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VOL.10 NO. 66

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2020

PRICE LD\$40.00



Cllr. Nwabudike faces deportation

Defense Minister in self-quarantine



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Continental News

French police officers suspended over racist slur

Two police officers in Paris have been suspended after being filmed using an extremely offensive racist slur.

The officers used a derogatory term for North Africans to mock a man they were arresting, and repeated a racist trope about him being unable to swim.

The footage went viral on social media and has sparked outrage across France.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner also strongly criticised the officers involved,

saying there was "no place" for racism in the police force.

He also announced that the IGPN internal police watchdog had been notified and would launch an investigation.

The police commissioner also tweeted: "With the approval of the interior



The officers, not pictured, are being investigated

minister, the chief of police Didier Lallemand has asked the head of the national police to suspend the two officers involved in uttering racial comments heard on a video

circulated on social media on 26 April."

The incident took place in the early hours of Sunday morning in the Seine-Saint-Denis suburb, north of Paris.

A man who was suspected of theft had jumped into the river Seine, reportedly to avoid arrest,

and was then pulled out by the police. As they escorted the man to the police van, one of the officers called the man the racist slur and added: "He doesn't know how to swim."

His colleague then laughed, and replied: "You should have tied a weight to his foot."

The exchange was filmed by journalist and anti-racism activist Taha Bouhafs, who then posted it on Twitter.

So far it has been viewed more than 1.8 million times.

In response, Mr Castaner tweeted: "All light will be shed on the matter..."

Racism has no place in the Republic's police force."BBC

UN warns of 'excessive force' in Covid-19 response

The United Nations Human Rights Office has warned countries against using excessive force during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The agency urged governments to "recognize that the threat is a virus, not people".

South Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda are among countries where security forces have used repressive measures to

enforce restrictions to movement.

The UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet said countries should not use emergency powers as a weapon to quash dissent and control the population.

She said shooting, detaining or abusing people for breaking curfew because they are desperately searching for food is unacceptable and unlawful.

The UN body she heads said more than 17,000 South

Africans have been arrested as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

In Kenya, 27 human rights organisations have written an open letter to the government demanding that it stops punishing curfew offenders by forcefully sending them into quarantine centres.

About 32,100 coronavirus cases have been reported in 52 African countries, with 1,428 deaths and 9,741 recoveries. BBC



Uganda is among countries that have been enforcing restrictions harshly

Nigeria to increase COVID-19 testing

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) says it remains focused on the fight against the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Nigeria.

The agency said on Monday in Abuja that it would increase testing for the virus across the country as a strategy to succeed.

Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, Director-General of NCDC,

The high number of cases we are now seeing in Kano is really not a surprise," he said.

"Since reporting its index case about two weeks ago, Kano has been the centre of controversies ranging from the rapid increase in the number of confirmed cases to the sudden halt of its only testing centre.

"Kano, which currently stands as the third hardest-



gave the reassurance at the daily briefing by Presidential Task Force on COVID-19.

"I will like to remind everyone that we remain focused on our target which is to increase testing across the country; during a pandemic, the risk of spread is in those towns where the population density is highest.

"We are all aware of the population density in Kano.

hit state in Nigeria has so far reported 77 cases out of the 1,273 cases of the infection Nigeria," he said.

Ihekweazu said that NCDC was also working hard to investigate the cause of some deaths in the state.

He said that the agency did everything possible to activate the Kano laboratory. -BBC

EDITORIAL

Liberian authorities should lead by example

MANY LIBERIANS ARE not only astonished but totally confused about news that high-level officials leading the COVID-19 fight, returned from a Joint Security meeting here recently with mass infection and one death. Yet these are the same authorities enforcing State of Emergency and lockdown, flogging citizens and residents for not washing their hands regularly, observing social distance, and wearing facial masks, among other preventive measures.

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL of Police Patrick Sudue, nearly blew up his head, screaming on radio Monday that the Police would enforce all public regulations with full force, including flogging of violators, which was demonstrated early Tuesday at the Duala, Waterside and Paynesville Red-light markets, respectively, leaving desperate residents scavenging for food brutalized, including women.

BUT THE PARADOX is joint security officers enforcing these regulations are themselves not wearing masks or observing social distance. From crowded canopies they approach vehicles for inspection at various checkpoints with their faces exposed, directly endangering drivers and occupants. In fact, some are more concerned about tips from drivers than the purpose for which they are deployed along the routes.

THAT HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS such as the Ministers of Justice, Information and Defense, respectively, along with other senior authorities from a meeting got affected, including one death is very worrisome, to say the least.

ARE THE AUTHORITIES enforcing one thing on the citizens and doing something totally different themselves or what is really going on in Liberia? We think there is a need to return to the drawing board in our strategies to fighting the novel coronavirus or else, situations could become worst before they get better, as the current realities indicate.

WE WERE VERY disappointed the other day when a reporter called Joy FM in Monrovia and disclosed that several lawmakers, including Montserrado County Representative Hassan Kiazulu had converged at an entertainment center in Brewerville late in the afternoon to drink alcoholic beverages amidst the State of Emergency and lockdown. This was hardly exemplary of the lawmakers allegedly involved, as it sent a very wrong signal to the public.

LIBERIA'S MINISTER OF Health Doctor Wilhemina Jallah is quoted as suggesting that the country appears to be wasting badly needed testing kits on dead people than those living, which seems to insinuate that the right things are not being done by our health authorities.

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD stop playing lip-service in this COVID-19 fight and wake up for real business. Our authorities should not use the State of Emergency and lockdown to squander our taxes and donor funds under the disguise of tackling the health crisis in the country.

WHEN A SENIOR official such as the Minister of Health could raise such concern about unfolding realities in treatment centers, it means something is fundamentally wronged that should be corrected immediately to make progress in our fight.

IF LIBERIA SHOULD win this battle, and we are confident we will, it is about time our leaders lead by examples from top to bottom to give ordinary Liberians and the public generally a clear focus of where we are heading as a people in defeating this global pandemic.

The New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

Published by the Searchlight Communications Inc.,
UN Drive, P.O. Box 1266 Opposite National Investment Commission,
Monrovia-Liberia. Tel: +231-06484201, +231-77007529, +231-886978282 /
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COMMENTARY

By Wandile Sihlobo

Agriculture After the Pandemic

After suffering severe labor shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems unlikely that advanced-economy farmers will return to business as usual. Instead, many will probably attempt to mitigate the risks stemming from dependence on foreign seasonal workers by automating more of their operations.

PRETORIA - As the COVID-19 pandemic forces countries to close their borders, their agricultural sectors are confronting major challenges. Even in countries that are unlikely to face food insecurity - such as those in Europe and North America - farms are facing severe labor shortages, owing to new barriers that keep low-cost workers out. And the impact of the disruption on the supply of workers is likely to spur permanent shifts within the sector after the pandemic ends.

The risks inherent in depending on foreign seasonal workers have materialized in several European countries, including France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, which depend on labor from Eastern Europe. Between border closures and fears of sickness and quarantine, those workers are not coming this season, and many Western European crops are set to rot in the fields.

In parts of the United States, fears about agricultural-labor shortages were mounting even before the COVID-19 crisis. Americans do not want to work in the fields, so farmers depend largely on seasonal Mexican migrant workers. Participants in the H-2A visa program - covering those who have been hired to fill agriculture jobs lasting less than one year - comprise 10% of all farmworkers in the US.

Yet the cost and complexity of the H-2A program has long amounted to a significant barrier for migrant workers. With the COVID-19 pandemic, that challenge has been compounded. Although US consular officers may now waive the visa interview for first-time applicants and returning workers, H-2A processing has slowed considerably. Add to that new health and safety burdens for employers, who must uphold social-distancing protocols not only at work, but also in the housing and transport they provide to H-2A workers, and agricultural productivity is set to decline significantly.

After this experience, it seems unlikely that farmers will return to business as usual. Instead, many will probably attempt to mitigate the risks stemming from dependence on foreign seasonal workers by automating more of their operations.

To be sure, automation requires considerable up-front investment, and some jobs (such as harvesting fruits and vegetables) are more difficult to automate than others. But technologies like drones, autonomous tractors, seeding robots, and robotic harvesters imply a dramatic reduction in farmers' reliance on migrant

labor.

If large agricultural producers in advanced economies take these steps, their peers in developing countries may follow suit, even in places without labor shortages. For example, South Africa has a large supply of unskilled, often unemployed workers well suited to farm work. (It does, however, face skilled-labor shortages.)

With the entire food supply chain having been classified as "essential" during the COVID-19 lockdown, agricultural activities have continued uninterrupted. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, South Africa's 2012 National Development Plan (NDP) had set the target of increasing employment in agriculture and agricultural processing by roughly a million by 2030, including through the promotion of labor-intensive subsectors and an increase in farmland.

So far, such efforts have led to the expansion of crops like citrus fruit, macadamia nuts, apples, table grapes, avocados, and soybeans. Employment in primary agriculture grew from 718,000 in the last quarter of 2012 to 885,000 in the last quarter of 2019 - a 23% increase.

But, after the pandemic, technological diffusion is also likely to accelerate, not because of domestic market conditions, but because of the need to compete in global markets with advanced-country producers that do embrace automation. In fact, the NDP also aims to increase agricultural investment in irrigation, boost productivity, and expand export markets - all objectives that could enable, or necessitate, greater automation.

The same goes for the increase in agricultural land. South Africa has plenty of space to do so, especially in the former homelands and underperforming land-reform farms. The provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, and Limpopo collectively have 1.6-1.8 million hectares of underused arable land, according to a 2015 study by McKinsey Global Institute. Automation could be built into the process of developing this land for agriculture.

More broadly, during the post-COVID-19 recovery phase, policymakers and industry in all countries with large-scale agriculture will have to pay close attention to trends in automation. As for workers, while agricultural jobs in countries like South Africa are likely to remain plentiful, those who depend on seasonal jobs in the advanced economies should prepare for even more uncertainty ahead.

O-PED

By Anne O. Krueger

Trump's War on Public Health

After ignoring warnings about the deadly implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, US President Donald Trump is now responding to the crisis in the worst way imaginable. Between attacking the World Health Organization and launching another front in his trade war, he has all but ensured that the crisis will get worse.

WASHINGTON, DC - US President Donald Trump's administration is effectively waging war on human health. In addition to imposing tariffs on imported medical equipment and restrictions on exports, the White House has proposed cutting the budget of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by 16%, starting in October. Moreover, Trump has also tried to divert blame on to the World Health Organization, after he himself long denied the threat of COVID-19, initially dismissing criticism of his administration's response as the Democrats' "new hoax."

Because viruses ignore political borders, they can create far-reaching externalities, both for the economy and for public health, which is itself a global public good. Over the years, policymakers, scientists, and other experts have amassed a great deal of knowledge about preventing and treating viral illnesses. Collecting data and evidence on the spread of contagious diseases has been critical to that effort. In 1851, representatives from around the world convened in Paris for the International Sanitary Conference to address cholera. By 1897, there was also an international convention to tackle plague. In the decades that followed, outbreaks of both diseases fell substantially.

Then, after World War II, the WHO was established as the global institution in charge of collecting and sharing health data, coordinating research, and offering guidance on epidemic preparedness plans. Thanks to its contributions, recent epidemics of H1N1 (swine flu), SARS, MERS, and Ebola have been contained. Yet despite the importance of the WHO's work, the United States has not had a representative on the organization's executive board since 2018 (though Trump finally announced his intended nominee for the position last month).

Nonetheless, US citizens are among the top staff at the WHO, and thus were fully informed of the COVID-19 outbreak as soon as China disclosed it in late December. Trump, in typical fashion, denies knowing anything, even though the US intelligence community had been warning him about it at least since January.

Worse, Trump has announced that the US will withhold some \$500 million in funding for the WHO pending an investigation of its supposed mishandling of the coronavirus outbreak. His denigration of the body has elicited a strong objection from the presidents of the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, who point out that continued funding for the WHO is critical, given its "lead role in coordinating an international response" to the crisis, "especially in developing countries." There can be no chance of recovery in the US, they warn, "until the threat of the pandemic subsides in other nations."

The Trump administration's behavior on the trade front has been no better. During the years when the WHO was coordinating efforts to support global public health, the World Trade Organization (preceded by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) was facilitating the liberalization of international trade. Just before the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, trade in medical products had grown to about \$2 trillion annually, and constituted about 5% of total world trade.

In fact, trade restrictions had dropped so sharply that the average tariff on medical supplies was under 4.5% globally. The US was importing around one-third of all its medical equipment, with Mexico the top supplier. Many of these imports consisted of labor-intensive parts and goods produced abroad by American-owned companies or joint ventures. US trade in medical products was fairly balanced, with \$47.5 billion of exports and \$51.6 billion of imports in 2018.

But since the Trump administration launched its war on trade, US tariffs on medical products imported from China - which previously supplied around one-quarter of US medical imports - have increased from 0-4.5% to 25%. True, some US tariffs on Chinese imports were partly rescinded, following a "phase one" trade deal in February, but the Trump administration has since begun a new effort to restrict US exports, not least by pressuring 3M, the largest manufacturer of face masks, to suspend its foreign sales and re-shore its Chinese production. 3M has agreed to increase its production for the US market, and the administration is now pressuring other producers to follow suit.

As with tariff increases, export restrictions inevitably invite retaliation. By the end of March, more than 89 countries had already limited their own exports of medical equipment. But the more that exports are restricted, the more that importing countries must build their own domestic capacity. In the end, everyone is harmed, because the shift to domestic production by importing countries crowds out exporters who can make the same products at much lower cost.

Export restrictions are damaging in both the short and long run. In the short run, they leave importing countries unable to provide sufficient medical equipment, and the quality of health care suffers as they increase their own production capacity at high cost with delays. Meanwhile, exporting countries can have more supplies than they need, and do not increase capacity as much as they would have with open export markets.

In the longer run, exporting countries lose sales and are producing items that had previously been imported at higher cost, while importing countries protect their producers both because capacity has been installed and because they are concerned about the next time supply gets short. The result is higher prices for medical equipment.

In addition to increasing the global efficiency of medical equipment production, significant cost savings could be achieved through risk pooling, which would allow for peak needs during emergencies to be addressed even with lower total capacity. The problem, of course, is that once a few countries start restricting exports in the face of a pandemic, a race to the bottom ensues. That is why the coordinating roles played by the WHO and the WTO are so important.

Insofar as either of these institutions needs to be reformed, it should be to strengthen them, not to cut their funding or shrink their operating capacity. And as with attacks on international institutions, unilateral import tariffs and export restraints will yield only self-inflicted wounds. A trade war is bad enough in normal times; to continue one in response to a pandemic is shockingly irresponsible. All tariffs and export restraints should be rescinded immediately, and support for international organizations reaffirmed. Otherwise, the worst economic crisis since the 1930s will become even more painful.

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OPINION

By Nouriel Roubini

The Coming Greater Depression of the 2020s

While there is never a good time for a pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis has arrived at a particularly bad moment for the global economy. The world has long been drifting into a perfect storm of financial, political, socioeconomic, and environmental risks, all of which are now growing even more acute.

NEW YORK - After the 2007-09 financial crisis, the imbalances and risks pervading the global economy were exacerbated by policy mistakes. So, rather than address the structural problems that the financial collapse and ensuing recession revealed, governments mostly kicked the can down the road, creating major downside risks that made another crisis inevitable. And now that it has arrived, the risks are growing even more acute. Unfortunately, even if the Greater Recession leads to a lackluster U-shaped recovery this year, an L-shaped "Greater Depression" will follow later in this decade, owing to ten ominous and risky trends.

The first trend concerns deficits and their corollary risks: debts and defaults. The policy response to the COVID-19 crisis entails a massive increase in fiscal deficits - on the order of 10% of GDP or more - at a time when public debt levels in many countries were already high, if not unsustainable.

Worse, the loss of income for many households and firms means that private-sector debt levels will become unsustainable, too, potentially leading to mass defaults and bankruptcies. Together with soaring levels of public debt, this all but ensures a more anemic recovery than the one that followed the Great Recession a decade ago.

A second factor is the demographic time bomb in advanced economies. The COVID-19 crisis shows that much more public spending must be allocated to health systems, and that universal health care and other relevant public goods are necessities, not luxuries. Yet, because most developed countries have aging societies, funding such outlays in the future will make the implicit debts from today's unfunded health-care and social-security systems even larger.

A third issue is the growing risk of deflation. In addition to causing a deep recession, the crisis is also creating a massive slack in goods (unused machines and capacity) and labor markets (mass unemployment), as well as driving a price collapse in commodities such as oil and industrial metals. That makes debt deflation likely, increasing the risk of insolvency.

A fourth (related) factor will be currency debasement. As central banks try to fight deflation and head off the risk of surging interest rates (following from the massive debt build-up), monetary policies will become even more unconventional and far-reaching. In the short run, governments will need to run monetized fiscal deficits to avoid depression and deflation. Yet, over time, the permanent negative supply shocks from accelerated de-globalization and renewed protectionism will make stagflation all but inevitable.

A fifth issue is the broader digital disruption of the economy. With millions of people losing their jobs or working and earning less, the income and wealth gaps of the twenty-first-century economy will widen further. To guard against future supply-chain shocks, companies in advanced economies will re-shore production from low-cost regions to higher-cost domestic markets. But rather than helping workers at home, this trend will accelerate the pace of automation, putting downward pressure on wages and further fanning the flames of populism, nationalism, and xenophobia.

This points to the sixth major factor: de-globalization. The pandemic is accelerating trends toward balkanization and fragmentation that were already well underway. The United States and China will decouple faster, and most countries will respond by adopting still more protectionist policies to shield domestic firms and workers from global disruptions. The post-pandemic world will be marked by tighter restrictions on the movement of goods, services, capital, labor, technology, data, and information. This is already happening in the pharmaceutical, medical-equipment, and food sectors, where governments are imposing export restrictions and other protectionist measures in response to the crisis.

The backlash against democracy will reinforce this trend. Populist leaders often benefit from economic weakness, mass unemployment, and rising inequality. Under conditions of heightened economic insecurity, there will be a strong impulse to scapegoat foreigners for the crisis. Blue-collar workers and broad cohorts of the middle class will become more susceptible to populist rhetoric, particularly proposals to restrict migration and trade.

This points to an eighth factor: the geostrategic standoff between the US and China. With the Trump administration making every effort to blame China for the pandemic, Chinese President Xi Jinping's regime will double down on its claim that the US is conspiring to prevent China's peaceful rise. The Sino-American decoupling in trade, technology, investment, data, and monetary arrangements will intensify.

Worse, this diplomatic breakup will set the stage for a new cold war between the US and its rivals - not just China, but also Russia, Iran, and North Korea. With a US presidential election approaching, there is every reason to expect an upsurge in clandestine cyber warfare, potentially leading even to conventional military clashes. And because technology is the key weapon in the fight for control of the industries of the future and in combating pandemics, the US private tech sector will become increasingly integrated into the national-security-industrial complex.

A final risk that cannot be ignored is environmental disruption, which, as the COVID-19 crisis has shown, can wreak far more economic havoc than a financial crisis. Recurring epidemics (HIV since the 1980s, SARS in 2003, H1N1 in 2009, MERS in 2011, Ebola in 2014-16) are, like climate change, essentially man-made disasters, born of poor health and sanitary standards, the abuse of natural systems, and the growing interconnectivity of a globalized world. Pandemics and the many morbid symptoms of climate change will become more frequent, severe, and costly in the years ahead.

These ten risks, already looming large before COVID-19 struck, now threaten to fuel a perfect storm that sweeps the entire global economy into a decade of despair. By the 2030s, technology and more competent political leadership may be able to reduce, resolve, or minimize many of these problems, giving rise to a more inclusive, cooperative, and stable international order. But any happy ending assumes that we find a way to survive the coming Greater Depression.

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SPECIAL

ARTICLE

How can universities quickly adopt Online Classes (eLearning) in mist of COVID-19?

There have been lots of demand on the information technology/telecommunication infrastructure recently. The pronouncement from the President of Liberia, H.E. George M. Weah that all schools should remain closed and that schools should seek innovative ways to still engage their students has given the increase need for online classes. Most schools are in the state of confusion since the implement of online learning is somehow new to Liberia. Online learning is for everyone including K12 to higher education. This paper will cover higher education.

Recently, the commission on higher education and the Ministry of Education met with all universities to discuss and plan forward as it relates to universities continuing regular academic activities (virtually). Lucky, some universities have already started using some form of eLearning. Those universities are using the SchoolLinkPortal which allow students to plan and register their courses online. These students already have their student's username and password which is the very first prerequisite for any eLearning platform.

Many big questions come to mind as universities are strategizing to roll out plans for online learning migration and other academic resources. Some questions to ponder about are: How can universities quickly adopt online learning in mist of this Covid-19 pandemic? Are Universities prepared? Are the students prepare to take classes online from the comfort of their homes? What are the tools available? Before I provide answers to these questions, let us first understand the concept of elearning/ online learning.

What is Electronic Learning (eLearning)?

eLearning, or electronic learning, is the delivery of learning and training through digital resources. eLearning is based on formalized learning, it is provided through electronic devices such as computers, tablets and even cellular phones that are connected to the internet. This makes it easy for students to learn anytime, anywhere, with few, if any, restrictions.

There are many terms used to describe learning that is delivered online, via the internet, ranging from Distance Education, to computerized electronic learning, online learning, internet learning and many others. I define eLearning as courses that are specifically delivered via the internet to somewhere other than the classroom where the professor is teaching. It is interactive in that you can also communicate with your teachers, professors or other students in your class. Sometimes it is delivered live, where you can "electronically" raise your hand and interact in real time and sometimes it is a lecture that has been prerecorded.

Components for eLearning

1. eLearning platform (software) - the most important decision to be made is the type of eLearning platform that the university wants to use. Each platform offers different options and benefits. Due to the pandemic, universities should be discouraged from using any on-premise eLearning platform. The cost to maintain an in-house (on-premise) eLearning platform is expensive and does not provide the needed benefits. Universities should consider cloud-based eLearning platform. They should be free to use open-source or proprietary platform. I will highly recommend that universities go with platform that has local support that is reachable, reliable, responsive and customer centric. After testing SchoolLink eLearning platform, I strongly recommend it for university using to start eLearning in mist of COVID-19. Based on my experience, proprietary option provides better

support as compare to open-source in Liberia. In mist of COVID-19, universities should adopt the agile rollout approach. They should focus on the most critical functions that are needed to keep their students engaged. Those critical functions are:

a. Posting of course material - lecturers should be able to post different learning materials, notes, pdf, word, excel, powerpoint, images, audio, video and links. Whichever platform should allow lecturer to post the above seamlessly.

b. Discussion board - lecturer should be able to discuss with their students. Students should be able to post questions and the lecturer should be able to answer the questions. The discussion board should be interactive that it shows who posted and when it was posted.

c. Posting of assignment - the platform should allow lecturer to post assignments and set the due date for the assignment. Student should be able to view these assignments and submit their assignments before the due date.



d. Login/Permission - the platform should support both faculty and student to login and based on their permission, lecturer should be able to post course materials and student should be able to see posted materials. The platform should be able to assign student to a section as well as faculty

e. Mobile Responsive - due to the mobile penetration rate in Liberia, it is important that whichever platform, it should be mobile responsive so that students using their mobile phone or other mobile devices will be able to access the eLearning platform without the need for a laptop or desktop.

2. Internet connectivity - eLearning cannot be possible without the internet. Internet connectivity is the cornerstone of any eLearning platform. Currently in Liberia, 80-95% of students are either using MTN or Orange network. Universities should begin discussion with these operators to allow their eLearning platform to be ZERO rated. That means students and faculties accessing the platform should not be charged. I know the Ministry of Education has been discussing with the GSM operators but universities need to understand that these infrastructures need to be maintained to support the learning demand. I will recommend that they begin discussion for a discounted rate for their platform. Example, student should pay a weekly 1\$ to access the platform. Or the universities can subsidize the cost for students and faculties. This is the fastest and best approach.

3. Faculty participation - my experience in implementing university management system has taught me that faculties are the most difficult group to embrace change. This is evident to the fact that they are accustom to doing things a certain way and they are

very methodical when it comes to moving to something new. Faculty involvement should NEVER be overlooked. They are the group that can make the system to success or fail. Universities should be discouraged from opening multiple online session. The maximum online sections should be at least five. These sections are not traditional sections; therefore, you can have more than one faculty providing support to a particular section. The best approach is to have three faculty members to run a particular course:

a. The first person should be responsible for posting all learning materials, courseware (notes, pdf, links, images), assignments, announcement, etc.

b. The second person should be responsible for engaging the students in term of answering questions, posting questions and moderating discussions.

c. The third person should be responsible for marking student's assignment and test as well as providing feedback.

Because eLearning is a new concept, having one faculty to operate an entire online section could be overwhelming especially if they lacked the experience. Detailed training should be provided for each of those group of lectures to focus on their area of concentration. Training should be organized based on the role-based approach where faculty are only train in the role they will be performing in the system.

4. Students Involvement - students are our major end-user. I usually refer to them as the system owner. Students acceptance to the platform is as important as the platform itself. The platform should be user-friendly and EASY to learn and use. Since massive training isn't possible due to the health protocol (social distancing), universities should invest in creating online manual, easy step-by-step guide and how do I manual. Universities are encouraged to do webinars and these webinars should be recorded and posted on youtube or other media platform where student can access these materials and learn on their own. Again, if the platform is not easy to use, those materials wouldn't make a significant difference. User-friendliness is important for student acceptance.

5. Rollout - the rollout process should be aggressive. Faculties should give homework/assignments within the first two week. These assignments will keep the students busy and change their perception of online learning. Once the assignments are submitted, it is extremely important that faculty read through each and provide individual feedback to the student. Since student will be reading at their own pace, a detailed lesson plan should be shared with the class so that students can read ahead if necessary.

Conclusion

For universities to quickly adopt eLearning in mist of COVID-19, they should first identify the platform to use. Second, they should discuss with the GSM operators to get a data package for their faculties and students. They should implement the role-based training approach to jumpstart the eLearning platform. The first two to three weeks are the most challenging period that will determine the success and failure of the platform. Faculty should remain focus and persevere. This is a cultural change and it requires all support to make the adoption process smooth and effortless. There are companies in Liberia who are willing to help universities move to online learning. MWETANA SchoolLink is a cutting-edge platform that is designed for Liberia. <http://elearning.schoolinkcx.com> which is worth considering during this COVID-19 period.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Buy your own food

-VP Taylor thinks distribution may not reach everyone

By Winston W. Parley

Liberia's Vice President Jewel Howard - Taylor is admonishing Liberians and residents that can afford to begin buying their own food and to also reach out to those that cannot afford, as she opines that the government may not have the money to share food with 2.5m people.

Interviewed via telephone Tuesday morning, 28 April by a local radio station, Madam Howard - Taylor asserted that her "small opinion" is that government does not have the money to share food with 2.5m people, saying her information is that government may share with nurses, securities - because they are on the frontline - and those who cannot afford.

She gives the caution as the country enters a second

designated households for 60 days, as Liberians remained under lockdown measures due to increasing coronavirus cases.

He indicated that he wanted the government to have the World Food Program implement this program, and for the government to fully pay loans owed by vulnerable market people, take up the electricity bill of households in the affected counties, as he proposed similar support for the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation.

But in approving the stimulus package, the Legislature made amendment by granting President Weah's request for US\$25 million to support food distribution to households in affected counties and putting aside the request for the Executive to pay loans owed by vulnerable market people, as the former awaited the latter

At the same time, she encourages the security forces here to calm down a little bit and limit the beating of people in enforcing the regulations, as she continues to express sorry to Church leaders for what happened when their worship centers were being closed.

She recognizes that churches were full of worshipers before police moved in to shut them down because when the health crisis started, the government didn't do what it should have to prevent such a situation.

Vice President Howard - Taylor also commands the Muslim Community for adhering to the health protocols by staying at home and praying at home especially during the month of Ramadan, recalling that Muslims lost their relatives during the Ebola crisis here because many of them may not have adhered to the messages at the time.

But she warns that if people start talking about opening the Church at this time, "we will lose this fight," given that the virus stays in the air for eight hours and poses risk to worshipers congregating in Churches and Mosques.

She recommends that Christians and Muslims use their homes as worship centers for them and their families during this crisis, saying "Let's pray at home," because "it will be risky at this time to start congregating in Churches."

She pleads with Church leaders to start getting on the radio to spread the coronavirus messages because when a Pastor talks about this, everybody knows it's serious.

She believes that coordination is a component that is missing in this coronavirus fight, thus posing a challenge in dealing with the crisis.

Madam Howard - Taylor recalls that During the Ebola crisis, former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf didn't close Churches or do a lockdown, but people stayed at home without being told because they knew it was serious.

She believes that many more people need to get involved in the fight, including community leaders and elected officials so that the people know it's serious

Minister Kruah Conveys COVID 19 Message

The Minister of Posts & Telecommunications, Cllr. Cooper W. Kruah, Sr. has conveyed a Coronavirus message to the people of Liberia on behalf of the Postal family.

In his recent message to the people of Liberia he said, "We believe that every Liberian is conscious of the spread of the deadly corona virus which is devastating not only Liberia but Africa and the world at

He warns Liberians to simply obey the instructions of the Ministry of Health and all other health authorities including regularly washing hands with soap and clean water or using sanitizer, wearing a facemask every time going out in the public and avoiding public gathering to help stop the spread of the disease, among others.

The Posts Master General



Cllr. Cooper W. Kruah, Sr.

large."

According to press release issued by the Ministry, Minister Kruah says consequently, it is befitting to join the calls of President George Manneh Weah, the World Health Organization (WHO) and all other groups and organizations that are having sleepless night to kick the virus out of Liberia, Africa and the rest of the world.

points out that health authorities say some of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 which may appear two to 14 days after exposure include: fever; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

He adds that other symptoms can include tiredness; aches; runny nose; sore throat; headache; diarrhea and vomiting.--Press release



Vice President Jewel Howard - Taylor

batch of 14 days lockdown in which Liberians look eagerly to see food distributions taken to their doorsteps, having heard of lawmakers' approval of President George Manneh Weah's proposed stimulus package to facilitate food distribution to designated households.

Madam Howard - Taylor says she thinks the government will share food with hospitals, orphanages, less fortunate people and those that cannot afford.

In a communication dated 13 April, President Weah requested the Legislature to re-appropriate US\$25 million for the remainder of the 2019/2020 budget year in support of the government's stimulus package to facilitate food distribution for

to send the budget for lawmakers to know the details.

The first 14 days of the lockdown which started on Saturday, 11 April, ended on Friday, 24 April but President Weah extended the measure on Friday as coronavirus cases continue to rise to over 140 cases and more deaths reported.

In the interview, the vice president expresses apology to the Church here for the manner in which security forces treated christian worshipers in enforcement of health protocols banning gathering of people at the start of the crisis.

"I want to say to them we are sorry, this was not intentional," Madam Howard - Taylor says, adding that the government wanted everyone to know that this is serious.

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for the country to avoid experts' projection of seeing increasing cases and more deaths.

She pleads with the media

to continue giving support in spreading the messages, while also stressing the need for officials to find funding to mobilize the media.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Bong Sup. denies interacting with infected colleague

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Bong County Superintendent Esther Walker has denied media report that she intermingled with Sinoe County Superintendent, Lee NagbeChea who has been tested positive for COVID-19, making him the first person to

they observed social distancing.

The tough-talking Bong County Superintendent insists that at no time did she interact with Superintendent Chea.

Madam Walker's clarification came days after some citizens of the Bong County called on her to turn herself over to health authorities on grounds

returned from Monrovia to Sinoe County on April 7, 2020, after traveling to the capital to receive COVID-19 preventive materials for distribution in his county.

However, Superintendent Walker reveals that while at the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 30 March, she was the one who received the COVID-19 materials from Internal Affairs Minister Varney Sirleaf for an onward distribution to her colleagues.

The Bong County Superintendent names Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Nimba, Monsterrado, Sinoe, among others, as some attendees of the meeting.

Report gathered further says that while on his way to Sinoe, Superintendent Chea and his team spent a night in separate hotels in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County.

They made a stop in Gios Town in Grand Bassa County when a vehicle had a breakdown on the way to Rivercess County.

According to reports, Superintendent Chea has been asked for self-quarantine in his home since there is no facility in the county to facilitate his quarantine.

Moreover, his family has also been asked to stay in isolation.--Edited by Winston W. Parley



Superintendent Esther Walker

contract the virus in the county.

But Madam Walker admits forming part of other superintendents from other counties including Sup. Chea who had gone to receive anti-coronavirus materials for their various counties, saying

that there is a likelihood she may have contracted the virus because she interacted with Mr. Chea is tested positive.

According to Madam Walker, they were using nose masks and hand gloves.

This paper further gathers that Superintendent Chea

South Korea proffers options against coronavirus

South Korean Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Lee In-Tae says strong leadership by his country's President Mr. Moon Jae-in, scientific and systematic COVID-19 containment framework established by South Korea and open, transparent and democratic responses in the country's approach in the fight have flattened the curve of the virus.

Mr. Lee tells a recent interview that from the outset of the outbreak, President Moon personally visited cluster sites, providing encouragement to health workers and actively managing the situation.

According to the South Korean Ambassador, the Moon administration also established a scientific and systematic COVID-19

containment framework while proactively taking aggressive early measures.

The country was once home to one of the world's largest

clusters of COVID-19 cases, but it has recently succeeded in flattening the curve, drawing praise from the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international bodies for its actions as well as a rush of requests from the



Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Lee In-Tae

Storm destroys 65 houses, seriously injures one

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

The New Dawn newspaper has learned that another violent storm on Monday night, 27 April de-roofed over 65 houses in Gbornkornimah and Kolila, leaving the occupants homeless and seriously wounding one victim.

According to Zeansue Clan Youth president Hamilton Paliwoe, the incident occurred during a heavy down pull on Monday.

A Mosque in Kolila was also de-roofed by the storm, and

be saved.

According to him, it is frustrating to see the homes of struggling people being de-roofed at a time when they are fighting to provide daily meals for their families.

"Those people whose homes got damaged are really in frustration as I speak to you," he says.

He explains that local officials of the town have nothing to give the victims but they can only appeal to the government to move in quickly to help.



broke the leg of an old lady in Gbornkornimah, according to the youth president in Zeansue Clan.

Paliwoe terms the situation as a complete setback for the victims, calling on Bong County authorities and the government here to intervene.

Paliwoe says even though the tragedy occurred during a time of serious health and financial crisis, government's intervention is needed at the moment if their lives should

"Right now, they have nowhere to go so we will need quick intervention from the government or nongovernmental organizations," he says.

The citizens are calling for the swift intervention of philanthropists and government, adding that it will be inappropriate for them to cluster with others, amid the spread of the deadly coronavirus.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

international community to share its experiences.

Mr. Lee says the world is now cautiously optimistic about South Korea overcoming the situation as the country reports a visible slow-down in the number of confirmed cases. During one of his press conferences, WHO Director-General urged for the people of the world to unite in this together, do the right things with calm, and protect the citizens of the world.

In the mind of Mr. Lee, Liberia therefore needs to put in place the right measures, emulating countries that are

making significant progress in the fight against this virus.

That way, he says the optimism expressed by the WHO Director-General that COVID-19 is a pandemic that can be controlled, would be realized.

He explains that the South Korean Government avoided taking drastic measures such as regional lockdowns; instead, it released all related information to the public in an active and transparent manner, thereby raising public trust and drawing voluntary civic participation and cooperation.

Français

Lutte contre le covid-19: Communiqué final de la Conférence des 15 chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement de la CEDEAO

1. Dans le but de coordonner et de renforcer les efforts engagés en Afrique de l'Ouest pour la lutte contre la maladie à Coronavirus 2019, également connue sous l'appellation COVID-19, les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement de la Communauté économique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO), sous la présidence de S.E. M. Issoufou MAHAMADOU, Président de la République du Niger et président en exercice de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement de la CEDEAO, ont tenu un Sommet Extraordinaire le 23 avril 2020, par visioconférence, pour examiner l'évolution de la situation et l'impact de la maladie à Coronavirus.

2. Ont participé à ce Sommet, les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement suivants :



Président de la République de Guinée Bissau

S.E. George Manneh Weah, Président de la République du Liberia

S.E. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Président de la République du Mali

S.E. Issoufou Mahamadou, Président de la République du Niger

S.E. Muhammadu Buhari, Président de la République fédérale du Nigeria

S.E. Macky Sall, Président de la République du Sénégal

S.E. Julius Maada Bio, Président de la République de Sierra Leone ;

S . E . F a u r e Essozimna Gnassingbé, Président de la République Togolaise.

3. Le Président de la Commission de la CEDEAO, S.E. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, a également assisté au Sommet Extraordinaire. Ont également participé, en qualité d'observateurs, le Président de la Commission

de l'Union africaine, S.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, ainsi que le Représentant spécial du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest, S.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

4. Les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement ont félicité le Président en exercice de la CEDEAO et le Président de la Commission pour l'organisation de ce Sommet Extraordinaire. Ils ont pris acte du mémorandum présenté par le Président de la Commission de la CEDEAO sur le COVID-19, ainsi que de son exposé sur l'évolution de la situation et l'impact économique, financier et social de la pandémie du COVID-19 sur la région de la CEDEAO. Ils ont exprimé leur vive préoccupation quant à la propagation du COVID-19 dans la Région, relevant qu'au 22 avril 2020, il avait été enregistré au total 6 083 cas, parmi lesquels 4 232 cas actifs, 1 793 guérisons et 158 décès. A

pandémie pour le processus d'intégration régional, ainsi que le programme régional de paix et sécurité.

6. La Conférence a pris note des projections qui indiquent que le taux de croissance économique, initialement prévue à 3,3%, subirait une baisse pour se situer à 2% si la pandémie prenait fin en juin 2020 et à -2,1% en supposant que la Région n'avait pas pris

les mesures adéquates pour freiner la propagation du virus et que la pandémie persistait au-delà du second semestre de 2020 comme projetée par le FMI.

7. La Conférence a pris note de la réduction globale des ressources financières occasionnée par cette pandémie à l'échelle de la région.

8. Le Sommet a décidé que la poursuite des efforts axés sur l'endiguement, la prévention et la lutte contre la maladie à COVID-19 demeurerait une

priorité absolue. À cet égard, les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement ont réaffirmé leur détermination et leur volonté de tout mettre en œuvre afin de protéger les citoyens et les résidents de la Communauté et de conjuguer leurs efforts pour trouver une solution durable à cette crise sanitaire. Le sommet a félicité les États membres pour leurs efforts individuels visant à contenir la propagation de la pandémie sur leurs territoires, et pour les mesures palliatives qu'ils ont mises en place pour atténuer les effets négatifs de la pandémie sur la population.

9. Les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement ont salué les initiatives prises par l'Organisation ouest-africaine de la santé (OOAS), ainsi que les actions fort louables qu'elle a engagées, en coordination avec la Commission de la CEDEAO pour lutter contre la pandémie.

10. La Conférence adresse ses remerciements à l'ensemble des partenaires, en particulier l'Union Africaine, la Banque Africaine de Développement, les Nations Unies, le Fonds Monétaire International, la Banque Mondiale, l'Union Européenne, le G20, pour les initiatives importantes qui ont été engagées et mises en place pour soutenir le continent africain dans la lutte contre la pandémie.

11. La Conférence a notamment salué l'unité et la solidarité aux niveaux régional et continental, en particulier les efforts coordonnés de l'Union africaine dans le cadre de la Stratégie continentale commune pour l'Afrique face à la pandémie de COVID-19.

12. Le Sommet a adressé ses félicitations et remerciements à l'ensemble des populations de la Région pour les efforts consentis et pour le respect des mesures et des gestes barrières visant à freiner la propagation du virus. Elle a salué l'importante contribution des citoyens, en particulier le secteur privé, à la lutte contre la maladie à COVID 19.

13. Les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement ont réaffirmé leur ferme engagement à poursuivre leurs efforts conjoints et coordonnés dans la lutte résolue contre la maladie à COVID-19 et à prendre les mesures appropriées pour en contenir les impacts et relancer les

L'appareil sécuritaire du Libéria frappé par le nouveau coronavirus



La Sécurité Conjointe du Libéria semble avoir été frappée de plein fouet par le nouveau coronavirus avec le décès du directeur de l'Agence Libérienne Anti-Drogue (LDEA), le colonel Marcus Soko, mort du COVID-19 la semaine dernière et l'infection de plusieurs autres personnalités, dont le ministre de la Justice et procureur général, Me Freak Musa Dean.

Selon les informations qui sont parvenues au journal NewDawn, certains des fonctionnaires sont à risque élevé de contamination au virus mortel, dont notamment le ministre de l'Information Lenn Eugene Nagbe, l'inspecteur général adjoint de la police, le colonel Marvin Sackor, le chef d'état-major des forces armées du Libéria, le général Prince C. Johnson, le ministre de la Défense, le général à la retraite Daniel Ziahnkan et le colonel Sadatu Reeves, inspecteur général adjoint de la police pour l'administration, entre autres. L'information a été donnée par l'Institut national de santé publique du Libéria (NPHIL), dont les décomptes portent à 140 le nombre des cas confirmés dans le pays et 16 décès à ce jour.

L'inspecteur adjoint de la police, le Colonel Sackor, a personnellement conduit le chef de la Drug Enforcement Agency, le colonel Soko, à l'hôpital pendant qu'il était malade et l'a emmené physiquement à l'hôpital militaire 14 car certains assistants de Sokone s'étaient pas présentés au travail par peur.

Une source très proche de la Coalition au pouvoir pour le changement démocratique a laissé entendre que le ministre de la Justice Dean, qui préside également la Sécurité conjointe, a présidé une

réunion de sécurité nationale le mercredi 23 avril, à laquelle ont assisté d'autres dirigeants nationaux influents.

Lorsque ce journal a tenté de contacter le ministre de l'Information Nagbesur son téléphone mobile, il n'y a pas eu de réponse. Il n'a pas non plus pu répondre à un SMS qui a été envoyé sur son téléphone lundi soir.

Cependant, le ministre Dean aurait déclaré dimanche soir qu'il avait été informé par le chef de NPHIL, le docteur Musoko Fallah, que le résultat du test réalisé sur lui était positif.

"Je suis plein d'espoir. Les médecins de l'hôpital militaire 14 sont très professionnels et font de leur mieux. N'oubliez pas que le virus pose un défi, même aux pays développés dotés de systèmes de santé beaucoup plus sophistiqués. Pour le moment, personne ne sait tout sur le virus. Nous devons continuer à respecter les protocoles de santé, en particulier en ce qui concerne la distanciation sociale », aurait déclaré le ministre de la Justice.

Me Dean a été testé positif après que le virus a tué le directeur général de la LDEA, le colonel Marcus Soko, qui avait assisté à des réunions présidées par le procureur général, chef de la sécurité conjointe.

Le sénateur Steve Zargo, qui aurait participé à la réunion de sécurité, aurait été testé négatif, a appris ce quotidien. Mais tous les efforts déployés pour le joindre également lundi se sont avérés vains, son numéro orange étant hors service.

Pendant ce temps, le président George Manneh Weah a rendu obligatoire le port des masques en public, sous peine de sanctions sévères.

Français

Lutte contre le covid-19: Communiqué final de la Conférence

économies.

14. A l'issue de leurs échanges, ils ont donc décidé de ce qui suit :

A. S'agissant de la lutte contre la maladie à COVID 19 :

i. inviter les Etats membres de la CEDEAO à apporter leur contribution au Fonds de solidarité de l'Union africaine et à renforcer la coopération entre African CDC et l'OOAS en vue de rendre plus efficaces les appuis aux Etats membres de la CEDEAO ;

ii. Renforcer la coopération entre les Etats membres en matière de recherche, de formation et d'échanges d'expériences dans le domaine sanitaire de manière générale, et particulièrement pour la lutte contre le COVID 19 de manière particulière ;

iii. Évaluer minutieusement la situation, en procédant au cas par cas, avant de décider de lever les mesures mises en place pour protéger la population ;

iv. Fournir quotidiennement à l'OOAS des informations épidémiologiques opportunes afin de renforcer la coordination et la collaboration régionales pendant la pandémie ;

v. sensibiliser la population aux dangers du COVID-19 et à la nécessité d'un changement de comportement afin de contenir la -propagation de la maladie et rompre la chaîne de transmission de la maladie ;

vi. accroître les tests de dépistage et assurer la prise en charge des personnes suspectées d'avoir contracté le virus ;

vii. aménager des corridors de transport humanitaire pour le personnel médical et les autres agents impliqués dans la lutte contre la pandémie, afin de faciliter l'acheminement du personnel, de l'équipement et du matériel nécessaires ;

viii. veiller à allouer au moins 15% de leur budget annuel au renforcement de leurs systèmes de soins de santé, conformément à la recommandation faite par la Conférence des Chefs d'État et de Gouvernement de la CEDEAO, lors de son sommet extraordinaire tenu le 06 novembre 2014 à Accra, en République du Ghana, à travers la Directive A/DIR. 01/11/14 relative à la maladie à virus Ebola (EVD) dans la région ;ix. encourager les Etats Membres à mutualiser, dans la mesure du possible, leur achats de matériels et médicaments de

lutte contre le COVID 19 ;

x. Poursuivre la mise en place des mesures humanitaires et palliatives destinées à fournir une aide aux populations, notamment par la distribution de denrées alimentaires et l'octroi d'une aide financière aux populations les plus démunies dans le strict respect des mesures sanitaires requises.

B. en ce qui concerne la stabilisation et la relance économique :

i. élaborer, par l'ensemble des Etats membres, un plan de riposte prenant en compte la lutte contre la propagation de la pandémie et un plan de relance économique post-pandémie ;

ii. émettre des Bons et Obligations de long terme du Trésor pour financer les besoins critiques en investissement pour soutenir le secteur privé et relancer les économies ;

iii. mettre en place des appuis importants pour soutenir les secteurs sociaux (outils pour enseignement à distance, renforcement des systèmes et infrastructure de santé, facilitation de l'accès à internet, ...) et les couches sociales les plus défavorisées (filets sociaux) ;

iv. déployer au niveau des Banques Centrales des outils, moyens et liquidité importante permettant de soutenir :

? le secteur financier, notamment les banques et établissements financiers, pour qu'il appuie le secteur privé, en particulier les Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (PME) ;

? les institutions de microfinance pour qu'elles appuient le secteur informel ;

v. lancer un appel à la Communauté internationale pour la mobilisation de ressources additionnelles au profit de la Région pour faire face aux défis économiques et sociaux auxquels sont confrontés les Etats ;

vi. soutenir l'initiative de l'Union africaine de négociation avec les partenaires pour une annulation de la dette publique et une restructuration de la dette privée des pays Africains ;

vii. mettre en œuvre des actions urgentes pour soutenir la production locale des produits de consommation, notamment les produits agricoles, et réduire ainsi la facture d'importation de ces biens ;viii. mettre en place un Programme de soutien au secteur de la fabrication des produits pharmaceutiques et des équipements de protection sanitaire dont la production locale couvre à peine 20% des besoins de consommation actuels de la Région ;

COMMENTAIRE

Par Wandile Sihlobo

L'agriculture après la pandémie

PRETORIA - Pendant que la pandémie COVID-19 force les pays à fermer leurs frontières, leurs secteurs agraires sont confrontés à des défis majeurs. Même dans des pays qui ont peu de chance de connaître des épisodes d'insécurité alimentaire – comme en Europe et en Amérique du Nord – les exploitants agricoles sont confrontés à de graves pénuries de main-d'œuvre, en raison des nouvelles restrictions à l'entrée d'ouvriers agricoles. Et les conséquences de la pénurie de main-d'œuvre entraîneront fort probablement des changements permanents dans ce secteur après la pandémie.

Les risques inhérents de la dépendance sur les ouvriers étrangers saisonniers se sont concrétisés dans plusieurs pays européens, dont la France, l'Allemagne, l'Italie et les Pays-Bas, qui dépendent de la main-d'œuvre d'Europe de l'Est. En raison de la fermeture des frontières et des appréhensions entretenues envers la maladie et la quarantaine, ces travailleurs ne viendront pas cette saison et la plupart des récoltes de l'Europe de l'Ouest vont probablement pourrir dans les champs.

Dans certaines régions des États-Unis, les pénuries de main-d'œuvre agricole étaient déjà anticipées bien avant la crise de la COVID-19. Les Américains ne veulent pas travailler dans les champs et la plupart des exploitants agricoles dépendent des travailleurs saisonniers mexicains. Les participants au programme de visa H-2A – couvrant ceux qui ont été embauchés pour combler des emplois en agriculture durant moins d'un an – constituent 10 % de l'ensemble de la main-d'œuvre agricole des États-Unis.

Or le coût et la complexité du programme H-2A constituent depuis longtemps un obstacle de taille pour les travailleurs migrants. Avec la pandémie de la COVID-19, il est encore plus difficile de les faire venir au pays. Même si les agents consulaires américains peuvent maintenant éviter l'entrevue pour l'octroi du visa aux requérants qui présentent une première demande et à ceux qui reviennent, le traitement des dossiers du programme H-2A s'est considérablement ralenti. Ajoutons à cela le poids des nouvelles exigences en matière de santé et sécurité que doivent supporter les employeurs, qui doivent mettre en vigueur des protocoles d'éloignement social non seulement au travail, mais aussi en ce qui concerne les besoins de logement et de transport à assurer aux travailleurs H-2A, la productivité globale en agriculture ne peut que fléchir.

Après cette expérience, il semble improbable que les exploitations agricoles reviennent à ce qui prévalait auparavant. La plupart s'efforceront plutôt de réduire les risques découlant de leur dépendance sur les travailleurs saisonniers étrangers en automatisant davantage leurs activités.

Certes, l'automatisation nécessite des investissements de départ considérables et certaines tâches (comme la cueillette des fruits et des légumes) sont plus difficiles à automatiser que d'autres. Mais des technologies comme les drones, les tracteurs autonomes, les

robots pour les semailles et les récoltes impliquent un plus faible recours à la main-d'œuvre migrante.

Si de grands producteurs agricoles dans des économies avancées empruntent cette voie, leurs homologues des pays en développement devront suivre, même dans des régions qui ne connaissent pas de pénurie de main-d'œuvre. Par exemple, l'Afrique du Sud dispose d'un vaste bassin de main-d'œuvre non spécialisée, la plupart du temps des chômeurs qui sont prêts à travailler dans les champs. (Le pays doit toutefois composer avec des pénuries de main-d'œuvre spécialisée.)

Toute la chaîne logistique agroalimentaire ayant été classée comme «?essentielle?» pendant le confinement de la COVID-19, ce secteur n'a pas cessé ses activités. Même avant la crise de la COVID-19, en 2012, le Plan national de développement (NDP) de l'Afrique du Sud visait à augmenter l'emploi en agriculture et en transformation agricole d'environ un million de travailleurs d'ici 2030, notamment en favorisant les créneaux à forte intensité de main-d'œuvre et le défrichage pour augmenter la surface de terres arables.

Jusqu'ici, de telles initiatives ont augmenté les récoltes de citrons, de noix de macadamia, de pommes, de raisins de table, d'avocats et de soja. L'emploi dans le secteur de l'agriculture primaire est passé de 718?000 au dernier trimestre de 2012 à 885?000 au dernier trimestre de 2019 – une augmentation de 23 %.

D'autre part, après la pandémie, il est fort probable que la diffusion des technologies s'accélère, non pas en raison des conditions du marché intérieur, mais par la nécessité de demeurer concurrentiel sur les marchés mondiaux face aux producteurs des pays avancés ayant emprunté la voie de l'automatisation. En fait, le plan vise également à augmenter les investissements agraires en irrigation, la productivité et les marchés d'exportation – des objectifs qui permettraient ou nécessiteraient une automatisation accrue.

Il en va de même pour l'augmentation des terres arables. L'Afrique du Sud regorge d'espace pour y parvenir, particulièrement dans les anciens territoires bantoustans et les exploitations agricoles à faible rendement issues de la réforme foncière. Selon une étude de 2015 réalisée par le McKinsey Global Institute, les provinces du KwaZulu-Natal, du Cap-Oriental et du Limpopo disposent collectivement de 1,6 à 1,8 million d'hectares de terres arables peu exploitées. L'automatisation pourrait être intégrée dans le processus de valorisation de ces terres pour l'agriculture.

Plus généralement, pendant la phase de relance après la COVID-19, les décideurs des secteurs public et privé de tous les pays où l'agriculture se pratique à grande échelle devront porter une attention particulière à l'évolution vers l'automatisation. En ce qui concerne les travailleurs, même s'il est probable que dans des pays comme l'Afrique du Sud on continue à offrir de nombreux emplois en agriculture, ceux qui dépendent des emplois saisonniers des économies avancées devraient se préparer à subir encore plus les aléas du marché.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

The looming danger beyond the use of the face masks – let's take action now

By D. Kaihenneh Sengbeh

After the government's April 24th statement, mandating that everyone should wear face masks in public areas, I tried it for the first time on Saturday (April 26, 2020). I had stepped out of home get some foodstuffs for the family, at which time I bought one of the locally-made face masks. In less than three minutes after putting it on, I felt rather uncomfortable. I was breathing hot air in it - from my nostrils to my mouth and the opposite - while two elastic strings were lightly pulling my ears from the back. It was hot inside but I got used to it, however, after a while. I have been "correctly" using facemasks since, in "public places". Now that I am one of the facemask users, looking like one ninja from Gbandi Land in Lofa County, I thought to share a point of observation.

The use and production of face masks have increased since late last week, after the Liberian Government extended by two weeks its State of Emergency to combat the Coronavirus. The extension was amended to include compulsory use of face masks, which the government said it would work to provide. Already, walking down the streets of Monrovia and many other parts of the city, you will see multiple types of face masks in different shades, sizes and colors. Nobody wants to be arrested!

How effective are these face masks in fighting the coronavirus is the question left for health experts; however, research tells me that there are three kinds of facemasks.

1. A MEDICAL FACE MASK (also known as surgical or procedure mask) is a medical device covering the mouth, nose and chin ensuring a barrier that limits the transition of an infective agent between the hospital staff and the patient. They are used by healthcare workers to prevent large respiratory droplets and splashes from reaching the mouth and the nose of the wearer and help reduce and/or control at the source the spread of large respiratory droplets from the person wearing the face mask.

2. NON-MEDICAL FACE MASKS (or 'community' masks - the ones being sold in the streets) include various forms of self-made or commercial masks or face covers made of cloth, other textiles or other materials. They are not standardized and are not intended for use in healthcare settings or by healthcare professionals.

3. RESPIRATOR OR FILTERING FACE PIECE (FFP), is designed to protect the wearer from exposure to airborne contaminants (e.g. from inhaling infectious agents associated with inhaling small and large particle droplets) and is classified as personal protective equipment (PPE).

All in all, medical or non-medical face masks are recommended as a means of source control for persons who are symptomatic in order to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets produced by coughing or sneezing.

On a more serious note, the government's pronouncement is good as part of the measures to defeat the coronavirus pandemic. Conversely, from my lockdown corner, and based on what I have seen in the public, I think more needs to be done not just to compel people to use facemasks, but to use them more "appropriately", if they are available, for the desired result: halting the spread of the coronavirus.

Since the government's order, I have seen thousands of people wearing non-medical or 'community' masks. Without mincing a word, many people are blundering in using/wearing these facemasks. Some are wearing it only because their friends are. Others are wearing it in public places either willingly or reluctantly because the government has mandated it so; while there's another group of people are wearing it for fashionable reasons.

Oh, yes! For these people, it must suit their clothes—to look spike and spine. For medical practitioners and healthcare givers, it is mandatory to prevent them from getting infected of infectious diseases, aside from the coronavirus. There are still other reasons.

Of all these reasons or purposes of wearing the facemasks, I see more danger beyond the use of the masks. The vulnerability I see lies in the proper uses of the facemasks and the sources of the locally-made masks. Therefore, instead of being a source of reducing the infection, it might just help to spread the virus more rapidly, and we know what that means.

Initially, many persons, including myself, had declined to wear facemasks based on advice from health experts including the World Health Organization (WHO)—that facemasks were best suited for healthcare providers or sick people including those with coughs and constant sneezing.

Now that it's a MUST that we use face masks in public areas, it is time (belatedly, though) that our health authorities create a massive awareness among our people on how to use (wear, adjust/readjust, take down and discard) facemasks. Don't take this for granted! I see people shrinking, pulling aside and twisting their facemasks to talk and cough. They use unclean hands to touch or scratch (itch) the very parts of their faces covered by the masks. I mean they are not washing or sanitizing hands—probably not knowing that this makes them more exposed to the virus and counter the use of the very facemask. The WHO forbids that.



Many people do not know that except the ones made locally, most face masks are used once. Even the ones made locally needs to be washed immediately they are taken down. Our people need to know this through radio dramas, jungles and other public programs. Our media entities need to be empowered to provide these kinds of education. Yes, there's a need, and it won't cost much as compared to the looming calamity if we don't do it at all.

Another worrying situation I have observed is with the locally-made face masks that have dominated the local markets and communities. I can't tell how safe they are from where they are made. How are the tailors handling these cloths? Are the tailors observing the safety rules? Are they covering their mouths and noses when they bend over their machines while having conversations and sewing these masks? Are they using some of the very masks to cover their faces, when they sneeze? Are they sneezing in their palms and saying "blessing" as has been traditionally done by many? There are too many questions.

Okay, what's about those selling it in the streets? I mean those children, some as young as 10. What safety measures do they know or employ? At Bardnersville Junction yesterday morning (April 28), I stood adjacent the police tent and observed two adults buying facemasks from two girls who aren't yet in their teens. Each of them tried several of the masks on before they selected theirs— what fitted them. Mind you, the Coronavirus is spread from contaminated hands and objects including the very facemasks being sold in the streets—that is, if it has been

polluted by a virus-infected hand. I have told all of my closest friends (and I am telling them via this means, again) not to use any of these street masks without first washing them.

With reports circulating on social media that the police will begin enforcing the use of facemasks in public places (good idea) this week, we must try to answer the questions above and ensure safer facemasks are available.

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the use of face masks in the community (public) may primarily serve as a means of source control. This measure, the ECDC says, can be particularly relevant in epidemic situations when the number of asymptomatic but infectious persons in the community can be assumed to be high. Wearing a face mask should be considered, especially

- when visiting busy, closed spaces, such as grocery stores, shopping centers, etc.;
- when using public transport; and
- for certain workplaces and professions that involve physical proximity to many other people (such as members of the police force, cashiers - if not behind a glass partition, etc.) and when teleworking is not possible.

Our people need to understand clearly that use of face masks in public areas, as mandated, should be considered only as a complementary measure. They need to understand that using the masks is not a replacement of the core preventive measures that are recommended to reduce coronavirus transmission including social (physical) distancing, staying home (or calling 4455) when ill, teleworking (working from home) if possible, respiratory etiquette, meticulous hand hygiene and avoiding touching the face, nose, eyes and mouth.

The public should be told that appropriate use of face masks is important. The face mask should completely cover the face from the bridge of the nose (not under the nose) down to the chin. They need to understand that they must clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer before putting on and taking off the face mask, and when taking off the face mask, they should remove it from behind, avoiding to touch the front side.

As I close, I strongly believe that media or publicity campaigns for the appropriate use of face masks may improve the effectiveness of the measure. Otherwise, research informs me that:

1. The use of face masks may provide a false sense of security leading to suboptimal physical distancing, poor respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene - and even not staying at home when ill.

2. There is a risk that improper removal of the face mask, handling of a contaminated face mask or an increased tendency to touch the face while wearing a face mask by healthy persons might actually increase the risk of transmission.

For communication purposes, as per the ECDC advice, it is important to emphasize that the people who use face masks in the community want to protect their fellow citizens in case they are infected. They do not want to unknowingly spread the virus, and wearing a mask should not be misconstrued that they want to protect themselves from others. Wearing a mask is not an act of selfishness and should be promoted as an act of solidarity.

Now, please use your face mask correctly, follow all the rules and stay safe. I want us to live and write the story of how we made it, after corona.

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Editor's note: The view above is that of the author and not of this paper. Every inquiry should be directed to the author.

Nwabudike faces deportation

By Othello B. Garblah

Self-proclaimed naturalized Liberian, Nigerian national Cllr. A. Ndubusi Nwabudike is a fake individual and hence should not be allowed a day in Liberia to be considered a citizen, the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA) has recommended.

“The mere fact that the Petitioner (Cllr. Nwabudike) has failed and neglected to prove his Citizenship before the House of Senate during his

the Civil Law Court after Criminal Court ‘B’ revealed that they were unable to locate his citizenship document.

But the LNBA which is the parent body for legal professionals here in a motion filed before the Civil Law Court in Monrovia, opined that in 1982 there was no court called the First Judicial Circuit Criminal Assizes “B”-where Nwabudikw claimed to have taken his citizenship oath at age 16.

Moreover, Chapter 21 of the Aliens and Nationality Law of

senators and documents he tendered in as evidence during his confirmation hearings are all replete with inconsistencies. President George Weah withdrew his nomination days after senators halted further confirmation hearings.

However, further in their motion, the LNBA of which Cllr. Nwabudike until now has been a member stated that his (Nwabudike) Curriculum Vitae is a product of big fraud as such he must be penalized by being prosecuted and deported to his native land, Nigeria by the Attorney General of Liberia consistent with Chapter 21, Section 21.10 of the Alien and Nationality Law of Liberia.

The Bar Association says at no time had Nwabudike ever petitioned the Liberian Immigration Services of his intention to change his nationality. It further stated that the

“That petitioner’s claim that he was naturalized by the First Judicial Circuit Criminal Assizes “B” is factually untrue because in 1982, after the Coup de’ tat, names of all courts including the Supreme Court used the prefix “People’s”, People’s Probate Court...Hence the fact that the Certificate of Naturalization relied on by the Petitioner did not carry any such prefix, further makes the Petitioner’s Certificate of Naturalization and Citizenship bogus and a big fraud for which this Petitioner must be penalized by having him prosecuted and deported to his native land, the Republic of Nigeria.”, the LNBA said in its motion.



Cllr. A. Ndubusi Nwabudike

confirmation hearing and up to present has still failed to do so, he has justified sufficiently that he has never been a citizen of Liberia but rather a faked individual and should not be allowed a day in Liberia to be considered citizen.” The LNBA wrote in a motion as intervener to buttress Government’s motion.

Cllr. Nwabudike filed a thirteen counts petition for Declaratory Judgment before

Liberia does not allow a minor to obtain citizenship. It states that the applicant must be at least 21 years of age at the time of the petition.

Cllr. Nwabudike nominated by President George Weah on Friday March 21, to head the National Elections Commission or NEC as chair, during his confirmation lied about almost everything including his naturalization papers, date of birth, and references.

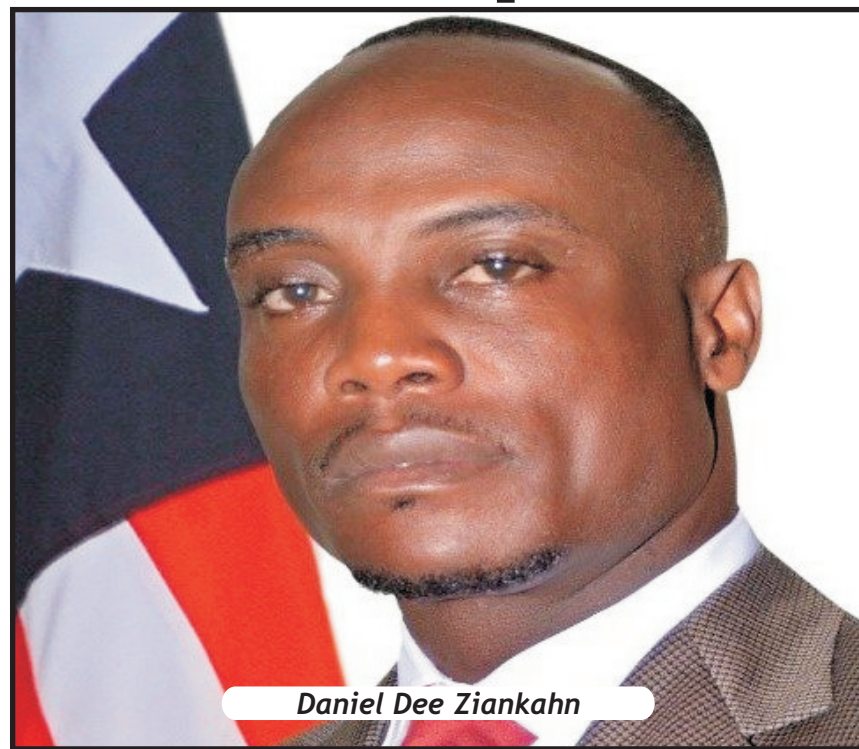
His testimonies before

Defense Minister in self-quarantine

Liberia’s Defense Minister, Retired General Daniel Ziankahn says his returning first test result of the deadly coronavirus pandemic is negative but remains in self quarantine.

His announcement came hours after Information Minister Len Eugene Nagbe disclosed here that his second COVID 19 test result has return positive and he’s now at the 14 Military Hospital undergoing treatment.

Minister Ziankahn who made the disclosure via the Truth FM breakfast show on Tuesday was among Liberian Security officials that attended the Regional Joint Security Meeting held at the Defense Ministry on April 11,



Daniel Dee Ziankahn

which the late Drugs Enforcement Agency boss Col. Marcus Soko who died of COVID

19 also attended.

At least about three government officials have

SAAR Insurance

Starts from back page

virus in the country, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National public Health institute of Liberia (NPHIL) have been very instrumental in ensuring the eradication of the virus out of the country for the common good of the citizens.

During the Presentation, he noted that the disease has attacked almost all developed and developing countries which has an adverse effect on the global health system with Liberia being no exception.

Mr. Cooper added that the money in question had already being deposited in the government’s COVID19-response account at the Central Bank of Liberia, While at the same time lauded the Minister of Health, the NPHIL Director General and the entire team for their tireless effort in ensuring that the government creates a formidable exit corridor for the monstrous virus.

Receiving the check on behalf of the government of Liberia, Health Minister, Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah lauded SAAR insurance for the gesture stating that the gesture was indeed an indelible one as its intended purpose will undoubtedly strengthen the government’s effort to defeat the virus.

Minister Jallah then used the occasion to inform the employees of SAAR Insurance Company and the citizens in

general not to take treatment or treat their family members at home when they are sick, but instead contact the hot line 4455 for said person to be tested or treated to save their lives and the entire country at large.

She also urged the Liberian Citizens to purchase and use face masks before engaging the public in order to avoid being affecting and others.

“Society African Assurance Reinsurance” alias SAAR insurance Liberia Ltd,” Was established and certificated in Liberian on July 25 2011, with eight branches operating in eight countries around the world, and is said to be doing business with both the governmental and private sectors.

SAAR Insurance Liberia LTD is providing coverage for some government institutions including Ministry of Health, Executive Protection Service (EPS), the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) and personnel of the National Security Agency (NSA) amongst others, “Philip Cooper said.

He also called on all their clients and other citizens to follow the Ministry of Health Protocol including the social distances to keep safe and urged the government of Liberia to ensure that the citizens should observe all the measures put into place for the safety of the citizens.

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tested positive of the virus all of whom were in that meeting-Justice Minister Cllr. Musa Dean, Information Minister Len Eugene Nagbe and Police Deputy Inspector General for Administration Col. Sadiatu Reeves.

There are speculations that the Police Deputy Inspector General for Operations Col. Col. Marvin Sackor who took the late LDEA boss to the hospital for treatment has been tested positive but this is yet to be confined by health authorities here.

Thus several officials are said to be at risks since there have been multiple interactions among security officials and other government officials since the April 11 meeting that have now seen three officers coming down with the virus.

However, he regretted the death of the LDEA boss, Soko and expressed condolence to the deceased’s family for the lost.

Ziankahn further disclosed that following the meeting, officials reported for testing at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville, outside Monrovia where the government has set up a major testing center for the public. “I went thru the first round of testing and my status proved negative”, said the Minister.

However, when asked whether he was working from home right now, Minister Ziankahn responded, “I work from home and from the office; you know, what’s supposed to happen will happen.”

This development has come at a time Liberia has entered phase two of the locked down measure with the compulsory wearing of face masks in public.

Police authorities here have vowed to enforce the measure and ensure that citizens adhere to the new rules of wearing masks in public and as well as clearing the streets at 3pm.
 Story by Jonathan Browne



SAAR Insurance Liberia LTD gives US\$50,000 to Gov't



SAAR Insurance Company Branch Manager/Acting C.E.O, Philip T. Cooper presents the check to MOH Minister Dr. Jallah

The SAAR Insurance Liberia Ltd, Friday April 24, presented a check of US\$50,000 to the Government of Liberia as its contribution towards the latter's effort in the fight against the deadly coronavirus pandemic in the country.

The check of US\$50,000 was presented to the

authority of the Ministry of Health and Liberian government to buttress the fight against this deadly virus by various organizations operating in the country such as the society African Assurance, alias SAAR Insurance Liberia Ltd.

During the symbolic presentation at the Health ministry in congo town, SAAR Insurance Company Branch

Manager/Acting C.E.O, Philip T. Cooper said that, this donation to the government of Liberia by his entity was intended to buttress the government's effort in the fight against the COVID-19 in the country.

According to Mr. Cooper, since the outbreak of this

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UEFA sets May 25 deadline for leagues to decide plans

UEFA has requested all top European leagues be in a position to communicate their plans to finish the 2019-20 by May 25.

The deadline was put forward as part of the governing body's guidelines on eligibility principles for 2020-21 UEFA club competitions.

Following a meeting of its executive committee last week, UEFA strongly recommended all leagues on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic be completed where

possible.

It proposed top divisions could be seen out with a different format, or, where resumption is not feasible, national associations could decide places for next season's continental competitions "on sporting merit".

UEFA expects all leagues to have a plan in place for how they will proceed ahead of the next executive committee meeting on May 27.

The organisation's guidelines read: "National associations and/or leagues should be in a



position to communicate to UEFA by May 25, 2020 the planned restart of their domestic competitions including the date of restart and the relevant competition format.

"In the event that a domestic competition is to be prematurely terminated for legitimate reasons in accordance with [conditions set out by the executive committee], UEFA would require the national association to explain by May 25, 2020 ...

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