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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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Rep. Gray



Sen. Dillon



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CMYK



Continental News

Anger over Kenya university's rape memo

A top Kenyan university has apologised after blaming "reckless" female students for becoming victims of rape. The security memo, which was sent to all students on Tuesday, was "insensitive", the University of Nairobi's vice chancellor admitted.

A petition started in response to the memo questioned how women could be blamed for their own rape. Popular media personality, Adelle Onyango, posted on Instagram: "This is what victim shaming looks like." The 31-year-old, who is a rape survivor, told her 374,000 followers that she was outraged that the university had had no condemnation for the rapists.

"This is what normalisation of rape looks like.

And we will not stand for it." The memo,

signed by the head of security, said the rising number of cases of robbery and rape of university students in the capital,



The vice chancellor said students should call the university's safety unit with security concerns

Nairobi, occurred at certain spots close to campuses.

"In all the three rape incidences reported last year, a clear case of recklessness on the part of our female students can be drawn," it said.

It gave an example of a drunk student who was gang raped on her way back in the early hours of the morning. It also included

tips about how to keep safe in social gatherings, suggesting students always go out with trusted friends, memorise important numbers in case they lost a phone and never leave their drinks unattended. Ms Onyango, who is raising funds to launch Safe 24/7 to offer free therapy and support to survivors of rape,

said such advice given to women was part of the problem. "Right now, where we

go, what time we will go there, who we will go with, how we will get there, what we will wear etc is governed by how safe we will be and that is NOT normal neither is it OK!" If men just stopped raping us, rape will stop."

The Change.org petition, so far signed by nearly 1,500 people, said: "Misogyny has been time and again endorsed by the powers in play in Kenya, and that has got to stop."

Stephen Kaima, the university's vice chancellor, said students were advised to call the security department whenever they faced "security challenges during day and night".

According to a Kenya National Bureau of Statistics study from 2014, 14% of Kenyan women have experienced sexual violence. BBC

Algeria confirms first case of coronavirus

The Algerian health minister has confirmed the country's first case of the coronavirus in an announcement on state-owned ENTV on Tuesday evening.

The minister, Abdel

Rahman Ben Bouzid, said the patient was an Italian man who had arrived in the country on 17 February, Reuters news agency reports.

The patient has been placed in isolation.

Algeria becomes the second African country with a

confirmed case of coronavirus.

Egypt was the first to report a confirmed case of the disease but later announced that the patient had been declared clear of the infection and was on the way to recovery. BBC



Egypt holds military funeral for Hosni Mubarak

A military funeral has been held in Egypt for former President Hosni Mubarak, who died on Tuesday aged 91.

Mubarak's sons, Alaa and Gamal, walked in procession with soldiers next to his coffin as it was taken to a mosque in Cairo built by the military where the ceremony took place.

the uprising. But he was eventually cleared on appeal.

He was also given a three-year jail sentence for embezzling public funds.

State media reported that he died at a Cairo hospital after undergoing surgery. Dozens of Hosni Mubarak's supporters, many dressed in black, gathered outside the mosque where the



Egypt's current president paid tribute to Hosni Mubarak's military service

The government has declared three days of national mourning.

Mubarak was forced out of office by an Arab Spring popular uprising in 2011, after 30 years in power. He spent the next six years in prison or military hospitals while standing trial on various charges. In 2012, Mubarak was sentenced to life after being convicted of complicity in the murder of protesters during

funeral was held. They held signs expressing gratitude for Egypt's "greatest leader".

"He was a wise man who kept this country stable for 30 years," a middle-aged man told me.

Stability was Mubarak's watchword. He took pride in keeping everything under control during his long autocratic rule. But this came at a massive price, according to his critics.

EDITORIAL

The CPP quarrel is complete mess

THE CURRENT RIGMAROLE in the four Collaborating Political Parties over who should be or is best suited for standard bearer is nothing but child's play. No one should take seriously a so-called opposition block that should rather be serious planning and conscientizing its followers and sympathizers for the next elections, now bent on tearing one another apart for leadership.

IT IS NOT the prerogative of the CPP Chair to determine who should become flagbearer in the next elections, but the membership or the people at primary. Why now waste precious time on something that is as clear as water in a glass?

Recent comments from Mr. Benoni Urey of ALP that ex-VP Joseph Nyumah Boakai of UP is best suited to become standardbearer for the CPP and reactions from both ANC and LP clearly indicates that something is amiss within the opposition block that needs to be addressed to allow that body puts its acts together as a true government in waiting that the Liberian people can hope on.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS in the CPP - Mr. Benoni Urey, Mr. Alexander Cummings, Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai and Senator Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence should begin to act now in ways that would win and maintain the trust of the people they want to lead.

HOWEVER, UTTERANCES COMING from member parties of the Collaboration of late, do not portray unity. Instead, we see a creeping sign that could turn the entire opposition into a mess.

AND THIS HAS been a fundamental problem in Liberian politics: lack of a cohesive opposition force that can pull strength and give the ruling party a run at the ballot box for their money. Parties that make up the CPP individually contested against the CDC in the 2017 presidential election and failed.

THEY SHOULD KNOW by now the best strategic option in the impending 2023 poll is to galvanize forces and present a united front against the Weah government, if they really want to provide alternative leadership.

WHETHER IT IS Amb. Boakai, or Mr. Cummings; Mr. Urey or a candidate from the LP, no single party or candidate can contest in an election and win definitively the first round, as the past three elections have shown.

IT IS BASED on these realities that we underscore the need that the CPP should remain a unity opposition block with a strong voice, not just in speeches but on the political battle ground to win state power.

THIS CANNOT BE achieved if there are infighting and jostling for the standard bearer position, which should actually be determined at primary than thru words of war in the media.

COMMENTARY

By Jean Pisani-Ferry

A Radical Way Out of the EU Budget Maze

It can be tempting to treat European budgetary discussions as a fairly inconsequential distributional game. But with the EU's role increasingly focused on the provision of public goods, in accordance with its values and priorities, this would be a mistake.

PARIS - In 2003, I co-authored a report on the future of the European Union - the Sapir report - in which we observed that the expenditures, revenues, and procedures of the EU budget were all inconsistent with the Union's objectives. We therefore advocated a radical restructuring of what had become a "historical relic." Seventeen years later, little has changed.

Two years ago, when negotiations on the budget for 2021-2027 started, I pointed out that the outcome would reveal what the EU is really up to, but that after high-drama bluffing, bullying, blackmail, and betrayal, such negotiations usually result in minimal changes. And here we are: we have had bluffing, bullying, blackmail, and betrayal, not least on the occasion of the inconclusive EU summit of February 20-21, and Europe appears to be headed for minimal changes.

Such an outcome would be dreadful. True, the EU's budget is not what usually defines it. Europe's integration has proceeded by establishing a legal system, common institutions, a single market and currency, and joint policies for competition, trade, and climate, rather than through joint spending programs. The lion's share of its budget goes to transfers to poorer regions and farmers, which may or may not be useful but do not characterize what today's Europe is about. It is therefore tempting to treat the EU's budgetary discussion as a fairly inconsequential distributional game: Europe's pork barrel.

But that would be wrong. Europe's defining issue is no longer integration through trade and mobility, or even the strengthening of the euro. As I argued in a recent report with Clemens Fuest of CESifo Munich, the EU's role is increasingly the provision of public goods at European rather than national level, in accordance with its values and priorities. Concretely, the defining issue for the EU is whether to act forcefully in fields like climate-change mitigation, digital sovereignty, research and development in transformative projects, development cooperation, migration policy, foreign policy, and defense. In such fields, the question is not whether Spain will gain more than Poland, or whether Dutch citizens will end up paying more than French, but whether there is added value in joint policies.

As matters stand, however, the EU is starting from an absurdly distorted approach to public goods. Some member states are interested only in what is in it for them, while others consider only what it may cost them, and still others care only about collateral damage to their cherished policies. What Europe loses in the process is an opportunity to get serious about its stated priorities and to confront the urgency of joint action.

A fundamental principle of public economics is that efficiency and distribution issues should be separated to the extent possible. Whether a policy delivers value and how its benefits are distributed are both important issues, but they

must be distinguished. Separation can never be absolute, because the provision of public goods has distributional consequences: an increase in defense spending, for example, benefits weapons-producing regions. But this only reinforces the point: no one wants security policy to be decided by the arms lobby.

The EU budget negotiation mechanism should be designed to give member states an incentive to aim both at collective efficiency and cross-country equity, but not to make one the hostage of the other. At present however, Poland fights for the regional development funds and France for the Common Agricultural Policy, regardless of these programs' intrinsic value, because they benefit from them. By the same token, the "frugal four" (Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden) have committed to resisting any meaningful increase in the budget, irrespective of what is done with the money. The result is deadlock.

The way out of the impasse is to choose a negotiation procedure that addresses efficiency and distribution separately. To the great dismay of devoted federalists, who (rightly) claim that the very notion of net budgetary balance is economic nonsense, negotiations nonetheless end up deciding how much each member state will pay and receive over the seven-year period covered by the budget. If contributions are too high or benefits too low, a "rebate" is agreed on, which ensures that the net balance is at the desired level. But since no one is very proud of this sort of murky horse-trading, it is left for the last, late-night or early morning discussion. As shown by Zsolt Darvas of Bruegel, the result is muddled and its complexity defies imagination.

To break the deadlock, Charles Michel, the president of the European Council, should propose to turn the table and start afresh with the setting of each country's net balance. It would be agreed that Poland, because it is poorer, would receive €X billion more each year than what it is paying into the budget; Germany, because it is richer, would pay Y billion more; and so on. With properly defined net balances set in stone, no state would have an interest to fight for a policy whose only value is that it benefits from it, because any additional net benefit (or cost) would be automatically offset through a lump-sum transfer. This would shift attention to the policies' intrinsic value rather than their distributional effects.

True, the debate over the overall size of the EU budget would remain. There would still be a row between partisans of higher spending and advocates of frugality. But this is a necessary debate that should not be eschewed. Those who think that there is value in European public goods would have to convince their partners - and also pay their fair share. The difference, not a minor one, is that they would argue on the basis of added value and efficiency, not direct pecuniary interests.¹

After another failed negotiation, Michel tweeted on February 21 that, "as my grandmother used to say, in order to succeed you have to try." European leaders would be wise to follow his grandmother's advice.

The New Dawn
FULLY INDEPENDENT

O-PED

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

Wall Street Can't Burn Bernie

America's plutocrats and their media allies are certain that US presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is unelectable, or that, if somehow elected, he would bring about the collapse of the republic. This disdain is both telling and absurd.

NEW YORK - The narcissism and Panglossian cluelessness of the Wall Street elite is a marvel to behold. Sitting on their perches of power, and enjoying tax breaks, easy money, and soaring stock markets, they are certain that all is best in this best of all possible worlds. Critics must be fools or devils.

When I have mentioned my support for US presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in their company, it has been to audible gasps, as if I had invoked Lucifer's name. They are certain that Sanders is unelectable, or that, if somehow elected, he would bring about the collapse of the republic. To varying degrees, the same sentiments can be found even in "liberal" media outlets like The New York Times and The Washington Post.

This disdain is both telling and absurd. In Europe, Sanders would be a mainstream social democrat. He wants to restore some basic decency to American life: universal publicly financed health care; above-poverty wages for full-time workers, along with basic benefits such as family leave for infants and paid leave for illness; college education that does not drive young adults into lifelong debt; elections that billionaires cannot buy; and public policy determined by public opinion, not corporate lobbying (which reached \$3.47 billion in the United States in 2019).

The US public supports all these positions by large majorities. Americans want government to ensure health care for all. They want higher taxes on the rich. They want a transition to renewable energy. And they want limits on big money in politics. These are all core Sanders positions, and all are commonplace in Europe. Nonetheless, with each Sanders primary victory, the befuddled Wall Street elite and their favorite pundits puzzle over how an "extremist" like Sanders wins the vote.

An insight into Wall Street's cluelessness is found in a recent Financial Times interview with Lloyd Blankfein, the former CEO of Goldman Sachs. Blankfein, a billionaire who earned tens of millions of dollars each year, argued that he's merely "well-to-do," not rich. More bizarrely, he meant it. You see, Blankfein is a low-single-digit billionaire in an era when more than 50 Americans have a net worth of \$10 billion or more. How rich one feels depends on one's peer group.

The result, however, is the elite's (and the elite media's) shocking disregard for the lives of most Americans. They either don't know or don't care that tens of millions of Americans lack basic health-care coverage and that medical expenses bankrupt around 500,000 each year, or that one in five US households has zero or negative net worth and that nearly 40% struggle to meet basic needs.

And the elite hardly take notice of the 44 million Americans burdened by student debt totaling \$1.6 trillion, a phenomenon essentially unknown in other developed countries. And while stock markets have soared, enriching the elites, suicide rates and other "deaths of despair" (such as opioid overdoses) have also soared, as the working class has fallen further into financial and psychological insecurity.

One reason the elites don't notice these basic facts is that they haven't been held to account for a long time. US politicians of both parties have been doing their bidding at least since President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 and ushered in four decades of tax cuts, union busting, and other perks for the super-rich. The coziness of Wall Street and Washington is well captured in a 2008 photo making the rounds again: Donald Trump, Michael Bloomberg, and Bill Clinton are golfing together. It's one big happy family.

Clinton's chumminess with Wall Street billionaires is telling. This was the norm for Republicans going back to the start of the twentieth century, but Wall Street's close links with the Democrats are more recent. As a presidential candidate in 1992, Clinton maneuvered to link the Democratic Party to Goldman Sachs through its then-Co-Chair, Robert Rubin, who later became Clinton's Secretary of the Treasury.

With Wall Street backing, Clinton won the presidency. From then on, both parties have been beholden to Wall Street for campaign financing. Barack Obama followed the Clinton playbook in the 2008 election. Once in office, Obama hired Rubin's acolytes to staff his economic team.

Wall Street has certainly gotten its money's worth for its campaign outlays. Clinton deregulated financial markets, enabling the rise of behemoths like Citigroup (where Rubin became a director after leaving the White House). Clinton also ended welfare payments for poor single mothers, with damaging effects on young children, and stepped up mass incarceration of young African-American men. Obama, for his part, largely gave a free pass to the bankers who caused the 2008 crash. They received bailout money and invitations to White House dinners, rather than the jail time that many deserved.

With the mega-hubris of a mega-billionaire, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg thinks he can buy the Democratic nomination by spending \$1 billion of his \$62 billion fortune on campaign ads, and then defeat fellow billionaire Donald Trump in November. This, too, is most likely a case of cluelessness. Bloomberg's prospects deflated as soon as he appeared on the debate stage with Sanders and the other Democratic candidates, who reminded viewers of Bloomberg's Republican past, allegations of a hostile work environment for women in Bloomberg's business, and of his support for harsh police tactics against young African-American and Latino men.

No one should underestimate the deluge of hysteria that Trump and Wall Street will try to whip up against Sanders. Trump accuses Sanders of trying to turn the US into Venezuela, when Canada or Denmark are the obvious comparisons. In the Nevada debate, Bloomberg ludicrously called Sanders's support for worker representation on corporate boards, as in Germany's co-determination policy, "communist."

But American voters are hearing something different: health care, education, decent wages, paid sick leave, renewable energy, and an end to tax breaks and impunity for the super-rich. It all sounds eminently sensible, indeed mainstream, when one cuts through the rhetoric of Wall Street, which is why Sanders has been winning - and can win again in November.

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OPINION

By Andrés Velasco

To Protect Democracy, Reform It

We vote every four or so years for candidates about whom we know little, in a process mediated by political parties, which are often less than fully democratic themselves. No wonder, then, that more than half of respondents in 27 countries say they are dissatisfied with democracy.

LONDON - Democracy may be "the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time," as Winston Churchill famously said, but that does not mean democracy is good enough. Voters know it, and they are as mad as hell about it.

According to the most recent Pew Global Attitudes Survey, an average of 51% of citizens in 27 countries surveyed report being dissatisfied with democracy, while 45% are satisfied. If that 51% does not seem high to you, note that the figure is 55% in Britain, 56% in Japan, 58% in the United States, 60% in Nigeria, 63% in Argentina, 64% in South Africa, 70% in Italy, 81% in Spain, 83% in Brazil, and 85% in Mexico. This sentiment is not unique to one social group. Men and women, young and old, rich and poor, highly educated and not, report being disappointed by democratic performance.

That should not come as a surprise. In the past 250 years, almost every human endeavor has changed beyond recognition - except democracy. We vote every four or so years for candidates about whom we know little (and we do so in person, often with paper and pencil!). This process is mediated by political parties, which are often less than fully democratic themselves. We elect large groups of peoples known as parliamentarians, who meet in ornate chambers and, following arcane rules, discuss at length and with great showmanship subjects they understand only superficially. Sparks fly, yet little illumination occurs. Many social and economic problems remain unaddressed. Four or five years later, the cycle starts again.

Since democracy began taking root in Western countries after the American and French revolutions, innovations have been few and far between. Direct citizen consultation or participation, as in ancient Athens? Not really. Systematic expert input into highly complex and technical discussions? Very seldom. Intensive use of technology to expedite the process? Thanks, but no thanks. No wonder today's young people, weaned on the immediacy and the results-now culture of the digital era, are skeptical of representative democracy.

The list of imaginable reforms to democratic practice is as long as it is challenging. Some of the necessary changes, like reducing the role of money in campaigns, are obvious. Others veer toward the adventurous. Referenda are unsuited to complex issues that do not lend themselves to a yes-or-no answer (think Brexit), but could we not move toward more direct democracy at the local level, where voters are well informed about the issues - build a park here, re-route a highway there - at stake?

Perhaps we could use technology to move from voting every four years with little information to voting more often with better information. Or we could combat lack of interest and low citizen turnout by making votes tradable - not for money but for other votes, so that you can vote twice next month in that referendum you really care about. Alternatively, votes could be storable, allowing voters to cast more than one in elections they feel strongly about.

The rules of democracy matter, but elected politicians matter just as much - and they too are thoroughly discredited. In the same Pew report, an average of 54% of respondents said that politicians in their country are corrupt, and only 35% said that elected officials care what ordinary people think.

Some of those politicians are discredited because their sins are so glaring. As Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil put it in 2018, "Of the four presidents elected after the 1988 Constitution took effect, two were impeached, one is in jail for corruption and the other is me." No wonder that some Brazilians report feeling nostalgic for their country's repressive military dictatorship. Those same Brazilians voted to elect Jair Bolsonaro, a populist who has insulted women, black people, and gays.

But the problem is bigger than just a few bad apples. In his famous essay "Politics as a Vocation," Max Weber warned that a key risk for modern democracy was that a political class would arise, disconnected from voters. Such a political class did indeed emerge, and now voters are revolting against it.

Political parties are a case in point. Once upon a time, they had roots in society. Conservative parties were linked to various churches, neighborhood clubs, and business associations. Socialist parties had their base in the trade unions and what was once called the industrial proletariat. Today, those institutions are fewer and weaker, and so are political parties. One political scientist has called today's parties "hydroponic" - floating above society but with no roots in it.

That is why nowadays conventional political parties tend to have leaders who themselves hail from the well-heeled professions, the upper echelons of universities, or from successful businesses whose founders have acquired the financial stability needed to be able to devote themselves to politics. The potential for a fundamental disconnect with voters is huge.

The message is clear: dissatisfaction with democracy is the perfect breeding ground for authoritarian populists. Strongmen, whether actual or potential, have little vested interest in democratic reform. Liberal democrats do. They should be the ones leading the charge.

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ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Climate change: A major global threat

The climate change, that is, the change of the global climate and in particular the changes in meteorological conditions that extend on a large time scale, is a major global existential threat. The greenhouse effect causes the increase of temperature of the planet primarily due to the tremendous increase in carbon dioxide, which has increased by 35% since the beginning of the industrial revolution. And of course the lion's share in pollution of the atmosphere with 50% of all carbon dioxide have Europe and North America. All other countries together are responsible for the other half, while the poorest countries are the least responsible. However, the people who live in these countries it is they who will suffer more strongly of the consequences.

The causes of climate change are mainly identified in combustion of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gasoline, natural gas, etc.) which account for 50% of total emissions, in the production and use of synthetic chemicals, in disaster of forest areas which contributes to the production of additional gases in the atmosphere and of course to the greenhouse effect by 15% and in conventional agriculture and livestock farming, which account for 15% of emissions.

The expert scientists knock the danger bell and warn that if there is no urgent global coordinated action by political leaders, governments, industries and citizens around the world, the temperature of the planet is likely to rise above 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels by 2060 and the increase could even reach 5°C by the end of the twenty-first century, fact that will make the lives of future generations problematic.

Such an increase in the temperature of our planet will have a devastating impact on nature, bringing about irreversible changes in many ecosystems and consequent loss of biodiversity, that is, all living organisms and species that make up life on the planet, that is, animals, birds, fish and plants (fauna and flora). Many species are expected to disappear from areas that will be directly and severely affected by climate change.

Today, compared to 1850 -from when recording data began- a temperature increase of 1.1°C is observed. So, it is vital importance, the increase not to exceed 1.5°C, because as scientists estimate, beyond this crucial point there will be no way back.

The climate change, however, which is due to human activities, is a tangible ominous reality and is already adversely affecting our planet. The sectors responsible for the production of greenhouse gases are primarily the sector of energy produce (units of production of electrical power, refineries) but also industrial activities, the modern means of transport (cars, airplanes, etc.) and the activities of the primary production sector.

So, the extreme weather events, the uncontrolled fires in forests such as the Amazon that have been characterized as the "lung" of the planet, the heat waves, the heavy rainfall, the prolonged droughts that create serious eating problems in the affected areas of the planet, the very powerful hurricanes, are becoming constantly more often and more intensively, costing tens of thousands of lives every year and causing huge disasters.

The ice at the same time and snow on the poles are melting, with the Arctic being the biggest victim to date, and the world average sea level goes up, as a result to be caused floods and erosion on coasts and lowland coastal areas and to be created environmental refugees. If this unfavorable development continues, areas such as the Netherlands and Venice will be at risk of being



permanently lost under the sea waters as new Atlantis.

The climate change also increases existing diseases worldwide but also creates new ones, and can also lead to premature death. Too many diseases are particularly sensitive to temperature change. To them included communicable diseases such as yellow fever, malaria, encephalitis and dengue fever, but also eating disorders, mental illnesses, cardiovascular diseases as well as respiratory diseases.

The climate change will also have negative impacts on the economies of the countries given the fact that the high temperatures undermine the productivity of most sectors of the economy, from the agricultural sector to processing. Valid scientists predict that by the end of the century, global GDP will have fallen by 7.22% from what it would have been without climate change.

The teenager Swedish activist against climate change, Greta Thunberg, has managed in the most vigorous and loud way to pass the debate over this huge problem, by the heads of state and government and public dialogue, in society and in the friendly discussions, mobilizing millions of people around the world, especially young people, who began to demonstrate demanding by governments the immediate taking of measures for the confrontation of climate change.

So, Swedish MPs rightly suggested her for the Nobel Peace Prize. And of course Greta Thunberg has big right when she says that the measures are being taken to reduce greenhouse gases and, above all, carbon dioxide are not sufficient.

So, what are the appropriate measures to be taken without delay to effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and keep the temperature at + 1.5°C? The basic policies for resolutely mitigating of the problem consist in promoting and utilizing renewable energy sources (wind, solar, biomass, etc.), the enhancing energy efficiency, the drastic reduction of the exploitation of oil and gas deposits and the imposition of carbon taxes in order that to limit the use of fossil fuels and thereby to reduce significantly carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and eliminate them by 2050 at

the latest, the rapid reduction of emissions of methane, carbon black and other short-lived pollutants that burden the climate, the restoration and protection of ecosystems and, above all, forests.

The Paris Agreement, the first universal, legally binding agreement for the climate, entered into force in 2016 with great optimism and manifest ambitions, despite the official US departure statement, which are one of the biggest polluters. Four years have passed since then and there are no substantial results, fact which raises serious questions as to whether there is really the political will to tackle this particularly threatening global problem.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that the effects of climate change will be so dramatic that human civilization will be in danger to collapse as a paper tower. So, in the face of this extremely dangerous climate crisis, the citizens around the world should increase their mobilization even further and the political leaders to finally stand up at the height of the circumstances and take immediately the necessary drastic measures, before it is too late, to reverse this unsustainable course and save the planet.

Curriculum vitae

Isidoros Karderinis was born in Athens in 1967. He is a novelist, poet and columnist. He has studied economics and has completed postgraduate studies in the tourism economy. His articles have been published in newspapers, magazines and sites worldwide. His poems have been translated into English, French and Spanish and published in poetry anthologies, in literary magazines and literary sections of newspapers. He has published seven poetry books and three novels. His books have been published in USA, Great Britain, Spain and Italy.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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State rests with evidence in ex-defense minister's trial

By Winston W. Parley

Prosecutors here have announced they are resting with the production of demonstrative, oral and documentary evidence in the trial of former Defense Minister Brownie J. Samukai, former Deputy

Criminal Court "C" at the end of the testimony of its third subpoenaed witness Mr. Stephen S. Howard, head of Corporate and Investment Banking at privately run ECOBANK Liberia.

Mr. Howard's appearance in the trial Wednesday followed

subpoenaed, following which the State announced that it had rested with the examination of witness Howard as well as the production of evidence in the case.

Following the cross examination of the witness, the court on Wednesday ordered the defendants to organize their witnesses and parade them for trial.

The next hearing of this case has been assigned by the court to Monday, 2 March at 9:00 A.M. at which time the defendants are expected to parade all of their witnesses.

Former Defense Minister Brownie Samukai, co-defendants Joseph P. Johnson and J. NyumahDorbor and others are standing trial for allegedly embezzling funds generated in a compulsory saving scheme established in July 2009 for Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) personnel during former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's rule.

The current regime of President George Manneh Weah indicted the officials on 9 October 2019, accusing them of committing economic sabotage, theft of property, and misuse of public money, among others.

Through the compulsory

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Ex-Defense Minister Brownie J. Samukai

Defense Minister Joseph Johnson and former Defense Ministry Comptroller NyumahDorbor, but note that they shall produce rebuttal witnesses if need arises.

The State announced the decision during hearing Wednesday, 26 February at

subpoena of ECBOBANK by the State to produce the bank records on an account titled "AFL Pension Funds," Ministry of Defense that was later changed to "AFL Welfare and Morale Account."

The bank produced the original of the instruments

Gbarpolu lawmaker cautions citizens

Gbarpolu County Representative Alfred Koiwood has cautioned citizens of his county against being deceived by greedy and selfish politicians as the 2020 midterm senatorial election draws closer.

A dispatch from the county says Mr. Koiwood made the assertions recently in the county capital Bopolu during a mass citizens' consultative meeting geared toward assessing their development needs for prompt resolutions and actions.

The dispatch quotes Rep. Koiwood as saying that the consultative meeting was intended to catalogue crucial development plans for his action in enhancing the development agenda of the county.

During the meeting, Koiwood urged the people not to leave any stone unturned as so-called politicians would soon start to visit them on false promises.

Koiwood further urged the citizens to be mindful how they go about encouraging



Representative Alfred Koiwood

individuals who intend contesting for legislative seats in the county.

The dispatch also disclosed that while in the county, the lawmaker is expected to travel to several other parts of the county as a way of assessing the development needs of the people of the county for implementation.

He disclosed that the people of the county deserve farm - to - market roads, health centers, farming implements, educational facilities, water and sanitation, and micro - finance loans, among others.

He is serving his second term in the House of Representatives, and he

CBL to get additional technical assistance

The Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), J. Aloysius Tarlue, Jr. has received assurances from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for technical assistance. The assurances were given by Governor Godwin I. Emefiele of the CBN on Friday, February 21, 2020 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The assistance is in response to a request from Executive Governor Tarlue to

greater cooperation and partnership among Member States of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) to promote regional economic integration, economic growth and development in the region. She indicated CBN's commitment to supporting sister central banks in the Zone in whatever way she can.

Mr. Tarlue highlighted the urgent need for capacity building at the CBL as his



the Nigerian Central Bank Authorities.

In his meeting with the Deputy Governor for Financial System Stability, Mrs. Aishah Ahmed, Executive Governor Tarlue recounted the continued support that Nigeria has rendered to Liberia, including Nigeria's role in restoring peace during Liberia's Civil War (1989 - 2003).

Speaking on behalf of the Governor of CBN, Mrs. Ahmed underscored the need for

administration strives to rebuild public confidence in the CBL and the banking system at large. He lamented that this was crucial if the CBL and the financial system are to play their rightful roles in the economic recovery of Liberia, especially at a time when the Liberian economy is experiencing serious challenges.

The areas of technical assistance discussed by the two

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

assures the citizens that he would continue to provide scholarship to less fortunate youth of the county who are in need of education at junior, senior, elementary, and college level.

He encouraged the citizens to be focused and consistent in the fight for development services, adding that "you should not be carried away by false promises by so-called politicians."

Mr. Joseph Yankillie, a youth of the county, who spoke on behalf of the citizens, said the people of the county will not allow any politician to infiltrate the county as they would out rightly deny and reject intruders because they don't belong to the county.

He assured the Koiwood that prior to his visit to their area, they had been holding series of informative workshops with the women and youth of the county to alert them on the present political trends in the country and the way forward.

Mr. Yankollie called on the citizens especially the youth to be mindful of how they go about crossing over to political parties.

He welcomed the lawmaker's visitations to their towns, villages, and clans, with the expectations that he will again deliver the county from greedy and selfish politicians who only care about themselves and not the suffering masses.—Dispatch

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Providence Baptist Launches Bicentennial Anniversary Plan

The Providence Baptist Church, Liberia's oldest church, the one in which the nation's declaration of independence was signed, will celebrate its bicentennial next year, February and March 2021, celebrating 200 years of its existence. This historic bicentennial is a celebration of the grace of God for the vision, mission, members, partnerships and works that He has placed in our stewardship throughout this 200-year journey.

Established in 1821, Providence Baptist Church played a very significant part in the history of Liberia as a nation. The aforementioned Declaration of Independence was signed in the edifice of the old Church building, which is a National Shrine. There, also, the original constitution of Liberia was debated and the national Flag was made.

Today, Providence remains a very active part of Liberia through its many human and social development programs, in addition to winning souls for Christ. "We have never been just a Sunday morning congregation," says Dr. Samuel B. Reeves, senior pastor of Providence Baptist Church (PBC).

It is in this historical context that PBC has convened a steering committee of persons from the private and public sectors, members and non-members of Providence, to plan our Anniversary next year.

On Sunday, March 1, 2020 at 9:30 a.m., at a special service, PBC will officially launch and announce the planning of this national

event.

To stage this event successfully, PBC is partnering with the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs & Tourism (MICAT), as well as other major groups and organizations at home and abroad, to converge in Monrovia next year for the series of events we are planning, including the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC), the Liberia Baptist Missionary and

throughout the Diaspora especially America and the Caribbean to come to Liberia for the festivities being planned.

During this historic celebration, PBC aims to embark on three national development projects as an outcome of this celebration and will be submitting proposals to funders and others to assist. They are: The restoration & redevelopment of Providence Island as a



Educational Conference, Inc. (LBMEC), Historical Black Churches and Universities, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Major Christian denominations, Black Fraternities and Sororities, the Congregation and many others.

The MICAT has agreed to work with PBC and assist in organizing tours and other cultural events for invited guests. We are reaching out to persons of African descent

cultural and tourist destination. The construction of a National Library and Research Center in partnership with Princeton Theological Seminary. The application to UNESCO to designate the old Providence Baptist Church building as a 'World Heritage Site' and thereby further preserving its historical significance along with the resources that comes with that for upkeep and maintenance.

Rep. Gleekia takes land complaints to Capitol

-wants Land Authority boss appear

By Bridgett Milton

Nimba County Electoral district #6 Representative Dorwohn T. Gleekia, writes the House of Representatives, requesting the body to invite the Chairman of the Liberia

Land Authority (LLA) and its commissioners to address alleged land conflicts across the country.

According to Rep. Gleekia, over past time, there have been situations

involving land conflicts in his

district, which he had informed the Liberia Land Authority about, but is yet to get redress.

He says for the past four years, there has been no legitimate and recognized representative of the LLA to handle land conflicts that continue to ensue within his district.

The lawmaker explains this is why he has formally communicated with the Chairman of the Liberia Land Authority about the prevailing situation and recommended ways that could be helpful to remedying this matter but claims there has been no



State rests with

Cont'd from page 6

savings funds, prosecutors here allege that former Minister Samukai, former Deputy Defense Minister Joseph Johnson and former Defense Ministry Comptroller NyumahDorbor deducted the salaries of AFL officers from all ranks to serve as supplementary pension benefits for assistance to wounded soldiers and deceased soldiers' families.

Over US\$1.2m of the US\$1.9m deposited was allegedly misapplied by Mr. Samukai, the prosecution alleges, and claims further that the defendants made themselves the only signatories to the account, leaving out the then AFL Chief of Staff and other ranking officers.

Earlier on Tuesday, 25 February Criminal Court "C" Judge YamieQuiquiGbeisay permitted prosecutors to introduce demonstrative video evidence in the trial following AFL Chief of Staff Major General Prince Charles Johnson's testimony.

Gen. Johnson had testified that around October 2017, his boss Minister Ziakahn [who was

at the time, Army Chief of Staff], received a letter addressed to the Manager of ECOBANK under the signature of former Deputy Minister Johnson about the change of the name of the AFL pension account to the AFL Morale and Welfare Account.

According to him, a halt was put to the monthly deduction from AFL personnel's pay and there was a press conference called by the Minister of Defense at the time, Mr. Samukai.

Prosecutors introduced the video evidence which they say showed then Minister Samukai holding a press.

The court heard in Gen. Johnson's testimony that there had been a roadblock and dependents of AFL personnel from the Edward BenyanKesselly Barracks (EBK) had gone on a protest which was later quiet down by retired AFL Chief of Staff, now Defense Minister Daniel D. Ziankahn.

Following the protest by the AFL personnel's dependents, Gen. Johnson narrated that the AFL decided to form a committee to do a report that had to go to the Chief of Staff.

CBL to get additional

Cont'd from page 6

central banks covered: IT audit, banking operations and currency management, procurement, internal audit and controls, monetary policy operations, research and macroeconomic forecasting capability, financial markets operations, banking supervision, payments system, etc.

The discussion also covered the possibility of establishment a currency swap arrangement between Liberia and Nigeria, with the aim of promoting trade and investment between the two countries, thereby alleviating the need for foreign exchange for such activities.

The proposed arrangement is expected to be conducted through the banking system, which would bring relief to Liberians trading with Nigeria, especially small and medium businesses. The Executive Governor also requested for

experience sharing on the CBN's Anchor Borrowers' programme, a flagship programme, for financing the agricultural sector, which has significantly transformed the agricultural sector in Nigeria and empowered several thousand smallholder farmers in Nigeria. He further indicated the crucial role that agricultural sector could play in transforming the Liberian economy and create jobs for the youth and rural population.

It can be recalled that upon assumption of office, CBL Tarlue expressed his commitment to reforming the Bank to rebuild confidence.

Mr. Tarlue was accompanied to the meeting in Abuja by Deputy Governor for Economic Policy, Dr. Musa Dukuly, Senior Technical Advisor, Mr. Mussah A. Kamara, and Senior Advisor for Multi-lateral Relations, Mr. Michael B. Ogun.

recourse.

The Nimba lawmaker laments the situation is breeding tribal and regional conflicts amongst the over 50,000 Liberians they represent in Nimba and other parts of Liberia.

He says they have

exhausted almost all efforts in handling this issue with the Liberia Land Authority but to no avail therefore, having him to request that authorities at the LLA be made to appear before plenary to explain their refusal to address the plight of the people.

Français

Y a-t-il des problèmes au sein de l'alliance des partis politiques de l'opposition

Rien ne semble aller au sein de l'alliance de quatre principaux partis politiques d'opposition qui souhaitent pourtant empêcher la Coalition pour le changement démocratique du président George Manneh Weah de bénéficier d'un second mandat en 2023.

L'ANC (Alternative National Congress), membre de l'alliance, s'est dit victime de campagne de dénigrement de la part des autres partis membres, à savoir le Parti de l'Unité (UP, ancien parti au pouvoir), le Parti de la liberté (LP) et le Parti de tous les libériens (ALP).

L'ANC est dirigé par l'ancien candidat malheureux à la présidentielle de 2017, M. Alexander B. Cummings, qui est considéré comme l'un des opposants farouches au régime Weah.

Le secrétaire général de l'ANC, Aloysius Toe, a mis en garde que M. Alexander Cummings et l'ANC ont maintes fois déclaré qu'ils n'accepteront que des

résultats issus d'un processus politique juste, transparent et démocratique.

Le secrétaire général Aloysius Toe est monté au créneau un jour après que le leader politique de l'ALP, M. Benoni Urey, a annoncé que l'ancien vice-président Joseph Nyumah et leader politique de l'ancien parti au pouvoir, est le plus apte à diriger le bloc de

l'opposition contre le président Weah lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2023.

Me Toea martelé que l'ANC est un parti responsable et a l'intention de faire preuve de maturité dans toutes ses déclarations et relations avec les partis de l'opposition et le

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Côte d'Ivoire: « Nous n'irons pas aux élections avec la CEI sur laquelle compte le Rhdp » Hubert Oulaï

Les enseignants membres de la Cellule des enseignants du Fpi (Cefpi) étaient en Assemblée générale samedi à Yopougon. Pour se faire expliquer l'attitude de leur parti dans la mouvance sociopolitique actuelle, ils ont invité le président du comité de contrôle, l'ancien ministre Hubert Oulaï.

Pendant plus d'une heure

et demie, cefidèle de Laurent Gbagbo a analysé la situation judiciaire de Laurent Gbagbo avant de déboucher sur les chances qu'al'ancien président de revenir aux affaires une fois sorti des mailles de la prison.

Dans son analyse, ils'est penché sur les facteurs favorables à l'éventuel retour de Gbagbo au pouvoir. Il

cite comme un des facteurs, "l'effritement du Rhdp", le parti au pouvoir. « Au moment où le Fpi est debout, on assiste à l'effritement du Rhdp. Un parti devenu Rhdp unifié déboulonné. D'indéboulonnable (comme le proclamait Ouattara) où sommes nous aujourd'hui ? », interroge le conférencier avant de déclarer que Ouattara a perdu tous ses boulons et ne tient plus que par le seul boulon du Rdr. Le Pdc, Guillaume Soro, l'a

communauté internationale, tous ces boulons sur lesquels comptait Ouattara, ont tour à tour sauté de l'avis de Hubert Oulaï. C'est pourquoi, dénonçant l'attitude du pouvoir à s'arc-bouter sur une commission électorale à sa guise, il a eu ce commentaire devant les militants de son parti : « Aujourd'hui, nous disons que nous n'allons pas aux élections avec cette CEI sur laquelle ils comptent. Sur le code électoral, on n'a pas signé de papier avec eux. (...)

Même NOCAL qui a dirigé le processus a, par ses actions, déçu tous les Libériens ordinaires et frustré le pays tout entier. Après avoir dépensé des millions de dollars sur les salaires et les avantages sociaux de son personnel, des projets publics de qualité inférieure et sur la soi-disant sensibilisation nationale entreprise par des législateurs malhonnêtes, tout l'exercice a dégringolé et NOCAL a fait

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Éditorial

Exploration Pétrolière : Les Libériens ont intérêt à se calmer

Le Libéria se prépare pour lancer un deuxième appel à candidature pour des explorations pétrolières offshore au cours du mois d'avril 2020. La présidence avait annoncé fin décembre 2019 le plan de l'administration Weah de mettre en vente neuf blocs offshore dans le bassin de Harper, qui serait l'un des derniers à ne pas avoir fait l'objet d'exploration au large de l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

Déjà, les parties prenantes, sous les auspices de la Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority et de la National Oil Company of Liberia, se sont réunies à Monrovia sur les perspectives de découverte du pétrole et du gaz ici.

Le Dr Lester Tenny, vice-président de NOCAL chargé des services techniques, est passionnément optimiste quant aux perspectives de découverte de « l'or noir » au Libéria. « Le Libéria a du pétrole ; les signaux sont là ; nous avons juste besoin de découvrir le pétrole », a-t-il déclaré la semaine dernière lors d'une rencontre avec des parties prenantes.

Cependant, il faut que les Libériens fassent preuve de prudence et de patience cette fois-ci en ce qui concerne l'euphorie autour du pétrole. Il faut tirer des leçons à partir des expériences passées où notre espoir avait cédé la place à une simple illusion comme du sable mouvant. L'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf avait suscité un enthousiasme inouï quant à la possibilité de l'existence du pétrole sur les côtes libériennes et vendu une douzaine de blocs pétroliers à des sociétés étrangères, dont le géant pétrolier américain Exxon Mobile. Mais après une période et d'explorations, il a été établi que le Libéria ne disposait pas de quantité suffisante de pétrole à des fins commerciales.

Même NOCAL qui a dirigé le processus a, par ses actions, déçu tous les Libériens ordinaires et frustré le pays tout entier. Après avoir dépensé des millions de dollars sur les salaires et les avantages sociaux de son personnel, des projets publics de qualité inférieure et sur la soi-disant sensibilisation nationale entreprise par des législateurs malhonnêtes, tout l'exercice a dégringolé et NOCAL a fait

faillite. L'ancienne présidente s'est dite responsable de l'échec.

Nous ne sommes en aucun cas pessimistes, mais les expériences que nous avons tous vécues concernant ce secteur exigent que nous procédions avec circonspection pour éviter de suivre le même chemin ou de répéter les mêmes erreurs.

Selon le site Web international du pétrole basé en Norvège, la société géophysique TGS détient une gamme de données multi-clients à travers le bassin de Harper pour soutenir le cycle de licences, y compris 5 272 kilomètres en 2D et 6 276 kilomètres carrés de données sismiques, gravimétriques et magnétiques en 3D.

Il a détaillé que des pièges structuraux Syn-rift peuvent être identifiés sur une grande partie de la zone, qui offrent une prospectivité à plusieurs niveaux et que des systèmes de ventilateur de pente et de bassin du crétacé démontrant un caractère de grande amplitude ont été identifiés, dont certains couvrent plus de 300 kilomètres carrés, tandis qu'une évaluation volumétrique de ces caractéristiques suggère que des champs de plus d'un milliard de barils de pétrole en place pourraient être présents ici.

C'est une bonne nouvelle. Nous félicitons le gouvernement et les partenaires pour ces études qui nous donnent de l'espoir. Néanmoins, nous appelons l'administration actuelle, en particulier l'Autorité de Régulation du Pétrole du Libéria (LPRA), à travailler de concert avec tous les acteurs du secteur pour obtenir un résultat satisfaisant pour le peuple libérien.

Nous exhortons le président George Manneh Weah à faire de ce rêve une réalité pour le grand bonheur du Libéria en veillant à ce que, si une quantité commercialisable est découverte dans nos eaux, les libériens en tirent grand profit, y compris les générations futures.

Français

Y a-t-il des problèmes

gouvernement libérien. Il a dénoncé des tentatives de dénigrement et de rabaissement de la part de certains partis membres de l'alliance dont seraient victimes l'ANC et son leader politique dont l'image serait ternie par une désinformation délibérée quant à la position du parti sur le processus de sélection d'un candidat unique de l'opposition par un sondage.

« Ce n'est pas la première fois que l'ANC et son leader politique sont dénigrés et rabaisés et ridiculisés par des personnes membres des partis frères. C'est devenu une habitude. Les cicatrices et les pertes de Cape Mount sont encore fraîches dans nos esprits. Ce sont toujours les mêmes personnes », a-t-il dit sans citer personne.

« Nous tenons à préciser clairement qu'à aucun moment l'ANC ne s'est opposé aux primaires. L'ANC a

embrassé les primaires. Le sondage ne remplacera pas les primaires. L'ANC a fait preuve de bonne foi et a fait une proposition claire pour la sélection d'un candidat unique de l'alliance. Chers Libériens, voilà ce dont il est question », a expliqué Me Toe.

Selon lui, le Parti de l'unité (UP) avait proposé un consensus où les quatre leaders politiques se mettraient d'accord à l'unanimité sur la personne qui serait le candidat de l'alliance. L'ANC, pour sa part, a proposé que si les quatre dirigeants n'arrivent pas à un consensus, alors il faut que nous procédions à un sondage des opinions auprès des électeurs afin de savoir qui a la faveur du peuple, la décision serait ensuite entérinée par une convention. Mais en janvier 2020, le Parti de la Liberté (LP) a quant à lui proposé l'annulation du sondage en faveur des primaires, ce qui a été accepté par tous.

Côte d'Ivoire: « Nous n'irons

clamepartout qu'il fait 8 % de croissance, qu'il met les ivoiriens à l'aise ne veut pas discuter (sincèrement) ? Ceci nous fait dire que si Gbagbo vient, il va gagner. Ils savent que c'est devenu difficile donc ils ne veulent plus discuter. Ils savent que si on s'assoit, on va parler du code électoral et de la Cei », explicitement l'ancien ministre de la Fonction publique. Lequel conclura que le contexte judiciaire international nous donne des

signes de libération de Gbagbo et qu'au plan national, le contextesociopolitique est plus que favorable à Laurent Gbagbo.

Hubert Oulaï nuance toutefois et propose soulignant que l'option de son parti, depuis le congrès de Moossouest de participer à toutes les élections de 2020 et qu'aucune disposition contraire n'a encore été émise. L'avis plus haut est donc une réflexion personnelle au regard des conditions de préparation de l'élection.

Weah va donner des terres à plus de 20 000 habitants

Le président George Manneh Weah a promis de consulter l'Autorité Terrienne du Liberia pour vérifier la propriété des terres qui sont actuellement occupées depuis des années à Unification Town, dans le comté de Margibi. L'objectif est de faire des occupants actuels des propriétaires officiels.

Le Président a fait cette promesse en réponse à une demande formulée par leur représentant, le député du district deux du comté de Margibi, Irvin Jones, le jeudi 20 février lors de la cérémonie de pose de première pierre pour l'expansion de la route menant à l'aéroport international Roberts (RIA).

« Permettez-moi d'informer l'honorable Jones que je vérifierai auprès de l'autorité foncière pour m'assurer que ceux qui squattent depuis tant d'années auront officiellement une place », a-t-il déclaré sous des applaudissements.

Le président Weah a dit qu'il ne peut cependant le faire seul. Il a demandé au député de diriger cette initiative car il est membre de la chambre des représentants.

Le président Weah a fait savoir que M. Findley, ministre des affaires étrangères, lui avait dit que son père était avocat et dispose des documents sur ces propriétés.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Jean Pisani-Ferry

Budget européen : une solution radicale pour sortir de l'impasse

PARIS - En 2003, j'ai participé au rapport Sapir sur l'avenir de l'Union européenne. Nous y relevions que les dépenses, les ressources et les règles du budget européen ne présentaient plus aucune cohérence avec les objectifs de l'UE et recommandions une reorganisation radicale de cette « relique de l'Histoire ». Dix-sept ans plus tard, pratiquement rien n'a changé.

Il y a deux ans, quand les négociations pour le budget 2021-2027 ont commencé, j'ai pronostiqué que le résultat serait révélateur de la réalité du projet européen, mais relevé qu'après une partie tendue de poker-menteur riche en pressions, chantages et trahisons, ce type de négociation de bouche en général sur les évolutions mineures. Et nous y voici : nous avons eu le bluff, les pressions, le chantage et les trahisons, notamment à l'occasion du sommet stérile des 20 et 21 février, et l'UE semble bien s'orienter vers des évolutions minimales.

Un tel résultat serait très dommageable. Bien sûr, l'Europe ne se définit pas par son budget. L'intégration du continent s'est faite autour d'un système juridique, d'institutions communes, du marché, de la monnaie et de politiques communes en matière de concurrence, de commerce ou de climat, bien plus que par la dépense budgétaire. La part du lion de ce budget est consacrée à des transferts vers les régions les plus pauvres (à travers la politique de cohésion) et vers les agriculteurs (par la politique agricole commune). On peut juger ces dépenses utiles, ou pas, mais elles ne sont pas l'essentiel de l'Union d'aujourd'hui. On peut donc tenter de tenir la discussion budgétaire pour une affaire secondaire : l'assiette au beurre européenne, en quelque sorte.

Ce serait une erreur. Pour l'Europe, l'enjeu existentiel n'est plus l'intégration par le commerce ou la mobilité, ni même la consolidation de l'euro. Comme je le défends dans un rapport récent, le rôle de l'UE est, de plus en plus, de fournir des biens publics, en accord avec ses valeurs et ses priorités. Concrètement, l'enjeu déterminant pour l'Union est sa capacité d'agir de manière déterminée dans les domaines comme le changement climatique, la souveraineté numérique, la recherche et développement dans les secteurs porteurs de transformation, la coopération pour le développement, la politique migratoire, la politique étrangère et la défense. Dans tous ces domaines, la question n'est pas de savoir si l'Espagne va recevoir davantage que la Pologne, ou si les contribuables néerlandais payeront plus que les Français, mais si les politiques communes présentent une valeur ajoutée.

Pour l'heure, cependant, l'UE s'enferme dans une approche absurde et étroite des biens communs. Quelques Etats ne s'intéressent qu'à ce qui les concerne directement, quand d'autres se demandent combien cela va leur coûter, tandis que d'autres encore se soucient surtout d'éventuels dommages collatéraux pour leurs programmes favoris. Ce que l'Europe perd dans l'affaire, c'est une occasion de prendre au sérieux ses priorités affichées et de se confronter à l'urgence d'actions communes.

Un principe fondamental de l'économie politique veut que les questions d'efficacité et de répartition soient autant que possible traitées de manière séparée. Savoir si une politique crée de la valeur et comment ses bénéfices sont distribués sont deux questions également importantes, mais elles doivent être distinguées. Bien entendu la séparation ne peut jamais être complète, car la fourniture de biens communs a des conséquences sur la répartition : une augmentation des dépenses militaires, par exemple, apporte des avantages aux

zones qui travaillent pour l'industrie de l'armement. Mais cela ne fait que confirmer l'argument : personne ne veut que la politique de Défense soit décidée par le lobby militaro-industriel.

Le mécanisme de négociation du budget européen devrait ainsi être conçu de manière à encourager les Etats membres à viser à la fois l'efficacité collective et l'équité transnationale, mais sans que la première soit otage de la seconde. A l'heure actuelle, pourtant, la Pologne se bat pour la politique de cohésion régionale et la France pour la politique agricole commune, indépendamment de la valeur propre de ces programmes : tout simplement parce qu'ils en bénéficient. Dans le même esprit, les pays « frugaux » (Autriche, Danemark, Pays-Bas, Suède) se sont engagés à combattre toute augmentation significative du budget, indépendamment de la manière dont l'argent est utilisé. C'est le blocage.

Pour sortir de l'impasse, il faut trouver une méthode de négociation qui sépare efficacité et répartition. C'est possible, car au grand désespoir des fédéralistes convaincus, qui affirment (à juste titre) que la notion même de solde budgétaire net est un non-sens économique, les négociations finissent régulièrement par fixer combien chaque Etat membre va déboursier et combien il va recevoir au cours des sept années de l'exercice budgétaire. Si les transferts sont trop élevés ou les retours trop faibles, un « rabais » est négocié, qui garantit que la contribution nette se trouve au niveau désiré. Mais comme personne n'est très fier de ces discussions de maquignons, ces petits arrangements sont réservés aux dernières tractations nocturnes et aux accords des petits matins. Le résultat de la discussion finale est aussi obscur que sa complexité défie l'entendement.

Pour surmonter le blocage, Charles Michel, le président du Conseil européen, devrait proposer de renverser la table et d'inverser la procédure en commençant par fixer le montant de la contribution nette de chaque pays. On déciderait que la Pologne, parce qu'elle est plus pauvre, recevra sur les 7 ans à venir X milliards de plus que ce qu'elle verse au budget commun. L'Allemagne, à l'inverse, parce qu'elle est plus riche, devrait consentir à une contribution nette de Y milliards, et ainsi de suite. Une fois gravées dans le marbre des contributions nettes bien définies, aucun Etat n'aurait intérêt à se battre pour une politique dont la valeur principale est le retour net qu'elle lui procure, puisque tout bénéfice net supplémentaire (ou toute perte) serait automatiquement équilibré par un transfert monétaire forfaitaire. Cela permettrait de concentrer l'attention sur la valeur intrinsèque des politiques communautaires plutôt que sur la répartition de leurs effets.

Pour autant, le débat sur l'ambition générale du budget européen resterait le même. Le fossé demeurerait ouvert entre les partisans d'une augmentation du budget et les avocats de la frugalité. Mais c'est un débat nécessaire qu'il ne faut pas esquiver. Ceux qui pensent que les biens publics européens ont une valeur doivent convaincre leurs partenaires - et y contribuer pour leur juste part. La différence, mais elle est de taille, est que dans le cadre d'une telle structure de négociation ils pourraient argumenter sur la base de la valeur ajoutée et de l'efficacité, et non sur la base de leurs éventuels intérêts pécuniaires directs.

Après le dernier échec des négociations, Charles Michel a tweeté le 21 février : « Comme le disait ma grand-mère, pour réussir, il faut essayer ». Les responsables européens feraient bien de suivre ce conseil valable et avisé.

INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW

Impact Of African Policies On Development Of Infrastructure Projects, Emergence Of Debt-Trap And Neo-Colonialism

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

In this interview taken by Kester Kenn Klomegah for Eurasia Review, Dr. Frangton Chiyemura, a lecturer in International Development at the School of Social Sciences and Global Studies, The Open University in the United Kingdom, discusses the impact of African policies on development and realization of infrastructure projects, the possible of running into “debt-traps” and the emergence of “neo-colonialism” in Africa. Here are the interview excerpts:

Q: Early December, you held discussions and shared your research on how African leaders influence the modality of engagement and negotiation process with China. What were the key points you discussed with the audience and participants who attended?

FC: First of all, I was invited to share my research findings with Oxford University China-Africa Network (OUCAN). OUCAN engages with researchers, think tanks, policy makers involved in Africa-China relations. My talk was part of this initiative to share research and evidence-based findings and conclusions on Africa-China relations.

My talk was based on my completed PhD research project where I investigated how the Ethiopian government exercised agency - defined as the ability to shape, control and influence, when engaging with the Chinese in the context of wind energy infrastructure. The key point was that the Ethiopian government was able to broker, negotiate, structure, implement and manage Chinese involvement in Adama 1 and Adama 2 wind farms.

The audience was quite engaging and wondered how the Ethiopian government was able to exercise agency as compared to other African governments dealing with the Chinese. There are several factors which make Ethiopia to have such clout when dealing with the Chinese as compared to other African countries. Such factors are not only limited to the governance and leadership model of the government especially under Meles Zenawi and Hailmariam.

Secondly, it relates to the geographic location of Ethiopia, which makes it a stabilising force in volatile East African region. Ethiopia, has a unique advantage, as it is the diplomatic hub of Africa - hosting the African Union (AU) and other international organizations. This adds weight to Ethiopia when negotiating with external powers.

Q: What are the general perceptions and attitudes toward this kind of relations? How do the political and business elites, interpret the benefits of determining concrete directions of investment in Africa?

FC: Both Ethiopian and Chinese governments see the relations as win-win. This comes at the backdrop of strong relations at the political party to party level. In the case of my research I conducted, I can confirm that the Chinese Communist Party has very strong relations with the then Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front. In fact, during my research, I found out that the corporate deals are informally negotiated at the party to party level before they are transferred to the government level for formalization. There seems to be a seamless connection between the ruling party and the government, and any decisions reached at the party level are by extension seamlessly binding on the government.

Q: How would you explain neo-colonialism by foreign players in Africa? What is it and what foreign (external) countries are referred to as neo-colonisers, in your view?

FC: Neocolonialism argument is present in Africa-China relations especially proposed so by scholars who come from a neo-Marxian epistemological grounding. Neocolonialism can be seen as a new form of domination, plunder and exploitation using clandestine and economic statecraft. Of course, there could be



some hints or pointers to suggest neocolonial tendencies, but I believe such claims should be levelled on case by case basis, and there has to be concrete evidence to suggest that way. That said, I think we have to be careful to scrutinize where such claims of neocolonialism are coming from, and potentially scrap beyond the surface to establish the motivations and interests for spreading or proposing such claims.

In my opinion, I believe there is no free lunch in the world, African countries should enter into partnerships based on their strategic interests and an understanding of what the partners can provide or deliver. Secondly, every African country should do a comprehensive evaluation of the structure and, the terms and conditions of their engagements with foreign powers. By so doing, this will eliminate the chances for the emergence of claims of neocolonialism. Instead of extending the blame to someone elsewhere, Africa needs to do its homework especially on the implementation and monitoring aspects of the deals. Africa has some of the best regulations and standards, but the problem lies in implementation and monitoring.

Q: Without doubt, Africa needs investment in infrastructure, agriculture and industry, and in many other sectors. Despite negative criticisms, what admirable roles is China playing here, we are talking about working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa?

FC: China is playing a huge role in infrastructure financing and development. For example, available evidence suggests that between 2000 and 2017, China provided about US\$143 billion worthy of loans to African governments. This has come quite handy especially given the shortage of finance to build the much-needed infrastructure targeting the SDGs.

In terms of trade, China became Africa's trading partner in 2009, and two-way trade volume reached its peak in 2014 at the value of US\$215 billion. Further, in 2017, it was estimated to have reached about US\$148 billion. Of course, trade transactions still remain unbalanced in favour of China. In addition, between 2000 and 2017, transport (US\$38.1 billion), power (US\$30.1 billion) and mining (US\$19.1 billion) ranked respectively as top three sectors that have received the lion's share of Chinese loans in Africa.

Q: What is your interpretation of debt-trap most often discussed in various platforms and leveled accusations on China? But, tangible infrastructure have been built with these loans in many African countries

FC: Interestingly, I don't believe in this debt-trap diplomacy. First of all, it does not make any business sense that the Chinese will design a project targeting 'failure' so

that they can control or pull the strings of a particular country. Second, most of the so-called assets that the Chinese are poised to be targeting to run are very complicated, messy and at times quite straining for the Chinese to dirty their hands. Therefore, it doesn't make any sense for me.

That said, I would not refer to it as 'trap' but as merely debt and the consequences associated with that. What that implies is that, for example, in the power sector, Africa requires on average more than 5 billion worth of investment per year for the next 10 years to address this challenge. Inevitably, part of the money will come from debt financing. For me, I am not really worried about 'productive debt' - defined as any money borrowed to invest in a project that has the ability to boost economic growth and at the same time, generate a revenue stream that will pay back the loan. I would be worried about countries that borrow to build, say, a presidential palace, a stadium, or to pay salaries. That type of borrowing for me is bad - its destructive and unproductive borrowing, and that must necessarily stop.

I have to disagree with the assertion that China is debt-trapping Africa. Of course, there are some African countries that are in debt distress situation, others have high risk of being in distress, but the contributions of Chinese finances towards that leave much to be desired. For example, countries such as Chad, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan are in high debt distress but the contributions of the Chinese towards that is very insignificant.

We also have some countries like Ethiopia, Cameroon and Ghana where the Chinese hold a substantial share of the debt, but those countries are not in debt distress, although they are high risk of debt distress. You will be surprised that according to World Bank, Africa's debt to China is less than 23%, compared to what Africa owes to private lenders (32%), and multilateral institutions such as World Bank, IMF etc. (35%). Sometimes, I see the hypocrisy of the West - with whom Africa has substantial debt, demonizing the Chinese on debt-trap diplomacy.

Q: In your expert view, what are the key challenges and problems facing Chinese investors in Africa, what are your suggestions how some aspects of the relations be improved between Africa and China?

FC: Of course, like any other relations, Africa-China engagements have their own challenges which need to be worked on to ensure there is mutual benefit and win-win situation. Some of the challenges relate implementation of regulations and standards by African governments when dealing with the Chinese. The issues lie not in regulations, but for me in the implementation and enforcement. This is the first aspect that needs to be addressed by African governments, especially in the infrastructure sector.

The second challenge relates to peace and security. Some of the African countries are in conflict situation or are, at least, under terrorist threat. This threatens some of the Chinese businesses and enterprises.

Third, the unbalanced nature of trade between China and Africa create room for emergence of neo-colonial arguments and such needs to be addressed immediately. Some of the challenges are minor, these include language barriers, differences in culture and work ethics. These can easily be resolved.

The fourth and final is about in some African countries lack policy certainty and stability which negatively impact on Chinese long-term business planning. Such countries include Zimbabwe where there has been of note currency uncertainty, policy uncertainty and even regulatory uncertainty. This impacts on long-term Chinese business interest.

CBL reports US\$222M deficit!

By J. Yanqui Zaza,
Contributing writer

How the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) did leapt from US \$222M deficit in 2018 to a US \$42 surplus in 2019? See page # 51 of the 2019 CBL Annual Report). Did officials generate the surplus by cutting social programs in 2019? Or did Officials siphon revenue in 2018, hence, the deficit? For whatever reason, CBL quickly removed the 2018 Annual Report from public view without explanation, and the revised 2018 Annual Report did not carry any information on government revenue.



What is the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL)? It is the custodian of all monies and gold deposits of the Republic of Liberia. It is responsible for managing the monetary policies of the country and provides collateral for the government and financial institutions. Its activities must be transparent, professional, and must avoid deception since businesses and third parties rely on its report to invest, plan, and

grow. It also prepares reports which cover the National Government's activities, including revenue, expenditure, deficit, surplus, debt, productivity, growth, interest rate, profitability of banks, Liberia's net international foreign exchange reserves, loan portfolios, etc.

While CBL is responsible to keep government revenue, Ministry of Finance Development and Planning (MDFP) and the Liberian Revenue Authority (LRA) play a

role in collecting the revenue. MDFP stated that revenue was low, while LRA stated that it collected more revenue than projected.

MDFP postponed salary payments for months and cut funding for hospital, clinics, education, etc. because it claimed that Liberia had no money. In fact, on many occasions, Finance Officials indirectly questioned LRA's claim that it collected more revenue.

The US \$42M surplus in 2019 prompted me to review

the CBL 2019 Annual Reports just in case it was removed from public view.

Reviewing the Annual Report will help me to find out if CBL repeated misinformation the government gave the public about the revenue amount. Well, unfortunately, even Wall Street chief executives sometimes use deception to achieve positive outcomes. Evidence suggests that Finance officials, trying to implement austerity measures, deliberately and deceptively, gave false information about financial matters.

Did CBL follow the government's line by reporting numbers that were not supported by the facts? As Liberians we should hope that CBL is not only a non-partisan entity, but it plays a critical role of linking the private economy to the public economy.

So, let us review CBL 2019 Annual Report, dated 1/27/2020.

Global Prices: At the beginning of the report CBL does not suggest that Liberia had US \$42M surplus. The Bank stated that, "In 2019, the Liberian economy experienced several challenges, partly emanating from global economic dynamics..."

However, what facts are there to support the assertion that Liberia's economic challenges emanated from global prices? The unit of Iron ore increased to \$92 in 2019 from \$69 in 2018; the ounce of gold began increasing from \$1,269 in December 2017 to \$1,390 in 2019. These were two of the three major commodities that Liberia exported in 2017, 2018, and 2019 as per page # 23 of the 2019 Central Bank of Liberia Annual Report.

Moreover, even if global prices of Liberia's major commodities had declined, the taxes are arranged by multinational corporations. So, what that means is that tax revenue emitted to the government does not fluctuate based on global prices.

Depreciation of the Liberian dollars: Again, did CBL stay above the game of deception? Let us visit the last sentence of paragraph # 2 on page # 6. CBL stated that "The Liberian dollar depreciated against the US dollar...induced by low foreign exchange inflows." Also, on page # 48, CBL also stated that "The depreciation of the Liberian dollar was primarily triggered by the high trade deficit."

What contributed to the depreciation of the Liberian dollar? Was it "...low foreign exchange inflows," or excess Liberian dollars on the market? Its

President George Weah publicly announced that the excess Liberian dollars was the primary reason for the depreciation. In fact, he authorized CBL to use US \$25M to buy back excess Liberian dollars. It seems that CBL wants to blame foreign exchange inflows, which has always being low, in an effort to save the government from shame.

Liquidity Squeeze: Once again, did CBL stay above the game of deception? Let us visit the last sentence of the last paragraph of page # 1. CBL stated that "The banking system was further constrained by Liberian dollar liquidity squeeze..."

Wait a minute, why complain about cash shortage when CBL reported US \$42M surplus? In addition, President Weah stated on January 22, 2020 that the government received US \$445M in revenue and received a loan proceed of US \$213M, which would have increased the cash position of the government. (See President Weah Third State of the Nation Speech).

Further, let us visit the CBL's Annual Report. CBL 2019 Annual Report, on page # 36, stated that "Currency outside the Banks" was L15B in 2017; L18B in 2018; and L20B at November 2019. So, contrary to the assertion that there was no money, the Total Money Supply, which included currency outside the bank, was L50.5B in 2017; L67B in 2018; and L76B in 2019.

Based on the discrepancies it seems clear that CBL on paper, a non-partisan organization, is in fact promoting a narrative that absolves the Liberian Government of any wrong doing. It is much easier to cut social programs when you can blame outside forces such as global commodities prices and low foreign exchange inflows. However, a closer review of the numbers suggests that the CBL is hiding the true cost of the cut in social programs. The true cost is the inhumane insistence that government surpluses are better than a fair Liberian economy.

www.indexmundi.com)
Iron Ore Web Site

(www. Bullionvault.com).
Gold Web Site

https://www.cbl.org.lr/doc/2019annualreport.pdf
Central Bank of Liberia 2019 Annual Report

(https://cbl.org.lr/doc/Annual_Report_2018_Feb_12_2019.pdf)
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(https://cbl.org.lr/doc/5thEditionLFS.pdf)
CBL Financial statistics 2019

(https://cbl.org.lr/doc/lfs_nov_dec_2018.pdf)
CBL Financial Statistics 2018

Gray boxes Dillon, Cooper

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Ruling party lawmaker Acarous Moses Gray is blue with opposition Senator Abraham Darius Dillon, whom he says is desperate to return to the senate in the October midterm senatorial election.

Speaking to reporters in his office at the Capitol Wednesday, February 26, Gray, who represents Montserrado County District #8, says Senator Dillon's approaches and consistent lies about happenings in the Senate is clear manifestation that the opposition Liberty Party senator is desperate beyond

normal thinking for the senatorial seat.

Dillon won the seat last July in a by-election, defeating the governing Coalition for Democratic Change in its stronghold, Montserrado County.

Reacting to Senators Dillon and Oscar Cooper of Margibi County criticism about the RIA road contract awarded to East International without ratification by the Liberian Legislature, Gray defends that for the fact plenary of the Liberian Senate mandated its leadership to act suggests that plenary is in the full know of the action taken.

He says due to the protracted period Senator

Dillon served as chief of office to former House Speaker Edwin Melvin Snowe and former Bong County Senator Jewel Howard Taylor has placed the senator to think low.

Turning to Senator Cooper, the ruling party lawmaker notes Cooper's argument on the road project is based on conflict of interest, disclosing that Senator Cooper's nephew Samuel B. Cooper, owns a construction firm, Westwood Construction Company, which had interest in the Roberts International Airport road project, but unfortunately, the contract was awarded to East International, something Gray claims is reason behind Senator Cooper's bitterness.

President George Manneh Weah awarded the road project to East International, a Lebanese-Indian group whose performance in the sector is greeted with less public trust, judging from previous contracts it had with the Sirleaf administration.

But the group is reportedly willing to pre-finance the project, valued millions of dollars.

However, Gray says it is unfortunate for Senator Cooper who is seeking reelection in October, to be fighting against the RIA road modernization project which falls within his county (Margibi). -Editing by Jonathan Browne



Rep. Gray



Sen. Dillon

Dele Alli: charged over coronavirus post



Tottenham midfielder Dele Alli has been charged with misconduct over his social media post regarding the coronavirus outbreak, the Football Association has announced.

Alli posted a video on Snapchat in relation to the deadly virus while also singling out an Asian man in an airport. The FA wrote to him seeking his observations and has now decided to charge him with misconduct.

An FA statement read:

“Dele Alli has been charged with misconduct for a breach of FA Rule E3 in relation to a social media post. It is alleged that the Tottenham Hotspur midfielder’s post breaches FA Rule E3(1) as it was insulting and/or improper and/or brought the game into disrepute.

“It is further alleged that the post constitutes an “Aggravated Breach”, which is defined in FA Rule E3(2), as it included a reference, whether express or implied, to race and/or colour and/or ethnic origin and/or

nationality. He has until Thursday 5 March 2020 to provide a response.”

The offending video was uploaded by Alli to Snapchat earlier this month. It showed him wearing a face mask in an airport departure lounge and had the title: “Corona whattt, please listen with volume.” The video then cut to an unsuspecting man of Asian appearance before panning to a bottle of antiseptic hand wash, underneath which appeared the caption: “This virus gunna have to be quicker than that to catch me.”

Alli deleted the video and posted an apology to the Chinese social media network Weibo. “It wasn’t funny and I realised that immediately and took it down,” Alli said. “I let myself down and the club. I don’t want you to have that impression of me because it wasn’t funny ... It isn’t something that should be joked about. I’m sending all my love and all my thoughts and prayers to everyone in China.”

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Man City ban appeal registered by Court of Arbitration for Sport

Manchester City’s appeal against their two-year ban from European club competition has been registered by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas).

The Premier League champions were also fined 30m euros (£25m) for “serious breaches” of Uefa’s financial regulations.

City chief executive Ferran Soriano has said the breaches are “simply not true”.

Cas says “it is not possible”

to say when the matter will be resolved. Cas arbitration procedures involve an exchange of written submissions between the parties while a panel of arbitrators is convened to hear the appeal.

The independent adjudicatory chamber of the Club Financial Control Body (CFCB) said it found City had broken the rules by “overstating its sponsorship revenue in its accounts and in the break-even information submitted to Uefa between 2012 and 2016”, adding



that the club “failed to cooperate in the investigation”.

At the time, City said they were “disappointed but not surprised” by the “prejudicial” decision and would appeal.

Uefa launched an investigation after German newspaper Der Spiegel published leaked documents in November 2018 alleging City had inflated the value of a sponsorship deal, misleading European football’s governing body.

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