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JFK closes maternity hospital



-over confirmed Covid-19 cases



Pres. Weah

Stimulus package faces hitches

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Continental News

Boko Haram confronts Buratai with mortar gun attacks in Borno camp

Boko Haram insurgents on Thursday launched an attack on the Army Special Super Camp at Ngamdu, a border town between Borno and Yobe where Gen. Buratai has relocated to launch a final onslaught on the insurgents. This daring attack by the insurgents is coming barely 72 hours after the Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. Buratai sent a damning message to

defeat the insurgents within a very short.

The Nation reports that the Chief of Army Staff at the 2020 Special Easter celebration with the troops at the Camp promised to stay with them until the insurgents are "substantially degraded".

But the insurgents Thursday tested their confidence by launching a daring attack on the camp even as Gen. Buratai and

his officers were currently at the camp apparently mapping out strategies on how to execute his final blow on the insurgents.

Impeachable sources at the camp who are not authorized to speak with the press revealed that the insurgents came in motor gun trucks from the south-western side of the camp and opened fire on the camp.

Other sources also revealed that mortar guns were launched in the camp but no fatality was recorded. Some of the troops were said to have sustained minor injuries.

Our correspondent gathered that Buratai ordered the troops to chase the ranting insurgents away and warned them to focus on a bigger target.

"The Chief of Army Staff told the soldiers to see what happened as a distraction from the main operation that they are going to carry out. But we defended ourselves very well by repelling them," the source said.

Another source revealed

that the insurgents could have been angered by an earlier advance operation that the troops carried out yesterday.

"We suspect it was the advance operation that we carried out yesterday that got them angry and they decided to come to attack us. You know we killed some of their men in the operation and captured others alive so they were angry," he informed.

The Acting Director, Army Public Relation, Colonel Sagir Musa,

could not reply messages sent to him even when this reporter called him and he promised to respond to his messages.AFP



Security forces kill more Nigerians than coronavirus

Security forces enforcing the lockdown in parts of Nigeria have killed more people than coronavirus itself, a local rights group says.

Evidence of the killings comes from members of the public who rang their hotline or sent in videos, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) adds.

It says law enforcers have killed 18 people in Nigeria since lockdowns began on 30

March, says the Council on Foreign Relations.

In its report about Nigeria's coronavirus lockdown period, the NHRC, a government agency, said it had found "8 separate incidents of extrajudicial killings leading to 18 deaths".

In total the group said it received more than 100 complaints across 24 of

Libya to impose 24-hour curfew over coronavirus

The UN-backed government in Libya has imposed a 24-hour curfew for 10 days to prevent the spread of

coronavirus.

The curfew will start on Friday, Reuters news agency reports quoting a statement from the government based in

the capital, Tripoli.

The country has 48 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and has reported one death. It recorded its first case on 24 March.

All vegetable and meat markets will be closed during the curfew, according to Anadolu agency, but bakeries and some shops will remain open.

Libya has been wracked by conflict since the 2011 uprising which ousted long-time leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Operations at al-Khadra hospital, one of the main hospitals in Tripoli, were suspended last week after it was repeatedly targeted in bombardments.

The government's supporters have blamed the attacks on forces from eastern Libya under the control of renegade General Khalifa Haftar.BBC



Forces loyal to Gen Khalifa Haftar have been shelling the capital Tripoli.



Nigerian security forces have a reputation for brutality

March.

Coronavirus has killed 12 people, according to health ministry data.

Nigeria, which has a population of about 200 million people, has reported 407 cases of coronavirus but there are fears it could spread quickly in overcrowded parts of the country.Nigerian security forces have a reputation for brutality.

At least 1,476 people were

Nigeria's 36 states - including Lagos, Ogun and Abuja. Those three parts of the country this week had their two-week lock down extended.

Other areas have set a variety of restrictions, which have seen the police and army called out to enforce them.Nigerian security forces have not responded to the NHRC's report.

But earlier this month,

EDITORIAL

Bring all of the technicians onboard

THE WOMAN APPOINTED recently by President George Manneh Weah to coordinate the country's COVID-19 fight, Mary T. Broh, has taken the bull by the horn by enlisting key technicians on a national structure to lead the fight.

WE NEED TRAINED and experienced public health practitioners, including doctors, nurses and health care workers to defeat COVID-19. And we hail Madam Broh for her line-up of statisticians and other technocrats to execute the job.

WITH DOCTORS JERRY Brown, Wilehlmina Jallah, Francis Kateh and others being brought onboard, Liberia is surely mobilizing frontline commanders to take this global pandemic head-on.

HOWEVER, WHAT IS needed urgently in this fight is government support, particularly funding, logistics and requisite supplies to dispatch professionals in the field.

WE ARE VERY optimistic that with all hands on deck and proper coordination, divorced of politics, Liberia would, in the words of former NPHIL boss, Tolbert Nyenswah, "get ahead of the curve."

MADAM BROH SHOULD also mobilize County Health Teams across the country, including the 3,000 contact tracers that were actively involved in eradicating Ebola out of Liberia.

SHE WOULD NEED political support at the highest level in order to succeed. Mary has never been a failure. She will not fail in this COVID-19 fight.

ORDINARY LIBERIANS TOO have a role to play in containing and expelling coronavirus out of Liberia, as they did to Ebola in 2015, by observing all preventive health measures.

HOW WE CONDUCT ourselves as a nation in coming months, would demonstrate our sincerity and commitment to defeating the virus and therefore, maintain continuous support from international partners and friendly governments.

THIS IS A fight to save humanity and we need all of our best generals both at home and abroad to join in this war against an invisible and common enemy. With God above and our resolve and resilient to win, victory is certain!

COMMENTARY

By Arancha González

How Global Public Health Could Revive Multilateralism

In the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, national responses are vital, but in the medium term, international cooperation will be our best weapon. And reforming and reinforcing the institutions and mechanisms that underpin such cooperation will be our best defense against future global threats.

MADRID - As the world struggles to contain COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on our lives and livelihoods, it should be clear to everyone that international cooperation is the only effective way to win the battle. National responses are vital, but in the medium term, multilateralism will be our best weapon in this fight - and our best defense against future global threats.

My country, Spain, is on the front lines of the pandemic. The coronavirus hit us earlier and harder than most other countries. We are mourning thousands of deaths. Our health system has been put to an extreme test. The public is enduring long confinement with exemplary civic duty. And we have had to take unprecedented measures to safeguard our economy.

As governments, our primary responsibility is toward our nationals. But we know that no country will be completely safe until all control the pandemic and, eventually, eradicate it. Our initial international disunion has only strengthened our enemy, moving us further away from our shared goal.

Drawing on some of the lessons we are still learning, we urgently need to devise a more effective approach to global public health that integrates new international, European, and national policies and initiatives.

First, at the international level, we need a more effective framework to prevent, detect, and respond to diseases and pandemics, rooted in reinforced institutions and new mechanisms designed to prevent some of the failures we have witnessed. The new institutional arrangements should be based on a revitalized and reformed World Health Organization, with wider mandates and greater enforcement authority. The WHO ought to have the capacity to design and impose better protocols for preparedness and reaction, compel data sharing, and mobilize whatever resources are needed.

A global health framework with teeth must also be agile enough to cover the whole chain of public-health interventions, from scientific research and early warning to policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. That's why, aside from necessary reforms of the WHO's decision-making process and its Emergency Committee, the potential of other international platforms and organizations to contribute to the global health system we need should not be overlooked.

For example, the G20 and the G7 can help marshal the necessary political will. The World Bank and other regional development banks are uniquely well positioned to mobilize resources toward health-care reform. And organizations like the OECD have the analytical firepower to distill best health policies and practices. Overall, we need to advance a "one health approach" that brings together the environmental, economic, social, and security dimensions of public health.

Second, the European Union should provide a model of preparedness and crisis management that other regions might emulate, by pooling

resources and devising new mechanisms for joint action. Besides leading in the establishment of a new and stronger global health framework, the EU can and should improve its own internal coordination. After all, it was sectoral collaboration on coal and steel that gave birth to the EU, the most innovative global governance mechanism that the world has seen. A similar level of ambition is now needed to combat the health challenges we share.

Deeper European integration in this area would yield several significant benefits. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control should gain greater autonomy and resources. A real European Crisis Management Unit could be established, with the means to ensure a rapid response to an emergency. Systematic stress tests on national health systems should also be conducted to assess EU members states' resilience against shocks. Like the rigorous stress tests conducted on our financial sectors, the process should allow for shortcomings to be addressed, best practices to be shared, and coordination tools to be developed.

Moreover, the EU should invest in joint databases, medical reserves, and stockpiles. Likewise, it should harmonize protocols and foster scientific collaboration on developing treatments and vaccines. In the immediate term, European countries should cooperate on a coordinated transition strategy to restart the economy without triggering a new outbreak.

Finally, at the domestic level, we all have much to do - as a duty not only to ourselves and our countries' inhabitants, but also to our neighbors and the international community at large. In Spain, we will establish a commission to assess the state of our health-care system and fix its weaknesses and shortcomings. But, because we know that pandemics affect the world's most vulnerable people the hardest, we will also reinforce our health diplomacy. Strengthening national health systems requires sharing our experience with other countries and learning from theirs, as well as placing a higher priority on health-sector reforms in our development cooperation.

If we take steps like those proposed here, this pandemic will leave us better prepared for the next one. But we should seek a bigger silver lining. International cooperation on health issues should be extended to other global "public bads" that we have failed to address effectively: climate change, armed conflicts, poverty, rising inequality, international migration, nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and more. The urgency of these challenges may seem less pressing now, but the threats they pose to all of us persist.

In our interconnected world, we need to revive multilateralism by making it more coherent and fit for purpose. That means reinforcing the institutions and mechanisms that work, reforming or eliminating those that don't, and creating those we need. This crisis reminds us of our fragility and the importance of international unity. It leaves no doubt that we are in this together. And it makes clear why we should view closer cooperation on global public health as a catalyst for the multilateralism we need.

The New Dawn
FULLY INDEPENDENT



Lord, Oga don waste it wawa

Dear Father:

Hmm, dis one here water don passed gari ooh. You mean Oga couldn't get one paper straight to back him small sef? So you want tell me say, all the walka, Ogadeywalkayamfu, yamfu beating his chest da he be native, it be 419 abi? My son why you dey worry yourself?

Father, dis one na complete embarrassment be dis one oo. But nawhatin get in Jorweah head to put this man to our village voting house sef. Hena know da big problem he want put himself in?

My son, don't blame Jorweahoo, blame the people who tell him say dis Ogana correct person for the job.

But Father, Jorweah too he na go think say this one da wahala he dey look for. He too he na get idea for himself- naeverything the people tell him, he can do?

The Oga say de time weh him be small pekin da de time weh he feel naturalized. Hmm. But it look like in 1982, the small, small children them were doing big, big things-it na be small oo. Puah, so he want tell us say them was having computer in 1982- let the Oga go and sleep jor.

Father, the thing weh I dey tell you ehn, the Oga get too much dry face. He feel say the Chiefs at the Traditional Council them all be mumu and he feel dribble pass them. Him age, he say da University puttan there for him school record. But my son what about him age in his passport?

Oh, Father Oga say he don be responsible for themistake the people make with him age in the passport too. He says, as they puttan so he sef, he feel use.

Um, this one him hard to believe oo. But the way things are going ehn Father, me I want believe that one big man feel help Oga to get all him fake papers-my name oo! It could true oo my son.

Yes Father, because nawhatin would make Oga brave to be moving here and there like one Ekwa, he moh be depending on something.

Ehn, but Father, whatever he was depending on, things na catch him correct, correct now. This one he no feel escape.

The man is too greedy and he can lie too. Da the one me sef I can understand. If you know get something, say I don't have. But he lie too much.

Now, you tell me Father, like this na who can trust him with our village election? You see why it na good to lie. Because you feel say when you tell one lie, you for continue to tell more lies, to cover the other lies.

See what he na do to himself. Its na all the food dey offer you, you can eat. Some food you have to say no, so that you will not disgrace yourself. You see what Oga don do to himself. He was able to beat the system to get everything, now the system is coming to get everything back from him.

OPINION

By Robert Skidelsky

Will COVID-19 Put us Right with Nature?

The COVID-19 virus, as frightening as it now seems, may ultimately fail to jolt humanity out of its profligate habits. But instead of regarding the pandemic as merely another problem requiring a technical fix, the world should see it as an opportunity to rethink humanity's relationship with the planet.

LONDON - One of the few things not in short supply in the COVID-19 era is commentary on the pandemic. Understandably enough, the virus has generated a non-stop flow of news about its spread, instructions on how to avoid and survive it, analysis of its causes and treatment, and conjecture about its impact on work habits, mental health, the economy, geopolitics, and much else.

My own period of home detention has produced the following reflections, which I add with some diffidence to the chorus of expert voices.

To begin with, I read Klaus Mùhlhahn's book *Making China Modern*. In Chinese cosmology, Mùhlhahn notes, the human and natural worlds were inextricably linked. "When the proper order was respected, the physical world ran smoothly and the human world prospered," he writes. But, "when that order was not respected, anomalous or destructive events, such as earthquakes, floods, eclipses, or even epidemics, would take place."

In what sense might COVID-19 be the result of not respecting the "proper order" of things? In Chinese thought, the proper order is about proper rule, and this includes maintaining the right relationship between the human and natural worlds. A pandemic indicates that our way of life has come to violate that relationship.

The health expert Alanna Shaikh thinks there will doubtless be many more epidemics as "a result of the way that we, as human beings, are interacting with our planet." This includes not just human-induced global warming, which is creating a more hospitable environment for pathogens, but also our push into the world's last wild spaces.

"When we burn and plow the Amazon rainforest [...], when the last of the African bush gets converted into farms, when wild animals in China are hunted to extinction, human beings come into contact with wildlife populations that they've never come into contact with before," Shaikh says.

This includes closer-than-ever encounters with bats and pangolins, both of which have been identified as potential sources of COVID-19. So long as we fail to respect nature's autonomy, nature will hit back.

One can draw either large or small conclusions from this line of thought. The conclusion that Shaikh draws is a small one, perhaps because the broader inference is too unpalatable for most people. We need, she says, to build a global health system good enough to enable countries to respond quickly to epidemics and prevent them from becoming pandemics. Each country should be able to identify, quarantine, and treat its infected citizens immediately.

One way to help achieve this, I think, would be for G7 governments to issue a global COVID-19 bond, with the proceeds going to a reformed World Health Organization that has a specific mandate to build up all countries' medical capacities to developed-world levels. (Admittedly, even the latter has proved insufficient in the case of COVID-19.) This WHO spending should be in addition to the World Bank's development expenditure.

Shaikh makes another very sensible point. "Just-in-time ordering systems are great when things are going well," she says. "But in a time of crisis, what it means is we don't have any reserves." So, if a hospital or a country runs out of personal protective equipment, it has to order more from a supplier (often in China), and wait for them to produce and ship the goods.

This critique applies to much more than medical procurement; it challenges the prevailing just-in-time orthodoxy in business. Reserves, the argument goes, cost money. Efficient markets don't require firms to have inventories, but rather just enough "stock" to satisfy consumers at the point of demand.

Holding financial reserves in case of a rainy day is also wasteful in this view, because in efficient markets there are no rainy days. So, firms should be leveraged to the hilt.

This is fine as long as there are no unexpected events. But when the world experiences a "shock" like the 2008 financial crash, the efficient-market model collapses, and with it the economy. Something like this is happening to our medical services now.

It follows that "just in time" needs to be replaced by "just in case." Ideally, some global authority should keep a strategic reserve of medical supplies needed to support life for a limited period (say, three months) in the face of a specified set of public-health threats. This reserve should be financed by taxes levied on national governments in proportion to their countries' national incomes. But such stockpiling can also be done nationally or regionally: the European Union would be an ideal place to start.

None of this, however, addresses the far bigger question of the proper relationship between humans and nature. In a 2014 lecture, the science writer Stephen Petranek listed eight events that could end the world as we know it: pandemics, solar flares, giant earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, biological accidents, greenhouse effects, nuclear war, and a collision with meteors. Four of these would be "natural disasters" - that is, cataclysmic events which do not result from the way we order life. But the other four - pandemics, biological mishaps, nuclear war, and global warming - would result directly from the way humans interact with nature.

The COVID-19 virus, as frightening as it now seems, may eventually turn out to be so mild and controllable that it fails to jolt us out of our habits. Indeed, the psychologist and Nobel laureate economist Daniel Kahneman thinks that "no amount of psychological awareness will overcome people's reluctance to lower their standard of living."

But we would be unwise to continue relying on technical fixes to get us out of any hole that our profligate lifestyles land us in, because sooner or later we will run out of medical solutions to the problem of "proper order." We should use our enforced downtime to ponder what solutions would work.

A PATRIOT'S DIARY

A PATRIOT'S DIARY

With Ekena Wesley

Is Deputy Justice Minister - Nyenti Tuan An Evil Minister? Angry Mother of 3 vents Frustration

A fellow Liberian, last week - in person of Ms. Jamesetta Taylor - a mother of three and a resident of Monrovia was as it were forced to flare-up her frustration in a Facebook post: "Deputy minister of Justice 'nyenetutuan' hit my three children with the ministry of Justice car, and the police report told him that he was in the wrong. He using his power not to treat my kids. I am going to seek Justice for my children. Evil minister." The Deputy Minister Nyenti Tuan must come clean for being indicted by enraged Ms. Jamesetta Taylor, trio's mother - whose kids were reportedly knocked down by Tuan's assigned government assigned vehicle along the Tubman Boulevard in Congo Town.

In Liberia, if the Deputy Minister of Justice cannot assure the citizenry of some form of deserved 'justice' - should the people indulge in lawlessness? This is a concern we would entreat Deputy Minister - Nyenti Tuan to address as a responsible father and as public servant of the people. Today, the fate of three Liberian children lie in a state of uncertainty due to recklessness and irresponsible driving by a sitting public official or his driver - who has failed to exercise nothing less than commonsense. Our people cannot be guaranteed any iota of hope especially when one of the very people who preside over the dispensing of justice is a culprit in meting out injustices.

When the poor mother of the three kids initially realized that justice was farfetched even after the Liberian National Police (LNP) ruled that Deputy Minister Nyenti Tuan's car was in the wrong - she chose to act out of frustration by resorting to Facebook folks. Did she go there to get justice? Maybe or maybe not! He dismay landed her there. First, since the police do take instruction from or are directed by folks at the Justice Ministry - there was no point relying on the police for justice. But she was confidently hopeless. Secondly, she thought by publically shaming and naming Deputy Minister Nyenti Tuan - he would opt for reform to show remorse. It was a vague thought that didn't materialize. In our part of the world, politicians are not remorseful and so she was mistaken as it were.

But an apparently hopeful Jamesetta Taylor thought to confidently assure herself: "I am going to seek Justice for my children." Let's underscore 'children' since they are a reflection of her precious jewels. He manifested the trappings of indeed a true mother, who like any jealous hen that has recently hatched - there is always that overwhelming tendency of protection for its newborn chicks.



Jamesetta might not have the biggest gun or the loudest voice but her three children mean so much to her and would not rest until justice is served. While we want to applaud Jamesetta's courage; our only fear is that the Deputy Justice Minister sits at the same Ministry she is endeavoring to seek justice - if you may. Will she be pouring John's palm oil on John's rice? It is anybody's guess!

When public officials are assigned 'official vehicles, they take responsibility for whatever happens to those assets - while such properties are in their custody. Jamesetta did not say - Deputy Justice Minister - Nyenti Tuan's private vehicle but official government-assigned vehicle, which the young lady described as "ministry of Justice car." Accident is not deliberate let alone intentional - although when it turns out to be an act of carelessness - it still carries the tag 'accident'. Mind you, some accidents are avoidable!

We have no doubt that Deputy Justice Minister - apart from being human - does have a sense of morality as it were. Whether he was driving or indirectly through his driver - the police said he was at fault. It is unfortunate that he would choose to deliberately ignore a life endangered situation that he cannot blame on the victims. We asked about Deputy Minister Tuan's sense of morality because these kids could be his and as a father, much could be expected of him. Would he like to treat his kids as such? What would be his response had someone trespassed or transgressed those of his children? Should it necessarily be his kids to attract his sanity or humanness? Deputy Minister Nyenti Tuan - according to the LNP was wrong and as such he must face it. It doesn't take away any kind of 'good-for-nothing title' from him.

Already COVID-19's rampaging scare is keeping folks from seeking attention at health centers for treatment. The fate of a poor Liberian child lying bandaged hangs in uncertainty. Meeting routine medical expenses remains a challenge. In our complex sociology where most of our young ladies carry the burden as single mothers - what can we expect? If Deputy Minister - Nyenti Tuan must indeed be seen as truly responsible for rendering justice to the abused - it must be reflected through deeds and concrete actions. He is not above the law and cannot be allowed to go scout free. His flagrant disregard for accepting traffic offense he is liable for could similarly translate into outright abuse of the justice system.

For those who know and understand the motor traffic history in Congo Town; the stretch of Tubman Boulevard from SKD Junction to the St. Joseph Catholic Hospital intersection is a vehicular death trap. LNP's Motor Traffic Division records whooping deaths toll severally. Pedestrians' movements are often ignored thus resulting

in countless casualties from time to time - folks. Despite the unprecedented deaths toll along the Congo Town enclave - motorists continue to drive mindlessly - thereby endangering the lives of their occupants and pedestrians alike. Disappointingly, Deputy Minister Tuan who should lead by example in what has become a reckless trend - has selected to exacerbate so inane a tendency - that runs contrary to any civilized practice.

Seeking justice at the Ministry of Justice is one thing but being alive to bear testimony to truth after all efforts are mobilized remains entirely another bottomless pit. If remedy must be an option for Jamesetta, what's about the Gender Ministry - in charge of 'Women, Children & Social Protection'? Can the Female Lawyer Association, Civil Society or our religious groups weigh in? An attack on any Liberian child should constitute a naked attack on all Liberian children. The children are the future; they deserve protection from us all including Nyenti Tuan who sits in a strategic position at the Ministry of Justice. We challenge legal aid clinics being operated in Liberia to take up the matter.

But we cannot compromise or adopt 'hanky-panky' with the health and well-being of those innocent kids. They too deserve a wholesome



functioning future. We pity Jamesetta Taylor - who is internally - physically and emotionally going through a lot at this time; grappling with COVID-19 on the one hand and desperately seeking medical assistance for her beloved kids. She doesn't deserve such treatment and so too should anyone be subjected to such inhumane insensitivity visited on her due to Nyenti Tuan's failure to act gentlemanly.

It is not too late for the Deputy Minister to make amends since to forgive is 'divine'. He cannot predict who any of those kids might turn out to be let alone refuse to lend a human face to the tragedy that befell the three kids. As humans, our destiny is not determined by mankind but Our Creator. Let not this tragedy become explosive for Nyenti Tuan. We have seen in human history how 'kind words' reversed catastrophes. Deputy Minister Tuan must do the honorable thing now!

As an integral part of the Supreme Court Bar; Deputy Minister Nyenti Tuan will for a long time to come live with - "LET JUSTICE BE DONE TO ALL" - by either adding value or declaring futile the struggle for justice in our infant democracy. Helping to show love and care for the poor kids at this time must challenge his inner being as well as our collective judgment and humanity.



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Liberians secretly flee to Guinea?

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

The NewDawn's Bong County correspondent has gathered that some residents of Panta and Zota Districts have fled to neighboring Guinea, using a secret border

Wednesday, 8 April which took effect on Saturday, 11 April in an effort to combat coronavirus in Liberia.

Our correspondent who toured the districts this week says some of the houses in towns in the two districts have been abandoned by their

have had domiciles in Guinea through family connections.

In Malanyahn, our correspondent says three houses are emptied with no account of the inhabitants' whereabouts, while in Kpamue; two houses that used to accommodate more than 11 persons have also been deserted.

Kpamue Town Chief John Gweayea says some of the citizens of his town had earlier told him that they were going to cross the border to Guinea without telling him when they would have done so.

Mr. Gweayea told our correspondent that the residents' decision to leave Liberia is due to the declaration of the state of emergency here, citing starvation and insecurity as key factors that may have prompted their journey.

He believes that those who may have left the country might just be around the Liberia-Guinea border.

Garmai Tuayah, a mother of six children says if she had a husband, she would have followed her friends to cross the border, saying she is afraid of the way things are going

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



path following the declaration of a state of emergency by President George Manneh Weah recently.

President Weah declared the state of emergency on

occupants as some of the citizens are said to have fled to Guinea due to their fear of security forces.

A source told our correspondent that many of those who have left the country

Violent storm leaves over hundred homeless in Gbarnga

By Joseph Titus Yekeran in Bong

A violent storm has made more than one hundred persons homeless in Gbarnga, Bong County after removing the roof of about 22 houses in the Chief Compound Community.

Our correspondent says some victims of the disaster which occurred on Wednesday, 15 April have explained that the situation is a complete setback for them, as they call on authorities in the county and the government here for their intervention.

The victims narrate that even though the tragedy occurred at a time where the country is in serious crisis, government's intervention is needed at the moment if their lives should be saved.

According to them, it is frustrating to see their houses being unroofed by storms during a time of health crisis in the country as they struggle to provide daily meals for their children.

Our correspondent who visited the scene says some victims of the disaster are



widows and physically - challenged people.

A pregnant woman has also requested for the philanthropists' aid after being cut by zinc during the incident and got severely injured.

"I am pregnant as you can see, and my husband is not even here. He left in Grand Bassa the State of Emergency started taking effect, so right now I

really need the support of anyone," she says.

Our Bong County correspondent says zinc, woods and nails are some of the things the victims are seeking. The disaster also saw the roof of a Church and a provision shop removed.

Meanwhile, Bong County Inspector Victor Wesseh has stressed that there is a need

Liberia Consoles Togo

President George Manneh Weah has sent a condolence message to the Government and people of the Republic of Togo, following the death of H.E. Mr. Edem Kodjo, former Togolese Prime Minister and former Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the AU.

The former Togolese Prime Minister died Saturday, April

irreparable loss sustained.

"It is with profound sadness and deep sorrow that we have learned of the death of one of Africa's son," President George Weah declared.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, President George Manneh Weah further recounted that former Prime Minister Kodjo was a distinguished statesman who



11, 2020.

In the message to his Togolese counterpart, H. E. Mr. Faure Gnassingbe, President George Manneh Weah, on behalf of the Government and people of Liberia, extended heartfelt condolences to the Togolese leader, and through him, to the Government and people of Togo, especially the bereaved family for the

will be remembered for his profound patriotism, his loyalty and selflessness in serving his country and people.

The Liberian President also prayed that the Almighty God will grant President Faure Gnassingbe and the people of Togo strength, courage and fortitude as they go through this difficult period of national mourning.

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for philanthropists and the government to quickly intervene in the situation.

"We are calling on any goodwill individual to come in

quickly to help these people because if that is not done, it might result to something else," Mr. Wesseh concludes.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley

LIBERIAN CIVIL SOCIETY CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO SAVE LIVES FIRST!

As representatives of wider Liberian communities and societies, a cluster of Civil Society Organizations hereby acknowledge and recognize the Government of Liberia for prioritizing and taking various measures in taking lead to provide national response in the fight against COVID-19. We appreciate the difficulty of the decisions that you are taking to preserve the lives and well-being of Liberian citizens.

We look forward to seeing the multi-sectoral national COVID-19 response plan and hope that you will partner in good faith with Civil Society, as we have an integral role to play and unified, collective action will be key to kicking COVID-19 out of Liberia!

At the same time, we remain apprehensive and extremely concerned over several issues in the Government-led national response.

In these extremely critical, and life-threatening moments, a comprehensive national response is crucial in defeating COVID-19. As Civil Society Organizations, we hereby urge the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of Government, donors and development partners pay immediate attention, respond and act on the following issues: We urge the Government to develop and deliver a unified national response based on expertise and not driven by partisan politics. This does not mean that actions and decisions should go unchallenged. A healthy opposition is key to a healthy democracy. This means that the response should be driven by experts and appointments be made based on merit and not party or personal loyalty.

We call on the mandated institutions to provide clear, complete, correct and consistent information on COVID-19 national response including testing and contact tracing. The public needs you to be transparent and truthful about life saving and other assistance such as food relief, non-food items etc.

We call aloud on government to protect human rights and enhance civic space in this crisis and thereafter. Government must immediately adopt, in cooperation with civil society, a comprehensive policy that ensures people's human rights and freedoms, including rights related to protection and access to information.

While some initial plans are underway to provide a social safety net for Liberians, Government must recognize and prioritize the needs of people in vulnerable situations including women, children, elderly, people with disabilities, people with compromised health, people living in rural communities, homeless people, survivors of violence and people living in poverty as well as people living in underserved communities.

Importantly, we urged government to adopt an integrated gender-based approach into the response plan to address special needs of women, girls and violence occurring during this outbreak and have a robust response mechanism in place.

Critically, we call on government, donors and development partners to be transparent and accountable in utilization of locally mobilized resources and donor funds. Civil Society is attuned to the risk of corruption and Liberians are already concerned about corruption and fraudulent use of these funds, as we witnessed same during the Ebola outbreak.

Lastly, we would like to urge the government of Liberia especially through the Ministries of Justice, Gender Children and Social Protection, Health and Security apparatus to provide accessible space and increase response to the spate of violence against women and girls during and after the State of Emergency. The COVID-19 pandemic has a disproportionate harmful impact on women's and girls' ability to enjoy their human rights and the severity of domestic violence, including intimate partner violence, against women and children will likely surge as tensions rise during this crisis. Women are on the front lines of the health sector where they form 70% of the workforce and, at home, the disproportionate burden of care work they shoulder will increase.

In conclusion, as the voice of the wider Liberian society, we also wish to draw attention of national response stakeholders to stigma associated with the virus and do hereby appreciate steps taken by the Ministry of Health and MICAT not to disclose personal identity of persons tested positive. We thereby encourage strict adherence to none disclosure of identities to avoid stigmatization and minimize trauma. We call on MICAT to unreservedly work with the media to provide news coverage on COVID-19 in a way that encourages the public to take effective action to help combat the disease and to avoid fuelling fear and stigma. An environment needs to be created in which the disease and its impact can be discussed and addressed openly, honestly and effectively.

We appreciate the difficulty of the decisions that you are taking to preserve the lives and well-being of Liberian citizens. We look forward to seeing a multi-sectoral intersectional gendered national COVID-19 response plan and hope that you will partner in good faith with Civil Society, as we have an integral role to play and unified, collective action will be key to kicking COVID-19 out of Liberia!

This CSOs' Position Paper is signed by all Civil Society Organizations listed below:

Foundation for Community Initiative (FCI)
 Organization for Women and Children (ORWOCH)
 Sisters Aid Liberia Incorporated (SALI)
 Paramount Young Women Initiative (PYWI)
 Helping Our People Excel (HOPE)
 Community Healthcare Initiative (CHI)
 South Eastern Women Development Association (SEWoDA)
 United Youth for Peace, Education, Transparency and Development in Liberia
 Livelihood Development Centre (LDC)
 Restoring Our Children Hope (ROCH)
 WestPoint Women for Health & Development Organization (WWHDO)
 National Union of Organizations on Disabilities (NUOD)
 Natural Resource Women Platform (NRWP)
 Her Voice Liberia
 Rural Education Sponsorship Enhancing Communities Together (RESPECT)
 National Institute for Public Opinion and Kids Educational Engagement Project (NIPPO)
 Kids Education Empowerment Program

SUPPLEMENT

CHICO to continue road construction

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Authorities in Bong and Lofa Counties in collaboration with the China Henan International Cooperation Group (CHICO) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) have agreed to resume construction works on the Gbarnga-Salayea road despite coronavirus spread here.

CHICO is a Chinese state-owned construction and engineering company held by the provincial government of Henan.

A one-day meeting convened by Bong County Superintendent Esther Walker on Tuesday, 14 April at CHICO's premises in Zota District was graced by AFL Commander in Bong County John Marshall, and local delegations from Lofa and the management of CHICO.

The construction company is known for being part of the "vanguard of the country's Africa drive".

The joint leadership agreed to continue the construction works as the coronavirus ravages across the country and the rainy season fast approaches.

Speaking at the meeting, head of CHICO Lu Xian Jin thanked the both counties' leaderships for giving the go-ahead to his company to continue the work.

He said the completion of the route is crucial in the midst of the current global pandemic.

"I want to say thanks to the

leadership of the two counties. Indeed you are eager for development that ensures the progress of a nation because when the road is completed, it will create the free transport of goods and services," Mr. Jin said.

Also speaking at the meeting, Bong County Superintendent Esther Walker cautioned the company to go ahead with the construction works, but follow all preventive measures of Covid-19.

"Right now we all know that even though the coronavirus is here, but the rainy season is fast approaching so we need to allow the company to continue its operation, but should take into

consideration all the necessary preventive measures prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) of Liberia," she added.

Madam Walker promised to ensure that a team will monitor the day-to-day operations of China-Liberia based

construction company in adhering to the mandate given as a means to fight the virus.

Superintendent Walker further mandated CHICO to maintain their current workforce and avoid recruiting new workers as a means of curtailing the spread of the virus at work.

She said the fight against this deadly virus during the construction period is the responsibility of CHICO, the Armed Forces of Liberia and the joint leadership of Bong and Lofa Counties.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley



CPP checkmates

Starts from back page

Given how small Liberia is and the interconnectedness of the people here, the CPP avers that it seems unjustifiable that there is a county in Liberia that can be excluded from the government's food aid program.

In the proposal, the CPP notes that the government has said that the cost of the food aid is US\$25M and could go up to US\$40M, but did not say how long such amount will supply "designated" counties for.

"Is it one month, two months or six months? We don't know," CPP ponders, and notes that before approving US\$40 million for a food aid program, the Legislature needs to ensure that the funding requirements for an effective holistic fight against COVID-19 are secured, including adequate and prompt payment of salaries and incentives of health workers.

It also calls for the purchase of equipment including ventilators, personal protective equipment and hospital beds, and among others.

The opposition bloc further calls on the Legislature to assure itself that the government has the capacity to make timely payment of civil servants' salaries, as the current delay in the monthly payment of civil servants' salaries is still an issue of concern.

The CPP urges government to identify the proposed sources or budget lines that will be cut to fund the US\$25 million program and specify the

World Bank projects that will suffer cuts in order to fund the food aid program.

"When convinced about the availability of fiscal space to fund the holistic COVID-19 fight, priorities in the food aid program should be given to orphanage ...; the elderly, the disabled community and other vulnerable groups," the group continues.

It calls for a comprehensive distribution plan to be developed that clearly addresses issues such as who benefits, the frequency of distribution as well as the composition of the food aid.

"This strategy must be approved by the Liberian Legislature," the statement urges.

The collaborating parties mandate that the government includes WFP as a core member of the National Steering Committee that should work out a purchasing and distribution scheme of food supplies that are inclusive of all local producers and importers of staple food.

It suggests that WFP and UNFPA should play distribution roles in those counties that have been mandatorily locked down.

"To raise the public confidence in the fair distribution of the food aid program, the committee in charge of the food aid should incorporate representations from recognized and

Français

Plan de relance : l'opposition se veut prudente, soupçonnant une intention de fraude

Le manque de clarté sur le montant réel requis dans le plan de relance proposé par le président George Manneh Weah, notamment le remboursement des dettes des petits commerçants auprès des banques, pourrait ouvrir la porte à de graves fraudes et abus comme la vadrouille des 25 millions de dollars américains, préviennent les sénateurs issus de l'opposition.

"Si le pouvoir législatif approuve ce plan, il aura donné carte blanche au président. Cela n'est pas dans la Constitution, même en cas d'état d'urgence", ont averti les sénateurs issus de l'opposition lors d'un débat houleux mercredi 15 avril au Capitole.

Les sénateurs Nyonblee Karnge Lawrence, Jonathan Kaipee, J. Milton Teahjay, Daniel Naatehn et Darius Dillon ont déclaré que le président n'a pas précisé le nombre exact de commerçants qui bénéficieront de ce plan et le montant total qui sera remboursé. Pour eux, il existe un flou dans ce plan.

Ils remettent fortement

en question le fait que le président ait remis son plan de relance au parlement pour ratification sans préciser qui sont les bénéficiaires et les créanciers.

Dans la communication qu'il a présentée au Parlement, le président Weah a proposé le paiement par le gouvernement de l'intégralité des dettes dues par les petits commerçants auprès des banques dans les comtés touchés dans le cadre

de la réaffectation budgétaire demandée.

Dans sa réponse, le groupe parlementaire de l'opposition a dénoncé un manque de transparence. Il craint que cela n'ouvre la voie à de graves fraudes et abus. L'opposition a dit se souvenir des 25 millions de dollars américains qui étaient destinés à éponger

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Etat d'urgence : de faux soldats arrêtés

La Sécurité conjointe a arrêté deux personnes qui se faisaient passer pour des soldats des Forces armées du Libéria (AFL).

Les suspects Tony Koffa et Eugene Shaman ont été arrêtés par la police nationale du Libéria et des soldats de l'armée libérienne à Monrovia.

Le ministre adjoint de la

Défense chargé de la communication et des relations publiques, Sam Collins, a déclaré que le suspect Sherman, un ancien soldat, portait un pantalon uniforme de l'armée. Il a été arrêté près de Bong Mines, à Bushrod Island, alors qu'il harcelait des citoyens pacifiques sous le couvert de l'application de l'état

d'urgence et du confinement, tandis que le suspect Koffa a été arrêté dans la communauté de Garnesville, commettant un acte illégal similaire.

Le ministre Collins a expliqué que les deux imposteurs ont été remis à la police pour enquête.

Il a rassuré le public comme quoi l'armée reste vigilante dans l'application du confinement sans brutaliser les gens. Il a mis en garde contre toute tentative d'imposture, notant qu'une telle pratique est inacceptable.

Le porte-parole de la police, Moses Carter, a quant à lui révélé que la police a arrêté un total de sept contrevenants qui sont actuellement en détention pour avoir usurpé l'identité d'agents de la sécurité nationale.

M. Moïse a promis que les droits fondamentaux de tous les citoyens et des ressortissants étrangers

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Éditorial

Amenez tous les techniciens à bord

La femme récemment nommée par le président George Manneh Weah pour coordonner la lutte contre le COVID-19, Mary T. Broh, a pris le taureau par les cornes en enrôlant des techniciens clés dans une structure nationale pour mener la lutte.

Nous avons besoin de professionnels de la santé publique formés et expérimentés, y compris des médecins, des infirmières et des travailleurs de la santé pour vaincre COVID-19. Et nous saluons Madame Broh pour sa formation de statisticiens et d'autres technocrates pour exécuter le travail.

Avec l'arrivée des médecins Jerry Brown, Wilehmina Jallah, Francis Kateh et d'autres, le Libéria mobilise sûrement les commandants de première ligne pour affronter de front cette pandémie mondiale.

Cependant, ce qui est nécessaire de toute urgence dans ce combat, c'est le soutien du gouvernement, en particulier le financement, la logistique et les fournitures nécessaires pour envoyer des professionnels sur le terrain.

Nous sommes très optimistes qu'avec les mains sur le pont et une bonne coordination et sans interférence politique, le Libéria, selon les mots de l'ancien patron de NPHIL, Tolbert Nyenswah, "remportera la victoire face à cet ennemi tueur".

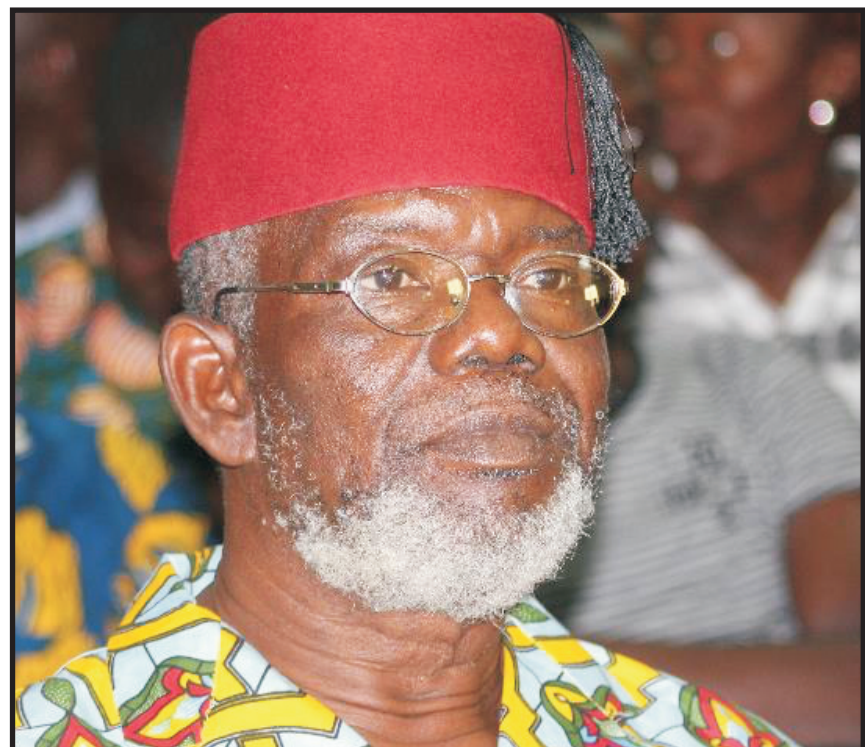
Madame Broh devrait également mobiliser les équipes régionales de santé à travers le pays, y compris les 3000 traceurs de contact qui ont activement participé à l'éradication d'Ebola du Libéria.

Elle aura besoin d'un soutien politique au plus haut niveau pour réussir. Mary n'a jamais été un échec. Elle n'échouera pas dans ce combat contre COVID-19.

Les Libériens ordinaires ont également un rôle à jouer pour contenir et expulser les coronavirus du Libéria, comme ils l'ont fait pour Ebola en 2015, en observant toutes les mesures de santé préventives.

La façon dont nous nous comporterons en tant que nation au cours des prochains mois démontrera notre sincérité et notre engagement à vaincre le virus et, par conséquent, maintiendra le soutien continu de partenaires internationaux et des gouvernements amis.

C'est un combat pour sauver l'humanité et nous avons besoin de tous nos meilleurs généraux, au pays et à l'étranger, pour participer à cette guerre contre un ennemi invisible et commun. Avec Dieu au-dessus et notre détermination et notre résilience pour gagner, la victoire est certaine !



Français

Plan de relance : l'opposition se veut prudente,

l'excédent de dollars libériens mais dont on ignore l'issue.

"La proposition n'identifie aucun contrôle pour assurer la légitimité de ces" emprunts "et les destinataires de ces paiements", poursuivent les sénateurs de l'opposition.

« Qui sont les « autres créanciers » auxquels le président a fait référence ? Sont-ils des clubs Susu, des coopératives de crédit, des amis ? Quels sont les contrôles en place pour nous assurer que nous n'avons pas de répétition de l'« exercice de nettoyage » lorsque des bureaux de change et des entreprises inconnus, non enregistrés et inexistantes ont été utilisés pour « acheter » des USD ? » s'interrogent les sénateurs.

Ils indiquent que sans ces contrôles en place, ce serait une avenue facile pour le gouvernement de partager l'argent aux militants de la Coalition au pouvoir dans les différentes communautés sous prétexte de rembourser les dettes des petits commerçants.

Selon eux, le manque de mesures de surveillance et de conformité expose les fonds des donateurs et les fonds publics à un risque énorme de détournement massif.

L'opposition soupçonne le président de profiter de la crise sanitaire actuelle pour se remplir les poches. Elle appelle le chef de l'Etat à plutôt chercher à restaurer la confiance en faisant preuve de transparence.

Les législateurs de l'opposition ne veulent pas que cette proposition soit adoptée tant que le gouvernement ne clarifiera pas les bénéficiaires potentiels, le montant exact dû par chaque bénéficiaire potentiel, les institutions financières et le grand total des dettes à rembourser.

Ils soutiennent en outre que même si une liste des bénéficiaires et le montant dû sont présentés avec les institutions financières concernées, cette liste devrait être soumise à une

vérification de la Commission générale d'audit (GAC) avant de procéder au paiement.

Pour les opposants, le fait que le président a fait mention des « autres créanciers » sans préciser qui sont ces derniers ouvre la porte à des tentatives de fraude comme ce fut le cas des 25 millions de dollars américains.

Ils craignent en outre que l'acheminement des paiements par ces moyens informels ne présente trop d'échappatoires pour le vol et la manipulation politique, d'où la nécessité d'y renoncer, car, pour eux, c'est une option dangereuse.

La sénatrice Lawrence, qui s'exprimait au nom de ces collègues, veut, par contre, que le gouvernement remette directement l'argent aux femmes et aux petits commerçants afin que leurs enfants ne meurent de faim.

Elle a insisté qu'avant d'approuver 40 millions de dollars US pour un programme d'aide alimentaire, l'Assemblée législative doit s'assurer que les besoins de financement pour une lutte holistique efficace contre le COVID-19 sont garantis.

Cela doit comprendre, selon elle, le paiement adéquat et rapide des salaires et des primes d'encouragement des agents de santé, l'achat d'équipement, y compris les ventilateurs, l'équipement de protection individuelle et les lits d'hôpital, entre autres.

« En outre, le législateur doit s'assurer que le gouvernement a la capacité d'effectuer le paiement en temps opportun des salaires des fonctionnaires, car le retard actuel dans le paiement mensuel des salaires des fonctionnaires est toujours un sujet de préoccupation », a-t-elle affirmé.

Elle demande également au gouvernement d'identifier les sources ou les lignes budgétaires proposées qui seront coupées pour financer le programme de 25 millions de dollars et préciser les projets de la Banque mondiale qui subiront des coupes afin de financer le programme d'aide alimentaire.

Etat d'urgence : de

seront respectés par la sécurité conjointe pendant l'état d'urgence et le confinement.

Il a averti les Libériens de respecter tous les protocoles de santé dans l'intérêt suprême du pays.

Le président George Weah a récemment déclaré l'état d'urgence pour 21

jours et 14 jours de confinement dans les comtés de Monterrado, Margibi, Nimba et Grand Kru, décrits comme des zones touchées.

Le pouvoir législatif devrait approuver l'état d'urgence sous peu par le biais d'une résolution commune des deux chambres.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Arancha González

Comment la santé publique mondiale pourrait relancer le multilatéralisme

MADRID - Alors que le monde s'efforce de contenir le COVID-19 et s'atténuer son impact sur nos vies et nos moyens de subsistance, il devrait être clair pour tous que seule la coopération internationale nous permettra de remporter la bataille une fois pour toutes. Les réponses nationales sont essentielles, mais à moyen terme, le multilatéralisme sera notre meilleure arme dans cette lutte - et notre meilleure défense contre de futures menaces mondiales.

Mon pays, l'Espagne, est en première ligne de la pandémie. Le coronavirus nous a frappés plus tôt et plus durement que la plupart des autres pays. Nous pleurons des milliers de morts. Notre système de santé a été mis à rude épreuve. La population supporte un long confinement, en faisant preuve d'une responsabilité citoyenne exemplaire. Nous avons dû prendre des mesures sans précédent pour sauvegarder notre économie.

En tant que gouvernements, nous sommes avant tout responsables de nos ressortissants. Mais nous savons qu'aucun pays ne sera complètement en sécurité avant que tous ne jugulent la pandémie, puis finissent par l'éradiquer. Notre désunion internationale des premiers jours n'a fait que renforcer notre ennemi, en nous éloignant davantage de notre objectif commun.

Alors que nous tirons les leçons de faits que nous continuons d'apprendre, nous devons d'urgence concevoir une approche de santé publique mondiale plus efficace, qui intègre de nouvelles mesures et initiatives internationales, européennes et nationales.

Premièrement, au niveau international, il nous faut un cadre plus efficace pour prévenir, détecter et répondre aux maladies et aux pandémies, qui se fonde sur des institutions renforcées et de nouveaux mécanismes conçus pour prévenir certains des échecs que nous avons observés. Les nouveaux arrangements institutionnels doivent se fonder sur une Organisation mondiale de la santé revitalisée et réformée, disposant de mandats plus larges et d'une autorité renforcée. L'OMS doit avoir la capacité de concevoir et d'imposer de meilleurs protocoles pour la préparation et la réaction, d'exiger le partage des données et de mobiliser les ressources nécessaires.

Un cadre de santé mondial ayant les moyens de se faire obéir doit également être suffisamment souple pour couvrir toute la chaîne des interventions de santé publique, allant de la recherche scientifique à l'alerte rapide à la formulation, à la mise en œuvre et à l'évaluation des mesures. C'est pourquoi, outre les réformes nécessaires du processus décisionnel de l'OMS et de son Comité d'urgence, il ne faut pas négliger le potentiel d'autres plates-formes et organisations internationales à même de contribuer au système de santé mondial dont nous avons besoin.

Par exemple, le G-20 et le G-7 peuvent aider à mobiliser la volonté politique nécessaire. La Banque mondiale et les autres banques régionales de développement sont idéalement placées pour mobiliser des ressources en faveur de la réforme des services de santé. Et des organisations comme l'OCDE ont la puissance de feu analytique pour distiller les meilleures politiques et pratiques en matière de santé. Globalement, nous devons faire progresser une « approche de santé unique » qui fédère les dimensions environnementales, économiques, sociales et sécuritaires de santé publique.

Deuxièmement, l'Union européenne doit fournir un modèle de préparation et de gestion des crises que d'autres régions pourraient imiter, en mettant en commun des ressources et en élaborant de nouveaux mécanismes d'action commune. Non contente de

mener à bien la mise en place d'un nouveau cadre de santé mondial plus solide, l'UE peut et doit en outre améliorer sa propre coordination interne. Après tout, c'est la collaboration sectorielle sur le charbon et l'acier qui a donné naissance à l'UE, le mécanisme de gouvernance mondial le plus innovant que le monde ait connu. Un niveau d'ambition similaire est à présent nécessaire pour lutter contre les défis que nous partageons en matière de santé.

Une intégration européenne plus profonde dans ce domaine aurait plusieurs avantages importants. Le Centre européen de prévention et de contrôle des maladies devrait bénéficier d'une plus grande autonomie et de davantage de ressources. Une véritable unité européenne de gestion des crises pourrait être créée, avec les moyens d'assurer une réponse rapide à une urgence. Des tests de résistance systématiques sur les systèmes de santé nationaux devraient également être effectués pour évaluer la résilience des États membres de l'UE face aux chocs. À l'instar des tests de résistance rigoureux effectués sur nos secteurs financiers, le processus devrait permettre de combler les lacunes, de partager les meilleures pratiques et d'élaborer des outils de coordination.

En outre, l'UE devrait investir dans des bases de données communes, des réserves médicales et des stocks communs. De même, elle devrait harmoniser les protocoles et favoriser la collaboration scientifique sur le développement de traitements et de vaccins. Dans l'immédiat, les pays européens devraient coopérer à une stratégie de transition coordonnée pour relancer l'économie sans déclencher une nouvelle épidémie.

Enfin, au niveau national, nous avons tous beaucoup à faire - en tant que devoir non seulement envers nous-mêmes et envers les habitants de nos pays, mais également envers nos voisins et la communauté internationale dans son ensemble. En Espagne, nous établirons une commission chargée d'évaluer l'état de notre système de santé et de corriger ses faiblesses et ses lacunes. Mais parce que nous savons que les pandémies frappent le plus durement les populations les plus vulnérables du monde, nous renforcerons également notre diplomatie en matière de santé. Le renforcement des systèmes nationaux de santé exige de partager notre expérience avec d'autres pays et de tirer les leçons de leur expérience, ainsi que d'accorder une priorité plus élevée aux réformes du secteur de la santé dans notre coopération au développement.

Si nous prenons des mesures comme celles que nous préconisons ici, cette pandémie aura pour effet de mieux nous préparer à la prochaine. Mais si cette catastrophe a un côté positif, ce dernier devrait la surpasser. La coopération internationale sur les questions de santé devrait être étendue à d'autres « maux publics » mondiaux que nous n'avons pas réussi à traiter efficacement : changement climatique, conflits armés, pauvreté, inégalités croissantes, migrations internationales, prolifération nucléaire, terrorisme, etc. L'urgence de ces défis peut sembler moins pressante en ce moment, mais les menaces qu'ils font peser sur nous tous persistent.

Dans notre monde interconnecté, nous devons relancer le multilatéralisme en le rendant plus cohérent et mieux adapté à nos besoins. Cela signifie renforcer les institutions et les mécanismes qui fonctionnent, réformer ou éliminer ceux qui ne fonctionnent pas et créer ceux dont nous avons besoin. Cette crise nous rappelle notre fragilité et l'importance de l'unité internationale. Il ne fait aucun doute que nous sommes tous concernés par cette crise. Elle nous montre clairement que nous devrions considérer une coopération plus étroite en matière de santé publique mondiale comme un catalyseur en faveur d'un multilatéralisme dont nous avons besoin.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

COVID-19: Russia Pledges Collaboration with Africa Fight Coronavirus



By Kester Kenn Klomegah

In separate early April discussions with South African and Ethiopian leaders, Russian President Vladimir Putin pledges Russia's support in collaborating with Africa fight coronavirus that is currently spreading among the population across the continent.

With the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Kremlin press reported that "while discussing the situation caused by the spread of the coronavirus, both parties stressed the importance of invigorating efforts of the entire international community, including the IMF and the World Bank, to combat the infection. They have also considered some topical aspects of developing bilateral relations."

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has taken over from President of Egypt Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as the Chair of the African Union. South Africa is a member of BRICS. Russia presides over BRICS in 2020.

"Opportunities for cooperation to counter the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences were discussed, particularly considering the results of the recent G20 digital summit," the Kremlin's official statement says. "Cyril Ramaphosa as the head of the country chairing the African Union informed Putin about the steps planned to be taken by this regional organization."

The G20 virtual summit held late March, Putin proposed the establishment of a special fund to help Africa and further stressed the necessity to continue regular exchange of credible information about the global pandemic and about the actions taken by various regions and individual countries.

He emphasized provision of all forms of aid to

affected African countries amid the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the global economy.

As a top-priority tasks in healthcare, Putin called on the World Health Organization (WHO) to channel its efforts to detecting hidden coronavirus epidemics in the countries that are not able to organize testing, also about joint research by countries that could significantly expedite the development of vaccines and medications. Russia expressed its support for the proposals for a comprehensive approach to mobilizing international support for Africa.

According to an executive decree, Russia will contribute \$1 million to the World Health Organization (WHO) to fight the coronavirus. "Allocate budget funding of \$1 million from the federal budget for one-time voluntary contribution to the World Health Organization for coronavirus infection fight measures implementation," the document reads.

The same decree earmarks about \$804,795 to fund expenses of the Vector Institute and the Central Research Institute of Epidemiology, "connected to production and shipment of tools for laboratory diagnosis of the novel coronavirus infection, and material and technical support to countries of Eastern Europe, Trans-Caucasus, Central and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America."

This year, South Africa is chairing the African Union. As Chairperson of the African Union (AU), Cyril Ramaphosa discussed the African response to the Covid-19 pandemic across the continent, and that included efforts to sustain the hard-won developmental and economic gains.

He gave an urgent need for medical supplies and equipment, and further called for international

cooperation and support while upscaling local production on the continent.

The African Union Covid-19 Response Fund established on March 26, to which members pledged the sum of \$12.5 million and an additional \$4.5 million to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Estimates from health organizations siad there were more than 10,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus across the continent. According to the latest data by the John Hopkins University and Africa Center for Disease Control on COVID-19 in Africa, offers a breakdown whole of Africa.

Foreign countries are contributors to the functioning of World Health Organization. For example, U.S. is the single largest funder of the organization, providing more than \$400 million each year - about 15% of its total budget.

WHO has come under criticisms. Many countries especially the U.S. and Britain, believe that WHO's reluctance to confront China over its handling of the coronavirus outbreak is the reason it has now become a pandemic, with most Western countries being forced to introduce lockdown measures in a belated attempt to limit the spread of the virus.

In late December 2019, Chinese officials notified the World Health Organization about the outbreak of the disease in the city of Wuhan in China. Since then, cases of the novel coronavirus - named COVID-19 by the WHO - have spread around the world. **Report By Kester Kenn Klomegah.**

JFK closes maternity hospital

By Winston W. Parley

Government referral hospital John F. Kennedy (JFK) Medical Center has shut down its Liberian - Japanese Friendship Maternity Hospital for 48 hours after two maternity health workers tested positive of coronavirus.

The management of JFK announced the decision Thursday, 16 April, saying it was closing the facility for 48 hours due to ongoing disinfection processes of the facility.

JFK is the second major health center to shut down its services to the public due to the coronavirus pandemic. The National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP) Diagnostic Center Jamale announced the suspension of its services few

days ago after five health workers there tested positive of the virus.

According to the announcement which

circulated on social media Thursday, the disinfection of the maternity hospital is mandatory due to positive Covid - 19 testing conducted

on the maternity health workers.

JFK indicates that the two positive Covid - 19 cases have both been taken to the treatment center, adding that it is complying with Ministry of Health and National Public Health Institute of Liberia guidelines for contact tracing and surveillance procedures.

According to the referral hospital, it recognizes the inconvenience the closure of the facility may cause, assuring the public that management is doing everything in its power to resume neonatal, obstetric and maternal care services in the safest environment and at the earliest possible time.

Notwithstanding, JFK announces that effective Monday, 20 April, all visitors,

incoming patients, JFK medical center staff and staff of all organizations domiciled at the medical center must wear a mask to be granted access to the medical center.

JFK warns that it is mandatory these masks (reusable or medical grade) be worn during the duration of their stay at the center, concluding that continued social distancing, hand hygiene and proper cough etiquette is highly encouraged.

Liberia is reported 73 confirmed coronavirus cases with at least six deaths, as the country goes through a period of lockdown as part of measures instituted under a state of emergency announced last week by President George Manneh Weah to combat the disease.



Weah's stimulus package faces hitches

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Some members of the House of Representatives headed by River Gee County Representative Francis Dopoe are soliciting signatures from their colleagues to stop passage of the COVID-19 stimulus package announced by President George Manneh Weah.

The opposing representatives argued the stimulus package is not clear on how funding projected by the President will be expanded.

Speaking to this paper Thursday, April 16, via mobile phone in Monrovia, Representative Dopoe said some key ministers of the executive branch of government especially, authorities at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning should appear before the House to provide detail information on how much the government has in its coffer.

The River Gee County lawmaker, who is a financial expert, argued that the stimulus package is mute or silent on health workers and health facilities.

He added that after the Corona virus, the government

should show the way forward for the economy.

He narrated that loan scheme mentioned in the package failed to clearly state who the beneficiaries are and process of disbursement of funds. Dopoe clarified that the opposition lawmakers are not against the stimulus package, but they are interested in how the allocation is carried out so that everyone will benefit fully and in the accordance with the budget law of Liberia.

Dopoe noted there are technical issues relating to the stimulus package that need technical answer or else, some Liberians may become millionaires after the pandemic has subsided.

According to him, the Houses of Representatives is yet to generate the required signatures or two-thirds of the total 73 members to pass the resolution, which would give full statutory authority to the President to act during the State of Emergency.

The Liberian Legislature has only today, April 17, to act or the recommendations sent to the lawmakers will come to force.

Dopoe, however, disclosed the opposition lawmakers are considering acting only on the State of Emergency and delay

the stimulus until further details are provided.

Meanwhile, the resolution, which is to be the official document from the House headed by Grand Kru County Representative J. Fonati Koffa and Montserrado County Representative Acarus Moses Gray, is yet to generate the needed signatures as the statutory date for action expires today.

Amidst a 21-day State of Emergency that is renewable and 14 days lockdown in four counties, President George Manneh Weah has written both the House and the Liberian Senate, seeking approval for a proposed stimulus package for all Liberians, including food distribution, electricity and water support, small informal petty traders bank loans program and settlement of government domestic debt programs to local vendors.

In a communication dated April 13, read in the plenary of the senate during its first special sitting for the hearing of the State of Emergency, Mr. Weah writes, "I propose that for the remainder of fiscal year 2019/20 of the Liberian Legislature re-appropriate the amount of US\$25 million to support food distribution to household in designated affected counties for the period of 60 days."

The President's decision followed public criticism here of authorities imposing a lockdown without considering welfare of citizens across the country, particularly in Monrovia. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Liberians secretly

Cont'd from page 6

because the state of emergency has increased the hardship brought by coronavirus.

"Some of us who have our farms along the main roads are usually being threatened by police officers when they see us on our farm after 3PM. They chase us from the farm so what

do you expect our friends to do?" she says.

Since the declaration of the state of emergency, our correspondent says the price of rice has increased from LD\$2,800 to more than LD\$3,000 at some business centers in the county.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

Liberia's COVID-19

Starts from back page

tested, which proved positive. He was then taken into quarantine center for 21 days and eventually survived and discharged.

On 17th March a close contact to Blama identified as his domestic worker tested positive and was also quarantined, while the NPHIL listed 127 contacts, 23 diagnosed as high risk and 104 low risk contacts, respectively.

A third case with no link to the index case was reported by NPHIL March 21, 2020, including 275 new contacts, 49 diagnosed as high risk; 168 low risk and 58 pending classification.

Then came March 27 when NPHIL reported one suspected case from Grand Gedeh County, southeast Liberia - a 22-year-old female with travel history from Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, who proved negative later. However, a total of 66 contacts were discharged from quarantine on March 27.

On March 30 NPHIL sent six suspected cases in isolation - four(4) in Montserrado, one in Grand Gedeh and one in Bong, respectively pending testing besides 434 contacts including 40 health workers documented with five (5) contacts discharged.

Two new suspected cases

were identified on 2 April plus 548 contacts including 78 health workers documented the same day. The next day, one new confirmed was recorded.

NPHIL then reported three new confirmed cases including two deaths on 5 April with no suspected cases. This was followed by 11 new confirmed cases on 10th April in Montserrado County. That statistics was increased by one the following day from the same county, which brought a total of 51 confirmed cases, including six deaths with 2028 contacts including 149 health workers documented.

As of 13th April eight(8) new confirmed cases were recorded, bringing a total of 59 confirmed cases with six(6) deaths, 49 active cases and four recovered.

Hence, as of Thursday, April 16 the country has recorded 73 confirmed cases, six deaths and 623 contacts with Grand Kru County in the southeast reporting one latest case, according to Chief Medical Officer and deputy Minister of Health Doctor Francis Kateh.

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Liberia's COVID-19 countdown



Dr. Mosoka Fallah

By Jonathan Browne

With latest confirmed cases of the Coronavirus pandemic in Liberia now at 73, including six deaths, the New Dawn in this retrospect reflects how the country reached this stage and how long a population of 4million people endure could an invisible virus.

The nation stood still on a cool afternoon on Monday, 16 March which was celebrated here as a public holiday or J.J. Roberts Birthday (in memory of Liberia's first President) when President George Manneh Weah broke the news thru a nationwide address that Liberia has recorded its first confirmed or index case of the novel COVID-19, involving the

executive director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Nathaniel Blama.

Blama had returned from Switzerland three days earlier and arrived at the Roberts International Airport on a weekend, but according to President Weah, he chose to self-quarantine at home rather than the quarantine center at the airport.

The National Public Health Institute of Liberia or NPHIL subsequently detailed that the 46-year-old index case, a resident of Cabral Estate, Monrovia on March 9, 2020 travelled to Switzerland on official duty and returned on 13 March via SN Brussels 241 airlines at about 6PM.

He exhibited symptoms (fever and unproductive cough) and reportedly "sought over-the-counter medication on 15th March from Lucky Pharmacy, 23rd Street, Sinkor."

He then reported himself to the NPHIL on 15th March and sample was collected and

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CPP checkmates stimulus package

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) has erected some checkpoints in the stimulus package proposed by President George Manneh Weah for the fight against coronavirus.

The CPP which comprises former ruling Unity Party, Liberty Party, Alternative National Congress and All Liberian Party asserts in a statement released in Monrovia that the proposal

does not identify the budgetary items that will be cut to raise the US\$25 million requested by President Weah.

According to the opposition bloc, the Executive leaves the difficult exercise to the Liberian Legislature which is not privy to all the facts to make an informed decision.

The CPP statement comes a day after it suggested that President Weah's proposed stimulus package which lack due diligence could open the door to serious fraud and abuse



Mr. Benoni Urey

like the US\$25 million mop-up exercise.

According to the CPP, the proposal does not identify which existing projects will suffer as a result of the World Bank's reallocation of US\$10 million contribution toward the stimulus package.

"Food aid in "designated counties" begs the question of which counties will be included and which will be left out?" the CPP says.

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