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Mr. Nathaniel Blama

Mayor Jefferson Koijee



Rep. Yekeh Kolubah

Sen. Darius Dillon

Officials face arrest, dismissal

House approves census for 2021



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CMYK



Continental News

Africa must 'wake up' to coronavirus - WHO

Africa must "wake up" to the coronavirus threat and prepare for the worst, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) has said.

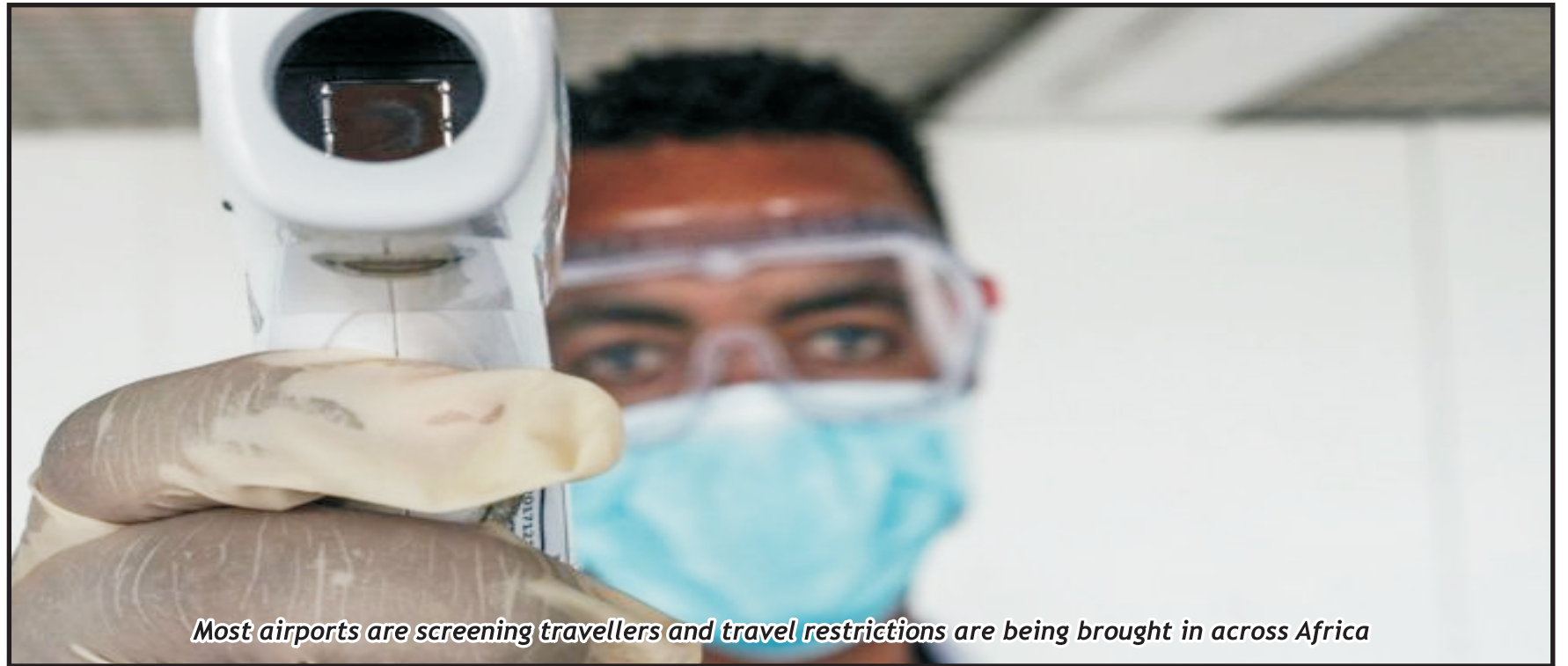
The continent should learn from how the spread of virus has sped up elsewhere, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

He warned that while Africa's confirmed cases were currently low - around 640 - there was no reason for complacency.

"Africa should wake up, my continent should wake up," said the Ethiopian, the WHO's first African head.

Health experts warn that strained public health systems in Africa could become quickly overwhelmed if the virus takes hold, especially in overcrowded urban areas."

WHO's recommendation is actually mass gatherings should be avoided and we should do all we can to cut it



Most airports are screening travellers and travel restrictions are being brought in across Africa

from the bud, expecting that the worst could happen," Mr Tedros told a news conference in Geneva, where the WHO is based.

In Africa, 16 people have died from Covid-19, the respiratory illness caused by

coronavirus: six in Egypt, six in Algeria, two in Morocco, one in Sudan and one in Burkina Faso. In South Africa, which has 116 cases, President Cyril Ramaphosa has declared a state of disaster, restricting travel,

closing schools, banning mass gatherings and ordering bars to close or limit numbers to 50.

The country has also banned all cruise ships from its ports. This comes despite tests coming back negative for six people on board a cruise ship,

which had been put under quarantine. All 1,700 people are now free to leave the ship and return home.

Anyone breaking South Africa's coronavirus measures will be subject to a fine, or even imprisonment. BBC

SA to build fence on Zimbabwe border 'to stem virus'

South Africa will build a fence along its border with Zimbabwe within 40 days to prevent people infected with coronavirus and undocumented migrants from entering its territory, Public Works Minister Patricia de Lille has said. The construction would be part of the emergency measures that the government had decided to take after President Cyril Ramaphosa declared the virus a national disaster on Sunday.

A 1.8m (5ft 11in) high fence, stretching for 20km (12.4 miles), would be built on either side of the Beitbridge border, the main crossing between the two nations, the minister said.

The number of people diagnosed in South Africa with the virus has risen to 150 since it was detected about two weeks ago in a South African who had visited Italy.

Hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans live in South Africa. Many of them fled

political violence and an economic meltdown after their government embarked on a controversial land reform programme nearly two decades ago.

Zimbabwe has not reported any cases of the virus, but President Emmerson Mnangagwa has ordered the close of schools and other educational institutions from next Tuesday as a precautionary measure. BBC

Grief in Ethiopia as trailblazing doctor dies

No-one came to meet Catherine Hamlin the day she arrived at a tiny airport in Ethiopia in 1959. More than 60 years later, the news of the Australian gynaecologist's death at the age of 96 was met with an outpouring of grief in the country she had made her home.

That is because of the work Dr Hamlin - along with her late husband, Reginald - did transforming and, in some cases, saving the lives of tens of thousands of women who had been cast out of their communities.

Treating obstetric fistulas - a preventable injury sustained in childbirth that leaves women incontinent and can lead to other infections - would become her life's work.

"These are the women most to be pitied in the world," Dr Hamlin told the New York Times in 2003. "They're alone in the world, ashamed of their injuries. For lepers, or Aids victims, there are organisations that help. But nobody knows about these women or helps them."

The 'cursed' women living in shame

Elinor Catherine Nicholson



was born in Sydney in 1924, one of six children. She decided to train to be a doctor because she wanted to help women and children.

After she completed her training, she began work at Crown Street Women's Hospital, where she met a doctor from New Zealand, Reginald Hamlin.

They were married in 1950, and had a son, Richard, two years later. But the two wanted to go and work in a developing nation, and one day an advert in British medical journal The Lancet caught their eye.

"It just read 'gynaecologist wanted in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa,'" Dr Hamlin told the BBC in 2016. It was enough to pique their interest, and the couple applied. BBC



Beitbridge is the main crossing between the two countries

EDITORIAL

In union strong, success is sure! We can beat the coronavirus

THANK GOD THE President of the Republic of Liberia, Mr. George Manneh Weah, has constituted a Special Presidential Advisory Committee for the Prevention of the corona virus (COVID-19) in Liberia.

CLEARLY, HE UNDERSTANDS that the corona virus outbreak requires all national and international hands on deck to handle eradicating the virus. With donor support, I hope the President takes his initiative a step further and establish a standing Incident Management System (IMS) and an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to help manage all the details of this crisis and any future crisis.

THE WORLD HEALTH Organization reports that worldwide the virus has infected more than 184, 000 people and has killed at least 7,500. This global pandemic has arrived in East, West, Central and Northern and Southern Africa. Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Togo, Cameroon, the DRC, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, South Africa, Morocco. These countries have reported confirmed cases.

EVEN LIBERIA'S NEIGHBORS, Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire have confirmed cases. Al Jazeera is reporting that most of Africa's cases came from those who travelled abroad and returned. Only five people have succumbed to corona virus so far -- all in North Africa, reported Al Jazeera, with the Sub-Saharan region recording no deaths and very low numbers of confirmed cases.

UNLIKE MANY OF these countries, Liberia has the hard won experience of successfully combatting Ebola. Through the active implementation of lessons learned, data collection and communication along with International and national engagement, and community activism, key measures were put in place - aggressive communication campaigns, contact tracing programs and reliable reporting mechanisms to eradicate the virus.

THERE WERE ALSO vigilant hand washing schemes, meaningful calls to action like calling community or traditional leaders when sick or when seeing someone who is sick, seeking early treatment and no touching. These measures helped to combat the deadly but survivable disease. There is a collective memory of what to do. Business and homes alike have installed hand washing stations. The Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia are working to ensure the relevant parties are quarantined and effective contact tracing is activated.

HOWEVER, THE CORONA VIRUS is not Ebola. New measures, campaigns and messages are needed because COVID-19 is infectious in a pernicious way Ebola wasn't. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said the corona virus is not just spread between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) but it is also spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets, said the CDC, can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly inhaled into the lungs.

IMAGINE, THOUGH, THE prospect of an infected person displaying symptoms and sneezing in a taxi. Those people are potentially affected. When they get out of the taxi, they in turn infect the people they come into contact with.

THE MINISTRY OF Transport is encouraging drivers to wear masks and has reduced the number of authorized passengers in a taxi to one in the front. What about passenger safety? Should passengers wear masks and gloves, too?

GOOD CRISIS MANAGEMENT CRITICALLY examines the worst-case scenario. For example, what will parents do if one child or another family member in the household has the virus and the rest of the family doesn't? How will the family manage that? How will sanitation be handled? Are hospitals and clinics equipped with enough gloves and masks to manage the crisis? Will the borders be closed?

HOW WILL INFECTION prevention be handled at congested markets across the country or with the people who travel to Guinea or Sierra Leone to buy and sell or visit family? What measures are put in place for this scenario? How will they be informed about accurate and reliable ways to prevent infection?

EBOLA WAS MORE than a health emergency. The epidemic severely impacted the provision of health care services and caused setbacks in the treatment and control of other diseases including: HIV, TB and Malaria according to the CDC, but Ebola also affected the population on the social, cultural, economic and political level.

Ebola changed the way greetings were conducted and it caused the need for safe burials which was a departure from traditional burial ceremonies. Other social norms were either transformed or were temporarily dropped from the cultural fabric of society.



EDITOR'S NOTE: LISA R. WHITE is a crisis communication specialist who consults with businesses and organizations on their crisis management plans and community outreach initiatives. She is the former UN Ebola Emergency Response Mission Public Information Officer for Liberia and former Senior Radio Producer with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). She can be reached at genesyscomms@gmail.com for questions or comment.

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+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan

COMMENTARY

By Donna Dickenson, Katie Hasson & Marcy Darnovsky

Heritable Human Genome Editing Is Not Inevitable

In recent years, the consensus barring genetic changes that would be passed down to a person's every descendant has collapsed, and scientists and bioethicists now focus largely on creating a detailed roadmap for moving forward. But there's a strong case to be made that the previous consensus was correct.

LONDON - The announcement by the Chinese biophysicist He Jiankui in November 2018 that he had created the world's first gene-edited babies - an egregious ethical and legal breach that resulted in a three-year prison sentence - gave discussions about heritable human genome editing a new sense of urgency. But those discussions are fundamentally flawed. Given the stakes - for today's societies and future generations - a course correction is urgently needed.

Some scientists, futurists, and others assert the inevitability of heritable genome editing - altering embryos or gametes in order to produce genetically engineered children who will pass the changed genes and traits to their own offspring. These proponents seem to assume that, overall, it would probably be a good thing - as long as we wait until the technology is "safe" and apply it under the right circumstances. With this in mind, they have focused largely on creating a detailed roadmap for moving forward.

The organizers of the 2018 International Summit on Human Gene Editing, held just days after He's announcement, proclaimed that "it is time to define a rigorous, responsible translational pathway toward" clinical trials of heritable genome editing. This echoed previous conclusions by the British Nuffield Council on Bioethics and the National Academies of Sciences and Medicine in the United States. The US National Academies, together with the United Kingdom's Royal Society, then established the International Commission on the Clinical Use of Human Germline Genome Editing to fulfill this mission.

But as we - together with 18 other civil-society leaders, bioethicists, scientists, and lawyers in 11 countries - recently argued in the Geneva Statement on Heritable Human Genome Editing, this approach reflects a number of deeply problematic assumptions. Before we start trying to set standards for how and when scientists may genetically engineer future children, we must ask whether they should do it at all.

There is a strong case for barring heritable gene editing altogether. As the Geneva Statement notes, that was the consensus of earlier debates on the topic, dating back to the 1990s. This consensus is reflected in the laws of dozens of countries and in international treaties, such as the Oviedo Convention, a binding Council of Europe agreement.

Like the Geneva Statement, the previous consensus did not eschew all gene editing. If the technology can be made safe, effective, and, ideally, affordable, it could be a powerful tool for treating the sick. But past debates concluded that gene editing should not be used to alter the genetic profile of future children and their offspring.

And make no mistake: heritable genome editing is not a life-saving medical intervention. It neither treats nor cures any existing person. Rather, it aims to create a future person without a harmful genetic variant, or with a desired trait.

Moreover, the claim that genome editing is needed to prevent the inheritance of genetic

disorders is misplaced. For the last 20 years, so-called pre-implantation genetic diagnosis - which screens embryos created through in vitro fertilization - has been enabling at-risk parents to have genetically related offspring who are unaffected by their genetic disorders.

The pervasiveness of such misconceptions is one of the reasons the Geneva Statement calls for a course correction in public and policy discussions about heritable genome editing. Another is that debates have typically emphasized scientific considerations, while ignoring or downplaying the social context in which efforts to alter human inheritance would take place.

It is dangerous to ignore systemic patterns of social discrimination and stratification, powerful commercial forces, and historical experience. The legacy of the eugenics movement alone - and its apotheosis in Nazi "racial hygiene" - should give anyone pause, and yet proponents of heritable genome editing typically dismiss it.

To be sure, coercive state-sponsored eugenics programs may not reappear. But a commercial version, shaped by marketing claims and individual consumer choices, is a very real risk. If CRISPR gene-editing techniques became established in reproductive medicine, there is little reason to doubt that fertility clinics would soon be offering parents with sufficient means the option of genetic "upgrades."

The third critical dimension of the necessary course correction is inclusiveness. Because heritable genome editing would affect everyone, broad public consensus is essential before any steps are taken. Yet scientists and professional bioethicists have so far dominated the conversation.

Not everyone who would be affected by heritable genome editing can participate in the debate. After all, we are talking about making genetic changes that would be passed down to a person's every descendant. This raises the thorny "future generations" problem over which philosophers have long agonized: our descendants have no say in the choices we make - say, our decision to continue pouring carbon dioxide into the atmosphere - but they will have to face the consequences.

In the case of a technology that would likely be marketed to the wealthy as a way to produce "biologically superior" offspring, those consequences could include entrenching a new and fundamental form of inequality. The social implications of that outcome would be profound and terrifying.

Cultivating an effective public debate that embraces a wide range of voices - including human-rights advocates, social scientists and humanities scholars, artists, religious figures, those who suffer from genetic conditions, and those who don't - will require significant human and financial resources. The Geneva Statement's call to clarify and reframe the issue is a step toward that end.

Whether to employ heritable genome editing is not a decision we can take lightly. It certainly cannot be treated as a choice we have already made.



Lord, were we really prepared or we were impressing as usual?

Dear Father:

Hmm, you know, for some time now our ears have been buzzing with the news about this big new sickness that is catching everybody around our global village.

By the very name Corona, which sounds like the name of a female, one would think it would have been soft with people. But no, it is deadly in disguise and this has prompted everyone everywhere to prepare for her arrival in every village.

So, our village has been no exception-at least when you think of the way our people have been blowing this in our ears and beating their chests that they were more than prepared. In fact, some even went on further to boast that if they could deal with the girl's cousin-Ebola, who is she that they can't subdue.

Well, the young lady has shown her face. In fact, she was brought into the village by one of our big men who went to visit a foreign neighbor where she is causing havoc.

Father, I don't want to tell you about the he says, she says that surround this man coming into our village with this destructive girl-no that is not my point of interest right now.

Father, my main concern here right now, is whether we were actually prepared for this girl's arrival when we said we were or we were just making empty noise as we are known to be -talk more and do little or nothing.

Come to think of it Father, preparations involves a lot of things and not just finding a house or place to keep people, it also includes treatment yes.

One of the greatest motivational speakers from Uncle Sam's village once said "It is better to prepare for an opportunity and don't have one than to have one and not prepared."

The arrival of the girl Corona in our village a few days ago has actually exposed our people-it has proven the point that Liberian people can talk plenty and do just little or nothing.

You don't mean that my son!

Oh yes, Father, I do. If you go over all the publicities we made about how ready our people were to deal with Corona, then the handling of this index case should be enough to tell you that we were not prepared for the opportunity, rather we have waited for the opportunity to come before we prepare.

Father, I know some people reading this will now start calling me by all kinds of names-an ingrate, opposition, doomsayer and many more. But the point remains the same-our people misled our entire village when they said they were prepared-they lied to us.

Father, preparation is not just getting people with thermometers to take people's temperature when they arrived through our ports of entry or find a place to put them for 14 days to observe them.

We forgot the most important part-treatments-not just the place to carry them when we notice that they are sick, but what to treat them with when we take them there.

So, Father, you see why I say we were only causing noise here for the past three months giving the entire village a fake impression, telling them we are prepared to deal with Corona, but in effect we are not.

Now, what we are hearing now is so sad, because you can't say you are prepared only to continue to tell people about the sickness and not prepared what to treat it with when it comes-shame!

Liberian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (LICPA)



Publication of members and member firms in Good Standing for the period January 1 to December 31, 2020

In line with Section 7 of the LICPA Act, the Institute is the only authority to license qualified individuals and Accounting Firms to engage in public accounting in the Republic of Liberia. Consequently, any organization (recipients of auditing and assurance services) using the services of anyone/firm not listed by the LICPA is in full violation of the Law. Legal actions will be taken against violators and those doing business with persons or firms not listed by the LICPA. Hence, the following are the accredited firms, licensed members, and members in Good Standing with the LICPA for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

Signed:
S. Moses Kessellie, Jr.
Executive Director

Approved: Governing Council of the LICPA

Member Firms licensed to practice (1 January to 31st December 2020)

No.	Name	License #
1	Baker Tilly Liberia	00000037
2	BICON, Inc	00000038
3	Crowe Liberia LLC	00000034
4	Deon and Noed International (DNI) Liberia LLC	00000039
5	Gedei & Associates Inc	00000036
6	Moore Monrovia	00000030
7	MGI-Monbo & Company	00000031
8	Pan African Consultants	00000032
9	PKF- Liberia	00000033
10	PricewaterhouseCoopers Liberia (PwC)	00000042

Individual Members Licensed to Practice (1 January to 31st December 2020)

No	NAME	LICENCED TO PRACTICE (YES/NO)
1	Arthur W. B. Fumbah	YES
2	Christopher K. Sokpor	YES
3	David M. Farhat	YES
4	George K.K. Fonderson	YES
5	Nim'ne E. Mombo, Sr.	YES
6	Prince Taylor	YES
7	Ranveek K Suji	YES
8	RoheitSuji	YES
9	Steven DindoSeimavula	YES
10	Theo Dekonty Joseph	YES
11	Winsley S. Nanka	YES
12	Francis B. S. Johnson	YES
13	Paul C. Collins	YES

Individual members in Good Standing (1 January to 31st December 2020)

No.	Individual Members	Membership #
1	Alex FavilleElvino Cline	83
2	Amos Odame Adjei	94
3	Andrew S. Jallah	43
4	AnitCeceWollo-Woiwor	79
5	Arthur W. B. Fumbah	19
6	Booker T. Harris	58
7	Brima Koroma	92
8	Christopher K. Sokpor	21
9	David Awuah Mensah	97
10	David M. Farhat	7
11	David O. Carew	39
12	Decontee King-Sackie	77
13	Edward Gomado	66
14	Foday G. Kiazolu	33
15	Francis B.S. Johnson	1
16	G. Cecil Dole	84
17	George K.K. Fonderson	13
18	Hayfron Aboagye	60
19	Hector J. Wuor	51
20	Jerome Padmore	90
21	Jonah EkowAnnobil	96
22	Joseph TohHinneh	87
23	Kolawole Popoola	61
24	L. Olandor Boyce, I	48
25	Leroy NyahFendor	80
26	Micah TebahBelleh	85
27	Mohammed A. Dukuly	71
28	Mohammed B. Korleh	56
29	Mozart Carney Barnard	95
30	NajeemdeenAbiolaGiwa	98
31	Nicholas V. S. Peters	81
32	Nim'ne E. Mombo, Sr.	6
33	Papin Daniels, Jr.	59
34	Patience A. Dzebu	52
35	Paul C. Collins	16
36	Prince Taylor	28
37	Ranveek K. Suji	10
38	Raphael M. Quaye	55
39	Rita Ganidekam	91
40	RoheitSuji	18
41	S. Moses Kessellie, Jr.	38
42	Samora P. Z Wolokolie, Sr.	57
43	Samuel Mensah	42
44	Steven D. Seimavula	25
45	Subozu Kollie	89
46	Theo Dekonty Joseph	14
47	VerleewoSiakor	100
48	Victor S. Tanwone, Sr.	54
49	Winsley S. Nanka	20
50	Yusador S. Gaye	46
51	Zephaniah J. Smith	101
52	Zinnah B. Sackie	62



SOLICITATION NUMBER: VA-669-20-00004

ISSUANCE DATE: 02/26/2020
 CLOSING DATE/TIME: 03/25/2020 (17:30 local time)

SUBJECT: Solicitation for the AID Procurement Agent, Cooperating Country National Personal Service Contract (CCNPSC).

Dear Prospective Offerors:

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking offers from qualified persons to provide personal services under contract as described in this solicitation.

Offers must be in accordance with Attachment 1, Sections I through III of this solicitation. Incomplete or unsigned offers will not be considered. Offerors should retain copies of all offer materials for their records.

This solicitation in no way obligates USAID to award a Personal Services Contract, nor does it commit USAID to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of the offers.

Any questions must be directed in writing to the Point of Contact specified in the attached information.

Sincerely,
 /s/
 Robert W. Appiah
 Supervisory Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT 1

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

SOLICITATION NO: VA-669-20-00004

1. **ISSUANCE DATE:** 02/26/2020
2. **CLOSING DATE/TIME FOR RECEIPT OF OFFERS:** 03/25/2020 at 17:30 Monrovia time
3. **POSITION TITLE:** Procurement Agent
4. **MARKET VALUE:** \$24,064.00 to USD \$38,498.00 equivalent to CCN-08 in accordance with AIDAR Appendix J and the Local Compensation Plan of the US Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia. Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value.
5. **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** Initial two years with possibility of extension depending on need, performance, and availability of funding. This is considered a permanent position.
 Employment under any contract issued under this solicitation is of a continuing nature. Its duration is expected to be part of series of sequential contract; all contract clauses, provisions, and regulatory requirements concerning availability of funds and the specific duration of the contract shall apply.
6. **PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:** Monrovia, Liberia with possible travel as stated in the statement of duties.
7. **SECURITY LEVEL REQUIRED:** Facility and computer access
8. **STATEMENT OF DUTIES**

A. BACKGROUND

USAID and Liberia maintain a long-standing partnership to support economic stability and growth, strengthen democratic governance, and improve health and education systems. USAID/Liberia fosters a spirit of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, building and supporting local systems so there is no longer a need for external support. USAID/Liberia is the first bi-lateral program to have an approved 2019-2024 Country Development Cooperation Strategy; the Mission is in the midst of designing and procuring a significant number of new activities, and the Mission fully embraces the Agency's newly issued Acquisition and Assistance Strategy as well as the Effective Partnering and Procurement Reform Initiative.

B. BASIC FUNCTION OF THE POSITION

This position is in the Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA), USAID/Liberia. The incumbent is under the direct supervision of the Supervisory Contracting Officer (SCO) or his/her delegate. H/she performs procurement duties within the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT) for both commodities and services, including international and local consultants; as well as a limited amount of clerical and secretarial duties on behalf of the SCO and the rest of the OAA team.

Serving as the OAA advisor on simplified acquisitions, h/she is responsible for the operational expense and program related procurement activities for OAA (which includes support to other offices in the Mission), and procures a variety of commodities by contract, purchase order, or other available instrument. The position fully complies with all relevant US Government laws, regulations, policies and procedures; liaises with the Financial Management Office (FMO) and the Executive Office (EXO) to ensure the availability and accounting of funds, proper equipment inventory, etc., and monitors how well the contractors and service providers perform towards achieving a contract's purpose.

H/she is principally responsible for planning and coordinating the procurement of goods and services throughout the year, and will be the technical liaison between the contractor(s) and the Contracting Officer; this will include monitoring services and activity implementation, receiving goods and services, and verifying contractor performance.

The incumbent also serves as the principal administrative support person for the Office Director, ensuring that administrative functions are performed effectively, efficiently, and in a manner that promotes harmony and problem-solving, so that other office staff members may be more effective.

The incumbent is expected to work primarily in accomplishing the specific tasks as outlined below. Given the nature of the position, the Procurement Agent will also be expected to respond to any changes in priorities that emerge during the contract period to provide efficient, timely, and effective services to the Mission.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- | | |
|---|------------|
| PROCUREMENT DUTIES | 60% |
| A. Performs all OAA local and off-shore procurement actions that are within the Simplified Acquisition Procedure (SAP) threshold for both program and operational expenses (OE) funded requests; from receipt of requests to preparation of purchase order (PO) or contract, and fully close out of the action. Procurement actions may use the full range of procurement instruments available for SAP. | |
| B. Provides assistance to support and technical offices on how to prepare appropriate documentation such as statements of work, statement of duties, government estimates (IGCE), evaluation criteria, and single source justifications. Works with Mission personnel to resolve questions related to budgets, classification of terms, reporting/deliverables requirements, market research and developing sources, and special conditions to be included in the solicitation document. | |
| C. Develops solicitations and assists the Contracting Officer in screening and reviewing bids and quotations and negotiating contracts. Reviews responses and recommends the best offers based on knowledge of availability, delivery schedules, reliability of suppliers, and cost/price analysis. | |
| D. Prepares and reviews final contract language, supplier's bill, and paperwork prior to submission to the Contracting Officer. Writes memorandum of negotiation and justification notes; has the responsibility for planning and organizing work, setting priorities, and making the most efficient use of available resources. | |
| E. Conducts periodic informal market surveys to allow reasonable control of prices offered. H/she is knowledgeable of the local and international market and the customs and shipping practices for delivery of commodities. Keeps abreast of market conditions, including price and availability of important commodities and services, and maintains contracts with officials of local supply firms to facilitate resolving procurement problems. | |
| F. Prepares contract amendments, negotiates revisions to various contract provisions; writes memoranda of negotiation and prepares other required documentation as needed. | |
| G. Monitors contractors' performance to ensure total compliance with the FAR, AIDAR procedures, policies and regulations, and Mission needs. | |
| H. Works with the Financial Management Office on financial reviews or audits of implementing partner awards. Analyzes findings and recommends courses of action regarding questioned and ineligible costs to the Contracting Officer. | |
| I. Closes out purchase orders, task orders, etc., when deliveries and payments are complete. Maintains a computerized database for generating special, quarterly and annual reports of Mission's procurements. Maintains an updated file of vendors, and all documentation associated with procurements and incoming and outgoing correspondence. | |
| J. Maintains contract files and records, prepares reports on closing out purchase orders and contracts which have ended. Maintains an up-to-date filing system (orders, catalogues, magazines), and a contractor/vendor's database. | |
| K. Performs contract management support and administrative functions in the review, termination and close-out of government contracts and delivery orders for awards both above and below the simplified acquisition threshold. | |
| ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES | 40% |
| A. The Agent takes messages in the absence of the supervisor and other staff, directing calls to appropriate staff members, receives and assists visitors, answers questions from the public and/or mission members, ensures that attendees are briefed or provided proper background material for meetings; and arranges for conference room space as required by OAA. | |
| B. The Agent receives and places phone calls, sends and receives E-mails, and sets up working meetings, workshops, conferences, and makes appointments at the request of the supervisor and other office staff within OAA with the Government of Liberia, donors, implementing partners, non-governmental organizations, private-sector, and other contacts; responds on behalf of the office director as needed, and takes minutes at meetings when requested. | |
| C. The Agent schedules appointments based on knowledge of the supervisor's commitments, maintains the office calendar, maintains and develops leave plans, weekly travel reports, emergency database and the USAID cascade list for emergency contacts. The incumbent will have expertise in word processing and spreadsheet development in the performance of a variety of assignments such as typing correspondence and other documents in draft and final form, proof-reading for format and consistency with standard Mission and Embassy requirements in advance of the supervisor's signature. | |
| D. The Agent maintains control of all correspondence for the OAA, is responsible for organizing OAA electronically located project/activity folders ("P" drive and subsequent filing systems), establishing and maintaining computerized tracking systems to track office actions, providing weekly reports to the SCO, drafting non-technical responses to routine correspondence and letters in English, and searching files and records to assemble background information for correspondence and other pending actions. The Agent reviews outgoing mail for proper address, routing, attachments, etc., prior to dispatch, reviewing outgoing correspondence for accuracy and conformance with Mission formatting procedures and special instructions. The Agent distributes internal policies and procedures | |

- E. The Agent establishes and maintains files according to standards set by USAID/Washington and the Mission Communications and Records Technician/Supervisor in EXO, and according to ADS provisions related to file and records retention. Marks correspondence and other documents for filing, and files accordingly. Reviews all correspondence prepared in OAA or elsewhere in advance of the supervisor's signature, corrects errors by drafters and edits correspondence, and assures that responding correspondence fully meets the requirements posed by incoming correspondence to which it pertains. The Agent maintains and updates documents such as visitors' lists, telephone listings, personnel rosters, vacation schedules, etc.
- F. The Agent may assist, in his absence, the subject matter expert (SME) or principal point of contact for multiple procurement related systems such as GLAAS-the Agency's world-wide web-based acquisition and assistance system that manages awards throughout the procurement life cycle, ASIST-the Agency's official electronic filing system, CPARS-the USGS contractor performance and assessment system, etc. As assistant to the SME, the incumbent will be expected to become familiar with how the systems work, and be designated open/close accounts, troubleshoot issues and solve problems, liaise with USAID/W SMEs, etc.
- G. H/she will make travel arrangements for OAA staff using the Agency's electronic travel system (E2) to prepare travel authorization (TA) requests, submit and track travel approvals by the Regional Security Office when necessary, make hotel and airline reservations through the travel agency and arrange for transportation to and from the airport. The incumbent will prepare travel vouchers after completion of travel. Also, s/he will provide assistance making vehicle requests, apartment and hotel reservations for temporary duty (TDY) arrivals and departures, and ensures welcome kits are ready (if needed) and pre-arrival information is sent to incoming staff. Also, liaises with RSO for security passes, airport passes, emergency contact list, and in-country travel request coordination.
- H. The incumbent is designated as POC for Country Clearance submissions and approvals through the eCC system, as well as File Custodian for OAA, responsible to upload documents and approved eCCs using ASIST. The incumbent is the primary timekeeper for OAA, collecting Time and Attendance (T&A) sheets from all the OAA staff, compiles these sheets and sends a consolidated report to the USAID main timekeeper. S/he will need to become proficient with WebTA, and other systems as needed.
- I. Arranges and submits MyServices requests for office related equipment needs, office and cell phone issues, updates/maintains phone lists, and supports USDH and TCN staff with official residential maintenance requests and needs.

9. POSITION ELEMENTS:

- a. **Supervision Received:**
 The Supervisory Contracting Officer or her/his delegate assigns work in terms of objectives and priorities. Assistance is provided on assignments. Employee exercises initiative and judgment in developing and coordinating the procurement actions from beginning up to award, in accordance with standard practices and established procedures.
- b. **Supervision Exercised:**
 None.
- c. **Available Guidelines:**
 Guidelines include Federal (FAR) and Agency (AIDAR) procurement regulations, USAID Automated Directives System, Mission Orders, and other Agency and Mission policies and procedures as applicable.
- d. **Exercise of Judgment:**
 Sound judgment is required to identify problems, provide guidance and make recommendations. A considerable degree of sound judgment is required in the analysis of costs, budgets, financial status and other characteristics of prospective contractors; in deciding what questions need to be asked to project officers and proposed contractors to ensure achievement of the acquisition objectives, purchase request or other instrument.
- e. **Authority to Make Commitments:**
 The Procurement agent will participate in discussions and negotiations with potential vendors for related to simplified acquisition procedures. Purchase orders and all obligation documents will be reviewed and signed by the Contracting Officer. The job holder is not authorized to commit or obligate USG funds.
- f. **Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts:**
 Daily contact with Mission staff, especially with the FMO, office chiefs, and team leaders or other technical team members including COR/AORs; may require occasional contact with Embassy procurement, mailroom services and shipping and customs staff; regular contact to be expected with counterparts, implementing partners and contractors, as well as with GOL officials and private sector business executives as needed.
 Contact is maintained with the Financial Management Office and other Mission officials to obtain statements of work/scopes of work, financial data, clarification on terms, conditions and specifications of proposed purchase orders and contracts. Frequent and continuing contact is maintained with present and potential contractors, vendors, and suppliers to clarify terms and conditions of contracts and other procurement documents.
 Time Expected to Reach Full Performance Level: One year.

10. AREA OF CONSIDERATION: Open to All Interested CCNs (Cooperating Country Nationals).

AIDAR, Appendix J. 1 (b) Definitions:
 (6) "Cooperating country" means the country in which the employing USAID Mission is located.
 (7) "Cooperating country national" ("CCN") means an individual who is a cooperating country citizen, or a non-cooperating country citizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the cooperating country.

11. PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The work requested does not involve undue physical demands.

12. POINT OF CONTACT:

All application packages are to be submitted:

Procurement Agent
 USAID/Liberia, C/O American Embassy Service Entrance,
 Gibson Street, Mamba Point, Monrovia
 Or by email to: Agatha W. Mangou, Human Resources Assistant, email: amangou@usaid.gov and
 Sylvester Browne, Human Resources Specialist, email: sbrowne@usaid.gov

11. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION

- a. **Education**
 Completion of a four year university degree in administrative areas to include but not limited to accounting, business administration, finance, marketing, procurement systems, or a related technical/liberal science (agronomy, computer science, ecology, education, environmental sciences, mathematics, political science, etc.) is required. Specialized training in U.S. Government and USAID acquisition and assistance is desirable.
- b. **Prior Work Experience**
 Three to five years of progressively responsible work experience, of which two years could be in procurement, logistics, international development, or related field with other donor organizations, international development organizations, civil society or community-based organizations, private sector, or host-government organizations.
- c. **Language Proficiency**
 Level IV (fluent) English skills are required with demonstrated fluency in both written and spoken English.
- d. **Clearances**
 The ability to obtain medical and security clearances (Public Trust level –building access) in a timely manner is required.

III. EVALUATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

- A. **Education—20 points**
 USAID will assess educational qualifications that increase the candidate's competitiveness for the position.
- B. **Relevant Work Experience – 40 Points**
 USAID will assess relevant work experience that increases the candidate's competitiveness for the position.
- C. **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities – 20 Points**
 Must possess strong analytical, communication and interpersonal skills. H/she must have strong command of the English language as well as strong computer, writing and speaking skills, including keyboarding/typing skills. Incumbent must possess highly developed organizational and task prioritization/tracking skills.
 Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective relationships at all levels within the Mission personnel, vendors, contractors, and high-level Embassy Officers. Incumbent must possess the ability to shift priorities as required and excellent customer service skills and be able to respond sympathetically to all staff in a timely and positive manner.
 H/she must possess excellent negotiation and persuasive skills. Ability to evaluate the capability of a contractor in terms of adequate productive facilities, current commitments, and financial status is desired. Incumbent must be skilled in determining the responsiveness of price and/or cost proposals, through analysis of cost elements. Must be able to speak authoritatively before USAID's personnel and counterparts to negotiate and represent the U.S. Government's best interests to both U.S. and host country individuals.
- D. **Communication and Computer Skills – 20 Points**
 Applicant skills in oral and written communication in the English language, including the ability to obtain, evaluate, and interpret reports, and to effectively communicate organizational mission and policies to staff and partners will be evaluated. USAID will evaluate the applicant's computer skills, including ease and skill in using MS-Office Suite of Applications and Google G Suite applications, and in using the internet to solve problems and conduct research on matters such as regulatory guidance and compliance.

Total possible points = 100

ADDITIONAL SELECTION CRITERIA

Management will consider potential nepotism/conflict of interest, and visa status when determining successful candidacy.

SELECTION PROCESS

After initial screening of applications, only short-listed applicants will be contacted and invited for an interview and a written exercise. Applicants selected for interview will also be evaluated on their reference checks.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications shall be submitted no later than the closing date specified, and should include the following:

1. A clearly typed application cover letter that briefly summarizes why you believe you are qualified for this position.
2. Resume or CV.
3. The names and contact details of three references that can attest to your procurement management experience.
4. Documentation (e.g. copies of certificates or degrees) that address the minimum requirements of the position.
5. One to two-page writing sample broadly related to procurement development in Liberia.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: The U.S. Mission provides equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Lawyers battle in ex-defense minister's trial

By Winston W. Parley

Prosecutors and defense counsels for former Defense Ministry officials have held their final arguments before the Criminal Court "C" in

pension.

Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay's ruling into the trial depends on when he will make an assignment, as hearing has been adjourned after the final

Commission (LACC), accused former Defense Minister Brownie Samukai, former Deputy Defense Minister Joseph Johnson and former Defense Ministry Comptroller Nyumah Dorbor of allegedly using their powers to usurp the authority of the people [soldiers] that they were supposed to represent.

The three officials have been on trial for allegedly embezzling funds generated through a compulsory savings scheme established in July 2009 in which soldiers' salaries were deducted and placed in an account as supplementary pension benefits for assistance to wounded soldiers and deceased soldiers' families.

The state alleges that over US\$1.2m of the US\$1.9m deposited was misapplied by the officials, with further claim that the defendants made themselves the only signatories to the account, leaving out the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and other ranking officers.

Cllr. Nwabudike argues that the defendants are not soldiers and were not qualified to contribute to the account, and therefore they were not also qualified to

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7



which the lawyers battled against opposing interests to convince the court either to convict or acquit the accused indicted for allegedly embezzling funds deducted from soldiers' salaries for

argument Thursday, 19 March at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia.

During the final argument, Cllr. A. Ndbusi Nwabudike, Executive Chairperson of the Liberia Anti-Corruption

Bishop Brown frowns on stigmatization

Bishop Kortu Brown, President of the Liberia Council of Churches frowns here on public stigmatization of the two individuals who tested positive of the coronavirus few days ago.

Bishop Brown warns that stigmatization will not help in the fight against the deadly coronavirus but scare people away, who might fall ill, but wouldn't avail themselves to health authorities for test and possible treatment.

He calls on churches to adhere to all health protocols, including foreign nationals

and avoid crowded areas or observe social distancing.

Liberia has confirmed two coronavirus cases after the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Mr. Nathaniel Blama, tested positive this week.

The government on Wednesday announced that after health authorities conducted tests on five primary contacts from the first case, four have tested negative.

Information Minister Eugene Nagbe says the contacts include the driver of the suspended EPA boss, Nathaniel



Bishop Kortu Brown

coming in to the country.

The Government of Liberia has banned travels from countries that have recorded 200 cases of the virus, among other regulations.

The LCC president says the deadly coronavirus could be eradicated from Liberia soon, if concerted efforts were realized through contributions of all - health workers, citizens and the government.

He reminds Christians to continue washing their hands with soap and chlorinated water, clean their environment, use sanitizers,

Blama, and another person who is said to have accompanied Blama to Switzerland.

According to the National Public Health Institute of Liberia, on March 9, 2020, case [Blama] travelled to Switzerland on official duty. He returned to Liberia on 13th March 2020 via SN Brussels airlines flight 241 at about 6p.m.

Onset of symptoms (fever and unproductive cough) was 14th March and sought over-the-counter medication on

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

LP wants rigid safety at RIA

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The opposition Liberty Party asks government to, with immediate effect, revisit safety measures at the Roberts International Airport and all border points of entry in the country to ensure they are effective.

The LP also recommends that government should reprimand all those responsible for allowing the suspended EPA director, Nathaniel Blama, to evade standing health emergency protocols at the RIA, which would serve as deterrence of a recurrence.

In further recommendations, the party wants to call in the paramilitary in effectuating a mandatory tracing of everyone with whom Mr. Blama had physical contact since his return to the country and ensure that they are quarantined as well as provide special emergency support to the press, health institutions, civil society organizations and local NGOs to begin a nationwide awareness.

The party says the authorities should close schools for a period of fourteen (14) days, consistent with the maximum incubation period for the COVID-19 to observe trend

deeply involved with awareness processes.

"We call on everyone within our country and those entering to adhere to all



of the current cases, regulate attendance at all public places and ensure that traditional and religious leaders, local government structures are

emergency health and safety measures that are being provided by the government and the International Community. Throughout the

history of our country, we have proven to be a resilient and courageous people. Let's make it our individual and collective duty to overcome COVID-19 more spectacularly and with zero fatality," a statement issued by the party reads.

"However, we did not envisage that COVID-19 would make its way into our population in a manner that was clearly preventable," it adds.

According to the party, confirmation from President Weah that the virus made its

way into the population through a senior official of government who made it a "choice" not to be tested and quarantined in keeping with prevailing protocols at the Roberts International Airport is disturbing, noting that Liberty Party is dismayed by the fact that the rule to have all travelers coming into Liberia from COVID-19 affected nations tested and quarantined would be subjected to arbitrary and individualized compliance.

Editing by Jonathan Browne

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Rep. Dopoh suggests more spending on health

By Bridgett Milton

River Gee County electoral district #3 Representative Francis Saidu Dopoh, II, wants government to delay all capital projects and direct increased spending on health facilities across the country.

Speaking to this paper Thursday, March 18, Rep. Dopoh encouraged his kinsmen in River Gee and Liberians in general they will overcome COVID-19 better than what they did with Ebola by not panicking, but following public safety rules pronounced by the National Public Health Institute of Liberia, while keeping faith in [God] Jehovah.

He said it is time State Owned Enterprises fulfill their contributions to the national budget to ensure availability of funds at all times for appropriate intervention.

He noted that reports had it that since October 2019, most, if not all of the hospitals and health centers in the counties lack budgetary allotment.

Dopoh added that as a matter of self-action, his personal finances and other resources will be directed only to assistance in enhancing the fight against spread of the

politicizing the issue.

Liberia confirmed two cases of coronavirus early this week after the executive director of the Environmental Protection Agency Nathaniel Blama tested positive upon arrival at the Roberts International



Representative Francis Saidu Dopoh

virus, especially to his native River Gee County.

The lawmaker reiterated call to Liberians to remain confident that COVID-19 will be defeated and avoid

Airport from Switzerland. Mr. Blama's domestic employee subsequently came down with the virus. They are both in quarantine. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Country devils besiege Zwedru Administration Building

A land crisis in Grand Gedeh has led two country devils or masked dancers to besiege the administration building

in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County, demanding release of more than two persons said to be currently in detention.

According to correspondent

from the county, the dispute is between the people of Bolikan and one Mr. Boyoi Beela, a resident of Zwedru over the land in question.

The case is presently before the Zwedru Magisterial Court, but the people of Bolikan are demanding the court to fast-track the hearings and come down with verdict.

The dispute has reportedly lingered for long, and overwhelmed local authorities, including Superintendent Kai G. Farley and the police, leading the locales to take the law into their hands.

The country devils are resolved not to leave the administration building until those in custody are released.



Bishop Brown

Cont'd from page 6

15th March from Lucky Pharmacy, 23rd Street, Sinkor, Monrovia.

The case-patient self-reported to the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) on the 15th March at about 10:43a.m. Sample was collected and tested at the National Public Health

Reference Laboratory. The positive test result was received at 3am on 16th March.

Meanwhile, the NPHIL reports that as of March 18, 2020, no new confirmed case has been reported and that both Blama and his domestic worker are alive, clinically stable and in isolation. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

Lawyers battle

Cont'd from page 6

benefit from that account, as he alleges that the accused had partly made expenditure before asking for authorization.

"They failed to produce evidence as to what they did with the money," he alleges, and says withdrawals were made 11 times for salaries.

Cllr. Nwabudike adds that even if the government pays the money, it does not suggest that the defendants are free of the crimes charged.

To counter a suggestion that government has agreed to pay back the soldiers' money, he argues that by 17 January 2018 [which was in a time of transition], outgoing President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf did not have the power to commit government to anything, as the Legislature was not seated to give approval to budgetary commitment by the president.

He pleads with the court to convict the defendants for having allegedly committed economic sabotage, theft of property, and misuse of public money.

But defense lawyer Cllr. Wilkins Wrights questions the prosecution as to why President George Manneh Weah committed himself to pay back the money if former President Sirleaf's commitment was invalid.

He accuses the state of persecuting and harassing the former officials, claiming that they are not being prosecuted but facing witch-hunt.

He argues that with the exception of "illegal orders," no defense minister would refuse to take the Commander - in - Chief's orders and instruction, saying "these people are not criminals."

"Your Honor, if the clerk follows your instructions, has he committed a crime?" he asks, and notes further that the defendants spent the money on the order of the Commander - in - Chief, former President Sirleaf.

"No matter how this case ends, these people got nothing to be ashamed of," he continues, as he tells State lawyers to be prepared to face similar consequences after President Weah's regime when new government comes.

"The thing is prosecution didn't produce any evidence that these people personally benefited anything," he adds.

Cllr. Wright says the State considers the AFL money as private money, and yet charges the accused for misuse of public money, saying "private money is not supported by public law, so we are asking you to please acquit and set the defendants free."

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Français

Le Libéria et la Banque mondiale signent un accord budgétaire de 40 millions de dollars

Le gouvernement du Libéria et la Banque mondiale ont signé un accord de financement d'un montant total de 40 millions de dollars américains à titre d'appui budgétaire direct pour l'exercice fiscal 2019/2020.

La cérémonie de signature a eu lieu au bureau de la Banque mondiale au Libéria le mercredi 18 mars 2020.

Le Ministre Libérien des finances et de la planification du développement, Samuel D. Tweah, représentait le gouvernement du Libéria, tandis que le Dr KhwimaNthara, Country Manager, représentait la Banque mondiale.

Le ministre Samuel D. Tweah, qui a signé au nom du gouvernement, a exprimé sa joie et salué l'équipe de la Banque mondiale au Libéria, l'équipe d'Accra-Ghana et le personnel de Washington DC pour leur approche bien coordonnée, qui a conduit à la cérémonie de signature réussie.

L'honorable Tweah a révélé que le financement est un soutien budgétaire et non un « paquet » pour la pandémie du Coronavirus.



«La signature d'aujourd'hui fait partie de l'exercice budgétaire 2019/2020 et elle est importante pour étayer les opérations du gouvernement. Oui cela est arrivé au moment où nous avons enregistré notre premier cas du coronavirus », a dit le ministre Tweah.

Il a déclaré que le gouvernement a aussi l'intention de rencontrer le Fonds monétaire international par l'intermédiaire de son chef de mission pour un soutien

possible au pays compte tenu de la situation économique à la suite de la pandémie de COVID 19.

Pour sa part, le directeur national de la Banque mondiale au Libéria, le Dr KhwimaNthara, a réaffirmé l'engagement de la Banque à soutenir le programme pour les pauvres pour la prospérité et le développement.

Dr Nthara a expliqué que

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Les employés non essentiels du gouvernement doivent rester à la maison

Tous les fonctionnaires non essentiels de l'Etat du Libéria ont été invités à rester chez eux jusqu'à nouvel ordre dans le cadre de la réponse continue du gouvernement libérien au COVID-19, a annoncé mercredi le directeur général par intérim de l'Agence de la fonction publique, James Thompson. Cette décision fait suite à la directive du président George Weah dans son adresse à la nation le lundi 16 mars 2020. Le président avait promis que tous les fonctionnaires non essentiels bénéficieraient d'un congé payé, après la confirmation du premier cas de coronavirus ici.

M. Weah a déclaré que la mesure vise à minimiser les contacts physiques et la transmission possible du virus.

Le directeur général par intérim de l'Agence de la fonction publique a affirmé que la question des employés

essentiels ou non essentiels ne devrait alarmer aucun fonctionnaire ni accroître son appréhension quant à la sécurité de l'emploi pendant cette période.

«Les employés non essentiels seront payés comme d'habitude et ce label ne diminue en rien votre importance dans la fonction publique. Nous avons besoin que de 25 pour cent de l'ensemble du personnel au travail », a-t-il déclaré.

« Nous encourageons également fortement les procédures recommandées et annoncées par les autorités sanitaires. L'avez-vous souvent les mains avec du savon et de l'eau ou utilisez un désinfectant pour les mains à base d'alcool. Évitez les gros rassemblements, ne touchez pas vos yeux, votre nez et votre bouche avec des mains non lavées et gardez votre sécurité », a ajouté Thompson.

Covid-19 : tension sur les masques

Alors que le Coronavirus gagne du terrain partout dans le monde, les populations tentent de trouver le meilleur moyen de se prémunir de la maladie, jetant leur dévolu sur les masques qui, malheureusement font défaut.

Les masques sont devenus indispensables dans la lutte

contre la maladie à Coronavirus. Cette protection est devenue nécessaire pour les citoyens du monde. C'est d'ailleurs ce qu'a compris le milliardaire chinois Jack Ma, qui a déboursé des milliards de dollars, investis pour la plupart dans l'acquisition de masques de protection qu'il a distribués partout dans le monde : en

Europe, aux Etats-Unis et en Afrique où la maladie poursuit sa croisée meurtrière.

Si la quantité de masques nécessaire est insuffisante, les populations ont aussi un autre souci : quel type de masque faut-il pour barrer la route au Coronavirus. Dans tous les cas, les masques se font de plus en plus rares. D'ailleurs, en France, un stock important de masques de protection a été volé, sans que les autorités ne sachent à quelles fins. Mais, il ne serait pas étonnant que ces masques soient destinés à la vente en ligne, dans la mesure où actuellement, en France, c'est une véritable tension autour de ce produit.

Des épidémiologistes ont toutefois effectué des sorties pour tenter de convaincre l'opinion sur le fait que le port de masque est inutile lorsqu'on n'est pas malade du coronavirus. Selon leur version, le masque ne doit uniquement être porté que par le malade avec comme objectif de ne pas propager la maladie en contaminant

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

SN Brussels suspend ses vols

Vu la propagation rapide dans le monde du coronavirus qui a également frappé certains pays africains, SN Brussels Airlines a annoncé qu'elle suspendrait ses vols en provenance et à destination de Freetown, en Sierra Leone, à partir du 21 mars jusqu'à nouvel ordre.

"Nous sommes heureux d'annoncer que Brussels Airlines suspendra ses vols au départ / à destination de Freetown à partir du 21 MAR 20 jusqu'à nouvel ordre", a indiqué un communiqué publié par la compagnie aérienne.

Le vol du SN241 le vendredi 20 mars sera le dernier. La compagnie aérienne encourage les passagers désireux de changer leur billet pour voyager avant le 21 mars à le faire gratuitement.

"Les passagers désireux de changer leur billet pour voyager avant le 21 mars peuvent changer leur billet gratuitement (différence de prix à payer, le cas échéant)", indique le communiqué.

En raison du flux de la demande, SN Brussels a affirmé que la priorité est donnée aux passagers qui souhaitent changer leur

billet à une date allant jusqu'au 20 mars, ajoutant que toute autre demande pourrait être traitée avec retard.

Le Libéria a confirmé deux cas de coronavirus après que M. Nathaniel Blama, un haut fonctionnaire du gouvernement de retour de Suisse a été testé positif à la maladie à l'aéroport international de Roberts au cours du week-end.

Pendant ce temps, le gouvernement a annoncé mercredi que sur les cinq tests effectués sur des principaux contacts du premier cas de coronavirus dans le pays par les autorités sanitaires, quatre se sont révélés négatifs.

Le ministre de l'Information, Eugene Nagbe, a déclaré que les contacts comprenaient le chauffeur du patron suspendu de l'Agence de protection de l'environnement, Nathaniel Blama, et une autre personne, qui aurait accompagné Blama en Suisse.

Le seul autre contact dont le résultat est avéré positif est Johnny Phillips, le domestique de M. Blama, selon le gouvernement.



Français

Le Libéria et la Banque mondiale signent un

l'accord de financement se présente sous deux formes, et qu'il comprend 20 millions de dollars américains sous forme de don et 20 millions sous forme de crédit IDA. Il a indiqué que la signature avait été approuvée le 17 mars 2020 par le Conseil d'administration de la Banque mondiale.

"Le financement n'aurait pas pu arriver à un meilleur moment pour le Libéria, étant donné les défis budgétaires auxquels le pays a dû faire face en raison de nombreux chocs", a déclaré le Dr Nthara.

Il estime que les défis budgétaires sont susceptibles d'être exacerbés par les impacts sanitaires et économiques de la pandémie du COVID 19.

« Nous prévoyons également de revenir prochainement à notre conseil d'administration pour demander l'approbation d'un soutien supplémentaire dans le cadre de la facilité accélérée récemment annoncée pour aider le Libéria à lutter contre la pandémie de COVID 19 », a-t-il assuré.

Il a révélé que le gouvernement du Libéria avait mis en œuvre et continue de mettre en œuvre diverses réformes, dont la

première était de stabiliser la macroéconomie, qui a abouti à l'approbation du programme du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) en décembre, l'année dernière.

Il a souligné que les deuxièmes réformes qui soutenaient l'appui budgétaire visaient à éliminer les distorsions et les contraintes pesant sur la croissance économique ainsi qu'à faire en sorte que les populations les plus pauvres et les plus vulnérables du Libéria soient protégées contre les effets néfastes des chocs économiques.

De plus, a-t-il dit, lorsque ces réformes seront mises en œuvre, cela améliorera la disponibilité de semences de qualité dans le pays. Selon lui, les réformes sont également essentielles à la transformation des secteurs agricoles. Il a également mentionné le nouveau plan de la Compagnie d'Electricité du Liberia.

Outre les réformes susmentionnées, il a révélé que le gouvernement avait informé la Banque qu'il était en train de mettre en place un registre social national des ménages qui servirait de plate-forme pour l'objectivité, en identifiant et en ciblant les bénéficiaires de divers programmes de protection sociale.

Covid-19 : tension

d'autres personnes avec leurs sécrétions, et par le personnel soignant dans le but d'éviter de se faire contaminer. Une version très contestable et même contestée, lorsque l'on sait que le citoyen lambda a aussi besoin de se protéger pour se prémunir.

Lorsqu'on sait par ailleurs que le masque est devenu une denrée rare, l'on pourrait comprendre par cette précision des spécialistes que leur théorie vise à réduire cette tension autour du masque. Le masque s'est en effet fait rare au point que l'armée française ait été obligée de puiser dans ses réserves cinq millions de masques mis à la disposition des autorités sanitaires du

pays.

En Afrique, c'est le même cas de figure. Au Sénégal, par exemple, les masques chirurgicaux, qui se monnaient à moins de dix centimes d'euro (50 FCFA) ont vu leur prix unitaire grimper et avoisiner les trente centimes d'euros (200 FCFA). Des prix qui ont quadruplé du fait de la pandémie du Coronavirus. A condition qu'on en trouve bien entendu, car la denrée se fait rare aussi sur le continent. Même scénario autour du gel antibactérien alcoolisé. Les prix ont flambé, passant du simple au double. Ce qui a d'ailleurs poussé les autorités à taper du poing sur la table, menaçant les opérateurs véreux de lourdes sanctions.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Donna Dickenson, Katie Hasson & Marcy Darnovsky

L'édition du génome humain héréditaire n'est pas ineluctable

LONDRES - L'annonce faite par le biophysicien chinois He Jiankui en novembre 2018 selon laquelle il avait créé les premiers bébés au monde génétiquement modifiés - une infraction flagrante aux codes éthique et juridique qui lui a valu une peine de prison de trois ans - a remis les débats sur l'édition du génome humain héréditaire sur le devant de la scène. Mais ces débats sont fondamentalement biaisés. Compte tenu des enjeux - pour les sociétés actuelles et pour les générations futures - il est urgent de réorienter le cours de ces discussions.

Certains scientifiques, futuristes et autres font valoir le caractère inéluctable de l'édition du génome héréditaire - la modification des embryons ou des gamètes afin de produire des enfants génétiquement modifiés qui transmettront les gènes et les traits modifiés à leur propre descendance. Ces partisans semblent supposer que, dans l'ensemble, cette avancée serait probablement une bonne chose - pour autant que nous attendions que la technologie soit « sûre » et qu'elle s'applique dans les bonnes conditions. Dans ce contexte, ils se concentrent principalement sur l'élaboration d'une feuille de route détaillée pour progresser dans cette voie.

Les organisateurs du Sommet international de 2018 sur l'édition des gènes humains, qui s'est tenu quelques jours après l'annonce faite par He, ont déclaré : « il est temps de définir une approche translationnelle rigoureuse et responsable vers » des essais cliniques sur l'édition des génomes héréditaires. Cette déclaration allait dans le sens des conclusions précédentes de l'organisation britannique du Nuffield Council on Bioethics et des National Academies of Sciences and Medicine aux États-Unis. Les National Academies américaines, ainsi que la Royal Society du Royaume-Uni, ont ensuite fondé la Commission internationale sur l'utilisation clinique de l'édition du génome germinal humain pour remplir cette mission.

Mais comme nous l'avons récemment soutenu - avec l'appui de 18 autres dirigeants de la société civile, bioéthiciens, scientifiques et avocats de 11 pays - dans la Déclaration de Genève sur l'édition du génome humain héréditaire, cette approche reflète un certain nombre d'hypothèses profondément problématiques. Avant de commencer à essayer de fixer des normes sur la manière et le moment où les scientifiques pourraient modifier génétiquement des enfants à l'avenir, nous devons nous demander s'ils ont le droit de le faire.

De nombreux éléments plaident en faveur de l'interdiction totale de l'édition de gènes héréditaires. Comme le fait remarquer la Déclaration de Genève, c'était le consensus des débats antérieurs sur le sujet, qui remontent aux années 1990. Ce consensus est mentionné dans les lois de dizaines de pays et dans des traités internationaux tels que la Convention d'Oviedo, un accord contraignant du Conseil de l'Europe.

Tout comme la Déclaration de Genève, le consensus précédent n'a pas rejeté tous les types d'édition du génome. Si l'on parvient à rendre cette technologie sûre, efficace et, idéalement, abordable, elle pourrait être un outil puissant dans le traitement de certaines maladies. Mais les débats passés ont conclu que l'édition du génome ne devrait pas être utilisée pour modifier le profil génétique des futurs enfants ni de leurs descendants.

Et ne nous y trompons pas : l'édition du génome héréditaire n'est pas une intervention médicale qui sauve une vie. Elle ne traite ni ne guérit aucune personne existante. Elle vise plutôt à créer une future personne sans variante génétique nocive, ou dotée d'un trait désiré.

En outre, l'argument selon lequel l'édition du génome est nécessaire pour empêcher l'héritage de troubles génétiques est sans fondement. Au cours des 20 dernières années, ce que l'on appelle le diagnostic

génétique préimplantatoire - qui filtre les embryons créés par fécondation in vitro - permet aux parents à risque d'avoir des descendants génétiquement apparentés qui ne sont pas affectés par leurs troubles génétiques.

L'omniprésence d'idées fausses de ce type est l'une des raisons pour lesquelles la Déclaration de Genève appelle à une réorientation du cours de ces discussions dans les débats publics et politiques sur l'édition du génome héréditaire. Un autre aspect est que les débats ont généralement mis l'accent sur des considérations scientifiques, tout en ignorant ou en minimisant le contexte social dans lequel les efforts de modification de l'héritage risquent de se produire.

Il est dangereux d'ignorer les modèles systémiques de discrimination sociale et de stratification, ainsi que le poids des forces commerciales et de l'expérience historique. L'héritage de l'eugénisme à lui seul - et son apothéose dans « l'hygiène raciale » nazie - devrait servir d'avertissement à tout un chacun, et pourtant les partisans de l'édition du génome héréditaire ont généralement tendance à ne pas en tenir compte.

Il est certain que les programmes d'eugénisme coercitifs parrainés par l'État ne risquent pas de réapparaître. Mais une version commerciale, façonnée par des arguments de marketing et par les choix individuels de consommateurs, est un risque très réel. Si les techniques d'édition du génome de type CRISPR sont mises en place en médecine de la reproduction, alors les cliniques de fertilité ne vont pas manquer cette occasion de proposer bientôt aux parents suffisamment riches de procéder à des « mises à niveau » génétiques.

La troisième dimension essentielle de réorientation nécessaire du cours de ces discussions est celle de l'inclusivité. Parce que l'édition du génome héréditaire risque d'affecter tout le monde, un large consensus public est essentiel avant toute prise de mesures. Pourtant, les scientifiques et les bioéthiciens professionnels ont jusqu'à présent monopolisé la majeure partie de la conversation.

Tous ceux qui risquent d'être affectés par l'édition du génome héréditaire ne peuvent pas participer au débat. Après tout, nous parlons d'apporter des changements génétiques qui risquent d'être transmis à tous les descendants d'une personne. Cela soulève le problème épineux des « générations futures » qui hante depuis longtemps la tradition philosophique : nos descendants n'ont pas leur mot à dire sur les choix que nous faisons - notamment sur notre décision de continuer à déverser du dioxyde de carbone dans l'atmosphère - mais ils devront faire face aux conséquences.

Dans le cas d'une technologie qui risque d'être commercialisée aux riches comme moyen de produire des descendants « biologiquement supérieurs », ces conséquences risquent de fixer pour longtemps une nouvelle forme d'inégalités fondamentales. Il y a de grandes chances que les implications sociales de ce résultat soient profondes et terrifiantes.

Permettre d'entretenir un débat public efficace englobant une large gamme de voix - en particulier celle des défenseurs des droits de l'homme, des chercheurs en sciences sociales et humaines, des artistes, des personnalités religieuses, de ceux qui souffrent de maladies génétiques et de ceux qui n'en souffrent pas - va demander des ressources humaines et financières importantes. L'appel de la Déclaration de Genève à clarifier et à reformuler la question est une initiative qui plaide en ce sens.

L'utilisation éventuelle d'une modification du génome héréditaire n'est pas une décision que nous pouvons prendre à la légère. On ne peut certainement pas la considérer comme un choix que nous aurions déjà fait



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LIBERIA 2019 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

CONT'D FROM LAST EDITION

LIBERIA 21

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019
United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

exclusive original jurisdiction over cases of sexual assault, including abuse of minors, and was presided over by two authorized judges. According to the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, there were 1,508 gender-based violence cases as of July, and rape accounted for almost 70 percent of the cases reported. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against persons younger than 18 accounted for 73 percent of cases referred to the ministry. Observers believed the true incidence of statutory rape was much higher than the number of rape cases reported.

The government operated two shelters for SGBV victims, victims of trafficking in persons, and others in need of protection--one in Lofa County and one in Nimba County. The government did not operate shelters in Monrovia. There were five other shelters across the country, but they were not operational at year's end. The Sexual Pathways Referral Program, a combined initiative of the government and NGOs, improved access to medical, psychosocial, legal, and counseling assistance for victims. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection assigned gender coordinators and staff members to each county office to increase public awareness of SGBV crimes and refer victims to assistance. The ministry also established "buddy clubs" in public schools across the country for children to discuss and report SGBV cases. LNP officers received training on SGBV through programs sponsored by the EU Spotlight Initiative and the UNDP.

An overtaxed justice system prevented timely prosecutions and delays caused many victims to cease cooperating with prosecutors. Victims' families sometimes requested money from the perpetrators as a form of redress; perpetrators sometimes offered money to prevent matters from going to court. Authorities often dropped cases due to a lack of evidence. The Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS) of the LNP reported that courts dropped 51 percent of reported domestic violence cases due to lack of evidence. The ability to collect and preserve evidence of SGBV crimes was also insufficient.

Although outlawed, domestic violence remained a widespread problem, and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection stated 16 percent of reported cases were for domestic violence.

In August the legislature passed and the president signed into law the new Domestic Violence Act, which reportedly strengthened penalties and provided support for a referral mechanism, although as of December the final text of the law had not been published. The existing maximum penalty for conviction of domestic violence was six months' imprisonment, but the government did not enforce the

LIBERIA 22

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019
United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

law effectively. The WACPS received reports on 579 cases of domestic violence between January and September, a 32-percent decrease from the 764 cases reported during the same period in 2018. Government and civil society officials suggested that decreased capacity in the courts led victims to seek redress outside the formal justice system.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): A 2013 UNICEF study estimated that 66 percent of girls and women ages 15 to 49 had undergone FGM/C, and the practice remained widespread. In 2018 then president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf issued an executive order to prohibit FGM/C of all persons younger than age 18 and of persons older than 18 without their consent, but the order lapsed early in the year. No FGM/C perpetrators were prosecuted during the year.

In April, Front Page Africa reported a 25-year-old woman was drugged, abducted, and forcibly subjected to FGM/C as part of ritual initiation into the Sande Society, where she was held for three weeks. The victim alleged that someone in her family had paid approximately 3,000 Liberian Dollars (LD) (\$15) for the initiation and procedure.

There were public statements supporting limiting or prohibiting FGM/C. In June the National Council of Chiefs and Elders and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with support from UN Women and the EU Spotlight Initiative, agreed to suspend for one year the activities of "bush schools"--traditional schools in which girls learn farming and household skills but were often subjected to initiation rites including FGM/C. The Sande

and Poro Societies--often referred to as "secret societies"--combine traditional religious and cultural practices and engage in FGM/C as part of their indoctrination ceremonies. A number of human rights organizations reported bush school activities and FGM/C continued, despite the ban.

The government routinely decried FGM/C in discussions of violence against women, although there remained political resistance to passing legislation criminalizing FGM/C because of the public sensitivity of the topic and its association with particular tribes in populous counties. NGO representatives stated there was little political will within the legislature to take on the issue of FGM/C.

Other Harmful Traditional Practices: Many observers, including the INCHR, the Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform, and the human rights office of the United Methodist Church, reported an apparent uptick in harmful traditional practices, including ritualistic killings, trial by ordeal, and accusations of

LIBERIA 23

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019
United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

witchcraft, but the government and NGOs did not collect comprehensive data. There were reports of killings in which perpetrators removed body parts from the victims. In May, two boys went missing from Kingsville, Montserrado County, and their bodies were discovered on June 3, reportedly mutilated with body parts removed. Most news reports referred to the incident as a ritualistic killing or the activity of "heart men"--individuals who remove organs for ritualistic purposes.

There were multiple cases of life-threatening violence against persons accused of witchcraft during the year. In September a jury in Buchanan convicted seven men and sentenced each of them to 45 years in prison on charges of murder, aggravated assault, criminal facilitation, and criminal conspiracy for their roles in a December 2018 attack against three women accused of witchcraft. After the women were accused of eating a child as part of a ritualistic practice, they were stripped, paraded through town, beaten, assaulted with palm branches and nettles, and raped; one woman was killed.

During the year reported incidents of trial by ordeal included heating a metal object until it glowed red and then applying it to the accused's skin, beatings, inserting sharp objects into bodily orifices (including the vagina), and forcing women to parade naked around the community.

Sexual Harassment: The Decent Work Act prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace, but it remained a significant problem at work and in schools. Government billboards and notices in government offices warned against harassment in the workplace. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education trained school administrators, students, and parents from seven of the 15 counties to identify warning signs and report incidents of sexual harassment and violence in schools.

Coercion in Population Control: There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization.

Discrimination: By law women may inherit land and property, are entitled to equal pay for equal work, have the right of equal access to education, and may own and manage businesses. By family law, men retain legal custody of children in divorce cases. In rural areas traditional practice or traditional leaders often did not recognize a woman's right to inherit land. Programs to educate traditional leaders on women's rights, especially on land rights, made some progress, but authorities often did not enforce those rights.

LIBERIA 24

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019
United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Children

Birth Registration: The nationality law stipulates children of "Negro" descent born in the country to at least one Liberian parent are citizens. Children born outside the country to a Liberian father are also Liberian citizens. Nevertheless, they may lose that citizenship if they do not reside in the country prior to age 21, or if residing abroad they do not take an oath of allegiance before a Liberian consul before age 23. Children born to non-Liberian fathers and Liberian mothers outside of the country do not derive citizenship from the mother.

If a child born in the country is not of "Negro" descent, the child may not acquire citizenship. Non-"Negro" residents, such as members of the large Lebanese community, may not acquire or transmit citizenship. The law requires parents to register their infants within 14 days of birth, but only 25 percent of children younger than age five had birth certificates. Even more women than usual did not give birth at health facilities during the Ebola crisis, resulting in thousands of unregistered births. The

UNICEF and the Liberia Council of Churches took steps to register these children.

Education: The law provides for tuition-free and compulsory education in public schools from the primary (grades one to six) through junior secondary (grades seven to nine) levels, but many schools charged informal fees to pay for teachers' salaries and operating costs the government did not fund. These fees prevented many students from attending school. By law fees are required at the senior secondary level (grades 10 to 12).

Girls accounted for less than one-half of all students and graduates in primary and secondary schools, with their proportion decreasing progressively at higher levels. Sexual harassment of girls in schools was commonplace, and adolescent girls were often denied access to school if they became pregnant. Nonetheless, the country made significant progress in narrowing the gender gap at all levels of education, especially in primary school where the gender parity index went from 88 girls per 100 boys in 2008 to 95 girls for every 100 boys in school in 2017. Students with disabilities and those in rural counties were most likely to encounter significant barriers to education. Only 14 percent of girls in rural areas completed primary school.

Child Abuse: Child abuse was a widespread and persistent problem, and there were numerous cases reported throughout the year. In June, Front Page Africa

LIBERIA 25

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019
United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

reported pastor Brown Sneh put two children on public display in downtown Monrovia and accused them of witchcraft, prompting them to give "confessions" and telling passersby that he had cured them of demonic possession. Children, especially those with disabilities, were occasionally accused of witchcraft and demonic possession and used as props for adults who claimed to be able to cure them.

Numerous reports of sexual violence against children continued, and the government engaged in public awareness campaigns to combat child rape. According to the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, more rape victims were reported in the 13 to 17 age group than in any other. In June, Criminal Court A sentenced 21-year-old steel worker Saah Joseph to 30 years' imprisonment for raping and murdering 15-year-old Vivian Wright after reportedly offering her \$20 to sleep with him and growing angry when she refused to consent to anal sex.

The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection reported removing children from the immediate reach of the perpetrators and placing them in safe homes. In 2017 the ministry launched a "child hotline" to report crimes against children, but as of November the number was not functional.

In June, Solomon Joah Jr., dean of student affairs at the private Soltiamon School, lashed a 16-year-old student multiple times across her buttocks for supposedly leaving class without a pass; the student said she left class because she needed a sanitary pad. The Ministry of Education noted that corporal punishment is banned, recommended Joah's removal, fined the school LD 350,000 (\$1,660), and ordered the school to pay the cost of the student's medical treatment. On July 2, both Solomon Joah Jr. and school proprietor Solomon Joah Sr. were charged with aggravated assault and criminal facilitation.

In June the More than Me girls' academy announced that it would cease running schools in the country following financial difficulties stemming from a 2018 report that an employee had sexually assaulted or raped up to 30 students. As of November the government had not released its report on the situation.

Early and Forced Marriage: The 2011 National Children's Act sets the minimum marriage age for all persons at 18, while the Domestic Relations Act sets the minimum marriage age at 21 for men and 18 for women. The Equal Rights of Customary Marriage Law of 1998 permits a girl to marry at age 16.

LIBERIA 26

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019
United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

With support from the EU Spotlight Initiative and the United Nations, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection continued the "End Child Marriage" campaign that began in 2016. During the year the ministry communicated with traditional leaders and community members in five counties in their local languages to raise awareness of the illegality and harm of child marriage.

TO BE CONT'D

Officials face arrest, dismissal

By Ben P. Wesee

Information Minister Lenn Eugene Nagbe says President George Manneh Weah has mandated a Presidential Taskforce to arrest any official of government that will breach health measures and protocols in the wake of cases of Coronavirus in Liberia.

The pronouncement came Thursday, 19 March at a press conference where the Liberian authorities along with international partners, assembled to give the public update on preparation made and measures taken so far in the fight against the disease here.

Liberia's two coronavirus cases include the indefinitely suspended executive director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Mr. Nathaniel Blama and his domestic worker.

Mr. Nagbe says during an earlier meeting with President Weah ahead of the press conference, a lot of new measures were put in place, which include the closing of

the VIP lounge at the Roberts International Airport (RIA) to all government officials.

"The President of Liberia has mandated and ordered the arrest of any official of his government in a meeting with the Presidential Taskforce and some high level security officers and furthered that he will dismiss that official and

turn that official over to be prosecuted in line with law," Mr. Nagbe says.

Minister Nagbe furthers that there is also an arrest warrant for anybody including members of the government that will misinform the public, pointing out that the time of speaking wrongly and misleading the public is over.



Mr. Nathaniel Blama

Mayor Jefferson Kojjee

Rep. Yekoh Kolubah

Sen. Darius Dillon

The Minister continues that President Weah also appeals to the media not to allow their platform to be used by those that don't mean well for the people of Liberia in the time of the deadly Coronavirus that is spreading globally.

"How can you give credence to someone who will not [want you] to wash your hand? Please don't listen to those people, they don't mean well for the country. This is not time for politics, people as such should wait for the election time and not this time," he warns.

Mr. Nagbe stresses that no lawmaker is above the law of the country, as he dares any lawmaker to repeat the misleading of the public or misinform the public, saying they will get arrested and prosecuted according to the law.

He also commends the public for the level of cooperation since the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the country and further discloses that the two people that were tested positive of the deadly Corona virus are coping with treatment.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Samuel Tweah, disclosed at the briefing that the World Bank has provided an immediate amount of US\$1.5 Million to help the

Government of Liberia in fighting the virus.

The briefing, planned earlier for 11am Thursday, at the National Public Health Institute of Liberia was eventually held jointly at 7pm in the conference room of the Ministry of Information.

It followed back and forth shuttling by the acting NPHIL director Doctor Masoka Fallah between the Ministry of Health and the Executive Mansion that led to a lengthy meeting with President George Manneh Weah and international partners.

Responding to the annoying delay that ran into about nine hours, Deputy Information Minister for Public Affairs, Eugene Fahngon told reporters state radio and other media institutions willing to stay until 7pm will cover the conference, pointing that there is no other important news equal to update on the Coronavirus.

"Journalists in the great United States of America had to wait for five hours before President Trump could address the nation; there is no big news than the Corona virus anywhere in the world, so if you want to wait, you can but of you don't want to, you can leave because we're not going to keep anyone hostage," the Deputy Minister said. *—Edited by Winston W. Parley*

House approves national census for 2021

By Ethel A. Tweh

The House of Representatives adopts Joint Resolution 003/2020, authorizing the Executive branch of government to conduct National Census on March 8, 2021.

Article 39 of the Constitution of Liberia empowers the National Legislature to take census every 10 years. The last national census was conducted in 2008. The pending one should have been conducted in 2018, but was not held due to unforeseen circumstances.

Upon the passage of the joint resolution, the National Legislature mandates the Executive to proceed with all necessary arrangements to

carry on the census in 2021.

Maryland County Senator J. Gble-bo Brown, in a motion said the resolution should be received by plenary, but noted it shouldn't be sent to the committee on autonomous agencies which is led by Senator J. Milton Teahjay of Sinoe County.

Senator Brown explained there are so many communications and documents before Sen. Teahjay, but he has allegedly failed to bring out findings to the senate, terming the committee on autonomous agencies as dormant.

Against this backdrop, Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert Chie has constituted an ad-hoc committee to take seize of the resolution and report to plenary.

The committee is headed by Bong County Senator Henrique Togba. Members of the committee are Senators Victor Waton of Grand Cape Mount County, Stephen Zargo of Lofa County and George Tengbeh of Lofa County, respectively.

In October 2019, the Government of Liberia and partners signed the 2021 National Population and housing Census Project Document in Monrovia with an estimated cost of US\$18.9 million.

The Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel Tweah, who chairs the Board of Directors of the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services (LISGIS) and the Director-General of LISGIS Professor Francis Wreh signed for government, while the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNFPA Resident Representative to Liberia, Dr. Bannet Ndyanabangi and the Ambassador of Sweden to Liberia, Ingrid Wetterqvist signed for their respective institutions and government.

The Director-General of LISGIS, Professor Wreh recalled that in 172 years, Liberia has conducted four census programmes, beginning with 1962, which produced a population of 1.2 million; 1974, a population of 1.5 million; 1984, a population of 2.1 million and 2008, a population of 3.1 million, respectively. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Ngafuan praises

Starts from back page

of an independent Central Bank of Liberia.

He also highlights that Mr. Taylor selected astute and top-notch professionals to serve in the senior management and the board of the bank as required by the Central Bank Act to steer clear from national politics.

He continues that the Central Bank of Liberia under Taylor was widely regarded as an epitome of monocracy where honor graduates from the University of Liberia (UL) and other universities were recruited without political [alignment] and other preconditions.

"I commend President Weah for his recent State of the Nation Address committing his government to measures

aimed at upholding the integrity and independence of the bank," he notes.

Mr. Ngafuan expresses hope that the Weah-led government can muster the fortitude to stay this course, indicating that macro-economic refers to the behavior and performance of the economy as a whole and deals with aggregate variables.

Quoting IMF 2018 report, Mr. Ngafuan explains that micro-economics indicates that stability is a situation where these major aggregates grow or evolve in a steady and durable way, whereby inflation is under control, the financial system is sound ... and the economy is resilient to shocks and is not likely to face crisis." *—Edited by Winston W. Parley*

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Ngafuan praises Taylor



Augustine Kpehe Ngafua



Ex-Pres. Charles Ghankay

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Former Foreign Affairs and Finance Minister Augustine Kpehe Ngafua has hailed imprisoned former President Charles Ghankay Taylor for protecting the integrity and dignity of the Central Bank of Liberia

(CBL).

Speaking recently at a forum, Mr. Ngafua asserted that Mr. Taylor is condemned for many things that he did that were not right, but he says the former president is however commendable for protecting the integrity and dignity of the

CBL.

Mr. Ngafua recalls that Mr. Taylor ensured the passage of appropriate legislations to improve the soundness of the financial system here and to provide for the establishment

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



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Mikel leaves Trabzonspor over coronavirus fears

Former Chelsea midfielder Jon Obi Mikel has left Turkish club Trabzonspor because games in the country are still going ahead.

Mikel, who made 368 appearances for Chelsea between 2006 and 2017, said he did not feel comfortable with top-flight games in Turkey being played during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Super Lig is one of the few sporting competitions still active and is currently completing fixtures behind

closed doors.

It was confirmed in a statement that the Nigerian, who joined the club last year and had a deal until May 2021, has had his contract terminated by mutual consent.

FA: Everybody wants to finish season Redknapp: PL has to help small clubs

"There is more to life than football," the 32-year-old had said on Instagram on Saturday.

"I do not feel comfortable and don't want to play football in this situation. Everyone should be home with their families and



loved ones in this critical time. "Season should be cancelled as the world is facing such turbulent times."

As part of his deal to depart the club, Mikel has forfeited any future payments from Trabzonspor.

Five of the most prominent leagues in Europe - England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France - as well as the Champions League and Europa League, have all been suspended, but Turkish league games are going ahead without fans present.

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