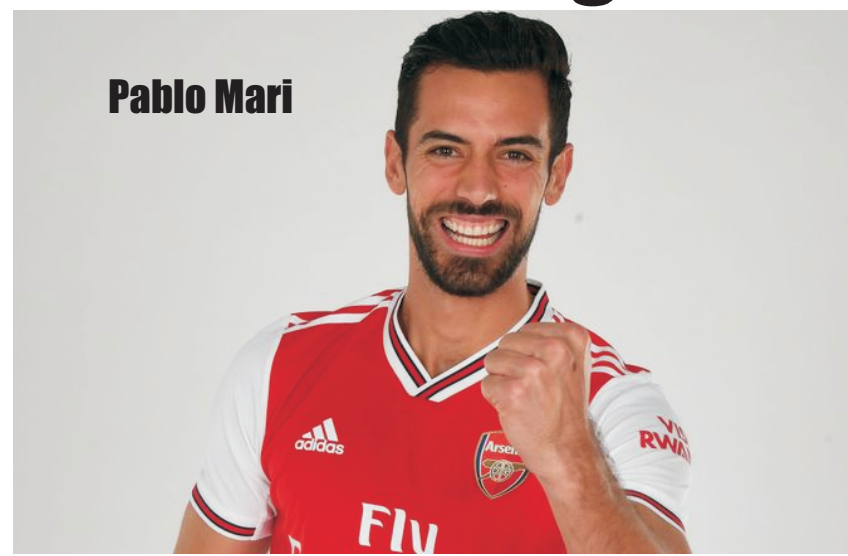
Logos for GTBank, Lonestar Cell, and MTN are displayed at the bottom.

# Arteta's first signing sends message to Arsenal fans

Pablo Mari insists he is delighted to join 'one of the best clubs in the world' in Arsenal and says he intends to achieve 'big things' while at the Emirates. Spanish defender Mari became the first signing of Mikel Arteta's reign on Wednesday when he joined the Gunners on loan from Flamengo until the end of the season. Arsenal identified Mari as a priority target earlier in the month and have the option to sign the 26-year-

old on a permanent deal in the summer. Speaking out after joining the Gunners, Mari said: 'This is one of the best clubs in the world, so I'm absolutely delighted to be joining.

'I'm really looking forward to playing in this jersey and helping my team.' Asked what Arsenal fans can expect from him, Mari added: 'I'm a very professional player. I like working hard every day to achieve objectives. 'One thing I can control is working hard on a daily basis to help my team-



mates to win football matches and repay the faith that Mikel and Arsenal have shown me by signing me to play here, so that's my main objective.

'I want to take it one day at a time and achieve big things at Arsenal.' Arsenal appeared set to miss out on Mari despite the Spaniard arriving in London last week to undergo a medical with the club. But the Gunners were able to force through a January deal, bolstering Arteta's defensive options with a player who has thrived at

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