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Pres. Weah

Pro-Temp Chea

Senate didn't help Weah

Undue attention



Menipakei Dumoe as police search his home

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Continental News

West 'condescends Africa over traditional medicine'

Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina has hit back at critics of an untested herbal tonic that he is promoting as a treatment for coronavirus, despite it not having gone through clinical trials.

Last week, the World Health Organization (WHO)

issued a warning against people using untested remedies for coronavirus.

Africans deserved access to medicines that had gone through proper trials even if they were derived from traditional treatments, it said.

The African Union (AU) has also said it wanted to see the scientific data on the "safety

and efficacy" of the product.

Nevertheless, the tonic, known as Covid-Organics, has been sent to several African countries. Nigeria has become the latest country to say it would receive it.

Speaking to French news channel, France 24, MrRajoelina said that criticism of the drink, known

as Covid-Organics, showed what he called Western nations' condescending attitude to traditional African medicine.

"If it wasn't Madagascar, and if it was a European country that had actually discovered this remedy, would there be so much doubt? I don't think so," he said.

But there is no peer-reviewed data to show that Covid-Organics is effective.

The tonic was tested on fewer than 20 people over three weeks, a presidential aide told the BBC - which is not in line with WHO guidelines on clinical trials.

A meeting of 70 experts on African traditional medicine

has agreed that clinical trials for all medicines must be carried out, the WHO's Africa region has tweeted.

There has also been warning from experts that the drink could give people a false sense of security which could lead people to expose themselves to the virus.

Meanwhile, the head of Nigeria's government task force on coronavirus has said President MuhammaduBuhari has given the go-ahead for the importation of Covid-Organics.

But officials said the import would be subjected to standard validation processes before it would be used on coronavirus patients. -BBC



Copyright: Getty Images: Madagascar's president had been promoting the artemisia-based herbal tonic

Kenya to test patients for Covid-19 before admission

Kenya's health authorities have announced that all patients being admitted to hospitals will have to be tested for coronavirus.

This is to ensure that health workers are protected from infections when handling patients in hospitals, the director-general in charge of health, Patrick Amoth, said on Monday.

"We are reviewing our guidelines as to make it

possible for everyone who is admitted in the facility for one reason or another to have a Covid-19 test as a pre-requisite

"This will not only protect front-line health workers, but also fellow patients who are admitted whose immune systems are compromised, therefore putting them at a very high risk of contracting the disease," DrAmoth said.

The new measure comes as Kenya's coronavirus cases rose to 700, including 33 deaths and

251 recoveries.

The government has restricted movement in and out of the capital, Nairobi, and the second biggest city of Mombasa, as well as two other counties in the coastal region as part of the measures to contain the spread of the virus.

It has also imposed a total lockdown in two areas identified as virus hot spots - one in Nairobi and the other in Mombasa - for 15 days. BBC



Copyright Getty Images: Kenya has imposed a number of measures to limit the spread of coronavirus

Ghana's coronavirus cases surpass 5,000

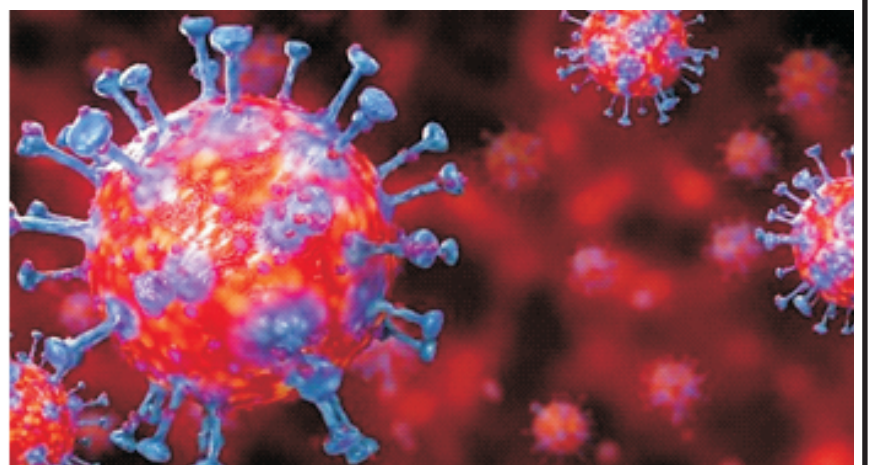
This was announced by the Director-General of the Ghana Health Service, Dr. Patrick Aboagye at a media briefing on Tuesday 12th May 2020.

The Greater Accra region has recorded 89 new cases whilst the Ashanti region has 307 new cases. The Central

becoming hotspots," he said.

Of the 5,127 cases, 1474 were recorded from routine surveillance, 115 are travellers who were put into mandatory quarantine upon arrival and the remaining 3,538 were identified from enhanced surveillance.

Recoveries and deaths,



Ghana has recorded 427 new Coronavirus cases, increasing the country's coronavirus case count to 5,127.

region has also recorded 27 new cases with the Western and Volta regions recording 3 and 1 new cases respectively.

According to Dr. Aboagye, majority of the new cases were recorded from workplaces. "Let's create the necessary space at workplaces because they are

however, still stand at 494 and 22 respectively bringing the active cases to 4611.

"Our total recoveries as at yesterday is 494 and we have about 180 awaiting their second negative tests which will increase the number of recoveries." Dr. Aboagye added. -Ghanaweb

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EDITORIAL

Pres. Weah failed to provide progress report

PRESIDENT GORGE MANNEH WEAH is considering re-opening churches, mosques and perhaps schools after the country observed one month State of Emergency and 14 days lockdown with no progress in the ongoing COVID-19 fight.

ADHERING TO APPARENT pressure from religious leaders, President Weah has ordered Churches, Mosques and other worship centers in the country to resume activities beginning Sunday, May 17, but with 25 percent regular worship-hour occupancy for social distancing and other health protocols.

BUT WE ARE highly disappointed that one month and 14 days after the President declared a State of Emergency and lockdown the government cannot provide any progress in terms of reduction in confirmed and active cases and number of death.

WITH ONE MORE month to go under the State of Emergency, President Weah has extended the lockdown by another 14 days, rallying citizens and residents to observe all health protocols. But what other strategies does the government have to containing the rapid spread of the virus which started with an index case on March 16, 2020 imported from Switzerland to nearly 200 cases today and 20 deaths?

WE HAVE THOUGHT that both the lockdown and the State of Emergency were intended to give health authorities the opportunity to carry out vigorous testing among the population to prevent the virus from spreading. But from initially two affected counties (Montserrado and Margibi) COVID-19 has attacked a total of eight (8) counties with the two index counties topping the list of infections.

THE MOST UNFORTUNATE situation about our fight is that officials, doctors and nurses are contracting the virus with the Ministers of Information and Justice currently in quarantine at the 14 Military Hospital after the death of the head of the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency Marcus Soko from the virus.

"ALL OF WHAT this government, including those charged with the responsibility to enforce lockdown and health protocols, is doing is in the direct interest of the people; it is all in the interest of protecting and saving lives; it doesn't give undue advantage to some citizens over others but is intended to ensure that we are on course with measures that all other countries and peoples are taking to defeat the pandemic", President Weah argued when spoke on a local radio station recently in Monrovia.

IT IS NOT just about lockdown and state of emergency. Ghana also observed lockdown, but the Ghanaian government went further in executing street testing to identify possible contacts in the public, which the government of Liberia is not doing. Yes, we are aware of a testing center at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville, but there is no strategy in place to attract citizens for voluntary testing.

UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT and health officials return to the drawing board to assess their performance in the first one month and 14 days, the coming one month and 14 days could see the worst case scenario of our COVID-19 fight because Liberia seems to be losing the fight.

PRESIDENT WEAH SHOULD realize that the oath to protect lives and property requires practical actions on the ground, not just awareness by music production.

COMMENTARY

By Steve Holling worth

Global Poverty's Sputnik Moment

In the 1950s, President Dwight Eisenhower spearheaded massive public investment in science and technology to counter the Soviet Union's strategic ambitions. More than a half-century later, the battle for geopolitical dominance includes the fight against global poverty, and this time the US is losing.

WASHINGTON, DC - Since the current administration was installed in the US White House, conversations about international development often morph into a communal lament. It is an elegy of sorts, even for optimists.

The lament has many verses. It starts with an "America First" approach that has resulted in a major reduction in concessionary foreign aid. While there has been continued funding for emergency aid, especially for geopolitical conflicts and to counter Islamist extremism, support for aid historically used for long-term programs - water sanitation, public health, financial inclusion, and agriculture - has diminished. And concessionary aid that still exists is being implemented slowly.

Meanwhile, donors in the United States are dedicating more resources to domestic causes such as immigration and gun violence, and an estimated \$10 billion will be spent on advertising alone in this year's US presidential campaign. And now, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced enormous new financial stresses. National and household economies are strained, borders are closed, and nationalist mindsets have hardened.

That brings us to the chorus. Just when sophisticated technology, data, and hybrid financing tools enable us to tackle the world's most pressing problems - such as global poverty, lack of opportunity for young people, and climate change - the US has stopped singing its part.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, 1.9 billion people have been lifted out of abject poverty, leaving 650 million. With tools like digital technology, mobile money, and data analytics, the end of poverty is within our reach - though a farther stretch in the wake of this pandemic.

China's role in development has led to a turning point in international development. Since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, China has sought to maximize its geopolitical influence through some \$1 trillion worth of infrastructure investment in more than 100 countries. Four years later, China announced the launch of the Digital Silk Road, an effort to bring IT infrastructure to BRI countries.

China's advances in big data, broadband connectivity, e-commerce, and financial integration have many analysts dusting off Cold War analogies to sound the alarm that China is trouncing America. What's needed is a holistic and aggressive strategy like those the US deployed when it sat at the head of the global table.

When the Soviet Union demonstrated the superiority of its long-distance rocket technology with its launch of its Sputnik 1

satellite in 1957, Americans suddenly feared that the Soviets would weaponize space. But, instead of merely expanding military spending to reclaim US hard power, President Dwight Eisenhower recognized the strategic importance of soft power and channeled public investment to science, technology, and education. America was in a race for more than the stars and planets. It was in a race for hearts and minds, just as it is today.

Many times since then, we have seen what happens when the US puts its weight behind policies to overcome global threats. In 2003, George W. Bush's administration took on HIV/AIDS with PEPFAR, the largest-ever global health program focused on a single disease. Eleven years later, Barack Obama's administration responded to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa with a multifaceted approach that helped to end the crisis in 18 months.

The current administration's approach to overseas development is the US International Development Finance Corporation. But while the DFC, which provides loans and insurance to investors willing to do business in developing countries, may fulfill its limited mission, thoughtful guiding principles are needed to mitigate the risks of shifting political winds and whims. Even then, the DFC alone will not eradicate world poverty. No single response will suffice - not philanthropy, data, digitization, or impact investing. What is needed is a bold plan that conjoins these invaluable resources.

Grameen Foundation, which has helped more than 14 million impoverished people since 2016, has witnessed firsthand the impact that new and reimagined resources have on the poor. Accurate, up-to-date data have enabled Grameen to understand poor people's needs for financial and agricultural tools, including digital technology, to help lift them from destitution.

Digitization will transform lives. The Internet of Things will allow for the push-and-pull of data to an estimated 38.5 billion devices globally in 2020. It is the reason mobile-quipped Grameen Community Agent Komal in India can bring financial services to her poor, rural neighbors' doorsteps. And creative financing is the reason Proyecto Mirador, a client of Grameen's subsidiary TaroWorks, uses clean cookstove technology to reduce the pollution caused by three billion people worldwide cooking on open fires. Its efforts to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions are partially funded through the sale of Gold Standard-registered carbon offsets.

Even now, the world is prepared to break poverty's grip. If the US doesn't take its seat at the table, it will be relegated to the children's corner, its voice unheard and its tantrums ignored. China and others with values far from those of Western democracies will dominate the adult conversation.

New Dawn
FULLY INDEPENDENT

O-PED

By Guy Verhofstadt

Is COVID-19 Killing Democracy?

Global media are so consumed by the public-health and economic consequences of COVID-19 that they have failed to pay adequate attention to growing political and institutional risks. In fact, if we are not careful, the biggest casualty of COVID-19 could be democracy.

BRUSSELS - The economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis occupy almost everyone's thoughts and conversations. And for good reason: the European Union, for one, is headed toward the worst recession in its history, with the economy expected to shrink by 7-12% this year. But far less is being said about the danger the pandemic poses to democracy, even though the signals are similarly ominous.

The EU acted fast to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic. The European Central Bank launched exceptional monetary measures, and the EU introduced a recovery and reconstruction package amounting to €1-1.5 trillion (\$1.1-1.6 trillion). Differences over how to finance an EU rescue package remain, but the primary objective is straightforward: to achieve a rapid V-shaped recovery, though a slower U-shaped recovery remains a distinct possibility.

Beyond a straightforward economic recovery, however, is the widely shared ambition of building a greener, more digitized European economy. Virtually everyone agrees that the COVID-19 crisis represents an important opportunity to accelerate such a transformation, though the jury is still out on whether the EU will seize it.

The outcome will depend partly on the pandemic's impact on Europe's political institutions. And, so far, there are serious reasons to worry.

From an institutional perspective, the biggest threat comes from Germany's Federal Constitutional Court, which recently ruled that the German government had violated the country's Basic Law by failing to monitor adequately the ECB's public-sector asset purchases. This ruling is not only remarkably detached from reality - saving the European economy must be the top priority today - but also reflects open contempt for the EU Treaties.

Juridical responsibility for the ECB - including oversight over whether it is overstepping its mandate - belongs to the Court of Justice of the EU, which deemed the ECB's asset purchases legal in 2018. Yet the German court, using utterly torturous logic, claims that it is not bound by that ruling - all in an effort to impose German economic prejudices on the rest of the EU.

Far more worrying, however, are populist efforts to use the crisis to undermine democracy. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is a case in point. Having spent the last decade attacking the free press, NGOs, and political opponents, Orbán has used the COVID-19 crisis as pretext to push through legislation that enables him to rule by decree indefinitely. This is Europe's first such dictatorial démarche since Adolf Hitler's Enabling Act of 1933.

In Russia, the assaults on democratic institutions are even cruder. Three doctors treating COVID-19 patients have mysteriously fallen out of windows in recent weeks, after questioning or criticizing the country's handling of the crisis. One cannot help but recall the fate of Jan Masaryk, the Czechoslovak foreign minister who was found dead below his apartment window in March 1948, two weeks after the Communist takeover.

This trend is hardly limited to Europe. The world's largest democracies - the United States, Brazil, and India - are also in growing peril.

US President Donald Trump has managed to politicize the pandemic. He has refused to help governors - especially Democrats - secure needed equipment, and even attempted to intercept equipment that had been ordered privately. Moreover, he has been stoking resistance to stay-at-home orders in states, such as Michigan and Minnesota, under Democratic control.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has been following the same playbook, albeit in a more openly thuggish and oligarchic way. And, beyond implementing a poorly thought-out lockdown that left millions of Indians jobless and hungry overnight, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has been using the virus to advance its anti-Muslim agenda.

Shockingly, these assaults on democracy have so far received little international attention. The global media are so consumed by the public-health and economic consequences of COVID-19 that they apparently have little space for the political implications. This is particularly true when it comes to coverage of contact-tracing apps - possibly the biggest threat to democracy of all.

By informing users of possible exposure to COVID-19, contact-tracing apps are supposed to be the key to enabling economies to reopen while minimizing the risks to public health. Yet even the most "secure" versions - which use Bluetooth, encrypt data, and promise anonymity - raise serious questions.

Who guarantees the security of the data against hackers? If I want to delete the app, will all my data be erased? How soon? What ensures that governments won't make the apps mandatory? If they do make the app mandatory during the pandemic, what stops them from keeping it that way? These questions go to the heart of our constitutional rights and freedoms.

Mass adoption of contact-tracing apps is a slippery slope. Before long, Europeans, Americans, or others could find themselves living more like the Chinese, with every move monitored, every violation - even of unwritten rules - punished, and a "personal rating" dictating one's access to travel and public services.

This may seem farfetched, but one need only consider the latest developments in Hungary or Poland to see just how vulnerable democratic institutions can be. If we are not careful, the biggest casualty of COVID-19 could be democracy.

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OPINION

By Shashi Tharoor

The Kerala Model

It is no accident that the southwestern Indian state of Kerala has fared better than many others in the COVID-19 crisis. The state has a long tradition of investing in its people and institutions, and of fostering a civic and political culture of mutual respect, trust, and compassion.

NEW DELHI - As India's 1.3 billion people struggle to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the country's 28 states stands head and shoulders above the rest. Kerala, in southwestern India, has been so successful in "flattening the curve" that many now speak admiringly of a "Kerala Model" for handling public-health emergencies.

Kerala was the first Indian state to report a case of COVID-19 - a medical student who had arrived from Wuhan, China, at the end of January. When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a nationwide lockdown on March 24, Kerala had the most cases of any state. Yet today, it ranks low on the list of confirmed cases, and high on the list of COVID-19 recoveries. Moreover, the state's fatality rate (0.53%) is the lowest in India, and it has managed to limit the spread of the virus without inflicting any of the human suffering seen in other parts of the country.

Kerala's formula for success has been straightforward. Public-health authorities have prioritized early detection through extensive testing, widespread contact tracing, and 28-day quarantines for all those infected (the rest of India, following the World Health Organization's guidance, has required only 14 days).

Since issuing its initial COVID-19 alert on January 18, the state has screened all arrivals at its four international airports, and immediately hospitalized or quarantined suspected cases. On February 4, Kerala declared COVID-19 a state-level disaster, and shut schools, restricted public gatherings, and instituted lockdowns in early March. By the time the central government had followed suit weeks later, Kerala had already deployed more than 30,000 health workers and placed tens of thousands of people in quarantine.

Kerala's COVID-19 response emerged from a template that long preceded the current crisis. Among Indian states, it is unique for having allocated significant resources to public-health infrastructure, devolved power and funding to village-level bodies, and established a social system that promotes community participation and public cooperation.

In addition to having the highest literacy rate in India (94%), Kerala also boasts a declining birth rate, higher life expectancy, more empowered women, and stronger welfare support for the indigent and the marginalized. People do not beg or starve in Kerala. The state offers universal access to health care and medical information, and respects all residents as rights-bearing citizens. No one is treated as a mere subject, as is common in many other Indian states. Throughout the current crisis, Kerala's educated populace has behaved responsibly, limiting community transmission, cooperating with authorities, and seeking prompt treatment as needed.

This institutional and political culture is not the result of some one-off policy. Kerala has spent generations creating the infrastructure to support social development, placing it far ahead of the rest of India on many key indicators. In addition to its rights-based welfare system, it has a vibrant civil society, free and independent media, and a competitive political system. Its robust form of social democracy reflects the contributions of alternating coalitions of Communist and Congress-led governments over time. As foreign observers have noted, the state's social compact reflects extremely high levels of trust in institutions and elected representatives.

As a result, Kerala was able to impose restrictive measures far more humanely than other states have. When Keralans under home quarantine reported that they had no one to bring them essential supplies, the police promptly delivered what they needed. When schools were closed, poor parents who rely on school lunches to provide their children with proper nourishment received the meals at home. Before the central government had even declared a lockdown, Kerala had announced a comprehensive economic relief package for citizens in need.

Meanwhile, Kudumbashree, a Keralan grassroots network of local organizations and women's self-help groups, has helped the state's containment strategy by producing two million masks and 5,000 liters of hand sanitizer in the first month of the national lockdown. Some 1,200 community kitchens were established to feed the indigent and unemployed, and Kudumbashree has already served 300,000 meals a day.

Kerala has maintained regular communication with the public about health risks, broadcasting precautionary messages through official channels to dispel fake news. Unlike other states, Kerala's response has centered on people's participation, not law enforcement. When migrant laborers became restive, they were given free accommodation and food, and urged to wait in place. These instructions were delivered in migrants' own languages, and duly followed. In other states, migrants have been kicked to the curb by the millions.

Kerala is among India's most densely populated states, which makes its success in combating the pandemic all the more remarkable. Moreover, an estimated 17% of its population works or lives elsewhere (their remittances account for 35% of the state's annual income), more than one million tourists visit each year, and hundreds of Keralan students study abroad, including in China. All of this mobility makes the state more vulnerable to contagious outbreaks, and yet it is weathering the crisis with flying colors.

In achieving such impressive results, Kerala has built on its tradition of decentralized governance, transparency, egalitarianism, civil rights, public trust, and governmental accountability. It offers clear lessons for the rest of India, both in responding to the current crisis and in preparing for the next one. Sadly, the central government's words and actions suggest that no one in New Delhi is paying attention to the success story right under their noses.

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ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Is President Weah a Feminist?

By SheWrites, SheLeads

President George Weah has consistently bragged ABOUT BEING the 'Chief Feminist' and made several bold and loud commitments to gender equality, but the numbers of women in his government contradict HIS PRONOUNCEMENTS.

As Liberia's Feminist-in-Chief, I remain committed to making gender main-streaming a matter of priority in the formulation of policies and programs that will drive the development of Liberia in the future," WEAH SAID AT THE 2019/2020 Annual address.

He said when the National Election Commission (NEC) required each political party a minimum of 30 PERCENT of women candidature in parliamentary election, he raised the bar for women TO 50 PERCENT.

"I am proud to inform you that all of those women who had the courage to run were all successful," HE SAID.

But contrary to Weah's statement, only Montserrado County District nine lawmaker Munah Pelham Youngblood won. Eight of the FEMALES candidates who contested on the President's party ticket did not win.

During the Sheroes conference, President Weah said when he was elected standard-bearer of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), he demonstrated his commitment to the cause of advancement of women's participation in leadership, and to practice what he preached. "I, therefore, selected a female as my running-mate," he said.

But in early January 2020, Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor expressed regret over the refusal to disperse monies to her office, something that made her appear discontent during 2020 annual address.

He has boasted of appointing many women in his cabinets including the first female Deputy Chief of staff of Armed Forces of Liberia.

He classified those actions as manifestations of his desire and advocacy for gender equality and of increasing women's participation in governance in the country.

Despite these efforts aimed at giving women a desirable platform in national leadership, the President acknowledged that women still face a range of issues in Liberia that hold them back in society and make social equality a significant challenge.

He named social norms and traditions as some of the issues.

The 2008 national census puts women at 49% of the

total population of about 4million.

Statistics compiled by UN Women states that only 3 female cabinet ministers out of 19 ministries, that amount of 12.12 percent while the males are 16 that amount to 87.88 percent.

The total number of Females is 10 (20.83) out of 48 Deputy ministers and 41 out of 61 assistant ministers.

Three female director generals, 25 are males out of 28 and assistant director-general amount to 36 of which 29 (80.56) are males, and 7 (19.44 percent) are females. Of the total numbers of five commissioners, 1 (20 percent) is a female, four are males (80 percent) and deputy commissioners, 4 are females (40.00) and 6 (60 percent) are males.

There are 7 superintendents, 3 are females (42.86) and 4 are males (57.14), assistant superintendent.

In the senate out of 30 seats one woman and 28 men, while in the representatives out of 73 seats 9 are occupied by women after 156 contested the 2017 elections.

9 women contested as Vice President candidates with



one winning.

For the judiciary there are two women out of five justices, six females out of 43 specialized court judges.

Four females as circuit judges out of 21 courts while eight are females; with 90 Stipendiary Magistrates six are females in Montserrado County.

The US 2018 Human rights report states that no laws limit the participation of women, members of minorities, or both in the political process, and women participate. WOMEN.

"Some observers believed traditional and cultural factors limited women's participation in politics as compared with the participation of men. Women participated at significantly lower levels than men as party leaders and as elected officials," The UN human report states.

2017 statistics from UNDP states that 54 percent women and 46 percent men participated in the 2017

elections.

Section 4.5 of Liberia's New Election Law, which calls for no less than 30 per cent representation of each gender on the lists of candidates submitted by political parties.

While this provision has no enforcement mechanism, there was a 16 percent uptick in the number of female candidates listed for the legislative race of the 2017 election cycle.

In 2017, the Senate passed the Affirmative Action Bill, but it still lingered in the House of Representative.

The bill seeks to give exclusive 15 seats to women in the Senate.

Liberia ranks 155 rank out of 188 in terms of women's representation in parliament according to Global data on National Parliament

The number of registered females fell far below the stipulated 'endeavor to ensure' 30% allocated for each gender equality in the New Elections Law.

Out of 783 registered candidates, 637 (71.4%) were male candidates, and only 156 (28.6%) were female candidates. The National Elections Commission reported that women represented 49 percent of all voters during the first round of presidential and legislative elections.

Mmonbeydo Joah Harrell, Executive Director of Organization for Women and Children commended President Weah for setting in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development plan with several pillars with an increased political participation of women at the national and local levels to reach a target of 30% by 2023.

The pillar includes medium, short term, and long-term interventions some of which include partners in the Civil Society.

Madam Harrell said though President Weah set up a site for women only to apply to work in his government. There is no evidence, however; that any name was selected from the list that applied to the site even though some women who did apply were appointed.

"It is time to back those commitments by actions which in clear terms remain his Constitutional duty as he called himself Chief Feminist."

"We all must and will continue to hold government accountable in providing safety nets and short-term social protection interventions for women who participate in political processes. Otherwise, the government will fall short of its 30% High-Level National Target," she said.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

LP reminds Weah

The political leader of the opposition Liberty Party, Senator Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence has sounded a wake-up call to President George Manneh Weah to prepare the health sector, including plans to motivate and keep health workers safe. Senator Lawrence writes on her Facebook page, "We

the time for many to earn livelihood, especially affecting petty traders and other ordinary citizens.

She says the burden is now on the government to provide food for the population in the wake of the lockdown, while it carries on contact tracing in a time frame to track the Corona virus.

"This was why we approved twenty-five million United

been shut down. There are no ambulances and mobile clinics. One month later, we are still asking: What is the plan? And this is an emergency," Senator Lawrence continues.

She notes that from the day the President declared the State of Emergency and curfew, counties have not received any support to fight the virus; no quarantine centers, no treatment centers, no contact tracers, no motivation for health workers and securities.

"One month later, Mr. President, where is the plan? And this is an emergency! We signed a Joint Resolution to give you the mandate. Our people are stuck! We are stuck! Where are the plans? Our country cannot seem so leaderless especially, in an emergency! We have to move on, move forward and fight this virus as a country. Please, Mr. President, get to work. Lead, and if you need help, ask for it! Give us a plan to work with after all, this is an emergency," the Grand Bassa Senator and opposition leader challenges President Weah.

The Liberian Legislature has approved a US\$25 million stimulus packaged submitted by President Weah, which includes food distribution to vulnerable groups in society.

The distribution exercise is expected to commence on 23rd May. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



Sen. Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence

need a recast budget to reflect the new priorities under the health emergency. One month later, we are still awaiting that budget for our legislative consideration. And this is an emergency."

She argues that when the President declared the State of Emergency and lockdown, the government shut down

States Dollars! It's almost a month, and there is no plan to feed our people. And this is an emergency! Mr. President, counties' borders are shutdown. It means rural activities are minimized especially, for farmers and market-day vendors. Many of those areas are without health facilities and transportation has

Pan-African leaders share critical perspectives on COVID-19 pandemic

The future can be shaped by our collective imagination, so we must share our vision. That is one of the core principles that has guided the Africa 2.0 community as it has come together in recent weeks to compile the paper "Collateral Benefits" that launches today on the organisations website. The paper brings together 27 opinion pieces from 17 thinkers and doers, providing a nuanced, multi-country-multi-sector outlook on both the challenges and opportunities for Africa, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Africa 2.0 is a pan-African civil society group made up of emerging and established leaders who have a shared vision for the transformation of the continent. This paper draws on the experience and

expertise of the organisation's membership community, to bring a much-needed Africa perspective to the global conversation surrounding the

impact of COVID-19. MamadouTouré, Chairman and Founder of Africa 2.0 said

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7



Supt. decries congestion in Buchanan prison

Grand Bassa County Prison superintendent Tom Camanda, decries congestion of prison facility in the county, stressing the need for the situation to be addressed, in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The county has recorded no COVID-19 cases yet, but overcrowdedness of its prison is raising serious concern about a possible outbreak.

Superintendent Camanda told a local correspondent that the main prison, built for 40 inmates, currently has 90 prisoners, which is causing serious problem.

Speaking Monday, 11 May during the opening of the May Term of court in Buchanan, Grand Bassa, Mr. Camanda said he is working with county

planned capacity.

The Report published on 11 March noted that approximately one-half of the country's 2,700 prisoners are at the Monrovia Central Prison (MCP), originally built for 374 detainees, now holds 1,262 inmates.

Specifically, it said Prison Fellowship Liberia (PFL), a local group, detailed that overcrowding in Block D of the MCP subjects prisoners to sleep in shifts, and as of those there, 74 percent are pretrial detainees.

The Report released annually, continued that as of December 2019, prison population countrywide included 75 women and 52 juveniles, adding, "The majority of juveniles were in pretrial detention. Pretrial



authorities to fine way of reducing the congestion.

Prison over-crowdedness is a serious challenge in Liberia. The government's main detention facility, the Monrovia Central Prison in the capital is overpopulated.

Conditions of prisons across the country have been described as life-threatening due to food shortages, gross overcrowding, inadequate sanitary environment, and medical care.

The U.S. State Department 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices quote the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation (BCR) at the Ministry of Justice in Monrovia as reporting that the prison population in Liberia's 16 facilities almost doubles its

detainees and convicted prisoners were held together. In some cases men and women were held together, and juveniles were held with adults."

A total of 17 deaths recorded at the Monrovia Central Prison during the period were attributed to medical reasons, including anemia, heart conditions, and infectious diseases, likely exacerbated by inadequate care.

The Government of Liberia subsequently denied allegations contained in the U.S. Department of State 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights in Liberia, challenging their truthfulness. -Story by Jonathan Browne

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Senate didn't help Weah

By Othello B. Garblah

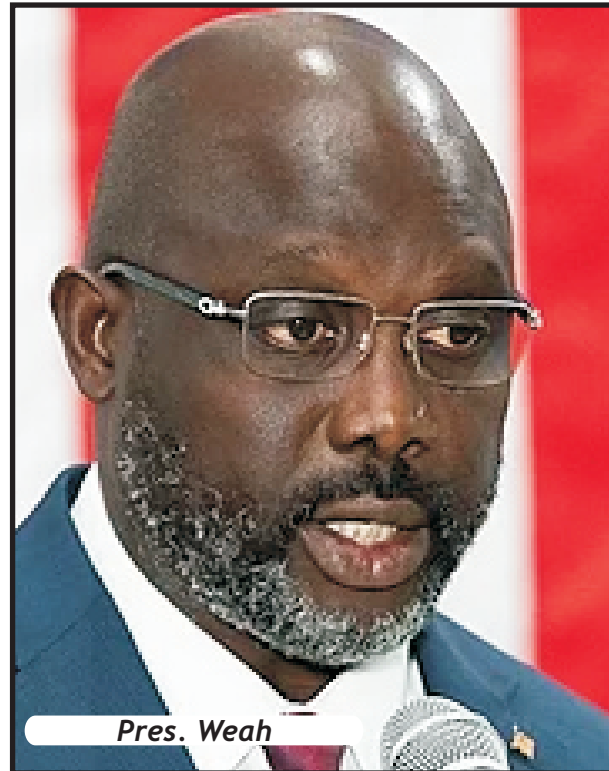
Presidential Press Secretary, Isaac Solo Kelgbeh says members of the legislature, making specific reference to the Senate, did not help President George Weah when

cleared in mentioning the four counties that were initially affected-Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Kru and that the President's SOE was for 21 days.

Instead, members of the Legislature did not only approve

funding. Mr. Kelgbeh explains that this is where the lawmakers failed to help the president.

"The President's mandate was based on the affected counties at the time," Mr. Kelgbeh said. "So with the



Pres. Weah



Pro-Temp Chea

they signed a resolution endorsing the president's State of Emergency (SOE).

Mr. Kelgbeh told this paper Tuesday that when the president spoke of providing a stimulus package, he was

the SOE, but also extended same for 60 days and recommended that the stimulus package should benefit the entire country without sourcing additional funding or making an appropriation for the additional

increase...that is why we are now saying the most vulnerable," he added.

Mr. Kelgbeh says President Weah is not in favor of the

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

In CBL trial

Starts from back page

from hearing the case, a writ of certiorari was filed before the Justice - in - Chambers at the Supreme Court.

Following a hearing into that motion, the case was referred back to the criminal court to continue with its proceeding.

According to Judge Gbeisay, that mandate was forwarded to the Criminal Court "C," ordering it to resume jurisdiction and proceed with the case.

At the last call of the case, the judge continues that lawyers representing defendant Sirleaf and others requested the court for severance trial, while the lawyers for defendant Weeks requested for continuance (suspension of the trial).

In the wisdom of the court, Judge Gbeisay notes that it reserved ruling and dismissed the representation announced by Weeks' lawyers, because as far as the court is aware, the matter involving the latter was still pending before the Supreme Court of Liberia.

According to Judge Gbeisay,

the mere fact that this matter before the Justice in Chambers, one of the parties took exception to the justice's ruling and announced an appeal while the other parties conceded the same ruling and a mandate was sent down to Court "C", that in itself "rendered the two Defendants and their contention separately."

Meanwhile, Judge Gbeisay has ordered commencement of the trial involving defendant Sirleaf and the other defendants on Friday, 15 May at 9:00am.

Although the trail into the case involving former President Sirleaf's son and others is expected to begin on Friday, as former governor Weeks awaits his appeals at the Supreme Court, what happened to the LD16 billion still remains a mystery.

Kroll Associate, a US investigative firm hired by USAID in its report said the money arrived at the central bank but that there were failings at each stage of the process.

Undue attention

By Winston W. Parley

The acting chairman of a group calling itself the Council of Patriots (COP's), Menipakei Dumoe could be getting undue attention at the expense of Liberian authorities following his social media post.

Mr. Dumoe in his post suggested that poor Liberians here need an AK47 rifle, a gun notorious here during the country's nearly two decades of civil war to be taken seriously by the government instead of a promised rice that has been long overdue.

"We don't need free bags of rice. I say we the poor in Monrovia need AK47s so our leaders can take us seriously," Mr. Dumoe wrote on Facebook.

Although Mr. Dumoe, a young promising political activist has said that his statement was metaphoric, state securities here on Tuesday invited him for a conference to enable him provide them a better understanding of his statement, but he was soon arrested and a search warrant issued to search his home for arms or related documentation.

Under the previous regime of former president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, his comment would have been described as someone seeking an "undue attention," but not under this regime.

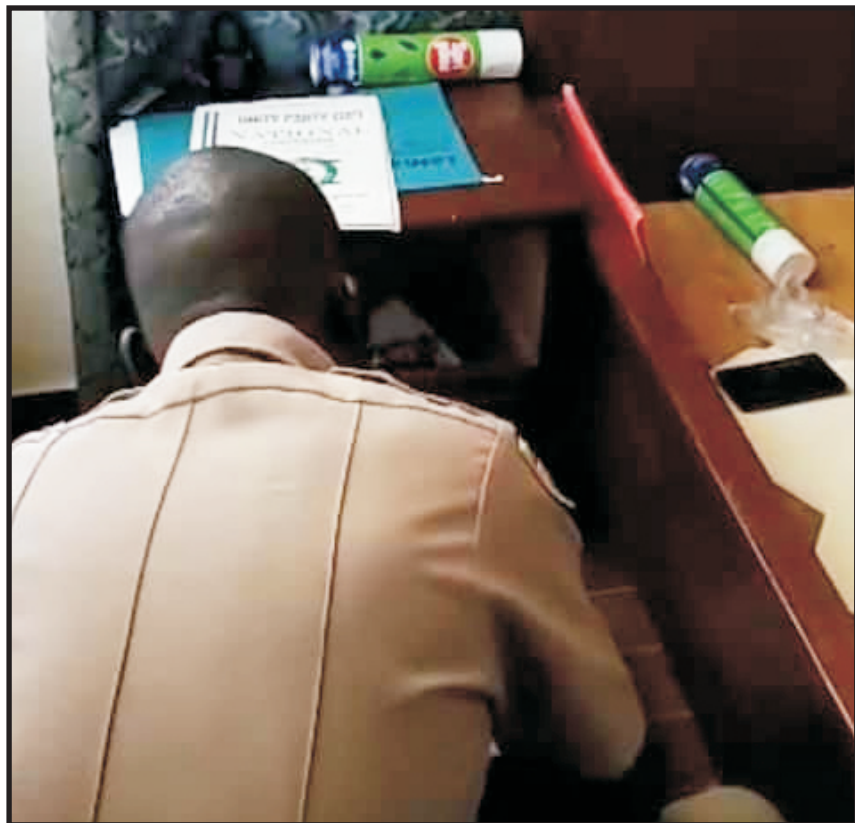
Police searched Mr. Dumoe's home Tuesday, 12 May after he posted on social media that "... we the poor in Monrovia need AK47s so our leaders can take us seriously."

Mr. Dumoe did not deny

making the post, but he claims he was being metaphoric, saying he is not talking about using a physical weapon.

His lawyer Cllr. Finley Kargra complained Tuesday that his client was arrested, contrary to police's assurance that he should accompany his client to the police headquarters in Monrovia for

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Pan-African leaders

Cont'd from page 6

"there is much to be proud of within Africa and its Diaspora, but also much that needs to improve and the COVID-19 pandemic is a test to our African resilience. With Collateral Benefits we want to use this situation to ignite actions that leave behind a long lasting legacy based on unity, freedom and prosperity".

Lead editors of the paper, Susana Edjang and Sarah J Owusu explain: 'we wanted to create a rich resource, that lifts up the human perspective and encourages African people everywhere to start imagining what may be possible beyond

the immediate disruption caused by the spread of the virus.'

The contributions to the paper span topics such as agriculture, gender relations, media and culture, youth, health and education, leadership, entrepreneurship and diaspora. The editors want this paper to encourage people to join the conversation, bring visibility to what is happening and spark action so that, as they say in the paper, "when we emerge from our lockdowns, the narrative has changed for the better, for the benefit of all".-AMA

Français

Chute du prix du carburant, une aubaine pour les consommateurs au Libéria

Un mois à peine après les deux crises successives de la pénurie de l'essence qui a presque mis à genou l'économie du Libéria, une nouvelle crise voit le jour dans le secteur pétrolier. Il s'agit cette fois des disparités des prix du carburant qui semblent paralyser les stations-services agréées par l'état du Libéria, à en croire certains opérateurs économiques. Mais pour les Libériens et les autres consommateurs, c'est une aubaine, car ils

achètent l'essence bon marché.

Pendant qu'un gallon d'essence se vend dans les stations-services agréées à 2,95 dollars américains, soit 580 dollars Libériens (prix officiel approuvé par l'état), sur le marché noir, il se vend entre 2 et 2,15 dollars américains, soit entre 400 et 430 dollars Libériens, au grand dam de certains importateurs.

La question qui se pose est de savoir si le Libéria dispose d'un excès d'essence en stock vu que dans les économies libérales, quand

l'offre est supérieure à la demande, les prix chutent. C'est peut-être le cas pour le Libéria où les consommateurs commencent à se lécher les doigts. Mais les autorités du secteur estiment que ceux qui vendent en dessous des prix officiels éludent les taxes.

Le ministre du Commerce, Wilson Tarpheh, n'a toutes fois pas confirmé l'infirmité de la thèse de l'évasion fiscale. Il ne s'est contenté de confier

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Le COVID-19 réduit exportations et importations (autorités portuaires libériennes)

Le port autonome de Monrovia n'a pas été épargné par le nouveau coronavirus, a fait observer le directeur général de l'Autorité Nationale du Port (NPA) selon lequel les exportations ont lamentablement chuté.

M. Bill Tweahway a fait savoir que le Libéria, comme tous les autres pays du monde, a enregistré des pertes énormes en raison de la pandémie du COVID-19.

"Selon ce que j'ai compris et d'après toutes les indications, le danger posé au Libéria par le COVID 19 est immense et nos exportations ont été réduites, y compris les importations", a-t-il dit lors d'un entretien retransmis en direct sur trois stations de radio le mardi 11 mai à Monrovia.

Il prévient que si quelqu'un au Libéria pense que le COVID-19 est un maquillage, une telle personne ne valorise pas la vie, car les pays en développement sont à genoux, luttant contre le

virus, c'est pourquoi la direction de la NPA a tout fait pour éviter la propagation du virus, notamment en disant aux gens de se protéger en observant les mesures barrières. La direction du port a mis en place les mesures nécessaires pour protéger son

personnel et les travailleurs.

« Les quatre ports du pays sont fonctionnels », a-t-il bien voulu préciser, notant que les ports de Greenville (comté de Sinoe) et de Buchanan (comté de Grand Bassa) exportent actuellement du

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Flashback: A patient escapes quarantine center

Éditorial

Quel bilan de la lutte contre le COVID-19 après 6 semaines de confinement ?

Le président Gorge Manneh Weah envisage de rouvrir les églises, les mosquées et peut-être les écoles après que le pays a connu un régime d'état d'urgence pendant un mois un confinement de 14 jours sans progrès dans la lutte en cours contre le COVID-19.

Cédant à la pression apparente des chefs religieux, le président Weah a ordonné aux églises, aux mosquées et aux autres lieux de culte du pays de reprendre leurs activités à partir du dimanche 17 mai, tout en observant les mesures barrières. Le président exige des chefs religieux d'écourter la durée de leurs cultes, c'est-à-dire que la durée de chaque culte soit moins de 25% de la durée en temps normal.

Mais nous sommes très déçus qu'un mois et 14 jours après que le président a déclaré l'état d'urgence et le confinement, le gouvernement n'ait fait aucun progrès en termes de réduction du rythme de la propagation de la maladie.

Avec plus d'un mois passé sous le régime de l'état d'urgence, le président Weah a prolongé le confinement de 14 jours supplémentaires, demandant aux citoyens et aux ressortissants étrangers d'observer toutes les mesures barrières. Mais de quelles autres stratégies le gouvernement dispose-t-il pour contenir la propagation rapide du virus. Nous avons un cas index le 16 mars 2020 importé de Suisse, et aujourd'hui, nous avons franchi 200 cas et enregistré 20 décès, selon les chiffres officiels.

Nous pensons que l'objectif du confinement et de l'état d'urgence était de donner aux autorités sanitaires la possibilité de procéder à des tests systématiques et rigoureux au sein de la population pour empêcher la propagation du virus. Mais à partir de deux comtés initialement affectés (Montserrado et Margibi), le COVID-19 s'est propagé sur un total de huit (8) comtés, les deux comtés index étant en tête de liste des infections.

Ce qui est malheureux dans notre combat c'est que même les ministres de l'information et de la justice actuellement sont aujourd'hui en quarantaine à l'hôpital militaire 14 après avoir contracté le virus lors d'un conseil de sécurité auquel a pris part le chef de l'Agence Libérienne de la lutte anti-drogue, Marcus Soko, mort du virus.

« Tout ce que font ce gouvernement et ceux qui sont chargés de faire respecter les mesures barrières est dans l'intérêt direct de la population; tout cela est dans l'intérêt de protéger et de sauver des vies; cela ne donne pas un avantage indu à certains citoyens par rapport à d'autres, mais vise à faire en sorte que nous respectons les mesures que tous les autres pays et peuples prennent pour vaincre la pandémie », a déclaré le président Weah lors d'une allocution prononcée récemment sur une station de radio locale.

Il ne s'agit pas seulement du confinement et de l'état d'urgence. Le Ghana a également observé le confinement, mais le gouvernement ghanéen est allé plus loin en effectuant des tests dans les rues pour identifier les contacts possibles, ce que le gouvernement du Libéria ne fait pas. Oui, nous connaissons l'existence d'un centre de test au Complexe sportif Samuel KanyonDoe à Paynesville, mais il n'y a pas de stratégie en place pour attirer les citoyens vers ce centre pour procéder à des tests volontaires.

Si le gouvernement et les responsables de la santé ne retournent pas dans leur centre de commandement pour évaluer leurs performances au cours des deux premiers mois, les mois prochains pourraient voir le pire scénario de notre combat contre le COVID-19.

Le président Weah devrait se rendre compte que le serment de protéger des vies et des biens nécessite des actions pratiques sur le terrain, pas seulement une sensibilisation à travers la production d'une musique.

Français

Chute du prix du carburant

à ce journal que la préoccupation entourant les disparités des prix de l'essence sur le marché local a attiré l'attention du gouvernement.

« Nous nous penchons sur la question et nous discutons avec les importateurs pour voir comment nous pouvons harmoniser le prix pour le stabiliser à long terme », a déclaré le ministre Tarpeh.

Des travailleurs des stations-services qui se sont confiés à ce journal sous le couvert de l'anonymat ont fait savoir qu'ils ont été maintes fois confrontés à des situations où les clients contestaient le prix officiel, ajoutant que leurs patrons ont non seulement acheté ces produits à des prix plus élevés, mais aussi ils ont des impôts à payer contrairement au marché noir. Certains pensent que si des gens vendent de l'essence à des prix inférieurs au prix officiel, c'est parce que la plupart des importateurs ne paient pas leurs impôts.

Ce quotidien a appris de sources dignes de foi que

pour résoudre ce problème, le gouvernement envisage de n'accorder des permis d'importation qu'aux importateurs qui disposent des stations-service. Actuellement, la plupart des importateurs n'ont pas leurs propres stations-service. Ils revendraient donc leurs produits à n'importe quel prix, c'est pourquoi l'on assiste à cette confusion dans l'industrie.

C'est le lieu de rappeler qu'à partir du 30 janvier jusqu'à début Avril cette année, le Libéria a connu deux crises successives de pénurie d'essence dues à l'insuffisance des infrastructures portuaires et au manque de transparence dans la gestion de la chose de l'Etat.

Le ministre du Commerce Tarpeh, a déclaré publiquement, l'on se souvient, que la première crise était due au fait que les chiffres avancés ne correspondaient pas à la quantité réelle en stock. La deuxième crise serait par contre due à l'insuffisance de l'offre par rapport à la demande.

Le COVID-19 réduit exportations



Flashback: A patient escapes quarantine center

bois et du minerai de fer.

M. Tweahway, qui fut député, a indiqué qu'au mois de mars la NPA a reçu environ 17 navires et 27 en avril, ce qui indique clairement que les ports fonctionnent. "Et je peux vous dire que tous les biens nécessaires à la survie des gens sont en stock."

M. Tweahway a révélé en outre que la NPA a annulé tout paiement journalier à la suite de l'état d'urgence et du confinement à cause duquel les travailleurs ne travaillent que quatre heures par jour.

« Je pense qu'il est injuste pour les gens de payer pour la nuit lorsqu'ils n'utilisent pas tout le temps. »

A la question de savoir si les personnes qui vivent à l'étranger peuvent facilement envoyer des conteneurs ou des colis à leurs proches pendant la crise, il a répondu par l'affirmative, notant cependant que depuis le début de la pandémie, les Libériens de la diaspora n'envoient pas assez de choses à leurs proches comme auparavant.

"Au moment où nous parlons, vous pouvez appeler vos proches en Amérique, en Europe et dans d'autres régions pour leur dire que le port de Monrovia reste ouvert", a déclaré le patron de la NPA au public.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Steve Hollingworth

Le tournant Spoutnik de la pauvreté dans le monde

WASHINGTON DC - Depuis que l'administration actuelle s'est installée dans la Maison-Blanche, les conversations portant sur le développement international se métamorphosent en une plainte collective. On dirait une élegie, même pour des optimistes.

La plainte comporte de nombreux couplets. Elle commence par une ritournelle qui privilégie l'«?Amérique d'abord?» pour réduire ainsi fortement l'aide étrangère à des conditions préférentielles. Même si le financement de l'aide d'urgence n'a pas été interrompu, surtout en cas de conflits géopolitiques et de lutte à l'extrémisme islamiste, on assiste à une baisse de l'aide de soutien historiquement affectée aux programmes à long terme affectés à l'assainissement des eaux usées, à la santé publique, à l'inclusion financière et à l'agriculture. Et l'aide qui est encore accordée à des conditions particulières est mise en place à pas de tortue.

Pendant ce temps, les donateurs aux États-Unis consacrent davantage de ressources aux dossiers intérieurs comme l'immigration et la violence armée et un montant estimatif de 10 milliards de \$ sera dépensé uniquement en publicité pour la campagne présidentielle de cette année. Et maintenant, la pandémie de la COVID-19 a créé d'énormes nouvelles pressions financières. Les économies nationales et le budget des ménages se contractent, les frontières se referment et les mouvances nationalistes se durcissent.

Ceci nous amène au refrain. Juste au moment où les progrès des technologies, des données et des outils de financement hybride permettent de s'attaquer aux problèmes du monde les plus pressants – comme la pauvreté mondiale, le peu de perspectives d'emploi des jeunes et les changements climatiques – les États-Unis ont quitté la chorale.

Depuis la chute du mur de Berlin, 1,9 milliard de personnes sont sorties des affres de la pauvreté la plus totale, mais 650 millions sont laissées en plan. Grâce aux technologies numériques, aux paiements par téléphone et aux analyses de données, la fin de la pauvreté est à notre portée – même si cette pandémie en retarde l'échéance.

L'évolution du rôle de la Chine a mené à un tournant en développement international. Depuis le lancement de l'Initiative de la nouvelle route de la soie en 2013, la Chine a cherché à maximiser son influence géopolitique par le truchement d'un investissement d'une valeur de 1?000 milliards de \$ en infrastructures dans plus de 100 pays. Quatre ans plus tard, la Chine annonçait le lancement des routes de la soie numériques, une initiative visant à implanter des infrastructures dans les pays participants au projet.

En raison des avancées de la Chine dans les domaines du traitement massif des données, de la connectivité large bande, du commerce électronique et de l'intégration financière, un grand nombre d'analystes dépoussièrent de vieux épouvantails datant de la guerre froide pour sonner l'alarme voulant que la Chine soit en voie de supplanter l'Amérique. Il faut donc une stratégie englobante et dynamique comme celle déployée par l'Amérique lorsqu'elle jouait son rôle prépondérant dans les institutions internationales.

Lorsque l'Union soviétique a démontré la supériorité de sa technologie de propulsion de fusées à longue distance lors du lancement du satellite Spoutnik 1 en 1957, les Américains se sont

subitement mis à craindre que les Soviétiques eussent pour intention de militariser l'espace. Mais, au lieu de seulement accroître les dépenses militaires pour recouvrer la puissance des armements américains, le président Dwight Eisenhower a eu la vision exacte de l'importance stratégique du pouvoir discret que procurent les investissements publics affectés à la science, aux technologies et à l'enseignement. L'Amérique s'engageait dans une course qui impliquait plus que des étoiles et des planètes. Il s'agissait en fait d'une course pour gagner les cœurs et les esprits, comme elle l'est encore.

À maintes reprises depuis, nous avons vu les États-Unis à l'œuvre dans leur appui aux politiques visant à combattre des menaces mondiales. En 2003, l'administration de George W. Bush a mené la lutte contre le VIH et le SIDA au moyen de PEPFAR, le plus ambitieux programme de santé mondiale consacré à une seule maladie. Onze ans plus tard, l'administration de Barack Obama est intervenue pour endiguer l'épidémie Ebola en Afrique de l'Ouest par une stratégie multidimensionnelle qui a contribué à mettre fin à la crise en 18 mois.

L'orientation actuelle de l'administration est celle de la DFC, une agence américaine de financement du développement international. Mais même si la DFC, qui assure des services de financement et d'assurance aux investisseurs souhaitant faire affaire dans des pays en développement, remplit probablement son mandat, de judicieux principes directeurs sont nécessaires pour atténuer les capricieux aléas de la politique. Là aussi, la DFC ne peut éradiquer à elle seule la pauvreté mondiale. Aucune mesure isolée ne pourra suffire – ni la philanthropie, ni les données, ni la numérisation, ni l'investissement à impact social. Un plan audacieux est nécessaire pour conjuguer ces ressources indispensables.

La Fondation Grameen, qui a aidé plus de 14 millions de familles démunies depuis 2016, a constaté de première main les retombées positives pour les populations démunies de nouvelles ressources optimisées. Des données précises et actualisées ont permis à Grameen de connaître les besoins financiers des moins nantis pour se munir d'instruments pour l'agriculture, notamment des technologies numériques, pour les aider à sortir de l'indigence.

La numérisation transformera leurs vies. En 2020, l'Internet des objets facilite déjà l'échange de données en amont et en aval entre un nombre estimé de 38,5 milliards de dispositifs, et ce, dans le monde entier. C'est grâce à ces appareils mobiles, qu'en Inde, l'agente communautaire Komal est en mesure d'assurer des services financiers à ses voisins moins nantis des régions rurales environnantes. Et le financement créatif est la raison pour laquelle Proyecto Mirador, un organisme client de la filiale TaroWorks de Grameen, utilise des fourneaux écologiques pour réduire la pollution générée par les trois milliards d'habitants dans le monde qui préparent leurs repas sur des foyers à ciel ouvert. Ses initiatives de réduction des gaz à effet de serre sont partiellement financées par la vente de crédits compensatoires de carbone certifiés Gold Standard.

Aujourd'hui encore, le monde est prêt à briser l'emprise de la pauvreté. Si l'Amérique ne prend pas sa place à la table des grands, elle sera envoyée à celle des enfants, sans que sa voix soit entendue, et les autres pays ne feront aucun cas de ses crises de colère. La Chine et les autres pays dont les valeurs sont très loin des démocraties occidentales mèneront la conversation à la table des adultes.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS

COVID-19: The Truth inside Malta, Zanzibar and Madagascar

By Kester Kenn Klomegah*

Ocean islands are, undoubtedly, favorite destinations for foreign investors and tourists primarily due to the diverse marine resources. These islands have geopolitical strategic relationship with the world. Amid the global spread of the coronavirus, it has become important to look at and analyze the extent of the disease and its impact, particularly, on the economy of the Republics of Malta, Zanzibar and Madagascar.

The theories and narratives are that islands may have few cases. Some other narratives that the islands may have huge numbers due to foreign visitors from infected countries and regions. It therefore becomes an important research focus to know the trends and to establish the possible effects on the economies and sociocultural lives of the population. Part of this study is presented here as follows: (i) The Islands and Coronavirus: An Overview (ii) Geographical location and Appearance of Coronavirus (iii) Economic Impact of Coronavirus on these Islands and (iv) Current Lessons and Directions for the Future.

Overview of Coronavirus:

The coronavirus disease appeared first in 2019 in Wuhan city in China. The disease was, first identified in Wuhan and Hubei, both in China early December 2019. The original cause still unknown, it remains a puzzle and an enigma for the world scientific community. The disease symptoms include high body temperature with persistent dry cough and acute respiratory syndrome. Some medical researchers say it is a pneumonia-related disease.

Late December 2019, Chinese officials notified the World Health Organization (WHO) about the outbreak of the disease in the city of Wuhan, China. Since then, cases of the novel coronavirus - named COVID-19 by the WHO - have spread around the world. WHO declared the outbreak only on 30 January, and then recognized it as "pandemic" on 11 March 2020.

Scientists and health experts have outlined various theories of its transmission. The basic transmission mechanisms of the coronavirus are the same worldwide. But the speed and pattern of spread definitely varies from country to country, urban to rural and place to place. Much also depends on cultural practices, traditional customs and social lifestyles. A densely populated township can have a different trajectory to a middle-class suburb or a village. The epidemic can spread differently among people on islands.

Geographical location and Appearance of Coronavirus:

The geographical location influence and spread of the coronavirus. During the 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic, the first COVID-19 case in Malta was an Italian 12-year-old girl on 7 March 2020. The girl and her family were in isolation, as required by those following the Maltese health authority's guidelines who were in Italy or other highly infected countries. Later, both her parents were found positive as well. As of 30 April, Malta reported 444 confirmed cases, 165 recoveries and 3 deaths.

The small Mediterranean island, first, imposed restrictions on travel from Italy, Germany, France, Spain and Switzerland to try to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Later closed completely air and sea entry points (except for cargo), and as of 13 March, mandatory quarantine was extended to travelers returning from any country. This was also published on the Malta Tourism Authority's and Air Malta's

websites. Malta then lockdown the island.

"The decision has been taken on the advice of the medical authorities because of the sharp increase in the spread of the virus, Some cases are local transmission, with the majority being foreigners and some linked to previous cluster and expected spread among immigrants living in crowded conditions," Prime Minister Robert Abela told a press conference on 11 March.

Zanzibar, approximately 50 kilometers off Tanzania, is located in the Indian Ocean. It consists of many small islands and two large ones: Unguja and Pemba Island. The total population is 1.4 million. Zanzibar is a paradise for tourists with sandy beaches and clear Indian Ocean water, as well as coral and limestone scarps, which allow for significant amounts of diving and snorkeling.

Considerable disparities exist in the standard of living for inhabitants of Pemba and Unguja, as well as the disparity between urban and rural populations. The average annual income is \$250. More than half the population lives below the poverty line despite its vast marine resources.

The Union Republic has shut its borders, both the mainland of Tanzania and the island of Zanzibar have banned all tourist flights as a precautionary measure against the deadly COVID-19. According the Ministry of Health, the Zanzibar had 105 coronavirus, Tanzania reported 284 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of 30 April, 2020.

Madagascar, located in southern Africa, belongs to the group of least developed countries, according to the United Nations. It is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU). In 2018, the population of Madagascar was estimated at 26 million. Madagascar's natural resources include a variety of agricultural and mineral products. Its major health infrastructure, in poor conditions, is similar to many African countries.

Many of its medical centers, dispensaries and hospitals are found throughout the island, although they are concentrated in urban areas and particularly in Antananarivo. Access to medical care remains beyond the reach of many Malagasy, especially in the rural areas, and many recourse to traditional healers. This poses a challenge to contain the COVID-19.

As at 30 April, Madagascar recorded 249 coronavirus cases since the epidemic began, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Nevertheless, it did not report any coronavirus deaths. In addition, Comoros and Lesotho remain the only two African countries yet to record infections.

In a summarized report, Dr Antipas Massawe, a former lecturer from the Department of Chemical and Mining Engineering, University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, East Africa, acknowledged the narratives that these ocean islands are closely involved in international tourism and trading, and consequently could easily be exposed to the global pandemic. "Malta, as an island situated naturally between Europe and North Africa, would be the most vulnerable because it is surrounded by heavily COVID-19 infected Italy, Spain, Turkey, Iran and others," Massawe noted in his report that offered a fledgling narrative and further highlights the islands vulnerability.

Economic and Social Impact:

All the three islands of Malta, Zanzibar and Madagascar depend mostly on travel industry. Malta is the most highly-developed among them. Malta and Zanzibar are

stable politically while Madagascar is an unstable southern African country. Ocean islands face an unprecedented crisis like any other country in the world. Governments and their central banks have put together mega-bailout packages. These ocean island governments around the world have also taken strict measures and adopted a range of tracking technologies to control the spread of the virus, as recommended by World Health Organization (WHO).

Malta, Zanzibar and Madagascar have made strides toward addressing the impact but only in the short term. What is important is to design post-pandemic policies that would reduce disparities and inequalities in the economy and society. With 105 coronavirus leading to lockdown of tourism sector, Zanzibar's economy has been hard hit by tourists' fears about the pandemic, with reports of hotel cancellations after the government suspended direct flights from Italy and other destinations.

At least 80% of Zanzibar's annual foreign income comes from tourism but the government is looking at boosting investment in other sectors, such as fishing and agriculture, to mitigate the economic blow. Zanzibar's scenery and rich historical culture bring close to 500,000 tourists to the island every year. With 105 coronavirus leading to lockdown of tourism sector, Zanzibar's economy has been hard hit by tourists' fears about the pandemic, with reports of hotel cancellations after the government suspended direct flights from Italy and other destinations.

Financing for at least 60% of the island's budget comes from the tourism sector. "It's going to affect us a lot because we really rely on tourism. The Italian market is a big market but in general, tourism is the backbone of Zanzibar, so we are going to lose a lot." According to the words of Zanzibar's Health Minister Hamad Rashid.

"We have to improve our agriculture system now using beautiful rains that we have, we have to improve our fishing industry so that we don't depend on tourism anymore because of this risk which may happen anytime again," added Hamad Rashid. The ministry has put in place measures to help prevent a coronavirus outbreak. Zanzibar has 192 primary health centers with staff trained to look for symptoms. The health centers do screening and track business people who travel broad, especially to China. It's a small area, so it's very easy to control.

With its proximity to Europe, Malta is hit by the coronavirus. Malta is a popular tourist destination with its warm climate, numerous recreational areas, and architectural and historical monuments. Numerous bays along the indented coastline of the islands provide good harbors. The landscape consists of low hills with terraced fields. According to Eurostat, Malta is composed of two larger urban zones nominally referred to as Valletta (the main island of Malta) and Gozo.

Malta is classified as an advanced economy together with 32 other countries according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Until 1800, Malta depended on cotton, tobacco and its shipyards for exports. Malta's major resources are limestone, a favorable geographic location and a productive labor force. Malta produces only about 20 per cent of its food needs, has limited freshwater supplies because of the drought in the summer and has no domestic energy sources, aside from the potential for solar energy from its plentiful sunlight. The economy is dependent on foreign trade (serving as a freight trans-shipment point), manufacturing (especially electronics and textiles) and tourism.

ARTICLE

Under COVID-19 lockdowns, 32 million Africans would be severely food deprived

-says new research

After an eight-week lockdown, 168 million people would no longer afford the amount of food they were consuming pre-COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa, indicates new International Growth Centre (IGC) research.

The IGC study indicates that in their current forms, and if implemented for eight weeks, lockdowns in sub-Saharan Africa could lead almost 32 million people, including 4 million children under five years old, to be severely food deprived. If extended to all countries in sub-Saharan Africa, lockdowns would push almost 78 million people (8% of the population) into extreme hunger.

The paper's authors - Matthieu Teachout, IGC Research Director, and Céline Zipfel, researcher at the London School of Economics and Political Science - also find prolonged, strict lockdowns would wipe out the savings of about 30% of the continent's population, effectively eliminating households' capacity to withstand future shocks.

The study builds on recent data showing how incomes have been affected under lockdowns in developing countries and makes assumptions about the likely impact on various sectors in Africa. Researchers estimate the impact of lockdowns on household consumption using survey data from Rwanda as a benchmark, and using additional data from multiple sources, make the same projections for all sub-Saharan African countries.

The study estimates the current containment measures in Africa have pushed an additional 9% of the population into extreme poverty. Furthermore, the long-term damage to incomes from the lockdowns could keep about 18 million people at risk of severe food deprivation.



A man walks past closed shops at the Red Light market on the first day of lockdown to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Monrovia, Liberia April 11, 2020. REUTERS/Derick Snyder

While the study's simulation is speculative and subject to a margin of error, the findings allow policymakers in developing countries to better understand the direct and immediate impact of COVID-19 containment measures on people's livelihoods. The IGC recently released policy guidance for developing country governments on containment strategies and support for vulnerable households.

In their calculations, the researchers also assume there is no government intervention in the form of social assistance. Currently, some African countries are distributing food and expanding social programmes, but World Bank data show coverage of existing, pre-pandemic programmes is extremely low and social assistance does not effectively target the poorest populations.

"The findings from our study suggest that blanket lockdowns in low-income countries - if not accompanied by massive amounts of aid and social assistance programmes - may put even more people at risk of dying than the unmitigated spread of COVID-19 itself," said Teachout.

About the IGC: The International Growth Centre (IGC) aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. The IGC directs a global network of world-leading researchers and in-country teams in Africa and South Asia and works closely with partner governments to generate high-quality research and policy advice on key growth challenges. Based at LSE and in partnership with the University of Oxford, the IGC is majority funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

Senate didn't help Weah

Cont'd from page 7

prolong lockdown of the country because of the negative effect it is having on the economy but he has been constrained to do so.

He says, he is not sure that president Weah would extend the lock down beyond the 60 days.

President Weah over a month ago presented a stimulus package before the Liberian Legislature to provide emergency relief to citizens here during the country's State of Emergency. An amount of US\$25million was earmarked to cover the entire stimulus package, which includes emergency food distribution, electricity and water supply, hazard pay for medical workers etc.

Since the rectification of the resolution by the National Legislature, which did not only approved the President's State of Emergency (SOE) but also extended the SOE by 60 days

with a controversial USD6, 500 payoff to members of the Senate-some senators described it as payment of overdue operational funds, while others say it was their sitting fees for coming back from break to sign the SOE, the package is yet to be distributed.

However, the Steering Committee which comprises government officials, opposition members and the World Food Program says the household food support program will target vulnerable groups and slum communities.

According to the Steering Committee Chairman, Commerce Minister Wilson Tarpeh, the distribution will be modelled after the former Special Emergency Life Food (SELF) food distribution program but will be headed by the World Food Program assisted by the community leaders in targeted slum areas beginning May 23.

Undue attention

Cont'd from page 7

a conference.

Cllr. Karnga says he felt extremely betrayed and belittled on grounds that the "police - lawyer relationship" which he had relied upon to carry his client for the conference had been abused by the authorities whose real plan to arrest his client was hidden.

He notes that the police had an intention to have his client arrested, but what they did was to put him (Karnga) under the pretense that they were going for a meeting after which Dumoe would have gone home.

Cllr. Karnga narrates that this has affected both his relationship with the police and his client, especially given the way Dumoe was allegedly treated like a mere criminal when he got arrested, handcuffed and taken in the back of a police truck.

The lawyer insists that the metaphor that his client used cannot be attributed to anything that is inflammatory, adding that Dumoe did not mean the use of a physical weapon.

He calls on the police to ensure that all Dumoe's rights are accorded him under the Constitution, urging that he be treated as a political prisoner, but not as a criminal.

Meanwhile Nimba County Rep. Samuel Kogar phoned in to a local radio

station Tuesday evening, condemning the police's action and said that as a law enforcement officer, you can be courteous and enforce your law.

Rep. Kogar contends that what happened between Dumoe, his lawyer and the police was a form of entrapment because the lawyer never knew the plan of the police and had gone along with his client based on the police's assurance.

The Nimba lawmaker states that everyone can be presumed innocent under the law until something culpable is found which would then be the ground for their arrest.

Kogar warns that if the police continue with these missteps, they will damage the image of the government, thereby calling on them to desist because this is a democratic state.

Additionally, COP member Mr. Mo Ali says the statement on social media clearly was Dumoe's personal statement, and not the Council of Patriots.

But he argues that he does not see any capacity in Dumoe to carry out a threat of such nature, saying the government has got the right to do what it wants to do, but it should be done in the confines of the law.

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In CBL trial: Sirleaf, Weeks divided



By **Winston W. Parley**

Former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's son Charles E. Sirleaf and former Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks have shown separate contentions in what was before now, a joint trial for alleged economic sabotage, prompting the court to separate Weeks from Sirleaf and the other defendants.

"In view of the fact, this court says it is a matter of formality and as such, the Motion for Severance Trial ought to be sustained and it is hereby granted. Henceforth, Charles Sirleaf et al, ordered separate and distinct from Co-defendant Milton Weeks," Criminal Court "C" Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay ruled Tuesday morning, 12 May.

Mr. Sirleaf who was CBL's Deputy Governor for Operations

and his boss Mr. Weeks were jointly indicted along with CBL's Director of Finance Department Dorbor M. Hagba and CBL's Deputy Director for Internal Audit Joseph Dennis for economic sabotage, criminal conspiracy, criminal solicitation and money laundering.

The defendants including Richard Walker were indicted on 4 March 2019 to give account for their alleged roles in Liberia's alleged LD\$16bn scandal that rocked the country throughout 2018 and sparked local and international investigation following protests here.

The court in August last year ordered the defendants to file LD\$1,058,000,000 bonds each, which when combined totaled LD\$5,290,000,000 after a new indictment for money laundering had been added to the previous charges.

Judge Gbeisay recalls that after his colleague Judge Blamo Dixon recused himself

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Spanish soccer players return to training camps, get tested

Soccer players in Spain returned to their team's training camps Wednesday for the first time since the country entered a lockdown nearly two months ago because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Players for Barcelona, Real Madrid, Atlético Madrid and other clubs started preparing for the return to training this week. They were all expected to be tested for COVID-19 and should be cleared to practice once the results are back.

Most clubs are expected to resume practicing by the end of the week.

The majority of players did not wear masks or gloves when they arrived, according to Spanish media.

Lionel Messi, Gerard Piqué and Luis Suárez were among those seen without masks when they drove into Barcelona's training center. Antoine Griezmann, Arturo Vidal and Ivan Rakitic did wear masks. Sergi Roberto arrived without a mask but had one on when he



left.

Real Madrid players Gareth Bale, Luka Modric and Karim Benzema arrived without masks, as did most of their teammates.

Both Barcelona and Real Madrid later released videos showing the players with gloves and masks inside their training centers.

Atlético Madrid had already posted some photos of its players arriving for tests wearing gloves and masks.

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