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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.

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Ex-Pres. Sirleaf

UP Chairman Paye

Ex-VP Pres. Boakai

P11

UP optimistic of collaboration deal

-reaffirms reconciliation process

Baggage of problems

-as Weah begins year 3



Pres. Weah

P11



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Continental News

Africa's richest woman 'ripped off her country'

Leaked documents reveal how Africa's richest woman made her fortune through exploiting her own country, and corruption.

Isabel dos Santos got access to lucrative deals involving land, oil, diamonds and telecoms when her father was president of Angola, a southern African country rich in natural resources.

The documents show how she and her husband were allowed to buy valuable state assets in a series of suspicious deals.

Ms Dos Santos says the allegations against her are entirely false and that there is a politically motivated witch-hunt by the Angolan government.

The former president's daughter has made the UK her home and owns expensive properties in central London.

She is already under criminal investigation by the authorities in Angola for corruption and her assets in the country have been frozen.

Now BBC Panorama has been given access to more

than 700,000 leaked documents about the billionaire's business empire.

Most were obtained by the Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa and shared with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

They've been investigated by 37 media organisations including the Guardian and Portugal's Expresso

newspaper. Andrew Feinstein, the head of Corruption Watch, says the documents show how Ms Dos Santos exploited her country at the expense of ordinary Angolans.

"Every time she appears on the cover of some glossy magazine somewhere in the world, every time that she hosts one of her glamorous parties in the south of France, she is doing so by trampling on

the aspirations of the citizens of Angola."

The ICIJ have called the documents the Luanda Leaks. One of the most suspicious deals was run from London through a UK subsidiary of the Angolan state oil company Sonangol.

Ms Dos Santos had been put in charge of the struggling Sonangol in 2016, thanks to a presidential decree from her father Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who kept a tight grip on his country for the 38 years he was in power.

But when he retired as president in September 2017 her position was soon under threat, even though his hand-picked successor came from the same party. Ms Dos Santos was sacked two months later. Many Angolans have been surprised at the way that President João Lourenço has gone after the business interests of his predecessor's family. The leaked documents show that as she left Sonangol, Ms Dos Santos approved \$58m of suspicious payments to a consultancy company in Dubai called Matter Business Solutions.

She says she has no financial interest in Matter, but the leaked documents reveal it was run by her business manager and owned by a friend. Panorama understands that Matter sent more than 50 invoices to Sonangol in London on the day that she was fired.

Ms Dos Santos appears to have approved payments to her friend's company after she was sacked.

Although some consultancy work had been carried out by Matter, there's very little detail on the invoices to justify such large bills.

One asks for €472,196 for unspecified expenses - another asks for \$928,517 for unspecified legal services. Two of the invoices - each for €676,339.97 - are for exactly the same work on the same date and Ms Dos Santos signed them both off anyway. Lawyers for Matter Business Solutions say it was brought in to help restructure the oil industry in Angola, and that the invoices were for work that had already been carried out by other consultancy companies it had hired. "Regarding the invoices related with expenses, it is common for consultancy companies to add expenses to invoices as a general item. This is often due to those expenses involving large amounts of paperwork."



World leaders 'committed' to Libya peace: UN chief

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that major powers are "fully committed" to a peaceful resolution in Libya after a summit in Berlin.

World leaders have pledged not to interfere in Libya's ongoing civil conflict, and have vowed to uphold a UN arms embargo.

The conflict pits powerful General Khalifa Haftar against the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA).

But although both Libyan warring sides were present, they did not meet.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the two sides were briefed and consulted by

the other parties. Alongside Mrs Merkel, attendees included Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Before the meeting, Mr Johnson said the aim of the conference was to "stop this jockeying for position".

"The people of Libya have suffered enough," he said as he arrived on Sunday.

"It's time for the country to move forward." Leaders from the EU,

Russia and Turkey were among those who committed to an end to foreign intervention in Libya's war, and to uphold a UN arms embargo.

After the conference, German leader Mrs Merkel stressed there was no military way to end the conflict, "only a political solution".

Mr Guterres meanwhile said all the major powers present shared "a strong commitment to stop" any further escalation in the region.

He did however say he was "very worried" about reports

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that forces loyal to Gen Haftar had closed several key ports and a major oil pipeline in the country.

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov also expressed concerns. He said afterwards the major powers "have not yet succeeded in launching a serious and stable dialogue" between the warring parties.

And there were questions about whether there could be a lasting ceasefire, and how this could be maintained. Nevertheless, Mr Lavrov said both sides had taken "a small step" forward. The commitment by foreign backers of the conflict - which include Russia,

Egypt and Turkey - to respect the UN arms embargo on Libya will only be taken seriously if the UN Security Council acts on violations. This is something it has failed to do in years of conflict.

For any progress to be made in the long term,

Libya's warring sides will need to declare and commit to a ceasefire, which still looks far-fetched.

If there is eventually a long-enough ceasefire in place, it would allow the UN to go back

to the political drawing board, and design a fresh



German Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed Russian President Vladimir Putin and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

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 Joseph E. Stiglitz

The Truth About the Trump Economy

It is becoming conventional wisdom that US President Donald Trump will be tough to beat in November, because, whatever reservations about him voters may have, he has been good for the American economy. Nothing could be further from the truth.

NEW YORK - As the world's business elites trek to Davos for their annual gathering, people should be asking a simple question: Have they overcome their infatuation with US President Donald Trump?

Two years ago, a few rare corporate leaders were concerned about climate change, or upset at Trump's misogyny and bigotry. Most, however, were celebrating the president's tax cuts for billionaires and corporations and looking forward to his efforts to deregulate the economy. That would allow businesses to pollute the air more, get more Americans hooked on opioids, entice more children to eat their diabetes-inducing foods, and engage in the sort of financial shenanigans that brought on the 2008 crisis.⁴

Today, many corporate bosses are still talking about the continued GDP growth and record stock prices. But neither GDP nor the Dow is a good measure of economic performance. Neither tells us what's happening to ordinary citizens' living standards or anything about sustainability. In fact, US economic performance over the past four years is Exhibit A in the indictment against relying on these indicators.¹

To get a good reading on a country's economic health, start by looking at the health of its citizens. If they are happy and prosperous, they will be healthy and live longer. Among developed countries, America sits at the bottom in this regard. US life expectancy, already relatively low, fell in each of the first two years of Trump's presidency, and in 2017, midlife mortality reached its highest rate since World War II. This is not a surprise, because no president has worked harder to make sure that more Americans lack health insurance. Millions have lost their coverage, and the uninsured rate has risen, in just two years, from 10.9% to 13.7%.¹

One reason for declining life expectancy in America is what Anne Case and Nobel laureate economist Angus Deaton call deaths of despair, caused by alcohol, drug overdoses, and suicide. In 2017 (the most recent year for which good data are available), such deaths stood at almost four times their 1999 level.¹

The only time I have seen anything like these declines in health - outside of war or epidemics - was when I was chief economist of the World Bank and found out that mortality and morbidity data confirmed what our economic indicators suggested about the dismal state of the post-Soviet Russian economy.¹

Trump may be a good president for the top 1% - and especially for the top 0.1% - but he has not been good for everyone else. If fully implemented, the 2017 tax cut will result in tax increases for most households in the second, third, and fourth income quintiles.

Given tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the ultrarich and corporations, it should come as no surprise that there was no significant change in the median US household's disposable income between 2017 and 2018 (again, the most recent year with good data). The lion's share of the increase in GDP is also going to those at the top. Real median weekly earnings are just 2.6% above their level when Trump took office. And these increases have not offset long periods of wage stagnation. For example, the median wage of a full-time male worker (and those with full-time jobs are the lucky ones) is still more than 3% below what it was 40 years ago. Nor has there been much progress on reducing racial disparities: in the third quarter of 2019, median weekly earnings for black men working full-time were less than three-quarters the level for white men.⁴

Making matters worse, the growth that has occurred is not environmentally sustainable - and even less so thanks to the Trump administration's gutting of

regulations that have passed stringent cost-benefit analyses. The air will be less breathable, the water less drinkable, and the planet more subject to climate change. In fact, losses related to climate change have already reached new highs in the US, which has suffered more property damage than any other country - reaching some 1.5% of GDP in 2017.¹

The tax cuts were supposed to spur a new wave of investment. Instead, they triggered an all-time record binge of share buybacks - some \$800 billion in 2018 - by some of America's most profitable companies, and led to record peacetime deficits (almost \$1 trillion in fiscal 2019) in a country supposedly near full employment. And even with weak investment, the US had to borrow massively abroad: the most recent data show foreign borrowing at nearly \$500 billion a year, with an increase of more than 10% in America's net indebtedness position in one year alone.

Likewise, Trump's trade wars, for all their sound and fury, have not reduced the US trade deficit, which was one-quarter higher in 2018 than it was in 2016. The 2018 goods deficit was the largest on record. Even the deficit in trade with China was up almost a quarter from 2016. The US did get a new North American trade agreement, without the investment agreement provisions that the Business Roundtable wanted, without the provisions raising drug prices that the pharmaceutical companies wanted, and with better labor and environmental provisions. Trump, a self-proclaimed master deal maker, lost on almost every front in his negotiations with congressional Democrats, resulting in a slightly improved trade arrangement.

And despite Trump's vaunted promises to bring manufacturing jobs back to the US, the increase in manufacturing employment is still lower than it was under his predecessor, Barack Obama, once the post-2008 recovery set in, and is still markedly below its pre-crisis level. Even the unemployment rate, at a 50-year low, masks economic fragility. The employment rate for working-age males and females, while rising, has increased less than during the Obama recovery, and is still significantly below that of other developed countries. The pace of job creation is also markedly slower than it was under Obama.¹

Again, the low employment rate is not a surprise, not least because unhealthy people can't work. Moreover, those on disability benefits, in prison - the US incarceration rate has increased more than sixfold since 1970, with some two million people currently behind bars - or so discouraged that they are not actively seeking jobs are not counted as "unemployed." But, of course, they are not employed. Nor is it a surprise that a country that doesn't provide affordable childcare or guarantee family leave would have lower female employment - adjusted for population, more than ten percentage points lower - than other developed countries.

Even judging by GDP, the Trump economy falls short. Last quarter's growth was just 2.1%, far less than the 4%, 5%, or even 6% Trump promised to deliver, and even less than the 2.4% average of Obama's second term. That is a remarkably poor performance considering the stimulus provided by the \$1 trillion deficit and ultra-low interest rates. This is not an accident, or just a matter of bad luck: Trump's brand is uncertainty, volatility, and prevarication, whereas trust, stability, and confidence are essential for growth. So is equality, according to the International Monetary Fund.

So, Trump deserves failing grades not just on essential tasks like upholding democracy and preserving our planet. He should not get a pass on the economy, either.

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 Michael Froman & Rajiv Shah

A Data Revolution for All

It has now been almost two decades since the original launch of DATA, a platform that marshaled \$100 billion in debt forgiveness for poor countries, and another \$50 billion in contributions for health and development. In a world with more data and data-science expertise than ever, it's time to revive that innovative spirit.

NEW YORK - Science has revolutionized medicine and agriculture over the last 100 years, particularly for the poorest of the poor. Achievements ranging from the treatment of hookworm to the green revolution attest to its power.

Looking ahead, data science has even greater potential to revolutionize everything from how we treat disease to how we build more inclusive economies. History shows us that when the power of science and technology is brought to bear on society's greatest challenges, millions of lives can be improved.

Pick any problem you see around the world: the raging wildfires that are devastating Australia; the opioid epidemic that is ravaging poor communities in the United States; the world's worst refugee crisis since World War II. Confronting these problems and others - from poverty and inequality to conservation and climate change - requires the responsible application of data, and the insights drawn from them.

Yet, while there have been great advances in data science in the private sector, many social-sector and civic organizations are lagging behind. With proper support, they can leverage data analytics to make their work go further and faster, ultimately helping more people. Just last year, our two organizations - Mastercard and The Rockefeller Foundation - committed to addressing this gap. By becoming more data-science driven, all organizations can achieve their full potential.

Fortunately, innovators in the field are already performing some of this work. The volunteer-based organization DataKind, for example, has connected non-profits with private-sector data scientists to solve issues facing community health workers. Community Solutions, a non-profit working in more than 80 US cities and counties, is using data science to tackle homelessness. And Benefits Data Trust, a Philadelphia-based national non-profit, leverages the power of artificial intelligence to help millions of low-income American families access the social benefits available to help them.

Data-driven insights have also been used to help mayors across the US pursue strategies of inclusive economic growth, and to help government officials in Africa predict the locations and causes of at-risk pregnancies in rural communities. And yet, these efforts represent merely the starting point, not the final destination. There is still so much more work to do.

Transforming the role of data in addressing major social and economic issues is not a job for any one person or organization. We must build on the successes of those who have come before. In 2002, a group of innovative social entrepreneurs, together with anti-poverty advocates and the Irish rock musician and philanthropist Bono, launched DATA, a nonprofit committed to alleviating debt, fighting AIDS, and reducing trade inequalities in Africa. In what ultimately became the ONE Campaign, they galvanized support for poverty alleviation by focusing on real-world data, and by advocating evidence-based approaches to development.

At the time, these efforts broke new ground by recognizing the power of data to address society's greatest challenges. In partnership with millions of activists around the world, the coalition behind DATA facilitated the cancellation of \$100 billion of debt owed by poor countries, marshaled \$50 billion in contributions for health and development aid, and pushed for trade deals that helped millions of vulnerable families.

But, although data are ubiquitous, and the opportunities offered by the data revolution are even larger, not everyone is poised to gain from it equally. Once again, we need a bold effort to bridge the gap and ensure that the most vulnerable are not left behind.

With that challenge in mind, and with the support of DATA's original founders, The Rockefeller Foundation and Mastercard are relaunching DATA.org to serve as a platform for partnerships to expand further the field of data science for social impact, and to ensure that non-profit and civic organizations are well positioned to take advantage of the data revolution.

By relaunching the platform, we hope to use data to tackle homelessness, improve access to social benefits, and support community health workers worldwide. Those on the front lines of efforts to improve public health, fight poverty, and solve many other problems will have improved access to data scientists who can help them maximize their impact. Most important, this will be done in a way that brings more people and organizations together to effect positive social change, all while adhering to principles of responsible data use.

Expanding the field of data science for social impact is a shared global effort. It will take collaboration from all sectors to ensure that the nearly 2.5 quintillion bytes of data being produced every day have a positive social impact. Just as DATA demonstrated the promise of evidence-driven policies for development 18 years ago, the relaunch of the platform this month will create new momentum for tackling the world's biggest challenges.

The data revolution must benefit all. Together, we can make 2020 the year that partnerships began to extend the promise of a data-driven economy to everyone, everywhere.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Meet Mikhail Mishustin, Russia's Prime Minister

By KesterKennKlomegah

Plucked from obscurity and little known in wide national political scene, the Head of the Federal Tax Service, Mikhail Mishustin, to become the new Prime Minister was a complete surprise, but not the first time in Russia's politics. President Vladimir Putin was pulled up to the top political field, in a similar way, by Boris Yeltsin. In August 1999, Putin was appointed one of three First Deputy Prime Ministers, and later on, was appointed acting Prime Minister of the Government of the Russian Federation by Yeltsin.

Yeltsin announced that he wanted to see Putin as his successor. Readily, Putin agreed to run for the presidency and later approved by State Duma with 233 votes in favor (vs. 84 against, 17 abstained), while a simple majority of 226 was required, making him Russia's fifth PM in fewer than eighteen months.

On his appointment, few expected Putin, virtually unknown to the general public, to last any longer than his predecessors. He was initially regarded as a Yeltsin loyalist, like other prime ministers of Boris Yeltsin, Putin did not choose ministers himself, his cabinet was determined by the presidential administration.

Now, with a new chapter opening, Mikhail Mishustin eventually replaces Dmitry Medvedev who served as Prime Minister until mid-January 2020. Putin and Medvedev worked together and even switched positions between President and Prime Minister. This switch was termed by many in the media as "Rokirovka", the Russian term for the chess move "casting" and later Medvedev said he himself would be ready to perform "practical work in the government" with under Putin.

On January 15, in his address to the Federal Assembly, Putin explicitly explained: "Our society is clearly calling for change. People want development, where they live and work, that is, in cities, districts, villages and all across the nation. The pace of change must be expedited every year and produce tangible results in attaining worthy living standards that would be clearly perceived by the people. And, I repeat, they must be actively involved in this process." Meeting with the Cabinet thereafter, Putin said: "For my part, I also want to thank you for everything that has been done so far in our joint work. I am satisfied with the results of your work. Of course, not everything was accomplished, but things never work out in full." He thanked the government and added that Medvedev served as President and for almost eight years now he has been the Prime Minister, which is probably the longest stint in this post in Russia's recent history.

Further, Putin held a separate working meeting with Head of the Federal Taxation Service Mikhail Mishustin and proposed him to take the post of Prime Minister. Having received his consent, the President submitted the candidacy of Mikhail Mishustin for consideration to the State Duma. On January 16, the State Duma (lower house) endorsed Mishustin, as the new Prime Minister of the Russian Federation. As many as 383 lawmakers supported Putin's choice, none were against, and 41 parliamentarians abstained. "Colleagues, the decision has been taken. We have given consent to the appointment of Mishustin Mikhail Vladimirovich as Prime Minister by the president of the Russian Federation," Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said, summing up the results of the vote.

President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree appointing Mikhail Mishustin as the country's Prime Minister. "In accordance with Article 83(a) of the Russian Constitution, Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin is appointed as Russia's Prime Minister," says the decree published on the Kremlin's website. The decree comes into force on the day of its signing.

Mikhail Mishustin was born on March 3, 1966 in Moscow to a father of Russian-Jewish origin and a mother of Russian origin. He completed postgraduate studies in 1992. He is



married and has three sons. His interest is in sport, playing ice hockey. He is a member of the supervisory board of HC CSKA Moscow.

In 2003, he defended a thesis, headlined "Mechanism of state fiscal management in Russia" and received a PhD in economics. In 2010, he received a doctoral degree in economics at the Academy of National Economy under the Government of the Russian Federation (currently Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration).

Since graduation, he has worked in several enterprises. In February 2009, he joined the personnel reserve of the President of Russia. In 2010, Mikhail Mishustin was appointed as the Head of the Federal Tax Service (FTS). From 2011-2018, he was a member of the Presidential Council for Financial Market Development.

During this period, the tax service was criticized for its overly strict approach to business, and Mishustin rejected this accusation, citing a significant reduction in the number of inspections. So, with the arrival of Mishustin in 2010, the Federal tax service changed its approach to the organization of control events, focusing on analytical work.

As a result, the number of on-site tax audits has sharply decreased, while their efficiency has increased. If earlier every tenth taxpayer was checked, in 2018, the tax authorities checked only one small business company out of 4,000. The number of inspections of large and medium-sized businesses has also decreased significantly.

"This candidacy comes absolutely unexpectedly, but that does not mean he is a figure who brings about repulsion. Perhaps even the contrary. Not all fiscal heads are likeable and agreeable. In my view, Mishustin is largely seen by the public as agreeable," Federation Council Deputy Speaker Ilyas Umakhanov told Interfax News Agency.

"This is yet more proof that our president relies on professionals at this difficult, critical moment when the country needs a qualitative leap, primarily in the economic sphere. This is down to new technology, digitalization; this is precisely where Mishustin made a mark as the Russian tax chief. He has huge experience under his belt, which has been embedded into the system," added Umakhanov.

First Deputy Head of the Federation Council Committee for the Budget and Financial Markets Sergei Ryabukhin, for his part, described Mishustin as a very successful public administrator. "A top professional, a very big statesman and individual who has achieved great successes within the system of public administration in

the tax and financial sphere. I think his is a good candidacy," according to Ryabukhin.

According to experts, the surprise shake-up could have been triggered by launching a reset of the Russian political system and the upcoming power shift. Political Analyst Konstantin Kalachev believes that Putin's decision to pick Mishustin as the new premier is related to his political neutrality, and he is also known in the business and corporate community. However, the new head of the government is unlikely to become Putin's successor.

All officials interviewed by Vedomosti have described the choice as a surprise but a good one. Taxation is the only sector that has demonstrated a breakthrough in Russia's state administration. The Russian Tax Service is one of the best in the world in terms of collecting taxes and developing technologies, an official linked to the financial system said. Mishustin is well-known in the government as a good administrator and his service was a lifesaver during the crisis, according to several media reports.

Mishustin is tasked with fulfilling Putin's economic program, namely the National Projects to the tune of 26 trillion rubles (\$424 billion) up to 2024. The program's slow implementation and weak economic growth were among the reasons Medvedev's government came under fire, the paper says. Mishustin's major achievement is turning the tax-collecting agency into a service tool, said Partner at Taxology Alexei Artyukh.

He reformed the administration of major taxpayers and businesses can coordinate deals in advance in exchange for the Federal Tax Service's access to companies' accounting systems. If these approaches are extended to other services, this would result in huge progress, Alexei Artyukh said.

Kommersant, a local Russian newspaper, reported that Russia would remain as a strong presidential republic, and all the upcoming changes are linked to the the upcoming presidential election in 2024. Unreservedly, Mishustin stated during a plenary session of the State Duma that Russia has sufficient funds to achieve all goals set by President Vladimir Putin. Implementation of all the social obligations the president enumerated in his State of the Nation Address would require \$64.8 billion.

Russia, with the largest territory in the world, has a wide natural resource base, including major deposits of timber, petroleum, natural gas, coal, ores and other mineral resources that can be used to support the expected economic development and raise the overall living standards of the population.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Liberia drops charges against Crane Currency

By Winston W. Parley

On the request of Liberian prosecutors, the Criminal Court “C” in Monrovia has dropped all charges against Crane Currency, AB, the company that printed billions of

motion is hereby granted, dismissed and the indictment also ordered dismissed,” presiding Judge Nancy F. Sammy ruled Monday, 20 January.

Crane Currency was indicted by Liberian

including defendants Sirleaf, Weeks, Dorbor M. Hagba, Richard H. Walker and Joseph Dennis have been facing prosecution for alleged economic sabotage on account of their alleged roles in the missing \$16 billion Liberian Bank notes scandal.

In September 2019, Judge A. Blamo Dixon recused himself from the trial of the case for reason best known to him, which led the cause to come to a pause. The court is now presided over by Judge Nancy F. Sammy.

Though prosecutors here indicted the money printing company Crane Currency AB, SE-14782 of Tumba, Sweden, they did not bring the company under the court’s jurisdiction for the trial of the case, except for the Liberian officials.

According to the indictment, the defendants deliberately launder money to the detriment of the Liberian economy and paid US\$835,367.72 to printing firm co-defendant Crane Currency for the printing of LRD\$2,645,000,000.

They accused allegedly defrauded the CBL and the government when they printed excess Liberian dollar bank notes amounting to LRD\$2,645,000,000 to infuse it into the Liberian market without authorization.

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Liberian dollars which brought down several officials here into an alleged corruption scandal.

“Notwithstanding, since the Movant requested court to drop charges against the Respondent on grounds that it does not intend to prosecute the respondent, the said

prosecutors along with former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf’s son and Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Deputy Governor Charles E. Sirleaf, former CBL Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks and several other CBL officials for alleged money laundering.

The Liberian officials

Postal Ministry turns to ICT products

-as traditional mail service becomes obsolete

By Lewis S. Teh

The Minister of Posts and Telecommunication and Post Master General of the Republic of Liberia, Cllr. Cooper W. Kruah, discloses that the Pan African Postal Union has designed strategies for member countries to diversify into potential ICT-based products such as financial service, e-commerce and other electronic services that have huge potentials for immense revenue intake.

He notes that this has become necessary, as traditional mail now affects revenue potentials both in Liberia and across Africa.

Minister Kruah made the observation in a news conference over the weekend during activities marking the 40th Anniversary of the Pan African Postal Union or PAPU held in Monrovia.

The theme of the PAPU

40th Anniversary is “Post, a veritable partner for financial inclusion and regional integration.” Minister Kruah says the Union over the years has been innovative and has put in place several programs to

enhance postal development in Africa.

He said with support from President George Weah, the Ministry has taken steps to introducing postal financial services, and is currently

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Oxfam-Liberia joins global campaign against inequality

A new study by Oxfam International reveals that the world’s 2,153 billionaires collectively are wealthier than the 4.6 billion people who make up 60 percent of the planet’s population.

The report was released on Monday, 20 January, ahead of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, says a press release by Oxfam.

“Global inequality is shockingly entrenched and vast and the number of billionaires has doubled in the last decade”, reads the release.

Oxfam Regional Director for West Africa Adama Coulibaly, calls on West African governments to strengthen commitment against inequality by promoting progressive taxation, boosting social spending, strengthening labour market protection, investing in agriculture and

world by Climate Change impact which is an inequality amplifier.

Oxfam India CEO Amitabh Behar, currently in Davos to represent the Oxfam confederation, says, “The gap between rich and poor can’t be resolved without deliberate inequality-busting policies, yet too few governments are committed to these.”

According to the release, this year’s report focuses on unpaid care and underpaid care work and how this is fuelling global inequality.

Oxfam’s global report, “Time to Care”, shows that the huge economic gap between the rich and the poor is based on a flawed and sexist economic system that values the wealth of the privileged few, mostly men, more than the billions of hours of the essential work such as caring done mostly by women and



strengthening land right for smallholder food crop farmers.

“We cannot beat poverty and climate change without fighting against inequality”, says Mr. Coulibaly.

Last year, Oxfam West Africa revealed at a regional report launch titled Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index that inequality is at crisis levels in West Africa, yet governments in the region are the least committed to reducing inequality on the continent.

The regional index further revealed that West African governments are exacerbating inequality by underfunding public services, including healthcare, education and agriculture while under-taxing corporations and the wealthy, and failing to clamp down on tax evasion, tax avoidance and corruption.

It says West Africa is also one of the most affected in the

girls around the world.

It says heavy and unequal responsibility of care work perpetuates and exacerbates gender and economic inequalities, noting that the 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa.

Africa still one of the most unequal continents, with some of the most extreme divides between rich and poor in the world.

Oxfam defends that its calculations are based on the most up-to-date and comprehensive data sources available, and that figures on the share of wealth come from the Credit Suisse Research Institute’s Global Wealth Databook 2019. “Figures on the very richest in society come from Fobes’ 2019 Billionaires List. Billionaire wealth fell in the last year but has since recovered.”

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Public Works demolition backfires in Paynesville

-victims seek human rights organizations' intervention

By Emmanuel Mondaye

A demolition exercise by the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) in the Negayeleh Town Community in Paynesville City

On Saturday, 18 January, scores of residents were awakened by the sound of yellow machines in their community which broke down structures, leaving affected

the area said that the demolition of their businesses and houses came as a complete shock to them because the MPW did not allegedly inform residents of any imminent demolition exercise in the community.

She claimed that they were compelled to sleep in the open with their children because they had nowhere to sleep due to the surprised demolition of their respective structures.

According to the victim, while the demolition was ongoing, they got information that the Ministry of Public Works was destroying the affected structures in order to construct a road into the community.

Thought he victim says she welcomes the road project, she however argues that MPW should have adequately provided residents with information as well as hold series of discussions with victims surrounding relocation package.

She claims that this was never done, except for a surprise demolition by the ministry.

Also speaking, the owner of



has reportedly backfired, as affected residents seek human rights and civil society organizations' speedy intervention.

persons and their children to sleep in the open.

Speaking to reporters, Madam Fatumata Kamara, owner of a provision shop in

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Postal Ministry

Cont'd from page 6

working with the National Investment Commission of Liberia (NIC) alone with other stakeholders to establish a Public Private Partnership (PPP).

The Post Master General explains that postal financial services and other e- services are about money transfer, remittances, mobile money, savings, e- wallet, on-line purchase and goods delivery, among others. He adds that Liberia is making efforts to meet postal demands of the public.

"The automation of our counter service to deliver on a real time basis is underway to improve quality of service and revenue collection [in order] to avoid and curtail any possible leakages and the delay in our service to the country."

Meanwhile, discloses that the Ministry under his administration is working towards a formal introduction of digital address system for the entire country, saying, "this system comes with many benefits, but all would not been achieved without the support of the President, for this we extend our sincere appreciation to him."

The PanAfrican Postal Union was established by the Constitutive Plenipotentiary Conference of African ministers in charge of postal services held in 1980 in Arushia, Tanzania. But with the coming in of the digital age, including the internet, use of traditional mails for communication except for conveying parcels and other items has become obsolete. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

Liberia drops

Cont'd from page 6

During the time that prosecution claims the crime

Open Bible Church elects new officers

Open Bible Standard Churches Liberia, Inc. ends a week-long Annual Conference here with the election of new corps of officers.

The Church was founded in 1935 by a group of Missionaries from the United States of America, with a mission to make disciples, develop leaders, and plant churches.

According to a press release, this year's conference, under the theme: "Building a Church with a Difference" with text from Acts 2:42-47 was from 13-19, January at

the Monrovia Open Bible Standard Church, Old Road, Monrovia.

A total of 426 delegates were drawn from each of the 33 chartered churches spread across the country, including Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Margibi, Sinoe, Maryland and Montserrado Counties, among others.

The Church, since its formation, has been winning souls to Christ and made progress towards what the great commission intended by impacting lives of Christians in Liberia and across the world as a denomination.



L-R: Newly Elected Officials Of The Church

In accordance with its constitution, and as part of the many activities marking this year's conference, the church elected a new corps of officials following the expiration of the four year mandate of the old leadership.

The incumbent Rev. Dr. Jacob A. B. Vambo III, was re-elected on white ballot as National Field Director /Bishop of the Open Bible Standard Churches of Liberia for the next four years.

Rev. Hilary G. Paul was also elected Assistant Field

Director and Deacon Timothy Shark Verdier Sr., was elected as National General Secretary.

Others include Pst. Matthew Garduah; Asst. National General Secretary, Deacon Philip N. Seekie; National Treasurer and Bro. Sam G. Wonlah; Financial Secretary, among others.

Speaking at the Thanksgiving Service at close of the event, the National Field Director/Bishop elect-Rev. Dr. Jacob A. B. Vambo, III, called on members to unite for the growth and development of the denomination.

According to Bishop Vambo, if members put aside their differences he sees the church impacting more lives and winning souls to Christ.

"It is time to put our arts together as people and as a Church. Let me be the first to ask for forgiveness if I have

wronged anyone, whether by my actions or deeds," Rev.

Français

Le régime Weah accusé de harcèlement

L'administration George Weahferait de plus en plus l'objet des accusations de harcèlement et d'escalade de la répression contre les détracteurs, plusieurs groupes de la société civile et partis d'opposition exprimant leurs préoccupations.

L'Association Nationale du Barreau du Liberia (LNBA) est l'un des derniers groupes à avoir exprimé son inquiétude face aux allégations de

harcèlement et de répression contre les critiques de l'ancienne légende du football Weah.

La LNBA, dans un communiqué publié ce week-end, s'offusque face à ce qu'elle appelle tentative de certains acteurs étatiques de se livrer au harcèlement des avocats simplement qui ne font que représenter leurs clients.

Le Barreau a déclaré qu'il était également préoccupé

par la répression croissante des critiques du gouvernement, comme en témoignent les allégations non fondées et les propos menaçants des personnes haut placées, en quête de museler la dissidence.

Cette déclaration fait suite au rapport attribué au procureur général du Libéria, Me. Cyrenus Cephus qui aurait menacé de faire arrêter Me Finley Karngar, membre de la LNBA, partant du principe qu'il ne pouvait pas produire son client, en personne d'Henry

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Pres. George M. Weah

SG Clr. Syrenus Cephus

LNBA Pres. Clr. Tiawon Gongloe

L'avenir de l'Eco s'assombrit

L'avenir de l'Eco s'assombrit. Les critiques sans concession faites la semaine dernière par les pays de la Zone monétaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ZMAO) ainsi que la Guinée Conakry, sont les derniers signes d'un malaise qui s'épaissit. Le Nigeria, le Ghana, le Libéria, la Sierra-Léone, la Gambie et la Guinée ont en effet dénoncé la décision « unilatérale » prise

le 21 décembre de renommer le franc CFA Eco. C'est comme si les six pays accusaient les pays de l'UEMOA d'avoir nommé la monnaie unique Eco sans leur consentement. Si ce n'était que ça, l'unilatéralisme dénoncé paraît étrange, quand on sait que le nom a été choisi depuis longtemps par tous les Chefs d'Etats de la CEDEAO. Non, il y a autre chose.

Oui, le 21 décembre

dernier, la France et l'UEMOA se sont entendus pour rapatrier les réserves de change de la BCEAO autrefois stockées à la Banque de France. Le but ultime est d'adosser le FCFA désormais appelé Eco à un panier de devises, même si provisoirement la monnaie sera arrimée au seul Euro. De la même manière, la France quitte les instances de gestion de la nouvelle monnaie. Mais l'arrimage au seul Euro et sa stabilité, exactement comme le FCFA actuel, soulèvent des questionnements. Car, même si cette option est provisoire, elle oblige à une garantie souveraine que Paris entend apporter. La France sera de facto impliquée dans la gestion d'une monnaie qui est censée être indépendante. Ce n'est apparemment pas ce qu'entendent les pays de la ZMAO qui ont bien insisté sur l'impératif d'indépendance de la nouvelle monnaie. Les six pays appellent à une réunion urgente des Chefs d'Etats et de gouvernement de la CEDEAO pour clarifier la situation.

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Éditorial

Au-delà de la nomination d'un nouveau ministre de l'Agriculture

Le président George Manneh Weah a nommé un nouveau ministre de l'Agriculture, en attente de confirmation par le Sénat libérien. Une femme, Madame Jeanine Cooper, est la deuxième femme nommée à ce poste depuis l'ex-ministre Florence Chenoweth, qui a servi l'administration Tolbert jusqu'au sanglant coup d'État militaire en 1980, puis le deuxième mandat de l'administration Sirleaf de 2011 à 2017.

Le président Weah aurait parcouru un processus de vérification minutieux pour trouver le nom de Mme Jeanine Cooper qui prendra en charge un secteur très crucial de l'économie, après confirmation du Sénat. En sa qualité d'agricultrice et de productrice de riz, avec sa riche expérience dans le secteur privé, nous n'avons aucun doute sur sa qualification académique et sa capacité à relancer le secteur agricole.

Mais nous espérons sincèrement que le président Weah fournira tout le soutien nécessaire à Mme Cooper pour faire le travail. C'est notre fervente prière qu'elle ne soit pas traitée comme de simples meubles au ministère de l'Agriculture sans outils pour travailler, comme dans le cas de la vice-présidente Jewel Howard Taylor, qui s'est plainte publiquement du manque de soutien.

Le fait qu'il a fallu plus de six mois au président pour nommer un nouveau ministre de l'Agriculture après la destitution de M. Mogana Flomo ne prouve pas que le gouvernement considère l'agriculture comme une priorité, si ce pays veut aller de l'avant.

Le fait qu'il a fallu un si long temps pour nommer un ministre de l'Agriculture à ce gouvernement qui, dès sa prise du pouvoir, a fait croire au monde entier qu'il a hérité une économie en berne, met en doute son intention déclarée de rendre le Libéria autosuffisant en matière de nourriture.

Des gouvernements amis et des partenaires internationaux nous regardent en tant que peuple et veulent savoir où se situe notre priorité ; est-ce dans la politique, les affaires ou les activités qui ne nous rapportent pas de bénéfices ? Nous pensons qu'une grande opportunité est ici de nous sortir de la pauvreté et de la faim en donnant la priorité à l'agriculture.

Le New Dawn, ainsi que plusieurs autres quotidiens, a eu le privilège en novembre dernier de couvrir un dialogue politique d'une journée organisé par la Commission de la gouvernance intégrant la valeur ajoutée dans l'agriculture à petite échelle pour une croissance soutenue des revenus intérieurs, où Mme Jeanine Cooper a parlé avec beaucoup de passion des potentiels dans le secteur s'il est soutenu par le gouvernement.

C'est ce dont elle a besoin pour faire le travail. Issu d'un milieu d'entrepreneur, elle a la discipline requise pour réussir dans ce secteur qui a de grandes perspectives pour les jeunes. Si nous pouvons cultiver suffisamment de nourriture pour nous nourrir en tant que nation, le Libéria pourrait sortir de la stagnation et de la dépendance.

Nous savons également que l'exécutif à lui seul ne peut revitaliser le secteur ; il faut également le soutien de l'Assemblée législative qui approuve le budget national. Et c'est là qu'intervient la volonté politique. Le secteur agricole ne pourra prospérer si les législateurs de Capitol Hill ne sont intéressés que par les voitures de luxe, les salaires fabuleux et les avantages sociaux.

En résumé, l'intérêt déclaré du gouvernement pour le secteur agricole ne se limite pas à nommer un ministre, mais à fournir un soutien budgétaire, y compris la logistique, qui permettrait à ce pays de passer de la culture itinérante à une agriculture mécanisée qui ouvrirait la voie à l'exportation.

Compagnie nationale des communications unilatérales

N° 88 - Janvier 2018

L'enquête publique au cœur des projets

Le devenir des enquêtes publiques s'assombrit

Français

Le régime Weah accusé

Costa qui a fui le pays pour des raisons de sécurité personnelle.

La LNBA a indiqué que certes Me. Karngar a pris l'engagement d'assurer la comparution de M. Henry Costa qui faisait l'objet d'une enquête, mais le simple fait que le gouvernement libérien sait que M. Costa a fui le pays et que le gouvernement a entamé des discussions avec le gouvernement de la Sierra Leone pour obtenir l'extradition de M. Costa désengage la responsabilité de son avocat.

Selon La LNBA, Me. Karngar n'avait plus aucune obligation d'assurer la comparution de Costa devant un forum, il n'était pas non plus responsable de répondre à toute question concernant le sort de Henry Costa.

La LNBA insiste que le fait d'être procureur général du Libéria ne donne par le pouvoir à Cephus, qui est également membre de la LNBA, d'arrêter arbitrairement un membre de la LNBA qui n'a commis aucune infraction vis-à-vis du droit libérien. Au Barreau d'ajouter en outre que le fait que procureur général perçoit, imagine, approuve ou entretient l'idée qu'il a une telle autorité est pour le moins triste.

La LNBA conseille au solliciteur général d'exercer son autorité dans le cadre de la loi et en ce qui concerne les droits de tous les citoyens libériens, y compris les avocats, tels que garantis par la Constitution du Libéria et la Charte internationale des droits de l'homme.

L'avenir de l'Eco

Ce qui est étonnant, c'est que dans le lot des pays contestataires figure le Ghana (oui, le Ghana !) qui pourtant avait acclamé la décision de l'UEMOA et montré son enthousiasme à travers un communiqué de presse en bonne et due forme. Pourquoi, à la suite de ses applaudissements bien compréhensibles, Accra se rebiffe-t-il aussi soudainement ? Il y a bien un profond malaise. Plusieurs pays voient toujours la main de Paris derrière les changements opérés en décembre dernier. D'autant que l'annonce de ces changements a été faite par Emmanuel Macron et Alassane Ouattara, le second agissant en sa qualité de Président en exercice de la conférence des Chefs d'Etats de l'UEMOA. La levée de bouclier chez les anti-CFA aurait pu être évitée si c'était uniquement les Chefs d'Etats de l'UEMOA qui avaient annoncé ensemble la décision aujourd'hui querellée. En voulant « faire son show » comme on dit sur les bords de la lagune Ebrié, Alassane Ouattara a probablement heurté la sensibilité des autres Chefs d'Etats de la région. Question de leadership oblige, il serait perçu au mieux comme un usurpateur au pire comme un imposteur. Torpiller cette ascendance permettrait dès lors de le descendre de son piédestal. Au profit de qui ? La question reste posée. Car, au fond, la question de la garantie qui soulève toutes

les passions, est bien compréhensible. Si elle n'existait pas, la zone UEMOA court de vrais risques de dévaluation et d'effondrement. Il faut l'apport du Nigeria et du Ghana pour consolider la position de la nouvelle monnaie et la rendre totalement indépendante.

A y voir de près, Abuja entend « casser » non seulement l'hégémonie française sur la question monétaire, mais également le leadership d'Abidjan. Il s'agit en dernier ressort d'imposer son agenda, puisque le Nigeria se sait incontournable. A lui seul, le pays représente actuellement environ 70% du PIB de la sous-région. Et pour tous ceux qui le suivent, Abuja s'oppose généralement à tous les projets d'intégration africaine, ou ne s'y prête que de mauvaise grâce. La monnaie unique le prive de la possibilité de gérer à sa manière sa politique monétaire. Sur ce plan, les Nigériens sont restés inflexibles, depuis leur indépendance. Il n'en est pas de même des pays de la zone Franc habitués à la surveillance de la France.

Ce dont je reste convaincu, c'est que même si les critères de convergence sont atteints par tous les pays, le Nigeria trouvera un moyen pour échapper à tout projet monétaire dans lequel il ne jouerait pas les premiers rôles.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Joseph E. Stiglitz

La vérité sur l'économie Trump

NEW YORK - À l'heure du rassemblement annuel des élites mondiales de l'univers des affaires à Davos, une question simple se pose : leur engouement pour le président américain Donald Trump est-il toujours d'actualité ?

Il y a deux ans, rares étaient les dirigeants d'entreprise à se montrer préoccupés par le changement climatique, ou contrariés par l'intolérance et la misogynie de Trump. La plupart saluaient au contraire les baisses d'impôts décidées par le président en faveur des milliardaires et des grandes entreprises, et attendaient avec impatience de voir se déployer ses efforts de déréglementation de l'économie. Ainsi les entreprises pollueraient-elles encore davantage l'atmosphère, des Américains toujours plus nombreux se retrouveraient accros aux opiacés, les enfants continueraient de consommer des aliments diabéto-gènes, de même que se poursuivraient les manœuvres financières du type de celles à l'origine de la crise de 2008.

Aujourd'hui, de nombreux chefs d'entreprise parlent encore de poursuite de la croissance du PIB, et de cours boursiers record. Or, ni le PIB, ni le Dow Jones ne constituent une mesure judicieuse de la performance économique. Aucun des deux ne retranscrit l'état du niveau de vie des citoyens ordinaires, ni quelque évolution que ce soit s'agissant de la durabilité. En réalité, la performance économique des États-Unis constitue le principal élément à charge contre le recours à ces indicateurs.

Pour obtenir une bonne lecture de la santé économique d'un pays, il faut commencer par observer l'état de santé tout court de ses citoyens. Une population heureuse et prospère vit plus longtemps en bonne santé. Or, sur ce plan, l'Amérique se situe en bas de tableau parmi les pays développés. L'espérance de vie américaine, déjà relativement faible, a diminué lors de chacune des deux premières années de la présidence Trump. En 2017, la mortalité en milieu de vie atteignait son plus haut niveau depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Ce n'est pas une surprise, dans la mesure où aucun président n'a jamais œuvré aussi activement pour priver d'assurance santé un maximum d'Américains. Plusieurs millions d'entre eux ont perdu leur couverture maladie, et le taux de non assurés a augmenté pour passer de 10,9 % à 13,7 % en seulement deux ans.

L'une des raisons du déclin de l'espérance de vie aux États-Unis réside dans ce que Anne Case et le lauréat du prix Nobel d'économie Angus Deaton appellent les morts du désespoir, provoquées par l'alcool, les overdoses de médicaments, et les suicides. En 2017 (année la plus récente pour laquelle des données satisfaisantes existent), le nombre de décès de ce type s'élevait à environ quatre fois le niveau de 1999.

En dehors des périodes de guerre et d'épidémie, j'ai observé une seule fois un tel effondrement de la santé d'une population, lorsque j'étais économiste en chef de la Banque mondiale, et que j'ai découvert que les données de mortalité et de morbidité confirmaient ce que nos indicateurs économiques suggéraient quant à la situation désastreuse de l'économie russe post-soviétique.

Trump est peut-être un bon président pour le top 1 % - et surtout pour le top 0,1 % - mais certainement pas pour les autres citoyens américains. Si elle est pleinement appliquée, la baisse d'impôts de 2017 entraînera en effet des augmentations d'impôts pour la plupart des ménages des deuxième, troisième et quatrième quintiles de revenus.

Dans la mesure où les baisses d'impôts bénéficient de manière disproportionnée aux ultrariches et aux grandes sociétés, il n'est pas surprenant qu'aucun changement significatif n'ait été observé dans les revenus disponibles médians des ménages américains entre 2017 et 2018 (ici encore, la période récente la

plus significative en termes de données). La part du lion dans l'augmentation du PIB revient également au plus haut de la pyramide. Les revenus hebdomadaires réels médians se situent seulement 2,6 % au-dessus de leur niveau au moment de l'arrivée au pouvoir de Trump. Par ailleurs, ces augmentations n'ont pas compensé les longues périodes de stagnation des salaires. Le salaire médian d'un travailleur homme à plein temps (ces travailleurs étant les plus chanceux) se situe par exemple encore 3 % en dessous du niveau observé il y a 40 ans. De même, peu de progrès s'observent dans la réduction des disparités raciales : au troisième trimestre 2019, les revenus hebdomadaires médians des hommes noirs travaillant à temps plein représentaient moins de trois quarts de ceux des hommes blancs.

Les chiffres sont d'autant plus mauvais que la croissance observée n'est pas durable sur le plan environnemental, et encore moins après les déréglementations massives opérées par l'administration Trump, contre des normes qui satisfaisaient pourtant à des analyses coûts-avantages très strictes. L'air est voué à devenir encore moins respirable, l'eau moins potable, et la planète plus sujette encore au changement climatique. De fait, les pertes liées au changement climatique ont déjà atteint de nouveaux sommets aux États-Unis, qui ont subi des dommages matériels plus que tout autre pays, à hauteur d'environ 1,5 % du PIB en 2017.

Les baisses d'impôts étaient censées favoriser une nouvelle vague d'investissements. Au lieu de cela, elles ont engendré une frénésie record de rachats d'actions - pour près de 800 milliards \$ en 2018 - par les sociétés les plus rentables d'Amérique, tout en entraînant des déficits inédits en temps de paix (environ 1 000 milliards \$ pour l'exercice 2019), dans un pays prétendument proche du plein emploi. En présence d'un investissement faible, les États-Unis ont pourtant emprunté massivement à l'étranger, les données les plus récentes indiquant des emprunts à l'étranger à hauteur d'environ 500 milliards \$ par an, avec une augmentation de plus de 10 % de la position d'endettement net de l'Amérique en l'espace d'un an seulement.

À nouveau, rien de surprenant dans ce faible taux d'emploi, notamment parce que des citoyens en mauvaise santé ne sont pas en mesure de travailler. Par ailleurs, les personnes handicapées, les détenus - le taux d'incarcération aux États-Unis ayant été multiplié par plus de six depuis 1970, avec près de deux millions de personnes actuellement derrière les barreaux - ou encore les Américains si découragés qu'ils renoncent à chercher activement un emploi, ne sont pas comptabilisés dans la catégorie « sans emploi ». Or, ils ne travaillent évidemment pas. Dans un pays qui n'offre ni garde d'enfants abordable, ni congé parental garanti, pas étonnant non plus que le taux d'emploi des femmes, ajusté à la population, soit inférieur de plus de dix points de pourcentage à celui des autres pays développés.

Même si l'on observe uniquement le PIB, l'économie Trump n'est pas à la hauteur. L'an dernier, la croissance s'élevait à seulement 2,1 %, bien loin des 4 %, 5 % voire 6 % promis par Trump, et en dessous même de la moyenne de 2,4 % enregistrée pendant le second mandat Obama. C'est une performance incroyablement faible si l'on considère la relance offerte par le déficit de 1 000 milliards \$ et les taux d'intérêt extrêmement bas. Or, ce n'est ni un accident, ni une question de malchance : incertitude, volatilité et faux-fuyants constitue la marque de fabrique de Trump, là où confiance, stabilité et prévisibilité sont essentielles à la croissance - sans oublier l'égalité, si l'on en croit le Fonds monétaire international.

En somme, si Trump mérite à l'évidence ses mauvaises notes sur des questions essentielles telles que la défense de la démocratie et la préservation de la planète, ses notes sont également celles d'un cancre dans le domaine de l'économie.

Baggage of problems

The euphoria and pageantry that characterized the official inaugural ceremonies of former football icon, George Manneh Weah, as the 25th President of Liberia has ever since evaporated, as the man who transitioned from professional soccer instantly to politics enters third year of his presidency here, seriously beset by voluminous challenges, ranging from the economy, governance, rule of law, corruption and national reconciliation.

He took over the helm of power from a rather more experience and long-time opposition leader, former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, but claimed to have inherited a broke economy.

The Weah administration also alleged to have met the nation's reserve virtually empty. However, ex-president Sirleaf challenged that in a BBC's interview when she informed the entire the world her government left US\$150 million and called on the appropriate officials in the new administration to check records on the book.

The governing Coalition for Democratic Change-led government never came back to the Liberian people to state clearly how much money it met in the reserve, but immediately embarked on series of ambitious infrastructure projects, including a coastal road



project, a military hospital and several community projects, that were initially announced as the President's personal initiatives, which later proved to be on the contrary.

Besides, President Weah demolished his private homes and constructed new ones, including 10 duplexes, all in the first year of his leadership amid public outcry to declare his assets.

However, as the dust settles and realities set in the second year, the government became entangled in financial crises, beginning with lack of proper accountability for newly printed 16 billion Liberian

banknotes brought into the country and US\$25 million withdrawn from the national reserve to mop up excess liquidity in the economy.

Every other step along the way has seen the administration sink deeper into financial problems, creating serious cash shortage in banks in the latter part of its second year in power, and the government's inability to raise adequate revenue to pay monthly salary of employees.

But this was not the hope President Weah gave to Liberians, particularly his supporters and international partners, including foreign delegates and diplomats who gathered at the Samuel

Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville on January 22, 2018.

"I have here taken an oath before you, and before the Almighty God, to uphold our constitution and to preside over this Government and this country to the best of my abilities. REST ASSURED, I WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN!!", the President had promised.

Liberians seem not to be seeing these promises fulfilled, as the ordinary citizen in street continues to feel the pinch of the economy characterize by hyperinflation and three-digit exchange rate.

Amid the current challenges, the President has even begun to give more promises on the heels of his

third term, as he told the joint assembly of the 54th National Legislature recently during opening of its 3rd Session, saying, 2020 would be a year of practicality and progress.

President Weah: "2020 is a year when we will consolidate our gains and launch Liberia upwards and onwards on a solid platform of policies and practical programs that will begin to turn our economy around."

Liberians hope this would not been another barrage of promises, as they look forward to seeing the government providing tangible solutions by delivering basic services and restoring rapidly eroding public confidence. *Story by Jonathan Browne*

Public Works

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a local restaurant Henrietta Gibson terms the action of the Ministry of Public as a complete violation of their human rights by compelling them to sleep in the open with their underage children without first consulting them.

She calls on the government to intervene in the matter by addressing their concerns and to provide shelter for the residents and their children.

Henrietta threatens that she will not allow her business establishment to be destroyed without any compensation to resettle her.

She maintains that even if the MPW has plan to construct a road, it does not give the ministry the right not to consult persons that are to be affected.

Henrietta claims that her business place was situated on a private land.

She also prays for timely intervention into the matter by civil society and human rights organizations here because those affected by the demolition are vulnerable due to the lack of shelters.

On the scene of the demolition were personal belongings of victims including beds, electrical appliances, mattresses, and cooking utensils, among others.

When this paper contacted the Ministry of Public Works on the information on Monday, 20 January, this reporter was informed that the relevant authorities to speak to the matter were not aware of the demolition as is being alleged by the affected residents.

The Ministry's personnel however assures that MPW will investigate to ascertain the facts into the matter.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Morocco and Poland Present Credentials

The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Henry B. Fahnbulleh has reiterated Liberia's commitment to strengthening ties with friendly nations across the world in the interest of its citizens aimed at fostering global cooperation.

Minister Fahnbulleh made the comments on Monday January 20, 2020 when the Ambassadors of Poland and

Morocco presented copies of their letters of Credence at separate ceremonies held in the Holding Room on the fourth floor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Earlier, Minister Fahnbulleh on behalf of President George Manneh Weah, welcomed the Ambassador designate of the Kingdom of Morocco H.E. Driss ISBAYENE to Liberia noting that President Weah

cherishes the peaceful co-existence and longstanding ties with the Kingdom of Morocco. He told the Moroccan Ambassador designate that Liberia looks forward to further strengthening ties with the Kingdom of Morocco in other areas of economic partnership.

The Acting Foreign Minister informed the Ambassador designate of the Kingdom of Morocco that his presence in Liberia, signifies the strong ties and corporation existing between the two countries but stressed that Liberia looks forward to more technical assistance from her Moroccan counterpart.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, Minister Fahnbulleh used the occasion to reemphasize the benefits of implementing agreements contained in the 2018 Liberian-Morocco Joint Commission.

On May 10th and 11th, 2018, the Governments of the Republic of Liberia and the Kingdom of Morocco signed three separate bilateral agreements in the fields of

Transport, Youth and sports as well as Cultural. The agreements were signed at the C. Cecil Dennis Auditorium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the end of the two day Liberia-Morocco Joint Commission Meeting held in Monrovia.

The aim of the dialogue was to strengthen friendship, solidarity and cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Liberia.

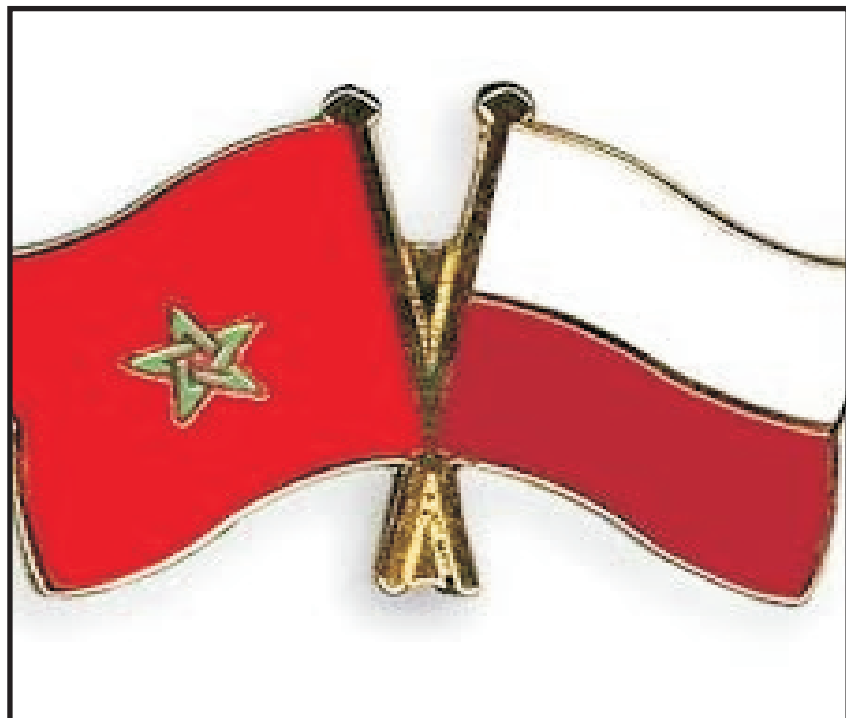
In brief remarks, the Ambassador designate of the Kingdom of Morocco H.E. Driss ISBAYENE assured Minister Fahnbulleh that he would endeavor to ensure that the agreements contained in Liberia-Morocco Joint Commission Meeting are implemented for the mutual good of the two sides.

Ambassador designate ISBAYENE recalled that Liberia

and the Kingdom of Morocco have been present on many issues at technical and international levels, adding that both counties should now begin to explore areas in the agriculture, fisheries and infrastructure sectors on which they could cooperate.

In another development, the Ambassador designate of Poland H.E. Mrs. Joanna Tarnawska at a separate meeting also presented copies of her Letters of Credence to the Acting Minister Fahnbulleh.

Ambassador Designate Joanna Tarnawska described Liberia as a warm and fascinating place to be; thereby stressing the need for Liberia and Poland to begin exploring areas of corporation including trade and commerce, Agriculture and gender mainstreaming among other vital areas.



UP optimistic of collaboration deal

By Othello B. Garblah

The former ruling Unity Party (UP) says it is optimistic that a deal will be reached among the collaborating opposition political parties to put up a stronger fight for 2020 and 2023 respectively. The party also dismissed rumor of an internal conflict saying its reconciliation process is on course.

UP Chairman Wilmot Paye told the New Dawn via telephone interview Monday, January 20, 2020 that the party is focused on its reconciliation process and is building on the commitment of members who see the UP as their common vehicle.

Following the 2017 presidential and legislative elections, the former ruling party was embroiled in an internal bickering, which saw the suspension of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and other officials who were deemed close allies of hers.

The matter was brought before the National Elections Commission (NEC) which ruled in favor of President



Ex-Pres. Sirleaf

Ex-VP Pres. Boakai

UP Chairman Paye

Sirleaf and others. However, current party standard bearer former Vice President Joseph Boakai and chairman Paye took an appeal to the Supreme Court. Nonetheless the case was soon withdrawn a year later following a reconciliation meeting between the both parties, led by Mrs. Sirleaf on one hand and Mr. Boakai on the other.

Paye says the reconciliation process entails individual commitment, mutual respect and seeking of the common good for each other, while the party remains the common vehicle that drives them all.

He denied reports that there is currently a bad blood between himself and party standard bearer Joseph Boakai, adding that they have

been on good terms and that there is even a planned meeting of party officials in days.

Mr. Paye described the media report of a brawl between he and former Vice President Boakai as the work of distractors who want to exploit the gains being made within the party by creating an artificial conflict to ride on.

He said he is not surprised that such reports are coming at the time when there is a pending mid-term senatorial election in October of this year.

Mr. Paye argues that the UP is a party which has held its members together even when the naysayers predicted its collapse in 2011 and 2017. "UP has always had a number of issues but has surmounted the challenges," he bragged.

The firebrand UP Chairman intimated the most important thing is that as an official of the UP what matters most to him is integrity saying "Politics and opposition should not make us to act differently from what we believe in. Our

(foremost aim) is how to transform the governing system of our country irrespective of political party affiliation, ethnicity and religion."

On the collaboration talks, he said it is fair to say with confidence that the party is in conversation with other opposition parties including the Alternative National Congress (ANC). He said his is to propagate the UP interest.

He denied speculations that he was unilaterally driving the party towards the ANC. "I don't know of any such idea".

However, despite these speculations, Mr. Paye said the UP will not contradict itself. "I am very optimistic that there will be a collaboration to consolidate and this will make our politics competitive."

He indicated that he will be happy if the UP can produce the standard bearer for the collaboration but it's too early to say. However, he said the party will be willing to work around whatever arrangement to the opposition bloc will arrive at.

Police chief defies

Starts from back page

Court "to show cause, if any, why he should not be held in contempt of court for his failure and refusal to comply with the Supreme Court's mandate issued on the 31st Day of December, 2019..."

In an effort to execute the order by Criminal Court "C" to arrest Col. Sudue on Monday, Bailiffs Felton Davies and J. Janjay Veatoh say they carried the writ of arrest to serve it on Col. Sudue.

Upon entering his office at the LNP Headquarters on Capitol Hill, the bailiffs say they informed Col. Sudue that they had a writ of arrest for him, asking the police chief to kindly walk over to the court with them.

Instead, the bailiffs claim that Col. Sudue got emotional, insulted them and ordered them to get out of his office.

"More to that, Director Sudue said he is a presidential appointee and was not coming with us to the court; he even said that we should order his arrest and he was not coming and was going to call the Minister of Justice," the bailiffs say in a handwritten report to the court.

It is said here that no one is above the law, no matter the status, but law enforcement seems challenging when matters involve persons privileged to have power.

"So we gave him a copy of the Writ and left his office, [while] he reigns insults on us saying the

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Death announcement



This station regrets to announce the death of Oldma Kebbeh Konah Kollie of Chugbor community, Old Road. This event occurred on Sunday, January 19, 2020 at the St.

Joseph's Catholci Hospital in Monrovia following a protracted illness. She was 88 years old.

The late oldma Kebbeh Konah Kollie was survived by several children including, Mr. Aaron Kollie, Manager of Power TM/TV, as well as a host of other relatives. The first family meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 19, 2020 at the Kollie's residence in Chugbor community, Old Road at 3: 00 PM.

This announcement goes out to the citizens of the town of Kpademai and Kpakarmai in Lofa County and relatives in Monrovia, Harbel and abroad.

Signed:

Aaron B. Kollie

Son of the deceased for the family

Police chief defies court's arrest order?



By Winston W. Parley

Bailiffs from the Criminal Court "C" at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia are accusing Police Inspector General Col. Patrick T. Sudue of allegedly defying a court arrest order issued against him for contempt, allegedly boasting of his presidential appointee status as ground for defying the court.

But during a following up with Col. Sudue Monday evening, 20 January via mobile phone, he denied the bailiffs' allegation against him, challenging them to show a returns signed by him to indicate that they met with him.

The lower court on Monday issued the arrest order against Col. Sudue for contempt charge due to his "failure and

refusal to comply with the Supreme Court's mandate" which it says was issued earlier on 31 December 2019.

Lawyers familiar with the main case indicate that the Supreme Court had upheld a ruling made by the Criminal Court "C" in relation to a trial surrounding some vehicles which the government and an importer were said to be battling over.

According to the lawyer, the lower court's decision was in favor of the importer, but the police here could not comply with the Supreme Court's mandate [for the authorities to hand over to the importer the vehicles which had been impounded].

"You are hereby commanded to arrest the living body of Patrick Sudue, Inspector General, Liberia National Police (LNP), Republic of Liberia, defendant, charged with the crime of contempt of court ...," the writ of arrest from Court "C" says.

It orders that Col. Sudue should be brought before the

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Nantes to pay homage to Sala a year after striker's death

Nantes announced on Sunday that they will pay tribute to their former striker Emiliano Sala at the league match against his first French club, Bordeaux, on January 26.

The 28-year-old player was killed on January 21, 2019, when the small plane taking him to join Cardiff City crashed off the British island of Guernsey.

The Argentine had been transferred to the Welsh club, in the Premier League at the

time, after three-and-half seasons at Nantes.

Sala had arrived in France as a youngster to join Bordeaux, who loaned him out to Orleans, Niort and Caen. He then moved to Nantes where he was the club's top scorer for three straight seasons.

"Emiliano was a talented player, warm and human. We all miss him," Nantes said in a statement. In homage to the player who "dreamed of playing for the Albiceleste",



Nantes will don a jersey inspired by the colours of the Argentine national shirt. Proceeds from sales will go to the two Argentine clubs where Sala played as a youngster.

A canvas featuring Sala will be laid in the centre circle as the players warm-up and giant screens will display images of his best moments in yellow.

Groups of fans will spread a giant banner in the stands and sing the song with which they celebrated each of Sala's goals, before a minute of applause.

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