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# The New Dawn

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# Referendum blues

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# MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Six candidates debate in Bong

By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan, Bong County

Six of the eight candidates for the senate in Bong County have unveiled the platforms to citizens during debate Sunday, 29 November at the Gbarnga Administration Building in the county.

Organized by the Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives LMDI with support from USAID through Internews Liberia Media Development LMD, the Docor Debate in Gbarnga witnessed the six candidates explaining how they intend to help ensure the progress of Bong County.

Candidate Menipakei Dumoe, who did not mention his 'free Charles Taylor' message, when he

He said Liberia spends millions of dollars to import food, adding that such amount needs to be used here in the country by farmers to produce enough food locally that will make great impact on the economy.

For his part, Deputy House Speaker Prince Kermue Moye listed five pillars, ranging from peace and unity, to decentralization of developments and empowering youths to take on leadership, amongst others.

He said in the past, the developments in Bong had not been decentralized that was the reason a bill to divide the county resurfaced in the Senate.

Mr. Mohammed Nasser, who works with the Youth Opportunity Project, promised peace and a united Legislative

need us. We ensure the livelihood of the local people by advocating for supports for hospitals and clinics in Bong County" she promised.

The former Development Education Network boss also promised to give back part of her salaries to Bong County for development purposes.

Incumbent Senator Henry Willie Yallah, who entered the hall about an hour late, said prior to getting in the senate, he identified nine problems in Bong County and out of the number, he has helped solve three, promising to solve the remaining six, if re-elected.

"Under my watch as Chairperson on Information Cultural and Tourism, we passed the freedom of Information Act that gives you the opportunity to express. The next thing we did was to support the Land Right Act, which was removed from Land Commission to Land Authority", he said.

Receptions from the different supporters who had gone to witness the debate indicated their willingness to keep hearing from those desiring to lead the county.

Incumbent Senator Henry Yallah and Deputy House Speaker Prince Moye responded to many questions asked by their opponents.

Senator Yallah and Representative Moye had in the past accused each other on several issues but during the debate, it was different, as both men failed to question each other.

Internews Liberia Deputy Chief of Party Jefferson Massa gave an overview of the Liberia Media Development Project and how it intends to improve the professionalism of the Liberian media.

Mr. Massah said Internews has been implementing the project since 2017, disclosing that technically, this will be their last year.

"In 2017, we funded the LMDI, the Press Union of Liberia and the Center for Media Studies and Peace Building to organize debates in all of the 73 electoral districts across the Country. It made significant progress as well because we had over 23,000 citizens participating with over sixty percent of the Candidates who contested during that time" he adds.

He said the importance of the debate is to create the platform for citizens to directly interact with those that want to lead them. - Editing by Jonathan Browne

## NEC, partners hold training workshop for independent candidates agents

The National Elections Commission, (NEC), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program, UNDP on Monday, conducted a one-day Political Parties and Independent Candidates Agents Training of Trainers, TOT workshop, with a warning that if party agents fail to speak the true, Liberia is certain to face the repeat dark days of 24 December 1989.

The Political Affairs Section of the National Elections Commission organized the party agent's TOT workshop and was also conducted in collaboration with the Peace Building Office in Liberia and

workshop officially open reaffirmed the commitment of the Elections Commission to announce whatever results coming from vote casted after election day.

Earlier speaking today, Monday, 1 December 2020 the Deputy UNDP Resident Representative for Programs, Violet Baffour said to maintain the current peace in Liberia, all party agents must speak and report the true of what they see during and after the 8 December 2020 Special Senatorial Elections, Constitutional Referendum and two representative By-elections.

The Deputy UNDP Resident



earlier appeared to summarize his platform in five minutes, called for change in leadership, which according to him, would bring economic development.

Mr. Dumoe accused Deputy Speaker Prince Moye and incumbent Senator Henry Yallah of being responsible for Bong County's backwardness, but the duo (Yallah and Moye) denied.

Former Agriculture Minister Dr. Mogana Flomo, believed to be the most educated candidate in the race, said he sees desperation in the faces of voters, committing himself to solving their problem through food security.

Caucus through which young people would be transformed.

"Right now, the Caucus is divided; our nine Lawmakers have formed a bloc, five on one side and four on the other side. We can assure you that when elected, we will not support that, and everything will be okay because we are coming to the Senate with open heart", he said.

The only female among the eight candidates in the race, Madam Dorothy Tooman, said she will take responsibility of the position, including lawmaking, oversight and representation.

"I am not going to be a senator that you will not see; we will be available anytime you



Commissioner Boakai A. Dukuly addresses political parties polling agents at Monrovia City Hall, UNDP/NDI/USAID.

the National Democratic Institute, NDI, with funds from the United States Agency for International Development, USAID. The workshop is largely discussing Political Party Poll-Watching TOT polling and counting procedures to electoral Violence prevention.

Commissioner Boakai A. Dukuly wants party agents to serve as Ambassadors for peace warned them to say nothing but the truth, knowing that the role of party agents on Election Day will keep Liberia save or destroyed the country.

Commissioner Dukuly who has Oversight for Political Affairs, declaring the TOT

Representative to Liberia challenged party agents to ensure that election becomes everybody's business in what they report and based on what they see on election day to promote peace, justice and democracy in Liberia. Political Parties and independent candidate's agents from the Collaborating Political Parties, CPP, National Democratic Coalition, NDC, Coalition for Democratic Change, CDC, All Liberian Party, ALP and the Liberia National Union, LINU among others participated in the one-day political parties TOT workshop held in Monrovia.

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# EDITORIAL

## We must hold the referendum howbeit

**LIBERIANS GENERALLY HAVE** expressed enough dissatisfaction about the holding of constitutional referendum next Tuesday, December 8, 2020 along with special senatorial election and two by-elections for the House of Representatives simultaneously. They argue that adequate time was never provided by the government, particularly for public education on the referendum.

**BESIDES, THEY ARGUE** that clustering some of propositions such as tenures for the presidency and the House of Representatives on one hand, while ignoring tenures for the Speaker and Senate President Pro-Tempore respectively, send a signal of bias hence, calls for it to be postponed.

**AS VOTERS, THEY** are right, because they are the ones going to decide on Tuesday, and issues contained in the referendum critically border on governance of our country and how we should interact as citizens both at home abroad after the poll.

**BUT THE SUPREME** Court of Liberia, after hearing these concerns, instructed the National Elections Commission to clearly distinguish each proposition by printing ballots for each, including tenures for Speaker and Senate President Pro-Tempore which the Commission has done, accordingly in order to conduct the referendum as planned.

**IT IS BUT PRUDENT** that the High Court's opinion be respected by all relevant stakeholders, including the NEC.

**WE BELIEVE WITH** the proper separation of the various propositions and subsequent inclusion of tenures for the Speaker and the Senate President Pro-Tempore positions, the referendum should be held as scheduled.

**IT GOES WITHOUT** saying that truly, there were missteps earlier, along the way. However, in its real intent, the referendum does make sense and should be voted upon.

**THIS DOES NOT** in any impose on any voter to cast his or her ballot against his or her will. The exercise remains as democratic as is necessary, as long as it involves one man, one vote.

**AT THE SAME** time every Liberian should hold himself or herself for his or her actions and inactions at the poll come Tuesday. The choice is before us.

**WE THINK THAT** honestly, it is too late to sit on the fence and watch. It is time for voters across the country to go out on December 8 and vote their conscience without regretting later.

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

# COMMENTARY

By Raghuram G. Rajan

## How Much Debt Is Too Much?

*The new conventional wisdom in these unconventional times is that advanced-economy governments can take advantage of today's ultra-low interest rates to borrow and spend without limit in order to support the economy. But the fact is that there is always a limit, and it may come into view sooner than many realize.*

**C**HICAGO - As the COVID-19 pandemic rages, governments in advanced economies have opened their coffers to support households and small businesses, spending on the order of 15-20% of GDP in many cases. Cumulative debt levels now exceed GDP in many developed countries; and, on average, debt as a share of GDP is approaching post-World War II highs.

Nonetheless, according to Olivier Blanchard and other economists, advanced economies can afford to take on much more debt, given the low level of interest rates. Calculations using International Monetary Fund data show that in the two decades before the pandemic, sovereign interest payments in these countries fell from over 3% of GDP to about 2%, even though debt-to-GDP ratios increased by more than 20 percentage points. Moreover, with much of the newly issued sovereign debt now paying negative interest rates, additional borrowing stands to reduce interest expenses even more.

In this strange world of ultra-low interest rates, what limits are there on government borrowing? According to advocates of Modern Monetary Theory (MMT), there are none, at least not for countries that issue debt in their own currency and have spare productive capacity. After all, the central bank can simply print money to pay off maturing debt, and this should not result in inflation as long as there is sizable unemployment. No wonder MMT has become the go-to idea for politicians advocating government spending to alleviate every problem.

Of course, any "theory" that promises a free lunch should be approached with skepticism. To see why, suppose we were in a normal environment with positive interest rates. The central bank could decide to print money to buy government bonds, and the government could then spend that money by transferring it to citizens. As a practical matter, however, there is only so much cash that someone will hold in her purse. If she already had enough on hand before the central bank started printing money, she will deposit the government transfer in her bank account, and her bank will deposit all the cash it has accumulated in its reserve account with the central bank.

Ultimately, the central bank will have bought government bonds by issuing reserves to commercial banks, which will then want to be paid interest on those excess reserves. The government could just as soon have issued Treasury bills directly to commercial banks. The interest cost would be more or less the same. The only difference is that there would be no appearance of a free lunch.

In today's abnormal environment, the central bank can finance the purchase of government bonds by issuing zero-interest-paying reserves to commercial banks, which in turn are willing to hold large quantities of such highly liquid reserves. That sounds like MMT nirvana. Yet, again, the government could just as soon issue Treasury bills paying zero interest to commercial banks. If commercial banks do not balk at holding vast quantities of claims on the central bank (reserves), they should not balk at holding vast quantities of claims directly on the government, of which the central bank is a subsidiary.

In other words, the monetary financing advocated by MMT is just smoke and mirrors. Yes, the government can avoid short-term disruptions in money markets by financing via the central bank. Over the medium term, however, this approach does not allow it to borrow any more than it could have by financing directly. In fact, if long-term interest rates are also low or negative, it is far better for the government to lock in those rates by issuing long-term debt directly in the markets, bypassing the central bank altogether.

That brings us back to the initial question of how much debt a government can issue. It is not enough for a government to ensure that it can afford to make its interest payments; it also must show that it and its successors can repay the principal. Some readers will protest that a government does not need to repay debt, because it can issue new debt to repay maturing debt. But investors will buy that new debt only if they are confident that the government can repay all its debt from its prospective revenues. Many an emerging market has faced a debt "sudden stop" well before it reached full employment, triggered by evaporating market confidence in its ability to roll over debt.

Put differently, the investor in new debt needs to be confident that the government's current and future tax revenues (net of critical spending) will be sufficient to repay its accumulated debt. There is a limit, but if the funds raised through new debt are invested in high-return infrastructure projects, it probably will never be tested - additional future revenues will pay for the additional debt. If, however, the money is spent on much-needed support for poor and vulnerable households, the limit eventually will come into view.

In this case, if the government is already raising as much revenue as is politically feasible from tax revenues, it will have to reduce the stock of existing debt to create room for new issuances. The simplest way to do this is to default on old obligations; but most advanced-economy governments would consider this unthinkable.

The other option is to allow for higher inflation, which would erode the stock of debt denominated in current dollars vis-à-vis future tax revenues. Inflation, in this case, would emerge not because the economy is at full employment (as MMTers would have it), but rather because the government had reached the limits of the debt it can repay. New debt holders would demand higher interest rates - including perhaps a premium for inflation risk - and the curtain would drop on the era of ultra-low interest rates and unlimited borrowing.

To be sure, advanced economies will not become Zimbabwe any time soon - if ever. But some of them are permeated by divisive politics that typically encourages higher spending but not higher revenues - as many an emerging market can attest. If so, it would not be surprising to see somewhat higher inflation in a few years.

This is not an argument for immediate austerity. To the extent that governments can target spending to protect the economic capacity of households and firms during the pandemic, they will recover those investments through future revenues. Public spending, however, must be sensible, not based on magical monetary thinking.

# Français

## Éditorial

### La COVID-19 et l'élection sénatoriale

Les Libériens devraient faire preuve de prudence totale pendant cette période électorale pour éviter une résurgence du Coronavirus dans le pays. Il faut tirer les leçons de l'atmosphère post-électorale actuelle aux États-Unis d'Amérique, qui est marquée par une forte augmentation des cas de la COVID-19 dans plusieurs États.

Le week-end dernier, les militants de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique, la coalition au pouvoir, se sont rassemblés au complexe sportif Samuel Kanyon Doe de Paynesville, dans la banlieue de Monrovia, dans le cadre du lancement officiel de sa campagne pour les élections sénatoriales.

Vêtus de T-shirts bleus et blancs assortis de bérets rouges et bleus, les militants sont arrivés de partout dans la capitale et de l'intérieur du pays pour se regrouper au stade.

Quelques jours auparavant, notamment le mercredi 18 novembre, le représentant Edwin Melvin Snowe du district n° 1 du comté de Bomi, qui est également candidat aux élections sénatoriales, aurait été testé positif au virus et serait immédiatement entré en quarantaine à sa résidence, quoique, selon lui, il n'eût pas ressenti le moindre symptôme.

Le représentant Snowe, un membre éminent du Parlement de la CEDEAO, devrait prendre part à une réunion à Lomé, au Togo, et lorsqu'il est allé se faire tester comme cela est de routine, il a été déclaré positif, ce qui l'a empêché de voyager à l'étranger.

Nous sommes à peine à deux semaines du jour du scrutin qui prévu le 8 décembre. Il est important que les Libériens, dont notamment les militants des candidats en lice, fassent preuve de prudence et se conforment à toutes les mesures sanitaires dont la distanciation sociale.

Nous ne voulons pas d'un scénario où après le scrutin, ce pays se voit obligé de procéder à un verrouillage, comme nous l'avons vécu auparavant.

Et si l'on n'y prend pas garde dès maintenant, cela pourrait probablement arriver, d'autant plus que nous nous préparons à célébrer Noël après les élections sur fond d'euphorie pour des victoires de certains prétendants.

La ministre libérienne de la Santé, docteur Wilhelmina Jallah, lors d'un point de presse à Monrovia la semaine dernière, a fait état d'une réémergence du virus, en particulier dans le comté de Montserrado et ailleurs dans le pays, soulignant le strict respect de toutes les mesures barrières, y compris le port de masque nasal, la distanciation sociale et le lavage régulier des mains, entre autres.

L'application de ces réglementations n'est pas réservée uniquement aux autorités sanitaires. Les leaders des partis politiques et les candidats ont également la responsabilité de sensibiliser leurs militants en portant des masques en public et en observant leurs distances sociales.

Ces élections viendront et passeront, mais la manière dont nous nous comportons en tant que nation, ce qui est important, au milieu de la pandémie mondiale, ira loin dans la détermination de notre stabilité continue sur le plan sanitaire, politique et économique.

Il est important que tout le monde s'inspire du représentant Snowe, qui aurait dû faire campagne, mais qui est maintenant contraint de se mettre en quarantaine pendant deux semaines avant d'être autorisé par le ministère de la Santé à reprendre ses activités publiques normales, prions Dieu qu'il en soit ainsi.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Raghuram G. Rajan

### A partir de quand la dette est-elle excessive ?

**C**HICAGO - Alors que la pandémie COVID-19 fait rage, les gouvernements des économies avancées ont ouvert leurs coffres pour soutenir les ménages et les petites entreprises, dépensant de l'ordre de 15 à 20% du PIB dans de nombreux cas. Les niveaux d'endettement cumulés dépassent désormais le PIB dans de nombreux pays développés; et, en moyenne, la dette en pourcentage du PIB se rapproche des sommets de l'après-guerre.

Néanmoins, selon Olivier Blanchard et d'autres économistes, les économies avancées peuvent se permettre de s'endetter beaucoup plus, compte tenu du faible niveau des taux d'intérêt. Des calculs utilisant les données du Fonds monétaire international montrent qu'au cours des deux décennies précédant la pandémie, les paiements d'intérêts souverains dans ces pays sont passés de plus de 3% du PIB à environ 2%, alors que les ratios dette sur PIB ont augmenté de plus de 20 points de pourcentage au cours de la même période. De plus, étant donné qu'une grande partie de la dette souveraine nouvellement émise paie désormais des taux d'intérêt négatifs, des emprunts supplémentaires devraient réduire encore davantage les frais d'intérêts.

Dans ce monde étrange de taux d'intérêt ultra-bas, quelles sont les limites à l'endettement public ? Selon les partisans de la théorie monétaire moderne (MMT, selon l'acronyme anglais), il n'y en a pas, du moins pas pour les pays qui émettent de la dette dans leur propre monnaie et ont une capacité de production inutilisée. Après tout, la banque centrale peut simplement imprimer de l'argent pour rembourser la dette arrivant à échéance, et cela ne devrait pas entraîner d'inflation tant qu'il y aura un chômage important. Il n'est pas étonnant que la MMT soit devenue l'idée incontournable des politiciens qui préconisent les dépenses gouvernementales pour atténuer tous les problèmes.

Bien entendu, toute « théorie » qui promet de « raser gratis » devrait être abordée avec scepticisme. Pour comprendre pourquoi, supposons que nous soyons dans un environnement normal avec des taux d'intérêt positifs. La banque centrale pourrait décider d'imprimer de l'argent pour acheter des obligations d'État, et le gouvernement pourrait alors dépenser cet argent en le transférant aux citoyens. En pratique, cependant, il y a une limite à l'argent que chaque personne conservera dans son portefeuille. Si cette personne en avait déjà assez avant que la banque centrale ne commence à imprimer de l'argent, elle déposera le virement du gouvernement sur son compte bancaire, et sa banque déposera tout l'argent qu'elle a accumulé dans son compte de réserve auprès de la banque centrale.

En fin de compte, la banque centrale aura acheté des obligations d'État en émettant des réserves aux banques commerciales, qui voudront alors percevoir des intérêts sur ces réserves excédentaires. Le gouvernement aurait pu tout aussi bien émettre des bons du Trésor directement aux banques commerciales. Le coût en termes d'intérêts serait plus ou moins le même. La seule différence est que cela ne ressemblerait pas à un programme de rasage gratis.

Dans l'environnement anormal d'aujourd'hui, la banque centrale peut financer l'achat d'obligations d'État en émettant des réserves à taux zéro aux banques commerciales, qui à leur tour sont disposées à détenir de grandes quantités de ces réserves hautement liquides. Cela ressemble au nirvana de la MMT. Pourtant, encore une fois, le gouvernement pourrait directement émettre des bons du Trésor ne payant aucun intérêt aux banques commerciales. Si les banques commerciales ne rechignent pas à détenir de grandes quantités de créances sur la banque centrale (sous la forme de réserves), elles ne devraient pas rechigner à détenir de grandes quantités de créances directement envers le gouvernement, dont la banque centrale est une filiale.

En d'autres termes, le financement monétaire prôné par

la MMT n'est qu'un écran de fumée. Certes, le gouvernement peut éviter des perturbations à court terme sur les marchés monétaires en se finançant via la banque centrale. Cependant, à moyen terme, cette approche ne lui permet pas d'emprunter plus que s'il avait emprunté directement. En fait, si les taux d'intérêt à long terme sont également faibles ou négatifs, il est de loin préférable que le gouvernement verrouille ces taux en émettant de la dette à long terme directement sur les marchés, en contournant complètement la banque centrale.

Cela nous ramène à la question initiale du montant de dette qu'un gouvernement peut émettre. Il ne suffit pas qu'un gouvernement s'assure qu'il pourra se permettre de payer les intérêts; il doit également montrer que lui et ses successeurs pourront rembourser le principal. Certains lecteurs protesteront contre le fait qu'un gouvernement n'a pas besoin de rembourser la dette, car il peut émettre une nouvelle dette pour rembourser une dette venant à échéance. Mais les investisseurs n'achèteront cette nouvelle dette que s'ils sont convaincus que le gouvernement pourra rembourser toute sa dette grâce à ses revenus potentiels. De nombreux marchés émergents ont été confrontés à un « arrêt soudain » du crédit bien avant d'atteindre le plein emploi, déclenché par la perte de confiance du marché dans sa capacité à reconduire sa dette.

En d'autres termes, l'investisseur achetant la nouvelle dette doit être convaincu que les recettes fiscales actuelles et futures du gouvernement (nettes des dépenses critiques) seront suffisantes pour rembourser sa dette accumulée. Il y a une limite, mais si les fonds levés grâce à un nouvel emprunt sont investis dans des projets d'infrastructure à haut rendement, l'investisseur ne le mettra probablement jamais en doute que des revenus futurs supplémentaires permettront de payer la dette supplémentaire. Par contre, si l'argent est dépensé pour un soutien indispensable aux ménages pauvres et vulnérables, la limite finira par apparaître.

Dans ce cas, si le gouvernement perçoit déjà autant de recettes fiscales que ce qu'il est politiquement faisable de collecter, il devra réduire l'encours de la dette existante pour permettre de nouvelles émissions. Le moyen le plus simple d'y parvenir est de faire défaut sur les anciennes obligations; mais la plupart des gouvernements des économies avancées considéreraient cela comme impensable.

L'autre option est de permettre une inflation plus élevée, ce qui éroderait l'encours de la dette libellée en dollars courants par rapport aux recettes fiscales futures. L'inflation, dans ce cas, émergerait non pas parce que l'économie est au plein emploi (comme le voudraient les défenseurs de la MMT), mais plutôt parce que le gouvernement a atteint les limites de la dette qu'il peut rembourser. Les nouveaux détenteurs de dette exigeraient des taux d'intérêt plus élevés - y compris peut-être une prime pour le risque d'inflation - et ce serait la fin de l'ère des taux d'intérêt extrêmement bas et des emprunts illimités.

Certes, les économies avancées ne deviendront pas le Zimbabwe de sitôt - voire jamais. Mais certaines d'entre elles sont engluées dans des politiques de division qui encouragent généralement une augmentation des dépenses sans augmentation de revenus - comme de nombreux marchés émergents peuvent en témoigner. Si tel est le cas, il ne serait pas surprenant de voir une inflation un peu plus élevée dans quelques années.

Ce n'est pas un argument pour une austérité immédiate. Dans la mesure où les gouvernements peuvent cibler les dépenses pour protéger la capacité économique des ménages et des entreprises pendant la pandémie, ils récupéreront ces investissements grâce aux revenus futurs. Les dépenses publiques doivent cependant être raisonnables et non pas fondées sur une pensée monétaire magique.

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"JOINT RESOLUTION #003/2020 ADOPTED BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 54<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AUTHORIZING THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2020 SENATORIAL ELECTION AND REFERENDUM TO DECEMBER 8, 2020"



The Liberian Senate  
CAPITOL BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL, MONROVIA, LIBERIA  
WEST AFRICA

-2020-

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

SCHEDULE OF JOINT RESOLUTION #003/2020 ENTITLED:

"JOINT RESOLUTION #003/2020 ADOPTED BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 54<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AUTHORIZING THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2020 SENATORIAL ELECTION AND REFERENDUM TO DECEMBER 8, 2020"

PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA FOR EXECUTIVE APPROVAL.

APPROVED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 2020 AT THE HOUR OF \_\_\_\_\_

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

**SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 54<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AUTHORIZING THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2020 SENATORIAL ELECTION AND REFERENDUM TO DECEMBER 8, 2020**

WHEREAS, Article 83(a) of the Constitution provides that voting for the President Vice President, members of the Senate and members of the House of Representatives shall be conducted throughout the Republic on the second Tuesday in October of each year; which is 13 October of this year (2020);

RECALLING, that pursuant to Article 91 of the Constitution regarding amendments to the Constitution, the Legislature made a certain proposals for amendments to the Constitution, one of which amendments is the provision for dual citizenship (amendment to "Chapter IV-Citizenship" of the Constitution), which amendments are scheduled by the National Elections Commission (the "NEC") to be submitted for Referendum on the same date as the 2020 Senatorial Election;

CONSCIOUS, that on May 7, 2020 the NEC wrote the President of Liberia, His Excellency George Manneh Weah, informing the President that given the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the procurement of election materials and the preparations for the election and referendum, it was not possible to conduct the Senatorial Election and referendum on October 13, 2020-the constitutionally mandated date for the Senatorial Election and thereupon requested for the postponement of the Senatorial Election and Referendum to a new date of which similar letters were sent to the Senate and the House of Representatives respectively;

MINDFUL, that the Legislature invited stakeholders including

political parties to public hearings, and that the NEC and political parties have agreed to a proposed new date for the implementation of programs and Activities by the NEC for the election and referendum to be held on December 8, 2020; and

COGNIZANT, that the President, in recognition of the implication of this request on the constitution, sent communications to the Senate and the House of Representatives respectively for their necessary action in the premises as it was done in 2014, when the Senatorial Election was postponed from October 2014 to December 2014 because of the effects of the Ebola Virus Disease ("EVD") epidemic. That postponement was done through a joint Resolution of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and approved by the President of Liberia.

NOW THEREFORE, it is resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia in Legislature assembled;

1. That due to the outbreak and effect of COVID-19 including financial difficulties arising there from in early 2020 which constrained funding for the 2020 Senatorial Election and the Referendum, the Senatorial Election and Referendum scheduled for October 13, 2020 is hereby postponed to Tuesday, December 8, 2020 in order to conduct free, fair transparent and credible Election; thereby having the elected Senators to be seated on the second working Monday of January 2021 as mandated by the Constitution.

2. That the appropriation made by the Legislature for the conduct of the Senatorial Election and Referendum for December 8, 2020 shall be adhered to, as quickly as reasonably practical, and that the Executive shall make the funds immediately available so as to ensure that no delay or interruption of the election and referendum will be precipitated by the unavailability of funding.

3. That given the competitive budding requirements of the Public Procurement Law and the urgency attached thereto, the Public Procurement and concession Commission (PPCC) shall conduct bidding process expeditiously in order to curtail the delay in procuring election material for 2020 Senatorial Election and Referendum for December 8, 2020.

4. That Considering that the authenticity and credibility of the 2017 FRR continues to be a source of speculation by the political parties and Civil Society Organizations involved with the electoral process, a clean-up process of the 2017 FRR shall be conducted by NEC with the involvement of political parties and other stakeholders in order to enhance the legitimacy and authenticity of the 2017 FRR for use for the 2020 Senatorial Election and Referendum.

5. That the voter Registration Update (VRU) shall be conducted for the 2020 Senatorial Election and Referendum. That without diminishing the Constitutional and Statutory powers, authority and functions of the NEC, the NEC shall employ and use the inter-party Consultative Committee ("IPPC") as a functional mechanism for consultations with Political Parties while also employing the services of technicians from Political Parties for the cleaning up of the 2017 FRR and VRU for the 2020 Senatorial Election and Referendum. NEC shall recognize and certify this mechanism to ensure the credibility of the VRU.

6. That due to the special circumstances appertaining to the 2020 Senatorial election and Referendum, the NEC shall give a written progress report every thirty (30) days to the Legislature, and physically appear to react to concerns of the Legislature, so as to ensure that all problems faced by the NEC will be promptly resolved and that the Senatorial election and Referendum will be held on December 8, 2020.

7. That the NEC shall continue its engagement with the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute, utilize their expertise and advice to ensure that whatever the impact of Covid-19 may be, it will not disturb or interrupt the process leading to the Senatorial election and Referendum on December 8, 2020.

8. That this postponement of the 2020 Senatorial election from the constitutionally-mandated date of the second Tuesday of October of 2020 (October 13) to December 8, 2020 shall not be used as a precedence for the postponement of any future election.

DONE THIS 5<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JUNE A.D. 2020 AND OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY THIRD YEAR OF THE REPUBLIC, CAPITOL BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL, MONROVIA, LIBERIA

SIGNED:

Senator Saah H. Joseph  
Montserrado County

Senator Abe Darius Dillon  
Montserrado County

**THE**

**LIBERIA**  **OFFICIAL**

**GAZETTE**

**ON THE NATIONAL REFERENDUM - 2020**

**PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY**

**VOL. XIX****TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2019,****NO. 52****EXTRAORDINARY**

**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA ANNOUNCES:**

That PURSUANT to Joint Resolution Leg-002/2019 adopted September 30, 2019 by the Senate and House of Representatives of the 54<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Republic of Liberia, proposing a Constitutional Referendum to Amend Articles 28, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, & 83 (a) and (c) of the 1986 Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, which was approved by the President of Liberia on October 4, 2019, and further published and printed into handbills on October 4, 2019; and,

In CONSONANCE, with Chapter XII, Article 91 of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia, which provides for the holding of a Referendum to be conducted by the Elections Commission not sooner than one year after the action of the Legislature; and,

CONSISTENT with Article 92 of the 1986 Constitution of the Republic of Liberia which states: "Proposed Constitutional amendment shall be accompanied by statements setting forth the reasons therefor and shall be published in the Official Gazette and made known to the People through the information services of the Republic. If more than one proposed amendment is to be voted upon in a referendum they shall be submitted in such manner that the people may vote for or against them separately"

NOW THEREFORE, THIS OFFICIAL GAZETTE IS HEREBY ORDERED TO BE RELEASED, AND IS RELEASED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW, FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING CLEAR, CORRECT AND ADEQUATE INFORMATION TO THE VOTING PUBLIC, ABOUT THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO BE PRESENTED TO THE SAID PUBLIC FOR A REFERENDUM VOTE, SCHEDULE TO BE HELD THROUGHOUT THE REPUBLIC ON TUESDAY, FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER 30, 2020, AHEAD OF THE GENERAL LEGISLATIVE AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS; AND, THE FOLLOWING SPECIMEN SET OUT THE THREE (3) BALLOT MEASURES TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE ELECTORS ON THE DAY OF THE REFERENDUM, AND WHICH PROVIDE FULL EXPLANATION ON THE PURPOSE OF EACH BALLOT MEASURE, AS WELL AS, THE IMPLICATION AND EFFECT FOR A "YES" OR "NO" VOTE, FOR EACH MEASURE

**BALLOT MEASURES – 1**

**PROPOSITION 1: To amend Article 28 of the Constitution to provide for the inalienability of the citizenship of natural born citizens of Liberia (Dual Citizenship)**

*(proposed to be placed on the ballot paper by the Legislature)*

**Summary**

To amend Article 28 so that any person, one of whose parent is a citizen of Liberia at the time of the person birth, shall be a citizen of Liberia without having to decide at age 18; and also to provide for dual citizenship.

**Analysis** - To afford the Liberian voters the opportunity to decide whether any person can be a natural born citizen of Liberia when either one of his or her parent is a Liberian citizen; and whether a Liberian can hold different citizenship.

As a consequence of the civil war, hundreds of Liberian fled Liberia as refugees, assumed residency in other countries and obtained citizenship of other countries. Many obtained citizenship because that was the only way for them to get certain jobs or to enjoy certain opportunities, such as education. Most of these Liberians also had children and continue to have children, who are automatically citizens of the countries of their birth.

Whatever the circumstance of these Liberians may be, one thing that is certain is that their loyalty to their motherland remains unquestionable; they continue to provide support to relatives and friends and to remain connected to their motherland through financial remittances. They continue to cling to the belief that they will be able to enjoy all the rights and privileges of Liberian citizenship, such as inheriting real property from their parents and being able to return to their motherland and be accepted and regarded as natural born citizens, not as foreigners. This amendment of the Constitution will enthrall all natural born Liberians to invest in Liberia and will give them hope of a permanent home in their motherland. To ensure that the loyalty of these Liberians will not be questioned, they are prohibited from holding certain positions in the Government of Liberia.

***Text of the Proposed Amendment***

**Article 28 which currently reads** , *“Any person, at least one of whose parents was a citizen of Liberia at the time of the person’s birth, shall be a citizen of Liberia; provided that any such person shall upon reaching maturity renounce any other citizenship acquired by virtue of one parent being a citizen of another country. No citizen of the Republic shall be deprived of citizenship or nationality except as provided by law; and no*

*Will be amended to read: "Any person, at least one of whose parents was a citizen of Liberia at the time of the person's birth, shall be a natural born citizen of Liberia; a natural born citizen's right to citizenship of Liberia is inherent and inalienable; no law shall be enacted or regulation promulgated which deprived a natural born citizen of the Republic of his/her citizenship right; and any law or regulation which alienates or deprived a natural born citizen of his/her Liberian citizenship right is null and void ab initio.*

*natural born citizen of Liberia may hold another/additional citizenship but shall not qualify for elected national or public service positions and the following appointive positions:*

*. Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia;*

*. Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers;*

*. All Heads of Autonomous Commissions, Agencies and Non-academic/Research/Scientific Institutions;*

*. Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiaries; and*

*. Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia*

*A Liberian with dual citizenship shall have certain rights, including the right to hold elected national or public service positions and all appointive positions if he relinquishes the other citizenship.*

*The Legislature shall enact laws on the process by which natural born citizens of Liberia who have obtained additional citizenship, will maintain all of the rights pertaining to their Liberian citizenship.*

## **What Your Vote Means**

### **YES**

A YES Vote on this Measure means: You have agreed that a person, at least one of whose parents was a citizen at the time of the person's birth, shall be a natural born citizen of Liberia. Such person does not have to reach the age of maturity to decide his/her citizenship. Also, you have agreed that a natural born citizen of Liberia may hold another citizenship, but shall not qualify for elected national or public service positions and the above listed appointive positions.

### **NO**

A NO Vote on this Measure means: The Constitutional provision shall not change but will remain in its current form.

## BALLOT MEASURES – 2

**PROPOSITION 2: Reduction of Tenure of the President, the Vice President & Members of the Legislature***(proposed to be placed on the ballot paper by the Legislature)***To amend Article 45 of the Constitution to provide for three to reduce the term of Senators from nine (9) years to seven (7) years**

**Summary** - To amend Article 45 of the Constitution so that the term of Senators is reduce from nine (9) years to seven (7) years.

**Analysis** - To afford the Liberian voters the opportunity to decide whether Senators should serve for seven years instead of nine years. The current nine-year term for a Senator is too long. It is so long that a child born in the year in which a Senator is first inducted into office will be eligible to vote (18 years) when that Senator's second term expires. A long term does not incentivize a Senator to perform well, especially during his second term. Reducing the term to seven (7) years therefore seems appropriate to address those concerns.

***Text of the Proposed Amendment***

**Article 45 which currently reads**, "The Senate shall be composed of Senators elected for a term of nine years by the registered voters in each of the counties, but a Senator elected in a by-election to fill a vacancy created by death, resignation, expulsion or otherwise, shall be so elected to serve only the remainder of the unexpired term of office. Each county shall elect two Senators and each Senator shall have one vote in the Senate. Senators shall be eligible for re-election".

**Will be amended to read**: "The Senate shall be composed of Senators elected for a term of seven (7) years by the registered voters in each of the counties, but a Senator elected in a by-election to fill a vacancy created by death, resignation, expulsion or otherwise, shall be so elected to serve only the remainder of the unexpired term of office. Each county shall elect two Senators and each Senator shall have one vote in the Senate. Senators shall be eligible for re-election. Immediately upon the passage of this amendment and its printing into handbills, all Senators shall be elected for the term of seven (7) years".

**To amend Article 47 of the Constitution to provide for election of a President Pro Tempore for a term of five years**

**Summary** - To amend Article 47 of the Constitution so that the term of the President Pro Tempore is reduce from six (6) years to five (5) years.

**Analysis** - To afford the Liberian voters the opportunity to decide whether the President Pro Tempore should serve for five years instead of six years.

The term of office for the President Pro Tempore and other officers of the Senate should be the same as the term of office of the President and Members of the House of Representatives to be in harmony with the beginning of each Legislative Session.

***Text of the Proposed Amendment***

**Article 47 which currently reads**, "The Senate shall elect once every six years a President Pro Tempore who shall preside in the absence of the President of the Senate, and such other officers as shall ensure the proper functioning of the Senate. The President Pro Tempore and other officers so elected may be removed from office for cause by resolution of a two-thirds majority of the members of the Senate".

**Will be amended to read**: "The Senate shall elect once every five (5) years a President Pro Tempore who shall preside in the absence of the President of the Senate, and such other officers as shall ensure the proper functioning of the Senate. The President Pro Tempore and other officers so elected may be removed from office for cause by resolution of a two-thirds majority of the members of the Senate".

**To amend Article 48 of the Constitution to provide for the reduction in the tenure of Members of the House of Representatives**

**Summary** - To amend Article 48 of the Constitution so that the term of the Members of the House of Representatives is reduce from six (6) years to five (5) years.

**Analysis** - To afford the Liberian voters the opportunity to decide whether Members of the House of Representatives should serve for five years instead of six years.

Reduction of the term of office for the House of Representatives from six (6) years to five (5) years is necessary so that the term is the same as the term of office for the President of Liberia, which will be five (5) years instead of six (6) as provided for by Article 50 of the Constitution. In addition to this, the amendment takes into consideration that as the civil war caueds migration of citizens from counties other than Montserrado to Montserrado, the resident population densities of other counties have decreased. Consequently, the number of legislative constituencies based on population densities of counties, as envisaged by the 1986 constitution, has decreased. To address this anomaly, legislative constituencies are now based on Joint Resolution of the Legislature, not the Constitution; and this Joint Resolution mandates a minimum three (3) legislative constituencies for each county. It is the wisdom of this Joint Resolution which is being proposed to a constitutional amendment to provide that notwithstanding the resident population density of a county, it shall not have less than three legislative constituencies.

***Text of the Proposed Amendment***

**Article 48 which currently reads**, "The House of Representatives shall be composed of members elected for a term of six years by the registered voters in each of the legislative constituencies of the counties, but a member of the House of Representatives elected in a by-election to fill a vacancy created by death, resignation, expulsion or otherwise, shall be elected to serve only the remainder of the unexpired term of the office. Members of the House of Representatives shall be eligible for re-élection.

**Will be amended to read:** "The House of Representatives shall be composed of members elected for a term of five (5) years by the registered voters in each of the legislative constituencies of the counties, but a member of the House of Representatives elected in a by-election to fill a vacancy created by death, resignation, or otherwise, shall be elected to serve only the remainder of the unexpired term of the office. Members of the House of Representatives shall be eligible for re-election".

**To amend Article 49 of the Constitution to provide for the election of a Speaker, Deputy Speaker and other officers of the House or Representatives**

**Summary** - To amend Article 49 of the Constitution so that the term of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and other officers of the House of Representatives is reduce from six (6) years to five (5) years.

**Analysis** - To afford the Liberian voters the opportunity to decide whether the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and other officers of the House of Representatives should serve for five years instead of six years.

This proposed amendment merely makes the term of office of the Speaker and other officers of the House of Representatives to be the same as the term for the Members of the House or Representatives – five (5) years.

***Text of the Proposed Amendment***

**Article 49 which currently reads**, "The House of Representatives shall elect once every six years a Speaker who shall be the presiding officer of that body, a Deputy Speaker, and such other officers as shall ensure the proper functioning of the House. The Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and other officers so elected may be removed from office for cause by resolution of a two-thirds majority of the members of the House.

**Will be amended to read:** "The House of Representatives shall elect once every five (5) years a Speaker who shall be the presiding officer of that body, a Deputy Speaker, and such other officers as shall ensure the proper functioning of the House. The Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and other officers so elected may be removed from office for cause by resolution of a two-thirds majority of the members of the House".

**To amend Article 50 of the Constitution to provide for the reduction in the tenure of the President**

**Summary** - To amend Article 50 of the Constitution so that the term of the President is reduce from six (6) years to five (5) years.

**Analysis** - To afford the Liberian voters the opportunity to decide whether the President should serve for five years instead of six years.

This proposed amendment reduces the term of office of the President from six (6) years to Five (5) years. It should be recalled that for many decades the term of office was as many four (4) years as the people elected the person to be President. President Tolbert had the 1847 Constitution amended to provide for one eight-year term. The 1986 Constitution provides for two six-year terms but in most parts of the world, especially Africa, it is two five-year terms. This amendment proposes to comply with this generally accepted term limit of five (5) years for a President for a maximum of two (2) terms.

***Text of the Proposed Amendment***

**Article 50 which currently reads,** "The Executive Power of the Republic shall be vested in the President who shall be Head of State, Head of Government and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The President shall be elected by universal adult suffrage of registered voters in the Republic and shall hold office for a term of six years *commencing at noon on the third working Monday in January of the year immediately following the elections. No person shall serve as President for more than two terms.*

**Will be amended to read:** "The Executive Power of the Republic shall be vested in the President who shall be Head of State, Head of Government and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The President shall be elected by universal adult suffrage of registered voters in the Republic and shall hold office for a term of five (5) years *commencing at noon on the third working Monday in January of the year immediately following the elections. No person shall serve as President for more than two terms*".

**What Your Vote Means**

**YES**

A YES Vote on this Measure means: You are in agreement of amending Articles 45, 47, 48, 49 and 50 of the Constitution to reduce the tenures of the Senators from nine (9) years to seven (7) years; the President Pro Tempore from six (6) years to five (5) years; Members of the House of Representatives from six (6) years to five (5) years; the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and other officers of the House of Representatives from six (6) years to five (5) years; and the President from six (6) years to five (5) years.

**NO**

A NO Vote on this Measure means: The Constitutional provision shall not change but remain in its current form

**BALLOT MEASURES – 3**

**PROPOSITION 3: Change in the Date of General Election**

*(proposed to be placed on the ballot paper by the Legislature)*

**To amend Article 83(a) of the Constitution to change the date for General Elections from October (the rainy season) to November (the dry season)**

**Summary**

To amend Article 83(a) of the Constitution to change the date for General Election so that voting

**Analysis** – Election Day in October means that propositions for elections, campaigns and voting shall take place during the raining season; which is very, very challenging for the National Elections Commission, voters and candidates because of their road-connectivity problems and the weather. By placing election day in November, a substantial amount of these activities can take place during the dry season.

### ***Text of the Proposed Amendment***

**Article 83(a)** which currently reads, “Voting for the President, Vice President, Members of the Senate and Members of the House of Representatives shall be conducted throughout the Republic on the second Tuesday of October of each election year”.

Will be amended to read: *“Voting for the President, Vice President, Members of the Senate, and Members of the House of Representatives shall be conducted throughout the Republic on the second Tuesday in November of each election year”.*

### **To amend Article 83(c) of the Constitution**

#### **Summary**

To amend Article 83(c) of the Constitution to reduce the time frame for resolution of complaints emanating from General Election from thirty days to fifteen days.

**Analysis** – Holding of general elections in November instead of October will reduce the time frame for resolution of complaints emanating from general elections. Proportionately reducing the time allotted for the hearing of complaints will ensure that Inauguration activities will be held on the date enshrined in the 1986 Constitution.

### **Text of the Proposed Amendment**

**Article 83(c)** which reads, “...The Elections Commission shall, within thirty days of receipt of the complaint, conduct an impartial investigation and render a decision which may involve a dismissal of the complaint or a nullification of the election of a candidate. Any political party or independent candidate affected by such decision shall not later than seven days appeal against it to the Supreme Court...”

Will be amended to read: *“...The Elections Commission shall, within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the complaint, conduct an impartial investigation and render a decision which may involve a dismissal of the complaint or a nullification of the election of a candidate. Any political party or independent candidate affected by such decision shall not later than seven days appeal against it to the Supreme Court...”*

## What Your Vote Means

### YES

A YES Vote on this Measure means: You have agreed for General Elections to be conducted on the Second Tuesday in November instead of Second Tuesday in October. You have also agreed to reduce the time allotted for the hearing of complaints coming from General Elections from thirty (30) days to fifteen (15) days.

### NO

A NO Vote on this Measure means: The Constitutional provision shall not change but will remain in its current form

Upon the announcement of the result of the Proposed Referendum Amendments, the result thereof shall be immediately implemented by the National Elections Commission.

The conduct of the Proposed Amendment shall be applicable to all elections conducted under the 1986 Elections Law; the Electoral Reform Law of 2004 and all other electoral laws, regulations and guidelines.

**BY ORDER OF THE PRESIDENT**

**GBEHZOHNGAR M. FINDLEY  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
CAPITOL HIL, MONROVIA, LIBERIA  
OCTOBER 8, 2019**

# Weah: It's Not about me

By Winston W. Parley

President George Manneh Weah is urging Liberians to vote yes to dual citizenship and all other proposals in the referendum, arguing that his quest for dual citizenship is not about him because as President he has the right to declare his children citizens of Liberia.

Speaking in Kingjor, Grand Cape Mount County Monday,

of it.

“So in the referendum, it is not because of me, it's because of all of us. You see I have a privilege, as the president, my children can come home anytime, I have the right to say you are citizens because I am the president now. But it is not because of me,” he says.

President Weah notes that people always say the white race is racist, but Liberians are at the same time not accepting

County on 8 December.

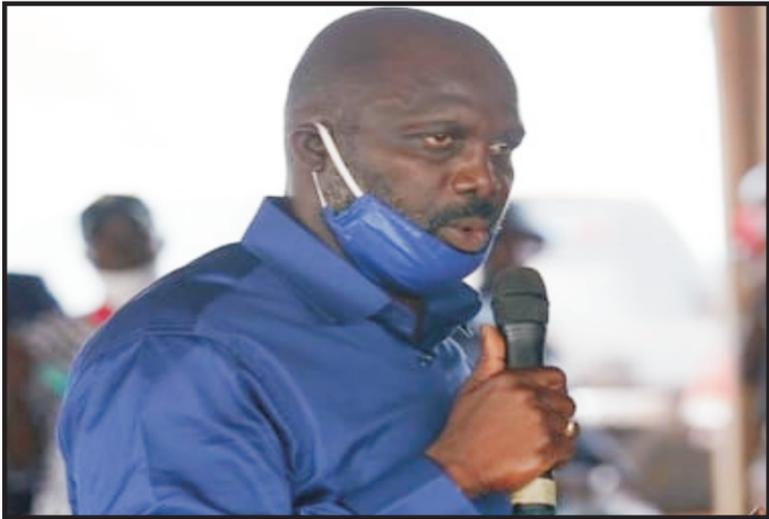
Mr. Weah's comments on the referendum come in support of the statement by his Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Mr. Nathaniel McGill on the need to vote yes to all the proposals in the referendum.

McGill recently argued that the recommendations in the referendum including reduction of the tenures of the president and representatives from six to five years; nine to seven years for senators; approval for dual citizenship, among others, did not come from President George Manneh Weah, but Liberians themselves.

The Weah administration insists that the president does not intend to seek a third term.

President Weah urges CDC partisans in Grand Cape Mount County to be party disciplined by voting the party's candidate Mr. Watson, saying he's their son.

Mr. Weah says for the government to achieve its objectives, it needs people in the Senate who are supportive of the administration and prepare to debate issues in the interest of the government.



30 November at the campaign of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC's) senatorial candidate Mr. Victor Watson, Mr. Weah said when dual citizenship is passed in the referendum, Liberians will enjoy the fruit

those that have different passports and are alienating their own people.

Mr. Weah encourages his supporters to vote yes to all propositions in the referendum just as they will vote Mr. Victor Watson in Grand Cape Mount

# Kemayah seeks maximum return from diplomats

By Winston W. Parley

Foreign Minister Amb. Dee Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr., is calling on Liberian diplomats accredited at foreign missions including ambassadors, consul generals and other diplomatic staff to ensure through their respective services abroad that they can give Liberians maximum return for their money.

At the start of a four - day virtual retreat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Monrovia Tuesday, 1 December for Ambassadors and Heads of Missions, Amb. Kemayah reiterated his commitment to working towards the much needed support that his colleagues' desire in the field to complement their efforts.

He indicates that a lot is happening in the field, but a number of steps need to be taken in terms of complementing the efforts of the diplomats.

The Foreign Minister notes that the objective of the retreat is to develop a

Enhancing the Future of the Foreign Policy Agenda of the Republic of Liberia During and Post Covid - 19” which is in line with the shared vision and agenda of President Weah.

According to him, the first phase of the retreat brought together 100 participants from across departments, bureaus, sessions, and units in the ministry and members of the diplomatic corps as well as other stakeholders of the government.

Delivering a keynote speech at the retreat, the Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Liberia Amb. Laurent Delahouse praised Minister Kemayah for pushing reform to strengthen integrity and credibility of the Liberian Passport and to improve accessibility and affordability, with the reduction of 20 percent of the price paid by applicants.

He indicates that Ambassadors and diplomats are lobbyists for their country, adding that their role is to



Amb. Dee Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr.

common understanding to enhance the shared vision of President George Manneh Weah and the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) as enshrined in the Pro - Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

Minister Kemayah stresses that the output from the retreat is expected to recommend concrete action for improved image and to further Liberia's economic development.

He says he is very much pleased to see his colleague ambassadors, consul generals, charge d'affaires and other diplomatic staff in Liberia's foreign missions take up their time to take part in the process, irrespective of the challenge as it relates to timing difference.

Since assuming the leadership role as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Kemayah says the Ministry has initiated a reform agenda under the rubric “Envisioning and

project themselves out of the Embassy and meet as many stakeholders of the bilateral relationship as possible, including officials from the host country, people in business and potential investors and their organizations.

Amb. Delahouse says Liberia has a lot to offer to the region and the world, despite noting the country's challenge of being under-represented in governing bodies of regional organizations in ECOWAS and at the African Union.

He says with Liberia's 150 military personnel in the UN peacekeeping Mission in Mali, it is giving back to the region and the international community what it has received from them.

Deputy Foreign Minister Amb. Henry B. Fahnbulleh, welcoming participants at the retreat, says the virtual retreat is in line with the reform agenda of the Ministry since Minister Kemayah assumed office in October 2020.

By Winston W. Parley

# Boakai calls for credible

million), he noted that Mr. Weah's government has failed so far to give proper account of same lest to indicate the US\$25 million that was withdrawn from the national coffers to mop up excess liquidity in the market, which subsequently prompted massive protests in July, 2019 and January, 2020, respectively.

He also pointed that diplomatic representatives of Liberia's development partners accredited here have had to take the unusual step of issuing public rebuke of the Weah government's misappropriation of foreign funds intended for development projects in the country.

Amb. Boakai accused the government of instituted a 'bogus' impeachment proceedings that removed Associate Justice Kabineh Ja'neh from the Supreme Court bench because of the latter's unwavering commitment to the rule of law.

He disclosed that the Weah government has tried to turn the Liberia National Police (LNP) into a partisan unit to be used against perceived enemies, despite the fact

that the LNP was trained as a professional force by UNMIL, financed by donors' money as part of the Security Sector Reform (SSR).

According to him, allegations are rife that the CDC is in the business nowadays of training private militias and assassins to target opposition figures and intimidate opponents, as there has been a spree of mysterious killings and disappearances, most of which the cops are yet to investigate or submit credible reports, lamenting “Liberians now live in fear and insecurity.”

He recalled that the Unity Party-led government which governed for 12 years inherited a country not only broken by civil strife, but one that had been turned into a failed state and an international pariah.

“We, the Unity Party-led administration with Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as President, then endeavored with scant resources, to restore basic social services, rebuild infrastructure and reestablish local administration and the rule of law throughout the country.”

He recounted the party-led government then steadily gained the confidence of development partners and

major lending institutions to be able to negotiate the write off of Liberia's massive debt and restore the country's credit worthiness.

With this, he said, the Sirleaf-Boakai Team took Liberia from a relief and emergency assistance case to recovery and set it firmly on the path to sustainable development in record time thus, enabling the nation state to take its rightful place of respectability and honor within the comity of nations.

Continuing, he said the national budget under the UP administration rose from a somewhat mere US\$85 million in 2006 to more than US\$500 million by the end of its first term, as the economy grew at a whopping rate of nearly 10% annually and was only down by the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008-2009.

“We maintained the peace uninterrupted for 12 years and kept the country united; I am bemused when critics say the Sirleaf-led government in 12 years did nothing”, Amb. Boakai, who lost to Mr. Weah during the 2017 runoff presidential election, concluded. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

# Referendum blues: Diaspora Liberians want compatriots vote yes to all

By Othello B. Garblah

With just 6 days for Liberians to head to the polls in their bid to decide the future direction of the country in a Referendum, which comes amid a mid-term senatorial election, Liberians in the diaspora have joined the campaign urging their compatriots to vote yes to all the prepositions.

"We are here in Liberia to advocate for the entire referendum. We want the referendum to be held. We support the entire referendum and we're calling on the people of Liberia to vote yes to all the prepositions on the referendum, even though our sole interest is preposition # 1, which is on dual citizenship. But we think that our appeal to the Liberian people is to vote yes to all items on the referendum, Mr. Emmanuel S. Wettee, Chairman of the All Liberian Conference on Dual Citizenship (ALCDC) told the New Dawn in an exclusive interview Tuesday December 1.

Liberians are expected to decide on 8 prepositions on December 8, the same day they will be electing 15 new members of the Senate. Each of the preposition is intended to amend different articles within the country's 1986 Constitution.

The prepositions seek amendments to Article 28 to allow dual citizenship, Article 45 and 48 reduction in Senatorial tenure from the current 9 years to 7 years and reduction in the tenure of Representatives from 6 years to 5 years respectively. Both Senate Pro-tempt and House Speakers will also see a reduction in their respective tenures from 6 years to 5 years.

The changes in the Constitution also seek an amendment to Article 50, to have a reduction in the Presidential and Vice Presidential tenures from 6 years to 5 years. It further seeks to amend Article 83 (a) to change the date of the General Elections from the 2nd Tuesday in October to November.

As good as the prepositions appear, they have not been void of controversies, especially from the opposition bloc, which filed a prohibition before the nation's highest court last month. The ruling from the country's Supreme Court has left behind it many

interpretations. But one thing is clear, most Liberians, if not all are in agreement with the propositions, but differs on the timing.

For Mr. Wettee whose organization represents more than 500 diaspora Liberians from various Liberian organizations within the diaspora including but not limited to ULAA-Union of Liberian Association in the Americas, EFLA- European Federation of Liberians Association, FLACA, -Federation of Liberian Association in Australia, LAC-Liberia Association in Canada, and the United Liberian Association of Ghana believes that the time is ripe for Liberians to decide the future direction of the country.

### Why is the Referendum so important to Wettee and his group?

Under the current Constitution, especially Article

citizenship-meaning Wettee and other natural born Liberians can still maintain their Liberian citizenship, while being a neutralized citizen of another.

"What it means to be a dual citizen is that you will have right to your country of birth; you will have right to land ownership; you will have right to own certain businesses and above all a woman will have the right to pass her citizenship to her child," Wettee flanked by Rev. Marcus Y. Sherman head of the United Liberian Association of Ghana said.

"In Liberia, as we speak right now," Wettee continues, "a woman does not have the right to pass her citizenship to her child. As we speak right now, if a child is born by a Liberian woman to a father who is not a Liberian, that child is not a Liberian. And right now as we speak the

National Elections Commission (NEC) to separate the prepositions rather than comprising them to three.

He argues that if that process of decompressing the prepositions had required the printing of new gazette as being propounded by others, the court would have said so.

"The Supreme Court did not postpone the referendum. Rather the Supreme Court said look each (preposition) item on the referendum which is approved by two-third of the both House of Representatives and Senate need to be printed on the ballot so that people can have the right to choose, you cannot bundle the eight preposition into three," he argued.

He avers that to the best of his knowledge, the National Elections Commission has gone ahead to separate the prepositions on the ballot for the December 8 elections. For him the court accepted the opposition request and it is based on that, that the Supreme asked the NEC to separate the items.

### Education of voters on referendum symbols

On the argument that the referendum should be postponed because there have not been enough awareness on the symbols, Wettee counters. He says the issue of dual citizenship is not a today issue.

He notes that there have

been a lot of education about dual citizenship. "There have been lot of publications on the symbols. The word enough education on the referendum is relative, therefore what might be enough public awareness to me may not be to you," he argues. He adds that this should not be a reason to call for the postponement of the referendum.

Furthermore, Wettee assumes that the Representatives who represented their people, may have spoken to then sufficiently before signing up to the resolution calling for the conduct of the referendum.

He also opines that with reports that the Ministry of Internal Affairs have been working with NEC to identify the symbols of the prepositions, he believes that there have been massive education ongoing about the referendum.

### On fears of President Weah contesting for a third term

"Our people need to read the constitution. Article 93 of the Constitution makes it very clear that if the constitution is amended, under the term of a President that president does not benefit. Nobody is mentioning Article 93, and it is written and the crafter saw that long before.

Article 93 states: The limitation of the Presidential term of office to two terms, each of six years duration, may be subject to amendment; provided that the amendment shall not become effective during the term of office of the incumbent President.



(L-R) Rev. Marcus Y. Sherman of ULAG & Mr. Emmanuel S. Wettee (ALCDC)

28, Wettee and thousands others- natural born Liberians who hold citizenships of other countries are no longer recognized as Liberian citizens. The same apply to children born by Liberian women to foreign fathers. They might declared their citizenship at age 18 or be robbed of same.

Article 28 states: Any person, at least one of whose parents was a citizen of Liberia at the time of the Person's birth, shall be a citizen of Liberia; provided that any such person shall upon reaching maturity renounce any other citizenship acquired by virtue of one parent being a citizen of another country. No citizen of the Republic shall be deprived of citizenship or nationality except as provided by law; and no person shall be denied the right to change citizenship or nationality.

An amendment to this Article, would allow dual

United Nations notes that there are 40,000 stateless children living in Liberia."

Thus, a yes vote to dual citizenship would protect not only natural born Liberians who have already obtained citizenship of other countries but also children born to Liberian parents outside the country and those born with one parent being a foreigner automatically qualifies to be a Liberian citizen. A yes vote to dual citizenship gives protection to Liberians in this category.

### What does the diaspora make of the recent Supreme Court ruling?

Wettee who represents an organization of 500 Liberians says the Supreme Court did not put a halt to the conduct of the referendum as is being claimed in other quarters of the country. Instead, Wettee says the court instructed the

**JUDICIAL BRANCH**  
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



Judge's chambers  
Sixth Judicial Circuit Court  
Civil Law Court  
Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia



SITTING IN ITS SEPTEMBER A.D. 2020 TERM

BEFORE HIS HONOR: SCHEAPLOR R. DUNBAR ..... ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING

THE PETITION OF ANNIE A. WESLEY OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, COUNTY OF MONTSERRADO, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, PETITIONER, PRAYING THIS HONORABLE COURT FOR A DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME TO BE ISSUED IN FAVOR OF HER TO BE KNOWN, REGARDED AND CALLED AS "MERCY ANNIE ASENATH WESLEY WHO WAS BORN ON OCTOBER 25, 1978, IN THE CITY OF GREENVILLE, SINOE COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME:

WHEREAS, Petitioner's Petition by and thru her counsel, in the above entitled cause of Action, having filed a Petition with an Affidavit attached thereto, requesting an Order from this Honourable Court to have her name formally change from ANNIE A. WESLEY TO MERCY ANNIE ASENATH WESLEY. "

WHEREAS, After Court thoroughly examined Petitioner's Petition and having been satisfied with the truthfulness of the allegations set forth:

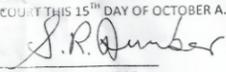
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS DIRECTED, ORDERED AND DECREED AS FOLLOWS:

That the Petitioner's Petition is hereby granted and the name of the aforesaid Petitioner is now formally and legally changed from "ANNIE A. WESLEY TO MERCY ANNIE ASENATH WESLEY. "

THIS ORDER SHALL TAKE EFFECT AS OF THE DATE OF ISSUANCE:

This Order shall be registered in the Office of the REGISTRAR OF DEEDS for Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia and shall be published twice in any recognized NEWSPAPER operating in the Republic of Liberia within twenty (20) days as of today's date. AND IT IS HEREBY SO ORDERED.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF COURT THIS 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER A.D. 2020

  
 SCHEAPLOR R. DUNBAR  
 JUDGE, PRESIDING, CIVIL LAW COURT  
 SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

COURT'S SEAL:

REGISTERED ACCORDING TO LAW IN VOLUME 11-2020 PAGE (S) 00006873

REGISTRAR, NATIONAL ARCHIVES CENTER, MONTSERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

# Boakai calls for credible, accountable elections



Former Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai

**B**arely days to the senatorial election, former Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai is calling for credible, transparent and accountable elections to consolidate peace in Liberia.

Speaking on Monday, November 30 when he celebrated his 76th natal day, Mr. Boakai, political leader of the former ruling Unity Party and also an executive of the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) maintained that the

Voter's Roll must be cleaned up by the National Elections Commission (NEC), and entreated all political parties, churches, civil society organizations and professional groups including the Liberian populace to join the demand for a clean Voter's Roll before Tuesday's elections.

"On our take on the Referendum, we do not support the Weah-led government decision to collapse the eight (8) proposed amendments to the Constitution adopted by the

Legislature into three (3) proposals. We equally do not support the holding of the Referendum during the Mid-Term Senatorial Elections, due to lack of massive awareness campaign by the CDC government and NEC to educate the citizenry about the ramification of these amendments to our Constitution," he added.

Taking stock of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change under the leadership of President George Weah, Amb. Boakai explained that Liberia began to suffer rapid setback by poor governance and an assault on the Constitution since the President and the CDC came to power in 2018, and he (Weah) and officials blatantly refused to declare their assets amid reports of using public resources to amass private wealth.

Regarding the alleged missing L\$16 billion (US\$104

▶ **CONT'D ON PAGE 14**

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# UEFA to discuss new 10-game model for CL group stage

**U**EFA is to hold talks over proposals that would see the Champions League group stage transformed to guarantee 10 matches for each side in the competition, according to a report on Tuesday.

Champions League reform is expected from 2024 onwards as European football's governing body aims to ward off the threat of a breakaway super league from the continent's biggest clubs.

British newspaper The Times reported that a "Swiss system" that would see all sides in the competition compete in one league and play 10 different opponents, selected by a draw, is now UEFA's favoured model for reform.

The system is designed to have fewer meaningless group matches and more games between the continent's biggest clubs.

After the 10 games, the top 16 clubs in the standings would progress to the knockout rounds.



The team that finished top of the league standings would play the club in 16th, second would play 15th and so on in a system similar to that used by the NBA playoffs.

The teams finishing 17th-24th would drop into the Europa League knockout rounds.

Currently, the 32-team group stage is divided into eight groups of four with the top two in each section progressing to the last 16 and third-place dropping into the Europa League.

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