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The New Dawn

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Public Service Announcement

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ALL OUR CLIENTS & READERS THAT THE BUSINESS AND NEWSPAPER OFFICES OF THE NEW DAWN NEWSPAPER HAVE BEEN RELOCATED ON UN DRIVE OPPOSITE THE NATIONAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION (NIC), BEHIND PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY.

Weah regime faces harassment charge

-Lawyers complain

P11



Pres. George M. Weah



SG Cllr. Syrenus Cephus



LNBA Pres. Cllr. Tiawon Gongloe



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Continental News

Germany host Libya rivals in renewed peace bid

Libya's warring rival factions are expected to join major powers in Germany in a renewed push to secure a ceasefire to halt the civil war.

The talks follow the collapse of an earlier truce amid recriminations.

The conflict pits powerful General Khalifa Haftar against the UN-backed government in the capital, Tripoli.

Sunday's summit also aims to extract a pledge from foreign powers to honour a UN arms embargo and to halt any further interference in the conflict.

On Saturday, forces loyal to Gen Haftar blocked oil exports from major ports - a blow to the country's main source of income.

And reports on Sunday suggest the general's forces had shut down pipelines in Libya as the conference got under way.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the aim of the conference was to "stop this jockeying for position".

"The people of Libya have suffered enough," he said as



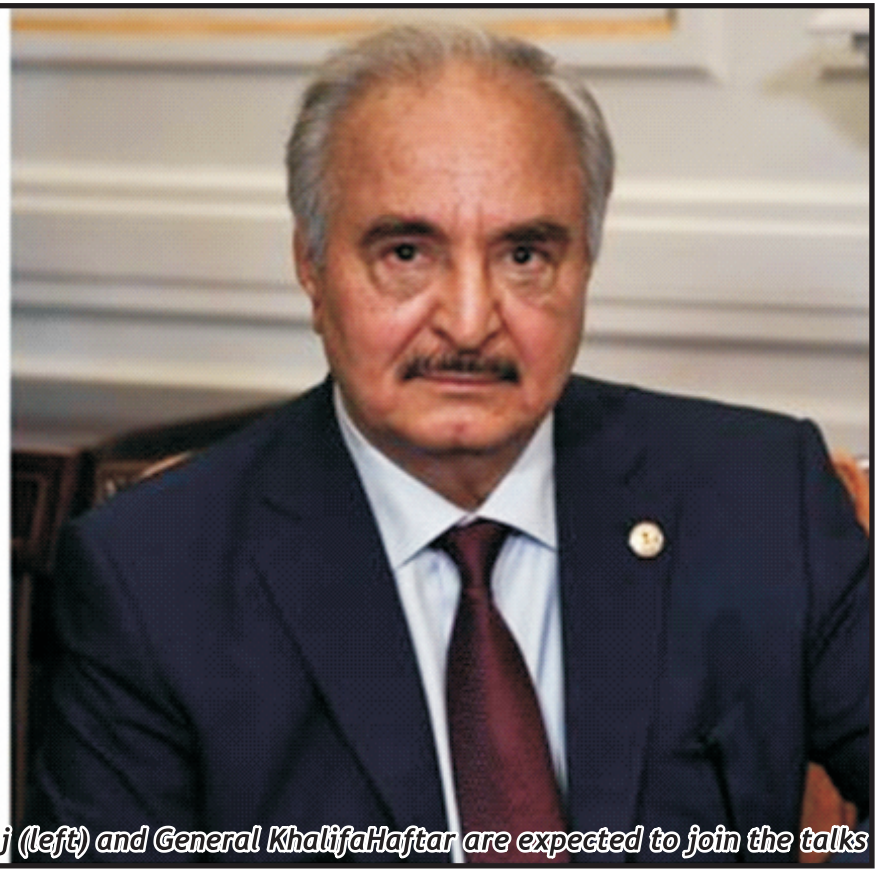
Image copyright AFP: Tripoli-based Prime Minister Fayeza al-Serraj (left) and General Khalifa Haftar are expected to join the talks

he arrived on Sunday. "It's time for the country to move forward."

The meeting is expected to bring the two sides together in Germany's capital Berlin, along with their foreign backers, the UN, and other global powers - including

Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"We don't lose hope that dialogue will continue and the conflict will be solved," Mr Putin said on Sunday before meeting the Turkish president on the sidelines of the



conference.

Mr Erdogan, who has recently sent troops in support of the Tripoli government, said before the meeting that Gen Haftar's "aggressive stance must come to an end".

What is happening in Libya?

Libya has been wracked by conflict since the 2011 uprising

which ousted long-time strongman Muammar Gaddafi.

Gen Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) controls much of eastern Libya, and last April he launched an offensive against the country's rival Government of National Accord (GNA) in the capital, Tripoli. -BBC

Six countries condemn changing CFA franc's name to eco

Five English-speaking West African countries and Guinea have criticised a move to change the name of the regional currency from CFA franc to the eco.

The West African Economic and Monetary Union, made

up of eight former French colonies and former Portuguese colony Guinea Bissau, said in December that it was renaming the CFA franc.

Nigeria, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Liberia and Gambia criticised the move

at the end of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) meeting on Thursday.

They said they "noted with concern" the announcement on 21 December "to unilaterally rename" the CFA franc by 2020, reports AFP news agency.

They asked for an extraordinary summit of leaders of Ecowas - the West African regional group made of 15 nations - to discuss the matter, reports Bloomberg news.

The renaming of CFA franc is not "in line with the decisions of the authority of heads of state and government of Ecowas for the adoption of the 'eco' as the name of an independent single currency," Bloomberg news quotes the group as saying.

Last year ECOWAS, which includes the huge economy of Nigeria,

also set the goal of creating a single currency, and also aimed to call it the eco, reports AFP.

Ghana opposition NDC to hold protests

General Secretary of NDC, Johnson Asiedu Nketia

The opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) has said it will go ahead to hold its planned demonstration in Kumasi, against the Electoral Commission's (EC) decision to compile new voters register, despite intervention by the Eminent Advisory Committee.

According to the party's chairman, Mr. Johnson Asiedu Nketia, no formal communication has been received from the Committee for which they will take a decision to call off their demonstrations.

He said there is no basis for them to stop the demonstration at this moment, particularly since the EC has not shown any sign to further engage stakeholders on the issue or suspend its decision to compile the new voters' register.

General Mosquito who was speaking at the Party's 'Moment of Truth Series' in Kumasi, organized by their



Communications Directorate, stressed that the NDC will only cease-fire if all the parties are brought to the table including the EC to thoroughly deliberate on the matter.

He said reports coming from the EC alleging to be a report submitted by a consultant to on the current biometric equipment has been falsified by the EC just to make their case.

The General Secretary of NDC said besides all the 'weak' justifications by the EC on its latest decision, the time is too short for any person to consider undertaking such an exercise as proposed by the EC.



AFP Copyright: The CFA franc is backed by France

EDITORIAL

Beyond the new Agriculture Minister-designate

PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH Weah has nominated a new Minister of Agriculture, pending confirmation by the Liberian Senate. A female, Madam Jeanine Cooper is the second woman appointed to that office since ex-minister Florence Chenoweth, who served the Tolbert administration up to the bloody military coup in 1980 and subsequently the second term of the Sirleaf administration from 2011 to 2017.

PRESIDENT WEAH REPORTEDLY went thru a meticulous vetting process to come up with the name of Ms Jeanine Cooper who will take charge of a very crucial sector of the economy, after senate confirmation. A farmer and rice producer herself with wealth of experience in the private sector, we have no doubt about her academic qualification and capability to revive the agriculture sector.

BUT WE SINCERELY hope that President Weah would provide all necessary support for Ms Cooper to do the job. It is our fervent prayer that she would not be treated as mere furniture in the Ministry of Agriculture with no tools to work with, like in the case of Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor, who has publicly complained of lack of support.

THE FACT THAT it took the President about more than six months to appoint a new Minister of Agriculture after Dr. Mogana Flomo was dismissed from the post does not demonstrate the government sees agriculture as a priority, if this country is to move forward.

FOR A GOVERNMENT that came to power, alarming that it met a broke economy to delay in even appointing a minister of agriculture nearly a year even after assuming office cast a serious dark cloud on its professed intention to make Liberia self-sufficient in food.

FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS AND international partners are watching us as a people to see where lies our priority; is it in politics, business or activities that don't bring us profitable returns. We believe a great opportunity is here to lift ourselves out of poverty and hunger by prioritizing agriculture.

THE NEW DAWN, ALONG with several other dailies was privileged sometime last November to cover a one-day policy dialogue organized by the Governance Commission integrating value addition into small-scale agriculture for sustained domestic revenue growth where Ms Jeanine Cooper spoke very passionately about potentials in the sector if supported by government.

THAT'S WHAT SHE needs to get the job done. Coming from an entrepreneur background, she has the discipline required to succeed in this sector which has great prospects for the youth. If we can grow enough food to feed ourselves as a nation, Liberia could be on its way out of stagnation and dependency.

WE ARE ALSO aware that the executive alone would not revitalize the sector; it would require support of the Legislature that approves the national budget. And this is where political will comes in. The agriculture sector would not thrive if lawmakers on Capitol Hill see luxurious cars, fabulous salary and benefits as priorities rather than issues that affect the entire country.

IN A NUTSHELL, government's professed interest in the agriculture sector does not end at just appointing a minister, but providing budgetary support, including logistics that would enable this country to graduate from shifting cultivation to mechanized farming that would pave the way for export.

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COMMENTARY

By Ifeanyi M. Nsofor

Why an Ebola Vaccine Is Not Enough

The Ervebo vaccine is a great stride forward in global health. But while it will save lives, it should not be viewed as a magic bullet for preventing and addressing future Ebola outbreaks. Above all, international donors must work closely with African governments and national public health institutes to ensure that the vaccine can be delivered to everyone who needs it.

ABUJA - When the US Food and Drug Administration approved the new Ebola vaccine Ervebo last month, I was elated. Ervebo can generate a quick immune response after a single dose, with protection occurring within ten days. If only such a vaccine had existed a few years ago, I thought.

In 2015, I co-led an African Union-commissioned evaluation by EpiAFRIC of the AU's efforts to address the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. For two weeks, my team and I traveled throughout the three countries, interviewing AU volunteers, community members, international partners, senior managers at health ministries, and other stakeholders who worked to stem that outbreak. We also visited a Coyah Ebola treatment center in Guinea.

During our evaluation, we saw the devastation caused by Ebola, and how weak health systems in the three worst-affected countries had enabled the infection to spread like wildfire. By the time we had finished our interviews, it was clear to us that a stronger health system could have prevented the outbreak, and could even have helped to stop it once it had begun. We wished there was an Ebola vaccine.

Now, there is one.

Without doubt, Ervebo could be a game changer in tackling future Ebola outbreaks. But, in order to help protect health workers and communities, the vaccine must be delivered safely, sustainably, and equitably. That seems unlikely in many countries where Ebola is endemic, owing to security, systemic, and social challenges. Unless these challenges are addressed, Ervebo won't be effective.

First, without security, Ervebo will effectively be unavailable. The recent deaths of health workers in Africa, and the derailment and episodic suspension of the Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, underline why security is imperative in health-care delivery.

In April 2019, for example, Richard Mouzoko, a World Health Organization epidemiologist, was killed in an attack on the Butembo University Hospital in the DRC. In 2013, nine female vaccinators engaged in the global polio eradication initiative were killed in two separate shootings at health centers in Kano, northwest Nigeria. The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeast has derailed polio eradication efforts and set back the country's prospects of being declared free of the disease.

Governments must therefore strengthen national security and work closely with health professionals and security agencies to ensure that health workers and community members are not put in harm's way.

Second, governments must invest in detecting, preventing, and responding to infectious disease outbreaks. According to

preventepidemics.org, a website that ranks countries' epidemic preparedness, no African country currently has the optimal "ready score" of least 80% on a WHO-supported Joint External Evaluation (JEE) to perform these tasks. The five countries that have experienced Ebola outbreaks in the last six years are the DRC (with a ready score of 35%), Guinea (35%), Sierra Leone (43%), Liberia (46%), and Nigeria (46%). This illustrates the huge challenges that lie ahead: If a country cannot efficiently detect, prevent, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks, how can it know when and where to deploy Ervebo or other vaccines?

Third, it is never too early to explain Ervebo's benefits to communities before the vaccine is needed. Such efforts should be led by national public health institutes, working with subnational ministries of health and local-government health departments. This is an area in which donors can invest, because it amounts to money well spent. Waiting until another Ebola outbreak occurs may delay delivery of the vaccines. Furthermore, past experience has shown that communities have little trust in Ebola interventions in the midst of an outbreak.

Community engagement should also include risk communication, which involves explaining to communities how Ebola is transmitted and what they can do to help prevent outbreaks. The University of Global Health Equity in Rwanda says that, "achieving equity in health care depends on equity in health education." This should be the global health community's mantra. We should never assume that people know enough about Ebola and other deadly diseases.

Finally, we must focus more on the social determinants of health. These factors are usually not considered to be part of the health sector, but they have serious implications for health and health-seeking behaviors. For example, access to clean water and the availability of good sanitation in Ebola-prone communities are vital to preventing and responding to outbreaks and stopping the spread of infection.

Yet, according to the WHO, compared to developed countries, 38% of health-care facilities in low- and middle-income countries lack access to an improved drinking-water source, 19% do not have adequate sanitation, and 35% lack water and soap for handwashing. When health workers cannot wash their hands in clean running water after seeing a patient, they are at greater risk of being infected and of transmitting infections to other patients.

The Ervebo vaccine is a great stride forward in global health. But while it will save lives, it should not be viewed as a magic bullet for preventing and addressing future Ebola outbreaks. Above all, international donors must work closely with African governments and national public health institutes to ensure that the vaccine can be delivered to everyone who needs it.

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O-PED

By Sergei Guriev

Putin's Meaningless Coup

The message of Vladimir Putin's call in his recent state-of-the-nation speech for a constitutional overhaul is not that the Russian regime is going to be transformed; it isn't. Rather, the message is that Putin knows his regime is on the wrong side of history - and he is dead set on keeping it there.

PARIS - Vladimir Putin may be setting himself up to remain Russia's leader well beyond the end of his presidency, to no one's surprise. In his annual state-of-the-nation speech earlier this week, he laid out a roadmap for overhauling Russia's political institutions, implying a major constitutional shakeup. The entire cabinet, led by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, immediately resigned.

Putin's proposals were vague and at times self-contradictory. But they provide valuable insights into his plans for after 2024, when his second consecutive term - and legally his final one - ends. For starters, Putin would shift powers from the president to the State Duma (the parliament), and transfer substantial, as-yet-unidentified powers to a Putin-led State Council (not mentioned in the Constitution) and Security Council (mentioned but not described in the Constitution).

Other proposed changes include the suppression of constitutional checks and balances, the virtual elimination of judicial independence, the loss of autonomy for municipal governments, and the priority of Russian legislation over international obligations. The Russian Constitution is very clear that only a Constitutional Assembly may change these foundational principles of Russia's political system. Putin said that he would not convene one. In this sense, his speech laid out an open and transparent plan for a coup, or, more precisely, what political scientists call a self-coup, or autogolpe - once a favorite tool of Latin American caudillos.

In fact, this coup is a non-event: the dramatic overhaul of political institutions implies no change in Russia's political regime. By definition, a political regime is a set of rules, formal or informal, that determine the selection of leaders and policies. Before the coup, Putin was in charge of both. After the coup, this is still the case, and he plans to keep it that way. As Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma, put it in 2014 (when he was Putin's deputy chief of staff), "There is Putin; there is Russia. No Putin - no Russia."

Of course, the country will outlast the man. Volodin was referring to the Russian political regime, which Putin created in his own image. That regime may eventually be reshaped, but probably not until after Putin is out of power.

Whether Putin will be forced from power hasn't been a serious question in a long time. Some may have thought (or hoped) that he would choose to retire in 2024. Had that been the case, he would be preparing the ground by introducing checks and balances aimed at protecting his safety and wellbeing after he left office.

By announcing plans to dismantle checks and balances, Putin has made very clear that he intends to hold onto power, though it remains uncertain how he will structure the system. Russian elites have no doubt been discussing Putin's options since he began his current term in 2018. For example, he could create a new union with Belarus, enabling him to restart the term-limit clock.

Putin has chosen to follow the example of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who stepped down as president, but retained much of the authority he held in that role. Shortly before his resignation, Nazarbayev strengthened Kazakhstan's Security Council and subsequently became its chairman. He was also officially appointed a "Leader of the Nation" with a veto over all important appointments.

Putin also seems to be laying the groundwork to choose a loyal successor. Among his proposals is a more stringent residency requirement for presidential candidates: currently, they must have lived in Russia for ten years; Putin wants to make it 25. Moreover, he wants to exclude anyone who has ever held foreign citizenship or residence permits. Whoever Putin is attempting to target with this rule - perhaps opposition leader Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who left Russia in 2013 - apparently poses too great a threat to his preferred successor.

The proposal to eliminate the primacy of international laws, agreements, and the decisions of international bodies in Russia seems to advance similar ends. The European Court of Human Rights regularly overturns the Putin-controlled judiciary's criminal convictions of another popular opposition figure, Alexei Navalny.

In order to stave off resistance to this power play, Putin also announced an increase in annual social spending of about 0.5% of GDP. And he replaced the deeply unpopular Medvedev with a highly competent but low-profile technocrat, Mikhail Mishustin, who was previously in charge of tax administration.

Like Putin's other "non-political" prime ministers - Mikhail Fradkov (2004-07) and Viktor Zubkov (2007-08) - Mishustin conveniently lacks the charisma to challenge him. And while Mishustin is respected for streamlining and digitizing the tax system, his popularity is tempered by the fact that tax collection increased dramatically under his leadership.

Putin seems to have thought of everything. But the fact that he finds it necessary to go to such lengths to protect himself and his potential successor reveals how tenuous his position is. His famously high approval rating now stood at a paltry (for him) 64% in December 2019. A loyalist successor would be unlikely to reach anywhere close to that level.

So, the message of Putin's recent speech is not that the Russian regime is going to be transformed. It isn't - as financial markets, which didn't budge, seem to recognize. Rather, the message is that Putin knows his regime is on the wrong side of history - and he is dead set on keeping it there.

OPINION

By Kevin Watkins

Closing the SDG Gap

Given the technology, knowledge, and resources now available, the gap between current progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and what is achievable remains far too wide. Closing that gap will require smart politics, new partnerships, and bold campaigning.

L AGOS - As global business and political leaders gather in Davos for the World Economic Forum's annual meeting, they should ask themselves one big question: Will the world achieve the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals for 2030? Or will the SDGs - with their targets for eradicating extreme poverty, ending preventable child deaths, expanding educational opportunity, and averting a climate disaster - join the long list of enthusiastically endorsed global pledges that go unfulfilled?

Those suffering from early new-decade SDG blues might take comfort from Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker. Building on the core theme of his influential book Enlightenment Now, and citing a familiar barrage of statistics on human progress, Pinker has offered an upbeat assessment: "Progress toward [the SDGs] is continuing," he wrote. "It is unlikely to do a sudden U-turn."

He is right, up to a point. Since 2000, there have been extraordinary improvements in human-development indicators. Poverty has been decreasing at historically unprecedented rates: the share of the world's population living on less than \$1.90 per day has fallen from 28% to 10%. The risk of children born in Africa dying before their fifth birthday has been halved, saving millions of young lives. Out-of-school numbers have fallen dramatically, and gender gaps in school attendance are shrinking. Over 1.6 billion people have gained access to clean drinking water. Such achievements refute the pessimism that often pervades public debates about aid and international development.

So far so good. But here's the catch: if progress over the next ten years mirrors that of the last decade, the world will fall catastrophically short of the 2030 targets.

Consider child survival. On current trends, there will still be over four million child deaths worldwide in 2030. The vast majority of these fatalities could be prevented through improved nutrition and basic health-care interventions. But progress toward eradicating malnutrition, which is implicated in half of child deaths worldwide, has been glacial, and millions of children are living beyond the reach of health systems. Pneumonia, which is now the single biggest infectious killer of children, claiming a life every 40 seconds, can be prevented with vaccination and treated with basic antibiotics (costing less than \$0.50) and oxygen. Yet, the fatality count is falling far too slowly.

There is a similar yawning gap between current trends and the 2030 targets for education. Although governments have committed to ensuring universal secondary schooling and improved learning, progress toward universal primary education has stalled. In an increasingly knowledge-based global economy, a combination of restricted access to education and abysmal learning outcomes will leave one billion children lacking the skills they need to flourish, and that their countries need to drive dynamic and inclusive growth.

Likewise, for all the success in combating poverty, past performance is no guide to future outcomes. The pace of progress has slowed, and the goal of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030 is drifting out of reach. That is largely because of slow growth, inequality, and demographic trends in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of people living in poverty is increasing. Research by the Overseas Development Institute suggests that more than 300 million African children will be living below the \$1.90-per-day threshold in 2030 - and these children will account for more than one-half of the world's poor.

The specter of climate change threatens the SDGs just as surely as it does the receding snow line around Davos. If the 2015 Paris climate agreement held out the promise of concerted international action to limit global warming, last month's COP25 climate-change conference in Madrid was a case study in inertia. The emissions gap between current policies and those needed to keep global warming below 1.5° Celsius is widening, and the world's poorest and most vulnerable people are bearing the brunt of the consequences, as the recent droughts in Zambia and the Horn of Africa illustrate.

This is the decade of no return for the climate emergency. Failure to price carbon out of the world's economies, safeguard carbon sinks, and - critically - protect the world's poor against the effects of global warming that are now irreversible will first slow, and then stall and reverse, gains in poverty reduction, nutrition, and health.

We cannot allow these challenges' daunting scale to foster passive acceptance of the inevitability of the SDGs' failure. Nor should we tolerate the paralyzing complacency that now pervades gatherings like Davos, World Bank-International Monetary Fund meetings, and United Nations summits. There is an alternative.

Nothing would do more to bring the SDG targets within reach than a concerted drive to narrow the social disparities currently acting as a brake on progress. To take one example, closing the gap in national death rates between children from the richest and poorest 20% of the world's population would save more than two million lives between now and 2030. That will require further investment in universal health coverage, more equitable public spending and service provision, and greater emphasis on the diseases that kill the poorest children.

Greater equity is the rocket fuel for achieving the SDGs. Instead of issuing vague pronouncements about "leaving no one behind," governments should report on how quickly they are reducing inequalities.

International action has a critical role to play. Later this month, Save the Children, UNICEF, and other partners will convene a global forum on pneumonia aimed at expanding access to life-saving interventions. Toward the end of this year, the United Kingdom and Japan will host global summits on climate and malnutrition, respectively. And former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, has developed a proposal for a new international financing mechanism that could boost education spending by \$10 billion. These initiatives represent real opportunities.

Galvanizing action on the SDGs would narrow the chasm between the human condition we can achieve and the world we tolerate. We need smart politics, new partnerships, and bold campaigning. Success is not guaranteed - but failure to act is not an option.

Bad road condition discourages farmers



Starts from back page

Our Bong County correspondent's five months survey has established that many people in rural Liberia have downplayed agriculture activities as a result of the lack of little or no road network in many farming areas in Bong County.

Many citizens who were engaged in farming before the civil unrest have disengaged on grounds that whenever they gather the produce from the farm, it remains with them and spoil due to bad road network and long distances to the markets.

The citizens told Journalist that before the war, they were not experiencing the challenges of bad road because traders from neighboring Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire used to travel from town to town to buy their local produce including pepper, garden egg and cocoa but since the war, those traders are no longer traveling to purchase produce like in the past and that has led many people to disengage communal farming activities and have now ventured into subsistence farming or other activities like bike riding, waiter marketing amongst others.

One of the commercial towns in Bong County that is heavily challenged with road issue is Gbonota. Linked with the cocoa rich Gbapolu, Gbonota is in addition to its proximity to Kpatawee water-fall as well as Sanoyea huge forest. The town is also the central market ground for the surrounding towns and villages where rural farmers converge to trade their produce.

One of the prominent Liberian farmers and former Senator of Bong County, Richard Flomo has approximately 50 acres of coffee plantation in the same proximity. The coffee has more or less been partially abandoned due to bad road connection which has also contributed to low profitable marketing.

Sanoyea District is further known for food and cash crops production including swamp rice, cassava, vegetables, oil palm, rubber, etc. the community has huge body of water (river) that sets the borders between Bong and Gbarpolu counties and it is also used for fishing purposes.

The road challenge is currently having serious implications on a local farming group under the banner "Kwapaigeh Farmers' Cooperative Society (KFCS).

KFCS is an Agriculture production and marketing cooperative and is one of the farmers' groups that is registered to carry on business as a Local Buying Agent (LBA) in Sanoyea District. With the chain command market structure of Sanoyea District agriculture (cocoa, coffee, rubber) economy and one of the organized societies, KFCS represents a courageous pace not only to give farmers a voice but more significantly, an enduring framework of access to better markets. For the most part, this remains the cooperative's unique selling proposition in the intense trade and value chain of the Sanoyea general agriculture economy.

An Executive Member of the Cooperative Mr. Dennis Flomotokpah told our Bong County Correspondent that road connection is the only major problem they are currently faced with as farmers in the area.

Mr. Flomotokpah said as Cooperative, they do not only sit and await farmers to bring their local produce for buying but they also go to them for the produce. However the road condition in the area is making the profit of their transaction to reduce drastically.

"Sometimes we get little or no profit on the goods we buy from farmers because whenever we get the goods, we will have to transport it on our heads due to

the bad road. So if we do not carry everything in time to store them in the warehouse, it gets damage" he adds.

He said as cooperative, they are eager to help improve Liberia's agriculture sector but that will be done if the roads in Sanoyea are connected to create the free movement of goods and services.

"The KFCS can be a very strong contributing factor to Liberia's agriculture sector because we will start to buy and store more produce which will ensure the availability of wanted produce on the market even when it is not the season for such [produce]" he maintains.

According to him, if roads in the area are well paved, their cooperative can start to supply super markets which will put to an end the importation of some produce that are currently being sole in various supermarkets in Liberia.

Ma-GormaKangai age 46 and the mother of five said they do not need money from anyone to provide the needs of their families; all they need is good road network.

"We really want help, even if the government cannot come now because we know the government has lot of things to do but we need the intervention of Nongovernmental organization (NGO) like USAID, UNDP, or PACS to help connect our roads because when they are paved, we will have the courage to keep making farm to send our children to school and feed our household" she adds.

She said Agriculture is important to national development adding that if the government of President George M. Weah must succeed to the fullest, agriculture needs to be given every necessary attention.

Our Bong County Correspondent who has toured the district for more than five months says Gbotota, in addition to it being used as a centralize point for the collection and trading of locally produced commodities, it can further be developed into ecotourism given its natural beauties.

The concept of Trade-to Trade can highly be recommended in this community. Our Correspondent also say that with the strengthening of the KFCS, not only on the issue of road connectivity but the aspect of promoting production, improving processing for better marketability can also help improve Bong County efforts to the agriculture sector.

This would include but not limited to increasing the size of farmlands, provision of improved planting materials, reduce postharvest loses, improve beans quality, and upgrade storage facilities by building simple and cost effective storages for Farmers.

Bong County prior to the war was considered as the one of the bread baskets next to neighboring Lofa County but due to the many challenges, many of the people living in the rural parts of the county who are also on fertile land usually travel to Gbarnga and other nearby towns to buy imported rice, chicken, fishes amongst others. **By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County**



MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

CBL Tarlue reaffirms Liberia's commitment on single currency

The Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), J. Aloysius Tarlue, Jr, has reaffirmed Liberia's commitment to joining the West African region's single currency regime.

His statement came during

The Extra-Ordinary Meeting was held in response to the public declaration by Ivorian President and Chairman of the Heads of State and Government of the member states of West African Economic and Monetary Union

French Franc, the Ministers and the Governors of the WAMZ expressed serious concern about the unilateral decision of the WAEMU Authority of Heads of State and Government to adopt the Eco outside of the Single Currency Programme approved by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS.

The Ministers and the Governors stressed the need for all Member States to work in concert to ensure the establishment of a sustainable and credible monetary union for the benefit of the sub-region. They further agreed to engage the ECOWAS Commission and WAEMU to seek clarification on the declaration and its implication for the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme (EMCP). The Ministers and the Governors also highlighted the urgent need for greater cooperation and collaboration among Member States of the zone to promote real convergence, as a critical requirement for a sustainable monetary convergence.

For his part, Executive Governor Tarlue reaffirmed Liberia's commitment to the EMCP and called for Member States' adherence to the policy harmonization and macroeconomic convergence criteria. He admonished

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7



CBL Governor, J. Aloysius Tarlue, Jr.

an Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Ministers of the Finance and Governors of Central Banks of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) on Thursday, January 16, 2020 in Abuja.

The Member States of the WAMZ are: The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

(WAEMU), Alassane Ouattara, to replace the currency "Communaute Financiere d'Afrique (CFA) franc" with the "Eco", the name adopted for the ECOWAS Single Currency.

While they acknowledged the decision of the WAEMU (or UEMOA, the French version) to delink the CFA from the

Bong Sup & DS at loggerheads?

Bong County Development Superintendent Anthony Boakai Sheriff has broken silence in the county following a recent statement that he and his Boss Madam Esther Yamah Walker have not had any good working relationship since she resumed work following her suspension by President George Weah about eight months.

Mr. Sheriff is currently the longest serving Assistant Superintendent for Development in the Republic of Liberia.

Recently on Super Bongese radio during a telephone interview, Mr. Sheriff said the county did not qualify from the group stage of the 2019/2020 National County sports meet as a result of Superintendent Walker's alleged refusal to work with the advice of others.

Mr. Sheriff said "The Superintendent wants anything she says must be

implemented and nothing else other will say it works besides what she says so that is the reason why Bong County was defeated by Nimba. And Let me also tell you that since eight months, the Superintendent and I have not been speaking" he alarms.

His Saturday January 11, 2020 statement has been greeted with clams and counter claims as many of the citizens have condemned the situation and describe it as a setback to the County's

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Madam Esther Yamah Walker

LDEA Arrests 39 Year-old man with Drugs

The Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency LDEA Bong County Detachment has arrested a 39 year old man for illegally possessing an undisclosed quantity of narcotic substances.

Suspect Veselee Junior was arrested at the Gbarnga Iron gate check point on Tuesday with the undisclosed quantity of heroin while enroute to Monrovia for marketing.

Some citizens who know suspect Junior have told the LDEA Bong office that he has been engaged in drugs trafficking for a couple of time and his operation has heavily affected lot of youths at the Jackson Village gold mining camp.

Briefing the media following the arrest of suspect Veselee Junior on Tuesday, Bong County DEA Commander Uriah Geela said Junior is

The suspect has since refused to speak with the Press.

Meanwhile, LDEA Bong County Commander Uriah Geela has launched an appeal to the government of Liberia to help empower agents of the LDEA in that part of the country, while calling on locals to provide information on suspected drug traffickers.

According to him, the lack of vehicle and information are the two major challenges facing the fight against drug trafficking in the county.

"We have only one land-cruiser jeep which is not in good condition so we want the government to help us with another vehicle in order to make our job easier," Geela said.

Regarding information, Mr. Geela said effectiveness of the LDEA operations depend on the credible information citizens



among the few suspects who have been arrested since the beginning of 2020.

"We arrested two other suspects about a week ago but through the investigation we conducted, it proved that they were not the major frontrunner of the case but as we speak, they are in our custody until we arrest those who are at the center stage of the case" he explains.

He said from the beginning, suspect Junior denied any wrong doing but later told the LDEA officers that the drugs confiscated belonged to him.

The LDEA Commander also maintained that suspect Junior admitted to being engaged in drugs trafficking for some five years now.

He is currently in the custody of the LDEA and will be charged and sent to court shortly according to Commander Geela.

give them from the community.

"It will be very difficult if a drug suspect is in a particular community and you find people hiding such person. So, if the community members themselves give us the right information, we will be able to arrest anyone who is engaged in drugs business" he concludes.

Our Bong County Correspondent says there are rumors that some citizens in Kpaai District are allegedly making Marijuana farming.

Even though the specific area the alleged farming is taking place has not been named but many people believe that if such continues, it will seriously undermine the workings of the Drugs Enforcement Agency in the area. **By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County.**

"We will not fail you"

---Deputy Transport Minister Assures Weah

By Lewis S. Teh

Deputy Transport Minister for Land and Rail J. Darius Kollie has assured President George Manneh Weah of his unflinching support to working collaboratively with his colleagues at the ministry

discharge of our duty as long we remain deputy minister here," he said Wednesday, 15 January during a program.

While being honored by a local group as the outstanding deputy minister, and public servant of the year 2019 for his enormous contribution

hard working staff of this Ministry who are out there carrying on their duties in making sure that our roads are freed from accident, and helping the government to raise the necessary revenue," he notes.

Minister Kollie expresses delight in seeing a great transformation within the Ministry of Transport, adding that during the past fiscal year, the ministry generated a little over US\$1.2m.

Presenting the certificate of honor to Minister Kollie, the Chairman of the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations in Liberia Mark Chea said his organization specifically focuses on the working of public officials including the Legislative, Judiciary, and Executive branches.

According to Chea, the selection of Deputy Minister Kollie as public servant of the year was based on his immense contribution and the good work including his robust administrative role during the period under review.

"As you may be aware, the people of Liberia have benefited from a launch of a program for warrant officers and a great partnership with Liberia National Police for the safety of pedestrian," he says.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



to raise the needed revenue for government.

"I want to thank President Weah and Minister Samuel Wlue for the preferment, and the supervisory role. But I want to assure our president that we will not fail him in the

towards the transport sector, Minister Kollie said the award belongs to the Transport family and not him as an individual.

"This award will serve as a motivation for me, but on the overall it belongs [to] the

Bong Sup & DS

Cont'd from page 6

development.

"For me what the DS said I think we need to take it very serious because if it is true that he and the superintendent do not have good working relationship then where are we heading as a County? How can we develop? Alexander S. Yarkpawolo one of the radio callers asks.

Mr. Yarkpawolo said there is a need for the Bong County Legislative Caucus Chairman Henry Willie Yallah to look into the matter and have it resolved adding that if that is not done, Bong will boast of little or no development under the government of President George Manneh Weah until his

six years end.

Nancy Dennis a resident of the county has also described the situation as a spiritual problem which can only be solved by God.

"I think we need to pray for our county because when you start to see or hear about fight between the Heads of the home, what happens to the children? She inquires.

Bong County Superintendent Madam Esther Yamah Walker is yet to comment on the issue despite a request from our Bong County Correspondent about her side of the DS's revelations. *By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County*

CBL Tarlue reaffirms

Cont'd from page 6

member states to exhaustively consult and engage for the amicable resolution of the decision of WAEMU.

It can be recalled that in 2000, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the above-named countries established the WAMZ as the second monetary zone of the ECOWAS. The WAMZ was expected to adopt a common currency by 2015 with the view of converging with the WAEMU for adoption of the ECOWAS Single Currency in 2020. However, due to the persistent delay in the achievement of the Single Currency Programme, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS adopted the single-track

approach with the new date for the launching of the single currency by 2020. A number of preconditions precedent to the launching of the single currency as contained in the revised roadmap remain outstanding. At the December 21, 2019 Summit held in Abuja, the Authority reaffirmed their commitment to the Single Currency Programme.

The Executive Governor was accompanied by Musa Dukuly (PhD), Deputy Governor for Economic Policy; Mr. Mussah A. Kamara, Director, Research, Policy and Planning; Mr. Michael B. Ogun, Head, Multilateral Relations; and Mr. Augustine S. Tailey, Special Assistant to the Executive Governor.

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before asset impairment.

"As part of the consideration of the sale, the Earn-Out Payment constitutes a continuing potential income for SDP even after SDPL ceases to be a subsidiary of the Group. But more importantly, this divestment will enable us to prevent further losses in our books and reallocate our financial resources into areas where they will create the highest value for the Group and its shareholders," he stressed.

Although the Group has endeavoured to reduce its cost of operations and taken various steps to enhance the efficiency of the operations, it still could not sustain its operations and provide a long-term sustainability for the business.

"Since we began our foray into Liberia in 2009, SDPL has only managed to plant on just over 10,300 hectares of land due to various operating challenges. This is in spite of a 63-year concession that we were given to develop 220,000 hectares of land. The existing size of the plantation is relatively small to make a significant impact to our bottom line," said Helmy.

Sime Darby sells



Pursuant to the SPA entered into by the parties on 12 December 2019, SDP will assign its employees with operational expertise and experience that are currently serving in Liberia to provide guidance to MPOI and ensure smooth transfer of knowledge to the new owner for a period of 12 months under a secondment arrangement.

"For over 10 years, Liberia and its people have been close to our hearts. Although our decision to leave has come under the most unfortunate circumstances, we were determined to ensure that we exit our business responsibly so that the local communities can

continue to benefit from the foundation that we have built over the years, under the new owner," added Helmy.

MPOI, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mano Manufacturing Company (MANCO) is involved in the purchase of CPO and exporting it to various destinations across West Africa. MANCO, a local Liberian company established since 1967, is principally involved in the manufacturing of soap, bleach and detergents.

According to Helmy, the selection of MPOI as the new owner was made based on the company's standing and track record, as well as its readiness to commit to SDPL's existing

obligations to its employees, local communities and suppliers. This also includes the development of an Outgrowers' Programme for the benefit of the local communities in Liberia.

All current businesses of SDPL will continue as-is. There will be no redundancy of existing employees as a result of this transaction and the new owner is expected to continue honouring all contractual obligations with the local

communities. In addition, SDP will be according a sum of payment to all its former employees based on their years of service.

"We firmly believe we are leaving the business in the good hands of a responsible buyer. It will indeed be in the best interest of all stakeholders in Liberia to support MPOI in its endeavour for the socio-economic development of all Liberians", added Helmy. - *Dispatch*

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Français

A la présidence du Liberia depuis deux ans, Weah a déçu

En arrivant au pouvoir il y a deux ans au Liberia, l'ancienne star du football international George Weah avait suscité d'immenses espoirs aujourd'hui déçus dans un pays ravagé par des années de guerres civiles et le virus Ebola, qui reste miné par la pauvreté.

Le corps ruisselant de sueur, Dominic Kpadeh, 45 ans, casse des pierres dans la banlieue de Monrovia. "Je fais

ça pour nourrir la famille", dit ce père de quatre enfants, plié en deux par l'effort.

Avant, son travail pour l'industrie du bâtiment lui rapportait 1.000 dollars (900 euros) par mois, à partager avec plusieurs ouvriers travaillant avec lui. Maintenant, dit-il, ils peuvent s'estimer heureux quand ils en touchent 250 (225 euros).

"Les gens ne font plus construire comme avant. Même ceux qui viennent

acheter de la pierre concassée la veulent pour pas cher", se désole-t-il.

Une plainte répandue au Liberia, petite république d'Afrique de l'Ouest, où l'inflation et les maux économiques attisent le dépit envers George Weah.

L'ancienne star du foot de l'AC Milan et du PSG a accédé à la présidence le 22 janvier 2018 en promettant de créer

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Derrière le drame d'extradition de Costa

Le feuilleton est terminé, la poussière retombée, et M. Henry Pedro Costa, président du Conseil des Patriotes, séjourne maintenant sur le sol américain, rayonnant de victoire sur le gouvernement libérien qui avait demandé en vain son extradition le mercredi 15 janvier auprès du gouvernement de la Sierra Leone voisine. Les services d'immigration du Libéria

avaient interpellé M. Costa pour faux et usage de faux présumé.

Le feuilleton de près de 72 heures a catapulté Costa à un nouveau niveau de renommée sur le plan mondial en tant que critique du régime de George Weah, tandis que le régime, lui, piétine dans les marmailles diplomatiques, truffé de honte.

La mauvaise nouvelle cependant pour ces adeptes, est que Costa ne pourra pas

retourner au Libéria - du moins tant que M. Weah restera au pouvoir, étant donné les circonstances dans lesquelles il a été autorisé à quitter la capitale sierra-léonaise Freetown tôt jeudi matin à bord de Royal Air Maroc, comme un homme libre.

C'est surtout l'image qu'aucun gouvernement des temps contemporains ne voudrait en aucun cas envoyer au reste du monde, étant donné surtout que le chef de ce régime est une ancienne superstar mondiale de qui le monde attend beaucoup.

Le gouvernement sierra-léonais a refusé de céder aux caprices de son homologue libérien, comme le disait son ministre de l'Information :

« Nous ne répondons pas aux ordres de quelque gouvernement que ce soit. »

Mais, au fait, comment tout a commencé ?

Quelques jours après la fin brutale de la manifestation ultra médiatisée du 30 décembre - qui a eu lieu le 6 janvier 2020 grâce à l'intervention des partenaires étrangers du Libéria,

dont les États-Unis et l'Union européenne pour calmer la tension - M. Costa a décidé de

quitter le pays pour séjourner aux États-Unis.

Et, boum ! Le voilà arrêté à l'aéroport international du Libéria par des agents locaux de l'immigration sur la base d'allégations selon lesquelles il aurait falsifié son titre de voyage.

Avant la manifestation du 30 décembre, Costa est entré au Libéria via Accra, Ghana, avec un laissez-passer (certificat de voyage), un document de voyage temporaire délivré à une personne en lieu et place de son passeport.

A la suite de son arrestation par les autorités libériennes, il a été emmené au siège du service de l'immigration pour répondre à des questions, à savoir comment il a obtenu le document qui aurait été faux. Mais Costa a depuis contesté cette affirmation, accusant les autorités locales d'avoir échangé son laissez-passer original contre un faux dans le but de l'accuser à tort.

La question qui se trouvait sur toutes les lèvres est de savoir quand les autorités de l'immigration se sont rendues compte que les documents de voyage de Costa étaient truqués, étant donné qu'il avait utilisé les mêmes papiers pour entrer au Libéria.

Alors que le débat faisait feu, et que Costa était attendu au siège du service de l'Immigration où il devrait répondre à un certain nombre de questions en ce qui concerne l'origine du « faux » laissez-passer dont il disposait, ce dernier est dit avoir franchi la frontière avec la Sierra Leone voisine. Selon certaines informations, il aurait été aidé par des officiers supérieurs de la sécurité qui l'auraient informé de l'intention présumée du gouvernement de le faire assassiner.

Des accusations que le gouvernement a naturellement niées, indiquant que sa responsabilité est de protéger tous ses citoyens en vertu de la loi. On ignore cependant si la fuite de Costa avait été facilitée par ces officiers supérieurs. À noter que sur les médias sociaux circule une déclaration du sous-ministre de l'Information chargé des Affaires publiques, qui disait : « Costa va bientôt mourir ».

L'appel d'extradition

Costa a été immédiatement arrêté par les agents d'immigration sierra-léonais et remis à la police alors qu'il tentait de monter à bord d'un vol de Lungi vers la Turquie, puis vers les États-Unis. Aussitôt l'arrestation de M.

Costa annoncée, le gouvernement a appelé les autorités sierra-léonaises à extraditer le fugitif vers le Libéria. Il n'y avait eu aucune communication officielle ou écrite à ce stade - juste un simple appel téléphonique. Il s'en est suivi un ballet diplomatique inédit, attirant

ainsi l'attention mondiale sur le cas gouvernement libérien et Henry Costa.

Le gouvernement libérien a-t-il effectivement demandé l'arrestation de Costa à Freetown ?

La réponse est oui. Le gouvernement a appelé à faire arrêter Costa en tant que fugitif, fuyant la justice pour des actes criminels présumés au Libéria.

Costa avait-il été inculpé avant de quitter le Libéria ?

Il n'est pas clair qu'il avait été inculpé avant de fuir le pays. Mais ce que sait tout le monde, c'est qu'il devrait répondre à un certain nombre de questions quant à ses documents que le gouvernement croit être faux. En d'autres termes, il faisait toujours l'objet d'une enquête. Mais une accusation de contrefaçon probable que le gouvernement prétend maintenant imminente et le gouvernement a estimé que demander son extradition pour faire face à des accusations était la meilleure option.

Comment fonctionne l'extradition ?

Une extradition est un processus et doit avoir des détails tels que convenus par les deux pays signant un tel traité.

Comme dans le cas de la demande du Libéria auprès du gouvernement de la Sierra Leone, le gouvernement libérien doit d'abord rédiger une lettre officielle demandant l'extradition par le biais du bureau du procureur général de la Sierra Leone - ce qui n'a pas été fait initialement.

Qui peut être extradé ?

Toute personne faisant face à l'un des crimes spécifiques décrits dans le traité d'extradition entre les deux pays dans cette affaire, le Libéria et la Sierra Leone, mais le pays demandeur devrait suivre une procédure légale formelle.

Par exemple, la loi de 1974 sur l'extradition de la Sierra Leone a estimé qu'un « criminel fugitif »

désigne une personne qui est accusée ou condamnée d'avoir commis une infraction à laquelle s'applique une section de la loi dans une partie quelconque du Commonwealth ou sous la juridiction de tout État étranger ou à bord de tout navire en haute mer, et qui se trouve ou est soupçonné d'être en Sierra Leone ou en route vers la Sierra Leone, une telle personne doit être traduite devant un tribunal local lorsque la demande est faite et un mandat est émis.

Selon la partie I, session 3 de la loi sur l'extradition de la Sierra Leone :

« Lorsque le criminel en fuite est traduit devant le juge, pour justifier pourquoi il ne devrait pas être extradé, le juge, dans la mesure du possible, entend l'affaire dans la même manière, et aura la même juridiction et les mêmes pouvoirs que si le prisonnier était traduit devant lui pour y être jugé.



Français

A la présidence du Liberia



des emplois et d'investir dans l'éducation. De nombreux pauvres adulaient l'ancien gamin des bidonvilles devenu vedette planétaire, puis chef d'Etat.

Au cours de ces deux années, M. Weah a lancé des chantiers routiers et aboli les frais pour les premières années d'université. Mais sa conduite des affaires et son action économique sont sérieusement remises en cause.

Une inflation à environ 30% érode le pouvoir d'achat. Les fonctionnaires ne sont pas payés régulièrement. Avec la crise des liquidités, les titulaires de comptes bancaires peuvent repartir des distributeurs sans avoir pu toucher à leur argent.

- Héritage -

Environ la moitié des 4,8 millions de Libériens vivent avec moins de 1,90 dollar (1,69 euro) par jour, selon des chiffres de la Banque mondiale.

Il reste "beaucoup de travail", concédait M. Weah à l'occasion du Nouvel, mais, ajoutait-il, "j'ai confiance, 2020 sera une année de rétablissement économique".

M. Weah "a hérité d'une économie en ruines", dit à l'AFP son porte-parole, Solo Kelgbeh, "mais il fait tout pour (la) ressusciter".

Seul Ballon d'or africain, en 1995, George Weah a pris ses fonctions de président dans un pays peinant à se remettre de guerres civiles qui ont fait 250.000 morts de 1989 à 2003, après des années de mauvaise gestion. Plus de 4.800 Libériens sont morts entre 2014 et 2016 de la fièvre Ebola.

Par un "effet pervers", après l'épidémie d'Ebola, le pays a perdu une source majeure de revenus avec la fin de l'aide extérieure, ce qui a favorisé l'inflation, dit le représentant local du Fonds monétaire international (FMI), Geoffrey Oestreicher.

Il note les efforts du gouvernement. Mais "ce sont les pauvres qui souffrent".

Les Nations unies étaient le deuxième employeur du Liberia et, avec le départ des humanitaires, il a fallu "piocher dans les caisses pour

mener à bien des choses qui n'étaient pas budgétées, des choses que la communauté internationale n'avaient pas faites, c'est un énorme fardeau financier", dit le porte-parole du président.

Les interrogations se font jour. Avec la politique, l'ancien crac évolue-t-il sur un terrain pas fait pour lui? On le lui avait déjà reproché en 2005, quand celui qui avait décroché au lycée avait concouru à la présidentielle.

- Décisif devant les buts? -

Il a depuis passé un diplôme universitaire.

Pour la troisième fois en moins d'un an, un collectif composé d'associations de la société civile, le Conseil des Patriotes, a fait descendre les Libériens dans la rue le 6 janvier pour de meilleures conditions de vie.

La police a dispersé les manifestants par la force. Les autorités ont fait fermer en octobre la radio de l'une des figures du collectif, l'animateur Henry Costa, virulent détracteur de M. Weah. Inquiété sur la validité de ses documents de voyage, M. Costa a quitté cette semaine le Liberia en catimini.

"Ces deux années de George Weah ont été un échec complet", dit l'un des co-présidents du collectif, Mo Alie.

La présidence Weah a dû faire face à une sombre affaire de corruption présumée à la Banque centrale et, récemment, déçu les victimes des guerres civiles en paraissant freiner la création d'un tribunal pour crimes de guerre.

"Ma mère a été violée en ma présence et l'agresseur est toujours dans les parages", se désole Martha Selewon, 40 ans. M. Weah a contribué au trouble en déclarant avoir entamé des consultations sur le sujet, mais ne pas comprendre les appels à l'instauration d'un tel tribunal des années après les faits.

L'ancien puissant attaquant conserve toutefois des supporters parmi les pauvres.

Makagbeh Kanneh, 35 ans, admet que le prix de son repas quotidien a doublé. Mais "je pense que nous devrions donner sa chance au président". "Comme quand il était joueur, il marquera le but de la qualification à la dernière minute", assure James Forkpah, membre du parti du président. APF

COMMENTAIRE

Par Ifeanyi M. Nsofor

Pourquoi le vaccin contre Ebola ne suffit pas

ABUJA - Quand le mois dernier, la FDA a homologué le nouveau vaccin Ervebo contre Ebola, j'étais ravi. Ervebo peut rapidement produire une réaction immunitaire après une seule dose, assurant jusqu'à dix jours de protection. Si seulement un tel vaccin avait existé il y a quelques années, me disais-je.

En 2015, j'ai codirigé une évaluation mandatée par l'Union africaine effectuée par EpiAFRIC des initiatives de l'UA pour combattre les épidémies Ebola en Guinée, au Liberia et en Sierra Leone. Pendant deux semaines, mon équipe et moi avons voyagé dans trois pays pour interviewer des bénévoles de l'UA, des membres des communautés, des partenaires internationaux, des cadres haut placés des ministères de la Santé et d'autres intervenants pour enrayer cette épidémie. Nous avons également visité le Centre de traitement d'Ebola de Coyah, en Guinée.

Dans le cadre de l'évaluation, nous avons constaté les effets catastrophiques du virus Ebola?; et dans quelle mesure la vulnérabilité des réseaux de santé a permis à l'infection de se propager comme une traînée de poudre dans les trois pays les plus touchés. Au bout du compte, il nous est apparu évident qu'un réseau de santé plus robuste aurait pu prévenir l'épidémie et aurait même aidé à l'enrayer son déclenchement. À l'époque, nous souhaitions tous ardemment un vaccin contre Ebola.

Nous en avons un maintenant.

Certes, Ervebo pourrait vraiment changer la donne dans la lutte aux prochaines épidémies Ebola. Mais, pour contribuer à la protection des effectifs sanitaires et des communautés, la distribution du vaccin doit se faire en toute sécurité, durablement et équitablement. Ceci semble peu probable dans la plupart des pays où Ebola est endémique en raison du manque de sécurité et de problèmes systémiques et sociaux. À moins de régler ces problèmes, le vaccin Ervebo perdra beaucoup de son efficacité.

Primo, sans sécurité, Ervebo sera de fait peu accessible. Les morts récentes de professionnels de la santé en Afrique, le dérapage et la mise en veille épisodique de la lutte contre Ebola dans la République démocratique du Congo, font ressortir les raisons pour lesquelles la sécurité est primordiale pour la prestation de soins de santé.

Ainsi, en avril 2019, Richard Mouzoko, un épidémiologiste de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé a été tué lors d'une attaque sur l'hôpital universitaire de Butembo en RDC. En 2013, neuf agentes de vaccination engagées dans une initiative d'éradication mondiale de la poliomyélite ont été tuées lors de deux fusillades dans des centres sanitaires à Kano, au nord-ouest du Nigeria. La rébellion de Boko Haram dans le nord-est du Nigeria a fait dérailler les initiatives d'éradication de la poliomyélite et a fait reculer les perspectives de réalisation du pays dans l'objectif d'être déclaré indemne de cette maladie.

Les États doivent donc renforcer la sécurité nationale et travailler étroitement avec les professionnels de la santé et les agences de sécurité afin d'assurer que les effectifs médicaux et les membres des communautés ne risquent pas leur vie.

Secundo, les États doivent investir dans le dépistage, la prévention et la réponse aux épidémies de maladies infectieuses. Selon preventepidemics.org, un site Web qui classe les

pays selon le degré de préparation des interventions contre les épidémies, aucun pays africain n'atteint actuellement la note optimale d'au moins 80 % sur une évaluation jointe externe (EJE) financée par l'OMS pour effectuer ces tâches. Les cinq pays qui ont subi des épidémies Ebola dans les six dernières années sont la RDC (avec un degré de préparation de 35 %), la Guinée (35 %), la Sierra Leone (43 %), le Liberia (46 %) et le Nigeria (46 %). Ceci illustre bien les énormes défis qui devront être relevés. En effet, lorsque les autorités sanitaires d'un pays ne parvient pas à dépister, à prévenir et à réagir efficacement aux épidémies de maladies infectieuses, comment peuvent-elles savoir quand et où déployer Ervebo ou d'autres vaccins??

Tertio, il n'est jamais trop tôt pour expliquer les avantages d'Ervebo aux communautés avant de recourir au vaccin. De telles initiatives devraient être menées par les institutions nationales de santé publique, en collaboration avec les ministères de la santé infranationaux et les services de santé des instances régionales. C'est un domaine où l'investissement des donateurs donnera le meilleur rendement, car les montants investis sont judicieux. Attendre qu'une autre épidémie Ebola se déclare pourrait retarder la distribution du vaccin. D'autant plus que le passé a démontré que les communautés ont peu confiance dans les interventions contre Ebola en pleine épidémie.

La mobilisation de la communauté doit également comporter une campagne de communication des risques, ce qui implique qu'il faut expliquer aux communautés les mécanismes de transmission d'Ebola et les mesures à prendre pour prévenir les épidémies. Selon l'Université de l'équité mondiale en santé du Rwanda, «?!l'atteinte de l'équité des soins de santé dépend de l'équité en éducation sanitaire?». Ceci doit constituer le leitmotiv de la communauté mondiale de la santé. Il ne faut jamais présumer que les populations en savent assez sur Ebola et les autres maladies mortelles.

Finalement, il nous faut nous porter une plus grande attention aux déterminants sociaux de la santé. D'ordinaire, ces facteurs ne sont pas censés faire partie des préoccupations du secteur de la santé, mais ils influent directement sur la santé et les habitudes de vie favorisant la santé. Par exemple, l'accès à l'eau potable et l'installation de latrines salubres dans des communautés exposées au virus Ebola sont essentiels à la prévention et aux interventions pour enrayer les foyers des épidémies et éviter la propagation de l'infection.

Or, selon l'OMS, à l'opposé des sommets de salubrité occupés par les pays développés, 38 % des établissements de santé dans des pays à moindre revenu n'ont pas accès à des sources d'eau potable, 19 % n'ont pas de systèmes sanitaires adéquats et 35 % n'ont pas d'éviers à l'eau courante pour se laver les mains avec du savon. Lorsque les effectifs médicaux ne peuvent pas se laver les mains à l'eau courante salubre après avoir soigné un patient, ils courent un plus grand risque de s'infecter et de transmettre des infections à d'autres patients.

Le vaccin Ervebo est un énorme progrès sur le plan de la santé mondiale. Mais même s'il sauvera des vies, il ne devrait pas être vu comme la panacée pour prévenir et combattre les futures épidémies Ebola. Avant toutes choses, les donateurs internationaux doivent travailler en étroite collaboration avec les États africains et les institutions nationales de santé publique pour assurer que le vaccin puisse être administré à tous ceux qui en ont besoin.

PERSPECTIVES PERSPECTIVES

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

LIBERIA'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IS NATIONAL DISGRACE US EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION FRUSTRATES APPLICATION FOR NON-IMMIGRANT VISA FOR TRAVEL TO USA:THE CASE OF A RECENT APPLICANT

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr. January 10, 2020

Indeed, the entire socio-cultural, economic and political structure of Liberia, managed, controlled and dominated by the Ruling Political Class had been, and is, a continuing quagmire, during the century and three quarters in which the Republic has been the sovereign State, since 1847.

Moreover, we, Liberians have been, and are unable, to produce Rice and cooking Oil (our national staples) to feed ourselves; we have and, are being, held hostages by foreign-owned and managed Rice and cooking Oil Cartel and other tropical food products imported from distant lands, in collusion with the political rulers, although Liberia is endowed with more fertile land than people.

But my immediate concerns, dating back to several years of socio-economic and political indignities include our Healthcare System in which there had been, and is, glaring absence of medical service-treatment of curable disease in our country. Patients, mostly the wealthy Liberians and foreign nationals, politicians of the political rulers and the politically-connected Liberians are flown, regularly, out of the country for medical service abroad.

An elderly senior citizen with some of the illnesses for which there are no treatment in Liberia, I applied, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the US Embassy Consular Section for Non-Immigrant Visa for travel to the USA and was requested, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to submit a latest report of my medical condition, which I did in early October, 2019 with the identity (address and telephone numbers) of the desired US hospital.

At my Visa Interview on November 25, 2019 with the US Consular Section, US Embassy, Monrovia, the list of questions given to me, included "Cost of Treatment" (to be provided by the US Hospital) and "Evidence of the ability" to pay the cost of treatment which, also, will be based on the response by the US hospital. But this not happen; so, I emailed a copy of my medical report to my family member, USA, with request that she submit the report to the US Hospital.

Unfortunately, the US Hospital gave January 28, 2020 appointment to receive the report and act on the request for cost of treatment, etc., some three months from November 25, 2019. Now, I am asked by the US Consular Section, Monrovia, "to send a copy of your surgery/medical appointment for January 28, 2020. Additionally, email us any medical reports you may have from the US hospital", while I am still in Liberia.

Now, in all of this, reasonably - the administration of the Visa Application Process - I submit that Law is based, primarily, on Reason, human reason; and that Law's Powerful Punch or its major power/support is drawn from and based upon Reason:

- That it is very important NOT to Admit Criminals - terrorists, anarchists, human rights violators or individuals known or to be anti-the democratic process - into the USA.

- That I have answered, successfully, all of the US Consul's political and economic questions asked of me regarding the Visa application and that there are no criminal charges against me, here in Liberia or anywhere, worldwide;

- That, indeed, I am an honorable, eternal political animal, well-known in Liberia, with open, clear, clean public record and a proven democrat



under the rule of law;

- That I am US-educated, pro-USA, lived, worked in the USA for a decade and married US citizen with 2 grown children who, now, live in the Chicago, Illinois area;

- That my application for the Visa is not intended and should not be confused with or interpreted as design for US citizenship; for, I could have achieved that status, easily, long ago, but did not apply for it because Dual US-Liberia citizenship or Dual Nationality violates the main, basic requirements for citizenship - loyalty, Nationalism and patriotism - including the historical convention that "no one may be citizen of two sovereign states at the same time" and, also, the historical adage that "no servant can serve two masters at the same time", the so-called "modern socio-political conditions notwithstanding"; and

- That, most importantly, dual nationality is illegal in Liberia and that I applied for the Non-Immigrant Visa to save my life; to eliminate constant, daily pain and for peaceful, painless elderly life, because there are no medical services-treatment for such illnesses as prostate (Urology), kidney (Dialysis), ear (Audiology), neck, throat skin/itching, etc. in our country.

The most important reason for granting this Visa to me and other Liberians so qualified is that it harms no one, in terms of placing anyone in danger of terrorism/security risk, both USA and Liberia. On the contrary, granting this Visa to me at this time, is in

fact, continuation of the historical US-Liberia friendship, solidarity and US political, economic support, particularly, humanitarian support provided over the years. Indeed, grant of this Visa for medical treatment to save my life means continuation, also, of social, cultural, economic and political support for Liberian families, including my family of 10 children with a multitude of grand, great-grandchildren and the critical future of Liberia.

On The Issue of Visa Refusals under Section 221(g) I am in agreement, reasonably, with the US Department of State that has acknowledged, also, reasonably, that Section "221(g) refusals happen too often and may be subject to overuse" and possible abuse. According to US Visa Office, "in fiscal year 2008, there were 589,418 nonimmigrant visa refusals under Section 221(g). Of those, 510,549 were successfully overcome and visas issued, a success rate of 87%."

Accordingly, granting my visa application or successful overcome of visa refusals will improve the success rate of 87%!!

Meanwhile, as indicated earlier that prostate, kidney and hearing loss deceases, etc., untreated overtime, deteriorate, while prostate and kidney may be fatal!!

Therefore, I repeat - ask, request and appeal, most respectfully, with the consent, support and cooperation of the average Liberians that the US Consular Service grant me this Visa based upon the foregoing, reasonable, truthful analysis.

Grant the Visa and Save a Life. The US Law, Section 221(g), demands it!!



Weah regime faces harassment charge

Allegations of harassment and the escalation of a clampdown on critics of the George Weah administration is said to be on the increase here with several civil society groups and opposition parties voicing their concerns.

One of the latest group to voice concern over the allegations of harassment and clampdown on critics of former soccer legend Weah is the Liberian National Bar Association or LNBA.

The LNBA in a statement issued over the weekend frowns on what it said is an attempts by some state actors to engage in the harassment of lawyers simply on the account of representing their clients.

The Bar said it is also concerned about the escalating clampdown on critics of the government, as evidenced by unfounded allegations and threatening utterances coming from highly placed individuals, which may have the net effect of silencing dissent.

The statement follows report attributed to the Solicitor General of Liberia, Cllr. Syrenus Cephus threatening to arrest Cllr. Finley Karngar, a member of the LNBA, on the premise that he could not produce a client, in person of Henry Costa who has fled the country based on personal security concerns.

The LNBA says assuming that Cllr. Karngar signed for Mr. Henry Costa to have him report for an investigation, the mere fact that the Liberian Government was in the know that Mr. Costa had fled the country and the Government said it was initiating discussions with the Government of Sierra Leone to bring Costa back to Liberia, the matter became moot.

The LNBA says that implies that Cllr. Karngar no longer



Pres. George M. Weah

SG Cllr. Syrenus Cephus

LNBA Pres. Cllr. Tiawon Gongloe

had any obligation of ensuring the appearance of Costa before any forum, neither was he responsible to answer any question regarding the whereabouts of Henry Costa.

The LNBA maintains the position that being the Solicitor General of Liberia does not give Cllr. Cephus, who is also a member of the LNBA, any authority to arrest a member of the LNBA who has not committed any offense under Liberian law. The Bar Association further says that for Cllr. Cephus to perceive, imagine, countenance or entertain the notion that he has such authority is sad, to say the least.

The LNBA cautions the Solicitor General to exercise his authority within the scope of the law and with regard to the rights of all Liberian citizens, including lawyers, as

guaranteed by the Constitution of Liberia and the international bill of human rights.

The LNBA says it will not tolerate any violation of the rights of lawyers in the execution of the professional obligations to their clients by the Solicitor General or any official of Government and reminds the SG to always take cognizance of section 12.70 of the Penal Law which prohibits the abuse of public office.

The LNBA warns that it will not hesitate to institute actions and impose appropriate sanctions on Cllr. Cephus if he were to carry out the threatened arbitrary arrest of Cllr. Finley, in order to send out a clear message that the Bar will not condone the subjection of lawyers to harassment by state actors and shall always defend lawyers in the protection of their duties.

Additionally, it says it is taken aback that the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) would assign unto itself a duty outside of its statutory mandate beyond the Alien and Nationality Law by attempting to investigate a Liberian citizen for alleged possession of false travel document. The Bar notes that the principal function of the LIS is to enforce the Alien and Nationality Law, Title 4 - Liberian Code of Laws Revised and not to conduct investigation of Liberian citizens suspected or accused of committing crime. Such a duty, according to the Bar, is strictly assigned to the Liberian National Police.

The bar further noted that it is also concerned about the escalating clampdown on critics of the government, as evidenced by unfounded allegations and threatening utterances coming from highly

placed individuals, which may have the net effect of silencing dissent, thereby reversing the gains made in the building of democracy in Liberia and eventually creating an environment for the resurgence of dictatorship in Liberia and civil conflict.

The LNBA calls on the Government and all its officials to take serious note of the fact that the legal profession is the only profession that is protected by the Constitution of Liberia. Article 21(i) of the Constitution of Liberia provides, amongst other things that "...no lawyer shall be... punished for providing legal services, regardless of the charges against or the guilt of his client..." Solicitor General Cephas and other overzealous officials of governments must resist the temptation to illegally amplify the scope of authority of their offices by taking actions against lawyers that bear the potential of creating a chilling effect on the practice of law and thereby make it difficult for lawyers to protect human rights in Liberia.

LNBA assures the Government of Liberia of its willingness to cooperate and collaborate with it in protecting the rights of the people and seeking their common good, but added that it shall not for one minute close its eyes on the violation of the rights of its members in the performance of the professional duties to their clients and any attempt by anyone holding public office in Liberia to depart from subscribing to governance by rule of law to governance by rule of man.



Bad road condition discourages farmers in rural Liberia



The issue of farm to market road continues to serve as major challenge in rural Liberia as the situation keeps undermining the progress of local farmers.

Agriculturists in other Countries are among the World richest according to a 2018 Herdsy report.

Herdsy is an arm of the

next generation of farming technology based in the United Kingdom Report.

However, in Liberia, it seems to be different as a result of the huge challenge that has immersed farmers which has affected their livelihood and they are only constraint to keep converting from communal farming to subsistence farming.

Besides the lack of working tools or modern technology or finance to argument the needed efforts of poor farmers in Liberia, another major challenge remains farm to market roads which is believed to be the cause of the decrease in production of commodities in Liberia.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 5

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Sime Darby sells 100% equity interest here

Sime Darby Plantation Berhad (SDP) announces the completion of sale of its entire 100 percent equity interest in Sime Darby Plantation (Liberia) Inc. (SDPL) to Mano Palm Oil Industries Limited (MPOI). The Bursa Malaysia filing follows an earlier press statement in December 2019 that a Sale & Purchase Agreement (SPA) of the asset was being finalised.

A dispatch from Kuala

Lumpur, Malaysia details that under the SPA, SDP's entire equity in SDPL was sold to MPOI for a total cash consideration of USD1 plus an Earn-Out Payment, the sum of which will be determined by the average future crude palm oil (CPO) price and future CPO production of SDPL in year 2022. The earn-out consideration is payable in equal quarterly installments over a period of eight (8) years, commencing April 2023.



(L-R-SDPL outgoing manger, Alikamal and MPOI boss, Assad)

SDP's Group Managing Director, Mohamad Helmy Othman Basha, says the terms and conditions of the asset sale were agreed with the buyer considering, amongst others, SDP's cash outflows and SDPL's continuous loss making state. SDPL has been a continuously loss-making operation since its inception. In 2018 and 2019, it registered operational losses of USD19 million and USD16 million respectively, even

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