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The New Dawn

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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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COVID-19
Let's Prevent its spread NOW! Follow the Regulations set by the Health Authorities
HOTLINE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL 4455

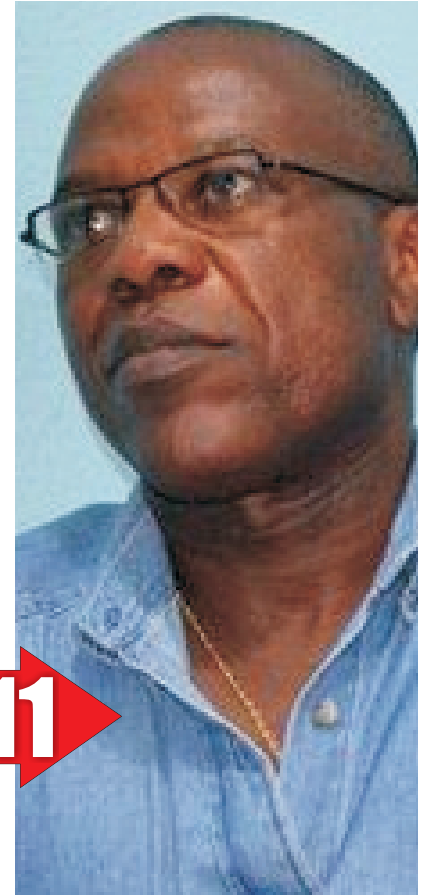
- WASHING YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY
- USE HAND SANITIZERS
- AVOID TOUCHING YOUR FACE
- MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING
- WEAR YOUR FACE-MASK
- SEEK MEDICAL CARE EARLY

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Health officials test for COVID-19



Dr. Wilhemina Jallah



Dr. Francis Kateh

P11



Prof. Wilson Tarpeh

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Continental News

Tanzania hospitals 'coping' with Covid-19

There has been a "sharp decline" in the number of coronavirus patients in Tanzania's hospitals, the president said, four days after the US embassy in the country reported that many hospitals had been "overwhelmed".

John Magufuli was speaking to an applauding church congregation when he

said: "God has answered your prayers."

In the past he has accused health officials of exaggerating the crisis. Tanzania does not have strict lockdown measures like those in other countries.

Large public gatherings have been banned and schools have been closed but videos of night burials shared on social media

have caused some to call into question the government's approach. The World Health Organization has also expressed concern about the government's strategy. The authorities have been slow to reveal official data.

Despite its warning on Wednesday that the chance of contracting the virus was

"extremely high", the US embassy did not provide details backing up its claim that hospitals in the commercial hub, Dar es Salaam, were struggling to cope.

Speaking at a church service in his hometown of Chato, north-west Tanzania, President Magufuli revealed that his own child had contracted the virus but was now well and "doing push-ups".

He said the child had made a recovery following a regimen of self-isolation, steam inhalation, and lemon and ginger juice, the BBC's Sammy Awami reports from Tanzania.

But there is no evidence that these treatments work, doctors say, and the vast majority of people with coronavirus will recover. Mr Magufuli did give some details of numbers over a fortnight

after the last official numbers had been released.

According to the president, Dar es Salaam's Amana Hospital, which at one point was treating 198 Covid-19 patients, today has only 12 patients with the virus. Other hospitals in Dar es Salaam have experienced similar decreases, he added.

"The way I see this trend, if the week beginning from tomorrow continues like this, I plan to open places of higher education so that our students can continue with their studies," he said.

He added that plans to quarantine tourists could also be relaxed next month.

According to data from the African Union's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Tanzania has had 509 recorded coronavirus cases and 21 deaths. BBC



Some churches have stopped services, but some, like this one last month, have been packed

Kenya closes borders with Tanzania and Somalia

Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta has ordered the closure of the country's land borders with Tanzania and Somalia except for cargo transport.

The order came into effect at midnight local time on Saturday.

Testing for the coronavirus at border posts will be compulsory for all drivers.

President Kenyatta said 78 truck drivers had tested positive in the last week and had been denied permission to enter.

In recent weeks there have been lengthy queues at the border between Uganda and Kenya where mandatory testing has already begun.

With the knowledge and experience gained from

dealing with HIV and Aids, countries in the region have been quick to identify lorry drivers as a high-risk group.

President Kenyatta also prolonged a nationwide overnight curfew and extended a ban on all movement in and out of several towns and cities including the capital, Nairobi. BBC



Mandatory testing at the border with Uganda has already caused long queues

176 new cases in Nigeria

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has announced the record of 176 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday, May 16.

According to the NCDC's data, 152 recoveries and five deaths were recorded on the same day.


With the latest report, Nigeria now has 5,621 confirmed Covid-19 cases out of which 1472 have been discharged and 176 deaths. Five deaths were

significant high with 152 patients discharged on Saturday.

So far, Nigeria has conducted 32,942 coronavirus tests. Earlier, Legit.ng reported that 55 coronavirus patients who tested negative twice for the virus had been discharged in Jigawa state. This was announced by senior special assistant to the governor on new media, Auwal D Sankara.

He disclosed that 55 COVID-19 patients were confirmed to





COVID-19 CASE UPDATE

176 NEW CASES CONFIRMED

16th May, 2020

TOTAL CONFIRMED	5621
DISCHARGED	1472
DEATHS	176

NCDC Toll-free Number: 080097000010

Twitter/Facebook: @NCDCgov/COVID19NCDCGOVNG

recorded and the number of fatalities increased from 171 to 176, while recoveries increased from 1,320 to 1472.

The 176 new cases are reported from 14 states- Lagos(95), Oyo(31), FCT(11), Niger(8), Borno(8), Jigawa(6), Kaduna(4), Anambra(3), Edo(2), Rivers(2), Nasarawa(2), Bauchi(2), Benue(1), Zamfara(1). Legit.ng notes that despite recording 176 new COVID-19 cases, Nigeria's recovery rate remained at a

have been cured and discharged after testing negative twice in Jigawa state. This brings the total number of discharged patients in the state to 62, with three fatalities.

Similarly, the Lagos state government has announced the discharge of 67 more patients from four isolation centres after testing negative twice for coronavirus. AFP

EDITORIAL

Lip-servicing genuine reconciliation

GENUINE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION would continue to elude Liberians for long because the country's national leaders seem to lack political will to drive this vital instrument of cohesion. A nation that is so divided in its historical and political existence can but go no further.

LIBERIANS CELEBRATE MAY 14 each year as National Unification Day, credited to the late 18th president William V.S. Tubman, who saw a compelling need to unite indigenous citizens and former slaves from America, who settled here and exercised a dominance posture over those they met on the ground, perhaps as a result of influence from ex-slave masters.

DIVISIVE POLITICS OR politics of exclusion is one vice that has subjected a population of less than 5 million people to deep-seated hate for one another with some semblances of envy, greed and narrow mindedness.

PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH Weah said this year's National Unification Day couldn't be commemorated officially due to the novel coronavirus fight in the country. But truth to the matter, what is there to celebrate?

MR. WEAH HIMSELF, who once headed Liberia's national reconciliation under former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf prior to winning the presidency in 2017, failed to initiate any meaningful program to bring Liberians together, despite coming from a marginalized and politically deprived segment of the society.

SOME MAY ARGUE that he might had adapted such done-care posture for obvious political reasons, not wanting to have a leader whose position he was eagerly eyeing, to take the glory or credit. However, ex-president Sirleaf herself had publicly remarked that her real weakness is forgiveness. She has no desire or interest in pardoning her perceived enemies.

NOTWITHSTANDING, THEN here is Mr. Weah, now President, saying he wouldn't sit with members of the opposition to share views and ideas on ways to not just uniting Liberians, but moving the country forward, principally because of persistent criticism against his government.

SO LIBERIA CONTINUES to wallop in this unfortunate quagmire with leaders from one administration to another talking reconciliation on their lips, rather than from the bottom of their hearts. They preach one thing in public, and totally mean something else in private.

JAILED FORMER PRESIDENT Charles Ghankay Taylor, from the Americo-Liberian background or descendant of settlers, said his greatest regret as a former leader, is he was not able to reconcile Liberians. He led a bloody rebel incursion in 1989 against the first indigenous President of Liberia, Samuel Kanyon Doe in a clearly reprisal attack, for Doe toppling the Tolbert regime, which was dominated by the settlers.

THIS NATIONAL DIVISIVENESS has stagnated this country for over a century, and from every indication, is not going away any time soon. The 14 years (1989-2003) civil war even exacerbated the situation. The people are divided from tribes, clans, communities, right into households and families.

COMMENTARY

By Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-kawari

It's Time to Reform the UN

The United Nations' failure to coordinate effectively during the COVID-19 crisis will bring about a difficult period of reckoning and tough decisions for the organization. Above all, the UN will have to abandon its old mindset and adopt institutional reforms that make it better equipped to address twenty-first-century challenges.

DOHA - The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many institutional weaknesses, but above all, it has shown that the United Nations is in urgent need of reform. In particular, the response of the World Health Organization - the UN's global health agency - to the virus has revealed obvious shortcomings, which reflect a lack of international consensus and cooperation, as well as widespread protectionism on the part of its stakeholders.

Nowhere has criticism of the WHO been louder or more pronounced than in the United States, where President Donald Trump's recent decision to freeze US funding for the organization delivered a devastating blow at a time when it was desperately in need of support. What the UN does next, and how it recovers from its failure to coordinate effectively during the COVID-19 crisis, will determine its role in the post-pandemic world.

I consider myself a son of the UN and a staunch supporter of its values and principles. Over a period of more than four decades, I undertook various roles within its mammoth bureaucracy, starting in 1974 with my appointment as Qatar's delegate to the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and ending in 2017, when I failed by a single vote to become UNESCO Director-General.

For much of this time, the UN consistently provided hope for a better future. Its specialized agencies and organizations played a vital role in preserving world peace, preventing international conflicts, eliminating colonialism, and protecting human rights.

More recently, however, the UN's role has been steadily declining, and its influence on world events and governments has waned. Once the world's pre-eminent moderator and arbitrator, it has become too constrained by old concepts and doctrines to be the truly effective, collaborative global governing body that its founders envisioned. It can no longer instill respect among governments for international legitimacy, international law, and the maintenance of global peace and security, as it did after both World War II and the collapse of the Soviet Union, for example.

Put simply, the world has changed and the UN has failed to keep up. The twenty-first century's turbo-charged political, economic, and cultural fluidity has left the once-powerful organization exposed, with few friends left to defend it.

But this decline does not mean that the UN is destined for history's scrap heap. If the past is any guide, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic - a catastrophic failure of global politics - is likely to usher in a period of significant change throughout the world. I believe we are heading toward a new and more diverse global order, in which international governance is no longer driven by any one country or set of political values.

During the COVID-19 crisis, international solidarity has failed, as each country has sought to protect its own interests. When the world

eventually emerges from the pandemic, there will be inquests, finger pointing, and even scapegoating. The UN will need to weather this storm, but I think that, in the end, it will be helped by a renewed appreciation for the collective community that we previously worked so hard to build.

Still, this period of reckoning will be difficult for the UN, because tough decisions will need to be made. The organization will need to abandon its old mindset and move in directions that it may find uncomfortable.

For example, bodies such as UNESCO will need to demonstrate their contribution to the world more clearly. Because education, science, and culture will be critical to the post-pandemic recovery, UNESCO's leaders must ask themselves probing questions: What are we doing to preserve cultural values? How can we protect human rights, including the right to education? How can we lead the scientific community and prevent another pandemic? Should there be more regional diversification to ensure it serves all member states, and does the leadership reflect this? Only by addressing such challenges successfully will UNESCO and other UN agencies remain relevant in a post-COVID-19 world.

Reform of the UN should start at the top with the Security Council, whose five permanent members - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the US - continue to exert veto-wielding power commensurate with a bygone age. Expanding the Council's permanent membership to include other countries - from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East - would deliver a more equitable balance to global decision-making.

And such change is justified. For example, India is set to become the world's most populous country during this decade, Japan has the world's third-largest economy, and South Africa and Nigeria have by far the largest economies in the continent with the fastest-growing population.

Equally, UN agencies need to ensure that citizens of the country in which they are based do not fill their top positions. Too often, an organization's choice of leadership calls its legitimacy and independence into question. We need look no further than my own region - the Middle East - to see the harmful effects that such decisions can have.

For example, the Cairo-based Arab League was once hailed as a platform for Arab cooperation, but the continuing appointment of a member of the Egyptian government as the organization's Secretary General signaled its demise. By seeking to make the League an extension of the Egyptian state, the country's leaders have rendered the body politically obsolete and reduced it to a hollow discussion forum.

The COVID-19 pandemic should serve as the necessary starting point for UN reform. If it does not, then I fear that the organization to which I dedicated much of my professional career, and whose values I hold in the highest regard, will be unable to find a secure place in today's world, let alone regain its former glory.



O-PED

By José Antonio González Anaya

Whither Oil Prices?

It is impossible to say what will happen to oil prices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and global recession. But there are signs that, though demand will take time to recover, supply may be adjusted faster than during past crises.

MEXICO CITY - With oil prices at historic lows, many are desperate for some idea of what will happen next in energy markets. As a wise oil expert once advised me, we should never try to predict the future price. But we can shine a light on how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting oil markets today, and what their prospects are.

Until a few weeks ago, the world was producing and consuming around 100 million barrels per day (b/d). But social-distancing rules and movement restrictions aimed at curbing COVID-19 infections have caused global oil demand to plummet. The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) forecasts that global liquid fuels consumption will average 92.6 million b/d in 2020, down 8.1 million b/d from 2019. In June, OPEC crude oil production could fall below 24.1 million b/d.

At the same time, countries' oil inventories are at or near full capacity. Typically, OECD countries hold about a 60-day supply of crude oil. Today, they are holding an 85-day supply. The EIA expects that global oil inventories will grow this year at an average rate of 2.6 million b/d - the largest annual buildup in the 40 years the EIA has tracked international data. Simply put, the world is running out of space to store oil.

Because oil markets are highly inelastic in the short term, the combination of plummeting demand and swelling inventories has produced the sharpest oil-price decline in recorded history. Prices even reached negative territory for some grades of crude, such as West Texas Intermediate and Mexican oil export basket.

Historically, abrupt declines in oil prices have typically been short-lived, with recoveries arriving after a few months. That is what happened after both the 2008 global financial crisis and the 2014 oil-price crash. But, with a pandemic raging and a recession looming, will this time be different?

The answer depends, first, on whether demand will recover more slowly this time around. OECD countries are certainly working hard to ensure that it doesn't. Beyond extraordinary monetary expansion in many countries, G20 governments have implemented unprecedented fiscal stimulus - the equivalent of 8% of GDP, on average. Stimulus packages are particularly large in the United Kingdom (17% of GDP), France (15% of GDP), and Germany (14% of GDP). The United States' package - which amounts to 10% of GDP - is twice the size of Mexico's entire economy.

But this is not a typical economic crisis. During a pandemic, spurring economic recovery is not as simple as encouraging people to move and consume. Even as social-distancing rules are relaxed, many businesses will continue to face constraints on their operations, from physical-proximity restrictions to supply-chain disruptions.

Moreover, consumers may hesitate to return to their old lifestyles, meaning that some industries - such as air travel and tourism - will continue to struggle long after outbreak-related restrictions are removed. And, absent a vaccine or cure, there is always the possibility that new waves of infections will force countries to clamp down again.

In any case, economic recovery does not necessarily mean a return to the pre-pandemic "normal." For example, remote-work arrangements could be maintained, and, with the pandemic viewed in some countries as an indictment of global supply chains, trade may suffer. In short, there is plenty of reason to expect oil demand not to rebound as quickly as it has after past crises.

That does not have to lead to disaster - but only if oil producers can adjust supply fast enough. In the past, this has been difficult to do. Traditional oil fields require large amounts of upfront capital, but once production starts, the marginal cost of extraction is very low. As a result, producers may hesitate to take fields "offline" when oil prices decline.

With the rise of shale oil, however, marginal production costs have increased considerably. So when oil prices fall below their breakeven point, the optimal response is to suspend production immediately. That explains why US oil production, of which shale accounts for a large share, has already fallen by one million b/d, from its mid-March record of 13.1 million. Most analysts predict further declines of similar magnitude in the coming months.

It is difficult to forecast the trajectory of oil markets in the best of times. During a once-in-a-century pandemic, which has triggered a once-in-a-century recession, it is impossible. But there are signs that, though demand will take time to recover, supply may be adjusted faster than during past crises - and a more stable oil price may be restored.

Liberia International NGO
LINGO

network of international non-governmental organizations in Liberia forum

LIBERIA INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (LINGO) FORUM JOINT STATEMENT ON COVID-19

The outbreak of a new coronavirus in late 2019 was the start of the global pandemic which has now spread to nearly every country and territory in the world. Since the first diagnosis of COVID-19 in Liberia on March 16 2020, the virus has spread to at least nine counties, with increasing community transmission. As of May 15, 2020, Liberia has recorded 223 confirmed cases and 20 reported deaths. As per official reports, Liberia is experiencing a higher case fatality rate compared to its neighbours in the region, and Liberian health workers account for over 20% of total confirmed cases.

The situation is especially alarming in Liberia because of the weak health sector, unstable economic system and lack of social safety net. Among the serious challenges are a shortage of trained health professionals; inadequate financial resources; poor water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) infrastructure; overcrowding in Monrovia's urban poor communities; high rates of informal employment and food insecurity; and the poor health of the population. Only 36% of health facilities have access to basic hygiene services, and 3% access to basic sanitation services.¹ In addition to weak health infrastructure, Liberia also has one of the lowest doctor-to-patient ratios worldwide, with only one doctor for every 15,000 people.² This is compounded by critical gaps in the availability of drugs and medical supplies. This virus not only threatens the health and survival of Liberians, it could have a devastating impact on the health system, the economy - and on the already fragile livelihoods of the most vulnerable people.

It is with this understanding that a majority of members of the **Liberian International Non-Governmental Organizations (LINGO) forum** want to acknowledge the leadership of the Government of Liberia for measures taken to respond to COVID 19 and flatten the epidemic curve in Liberia. Many of the LINGO members have been active participants in the National Incident Management System (IMS) at national and county level since it was activated in March. We reaffirm our support to the IMS led by the Government of Liberia. We will work with you to strengthen the IMS, because the safety and well-being of our staff is paramount as is **maximizing the impact of the response to save lives and protect livelihoods**.

LINGO Members wish to make the following recommendations to the Government of Liberia, Donor Community and United Nations agencies:

- 1. Improve coordination in the national response.** If we don't deliver a well-coordinated, multi-sectoral response, many more lives will be lost to COVID-19 as well as other diseases and health issues in Liberia. LINGO strongly encourages government, donors, UN, the private sector and civil society actors to effectively collaborate to rapidly respond to the crisis. The IMS should:
 - Decentralize the coordination of the response with increased financial and logistical support to county health teams and health structures at county and district level to fast-track county readiness and response activities.
 - Recognize the role of essential humanitarian workers involved in COVID-19 response and provide access passes to a limited number of INGO and CSO staff who need to move about unhindered by Joint Security.
 - To the UN Resident Coordinator - ensure that all working groups are coordinated to allow the development of a national vision for overall preparedness and response, with every organisation's role clearly defined.
- 2. Strengthen laboratory capacity and improve the testing regimen.** The WHO encourages countries to invest in and strengthen laboratory capacity as one of the most effective means of flattening the curve. Liberia must quickly adopt a mass testing strategy. This is the only way we will be able to effectively test, trace, and treat COVID-19 cases. The IMS should:
 - Procure more testing kits, train laboratory staff to perform tests, increase sample collection and testing, and ensure timeliness and reliability of test results and reporting.
 - Ensure continued reporting on number of samples collected and tested. Otherwise there is a risk that the low numbers will be attributed to lack of new infections, and the public will be less likely to comply with IPC protocols. Greater transparency will also allow us to work together to address the challenges with testing.
- 3. Enhance risk communication.** Messages must be clear, consistent and transparent, ensuring people have the life-saving information they need to protect themselves and others from the virus and to reduce its impact on health, social life, and the economy.
 - Increase the frequency and level of detail in the IMS situation reports and maintain gender- and age-disaggregated data.
 - Ensure messages are gender-sensitive and also contain specific information applicable to people with disabilities, considering their rights, barriers, and needs in this emergency.
- 4. Increase protection of healthcare workers.** Over 20% of the current confirmed cases are health workers. Public and private health institutions have expressed widespread concerns that health workers are facing a tremendous risk because they lack Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hygiene materials as well as adequate training. The Government and specifically the IMS must:
 - Support health facilities to improve IPC protocols and ensure the availability of PPE to protect medical staff.
- 5. Strengthen community and civil society engagement.** During the EVD outbreak, communities were initially excluded from the response which resulted in mistrust, misinformation and fear about the outbreak and response. We are seeing this play out in the COVID-19 response. A response that is disconnected from local actors and communities will exacerbate the pandemic in Liberia. For an effective response to COVID 19, the Government and development partners must:
 - Ensure a community-centred approach and engage civil society and existing community structures (especially those that engage and serve the most vulnerable groups) in all coordination mechanisms for the development, implementation and monitoring of COVID-19 national response actions.
- 6. Apply a human-rights based approach to the State of Emergency and lockdown.** A complete lockdown without appropriate mitigation measures for vulnerable populations will have a devastating collateral impact on the poorest households, which depend on the informal economy for their livelihoods and day-to-day survival. At the same time, women and girls are likely to experience increased violence due to prolonged confinement in their homes, increased financial pressure and other stressors. There is also a risk that more Liberians will die from other diseases and health complications because they will not be able to access health services. The SOE and lockdown must be accompanied by targeted measures to ensure **human rights are respected, basic needs are met, and livelihoods are preserved**. The Government must therefore:
 - Provide social protection programs and subsidized social services, verifying that they target and reach the poorest households and most vulnerable groups.
 - Guarantee preparedness and response plans are developed with an age, gender, diversity approach, and are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities.
 - Ensure that gender-based violence protection and response services are integrated in the multisectoral COVID-19 national response plan.
 - Ensure continuity of primary health care services, with the priority on reproductive health interventions and those linked with mortal diseases (TB, malaria, HIV, undernutrition, maternal mortality) and include treatment of these in protocols, preparedness and protection strategies.
 - To the Donor Community and UN - hold Government accountable for upholding human rights during the State of Emergency.
 - To the UN Resident Coordinator - engage LINGO in the development and roll out of Liberia's COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan.
- 7. Mobilize additional financial resources.** While multilateral and bilateral partners including the World Bank, WHO, EU, and several governments have committed resources, the IMS pillars remain largely underfunded. Most of the in-country donors have shown commitment to the response through reprogramming of existing grants; however, without committing additional resources to address the pandemic, it will be difficult to flatten the curve and minimize the socio-economic impact in the country. Donors and development partners should:
 - Allocate additional funding to COVID-19 preparedness and response and increase monitoring and verification of expenditures.
 - Ensure essential services and other interventions already financed remain supported throughout the crisis.
 - Prioritize financial support to counties not just based on the number of cases, but through an in-depth vulnerability analysis.
- 8. Strengthen accountability for financial resources.** All involved stakeholders must be transparent in accounting for all emergency funds to counter the widespread belief that COVID-19 is a hoax for elites to enrich themselves. Internal control measures must be strengthened to ensure that funds are utilized for the intended purpose. All actors must:
 - Develop and implement robust monitoring oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability of all COVID-19 related expenditures.
- 9. Plan for a stronger, more resilient Liberia post COVID-19.** The pandemic is reinforcing the relevance of our missions and revealing new possibilities for systemic change. Although we're still in the middle of the crisis, we believe now is the time to start planning for a better, more equal, and more sustainable future.
 - Invest in the health system and nurture local innovation in the sector.
 - Invest in water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, services and activities with a focus on behavioural changes, specifically handwashing and hygiene practices, greetings and physical distancing.
 - Given Liberia's high dependency on imported food, prioritizing and investing in local food production will ensure access to food for primarily vulnerable groups. Emphasis must be placed on inclusive domestic value chains to reduce disruptions on local and economic markets and to reduce dependency on agricultural imports.

Considering the dramatic impact that the pandemic could have in Liberia, the Government, with the support of all stakeholders, must act fast while the situation is still manageable. Members of the LINGO network remain committed to support the Government's efforts to "kick the coronavirus out of Liberia". We believe that our collective experience, technical expertise and operational support are vital.

From the majority of the LINGO members.

FEATURE

FEATURE

Barehanded Soldiers in the Fight Against COVID-19 in Liberia - The Health Workers

A Tribute to Health Workers

Cont'd from last edition

The Barehanded Soldiers in the Fight Against Corona The writer describes them as the frontline soldiers and commanders- the health care workers -the Doctors, the Nurses, Laboratory Technicians, Public Health Practitioners, Epidemiologists, Scientists, Care Givers and Ambulance Drivers that are working against the odds to fight an invisible and unknown, but lethal enemy. In Liberia, in particular, the health care workers are working under unpleasant and mundane conditions that have attended the health system for decades. As at the time of this piece, there were reports that there is very little or no personal protection equipment (PPEs), i.e., no standard face masks, no hand gloves, no ventilators, limited or no testing kits, yet they are daringly working around the clock vigorously battling to abate a disease which knows no borders.

Fight Against COVID-19 in Liberia

The Coronavirus is no respecter of class, race, economic, political and social status. Some prominent world figures have contracted the virus including Prince Charles, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, to name but a few. In Liberia, the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Nathaniel Blama is the first person to have been tested positive on March 16, 2020, but survived along with dozens of other earlier known cases. However, the Director of the Drug Enforcement Agency, Col. Michael Soko and little over a dozen others have to date, fallen prey to the virus and have succumbed. Later, the Minister of Justice, Cllr. F. Musa Dean and the Minister of Information, L. Eugene Nagbe, Deputy Police Director for Administrator Sadiatu Reeves and a host of other government officials - also contracted the disease; were treated and discharged from the newly built 14th Military Hospital. It was reported in the media that President George Weah who closely interacted with Nagbe prior to the Minister testing positive with the virus did not self-quarantine as required under the health protocols. Information from the corridors of state actors hinted that President Weah might have contracted the disease as his alleged secretly leaked test result showed. As a consequence of that alleged leakage, a number of health workers from the National Public Health Institute of Liberia and the Montserrado County Health Team were subjected to security interrogation. The writer who spoke to one of the health workers was informed of their horrifying ordeal and how they were intimidated and harassed for hours by the authorities of the National Security Agency. However, Health authorities, probably for the fear of losing their jobs, have remained tight-lip on the matter. There is no indication whether President submitted himself to be tested, but was seen with a dazzling array of government officials distributing rice and COVID prevention materials in some communities around Monrovia and parts adjacent.

That being said, in the face of inadequate supply of critically needed materials, these men and women are saving lives, attending to the sick, the persons who have symptoms, or are showing signs of the virus. These health workers are working under the most severe and appalling infrastructural defects with no emoluments, low salaries which are usually not paid on time. These health workers continue to brave the icy current to face the bullets at the frontline of the fight against the scathing attacks of the disease. They are vulnerable and practically barehanded due to lack of the necessary tools and equipment they need to face the invisible but deadly enemy. While the writer agrees that these health

workers took an oath to serve humanity and to save lives, they cannot continuously be exposed to danger and subjected to humiliation caused by the unfavorable conditions of service while they combat a disease to the peril of their lives. As these health care workers continue to face the enemy at the frontlines, despite these abysmal conditions, the writer herein embellishes them with a humble salute for the incredible job. These health workers are the unsung heroes of this fight against the coronavirus. The writer reminisces that during the Ebola outbreak in 2014, Liberia was caught with its pants down. The health care delivery system was moribund, and unprepared to respond and to combat the plaque at the time. That being said, in the aftermath of the EBOLA outbreak, it was expected that the country would erect a typology of adequate preparation by garnering the requisite tools and the necessary safeguards that would evince the commitment of politicians and policy makers to build a resilient health system.

However, the recent outbreak of the coronavirus has exposed the seemingly intractable weakness and showcased that the system still remains in tatters. It also accentuates the exigency of the health system and hammers in the stubborn truth that national leaders have made no significant investment and or have not prioritized allocation of adequate resources and to make other interventions required to build a resilient



health care system. Suffice it to say that Ebola did not teach us any hard lesson, neither did it prepare the country to bear and combat the outbreak of another epidemic or a pandemic as the national response to the coronavirus has eloquently unraveled.

In the calculus for combating this current global pandemic, and bracing for future outbreaks in Liberia, the need to hugely invest in the health care infrastructure and personnel cannot be overemphasized. The nuance is that considering the relics that are traceable to the Ebola virus, the building of a vibrant and responsive health care delivery system is inextricably linked to erecting the requisite technical and professional safeguards to respond to the current coronavirus and future outbreak of an epidemic or a pandemic for that matter. The health care infrastructure remains seriously challenged and unimpressive. The shameful conditions that attended the outbreak of EBOLA are very present, which further expose our health care workers to danger, and getting possibly infected while they help to save lives. In the likely event that many of health care workers get infected with the virus due to these prevailing demotivating working conditions, this would have deleterious consequences on the overall effort to combat the virus. Giving care at such a crucial time of national health emergency is not a simple act imposed by mere professional duty and the obligation to save

lives. It is typical of the biblical story of one laying down his life for another to be saved. It becomes even colossal when such fight presents real and clear danger to their lives. The writer applauds the valor emitted by the unbridled commitment of the men and women of the health care system of Liberia and their counterparts around the world. In spite of the unpleasant and horrible conditions they are made to work under, the health caregivers continue to be at the frontlines amidst systemic failures and inadequacies. In Liberia, the laundry list of shortcomings that attend the healthcare delivery system range from absence of basic social services, i.e. lack of pipe borne water, lack of electricity and poor infrastructure and lack of incentives for health workers.

Conclusion

The writer masks this salutation to the health care workers for their unmatched bravery and tenacity in the fight against coronavirus with a clarion call that if the fight against COVID-19 pandemic is to gain currency, health workers need an unprecedented scale of motivation from both the Government and the general public to continue to grapple with such a herculean task. The health workers need the support of the Government, public and private institutions, entrepreneurs, private citizens and the citizenry at large to lend them any and every assistance as they continue to be at the epic center of the fight against this vituperative disease. The writer takes off hat to the doctors, the nurses, the lab technicians, public health practitioners, health administrators and ambulance drivers and their partners who continue to brave the storm and to rise to the occasion to work diligently to flatten the curve in the fight against COVID-19 in Liberia. Their performance remains outstanding in the face of these awful and untenable conditions enumerated hereinabove. The writer touts that all and sundry need to rise to the occasion to encourage the health workers by embellishing them with bouquets of gratitude and heartwarming renditions of appreciation for the tireless efforts and tremendous sacrifices they continue to endure. The writer entreats them to continue the extraordinary effort to serve humanity and their communities for which posterity will ever remain kind to them. It is a rallying call to stand with them and to honor the commitment by continuously illuminating their selfless strides with thunderous applause and lavishing them with snippets of individual and collective actions, showering them with gifts, big or small, during this time of a national health pandemic. Bravo to the health workers, bravo to the public health practitioners for the stunning act of heroism demonstrated then and now. The writer lavishes love and appreciation to them in a big way for this huge and extraordinary effort to roll back and abate the spread of the deadly corona virus-COVID-19. BRAVO TO THE BAREHANDED HEROS, BRAVO TO THE HEALTH CARE WORKERS OF LIBERIA.

About the Author

Bobby F. Weetol-Livingstone studied law at the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia. He also read Development Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies, in the Hague, Netherlands. He is a keen observer of political events in his country and globally, and is very passionate about governance issues in the motherland. He is presently a lecturer of Mass Communication at the United Methodist University (UMU). He is also Secretary General of the Liberian National Bar Association and Counselor at-Law of the Supreme Court Bar.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Weeks left hanging -Sirleaf others set free

By Winston W. Parley

Former Central Bank Executive Governor Milton Weeks has been left hanging at the Supreme awaiting a separate hearing, while Liberian prosecutors on Friday May 15,

prejudice.

But the mystery surrounding the "missing" \$16 billion local currency which prompted their indictment for economic sabotage and other crimes, still lingers on.

Deputy Central Bank of

has a matter pending before the Supreme Court from the same case and therefore charges were not drop against him.

"At this stage, counsel for the State begs to inform Your Honor that it has filed with this Court a Motion for Nolle Prosequi in favor of the following Defendants: 1) Charles E. Sirleaf, 2) Dorbor Hagba, 3) Richard Walker and 4) Joseph Dennis," the prosecution announced at Criminal Court "C" Friday, 15 May at the Temple of Justice.

Further, the prosecution informs the court that it will want to modify the motion that is pending before the court and that a nolle prosequi is entered in favor of defendant Sirleaf "with prejudice to the State" and in favor of Hagba, Walker and Dennis "without prejudice to the State."

Following the State's decision, the defense team says the right and authority of the State to enter Nolle Prosequi in favor of the criminal defendants pending before the court is provided for by Chapter 18 of the Criminal Procedure Law, adding that it therefore

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filed a nolle prosequi (drop charges against) former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's son Charles E. Sirleaf "with prejudice," and nolle prosequi three others without

Liberia (CBL) Governor Mr. Sirleaf, Dorbor Hagba, Richard Walker and Joseph Dennis were nolle prosequi while being jointly tried, but former CBL Executive Governor Weeks who

Bankers Association donates to NPHIL

In support of government's efforts to stem the spread of the Coronavirus out of the country, the Liberian Bankers Association (LBA) has donated a huge consignment of food and non-food items to the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).

Led by the LBA president, John B. S. Davies, III, head of secretariat, Mrs. Doreen McIntosh and her assistant Ms. Sarah Lamin, the exercise involved the donation of 15 pieces of thermometers, 50 cartons of chlorox, 50 cartons of Pop soap, 20 cartons of alcohol, 100 bags of (25kg) rice, 50 gallons of argo oil and five (5) cartons of gloves, respectively.

The LBA comprises nine banking institutions, including

containing the virus and called on all Liberians to help in whatever way they can.

"We know that each member of the financial institutions within the LBA is making efforts and small strive in their own capacity to lend a hand of support to the national government."

"Again, it's not so much of the magnitude we have provided; it is the gesture that is important. We know that in order to defeat this very difficult enemy (COVID-19) it requires all of us to bring our little drops of water and, in the final analysis, we will make a mighty ocean that can wash this virus away." So, on behalf of the Liberia Bankers Association, I like to present to you (Doctor Mosoka Fallah) this token and in kind of these



the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment, United Bank for Africa, Ecobank Liberia Limited, GN Bank, Access Bank, Global Bank, Guarantee Trust Bank, International Bank Liberia, Afriland Bank, and the Central Bank of Liberia, among others.

Presenting the items on behalf of the LBA recently at the NPHIL office in Congo Town, Mr. Davies said the donation is intended to awaken the interest of everyone to join the government in the ongoing fight against the Coronavirus.

"Coronavirus has no cure and so it is the responsibility of all Liberians to join and support the fight against this deadly menace," he said.

He acknowledged the efforts of the government in

goods in the fight of the COVID-19."

The Director General of the NPHIL, Dr. Mosoka Fallah, who received the donation on behalf of the government, expressed gratitude to the bankers association for the kind gesture.

"We want to say thank you very much on behalf of President George M. Weah, who has taken this active leadership role in the fight and the Minister of Health, Dr. Jallah and all of the members of NPHIL."

Doctor Fallah said though the ongoing fight is a long difficult road, they are having the assurance that Liberians are committing themselves to the fight. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

CPP finalizes framework

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Head of the Special Senatorial Election due October this year, the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) has finalized a framework document making the institution a legally recognized political party.

The CPP is comprised of four opposition collaborating political parties, including immediate past ruling Unity Party (UP), Liberty Party (LP), Alternative National Congress (ANC) and the All Liberian Party (ALP).

According to a statement issued in Monrovia over the weekend, CPP reflected that about three weeks ago, it announced the finalization of the framework document that officially bounds the four parties together and defines the roles and obligations of each constituent party.

The statement added that the finalization of the document is an immense progress towards building a strong collaboration among the four parties as all contending issues which delayed the signing of the

document have been amicably resolved.

The joint statement points out that a formal ceremony for the endorsement of the document has yet to be executed by the four political parties due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis in the country.

However, the CPP says given the exigency of preparing for the 2020 Special Senatorial

Elections, the signing ceremony has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 11A. M.

In adherence to the emergency health protocols to fight COVID-19, the CPP says the ceremony will be virtually held among the four political leaders, chairpersons and other

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Benoni Urey

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Lonestar Cell MTN announces 2020 edition of Y'ello Scholars program

Lonestar Cell MTN has announced the launch of its scholar program, the Y'ello Scholars Internship and Graduate Trainee program for 2020. The program, which is part

selected participants with expert training, mentorship and career development facilitated by employees at Lonestar Cell MTN, Liberia's leading telecommunications network to enable them to become job-

lead Liberia into a bold new digital future. Our goal is to find and recruit these young talented individuals through this program. Those selected to begin their careers with us will undertake a unique career development path while acquiring practical, hands-on job experience." said UcheOfodile, CEO of Lonestar Cell MTN. We are proud to be an 'Employer of Choice' in Liberia and will continue to develop such innovative programs to the benefit of young Liberians."

The Y'ello Scholars Internship Program will offer three-month internship positions for sophomore and junior students, the company said. Graduating senior students and recent graduates will benefit from the Y'ello Scholars Graduate Trainee Program, which offers a 12 to 18-month early-career training program. Candidates will be mentored and coached while they gain hands-on work experience in a corporate environment.

To be eligible for Y'ello Scholars, applicants must be:

- Enrolled in a university

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Uche Ofodile

of Lonestar Cell MTN's youth empowerment initiatives, aims to create a pool of talented young people who will be well-equipped to be the future leaders of Liberia. Y'ello Scholars will provide

ready individuals and leaders in their chosen fields.

"Young people are the future of Liberia. Y'ello Scholars is our way of helping to develop a pipeline of talented young Liberians who are prepared to

President Weah extols Norway on "Constitution Day" observance

President George Manneh Weah has sent a congratulatory message to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Norway on the occasion marking the 206th Anniversary of the signing of Norway's Constitution, at Eidsvoll.

In the message to His Majesty King Harald V, President George Manneh Weah, on behalf of Liberia, expressed delight over the relations between Liberia and Norway which he noted are growing stronger in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to a Foreign Ministry release dated Friday, 16 May, President Weah indicated that the two countries' engagements have given priority to cooperation in sectors which are of immense importance to the attainment of the two nations' development goals.

He lauded Norway's investment in key sectors of the Liberian economy including energy, security and forest management.

President Weah also acknowledged, with deep

appreciation, the development role Norway has played in Liberia's developmental agenda.

He emphasized that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states, the Kingdom of Norway has been a reliable partner to the Republic of Liberia.

President Weah further expressed confidence that the cordial relations between

Liberia and Norway will be further enhanced through the joint efforts of both countries in the years ahead, for the mutual benefit of the two peoples.

He then wished for His Majesty King Harald V, personal good health and happiness and for the people of Norway continued wellbeing and prosperity.—Press release



Pres. Weah

Team Andy identifies with District#13 residents

By Lewis S. Teh

A local group, Team Andy has donated assorted food and sanitary materials to residents of Montserrado County District#13.

Montserrado District#13 is located along Somalia Drive.

"In these troubling times our leader, Mr. Andy BroplehJallah had asked me to inform residents that their welfare remains his foremost priority", said the Chairman of Team Andy, Emmanuel B. Zor.

He spoke over the weekend at the start of donation of food and non-food items including anti-Corona virus materials to over six communities in the district to help in containing widespread of the pandemic.

Mr. Zor said the gesture is

everyone that he's still have your in mind, and we should all abide by all of the preventive measures in order to minimize the spread of the virus, Zor continued.

Communities benefiting from the donation include Famous Island, Sarco Yard, Topo Village, Courage Island and MKK, among others. Items donated include rice, oil, clorox, pop soap, and water drums, among other.

Receiving the donation, the Chairman of Famous Island in New Georgia Gulf community, Brooks Barlue, extolled Team Andy for the gesture and promised to reach out to the neediest.

"I'm overwhelmed Andy didn't forget us; we saw him



their leader's way of identifying with the people of district 13, particularly the elderly, widows, underprivileged kids, and orphans.

"As you may be aware of the danger this virus has caused the entire world; our leader Mr Andy BroplehJallah who is currently residing in the united States, says you can't fight this virus on empty stomach; it's against this backdrop that he thought it wise through his supporters here under the banner 'Team Andy' to bring these relief items, while you're observing the stay home order."

He had asked me to inform

during the campaign period; he helped to construct our bridge, and today we are receiving another donation from him; this is a clear manifestation that he is a true son to us."

Also speaking, the Chairlady of Courage Island community in New Georgia, Ms. Ayesha M. Sayon expressed delight over the donation and termed it as timely.

"Today is a joyous day for us on this island particularly, we the people of electoral district #13 in New Georgia here; this is the first of itskind for someone to think on us", MsSayon noted. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

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Français

Lutte contre le COVID-19 : bientôt les Libériens se verront totalement confinés

Le gouvernement procédera à un confinement total du pays afin que toutes les populations soient testées. Le confinement commencera dès après la distribution de la ration alimentaire du COVID-19 longtemps attendue. Les agents de santé iront de maison en maison pour tester les gens, a appris ce quotidien.

Jusqu'au 17 mai 2020, le Libéria comptait plus de 200 cas confirmés de

coronavirus, dont 20 décès et 105 guérisons. Il reste alors un peu plus d'une centaine de cas actifs. Le Libéria est dans la troisième phase de 14 jours de confinement imposée par l'administration pour freiner la propagation du virus. Les extensions des confinements se sont avérées nécessaires en raison de l'augmentation du nombre de cas.

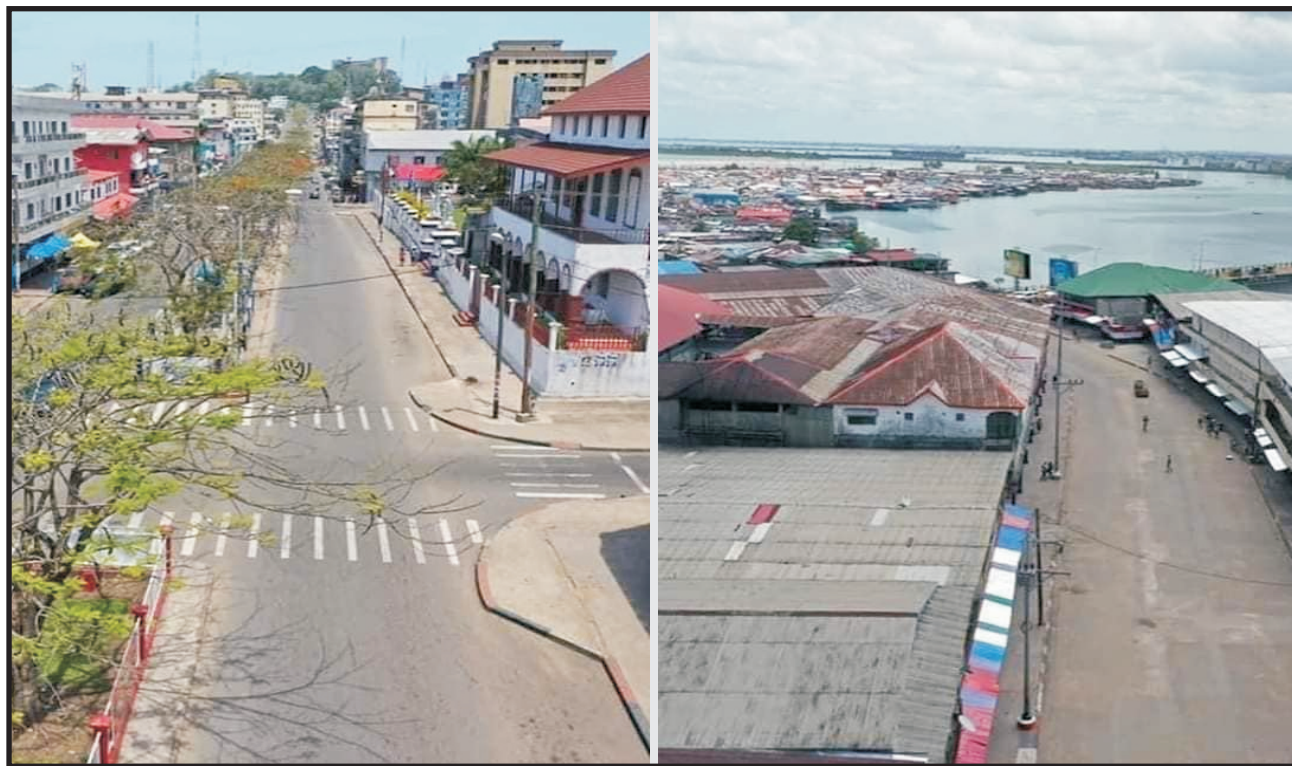
Les autorités ont dit avoir identifié certains des points chauds qui feront partie des communautés qui bénéficieront de la ration

alimentaire et où les tests de masse auront lieu.

On ne sait pas combien de temps cela durera. Mais à en croire les responsables, cela dépendra du nombre de jours qu'il faudra pour que la distribution et les tests soient terminés dans une communauté cible.

Le ministre du Commerce, Wilson Tarpeh, qui préside le comité directeur du gouvernement libérien pour le programme de soutien alimentaire des

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Le Liberia abandonne les poursuites contre le fils de l'ex-présidente Sirleaf

Le Liberia a abandonné les poursuites contre quatre anciens responsables de la Banque centrale (CBL), dont un fils de l'ex-présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, inculpés dans un retentissant scandale touchant à l'impression de dizaines de millions d'euros de billets.

Charles Sirleaf, ancien vice-gouverneur de la CBL, ainsi que quatre de ses ex-collègues, Milton Weeks, DorborHagba, Richard Walker et Joseph Dennis, ont été inculpés en 2019 pour "blanchiment", "complot criminel" et "sabotage économique" dans une affaire liée à une commande de billets par la Banque centrale entre 2016 et 2018.

Ces cinq hommes, dont le fils de l'ex-présidente (au pouvoir de 2006 à 2018) sont considérés comme faisant partie des plus influents du pays.

La commande portait sur quelque 16 milliards de dollars libériens (74,6 million d'euros au cours actuel), selon un audit indépendant. Elle aurait été passée sans appel d'offres et sans accord préalable du Parlement auprès d'une société américaine qui a fait

imprimer les coupures en Suède.

L'audit dressait un tableau accablant des pratiques de la Banque centrale dans l'un des pays les plus pauvres du monde, sur une période correspondant aux deux

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Menipakei Dumoe as police search his home

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 respections 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

Lutte contre le COVID-19 :

ménages, a déclaré le jeudi 14 mai 2020 que la distribution de nourriture devrait commencer le 23 de ce mois à partir de 15 heures. A cette heure, estime-t-il, chacun sera chez soi et recevoir sa part.

Le ministre Tarpeh a également déclaré à ce journal que son comité s'appuiera fortement sur les dirigeants communautaires pour travailler avec le Programme alimentaire mondial pour la distribution alimentaire. Il a déclaré que le comité organiserait une importante conférence de presse pour préciser comment la distribution de nourriture se fera.

Il y a plus d'un mois, le président Weah présentait un plan de relance à l'Assemblée législative libérienne pour fournir des secours d'urgence aux citoyens pendant l'état d'urgence. Un montant de 25 millions de dollars avait été affecté à la couverture de l'ensemble du plan de relance, qui comprend la distribution alimentaire d'urgence, l'approvisionnement en électricité et en eau, la prime de risque pour le personnel soignant, etc.

Depuis la ratification de

la résolution par l'Assemblée législative nationale, qui a non seulement approuvé l'état d'urgence du président, mais l'a également prolongé de 60 jours avec un paiement controversé de 6 500 USD à chacun des membres du Sénat - certains sénateurs l'ont décrit comme paiement des fonds opérationnels en souffrance, tandis que d'autres disent que ce sont leurs honoraires de séance-, le paquet n'a pas encore été distribué.

Cependant, le comité directeur, qui comprend des représentants du gouvernement, des membres de l'opposition et le Programme alimentaire mondial, a déclaré que le programme de soutien alimentaire des ménages ciblera les groupes vulnérables et les communautés des bidonvilles.

Selon le président du Comité directeur, le ministre du Commerce, Wilson Tarpeh, la distribution sera calquée sur l'ancien programme de distribution alimentaire Special Emergency Life Food (SELF), mais sera dirigée par le Programme alimentaire mondial assisté par les dirigeants communautaires dans les bidonvilles ciblés à partir de mai 23.

Le Liberia abandonne les

dernières années de présidence Sirleaf et au début de celle de son successeur George Weah. Il soulignait les défaillances du contrôle sur les billets entrant et sortant de la CBL.

Les cinq hommes avaient été inculpés à la suite de sa publication. L'accusation leur reprochait d'avoir détourné l'équivalent de millions d'euros. Arrêtés avant d'être libérés sous caution à des dates différentes, ils avaient tous plaidé non coupables à leur procès.

Le ministre de la Justice, Musa Dean, a indiqué jeudi soir devant le tribunal qu'il abandonnait les charges contre quatre d'entre eux. Seul l'ancien gouverneur de la CBL, Milton Weeks, reste inculpé.

Le gouvernement n'a pas répondu vendredi aux

questions de l'AFP qui lui demandait pourquoi il renonçait aux poursuites.

En raison de l'inflation, la valeur de la commande était plus proche de 90 millions d'euros quand le scandale a éclaté. L'argent avait initialement été présenté comme ayant disparu, ce qui a ensuite été démenti.

Les soupçons de mauvaise gestion de l'ancienne direction de la Banque centrale sont apparus après l'arrivée à la présidence, en janvier 2018, de George Weah, élu sur un programme de lutte contre la pauvreté et la corruption.

L'administration Weah est elle-même critiquée pour avoir ensuite conduit de manière hasardeuse en 2018, pendant plusieurs mois, une opération monétaire censée enrayer l'inflation due à la chute de la monnaie nationale face au dollar américain.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-kawari

Il est temps de réformer l'ONU

DOHA - La pandémie COVID-19 a fait connaître de nombreuses faiblesses institutionnelles, mais elle a surtout prouvé que les Nations Unies ont un besoin urgent de réforme. En particulier, la réponse de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé au virus (l'agence mondiale de santé de l'ONU) a révélé des lacunes évidentes, qui reflètent un manque de consensus et de coopération internationales, ainsi qu'un protectionnisme généralisé de la part de ses parties prenantes.

Les critiques les plus fortes et les plus prononcées à l'encontre de l'OMS ont été celles des États-Unis : la récente décision du président Donald Trump de geler le financement américain de l'organisation lui a porté un coup dévastateur à un moment où elle avait désespérément besoin de soutien. Le prochain coup des Nations Unies, ainsi que sa manière de rebondir après son incapacité à se coordonner efficacement durant la crise du COVID-19, vont déterminer son rôle dans un monde post-pandémie.

Je me considère comme un fils de l'ONU et comme un fervent partisan de ses valeurs et de ses principes. Durant plus de quatre décennies, j'ai assumé divers emplois au sein de sa bureaucratie gigantesque. Mon premier poste en 1974 fut celui de délégué du Qatar à l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture (UNESCO). Mon dernier emploi a pris fin en 2017, lorsque j'ai échoué d'un seul vote à devenir Directeur général de l'UNESCO.

Pendant la plus grande partie de cette période, l'ONU n'a jamais manqué de donner espoir en l'avenir. Ses agences et ses organismes spécialisés ont joué un rôle déterminant dans la préservation de la paix mondiale, dans la prévention des conflits internationaux, dans l'éradication du colonialisme et dans la défense des droits de l'homme.

Dernièrement toutefois, le rôle de l'ONU n'a cessé de décliner et son influence sur les événements mondiaux et les gouvernements s'est amoindrie. Cette institution, qui occupait autrefois une position prééminente de modérateur et d'arbitre, s'est sclérosée par l'usage de concepts et de doctrines trop anciens. Elle a ainsi échoué à être l'organe directeur véritablement opérant que ses fondateurs avaient envisagé. Elle ne peut plus inspirer de respect entre les gouvernements pour la légitimité internationale, le droit international et le maintien de la paix et de la sécurité mondiale, comme ce fut le cas après la Seconde Guerre mondiale et l'effondrement de l'Union soviétique, par exemple.

Bref, le monde a changé et l'ONU n'a pas réussi à suivre. La fluidité politique, économique et culturelle survoltée du XXIème siècle a laissé cette organisation autrefois puissante avec peu d'amis pour la défendre.

Mais ce déclin ne signifie pas que l'ONU soit destinée à être mise au rebut de l'histoire. Si l'on peut se fier à l'expérience passée, la réponse à la pandémie de COVID-19 - un échec catastrophique de politique mondiale - risque d'ouvrir la voie à une période de changements significatifs dans le monde entier. Je crois que nous nous dirigeons vers un nouvel ordre mondial plus diversifié, dans lequel la gouvernance internationale ne sera plus conduite par un pays ou par un ensemble de valeurs politiques.

Pendant la crise du COVID-19, la solidarité internationale a échoué car chaque pays a cherché à protéger ses propres intérêts. Après la pandémie

viendra le temps des enquêtes, des accusations, voire même des boucs émissaires. L'ONU devra surmonter cette tempête, mais je pense qu'en fin de compte, elle sera aidée par une appréciation renouvelée à l'égard de la communauté collective à laquelle nous avons consacré tant d'efforts.

Pourtant ce face à face avec ses responsabilités sera difficile pour l'ONU, car il lui faudra prendre des décisions difficiles. L'organisation devra abandonner son ancien état d'esprit et aller dans des directions qu'elle risque de trouver inconfortables.

Par exemple, des organismes comme l'UNESCO devront démontrer plus clairement en quoi ils contribuent au monde. Parce que l'éducation, la science et la culture seront essentielles à la reprise post-pandémie, les dirigeants de l'UNESCO devront se poser les vraies questions : Que faisons-nous pour préserver les valeurs culturelles ? Comment protéger les droits de l'homme, en particulier le droit à l'éducation ? Comment peut-on diriger la communauté scientifique et éviter une nouvelle pandémie ? Doit-il y avoir davantage de diversification régionale pour s'assurer qu'elle serve tous les États membres, et les dirigeants reflètent-ils cette position ? Ce n'est qu'en s'attaquant à ces défis avec succès que l'UNESCO et d'autres institutions des Nations Unies resteront pertinentes dans un monde post-COVID-19.

La réforme de l'ONU doit commencer par le Conseil de Sécurité, dont les cinq membres permanents - la Chine, la France, la Russie, le Royaume-Uni et les États-Unis - continuent de brandir leur droit de veto dans une attitude qui est celle d'une époque révolue. Élargir le nombre de membres permanents du Conseil pour y inclure d'autres pays - d'Asie, d'Afrique, d'Amérique latine et du Moyen-Orient - permettrait de parvenir à un équilibre plus équitable dans la prise de décisions mondiales.

Un tel changement est justifié. Par exemple, l'Inde est sur le point de devenir le pays le plus peuplé de la planète au cours de cette décennie, le Japon est la troisième économie mondiale et l'Afrique du Sud et le Nigeria sont de loin les plus grandes économies du continent avec la population à la croissance la plus rapide.

De même, les agences de l'ONU doivent s'assurer que les citoyens du pays dans lequel elles sont basées n'occupent pas la totalité de leurs postes à responsabilité. Trop souvent, le choix du leadership d'une organisation remet en cause sa légitimité et son indépendance. Il ne faut pas chercher plus loin que ma propre région - le Moyen-Orient - pour comprendre les effets néfastes que de telles décisions peuvent avoir.

Par exemple, la Ligue arabe du Caire a été saluée comme une plate-forme de coopération arabe, mais la nomination continue d'un membre du gouvernement égyptien au poste de Secrétaire Général de l'organisation a été son arrêt de mort. En cherchant à faire de la Ligue une extension de l'État égyptien, les dirigeants du pays ont rendu l'organe politiquement obsolète et l'ont réduit à un forum de vaines discussions.

La pandémie de COVID-19 devrait servir de point de départ nécessaire à la réforme de l'ONU. Si ce n'est pas le cas, je crains que l'organisation à laquelle j'ai consacré une grande partie de ma carrière professionnelle, et dont je tiens les valeurs dans la plus haute estime, ne soit pas en mesure de trouver une place sûre dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, et encore moins de retrouver sa gloire passée.

Lonestar Cell MTN announces 2020

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(sophomore or junior year for the Internship program); or graduating senior or a recent graduate (no more than a year since graduating) for the Graduate Trainee program

- 18 to 25 years at the time of submitting their application
- Computer-literate
- Liberian citizen
- Have cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above.

Those eligible can apply by sending a cover letter; their CV/resume; a two-minute video stating their motivation

for the program; a copy of their current control sheet and grade sheet for the previous semester; and, for the Graduate Trainee Program only, a copy of their degree or graduation clearance to yelloscholars.lr@mtn.com. Applications close on May 22, 2020.

Lonestar Cell MTN's Y'ello Scholars program is one of the many ways in which we strive to make the lives of Liberians a whole lot BRIGHTER. We are #GoodTogether.

About Lonestar Cell MTN/MTN Liberia:

Lonestar Cell MTN/MTN Liberia, Liberia's leading telecommunications provider, was founded in 2001. We are a technology-based company with a focus on winning in everything we do while demonstrating consistency in innovation to meet our unique customer needs. We are a subsidiary of MTN, a leading international telecommunications groups operating in 21 countries across Africa and the Middle East.



Lonestar Cell MTN gives

Starts from back page

Deputy CEO and Head of Corporate Affairs at Lonestar Cell MTN, Mr. Ali Fakih, said, "The donation exercise is just one of the ways we are helping to support the national fight against COVID-19. We have always stood with the people of Liberia through changing times and we will continue to do all we can to bring relief to the citizens of Liberia."

"We are reaching out to communities with these donations from our past experience; we know that impoverished and minority communities such as orphans, the elderly, pregnant women, and the disabled are the hardest hit during public health crisis like this. But I'm

certain that, as a people, we can defeat this virus as long as we all continue to practice all the health protocols to stay safe", he concludes.

Receiving the item on behalf of the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled, its head Ambassador Daintowan Donnah Pay-Bayee extolled Lonestar Cell MTN for the gesture and promised to reach it to every member of the union.

Also receiving the donations on behalf of the Township of West Point, Commissioner William Weah expressed gratitude to Lonestar Cell MTN for identifying with the people of West Point. He said, "It's often said in troubling times the one who reaches at your doorsteps is a person who is

concern about you. We are extremely overwhelmed with the support Lonestar to us. This tells us that we are one family."

Chairman Daniel H. Brownell of the Chocolate City Community praised Lonestar Cell MTN for identifying with his community, terming the company's gesture as timely. He acknowledged that Lonestar has proven to be a great partner to the government especially, at this critical time in the history of Liberia.

Lonestar Cell MTN recently revealed its 350k Y'ello Hope package to help in fighting the corona virus/COVID-19 outbreak. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



Liberian churches

Starts from back page

risk of COVID-19 transmission if Churches were to open as ordered by President Weah.

His comment appears to have resonated with some denominations such as the Catholics, Methodists and Baptists churches which kept shut the doors of their churches on Sunday with statement to their worshipers that they were still observing the reduction in the number of confirmed corona virus cases here.

The Liberian Catholic Archbishop Most Rev. Lewis Zeigler in a statement asked all Parish Priests and Priests in charge of parishes in the Archdiocese of Monrovia to delay the opening of their churches for regular church activities till the end of May 2020, in the wake of daily increase of coronavirus cases here.

"This will enable us to monitor the reduction in the cases of the Coronavirus pandemic in the Archdiocese. By early June we shall observe and decide how to go forward with the resumption of our church activities. Many thanks for your understanding and cooperation," a memorandum under his signature dated 13 May, says.

Meanwhile, on Saturday May 16, the eve of churches resumption, Liberia reported 226 confirmed coronavirus cases. Out of this number 85 remain active, 21 death and 120 recovered.

However, this did not stop zealous worshipers from

trooping to their various worship centers.

At the Remedy Movement International where this writer joined the worship, Pastor Philemon A. Tarpeh, referred to as the Pioneer was very emphatic with the protocols. He outlined the various measures that members have to abide by this include walking 6ft or standing 6ft behind the next person.

There were stewards standing at the entry ensuring that worshippers enter with masks. Inside the sanctuary was a complete social distancing with worshipers sitting 6ft apart. There were sufficient microphones to ensure that no two person use one mic. Deacons who usually pass offering baskets around were not allowed to do so. Rather huge buckets were erected at vantage points to enable members drop their offerings and tithes.

"We are here to do two things," Pastor Tarpeh said as he mounted the pulpit. He informed members that their presence was to thank God for the resumption of worship and to partake of the Blood of Sprinkling for the renewal of the mark of exemption and reestablishment of God's Covenant of protection.

After the first service, the chairs were sanitized for those coming for the second service while all microphones used during the first service were all removed and replaced by new ones.

CPP finalizes

Cont'd from page 6

executives of the constituent parties to the CPP.

Prior to the signing ceremony, the CPP notes that members of the press will be notified of the link to follow the ceremony live. It says supporters and sympathizers of the CPP are encouraged to follow-up with their respective parties for other relevant information.

On 21 February, leaders of the opposition political parties gathered in Monrovia to affix their signatures to a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) collaboration document.

They commit to forging, branding and re-branding and supporting a common national interest which may collaborate, in keeping in focus the welfare of the people, and not allowing their political differences and personal ambitions to derail the cooperation among opposition political parties here.

They commit also to openly and consistently engage and

collaborate on various issues of concerns to the people whom they represent, and establish common national positions.

Further, the CPP commits to promote a common agenda (where necessary) to aid, support and encourage the ongoing efforts of individual political parties aimed at ensuring responsive governance and effective collaboration for the good of the country

Additionally, the CPP commits to demonstrate, above all that political collaborations is not only possible, but also necessary and crucial to the development of democracy, and to encourage the participation of all political parties.

Finally, the CPP agrees to encourage the respective national chairpersons and leaderships of the various political parties to continue with and intensify efforts leading to the commemoration of this arrangement. **-Edited by Winston W. Parley**

Health officials test for COVID-19

By Lewis S. Teh

As Liberia's prepares for total lockdown in coming days, health authorities here have gone to test their specimens for the novel coronavirus, aimed at rallying the public to report for mass testing.

The Government of Liberia is planning an all-out lockdown of communities and food distributions that would require residents to stay at home to allow mass testing of the population.

The Minister of Health Doctor Wilhemina Jallah Sunday, 17 March led an arrayed of healthcare officials to the Samuel Keyon Doe Sports Stadium in Paynesville outside Monrovia

system.

Doctor Jallah explains that the decision to lead an arrayed of health officials, including the Country Representative of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization Country Representative to Liberia, Doctor Peter Clement, Liberia's Chief Medical Officer Doctor Francis Kateh, and the head of the USAID Mission, among other is to encourage the public to come forth to give their specimens for testing.

Dr. Peter Clement of the WHO says it is important that officials of government particularly from the health

ECOWAS Radio on Saturday, he explained that Ebola was not infectious as COVID-19, noting that with Ebola, you have to touch an infected person to contract the virus. "For Ebola, when a person dies, the body becomes more infectious."

Doctor Kateh: But for COVID-19, when a person dies, we take a specimen and put the body in a block bag and have it kept, pending the test result. You can keep the body as long as you want to once it is placed in as freezer.

Liberia's total confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus is officially at 218, including 20 deaths and over 90 recoveries.



for specimens test.

"We gather this morning to do our specimens collections in order to set examples for our citizens to follow", said the Health Minister, who is on record for disclosing that out of a total 20 COVID-19 deaths in the country, only one occurred in the treatment center at the 14th Military Hospital along the Robertsfield Highway.

She cautions that if the coronavirus would leave Liberia, every citizen, beginning with officials must go for testing, something, which she notes, would build citizens' trust in the health

sector took the lead because it will certainly encourage others.

"Our gathering here today is a clear manifestation that leaders are interested in curtailing the spread of the virus", Doctor Clement notes.

Deputy Minister of Health and Chief Medical Officer, Doctor Kateh notes that it was very prudent to have begun the sample test with themselves rather than waiting on the public, adding, "Now that we have started this process, we want to call on our people to follow; with this, we will defeat this virus."

Speaking earlier with

Meanwhile, the Country Representative of the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention Doctor Desmond Williams is optimistic that now that health officials have taken the lead, it is time for citizens to follow their leaders' footsteps.

He emphasizes that government had made the pronouncement that people should have their samples taken for testing, and they deemed it necessary to key-start the process, so everyone should come out to do their test. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*

Food supply to delay

The Steering Committee of the COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP) has announced a delay in the distribution of food commodities for a few weeks due to several issues beyond the control of the Steering Committee. The Committee had earlier set 23 May 2020 as the commencement date of the distribution.

The Chairman of the of the COVID-19 Food Support Program Steering Committee, Prof. Wilson Tarpeh, however, remain optimistic that the targeted food distribution to COVID-affected households will begin as soon as budgetary and financial procedures are completed.

Mr. Tarpeh in a press release made it clear that the food assistance programme won't be rolled out by 23 May as initially planned, primarily because the budget confirmation process by the Liberia Legislature requires careful, consultative, and legal ramifications that cannot be done within a day or two.

Furthermore, even if the budget is approved by the Legislature, the Government is under obligation to await the approval decision of the budget by the IMF's Executive Board whose meeting is scheduled for 2 June 2020.

The transfer of funds would then take a few more days to reach the Central Bank of Liberia and made accessible to fund the food assistance operation.

Prof, Tarpeh, is now making a passionate plead to all Liberians to continue to exercise patience and be supportive of the process to defeat COVID-19, as the government is very much committed to meeting both the health and social protection objectives of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, what would happened during the food distribution?

Health services will attend to each community prior to the COHFSP to conduct contact tracing, testing and provide support to those that are ill.

This health exercise will take 5-7 days depending on the size of the community.

Following the health pillar a above-mentioned intervention, vulnerable communities will receive one month food ration and the Government will call for a total lockdown of that community for 14 days.

COHFSP will only target the poorest and most food insecure households affected by COVID-19. Community Leaders will work with LISGIS on the registration of households.



Prof. Wilson Tarpeh
(Photo Credit: <http://www.moci.gov.lr>)

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Weeks left hanging

interposes no objection to the State's decision.

Meanwhile Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay says the court [has] not been afforded the opportunity to review the Motion for Nolle Prosequi which was said to be filed on Wednesday, 13 May, adding that he reserves ruling, pending notice of assignment.

Speaking with journalists after the state informed the court that it was dropping

charges against him and others, Mr. Sirleaf acknowledged God as his vindicator, saying "our president believes in the rule of law, and justice will be served."

Mr. Sirleaf then CBL's Deputy Governor for Operations and his boss Mr. Weeks were jointly indicted along with other junior officials- 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 the "missing" LD\$16bn scandal that rocked the country throughout 2018 and sparked local and international investigation following protests here.

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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

Liberian churches resume worship



Worshippers at Remedy on Sunday, May 17, 2020

By **Othello B. Garblah**

Churches across Liberia resumed their regular worship services on Sunday, May 17, more than one month after the government banned social gathering ordering all Churches, Mosques and worship centers closed.

The Remedy Movement

International, one of Liberia's growing charismatic churches here resumed worship on Sunday with a complete social distancing, suspending the roles of auxiliary groups in the church to avoid social contact and maintain social distancing. While the Pentecostal Church at the Vamoma traffic light in Sinkor, had police ensuring that

those entering the sanctuary wore masks.

The ban, which was intended to halt the spread of the coronavirus here and ensure social distancing was lifted by President George Weah on Friday, May 8.

President Weah on Friday, May 8 proposed that Churches, Mosques and worship centers consider operating 25 percent of their regular worship-hour occupancy for each service beginning Sunday, May 17, with Muslims permitted to begin operating in their Mosques on May 15.

The President's call for the resumption of worships here was met with criticisms with some saying it was too early, while others said it was a high risk for infection.

Among the president's critics was the chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Dr. Peter Coleman. Sen. Coleman informed his colleagues at the Liberian Senate that there will be high

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Lonestar Cell MTN gives to communities

By **Lewis S. Teh**

Liberia's leading mobile telecommunications provider, Lonestar Cell MTN has completed week-long donations in several communities in Montserrado County, one of the 15 political sub-divisions of Liberia.

The company conducted the exercise in over 10 communities, including West Point, Doe Community, Sonewein, Jacob Town, Chocolate City, Barnesville



Kebbah, Popo Beach, Caldwell, and Duala, respectively, and to the vulnerable group, the National Union of the Disabled.

Items donated to the communities include: handwashing drums, rice, oil, luncheon meat, soap, Clorox, seasoning cubes, and water. Over the next week, the company will make similar donations to select locations in some other counties across Liberia.

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