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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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Continental News

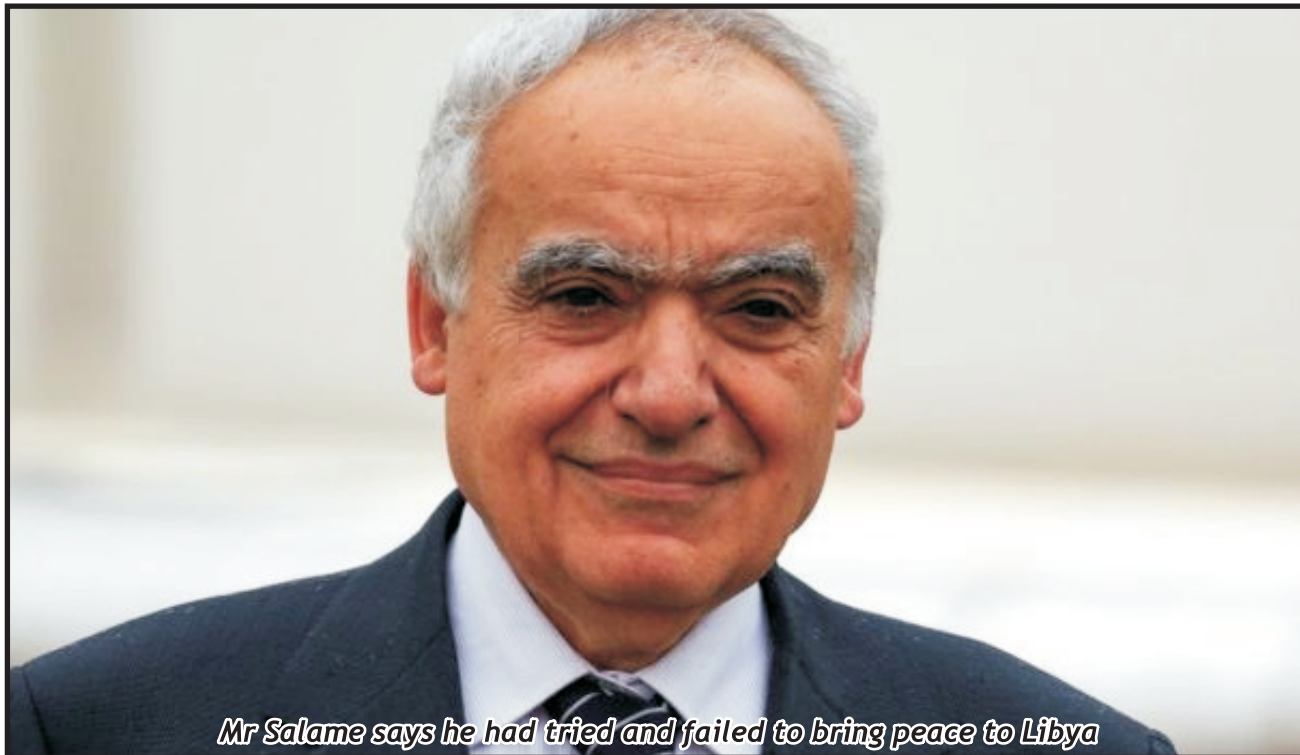
UN's Libya peace envoy quits on grounds of stress

The UN's special envoy for Libya has resigned saying his efforts to bring peace in the North African country was damaging his health.

Ghassan Salame tweeted that "my health no longer allows this rate of stress".

Talks between the UN-backed government based in the capital, Tripoli, and fighters loyal to renegade Gen Khalifa Haftar have floundered.

Libya has been torn by conflict since the 2011 uprising which ousted long-time strongman Muammar Gaddafi. Last week Mr Salame brought representatives of the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Haftar-led Libyan National Army (LNA), the two warring sides, to Geneva for peace talks, but the representatives suspended their involvement. Mr Salame tweeted on Monday that he had "sought for two and a half



Mr Salame says he had tried and failed to bring peace to Libya

years to unite Libyans, prevent foreign intervention, and preserve the unity of the country".

"My health no longer allows this rate of stress, and therefore I have asked the [UN] secretary general to relieve me

of my duties," he added.

The UN mission in Libya and the UN office in Geneva were not immediately available for comment, news agency Reuters reports. The conflict in the oil-rich nation has been complicated by the

involvement of foreign states.

Turkey passed a controversial law in January to

deploy troops to help GNA forces, in Tripoli. Qatar also backs the GNA, which is led by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj,

The capital has been under an 11-month-long siege by forces loyal to renegade Gen Haftar. According to the UN, the campaign has killed hundreds of people and displaced thousands more from their homes. The LNA, which controls much of eastern Libya, is backed by Egypt, Russia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

UN chief António Guterres, in an interview with the BBC last month, termed the conflict a "proxy war", adding that it was "unacceptable".

Last month, EU foreign ministers agreed to a new naval and air mission to prevent further weapons reaching Libya. BBC

Ghanaian died 'in plain sight' at UK detention centre

A mentally ill man died from dehydration, malnutrition and hypothermia "in plain sight" at an immigration centre, an inquest found.

Prince Kwabena Fosu's death at 31 was partly due to "gross failure" by agencies at the centre, the jury said.

Mr Fosu was left in an

isolation cell for six days without bedding while he suffered from a psychotic illness. The Home Office said the standard of care had been "unacceptable" and new safeguarding steps had been introduced.

Coroner Chinyere Inyama said that "almost unbelievably" Mr Fosu died "in plain sight" of many people at

Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre.

Warning: Contains images some people may find distressing

The jury at West London Coroner's Court found that procedures to protect vulnerable detainees at the centre were "grossly ineffective".

Agencies running the centre and its healthcare failed to recognise, monitor and respond to the worsening condition of someone who was unable to look after himself, they found.

Stripping the bedding and mattress from his cell without any lawful written authority was an indication of the "casual approach" of centre staff to Mr Fosu's welfare, the jury said in its conclusions.

Speaking after the inquest, prisons and probations ombudsman Sue McAllister said it was "inhuman and degrading" for Mr Fosu to have been "segregated, living naked in a room dirty with faeces, urine and uneaten food" with no justification or review of the isolation. BBC



Prince Fosu was found dead at 31 on the floor of an isolation cell

Kenyans to be fined \$50,000 for coronavirus rumours

Kenyans risk being fined \$50,000 (£39,000) or be jailed for two years for publishing or sharing fake news about outbreak of coronavirus.

The country has no confirmed case of the virus, although a high court judge last week temporarily suspended all direct flights from China after public fears over the virus.

Kenya's Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes law, criminalises sharing of false, misleading or fictitious information and stipulates a fine of 5m Kenyan shillings (\$50,000) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or both.

The country has been grappling with cases of false alerts being shared on social media.



Kenyan has not reported any confirmed case of the virus

The authorities say they have enhanced monitoring of social media and other digital platforms to check the spread of misinformation about coronavirus.

Government spokesman Cyrus Ogunu said detectives from the cybercrime unit are analysing content shared online for investigation, arrest and prosecution of those culpable.

There was a public uproar on Monday after a four-minute clip was circulated widely giving the false impression that the government had confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the country.

The ministry of health later said the leaked clip was from a simulation event held over the weekend. BBC

EDITORIAL

Avert another gasoline shortage

LIBERIA RISKS SLIPPING back to the recent nightmare of gasoline shortage that nearly brought the entire economy to its knees characterized by hike in prices and protests by commercial cyclists, including trekking by students, marketers and public workers.

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC) Marie-Urey Coleman told the Liberian Senate last week that current stock of gas in the country will last for 48 days, with the risk of a return of the recent gasoline crisis this nation experienced.

SHE HOWEVER DISCLOSED a vessel of 15,000 metric tons of gasoline is expected to arrive by 10th March.

MADAM COLEMAN ALSO told senators the LPRC lacks money to import its petroleum into Liberia, so it relies on private importers to bring in the commodity for the public.

SHE SAID, PRIOR to the recent petroleum crisis, she tried to obtain credit from commercial banks to import the product in order to be able to store reserve that would address crisis like the recent shortage that nearly paralyzed the economy.

THE LPRC HAS not brought in its own products for about 15-20 years, managing director Coleman disclosed, and stressed that by law, the entity should be the importer of petroleum products for the country other than leaving the business at the hands of private importers.

THIS IS WHERE we draw the attention of the senate. If there were laws on the book, why aren't they being implemented? Government should not perpetually treat the LPRC as a "glorified gas station" to borrow the word from the late former managing director, Harry Greaves.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT create public entities and abandon them by the wayside, because that's what the LPRC is truly is: a storage center for petroleum products brought in by private importers.

NOW IS TIME for our policymakers to rethink the issue and take actions on such an issue that is so critical for the smooth running of the economy.

THE LPRC MANAGEMENT, thru managing director Coleman, has identified some of the problems the entity faces, including lack of finances. How could government run such institution with great potentials to generate revenue and allow it to struggle; we don't understand.

NOW THAT THE senate has been thoroughly briefed, it should communicate to the executive with necessary recommendations to avoid another gas shortage or else, the authorities could be shooting themselves in the leg.

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COMMENTARY

By Kenneth Rogoff

That 1970s Feeling

Policymakers and too many economic commentators fail to grasp how the next global recession may be unlike the last two. In contrast to recessions driven mainly by a demand shortfall, the challenge posed by a supply-side-driven downturn is that it can result in sharp drops in production, generalized shortages, and rapidly rising prices.

CAMBRIDGE - It is too soon to predict the long-run arc of the coronavirus outbreak. But it is not too soon to recognize that the next global recession could be around the corner - and that it may look a lot different from those that began in 2001 and 2008.

For starters, the next recession is likely to emanate from China, and indeed may already be underway. China is a highly leveraged economy, it cannot afford a sustained pause today anymore than fast-growing 1980s Japan could. People, businesses, and municipalities need funds to pay back their out-size debts. Sharply adverse demographics, narrowing scope for technological catch-up, and a huge glut of housing from recurrent stimulus programs - not to mention an increasingly centralized decision-making process - already presage significantly slower growth for China in the next decade.

Moreover, unlike the two previous global recessions this century, the new coronavirus, COVID-19, implies a supply shock as well as a demand shock. Indeed, one has to go back to the oil-supply shocks of the mid-1970s to find one as large. Yes, fear of contagion will hit demand for airlines and global tourism, and precautionary savings will rise. But when tens of millions of people can't go to work (either because of a lockdown or out of fear), global value chains break down, borders are blocked, and world trade shrinks because countries distrust of one another's health statistics, the supply side suffers at least as much.

Affected countries will, and should, engage in massive deficit spending to shore up their health systems and prop up their economies. The point of saving for a rainy day is to spend when it rains, and preparing for pandemics, wars, climate crises, and other out-of-the-box events is precisely why open-ended deficit spending during booms is dangerous.

But policymakers and altogether too many economic commentators fail to grasp how the supply component may make the next global recession unlike the last two. In contrast to recessions driven mainly by a demand shortfall, the challenge posed by a supply-side-driven downturn is that it can result in sharp declines in production and widespread bottlenecks. In that case, generalized shortages - something that some countries have not seen since the gas lines of 1970s - could ultimately push inflation up, not down.

Admittedly, the initial conditions for containing generalized inflation today are extraordinarily favorable. But, given that four decades of globalization has almost certainly been the main factor underlying low inflation, a sustained retreat behind national borders, owing to a COVID-19 pandemic (or even lasting fear of pandemic), on top of

rising trade frictions, is a recipe for the return of upward price pressures. In this scenario, rising inflation could prop up interest rates and challenge both monetary and fiscal policymakers.

It is also noteworthy that the COVID-19 crisis is hitting the world economy when growth is already soft and many countries are wildly overleveraged. Global growth in 2019 was only 2.9%, not so far from the 2.5% level that has historically constituted a global recession. Italy's economy was barely starting to recover before the virus hit. Japan's was already tipping into recession after an ill-timed hike in the value-added tax, and Germany's has been teetering amidst political disarray. The United States is in the best shape, but what once seemed like a 15% chance of a recession starting before the presidential and congressional elections in November now seems much higher.

It might seem strange that the new coronavirus could cause so much economic damage even to countries that seemingly have the resources and technology to fight back. A key reason is that earlier generations were much poorer than today, so many more people had to risk going to work. Unlike today, radical economic pullbacks in response to epidemics that did not kill most people were not an option.

What has happened in Wuhan, China, the current outbreak's epicenter, is extreme but illustrative. The Chinese government has essentially locked down Hubei province, putting its 58 million people under martial law, with ordinary citizens unable to leave their houses except under very specific circumstances. At the same time, the government apparently has been able to deliver food and water to Hubei's citizens for roughly six weeks now, something a poor country could not imagine doing.

Elsewhere in China, a great many people in major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing have remained indoors most of the time in order to reduce their exposure. Governments in countries such as South Korea and Italy may not be taking the extreme measures that China has, but many people are staying home, implying a significant adverse impact on economic activity.

The odds of a global recession have risen dramatically, much more than conventional forecasts by investors and international institutions care to acknowledge. Policymakers need to recognize that, besides interest rate cuts and fiscal stimulus, the huge shock to global supply chains also needs to be addressed. The most immediate relief could come from the US sharply scaling back its trade-war tariffs, thereby calming markets, exhibiting statesmanship with China, and putting money in the pockets of US consumers. A global recession is a time for cooperation, not isolation.

O-PED

By Koichi Hamada

The Fiscal Fight Against COVID-19

Governments should rely on fiscal rather than monetary measures when responding to natural disasters or epidemics such as the new COVID-19 coronavirus. Above all, policymakers must act quickly, and - particularly in the case of Japan - not be swayed by misleading statements regarding the level of public debt.

TOKYO - As the new COVID-19 coronavirus continues to spread rapidly outside China, medical professionals and policymakers around the world are fighting to contain the outbreak. But what role can or should governments play in this situation - or, for that matter, when natural disasters strike?

The Chinese authorities already have loosened monetary policy in response to the outbreak, an understandable move in view of the virus's serious effect on key economic sectors, notably manufacturing and transport. But monetary measures are a roundabout way of coping with real disruptions such as epidemics or natural calamities. Fiscal policies, on the other hand, are more likely to have a direct impact on economic challenges.

Alongside the efforts of medical professionals, therefore, governments should introduce various initiatives and regulations to contain the COVID-19 epidemic - such as ensuring adequate medical supplies and providing airplanes to evacuate citizens from affected areas abroad.

Of course, these measures entail additional spending. Fiscal conservatives, who believe that governments should limit the size of budget deficits wherever possible and focus on paying down public debt, typically resist immediately financing such expenditures. When Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's cabinet announced a \$120 billion package to help the areas worst affected by last October's Typhoon Hagibis, for example, the plan encountered precisely this type of resistance from fiscal conservatives and the finance ministry.

But such objections miss the point. I remember an exam question in the linear-programming course I took as a student at the University of Tokyo more than a half-century ago: What is the optimal way to solve the transportation problem when a Japanese island is hit by a natural disaster such as an earthquake? We students thought of minimizing the cost or distance of the transport. But our professor, freshly returned from Harvard, said we should have focused instead on minimizing the time required to transport goods and services needed for emergency relief.

When natural disasters or epidemics strike, the desired goals must be achieved quickly. As long as the response is delayed, the economy, institutions, and everyday life in affected areas will remain paralyzed. Unless the damage is rapidly and properly addressed, its effects will lower the quality of life, and often prevent productive facilities from recovering. Both current and future generations will suffer from the destruction of social overhead capital caused by disasters and from insufficient economic recovery.

In the case of Japan, however, conventional economists and journalists seem to think in different ways. For example, a December 5, 2019, article in The New York Times by Motoko Rich provided a timely account of the Abe government's stimulus package. But its depiction of Japan's public debt was inaccurate, or at least misleading, both from a statistical point of view and in terms of current macroeconomic thinking.

For starters, when we evaluate the soundness of a firm's financial health, we look at its (real and nominal) assets and its liabilities. We do not judge a business's performance merely by its gross debt. But Rich's description of Japan as having "the biggest debt load in the developed world relative to the size of its economy" referred to gross government debt, and neglected the government's financial as well as real assets.

The International Monetary Fund's October 2018 Fiscal Monitor shows that although Japan's public wealth is slightly negative, its ratio of net debt to GDP is better than that of France and the United Kingdom, and similar to that of the United States. Thus, when we look at net rather than gross debt, Japan's fiscal position is much healthier than The New York Times and other media outlets often suggest. Perhaps Japanese economic journalists and foreign media, including those with correspondents in Japan, are too credulous toward the finance ministry, which supposedly wants higher taxes in the future.

Moreover, the need to run tight government budgets is no longer the received wisdom in macroeconomic policy. Economists since Paul Samuelson have pointed out that, when interest rates are low and an economy has excess savings, deficit financing of government expenditure can improve the welfare of both current and future generations. Today, not only radical advocates of Modern Monetary Theory hold this view; so do mainstream economists and policymakers such as Olivier Blanchard and former European Central Bank President Mario Draghi.

That is why I also disagree with Motoshige Itoh's article, "Economics of Anxieties," in The Yomiuri Shimbun on February 2. The article seems aimed at indirectly instilling fear on the part of readers, and eventually makes the groundless claim that the fiscal deficit is currently the biggest source of uncertainty in Japan.

With Typhoon Hagibis and now COVID-19, Japan has been confronted with two emergencies in the space of a few months. The government - like others elsewhere - must now act quickly and decisively, and not let conservatives' fiscal phantasms distract it from its task.

OPINION

By Richard N. Haass

How to Leave Afghanistan

After nearly two decades, the United States may at long last extricate itself from Afghanistan, after signing a peace accord with the Taliban. But will the Taliban abide by the agreement, or is US President Donald Trump's deal akin to the "peace with honor" by which America doomed South Vietnam a half-century ago?

NEW YORK - After nearly two decades, 2,400 soldiers killed, another 20,000 wounded, and as much as \$2 trillion spent, the United States is understandably eager to withdraw from Afghanistan. President Donald Trump wants to be able to claim in advance of the November 2020 election that he fulfilled his campaign promise to end the country's longest war, and his Democratic challengers share his desire to extricate the US from the conflict.

Toward that end, following a one-week period of relative calm, the US and the Taliban - the "students" whose Sunni fundamentalist political and military movement has been fighting for power or ruling Afghanistan for a quarter-century - signed an accord. One imagines it took as much time to settle on what to call the pact as on any of its provisions: it is the "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America."

As the accord's name suggests, the government of Afghanistan is not a party to it, although the agreement does call for a political dialogue between the government and the Taliban to start by March 10. The agenda for this intra-Afghan dialogue includes arranging for a permanent and comprehensive cease-fire as well as "the completion and agreement over the future political roadmap" of the country. No details about a roadmap are set forth.

The agreement mostly details two sets of commitments. The US has pledged to withdraw one-third of its approximately 13,000 troops in 135 days, and the remaining 8,600 before the end of April 2021. America's coalition partners would withdraw their troops by then as well. The US further agreed to withdraw all "private security contractors, trainers, [and] advisers" from the country and work toward removing sanctions on the Taliban and releasing Taliban prisoners.

For its part, the Taliban committed to doing all it can to ensure that terrorist organizations do not use Afghan territory to target the US or its allies. The Taliban also agreed not to cooperate with or support individuals associated with such groups, including Al Qaeda, which was based in Afghanistan when the Taliban were in power and used the country to train those responsible for the September 11, 2001, attacks on the US that killed nearly 3,000 people. The Taliban did not agree, however, to any limits on their military capabilities now or in the future. Nor did they agree to recognize the legitimacy of Afghanistan's current government.

The accord is ambitious (and then some), in the hope that political arrangements can be sorted out before the called-for withdrawal of American troops. With respect to elections, power sharing, a constitution, and the role of religion and the rights of women within Afghan society, the agreement is silent.

It is also worth noting that the Afghan government in recent days has raised questions about its preparedness to release 5,000 Taliban prisoners. More important, the relative calm already has been broken by renewed Taliban armed attacks. None of this bodes well for the future of the agreement.

But whatever happens from this point on, it is essential that the US sign a separate pact with Afghanistan's government. It is essential that that agreement specifies what criteria must be met and what conditions must exist before US troop withdrawals would proceed. And it is essential that the US promise to provide the Afghan government with long-term economic, diplomatic, intelligence, and military support - something unfortunately made more difficult by the commitment to the Taliban to withdraw all advisers from the country.

Such a side agreement would constitute a hedge against the all-too-real possibility that the Taliban's pledges are tactical, designed to bring about America's military withdrawal rather than peace or an end to terrorism. A commitment to the Afghan government would also reassure its leaders and citizens that they were not being abandoned like the Kurds in Syria. America's friends and allies everywhere would welcome such a commitment.

In an ideal world, the US would also require that the Taliban end their use of Pakistani territory as a military sanctuary. The problem with this and other sensible demands is that the US has done much to weaken its own leverage with the Taliban by its obvious desire to end its military presence in Afghanistan.

It is possible that calm in Afghanistan can be restored nonetheless, that intra-Afghan talks bear fruit, and that a cease-fire materializes. This would of course be welcome. But it is more likely that the US-Taliban agreement to bring peace to Afghanistan does nothing of the sort. In that case, the US and its coalition partners would be wise to fall back on a strategy that protects their core interests, above all ensuring that Afghanistan does not once again become a haven for terrorists planning and carrying out attacks against the West.

Such a strategy would require keeping several thousand troops in the country to continue to build and train the Afghan security forces and to conduct select counterterrorism missions. For some, this would be too expensive. But, given what is at stake, it would be a price worth paying. It would not end the "forever war" that has been Afghanistan; but nor, almost certainly, will the just-signed agreement.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

“RIA Road Expansion, A Good Project but the ACT of Illegality”

In 2015, the Ministry of Public under the administration of Min. W. Gyude Moore developed a road project to intervene in communities within and around the capital to construct communities roads using “rigid pavement (concrete)”. Having conducted an engineering assessment; the Ministry of Public Works developed a pilot project to showcase government's intent to improve conditions of communities roads with the objective of almost eliminating maintenance because of the longitivity of rigid pavement.

The Rigid Pavement-Pilot Project

The pilot project was executed through a national competitive bidding procurement process sanctioned by the Public Procurement & Concession Commission (PPCC) headed by Dorbor Jallah who is well known for his integrity during his tenure at the PPCC. The East International Company amongst other companies that submitted bids was selected as winner based on its completion of a project in the Gaye Town community, Old Road financed by the Monsterrado County development fund. Upon the completion of the procurement process;

the Ministries of Public Works, Finance & Development Planning and Justice as required by the procurement law of Liberia certified the company's contract award. The rigid pavement road pilot project was implemented in three (3) selected communities: PHP Community-Redemption Road, Old Road Community-Symthe Road and Thinkers' Village Community-Old Telecom Road.

The Rigid Pavement-75 Kilometers (Communities Roads and Bomi County) When the pilot project was being implemented; the Ministry of Public Works agreed that rigid pavement in communities would be the way go. Hence, a bigger project was developed to pave 51 kms of roads in and around Monrovia and 24.5k in Bomi County modeled on the basis based of pre-financing totaling a contract amount of US\$79,472,548.29. The ministry was cognizant that the Government of Liberia didn't have sufficient money to invest in such a large project considering the upfront investment cost.

However, based on the “risk free” pre-financing model meaning the company that wins the bid will take all the risks associated with sourcing funding to invest in the project; it was conceived. The project was designed that the Liberian Government would make payment to the contractor upon the completion of works as outlined in the project document. Considering the perimeters, the Ministry of Public Works transparently conducted an “International Bidding Process” after which only the East International Company submitted bid.

R. Lafayette Giddings

**Former Deputy Minister-Administration, MPW
Former Senior Program Office, President's Delivery Unit**

Based on size of the project; the Ministry informed the PPCC that it was inclined to relaunch the tendering process for which East International was very dissatisfied and threatened to complain the Ministry to the PPCC. However, East later declined because PPCC also felt the Ministry needed to encourage full participation in the tendering process of such a big project to guarantee “value for money” and ensure TRANSPARENCY and ACCOUNTABILITY.

The International Bidding Process was relaunched and three companies this time submitted bids (East International Company, Compagnie Sahelienne D'Enterprises, a Senegalese firm currently paving *Ganta-Sanniquelle-Yekepa* and ADI Contractors). After the evaluation of the financial and technical proposals submitted by the three companies, again East International won the bid sanctioned by the PPCC. East International was now responsible to source the funding without the Government of Liberia providing any form of guarantee. Several communities roads were listed in the project document; to name a few included: the Doe Community, Chugbor, Banjul, Chocolate City, Thinkers' Village Guest House, Neeklay's Town, Pipeline, Soul Clinic, etc. Let me emphasize that, the RIA Corridor was never included in the rigid pavement project.

Considering the benefit of the project; the Ministry of Public Works advised the Presidency that the proposed financing agreement should be ratified by the Legislature (*House Representative* and *Senate*) because the financing commitment as loan was over a 7 year period which would've committed the future government. The legislature in its wisdom, ratified the agreement which committed the incoming Executive Branch of Government to execute the agreement in line with the contract certified by ministries of Public Works, Finance & Development Planning, Justice and PPCC which oversaw the procurement and sanctioned the contract award.

The Robert International Airport (RIA) Road Corridor Inclusion, a Misteep

The Procurement Law acceptable provision for a “change order” or an amendment to the cost of a road contract affecting the amount can only consider a 10% adjustment of the contract value. Additionally, the adjustment can't consider a new scope of works like the RIA Road Corridor which is about 45 kms in length. The length of RIA Road Corridor is over 50% of the total length of original contract which didn't include RIA Road Corridor.

Beside, the RIA Road Corridor is an asphalt pavement which is sharply different from rigid pavement characteristics. Don't get me wrong; we did rehabilitate the existing RIA Corridor and designed a project future for expansion with a 3D Video that is being viewed on facebook. So, we do want to see this corridor expansion being implemented but should done within the confirm of the relevant laws.

The RIA Road Corridor Project Expansion can only be executed as a separate contract and not as an “addendum” to the existing East International contract. The Public Procurement Concession Commission and Public Financial Management Laws have no provision to legally support the Government of Liberia current action.



On the other hand, there is an argument that the legislature ratified the amendment to the agreement;

note, the legislature has no authority to award contract. What both houses did initially was to ratify the financing agreement and not contract award. The legislature has no authority whatsoever to amend any contract of such to include a new scope of works. To have RIA Road Corridor Project included in an existing contract most especially without any national or international bidding procurement process is “DEAD WRONG”. Even

if a transparent procurement process was done; this project must be implemented as a stand alone project with the requisite financial and technical competences established before awarded.

My Professional Advice

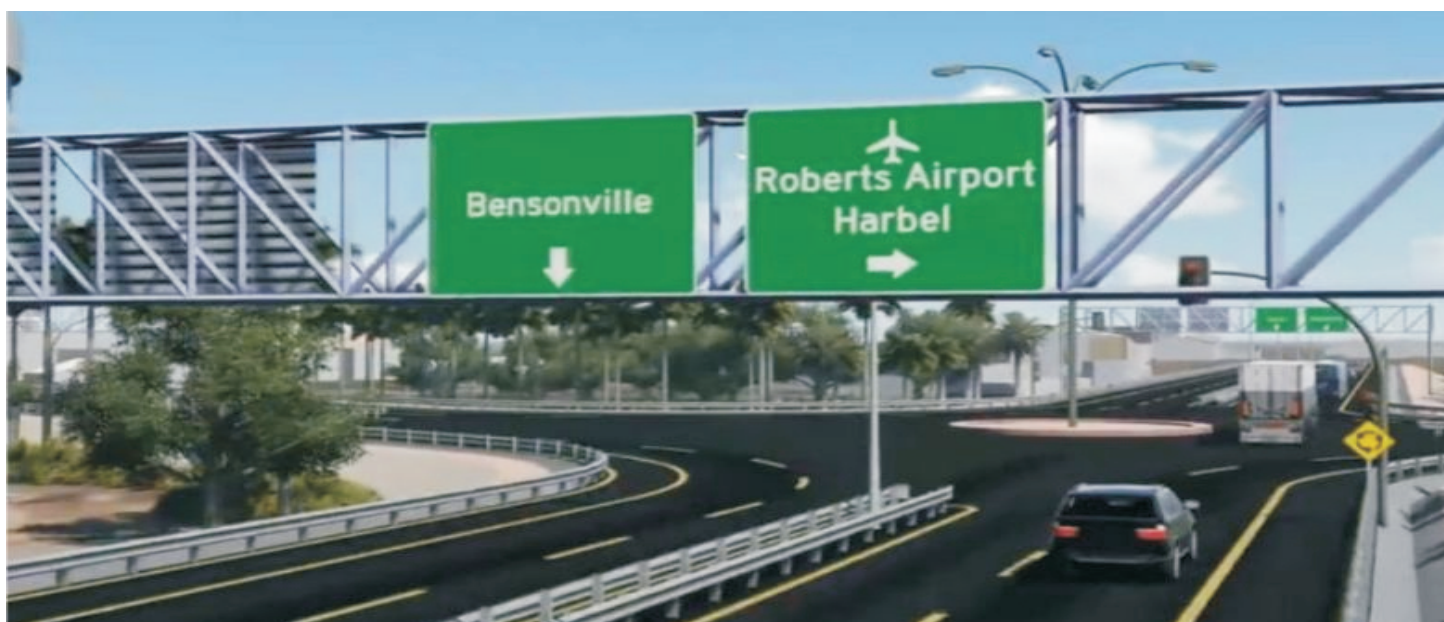
The Government of Liberia should avoid abrogating the Procurement and Public Financial Management Laws by not going ahead with this illegal process of contracting the RIA Road Corridor to East International; The Legislature shouldn't over step its authority by seeking to amend the scope of works of an existing financing agreement which will require only 10% adjustment in the current contract proposed by the Executive after a request for change order. In the case of RIA Road Corridor Project, the cost is far above 10% which doesn't satisfy this requirement.

The Legislature should be reminded that entering into contract on behalf of the Government of Liberia is supervised by the PPCC through a sector ministry or agency within the Executive Branch of Government and might be sent for ratification to the Legislature if so required;

To implement the RIA Road Project, the Government of Liberia should launch an International Bidding Procurement Process seeking companies with the capacity to pre-finance the expansion of the corridor transferring all the risks associated with securing the funding to the firms;

As argued by East International that she has secured funding for RIA Road Expansion Project; whenever the request for bid is launched base on the pre-financing model, East International will likely be a suitable firm amongst others if she presents a Joint-venture bid with a company that has the requisite technical capacity to implement the project and if no other firm has both the technical and financial capacity during bid evaluation;

While it is good to invest in the development of our national road network; I am convicted that implementing the RIA Project within the confines of the existing laws will strengthen the systems relevant institutions and promote TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY which will minimize the level of CORRUPTION that continues to hurt our country;



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Nat'l budget suffers US\$20m shortfall

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The Government of Liberia has been hit by a budget shortfall of US\$20 Million in an already cash-stricken economy.

Already, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning along with the technical team of the

and Development Planning Ministry, including the House of Representatives and the Senate Ways, Means, Finance and Budget Committees are now working out technical details in re-shifting national priorities to adjust the current realities facing the country.

number of road contracts were being implemented without corresponding budgetary allocations. The authorities are initiating external audits of the financial and technical aspects of these projects, and are working with relevant stakeholders to ensure commitments outside the budget do not occur again", the source confided in this paper.

Though no reason yet provided for the shortfall, it is suspected that government has not generated the needed revenue projected from the revenue generating agencies here.

The source further narrated that the Liberia Revenue Authorities (LRA) and other revenue generating agencies are working tirelessly to ensure the US\$530 projected in the current national budget is achieved.

"The forecasting of the budget means areas that were earlier captured with much financial attention will now be reduced to fit the current realities and that the hit of about US\$20 million is big blow to the already struggling economy of a country that's facing serious international aid drought," the source said

Addressing significant shortcomings that have emerged in the budget process and expenditure controls, the source said, will be critical in coming months.

"In recent weeks, it has become clear that a significant



Liberian Legislature through the Ways, Means, Finance and Budget Committees of both houses has commenced forecasting of the current 2019/20 national budget due to the shortfall.

Sources from the Finance

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

Youth Forum on clean oceans and healthy environment



The Think Blue, Live Green awareness campaign for sustainable and clean communities proudly supported by the Embassy of Sweden Monrovia and organized by Miss Boss Lady (MBL) International kicked off here with a one-day youth forum in Marshall City, Margibi County.

The event brought together more than 150 students and youth from the City of Marshall, and cadets from the Liberia Maritime Training Institute to talk about the significance of waters, it's natural and financial resources and the importance of keeping communities clean and healthy, with the rallying theme, "think blue, and live

green!" Mr. Donald T. Gwaikolo, a professor from the Liberia Maritime Training Institute (LMTI), informed the students about the relevance of the different aspects of the "Think Blue, Live Green" including thinking blue: blue economy, blue ocean and blue skies; green environment and clean

MCSS teachers go to elections

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Independent Elections Commission (IEC) of the Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS) Teachers Association has announced 13 March as official date for the association's general elections across Montserrado County.

A bulletin released by the commission, details that polls are divided into three zones, including the William V. S. Tubman High campus, G. W. Gibson High campus, and D. Twe High campus, respectively.

According to the bulletin signed by Chairman J.

Paul B. Nardoh and Emmanuel Saye Quoi; while for the Secretary-General post are: Emmanuel M. Dickson, Kolubah Joe Roberts, and Mentor AbedinegoZlehn.

Candidates for the position of Chaplain include Kumon Cletus Swen and Sayon Philip Joe; Treasure post, Madam Ruth Y. Evans, John N. Flomo and Madam Jerroline G. Flomo.

Contestants for Vice President for Administration post, include, John T. Argbason and Madam Emily Kerkula, while candidate for the Assistant Secretary-General



YourvorKollie and Secretary-General MomoGlehNasom, several aspirants have been qualified by the IEC to contest for various positions within the association.

Those contesting for the presidency include Andrew S. Fayiah, Johnny D. Hopkins, and Augustine N. Nyormui, while those contesting to become Vice President for Operations are: Rufus A. Bryant, Dallasui James Farnaga and David E. G. Scott.

The bulletin also names those vying for the parliamentary positions as

post is Nowomu D. Sondah, respectively.

The bulletin disclosed that SeingbehYarvelee, Morris G. Perry, and Samuel D. Russell, Jr. are vying for the Financial Secretary-General position, respectively.

In a related development, campaign activity is presently ongoing across the three electoral zones with candidates coming face-to-face with electorate of the MCSSTA, as to what they are bringing to the leadership of the association. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

marine ecosystem that Liberia is endowed with.

He said despite Liberia being blessed with long Coastline unlike its neighbors, little is being done to tap on the economic advantages the country's marine resources hold. "This is because we are not "thinking blue." Mr. Gwaikolo indicated that the youth workshop will enlighten young people to begin taking actions that would help them sustainably take care of marine resources and their environment, given the fact that Liberia is naturally gifted. "The long Coastline Liberia has is a reservoir of

wealth, health and money if utilized."

According to him, there are many resources under the ocean that could be mined for the greater good of the country but Liberians are either not interested or aware.

The team leader of MBL Group, Marcelle G. Yhapsaid the intent of the Think Blue, Live Green initiative is to rally communities on the importance of keeping their surroundings clean since most of the trash is wasted into the ocean; hence causing pollution that result to

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Road safety borders on health, development

The Government of Liberia has described road safety as an urgent health, development matter, noting that number of deaths on the world's roads remains unacceptably high, with an estimated 1.35 million people killed each year.

Besides, it noted that as many as 50 million people are injured yearly, while road traffic crashes are the eighth leading cause of death globally for people of all ages, and the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29 years, respectively. "Road traffic deaths and injuries shatter lives and throw families into poverty."

technical team on road safety in readiness to start work.

The government delegation, including the Road Safety Secretariat, the Safety Division of the Liberia National Police and the Germany International Service (GIZ) returned here with ideas, experiences and shared knowledge on road safety issues.

A statement issued in Monrovia Monday says the next step is implementation of the Road Safety Action Plan - increasing road safety awareness and improving law enforcement on roads in the country.

The Stockholm Declaration is the outcome paper of the conference, which connects

"In an increasingly polarized world, the country needs more collaboration. Road safety is a shared responsibility, crossing borders just as roads do. 50% reduction of deaths and injuries on roads in the next decade - that is the global goal."

The forum focuses on a lot that must happen in low- and middle-income countries where currently, 90 percent of all road fatalities occur. Liberia as well is heavily burdened with the effects of traffic deaths and injuries on roads - but that can be changed.

Conference outcome encourages drivers to concentrate on key aspects to make roads safer in the country, providing road-worthy vehicles including check lights, tires and brakes regularly, proper road user behavior such as wearing a helmet or seatbelt, proper road maintenance and law enforcement, among others.

"We know that the majority of deaths and injuries in traffic are preventable - so let's prevent them, we are all called to action," the statement concludes.

The 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety "Achieving Global Goals 2030" take place in February 2020 in Stockholm, Sweden.

Hosted by the Government of Sweden and co-hosted by World Health Organization, the Ministerial Conference is an opportunity for delegates to share successes and lessons from implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, chart future strategic directions for global road safety, and define ways to accelerate action on proven strategies. The Ministerial Conference also provides an opportunity to link road safety to other sustainability challenges.

road safety to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was drafted with input of academic experts as well as multiple road safety stakeholders.

The statement gives a global commitment to halving traffic fatalities worldwide within the next decade. The conference emphasized that road safety can no longer be a separate process but must become a central part integrated into other political goals and processes.



Government through its agencies, including the Ministry of Transport and the Public Safety Road Division of the Liberia National Police is to shortly implement road safety road action plans.

The government recently attended the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Sweden.

The Liberian delegation to the conference was headed by Transport Minister Samuel Wulue. Minister Wulue asserts that the new studies have put the government

Nat'l budget suffers

Cont'd from page 6

via mobile phone.

With the shortfall, government with full understanding and cooperation from the Liberian Legislature will revise the 2019/20 national budget focus points and redirect some to areas that may consume less money, but vital priority areas, including salaries and benefits will be retained.

Both authorities from the Finance and Development Planning Ministry and the Liberian Legislature seem unwilling now to comment on

the speculation. But within matter of days the government is expected to introduce the forecasting process to the House of Representatives.

This is the biggest shortfall the Weah administration is experiencing. Last budget year, the government experienced a shortfall of US\$8.2 million, after failure to collect US\$31 million projected for the National Road Fund Fee to support the 2018/2019 Fiscal Budget. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

Youth Forum on

Cont'd from page 6

adverse effects on marine ecosystem and the very communities that created them.

"We want to make sure that Liberia has clean communities especially along the coast. A lot of our resources come from the water. We have fish and port facilities that depend on the water, we depend on water every day, so we have to think about how we are affecting our waters" she stated.

She MBL, with support from the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia is going to various communities across selected coastal areas to educate residents, students and young people about the need to keep their beaches and communities clean.

She disclosed that the team will go to Grand Cape Mount and Grand Bassa Counties to conduct similar forums and beach clean-ups as

part of Think Blue, Live Green awareness exercise. Marshall City, she noted, is privileged to be the first place to benefit from the initiative that would go a long way in helping young people to be aware of the danger that pollution poses to the waters around them and the environment.

At the end of the daylong event, the Special Assistant to the Mayor of Marshall, McArthur Williams thanked MBL Group for the initiative and Swedish Embassy in Monrovia for the support that provided the young people of the coastal city the opportunity to acquire new knowledge about the management of marine ecosystem and the environment.

Two large trash and recycle bins were donated to be used by the Marshall City Hall and to LMTI to store trash for proper disposal.

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Cont'd from back page

UL president assures

faculties would be absent from class and result to students' protest.

To get resources in support of the Administration's vision, Dr. Nelson reveals that the University is working very hard to pick up four investment opportunities for 2020 which include investment in the establishment of what will be called Lux Water (mineral

water business), Lux Filling Station, Lux Printing Press and Lux Insurance.

According to him, establishing Lux Filling Station will cut down the University's spending fueling vehicles and boost revenue generation, while the University's Insurance Company, when set up, will pick up insurance matters at UL, among others.

Dr. Nelson expresses

gratitude and appreciation to the Dean, the Faculties and Students at Straz - Sinje for the sacrifices they are making as a family, saying the College will not be forgotten in the University's investment plans, as there are numerous investment potentials at the College.

For his part, the Dean of the David A. Straz - Sinje College Dr. John S. Sellu

extends appreciation to Dr. Nelson for the visit, pledging the college's continuous commitment to work with the University Administration to achieve its dream.

Earlier presenting a petition to Dr. Nelson, Mr. Jerry S. Sirtor, Jr., indicated that the David A. Straz - Sinje College has numerous investment potentials that can help the University achieves its dreams

for investment, including farming, and other agriculture activities.

He also stressed the need to recruit female faculty members at Sinje, as females are lacking.

Presenting a petition on behalf of the students, Mr. A. Magnus Kamara, a student a Sinje, reaffirm the commitment of the students there to work with the

Français

Le FMI et la Banque mondiale sont prêts à aider à combattre le coronavirus

Le Fonds monétaire international (FMI) et la Banque mondiale ont annoncé lundi leur disponibilité à contribuer à la lutte contre le coronavirus mortel.

Le Coronavirus a tué plus de 3000 personnes, la grande majorité en Chine continentale avec maintenant plus de 88 000

cas dans le monde, avec des infections sur tous les continents sauf l'Antarctique.

Dans une déclaration conjointe publiée lundi 2 mars, le FMI et le groupe de la Banque mondiale se sont déclarés prêts à aider les pays membres à faire face à la tragédie humaine et au défi économique posés par le virus COVID-19.

« Nous collaborons activement avec les institutions internationales et les autorités nationales, en accordant une attention particulière aux pays pauvres où les systèmes de santé sont les plus faibles et les personnes les plus vulnérables.

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Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

Côte d'Ivoire Pres. Alassane Ouattara

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Antoinette Saye

Le représentant de l'UNICEF rend visite au ministre des Affaires étrangères

Le ministre libérien des Affaires étrangères, Gbehzohngar Milton Findlay, a reçu lundi en audience la représentante de l'UNICEF au Libéria, Laila O. Gad qui lui a rendu une visite de courtoisie au ministère des Affaires étrangères, sur la colline du Capitole.

Selon un communiqué du ministère des Affaires étrangères, les deux responsables se sont rencontrés le 2 mars 2020 au

4ème étage du ministère.

Au cours de leur entretien, la Représentante de l'UNICEF au Libéria a exprimé sa gratitude au Gouvernement libérien pour l'accueil chaleureux et a révélé les efforts continus de son organisation pour résoudre les problèmes auxquels sont confrontés les jeunes et les enfants au Libéria.

Selon Mme Gad, l'UNICEF a entre autres lancé une initiative qui vise à augmenter

le taux de scolarisation des enfants et à augmenter considérablement le nombre d'enseignants dans le pays.

Elle a déclaré que l'UNICEF est en train d'élaborer une proposition de programme solide sur l'autonomisation et l'engagement des jeunes, en particulier en ciblant les jeunes défavorisés au Libéria.

« L'UNICEF espère également enregistrer tous les nouveau-nés au Libéria d'ici 2024. C'est-à-dire les données de chaque enfant né au Libéria seront enregistrées dans des archives », a révélé l'Envoyé des Nations Unies.

Mme Gad a en outre révélé que l'UNICEF travaillait en partenariat avec le Ministère de l'égalité des sexes et de la protection sociale pour lutter contre la violence sexiste et d'autres problèmes liés au genre. En réponse, le Ministre libérien des affaires étrangères, Gbehzohngar Milton Findlay, a souhaité la bienvenue au Représentant de l'UNICEF et a exprimé l'espoir que les objectifs et les aspirations du Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance seraient atteints.



Droits des Femmes : Des Africaines se rendent à l'ONU pour plaider leur cause

Une forte délégation des femmes, représentant plus de quatre pays africains, se rendra à New-York, la semaine prochaine, pour faire entendre la voix de ce continent, au vingt-cinquième anniversaire de la quatrième conférence mondiale de Pékin en Chine, sur les femmes. Elle prendra également part à la session de la commission de la condition de la femme, au siège des Nations-unies. Deux rendez-vous importants en ce moment où l'Afrique est traversée de toutes parts, par des guerres et crimes odieux, dont des femmes et des enfants sont des principales victimes.

Les femmes, au plan mondial, célèbreront cette année, le vingt-cinquième anniversaire de la quatrième conférence mondiale sur les femmes, avec l'adoption de la déclaration et du programme d'action de Beijing, du 9 au 20 mars 2020, à New York. Ce sera en présence des femmes de l'ONG africaine : « Femmes Actives pour les ODD et l'Emergence » - FAODE. La délégation africaine, que conduira Madame Ina KOITA, promotrice de l'ONG malienne « Inter Action Globale » et point focal FAODE au Mali, sera forte d'une trentaine de femmes, composée de 20 Maliennes, 2 Camerounaises, 3 Ivoiriennes et 5 Françaises d'origine africaine. Au siège des Nations Unies, les Africaines participeront également à la soixante-quatrième session de la Commission de la condition de la femme.

RDV ET RENCONTRES IMPORTANTES

La « Quatrième conférence mondiale sur les femmes : Lutte pour l'Égalité, le Développement et la Paix », dont la 25ème édition sera ainsi célébrée la semaine prochaine, est née sous l'égide de l'ONU, lors des assises des femmes à Pékin en Chine du 4 au 15 septembre 1995, en présence de 189 gouvernements, plus de 5000 représentants et 2100 Organisations non gouvernementales (ONG). A l'occasion Hillary Clinton y avait prononcé un discours historique : « Women's Rights Are Human Rights », qui est devenu depuis lors, le slogan des mouvements féministes dans le monde.

Les thèmes principaux généralement abordés tous les ans, pour cette conférence, sont : la promotion et l'autonomisation des femmes en matière de droits humains, les femmes et la pauvreté, les femmes et leur pouvoir décisionnel, la petite fille, les violences faites aux femmes et

d'autres domaines de préoccupation. Deux documents sont issus de cette conférence : la Déclaration et le Programme d'Action de Pékin.

La délégation des femmes venues d'Afrique sera également l'hôte de la soixante-quatrième session de la Commission de la condition de la femme (CSW) qui aura lieu au siège des Nations Unies à New York, du 9 au 20 mars 2020. La CSW est le principal organe intergouvernemental au plan mondial dédié exclusivement à la promotion de l'égalité des sexes et de l'autonomisation des femmes. C'est une commission fonctionnelle du Conseil économique et social des Nations Unies, créée par une résolution du Conseil, le 21 juin 1946.

Queen Mother de Harlem, Dr. DeloisBlakely, ambassadrice de bonne volonté pour l'Afrique à l'ONU

En marge de ces deux événements, la délégation des femmes africaines qui se rend à l'ONU, aura une rencontre et une séance de travail importante, avec la Queen Mother de Harlem, Dr. DeloisBlakely. Cette dernière avait été nommée en 2009, Ambassadrice de bonne volonté pour l'Afrique, auprès des Nations Unies. Elle est chargée des questions relatives aux droits des femmes, des enfants et de la diaspora au siège de l'ONU à New York. La réputation de la « Reine-mère DeloisBlakely », est légendaire. Religieuse américaine née à Fort Lauderdale, en Floride, elle est également écrivain et activiste. Elle s'est faite défenseuse des aspirations des femmes, des jeunes, de l'éducation, du développement économique et social et des relations communautaires.

MINITIEUSE PREPARATION

Les FAODE lors du de la rencontre préparatoire à Aulnay-sous-Bois

La cheville ouvrière de la préparation de la participation africaine à ces deux rendez-vous, c'est Mme Abaa Rosa HANSELER, présidente-fondatrice des FAODE et du Réseau Africain pour un Monde Équitable (AFNEW), basé à Genève en Suisse, est convaincue que : « L'année 2020 est une année substantielle pour la réalisation accélérée de l'égalité des sexes et l'autonomisation de toutes les femmes et les filles dans le monde ». Un forum a été organisé, il y a quelques semaines à cet effet, à Aulnay-sous-Bois.

Français

Le FMI et la Banque

Nous utiliserons nos instruments disponibles dans toute la mesure du possible, y compris le financement d'urgence, les conseils politiques et l'assistance technique. En particulier, nous disposons de mécanismes de financement rapide qui, collectivement, peuvent aider les pays à répondre à un large éventail de besoins.

Le renforcement des systèmes nationaux de surveillance de la santé et de riposte est essentiel pour contenir la propagation de cette épidémie et de toute épidémie future. La coopération internationale est essentielle pour faire face à l'impact sanitaire et économique du virus COVID-19.

Le FMI et le Groupe de la Banque mondiale sont pleinement déterminés à fournir le soutien que les habitants de nos pays membres attendent de nous », a dit le communiqué.

Comment le FMI peut aider les pays à faire face à l'impact économique du coronavirus

Le Fonds monétaire international est prêt à fournir une assistance aux pays membres confrontés à des besoins de financement immédiats résultant de catastrophes de santé publique.

Une crise sanitaire mondiale, telle que le coronavirus, peut inévitablement avoir un impact économique négatif, et cela fait partie du mandat du FMI d'aider les pays par le biais de conseils politiques et de prêts.

L'institution travaille en étroite collaboration avec ses partenaires au développement - Banque mondiale, Organisation mondiale de la santé et Banque asiatique de développement - et d'autres responsables de la santé pour fournir en temps opportun des conseils stratégiques, une assistance technique et un soutien financier.

Le FMI a les facilités et instruments suivants dans sa boîte à outils pour aider les pays à répondre à l'impact économique du coronavirus.

Financement d'urgence. La Facilité de crédit rapide (RCF) et l'Instrument de financement rapide (RFI) fournissent une aide financière d'urgence aux pays membres sans avoir besoin d'avoir un programme complet en place.

Ces prêts peuvent être

décaissés très rapidement pour aider les pays membres à mettre en œuvre des politiques pour faire face aux urgences telles que le coronavirus.

En 2016, le FMI a accordé un prêt d'urgence à l'Équateur après un des tremblements de terre les plus violents depuis des décennies. Augmenter les programmes de prêt existants. Le FMI peut modifier au besoin les programmes existants en faveur des pays pour répondre aux nouveaux besoins urgents découlant du coronavirus.

Le FMI a été la première institution financière internationale à fournir rapidement un financement supplémentaire à la Guinée, au Libéria et à la Sierra Leone en 2014 pour lutter contre l'épidémie d'Ebola. La réponse du FMI a aidé ces pays à faire de la place dans leurs budgets pour les dépenses de santé essentielles et a servi de catalyseur pour les donateurs, dont l'assistance était largement destinée aux dépenses de santé.

Subventions pour l'allègement de la dette.

Le programme du FMI intitulé Catastrophe Confinement and Relief Trust lui permet d'accorder des subventions pour l'allègement de la dette aux pays les plus pauvres et les plus vulnérables qui ont des obligations envers le FMI pour aider à faire face aux catastrophes, y compris les catastrophes de santé publique.

Cet instrument a été utilisé pour soutenir la Guinée, le Libéria et la Sierra Leone pendant l'épidémie d'Ebola de 2014. Nouvelle entente de financement.

Le FMI peut également fournir un soutien par le biais d'un nouvel accord de financement dans le cadre de ses mécanismes existants tels que les accords de confirmation, bien que certains des outils énumérés ci-dessus soient généralement préférables, notamment parce qu'ils peuvent être décaissés rapidement pour répondre au besoin financier urgent.

Le FMI continuera de soutenir les pays vulnérables grâce au renforcement des capacités. Compte tenu de la nécessité de réorienter rapidement les ressources publiques, le FMI restera étroitement engagé avec les pays membres et les partenaires au développement concernés, travaillant selon les besoins pour redéfinir les priorités des activités de renforcement des capacités.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Kenneth Rogoff

Comme une ambiance des années 1970

CAMBRIDGE - Il est encore trop tôt pour prédire l'évolution à long terme de l'épidémie de coronavirus. Ce qu'il est en revanche possible d'annoncer, c'est la possibilité toute proche d'une nouvelle récession mondiale, qui pourrait être très différente de celles apparues en 2001 et 2008.

Pour commencer, il faut s'attendre à ce que la prochaine récession émane de Chine. Elle pourrait d'ailleurs avoir déjà débuté. La Chine est une économie hautement endettée, qui ne peut se permettre d'être interrompue aujourd'hui, comme ne pouvait se le permettre un Japon à croissance rapide dans les années 1980. Individus, entreprises et municipalités ont besoin de fonds pour rembourser leurs dettes massives. Démographie nettement défavorable, rétrécissement des perspectives de rattrapage technologique, et surabondance des logements liée à des programmes de relance récurrents - sans parler d'un processus décisionnel de plus en plus centralisé - présagent d'ores et déjà d'une croissance significativement moindre en Chine au cours de la prochaine décennie.

Par ailleurs, absent des deux précédentes récessions mondiales de ce siècle, le nouveau coronavirus, le COVID-19, entraîne un choc de l'offre et de la demande. Il faut remonter aux chocs de l'offre pétrolière du milieu des années 1970 pour observer un impact aussi conséquent. Bien entendu, la peur de la contagion impactera la demande relative aux compagnies aériennes, au tourisme international, et l'épargne de précaution augmentera. Mais lorsque plusieurs dizaines de millions de personnes ne pourront se rendre à leur travail (par crainte ou en raison des confinements), que les chaînes de valeur planétaires se briseront, et que le commerce mondial diminuera en raison de la méfiance des pays autour des statistiques sanitaires des autres, la souffrance sera au moins aussi importante du côté de l'offre.

Les pays impactés creuseront à juste titre d'importants déficits liés aux dépenses visant à consolider leur système de santé ainsi qu'à soutenir leur économie. Si les pays épargnent pour les jours difficiles, c'est pour dépenser lorsque les difficultés se présentent, et la préparation aux pandémies, aux guerres, aux crises climatiques et autres événements imprévus démontre précisément pourquoi les déficits budgétaires illimités sont dangereux en périodes favorables.

Or, trop de dirigeants politiques et commentateurs économiques échouent à comprendre en quoi la composante offre pourrait rendre la prochaine récession différente des deux précédentes. À la différence de récessions principalement engendrées par une pénurie de demande, un ralentissement du côté de l'offre peut entraîner d'importantes baisses de production, ainsi que des goulots d'étranglement à grande échelle. Dans ce cas, les pénuries généralisées - phénomène que certains pays n'ont pas connu depuis les files d'attente aux stations essence dans les années 1970 - sont en fin de compte susceptibles de pousser l'inflation à la hausse, pas à la baisse.

Certes, les conditions initiales d'une maîtrise de l'inflation généralisée sont aujourd'hui extrêmement favorables. Pour autant, quatre décennies de mondialisation ayant certainement constitué le principal facteur d'une inflation faible, un repli prolongé derrière les frontières nationales, lié à une pandémie de COVID-19 (voire à la peur durable d'une pandémie), en parallèle de frictions commerciales croissantes, constitue la recette

parfaite d'un retour à des pressions haussières sur les prix. Dans un tel scénario, l'augmentation de l'inflation pourrait pousser à la hausse les taux d'intérêt, et mettre en difficulté les décideurs monétaires et budgétaires.

Il faut également souligner que la crise du COVID-19 frappe l'économie mondiale alors même que la croissance est déjà faible, et que de nombreux États sont lourdement surendettés. La croissance mondiale en 2019 a atteint seulement 2,9 %, peu supérieure aux 2,5 % qui constituent historiquement le signe d'une récession mondiale. L'économie de l'Italie commençait difficilement à se rétablir lorsque le virus est apparu. Le Japon s'orientait déjà vers la récession après une hausse inopportune de sa taxe sur la valeur ajoutée, tandis que l'Allemagne chancelait sur fond de désarroi politique. Ce sont les États-Unis qui semblent dans la meilleure forme, mais ce qui apparaissait hier comme un risque de 15 % de voire une récession frapper avant les élections présidentielles et du Congrès en novembre semble aujourd'hui beaucoup plus élevé.

Il peut apparaître surprenant que le nouveau coronavirus soit susceptible de provoquer autant de dégâts économiques, au sein même d'États à priori dotés des ressources et technologies suffisantes pour faire face. Parmi les principales explications à cela, les générations précédentes étaient beaucoup moins aisées que la génération actuelle, et par conséquent beaucoup plus d'individus n'avaient d'autre choix que de prendre le risque d'aller travailler. Hier, contrairement à aujourd'hui, un retrait économique radical en réponse à une épidémie relativement peu mortelle n'était pas une option.

Ce qu'il s'est produit à Wuhan, épice de l'actuelle épidémie en Chine, est aussi extrême que révélateur. Le gouvernement chinois a pour l'essentiel confiné la province du Hubei, plaçant 58 millions d'habitants sous le coup de la loi martiale, et empêchant ainsi les citoyens ordinaires de quitter leur domicile, sauf circonstances très spécifiques. Dans le même temps, le gouvernement semble en capacité d'alimenter les citoyens du Hubei en eau et nourriture depuis environ six semaines, ce qu'un pays pauvre ne pourrait imaginer pouvoir faire.

Ailleurs en Chine, de nombreux habitants de grandes villes telles que Shanghai et Pékin sortent très peu de leur domicile, afin d'éviter de s'exposer. Les gouvernements de pays comme la Corée du Sud et l'Italie ont beau ne pas appliquer les mesures extrêmes imposées en Chine, de nombreux habitants restent également chez eux, ce qui est synonyme d'impact négatif important sur l'activité économique.

La probabilité d'une récession mondiale a considérablement augmenté, bien au-delà de ce que veulent bien admettre les investisseurs et institutions internationales dans leurs projections habituelles. Les dirigeants politiques doivent comprendre qu'en parallèle des taux d'intérêts et des relances budgétaires, le choc immense subi par les chaînes logistiques mondiales doit également être appréhendé. Le soulagement le plus immédiat pourrait résider dans une marche arrière significative de l'Amérique concernant les droits de douanes dans le cadre de sa guerre commerciale, ce qui apaiserait les marchés, et ce qui démontrerait un certain sens politique vis-à-vis de la Chine, tout en remplissant un peu plus les poches des consommateurs américains. Le temps de la récession mondiale est celui de la coopération, pas de l'isolement.

PERSPECTIVES PERSPECTIVES

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

NEW BUDGET LAW, COUNTY LEGISLATIVE CAUCUSES & HOW THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA PUBLIC FUNDS ARE SIPHONED INTO POCKETS OF POLITICAL RULERS A SUPPORT TO LACC INVESTIGATION

According to the newspaper *Hot Pepper Liberia*'s most recent investigative report entitled, "*LACC Investigation Reveals*", detailed a planned, massive corruption activities by Bong County Administrative officials in collaboration with the Bong County Legislative Caucus in the theft of public resources of hundreds of millions of US dollars allocated by the National Government for construction/administration of the Bong County Technical College (*Hot Pepper Liberia*, June 28, 2019).



LACC BONG COUNTY INVESTIGATION Kenneth Y. Awadji (?)



LACC BONG COUNTY INVESTIGATION
County Legislative Caucus & County Administrative officials

This article lends support clarification and the source of the National Scheme for theft of public resources allocated consistent with prudent public policies, but end up in the pockets of government officials or the nation's political rulers.



The New Budget Law

This was, and is, an Act of the National Legislature passed and approved during FY July 1, 2012/June 30, 2013 with several, major provisions that are patent violations of prudent economic and financial management, particularly for a poor, small developing nation as our country. Extensive support citations are not, really necessary but, for emphasis and examples, we cite the following provisions:

Section 2, Liberian Currency Conversion Rate from Liberian dollars to US dollars (and others) at the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), (2017-2019) now stands at an average exchange rate of L\$ 196.7 to US\$ 1.00 dollar for the months going into more than a year immediately after the elections.

Section-3(a), Revenue Estimates by the Liberia Revenue Authority to support operation of the Government of Liberia have been, and are, deeply shrouded in corruption and management dishonesty.

Section 6[a(1)], Structure of National Budget even though Government Revenue and expenditure programs are planned for the short- to medium-term, Legislative approval will be required annually, because the core Administrative and over-riding, recurrent Budget has been for salaries and allowances. Recent IMF advice: reduce payroll and related costs!!

Section 9 (a), Management of County CDF/SDF Development Funds allocated directly to all county budgets, each county shall establish and manage a County Development Account in the name of the county at a local bank for the purpose of control and **Section 9(b), Complementary to the terms and conditions of agreements pertaining to all funds allocated in a budget directly to a county as County Development Funds (CDF);**

Section 9(e), The Minister of Internal Affairs shall request allotments against the amounts appropriated in this budget as County Development and Social Development Funds for each county, taking into account the time of the year that is most conducive for execution or rural development activities in Liberia, based on Resolutions of each County Council;

Section 9(f), Upon issuance of the allotments, the Minister of Internal Affairs shall raise the necessary vouchers and deposit the funds into existing Development Account of each county. The Minister of Internal Affairs shall also ensure that each County Council requests the entire amount appropriated as County and Social Development Funds in this budget and have said amount deposited into the County Development Fund Account within the first six

months of the fiscal year to prevent any portion of said appropriation lapsing at the end of the fiscal year.

Section 9(g), Access to the County Development Fund shall be upon Resolution of the County Council.

Section 9(h), Mandate of the County Council shall serve as the highest decision of the county on matters of development and fund-management.

Section 9[h(1), Decision of the County Council shall be expressed in the form of Resolutions, which shall be signed by the heads of delegations attending the sitting; the presiding officers of the sitting; witnessed by the County Superintendent or, in the stead, the County Assistant Superintendent for Fiscal and Financial Management; and attested by the Chairperson and majority members of the County Legislative Caucus.

Section 9(j), Once the Council has allocated funds to an area, it shall be the responsibility of the citizens of the targeted area to meet and appoint a Project Management Team (PMT), which shall coordinate the planning of all activities relating to the project(s) for their area, and the processing of documents to relevant and concerned entities. The PMT shall report to the citizens of their respective areas and to the PMC for onward submission to the County Superintendent, the County Legislative Caucus, and the County Council (in Session).

Section 9k(ii), The Chairperson of the County Legislative Caucus shall serve as Chairperson of the County Council. The County Superintendent shall issue citations for each sitting of the County Council.

Impact of the Budget Law with Legislative Caucus Control/Management

According to *The Perspective.org*, June 1, 2015, "Hold The Maryland County Legislative Caucus Accountable." "The students of Cape Palmas High School . . . have been protesting, demanding renovation of their dilapidated school building". Following the returned to classes later this month, they found their building in ruins, much to their anger. "We want a building", reads a placard of the protesting students".

"The problem must be the lack of sensitivity to the development needs of the county", said an incredulous Marylander, who is knowledgeable of how the so-called county's development fund is allocated but who had never thought that the current ruling elites of Maryland County would grossly neglect health and education. He revealed that, like all other legislators in the country, Representative James P. Biney of the Harper District (where Cape Palmas High

School is situated) has received \$20,000 for this Fiscal Year so that he can fund any development project, known as 'Legislative Project' in the district, while both Senators Dan Morais and Gbleh-bo Brown have received \$40,000 per district to carry out development projects in each of the districts in the county. Needless to say, the Maryland Legislators have received \$180,000 (apart from the annual \$200,000 for county development!) this year alone. Yet infrastructure in the county remain in tatters".

" . . . Hon. James Biney is currently sitting on US \$20,000 earmarked for the development of the Harper District, while students of Cape Palmas High School are forced to use umbrellas in class . . . Hon. Biney has the final say in how County Development Fund (CDF) is spent. Over the past nine years, more than 1.8 million US dollars of CDF has been "spent" in Maryland County, but there is nothing to show for the money".

"It has even been alleged, quite recently, that Nathaniel Toe, the Development Superintendent of the county, has not been able to give account of \$85,000 (\$50,000 to build a bridge over the Nehdilloh Creek and \$35,000 allotted to Pleebo-Sodoken District). But the lawmakers are mute on the allegations against the development superintendent".

"The people of Maryland County should therefore hold accountable their lawmakers and the county officials. The legislators must give full account of the county's development funds and the money set aside for the "Legislative Projects". They are the ones standing in the way of infrastructure development in the county, and they must therefore be blamed for the dilapidated school.

The immediate renovation of Cape Palmas High School squarely lies with them. Requesting help from Liberians in the Diaspora might be a good idea, but the money will undoubtedly end up in the pockets of these corrupt lawmakers and county officials."

The Problem of County Legislative Caucuses

This problem is not unique to Maryland County, multiply by this condition by 15 Counties. For example, there is the problem of the Bong County Technical College and County Legislative Caucus. Almost \$2 million US dollars was made available in 2010, but there are blame-games among the County Legislative Caucus over construction while makeshift classes are being held in the United Methodist High School with inadequate space for students and equipment.

Similarly, Grand Gedeh County faces the problem of the County Legislative Caucus and the local, County Administration, over Funds allocated for SDF/CDF development!!

Citizens nationwide are afraid to speak out because this Clique is composed of powerful personalities and powerful agencies of government - begins with the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning (the "Paymaster who must chop something from the people he/she pays"); the County Legislative Caucuses (who are Chairs of the CDF & SDF County Councils, decide who gets on the County Council, distort and abuse the Budget Law & rules and decide who gets what and how much); and The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the local town & County chief who controls it all.

EPS arrests, flogs war crimes campaigner

By Bridgett Milton

Presidential security forces have arrested and flogged the lead campaigner for the establishment of War and Economic Crimes Court for Liberia, Emmanuel Savice.

Officers of the elite Executive Protection Service (EPS) carried on the brutality while Emmanuel was leading protesters before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the temporary office of President George Manneh Weah.

Mr. Savice, led protesters here Tuesday, 3 March under the banner Liberians United for Justice and Accountability on the ground of the Capitol where they petitioned the Liberian Legislature for the establishment of the War and Economic Crimes court, and subsequently proceeded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which also is the temporary office of President George Manneh Weah but was arrested and flogged by EPS officers and later turned over to the Liberia National Police.

This is the third time the Liberians United for Justice and Accountability is hosting a peaceful march to raise awareness for such court in Liberia to dispense justice and end a culture of impunity in



the country.

Mr. Savice presented his petition to the National Legislature peacefully and they left but upon getting to the Foreign Ministry they were stopped by officers of the EPA, who instructed the protestors to cross the road; it was when some members of the EPS started flogging him, knocking him to the ground before dragging him into the compound of the Foreign ministry.

Earlier at the Legislature, he said the House of Representatives has done nothing about the establishment of the War and

Economic Crimes court, so they (protesters) were here to wage a campaign that would bring perpetrators of heinous crimes during the Liberian Civil War to justice.

Emmanuel warned if the Legislature didn't do anything about the establishment of the war and economic crimes court, Liberia risks returning to violence.

EPS officers confiscated reporters' cameras, mobile phones and other gadgets while they were photographing scene of the confrontation.

Among the protesters was the notorious ex-rebel

General-turned evangelist, Joshua Milton Blayee commonly known as 'Butt Naken.'

Blayee said he did not testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008 in anticipation of being accorded amnesty, but did so because of his conviction that no sin goes unpunished.

According to Evangelist Blayee, he only the truth can set a person free, and so based on his faith as a Christian, truth is the only way forward.

He narrated that over the years, he has watched violence grow in this nation and

he is suspecting that violence will continue to grow due to the culture

of impunity being embraced by Liberians.

The ex-fighter, who is widely known to have allegedly fought on the

battlefield completely naked, as a demonstration of magic charm, added that the only way Liberians would enjoy true freedom is when they embrace justice.

He said he sees the establishment of the war and crimes court as a way to ending violence, and he and his organizations support justice for the country.

Receiving the petition on behalf of the House of Representatives,

Deputy Speaker Prince K. Moye said the document is a blunt reminder to members of the legislature.

He said they already have more than 50 signatures of lawmakers, including himself supportive of the call for the court, so the petition was just a reminder to put the issue back on the agenda for appropriate action.

Coronavirus infection hits 92,000 globally

Reports say at least 92,000 people have been infected globally from the coronavirus, while over 3000 of this number have died with the highest figures being in China since December 2019.

Reports state that a vast majority of cases – more than 80,000 – have occurred in China, but around 60 other countries are now also dealing with outbreaks. South Korea, Italy and Iran are fighting the largest outbreaks outside of China.

In Italy, it was reported that Pope Francis was still suffering from a cold and not exhibiting other symptoms, after a report said he had tested negative for the novel coronavirus.

Italy's *Messaggero* newspaper reported that the 83-year-old pontiff, who has been cancelling events since last Wednesday, had been tested for the virus as a precaution.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said in a statement that the cold was "running its course without symptoms attributable

to other pathologies".

In Lebanon, the country's health minister said hospitals were ready to deal with any further spread of the novel coronavirus in the country, where 13 cases have been recorded with no deaths.

Hamad Hassan was quoted as saying the cases had all either returned from an affected country or were transmitted through "close contact" with a family member or neighbour - not "local transmission".

All 13 people suffering from the Covid-19 illness are being treated at Beirut's Rafic Hariri state hospital, where 140 beds have been designated to isolate and monitor suspected cases, he added.

The US state of Seattle is also said to be battling with the outbreak as fear that the virus has hit all states looms.

In the US, the BBC reported that the US central bank has slashed interest rates in response to mounting concerns about the economic impact of the coronavirus.

The BBC said the Federal Reserve lowered its benchmark rate by 50 basis points to a range of 1% to 1.25%.

It said the move comes

after the G7 group of finance ministers pledged action earlier on Tuesday.

It follows warnings that slowdown from the outbreak could tip countries into recession.

The Trump administration has requested up to US\$2.5 billion to fund the US response to COVID-19. In a 24 February letter to Congress, the Office of Management and Budget requested \$1.25 billion in new funding and proposed to make up the rest by repurposing funds allocated to other programmes, including \$535 million assigned to the Ebola response.

In Africa, Nigeria is among three countries to have confirmed the novel virus cases in South Saharan Africa where its slow infection is beating the world's imagination due to its perceived vulnerability to pandemic outbreaks.

On Monday, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank announced their readiness to help in the combat of the deadly coronavirus.

In a joint statement issued Monday March 2, the IMF and the World Bank Group stand said they stand ready to help member countries address the human tragedy and economic challenge posed by the COVID-19 virus.

"We are engaged actively with international institutions and country authorities, with special attention to poor countries where health systems are the weakest and people are most vulnerable.

We will use our available instruments to the fullest extent possible, including emergency financing, policy advice, and technical assistance. In particular, we have rapid financing facilities that, collectively, can help countries respond to a wide range of needs.

The strengthening of country health surveillance and response systems is crucial to contain the spread of this and any future outbreaks. International cooperation is essential to deal with the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 virus.



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UL president assures progressive collaboration



Flashback: Dr. Nelson leads groundbreaking ceremony

By **Winston W. Parley**

The President of the University of Liberia (UL), Rev. Dr. Julius Julukon Sarwolo Nelson has held consultation with the Faculties and Students to thread a new progressive course at the David A. Straz - Sinje College in Grand Cape Mount County.

Dr. Nelson held the meeting minutes after he kicked off a weekend - long massive cleanup campaign

Tuesday, 3 March at the Straz - Sinje College of the University which is scheduled to continue on the rest of the campuses on Wednesday (Medical College), Thursday and Friday (Capitol Hill Campus and Fendall), respectively.

During the meeting with the Faculties and Students, Dr. Nelson expressed his willingness to solve issues at the University internally, urging them to work with the Administration as a family.

"My doors are always opened and I am prepared to solve all matters internally," Dr. Nelson says, adding that "My appeal has always been there is no problem at the University that we cannot find solution for."

He indicates at the meeting that the University Administration is committed to make salaries current to avoid a situation where

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UEFA sets up group to focus on coronavirus fixture impact

UEFA has set up a working group with the European Leagues association to handle any fixture congestion which may be caused by coronavirus postponements.

UEFA general secretary Theodore Theodoridis told UEFA's congress on Tuesday that the body had been set up on Monday to "work on calendar issues".

During the congress, FIFA president Gianni Infantino had said "it is important to

work with authorities but not to panic" but Swiss FA president Dominique Blanc warned of serious consequences to the sport.

"Due to the coronavirus we are in a situation that could shake, for a part of us, professional football to its foundations," he told the congress.

The Swiss soccer league (SFL) has been put on hold until at least March 23 because of the coronavirus outbreak after the clubs rejected the possibility of



playing matches behind closed doors.

Switzerland, which has had at least two dozen confirmed cases, introduced a ban on Friday on events expected to draw 1,000 people or more until March 15 in an effort to combat the coronavirus.

In response, the Swiss League called off all matches in the top two divisions and Saturday and Sunday and it has now extended the ban to the international break at the end of March.

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