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VOL.11 NO. 011

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 08, 2021

PRICE LD\$40.00



Weah lights up Monrovia

Grand Kru election results head to S/Court



-As NEC confirms Batekwa as winner

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Continental News

UN boosts food aid to Ethiopia's Tigray over starvation fears

The head of the World Food Programme has said he has reached a deal with Ethiopia to expand access for aid workers and "scale up" operations in the country's conflict-hit northern Tigray region.

David Beasley's announcement on Twitter late Saturday comes as fears grow of a humanitarian catastrophe in Tigray, three months after fighting erupted between forces loyal to the regional ruling party and the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

The government and WFP "have agreed on concrete steps to expand access for humanitarians across #Tigray, and WFP will scale up its operations," Beasley said on Twitter following a visit to the Tigray capital Mekele.

A statement by the WFP -- the 2020 Nobel peace laureate -- said Ethiopian officials had agreed to speed up reviews of aid workers' requests to move within the region.

It also said WFP had agreed to government requests to provide emergency food aid to one million people in Tigray and help with transportation to hard-to-reach rural areas.



Ethiopian peace minister Muferihat Kamil said in a separate statement the government was "moving with urgency to approve requests for international staff movements into and within Tigray."

Top UN officials and international NGOs have repeatedly complained about access restrictions to Tigray, where fighting persists despite Abiy's declaration of victory in late November after federal forces entered the regional capital.

The new terms fall "under the existing agreement" between the government and the UN on aid, according to the WFP

statement.

That agreement restricted UN access to areas under government control.

But a senior UN official told AFP the progress was nevertheless "significant" and would facilitate access deeper into Tigray.

"It's not good enough to just stick to the safe routes, the secure routes," the official said.

"Our role is to be determined to get to where the last person in need is, and the presence of militias should not really hamper us."

The WFP statement noted that "armed escorts for

humanitarian cargo and personnel will be undertaken as a last resort."

Tigray remains largely cut off to media, making it difficult to assess the situation on the ground.

The UN official noted that "insecure areas (are) were

"many and significant." - 'No time to waste' -

The government has played down fears of widespread starvation while touting its own efforts to meet the needs of a population of around six million.

It says it has provided emergency food aid to 1.8 million people.

During a visit to Ethiopia last week, UN refugees chief Filippo Grandi stressed the need for a more efficient system of facilitating access for aid workers and distributing aid.

"We heard from everywhere, including from the local authorities, that more is needed" beyond what the government is providing, Grandi said.

"The situation as I said is very grave, is very urgent. Without further action it will get worse."

In his Twitter post Saturday, Beasley said "nearly 3 million people need our help NOW and we have no time to waste."

Tunisia demonstrators defy lockdown to protest police brutality

The rally was held to mark the anniversary of the 2013 killing of a prominent activist and to protest against police abuses that demonstrators say have imperilled freedoms won in the 2011 revolution.

Riot police deployed cordons around the city centre, stopping cars and many people from entering

the streets around Avenue Habib Bourguiba, a witness told Reuters news agency.

"I lived 10 years in freedom ... I am not ready to lose it," said Haytem Ouslati, a 24-year-old demonstrator. Protesters raised placards condemning police violence and chanted: "No fear. The street belongs to the people."

Unlike previous marches in a

wave of protests that have spread across Tunisia in recent weeks, Saturday's rally was backed by the UGTT union, the country's most powerful political organisation with a million members.

Samir Cheffi, a senior UGTT official, said the protest was needed to protect liberties. "Today is a cry of alarm to defend the revolution, to protect freedoms under threat," he said.

Protests which began last month over inequality have increasingly focused on a large number of arrests and reports - denied by the Interior Ministry - of abuse of detainees.

Mohammed Ammar, a member of parliament for the Attayar party, said he had phoned the prime minister to protest against the closure of central Tunis.

Protesters chanted against the moderate Islamist Ennahdha party, a member of successive government coalitions, and reprised the Arab Spring slogan: "The people want the fall of the regime."



A new case of Ebola virus detected in DR Congo

A new case of the Ebola virus has been detected in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the country's health ministry says.

A woman from the town of Biena near the city of Butembo has died from the disease.

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a virus that initially causes sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain and a sore throat

It progresses to vomiting, diarrhoea and both internal and external bleeding

People are infected when they have direct contact



The authorities say they are sending a response team to the area.

This would be DR Congo's 12th Ebola outbreak.

The previous one occurred nearly three months ago in the west.

through broken skin, or the mouth and nose, with the blood, vomit, faeces or bodily fluids of someone with Ebola

Patients tend to die from dehydration and multiple organ failure

EDITORIAL

Sad disgrace of Liberian diplomatic passport

IT IS GENERALLY understood that people carrying diplomatic passports around the world deserve special preference and courtesy of the highest esteem. But when supposed diplomats or their relatives with diplomatic passports crossed the red line and behaved very uncouth, like in the case of George Weah, Jr., son of President George Manneh Weah, Sr., they automatically lost their respect and therefore, are treated like common criminals.

GEORGE WEAH, JR., AKA CHAMP, carrying Liberian Diplomatic Passport, has been reportedly arrested in Paris, France by French Police for contempt and rebellion, after being observed intoxicated.

ACCORDING TO TODAY 24 News, based in Paris, Champ is being scheduled to appear before French justice system next Thursday, 10 February, though he holds a Liberian diplomatic passport, bringing reproach not only to his father and President of Liberia, George Manneh Weah, Sr., but the entire Liberia that he represents in France, as son of our President.

REPORT FROM PARIS details that on Tuesday, 2 February 2021 at 3:20 am, Police in Paris intervened in a nighttime noise during a clandestine party in an opulent building in the French capital specifically, avenue du President-Wilson (8th arrondissement), in the Alma-Marceau district.

INSIDE A RENTED apartment through Airbnb, French officials discovered a gang of eight, including George Weah, Jr., 33, clearly breaching COVID-19 health protocols.

REPORT QUOTES FRENCH Police as describing Weah Junior as “very alcoholic” and insulted the police and took out a diplomatic passport. He was subsequently arrested for contempt and rebellion, and taken to the 17th arrondissement police station.

IT IS SAD and highly regrettable that someone holding our nation’s highest credential abroad, in this case, son of the President of Liberia, would have stood so low in a foreign land, fully cognizant that he is an adult and not an ordinary Liberian citizen.

WHAT DOES THIS say about our moral rectitude as a country when a Liberian with such status would knowingly get drunk, ignore health protocols and behaved rudely to French Police? Doesn’t he know that being a son of President George Manneh Weah, his wellbeing automatically becomes the concern of all Liberians?

AT AGE 33, Champ clearly knows right and wrong, and to have allegedly insulted and defied French Police before displaying his Liberian Diplomatic Passport, brought Liberia to serious ridicule.

IT IS INDEED sad and disgraceful that someone entrusted with our Diplomatic Passport by virtue of his dad representing the 4.5 million people of Liberia as their President, would choose to discredit such international honor thru actions and behaviors that contravene diplomatic norms.

The New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

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

By Mariana Mazzucato

From Moonshots to Earthshots

LONDON - COVID-19 has exposed the myriad weaknesses of modern capitalism. And in many countries, past cuts to social services and public health have amplified the damage wrought by the pandemic, while other self-inflicted wounds to the state have led to inadequate policy coordination and implementation. Mass testing and tracking, production of medical equipment, and education during lockdowns have all suffered as a result.

By contrast, countries and states that have invested in their public-sector capabilities have performed much better overall. This has been most striking in the developing world, where Vietnam and the Indian state of Kerala stand out.

Instead of acting as investors of first resort, far too many governments have become passive lenders of last resort, addressing problems only after they arise. But as we should have learned during the post-2008 Great Recession, it costs far more to bail out national economies during a crisis than it does to maintain a proactive approach to public investment.

Too many governments failed to heed that lesson. Faced with another society-wide challenge, it is now clear that they have relinquished their proper role in shaping markets, allowing public institutions to be hollowed out through outsourcing and other false efficiencies. The retreat of the public sector has given way to the idea that entrepreneurship and wealth creation are the exclusive preserve of business - a perspective endorsed even by those who advocate “stakeholder value.”

In fact, the more we subscribe to the myth of private-sector superiority, the worse off we will be in the face of future crises. To “build back better” from the current one, as US President Joe Biden’s administration and many other governments have committed to do, will require renewing the public sector, not just by redesigning policy and expanding the state’s organizational capabilities, but by reviving the narrative of government as a source of value creation.

As I explain in my new book *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism*, landing a man on the moon required both an extremely capable public sector and a purpose-driven partnership with the private sector. Because we have dismantled these capabilities, we cannot hope to repeat earlier successes, let alone achieve ambitious targets such as those outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris climate agreement.

The Apollo program demonstrated how a clearly defined outcome can drive organizational change at all levels, through multi-sector public-private collaboration, mission-oriented procurement contracts, and state-driven innovation and risk taking. Moreover, such ventures tend to create spillovers - software, camera phones, baby formula - that have far-reaching benefits.

The original moonshot model offers insights and inspiration for pursuing “earthshots” today. For example, to achieve the 17 SDGs, we

should transform each into several clearly defined missions that would lay the groundwork for more multisectoral, bottom-up innovation. A plastic-free ocean, for example, will require investment and innovation in areas as different as marine transport, biotech, chemicals, waste management, and design. That is what the Apollo program did by sparking innovation in aeronautics, nutrition, materials science, electronics, software, and other areas.

A mission-oriented approach is not about government “picking winners,” but about choosing directions for change - like a green transition - that require investment and innovation in many sectors. The full power of policy instruments should be used to create projects that elicit solutions from many different willing actors. NASA designed its procurement contracts to focus on goals, while encouraging bottom-up solutions and including “no excess profits” clauses and fixed costs, so that going to the moon involved sharing both risks and rewards. This is an important lesson for many governments that have suffered higher costs and lower quality from outsourcing.

Earthshots have much in common with moonshots, but the two are not synonymous. Among their similarities, both require bold, visionary leadership from governments that have been properly equipped to “think big and go big.”

Consider the COVID-19 vaccine. The collective spirit and outcome-driven approach to vaccine research and development last year recalled the Apollo program.

While technological breakthroughs can provide new tools, they are not necessarily solutions in themselves. Earthshots require attention to political, regulatory, and behavioral changes. Safe and effective vaccines were created and tested in record time through public-private collaborations, with public investment proving absolutely crucial. But a disparity in vaccine acquisition between high-income and lower-income countries appeared immediately and has only deepened.

When it comes to an earthshot like global vaccination, technological innovation is only as useful as its real-world application. “Vaccine apartheid” - rather than a People’s Vaccine - would constitute a moral and economic catastrophe. If pharmaceutical companies are serious about their stated support for the principle of stakeholder value, they should be sharing COVID-19 vaccine patents, data, and know-how through the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool, which remains unused.

Governments, too, must truly embrace the principle of stakeholder value, which does not apply only to corporate governance. Public-private collaborations also must be governed in the public interest, and not repeat the failures associated with today’s digital economy, which emerged in its current form after the state provided the technological foundation and then neglected to regulate what was built on it. As a result, a few dominant Big Tech firms have ushered in a new age of algorithmic value extraction, benefiting the few at the expense of the many.

O-PED

Multilateral Cooperation for Global Recovery

- Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, MackySall, AntónioGuterres, Charles Michel, and Ursula von der Leyen
Emmanuel Macron is President of France. Angela Merkel is Chancellor of Germany. MackySall is President of Senegal. AntónioGuterres is Secretary-General of the United Nations. Charles Michel is President of the European Council. Ursula von der Leyen is President of the European Commission.

PARIS - In September 2000, 189 countries signed the "Millennium Declaration," shaping the principles of international cooperation for a new era of progress toward common goals. Emerging from the Cold War, we were confident about our capacity to build a multilateral order capable of tackling the big challenges of the time: hunger and extreme poverty, environmental degradation, diseases, economic shocks, and the prevention of conflicts. In September 2015, all countries again committed to an ambitious agenda to tackle global challenges together: the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our world has experienced diverging trends, leading to increased prosperity globally, while inequalities remain or increase. Democracies have expanded at the same time that nationalism and protectionism have seen a resurgence. Over the past decades, two major crises have disrupted our societies and weakened our common policy frameworks, casting doubt on our capacity to overcome shocks, address their root causes, and secure a better future for generations to come. They have also reminded us of how interdependent we are.

The most serious crises call for the most ambitious decisions to shape the future. We believe that this one can be an opportunity to rebuild consensus for an international order based on multilateralism and the rule of law through efficient cooperation, solidarity, and coordination. In this spirit, we are determined to work together, with and within the United Nations, regional organizations, international fora such as the G7 and G20, and ad hoc coalitions to tackle the global challenges we face now and in the future.

Health is the first emergency. The COVID-19 crisis is the greatest test of global solidarity in generations. It has reminded us of an obvious fact: in the face of a pandemic, our health safety chain is only as strong as the weakest health system. COVID-19 anywhere is a threat to people and economies everywhere.

The pandemic calls for a strong coordinated international response that rapidly expands access to tests, treatments, and vaccines, recognizing extensive immunization as a global public good that must be available and affordable for all. In this regard, we fully support the unique global platform Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, launched by the World Health Organization and G20 partners in April.

To deliver on its mission, the ACT-Accelerator urgently needs wider political and financial support. We also promote the free flow of data between partners and the voluntary licensing of intellectual property. In the longer term, we also need an independent and comprehensive evaluation of our response to draw all the lessons of this pandemic and better prepare for the next one. The WHO has a central role to play in this process.

The emergency is also environmental. Ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November, we must enhance our efforts to tackle climate change and make our economies more sustainable. By early 2021, countries accounting for more than 65% of global greenhouse-gas emissions are likely to have made ambitious commitments to carbon neutrality. All national governments, businesses, cities, and financial institutions should now join the global coalition for reducing CO2 emissions to net zero according to the Paris climate agreement - and start implementing concrete plans and policies.

The pandemic has caused the world's worst economic crisis since World War II. Recovery of a strong and stable world economy is a fundamental priority. Indeed, the current crisis is threatening to undo the progress we have made over two decades in fighting poverty and gender inequality. Inequalities are threatening our democracies by undermining social cohesion.

No doubt, globalization and international cooperation have helped billions of people escape poverty; but nearly half the world's population still struggles to meet basic needs. And within many countries, the gap between rich and poor has become unsustainable, women still do not enjoy equal opportunity, and many people need to be reassured about the benefits of globalization.

As we help our economies overcome the worst recession since 1945, it remains our core priority to ensure rules-based free trade as an important engine of inclusive, sustainable growth. We must, therefore, strengthen the World Trade Organization and fully use the potential of international trade for our economic recovery. At the same time, protection of the environment and health as well as social standards must be placed at the heart of our economic models while ensuring the necessary conditions for innovation.

We need to ensure that the global recovery reaches everybody. That means stepping up our support to developing countries, particularly in Africa, by building on and going beyond existing partnerships such as the G20's Compact with Africa and its joint effort with the Paris Club within the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. It is crucial to further support those countries in reducing their debt burden and ensure sustainable financing for their economies, using the full scope of international financial instruments such as the International Monetary Fund's reserve asset, the special drawing rights (SDRs).

OPINION

- Daron Acemoglu

Give Workers a Fighting Chance

Daron Acemoglu, Professor of Economics at MIT, is co-author (with James A. Robinson) of *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty*.

CAMBRIDGE - The first months of US President Joe Biden's administration will be defined by the efforts to contain COVID-19 and deliver vaccinations on a mass scale. Over the medium term, however, the economy will determine the administration's success. Here, Biden has indicated that tax reform will be a high priority, and he has released plans to address long-running fiscal problems such as federal government revenue shortfalls and the tax system's loss of progressivity. But these proposals do not yet go far enough to address a major fault line in the tax code: the excessively favorable treatment of capital income (profits and returns on financial assets and savings).

Capital has always been taxed more lightly than labor has in the United States. In my own research with MIT's Andrea Manera and Pascual Restrepo of Boston University, we estimate that the effective tax on labor (accounting for payroll and federal-income taxes) in the 1980s and 1990s was about 25%, which meant that it cost \$1.25 to pay an employee \$1. By contrast, the effective tax on capital was only around 15%.

The situation has only worsened since then, as effective taxes on capital have declined. Following the Republicans' 2017 tax cuts, capital such as equipment and software faced a tax rate of about 5%, while the effective tax on labor remained largely unchanged.

Today's rock-bottom taxes on capital are the result of several developments. Marginal taxes on rich households - which tend to receive the greatest share of their income from capital - have declined, and many businesses have changed their tax status to become S-corporations, which are exempt from corporate income tax. The biggest factor, however, is the US tax code's increasingly generous depreciation allowances, which have allowed corporations to deduct so much investment expenditure from their tax liability that some are actually receiving a net investment subsidy.

The asymmetry between capital and labor that began in the 1980s increased income inequality and distorted investment and employment decisions. Today, its consequences are graver still, because the range of technologies that firms can use to automate their operations has expanded. There are many more machines and algorithms capable of performing tasks done by human workers, and the tax code is actively encouraging companies to adopt them, even to the point of excess.

Consider the choice between employing ten workers for the next ten years, at a salary of \$100,000 per year, and buying an \$11 million machine that will perform exactly the same tasks. The cost of the first option is \$12.5 million (\$10 million for the workers, plus tax), whereas the cost of the second option is only \$11.55 million (the price of the machine, plus the 5% effective tax on capital). The decision is easy. Even though the workers in this case are actually more efficient than the capital (receiving \$10 million for work that would require an \$11 million machine to do), the tax code nonetheless induces this hypothetical business to prefer job-eliminating automation.

To be sure, if more technologies, including digital technologies, were designed to complement rather than replace humans, additional capital investment need not eliminate jobs, and could even boost overall worker productivity. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

How did we end up with tax policies that are overtly fueling inequality and costing jobs? For starters, large corporations have become more vocal and powerful politically over the last several decades - and not just because of the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United ruling, which opened the floodgates for corporate spending in elections. Even more important has been the increase in industry lobbying, with corporations not only influencing lawmakers, but often even writing the legislation themselves.

The economics profession also hasn't helped. Many economists have clung for too long to the view that capital should not be taxed, on the grounds that doing so discourages savings and reduces investment. But the evidence for these claims is hardly overwhelming. Recent estimates suggest that the supply of capital responds only modestly to tax rates. And given that labor taxes also distort a wide range of economic decisions, there is no compelling reason always to prefer one to the other. This is not a call for the kind of wealth tax that became a hot-button issue in the Democratic presidential primaries. Rather, the point is to devise a tax code that does not inordinately disadvantage labor vis-à-vis machines. Now that we are in the middle of the worst economic crisis in generations, it would be inadvisable to hike capital taxes suddenly. But as we emerge from the COVID-19 recession, the economy will need both jobs and more tax revenues, not just to service a larger national debt, but also to invest more in health care, infrastructure, and education.

Over the past 20 years, the capital share of national income in the US has risen considerably, from about 35% in 2002 to around 45% as of the mid-2010s. Thus, simply restoring capital taxes to their level in the 1990s could increase federal revenues significantly - perhaps by as much as 4-5% of GDP.

Moreover, my research with Manera and Restrepo suggests that just rolling back overly generous depreciation allowances could reverse more than half of the decline in capital taxes since the 1990s. And if the various exemptions that have enabled corporations and capital-income earners to avoid taxes were removed, there might even be enough additional revenues to help workers directly, such as by reducing payroll taxes and redirecting more funding to Social Security and Medicare.



Republic of Liberia
Ad hoc Committee for the Recruitment
of the Auditor-General of Liberia



**Invitation for the Position of
Auditor General of Liberia**

Background

Established by an Act of the National Legislature in 2014 ("the Act"), the General Auditing Commission (GAC) supports Legislative oversight of the management of public resources. As the independent constitutional external auditor of Liberia, the GAC serves the people of Liberia by conducting quality and timely financial, compliance and performance audits. Headed by the Auditor General of the Republic of Liberia, the GAC is mandated to periodically conduct professional audit of all government ministries and agencies, and reports audit results and recommendations to the Legislature with copies to the President.

According to Section 2.1.5, the Auditor General shall hold office for a term of seven (7) years and shall not be eligible for reappointment. Consequently, given the tenure of the current Auditor General is nearing expiration, the Government of Liberia, in compliance with Part 2, Section 2.1 of the ACT, is recruiting to fill the position of Auditor-General of the Republic of Liberia.

The Duties and Responsibilities of the Auditor General:

- The Auditor General shall be the auditor of the public accounts and public funds of the Republic of Liberia. Subject to sub-section (b) below, the Auditor General shall carry out such audits and inquiries as he/she considers necessary of public entities and funds owned or controlled by the Government to enable reporting as required by the General Auditing Commission Act of 2014.
- Notwithstanding the generality of Section (a) above:
 - The Auditor-General shall carry out the annual audit of the Government's annual consolidated financial statements and
 - The scope of audits by the Auditor General for the Judicial Branch of Government shall exclude matters relating to court decisions and for the Legislative Branch of Government shall exclude matters relating to the merits of legislation.
- The Auditor General shall have the right to determine which audits are to be carried out, to select the type of audit to be carried out, when to carry them out and report the findings.
- In the performance of his/her operational duties as set out in sub-section (c) above, the Auditor General shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.
- The Auditor General and the staff of the General Auditing Commission shall carry out audits, but shall not be involved, or seen to be involved, in any manner, in management's responsibilities of the organizations being audited

Basic Qualification for Selection and Appointment

A person shall be appointed as Auditor General only if:

- the person is a Liberian citizen;
- the person possesses at least one professional certification such as a CPA, CA, or ACCA from a recognized professional accountancy body;
- the person possesses at least a Bachelor degree in accounting, audit, business, finance or a related field;
- the person possesses a minimum of fifteen (15) years of relevant work experience, including an understanding of the role of a Supreme Audit Institution; and
- the person is of a high moral character, with integrity and impartiality, and who has neither been convicted of any criminal offence nor judgement or been declared bankrupt, in any jurisdiction.

Core Competencies Required for the Auditor General:

Behavioral

- Integrity;
- Objectivity;
- Professional competence and due care;
- Confidentiality;
- Professional behavior;
- Ability to work with others; and

Technical

The Auditor General must understand:

- Financial Statement, Compliance, Performance and Information Technology Audits;
- Public Financial Management Act and Regulation of 2009 of Liberia as amended in 2019;
- Public Procurement and Concessions Commission Act of 2005 as amended in 2010;
- Revenue Code of Liberia of 2000 as amended in 2011;
- INTOSAI Standards;
- International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS); and
- IFAC Standards.

Others:

- Information technology systems for financial accounting and reporting, including relevant current issues and developments;
- Principles and practices for evaluating financial accounting and reporting systems, including evaluating controls and assessing risk;
- Computer-assisted auditing packages and techniques; and
- Have an understanding of the LICPA Act and Regulations.

SUBMISSION OF INTENT

To be considered for inclusion in the recruitment process, please submit your CV, Cover Letter, and all relevant Credentials to:

In Person Delivery: Office of the Ad hoc Committee
C/o Office of the Legal Advisor
5th Floor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Via Email: adhoccommittee2021@gmail.com

Deadline for Application: Friday, February 26, 2021 @ 4 0'Clock P.M. (GMT)

Note: All Applications already delivered in-person to the Civil Service Agency or via email to agapplication@csa.gov.lr are valid.



With Jones Mallay

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**LIBERIA POLITICAL
HOT-FIRE**

Should President Weah continue to be apprehensive over CDC's massive senatorial defeat, or simply ignore it completely?

Political Hot-Fire asks: "Should President Weah continue to be apprehensive over CDC's massive senatorial defeat, or simply ignore it completely?"

The writer is aware that CDC's Stewarts would refer to him as being stupid or has no sense of direction. But the fact of the matter is that the senatorial results are self-evident of president Weah's systematic declining football popularity that took him to the majesty-high of the Liberian politics, where he now served as President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia.

However, President Weah's well-deserved football popularity was not the only factor that gave him the Presidency. Two other political parties stood with the CDC to capture the government in the form of a coalition led by Alex Tyler (Liberia People Democratic Party (LPDP); and the National Patriotic Party under Jewel Howard Taylor. These two parties helped to enforce CDC's overwhelming success through its "Coalition for Democratic Change."

But the political foundation of LPDP and NPP in the coalition is seemingly cracking at a disproportionate level, which should by and large make Pres. Weah apprehensive due to the just-ended CDC massive senatorial defeat which is a political referendum on Pres. Weah's if he chooses to run for 2nd term in 2023.

Pres. Weah should also be apprehensive for three reasons: First, either the coalition base did not support any of his senatorial candidates, or the coalition members simply refused to vote for them either the coalition leadership was simply unhappy over the limited political pie Pres. Weah has to offer them and keep the most lucrative jobs for CDC partisans.

Second, President Weah may have turned his blind eyes on everything they agreed on or he simply doesn't respect the power of the coalition anymore. Third, either President Weah is now overconfident at this time in his presidency after mastering and understanding the Presidency, or he no longer needs any type of political expertise going into the 2023 election.

But the writings are very clear on the wall. The parties that make up the coalition are the same parties that may undermine the CDC in the 2023 elections for three reasons: First, they may feel Pres. Weah used them for his political aggrandizement at their peril. Second, they may also feel that President Weah dumped them and deceived them by denying them lucrative jobs.

Third, the coalition parties would feel that they have nothing to lose, but Pres. Weah has all to lose, because if the CDC is yearning for 2nd term in 2023, with or without any coalition which in my mind is very dangerous tactics, that could possibly be the end of CDC political existence. But the LPDP and the NPP are not sleeping as well. They could be in search of another political opportunity to build a much stronger coalition that may inevitably endanger Pres. Weah chances in 2023.

Other CDC partisans think that Pre. Weah has a very strong political popularity from his football career days which is still active to earn him the 2023 presidential victory whether coalition or no coalition parties. Three reasons account for the President's confidence come 2023. First, Pres. Weah did employ an array of election Commissioners that can easily twist their hands in the direction of President Weah in the 2023 presidential election and make him the winner. Second, Pres. Weah did employ all the election Commissioners who should also return similar favor in kind by making him the winner in the 2023 election. Third, African governments are very notorious when it comes to cheating and nothing can ever happen to them.

Aside from the coalition fallen apart due to Pres. Weah's own political maneuvering capabilities, the ruling CDC has its own bad political odors heading into the 2023 Presidential election could also affect Pres. Weah directly. The first bad political odor is associated with the deplorable economic status of the nation where Pres. Weah has put the economics of the nation in the charge of his friends, who are simply not doing well? Pres. Weah has received calls from oppositions to replace unqualified Liberians with qualified Liberians but he doesn't care. This could cause a problem for Pres. Weah in 202.

3

Another bad odor has to do with the CDC party itself. The party membership will need to be revamped to be reflective of a more responsible personality who do not subscribe to militants' ideologies. The CDC should be a respected ruling political party in Liberia, but it is not. There are many level-headed Liberians who are finding it difficult, if not impossible to take up active membership within the CDC political entity due to the type of characters who are currently manning the CDC.

Political-Hot Fire is told that the CDC is run largely by boys who are militants and who make militants' utterances and dress like militants who are ready to kill. Some responsible Liberians at home and abroad argued that the CDC doesn't have a well-structural layer of functionaries, nor does it have well-educated professionals and political technocrats to man its day-to-day political affairs or guide its strategic planning and actionable goals.

Many level headed Liberians in CDC led-government are often ashamed to associate themselves in public with the CDC party officials who are just violence oriented according to one inside source familiar with the CDC inner working. These are some of the rationales while Pres. Weah has to be apprehensive in the 2023 election for 2nd term.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Weah calls for practical actions at AU

Liberia's President George M. Weah has stressed the need for more targeted and practical actions to ensure that reform in the African Union (AU) structures will translate into tangible benefits in the lives and livelihoods of its people.

Delivering his statement at the 34th AU Summit via zoom, Mr. Weah notes that achieving this would require leaders taking deliberate steps collectively in their

states, ACFTA will become an even stronger tool for economic growth on the African Continent," the President explained.

On the quota system within the organization, Mr. Weah made known his support by indicating that he could not overstate the importance of its full utilization by all AU Member States.

"My delegation aligns itself with the proposal by the R10 Team, that the Quota System

implementation of the recommendations of the Report; as well as the extension of such audit to other organs of the AU.

He also indicated that his delegation is in alignment with the decision to adopt the budget for the year 2022, without any funding gap; in line with the golden rules at the AU.

On the issue of insecurity, President Weah calls for urgent action to suppress the continuous wave of insecurity in various parts of the continent, caused by insurgencies and terrorists.

"The persistent attacks by terrorists in some parts of West Africa, including Mali, where troops from the Liberian army are serving under a multi-national peace-keeping force, need urgent attention, he said adding "Additionally, the growing threats to Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, where pirate attacks are on the increase, gravely affects trade and commerce. We must adopt stringent measures to curtail this unacceptable situation."

Mr. Weah closed his statement by extending profound congratulations to the new Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency Felix Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, who is assuming the leadership of the Union in these challenging times.

He earlier praised the outgoing leadership of the AU for their tireless efforts in steering the affairs of the organization.



respective countries through stronger continental economic integration, ease in trade and commerce, and free intra-continental movement.

Mr. Weah pointed out that Liberia reaffirmed its commitment to the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) agreement. "I have placed the ratification of this Agreement at the top of my Legislative Agenda for 2021. Once ratified by all member

should take into consideration the principle of solidarity and payment of contributions. My delegation would like to state that this key component should not be the sole choice of the Commission, but should also be in conjunction with member states," he said.

Regarding the Forensic Audit Report at the AU, Mr. Weah opines that the findings are not encouraging. But notes that the right thing can be done beginning with the

CENPAD ends two-day retreat in Gardnersville

A local group, Center for Policy Analysis and Discourses (CENPAD) has held a two-day retreat for members to review the organization's performance plans for 2021

Speaking at the retreat, the president of CENPAD, Dorsela D. Farcathy, said the objective of the retreat among other things was to enhance the capacity of key stakeholders, especially members of CENPAD to effectively integrate its activities into their respective strategic planning.

According to him, the two-day long retreat which was held at a local entertainment center in Gardnersville Township discussed CENPAD's

calendar, road map and implementation as well as community development.

Mr. Farcathy told the CENPAD members to remain steadfast and fully committed to their quest in making the organization the best in the country.

He said CENPAD can contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the Liberian society if they are prepared to do so and ensure that CENPAD will lead the way for others to follow in the forward march of the Liberia's development.

"Use SWOT Analysis to assess our organization's current position before we can decide on any new strategy for CENPAD", he said.

He said, "This can be used if

we find out what's working well, and what's not so good. Ask yourself where you want to go, how you might get there - and what might get in your way. These are big issues, and you'll need a powerful but simple technique to help you."

According to him, SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, and so a SWOT Analysis is a technique used in assessing these four aspects of any business.

"You can use SWOT Analysis to make the most of what you've got, to your organization's best advantage. And you can reduce the chances of failure, by understanding what you're lacking, and eliminating

US stands ready to be your partner -Biden addresses AU Summit

United States President Joseph R. Biden has told African leaders at the 34th African Union Summit that the United States stands ready to be a partner of the continent and work in solidarity, support, and mutual respect.

"We believe in the nations of Africa. In the continent-wide spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation.

And though the challenges are great, there is no doubt that our nations, our people, and the African Union are up to this task," US President Biden said in an address to the AU.

His comment comes in sharp contrast to that of his predecessor who described African countries as shithole countries.

In an immigration outburst,

and how our fates are bound up together. That's why my administration is committed to rebuilding our partnerships around the world and re-engaging with international institutions like the African Union."

"We must all work together to advance our shared vision of a better future. A future of growing trade and investment that advances the prosperity of all our nations. A future that advances lives of peace and security for all our citizens. A future committed to investing in our democratic institutions and promoting the human rights of all people - women and girls, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, and people of every ethnic background, religion, and heritage," he added.

"To reach this future, we must also confront the serious



former US. President Donald Trump questioned why his country was allowing so many African immigrants in the US countries instead of granting temporary residency to migrants from countries like Norway.

"Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?" the Washington Post quoted him as saying.

The AU demanded an apology but Trump denied ever calling countries on the continent "shitholes".

However, President Biden took note saying the past year has also shown how "interconnected our world is -

challenges we face. That includes investing more in global health- defeating COVID-19 and working to prevent, detect, and respond to future public health crises, and partnering with the Africa CDC and other institutions to advance health security. Raising our climate ambitions and ensuring developing nations can mitigate and adapt to the climate impacts that are already causing pain. And engaging in sustained diplomacy, in concert with the African Union, to address conflicts that are costing lives across the African continent," he noted.

hazards that would otherwise catch you unawares."

The retreat was climaxed

with a workshop facilitated by Stanley Kamara of the UNDP. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

At MFDP Mid-Year Strategic Plan Retreat:

-Finance Minister calls for stronger coordination

Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah Jr., has called on departments of the ministry to ensure stronger coordination for improved service delivery.

“We’re the custodian of the national development plan. We have to build momentum, document gains we have made, do things differently by changing strategy and thinking differently”. Tweah said at the mid-year review of the

about assessing performance of the ministry’s objectives, its accomplishment and challenges during the last three years.

He challenged senior level staffs to take responsibility beyond their scope of work, so that other agencies of government payroll can be submitted on time. “We need to see ourselves more as a ministry, see us as being responsible for over 107 line ministries, anything we do will have some impact on the country, how we do strike that

Administration Patience Kollie-Lawson believes that employees of the ministry must maintain clear and define strategy that aligns with the PAPD.

She reminded employees about the PAPD which is the policy paper of the government development that include: power to the people, the economy and job creation, sustaining peace and transparency, adding that the ministry should remain alert, effective and professional to ensure government objectives are



Ministry of Finance and Development Planning held in Marshall City, Margibi County from February 5 to 7, 2021.

The retreat according to him is more about coming together as a ministry, and practically talking, and understanding as to where the ministry is going.

Understanding from departments on matrix they have used on service delivery and their achievements were important in making an impact, he says.

It was held under the theme “Strengthen Public Service Delivery”, was also

balance, your job is not done, until someone receives payment or money goes into the economy”.

However, Minister Tweah expressed the need for strengthening the department and about ways coordination can also take place between allotment and availability of funds. The ministry is becoming more accountable and responsible to workers, with service delivery now “the game of the game”, practical improvement must be demonstrated at all times, he added.

In addition, Asst. Minister for

met, and that the live of every Liberian are affected positively.

Moreover, Asst. Min. Lawson, went on to say “As we carried out this Mid-Year strategic review, we must ensure the ministry objective aligned with the PAPD, and put our country first in every decision we make with honesty, as the change we hope to see might start from this room”.

Minister Samuel D. Tweah Jr., including Deputy Ministers and Assistant Ministers, Directors and Senior Analysts attended the retreat.

FGM is serious human rights violation

-EU Amb. Delehoue

The head of the European Union Delegation to Liberia, Ambassador Luarent Delehoue has described the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a serious human rights violation.

In a statement Friday February 5, to commemorate the International Day for Zero Tolerance on FGM, Amb. Delehoue explained that FGM is a serious human rights violation because of its impacts which ranges from immediate to long-term, with pain and suffering, and real damage and harm, which can sometimes be physical, sexual and mental.

According to World Vision, there are currently 31 countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, where FGM is being practice. It’s most prevalent in Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, and Mali, where 90% or more of women aged 15 to 49 have been subjected to FGM.

The United Nations as part of its fight against the practice, in 2015 declared that the practice of FGM be eliminated making it a part of its Sustainable Development Goal (SGD).

Amb. Delhoue noted that the measure taken by the UN to declare the elimination of FGM as part of its SDGs is because the impact it has on women and girls is devastating.

She further explained that Female genital mutilation does not benefit women and girls in any shape or form. Rather it does, in fact, have a tremendous cost for their families, the community and any country at a large.

The EU envoy opined that the way to address the issue of FGM and other gender based violence is to focus more on the root causes, which are found in gender discrimination and power inequalities.

She observed that through the Spotlight Initiative, the EU, in partnership with One UN, continues to support the Government, traditional leaders and civil society in this rigours work to promote gender-equitable social norms and improve the lives of women and girls.

Madam Delehoue further observed that while there have been important progresses in Liberia to prevent sexual and

gender based violence; the passing of legal framework’s such as the Rape law and Domestic Violence Act, and the increased awareness & discourse on women’s rights, there is yet a lot that still remains to be done.

However, she was quick to acknowledge that changing structurally embedded gender inequalities requires courageous and high level leadership as well as national ownership.

In this regard, she explained that the EU commends the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the Government for taking the extra step in its commitments formalising the Anti-SGBV Roadmap with its pledges in 2020.

“One very important commitment made in the Anti-SGBV Roadmap was the undertaking to extend the Executive Order #92 temporarily banning FGM -until a law on FGM can be passed,” she noted adding “We urge on continuous efforts to push for a legal framework addressing FGM as it is a crucial step in criminalising harmful practises and human rights violations on women and girls.”

She further praised the efforts being taken amongst traditional leaders, saying “we have also seen increased action on addressing harmful traditional practices, for instance showcased in the commitment of traditional leaders when signing the ‘Seven-Count Policy’ suspending Sande for one year.”

She commended the traditional leaders in this regard and urged them to follow the positive steps by signing and committing to the extension of the ‘Seven-Count Policy’.

“You traditional leaders are also instrumental in encouraging your peers and community members to change the harmful traditional practises; and rather influence them to change harmful behaviours and beliefs - by leading by example advocating and speaking out amongst your members and communities on the necessity to stop FGM, and to indeed make Liberia a better and safe place. The EU remains your partner in this endeavor and we will continue through our support in the Spotlight Initiative,” she added.

Starts from back page

AfCFTA workshop opens

of participants on the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement, solicit feedback from Liberian service providers on trade restrictions faced in other African countries, as well as seek high level political buy-in to facilitate the ratification of

the Agreement.

The workshop will be held at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry at Ministerial Complex in Congo Town, from 9: AM to 3: PM, on February 9-10, 2021.

Expected participants include members of the National Legislature, the Ministries of

Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, Transport, Post and Telecommunications, Education, Foreign Affairs and State for Presidential Affairs

Other participants are the Central Bank of Liberia, Liberia Revenue Authority, the Liberia Medical and Dental Association, Liberia Chamber of Commerce, Liberia National Tourism Association, Liberia National Bar Association, Liberia Bankers Association, Consortium of Liberian Insurance Companies, Press Union of Liberia, Travel Agency Association and civil society organizations. -Press release

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Français

Liberia : quand George Weah Jr. fait la fête à Paris en pleine pandémie

Le fils du président libérien, George Weah Jr., a provoqué un mini-incident diplomatique entre son pays et la France après avoir participé à une soirée très arrosée, malgré le couvre-feu. Et ce n'était visiblement pas la première...

« Les dérives de quelques-uns ne sauraient ruiner les efforts de tous. » Un peu plus de 48 heures après que le Premier ministre français, Jean Castex, a fustigé les organisateurs de « fêtes clandestines », l'intervention des services de police pour interrompre l'une d'elles a fait couler beaucoup d'encre, de Paris à Monrovia.

En cause, l'identité de l'acteur principal de ce « scandale » : George Weah Jr., 33 ans, le fils du président libérien. Selon la version délivrée par le quotidien français 20minutes, ce dernier a été interpellé dans la nuit du 1er au 2 février pour « outrage et rébellion ». Après des plaintes de voisins mécontents, les policiers sont intervenus vers 3 h 30 du matin dans un appartement du VIII^e arrondissement de

Paris, dans lequel se trouvaient huit personnes.

Immunité diplomatique
Tandis que les policiers dressaient une série de procès-verbaux pour non-respect des mesures sanitaires, George Weah Jr., visiblement alcoolisé, s'en serait verbalement pris à eux en des termes peu amènes. Le fils du chef de l'État libérien montre alors un passeport

diplomatique aux policiers, qui l'interpellent tout de même. Après un passage au commissariat du XVII^e arrondissement de Paris, il a été relâché, avec une convocation pour le jeudi suivant, en vue de vérifier la validité de son immunité diplomatique.

À peine révélée, l'affaire

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Côte d'Ivoire et Ghana, vers une OPEP du cacao ?

Il y a 3 ans, les 2 pays s'opposaient sur le tracé de leur frontière maritime, le conflit avait alors été réglé devant le Tribunal International du Droit de la Mer (TIDM) à l'avantage du Ghana.

Aujourd'hui, le temps est à

l'alliance dans un projet amenant à une entente, sur le modèle des pays exportateurs de pétrole, transposé au marché du cacao.

Face aux mastodontes du secteur, que sont entre autres MARS, NESTLE, CARGILL ou encore FERRERO, les 2 pays ont

décidé de venir au chevet de l'industrie du cacao, et défendre les intérêts des planteurs en contrôlant davantage les prix.

À eux deux, la Côte-d'Ivoire et le Ghana produisent plus de 65% de cacao mondial. Mais ils restaient jusque-là largement dominés, dans le partage des revenus issus du cacao, par des petits pays non-producteurs, tels que la Suisse, les Pays-bas et la Belgique.

Avec une production d'ensemble estimée à plus de 3 millions de tonnes de cacao par an sur les 4,6 millions que représente la production mondiale, les 2 pays représentent à eux seuls plus de 65 % du marché. La Côte d'Ivoire et le Ghana sont donc des partenaires privilégiés et incontournables pour les sociétés majeures utilisant cette matière première.

La filière Café Cacao, qui participe, directement ou indirectement, à la vie de plus

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



La France face au borbier malien

Editorial. Les opérations « Serval » puis « Barkhane », où 5 100 militaires sont engagés, ont, certes, mis hors d'état de nuire plusieurs chefs djihadistes, mais elles n'ont empêché ni la montée des violences entre civils, ni les percées islamistes au centre du Mali.

Editorial du « Monde ». Que fait la France au Mali ? Huit ans après l'intervention militaire déclenchée par François Hollande pour stopper une colonne djihadiste menaçant Bamako, la réponse à cette question apparaît de moins en moins claire. La promesse de la reconstruction, grâce à la protection des soldats français, d'un Etat malien capable de juguler la menace islamiste et de répondre aux besoins de justice et de sécurité des populations, a volé en éclats avec l'échec du président Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, dont l'impéritie a été sanctionnée, en août 2020, par un coup d'Etat militaire.

Les opérations françaises « Serval » puis « Barkhane », où 5 100 militaires sont engagés, ont, certes, mis hors d'état de nuire plusieurs chefs djihadistes ; elles ont aussi permis d'éviter une trop grande porosité entre le Sahel et le borbier libyen. Mais elles n'ont empêché ni la montée des violences entre civils, ni les percées islamistes au centre du Mali, ni la contagion au Niger et au Burkina Faso voisins.

Des effectifs conséquents mobilisés

Avant même la mort récente de cinq militaires français - qui porte le bilan à cinquante « morts pour la France » depuis 2013 -, le risque d'enlèvement dans une zone grande comme l'Europe était si patent que l'armée elle-même avait commencé à envisager de restreindre sa présence. Une telle perspective, difficile à officialiser au lendemain de ces drames humains, ne peut plus être écartée. Certainement pas sous la forme d'un retrait brutal, qui constituerait un

encouragement pour les djihadistes et un choc supplémentaire pour un pays qui en a déjà trop subi. Mais des considérations tant militaires que politiques poussent désormais dans le sens d'une réduction de voilure.

D'abord parce que « Barkhane » mobilise des effectifs conséquents qui seraient utiles ailleurs, compte tenu de la multiplication des théâtres de tensions dans un monde incertain. Il n'est pas inutile non plus d'envoyer le message aux autorités en place, pas toujours loyales, que la protection de Paris n'est pas un dû et que leurs propres soldats doivent prendre le relais.

Les deux craintes qui motivent l'intervention française - vague migratoire et contagion terroriste touchant la France d'une part, prise de contrôle d'un pays francophone par des islamistes, avec menace d'extension à l'ensemble du golfe de Guinée d'autre part - doivent être réévaluées. Aucune des multiples attaques terroristes visant l'Hexagone n'est liée aux événements sahéens, et rien ne permet d'affirmer qu'une montée en puissance des religieux provoquerait plus d'émigration que le chaos actuel.

Sombre expérience

Alors que Paris, en 2013, volait au secours des Maliens face à un ennemi perçu comme une branche d'un djihadisme mondial, les soldats français combattent désormais des djihadistes enracinés localement, prospérant sur des conflits ancestraux et sur la révolte contre l'absence d'Etat. L'influence des leaders religieux dans la vie politique et parmi les militaires au pouvoir est telle que l'islamisation de la République malienne paraît difficilement évitable.

Paris envisage désormais de négocier avec « certains éléments » des groupes djihadistes. La sombre expérience du retrait

Français

Liberia : quand George Weah Jr.

est vite reprise par une grande partie de la presse française, et largement relayée sur les réseaux sociaux. Dès le lendemain de l'interpellation, Le Parisien dévoile des photos volées prises par des voisins. Le quotidien relaye aussi les plaintes de riverains excédés par les soirées à répétition qu'aurait organisées George Weah Jr. dès le premier confinement, dans son logement de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, commune huppée de la banlieue parisienne. Un logement luxueux - 120 m², avec une terrasse de 50m² - où, à en croire les témoins cités, les fêtes « avec des filles et du champagne » se succédaient sur fond de musique tonitruante.

Toujours selon ces voisins mécontents, l'intéressé aurait à plusieurs reprises

exhibé son passeport diplomatique devant les policiers appelés pour tapage nocturne.

George Weah « fâché »

Dans un court entretien accordé au Parisien, publié ce vendredi, George Weah Jr. tente de désamorcer le scandale. Affirmant être allé s'expliquer au commissariat du VIII^e arrondissement de Paris, accompagné d'un représentant de l'ambassade du Liberia à Paris, qui a confirmé son identité, il affirme avoir échangé sur le sujet avec son père. « Il est très énervé et très fâché, explique-t-il. Ma famille est très mécontente de cette situation, car elle joue en défaveur d'une réputation qui a toujours été très propre. » Promettant que « cela ne se reproduira plus », il a en outre présenté ses « excuses » à ses voisins mécontents.

Côte d'Ivoire et Ghana,

de 5 millions de personnes en Côte d'Ivoire, souffre toujours d'une chaîne de valeur mal maîtrisée. En effet, le peu, voire l'absence de transformation de cet or brun, induit une très faible création de valeur ajoutée, et constitue in fine, un important manque à gagner pour les planteurs. Première bataille remportée à l'heure où l'industrie cacaoyère attend toujours sa révolution, les pouvoirs publics des 2 pays représentés par les présidents Alassane Ouattara et Nana Akufo-Addo, tous deux fraîchement réélus à la tête de leurs États, ont pris le problème à bras le corps dans leurs politiques économiques. Les 2 gouvernements, pourtant de courants libéraux, ont décidé d'intervenir directement dans cette filière stratégique. Ceci par l'intermédiaire du Conseil Café Cacao (CCC) pour la Côte d'Ivoire et le Cocoa Board (Cocobod) pour le Ghana en instituant le Différentiel de Revenu Décent (DRD). Cette participation, payée par les géants du secteur, est évaluée à 400 dollars par tonne en plus du prix du marché. Elle permet de rémunérer comme son nom l'indique, décemment les planteurs. Cela répond également à la volonté des consommateurs finaux d'une production plus éthique, plus responsables et respectant les normes environnementales.

Mais pas la guerre

La mise en place du DRD au

1er octobre 2020, qui est une première réponse posant les bases du rééquilibrage des relations commerciales entre les planteurs et les entreprises du chocolat, a déjà du plomb dans l'aile. Les 2 institutions du cacao, Ivoiriennes et Ghanéennes, dénoncent un contournement du dispositif par les industriels. En témoignent, les achats importants réalisés le mois dernier sur les marchés à terme de New-York et non auprès des cacaoculteurs, évitant ainsi de payer le surplus négocié. Argument réfuté par les industriels qui expliquent, qu'avec le coronavirus, inversement aux attentes, la consommation mondiale de chocolat a baissé. Sur 2020, l'offre ayant été supérieure à la demande n'a pas joué à l'avantage des planteurs.

Sur ce marché générant 100 milliards de dollars de revenus, un rapport de force inédit s'est installé entre les pays producteurs de cacao et leurs clients. Abidjan et Accra qui ont besoin d'un « cacao fort » pour soutenir leur croissance, menacent de ne plus certifier les produits de la filière. Or, il s'agit d'un argument commercial important pour ces grandes marques dont les clients demandent toujours davantage de transparence.

La stratégie commune de ces 2 pays importants de l'Afrique francophone et de l'Afrique anglophone portera-t-elle ses fruits ? Sur du long terme, un compromis est inévitable entre les producteurs et leurs clients qui ne peuvent vivre l'un sans l'autre.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Mariana Mazzucato

Du premier pas sur la Lune à nos missions sur Terre

LONDRES - Le COVID-19 a mis en lumière les faiblesses multiples du capitalisme moderne. Dans de nombreux pays, les réductions de dépenses passées dans les services sociaux et la santé publique ont amplifié les dommages causés par la pandémie, de même que plusieurs autres blessures auto-infligées à l'État ont conduit à des défaillances dans la coordination et la mise en œuvre des mesures politiques, avec pour conséquence de grandes difficultés dans les tests et le traçage à grande échelle, la production d'équipements médicaux, et l'éducation pendant les confinements.

Par opposition, ceux des pays et États qui ont investi dans les capacités de leur secteur public s'en sont dans l'ensemble beaucoup mieux sortis. C'est particulièrement vrai dans les pays en voie de développement, le Vietnam et l'État indien du Kerala se démarquant à cet égard.

Plutôt que d'agir comme des investisseurs en premier ressort, trop de gouvernements sont devenus des prêteurs de derniers recours, passifs, en s'attaquant aux problèmes seulement près l'apparition des difficultés. Or, comme aurait dû nous l'enseigner la Grande Récession post-2008, il est beaucoup plus coûteux de secourir une économie nationale lors d'une crise que de maintenir une approche proactive d'investissement public.

Trop de gouvernements n'ont pas retenu cette leçon. Confrontés à un nouveau défi à l'échelle de la société, ils semblent désormais clairement s'être dessaisis de leur rôle dans le façonnement des marchés, en laissant les institutions publiques s'affaïsser à travers l'externalisation et d'autres fausses efficacités. Le recul du secteur public a laissé place à l'idée selon laquelle l'entrepreneuriat et la création de richesse seraient le domaine réservé des affaires - un point de vue adopté par ceux-là mêmes qui défendent le principe de valeur créée par les parties prenantes.

En réalité, plus nous souscrivons au mythe de la supériorité du secteur privé, plus nous serons en difficulté face aux crises futures. Pour « reconstruire en mieux » à l'issue de la crise actuelle, comme se sont engagés à le faire l'administration du président américain Joe Biden ainsi que de nombreux autres gouvernements, il s'agira de redynamiser le secteur public, pas seulement en reconcevant les politiques et en développant les capacités organisationnelles de l'État, mais également en ravivant le discours de l'État en tant que source de création de valeur.

Comme je l'explique dans mon dernier livre *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism*, le premier pas de l'homme sur la Lune a nécessité à la fois un secteur public extrêmement efficace et un partenariat avec le secteur privé, autour d'objectifs déterminés. Ayant démantelé ces capacités, nous ne pouvons plus espérer reproduire les réussites du passé, sans parler de grandes ambitions telles que prévues dans les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD) et l'accord climatique de Paris.

Le programme Apollo a démontré combien un objectif clairement défini pouvait susciter un changement organisationnel à tous les niveaux, à travers une collaboration public-privé

multisectorielle, des contrats d'approvisionnement axés sur la mission, ainsi qu'une innovation et une prise de risques conduites par l'État. Les initiatives de ce type ont par ailleurs tendance à créer des retombées - logiciels, smartphones, lait maternisé - extrêmement bénéfiques.

Le modèle de la mission sur la Lune constitue une source d'idées et d'inspiration pour viser aujourd'hui plusieurs missions sur Terre. Pour atteindre par exemple les 17 ODD, nous devons les considérer comme autant de missions clairement définies, susceptibles de poser les bases d'une innovation multisectorielle ascendante. La fin du plastique dans les océans exigera ainsi investissement et innovation dans des domaines aussi divers que le transport maritime, les biotechnologies, les produits chimiques, la gestion des déchets, ou encore la conception. C'est précisément ce que fit le programme Apollo en favorisant l'innovation dans l'aéronautique, la nutrition, la science des matières, l'électronique, les logiciels, et d'autres domaines.

L'idée d'une approche axée sur la mission ne doit pas consister pour un gouvernement à « choisir les vainqueurs », mais plutôt à choisir les orientations de changement - telles que la transition écologique - qui nécessitent investissement et innovation dans de nombreux secteurs. Toute la puissance des instruments politiques doit être déployée pour créer des projets qui aboutissent à des solutions via l'intervention de multiples acteurs engagés. La NASA avait élaboré ses contrats d'approvisionnement autour d'objectifs, tout en encourageant les solutions ascendantes, ainsi qu'en incluant des coûts fixes et des clauses empêchant les profits excessifs, de sorte que la mission sur la Lune implique un partage à la fois des fruits et des risques. C'est une importante leçon pour les nombreux gouvernements qui souffrent aujourd'hui de coûts plus élevés et d'une qualité inférieure dans le cadre de l'externalisation.

Si les missions terrestres partagent de nombreux points communs avec les missions lunaires, les deux ne sont toutefois pas synonymes. Parmi les similitudes, un leadership audacieux et visionnaire est nécessaire de la part des gouvernements, qui doivent disposer des moyens de penser et faire les choses en grand.

Songez au vaccin contre le COVID-19. L'esprit collectif et l'approche axée sur un résultat, dans le cadre de la recherche et développement sur le vaccin, ont rappelé l'an dernier le programme Apollo.

Si les avancées technologiques peuvent produire de nouveaux outils, elles ne constituent pas nécessairement des solutions en elles-mêmes. Nos missions terrestres exigent une certaine attention aux évolutions politiques, réglementaires et comportementales. Plusieurs vaccins sûrs et efficaces ont été créés et testés en un temps record grâce à des collaborations public-privé, avec l'intervention absolument cruciale d'investissements publics. Une inégalité dans l'acquisition des vaccins entre les pays à revenu élevé et les pays à revenu faible est toutefois apparue, et n'a fait que s'accroître depuis.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS

My 30 Counts Analysis of President Weah's 2021 SONA

Today, President George Manneh Weah addressed the people of Liberia as required by Article 58 of the Constitution of the Republic. Below are my initial reflections on this address:

I. Things promised in 2020 SONA but not achieved or reported on

1. In his 2020 SONA, the President promised to conduct a national referendum to amend some parts of the Liberian Constitution. However, in his 2021 SONA, he failed to provide any information on the referendum process and its outcome.
1. In his 2020 SONA, he said 'these loans and grants are allocated as follows: One Hundred and Twenty-Five point One Million United States dollars (US\$125.1 million) for road construction linking Barclayville to Sasstown, Voinjama to Konia, and Sanniquellie to Loguatu; Forty-Seven Million United States dollars (US\$47 million) for improving results in secondary education; Twenty-Eight point Ninety-five Million United States dollars (US\$28.95 million) for improving urban water supply in Monrovia; Seventy-One point Eight Million United States dollars (US\$71.8 million) for improving agriculture; and Six point Five Million United States dollars (US\$6.5 million) for youth empowerment and employment'. In his 2021 SONA, instead informing the State that the Government failed to implement these, the President made new promises to implement these projects. Astonishingly, the legislators were clapping for failed promises being remade.
2. Last year, the President also said 'pavement of the Fifty kilometer (50 km) highway between Kanweaken in River Gee County and Harper in Maryland County as well as the Sixteen kilometer (16 km) corridor between Harper Junction and the Cavalla border with the Republic of Cote D'Ivoire has been completed. These projects will be dedicated during my nationwide tour which begins next month. He repeated this report in 2021 SONA, indicating that the double reported things that were reported in 2020 SONA.
3. He stated in 2020 that 'paving works on the Eighty kilometers (80 km) highway between Karloken and Fish Town in River Gee County are over 50% completed. Still in the South East, we are pleased to report that Twenty kilometers (20 km) of the Highway between Fish Town and KellipoKanweaken in River Gee towards Grand Gedeh County, have been approved for construction, and pavement works will begin this year'. The President failed to provide status update on this in the 2021 SONA. He needed to give an update on these.
4. In 2020, the President state that 'in the central northern region of our country, construction works on the Eighty-one kilometer (81 km) Gbarnga to Salayea road, are proceeding according to schedule, and asphalt pavement will begin this year. This project is funded by our Arab partners including the Saudi Fund for Development, the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)'. The President failed to provide status update on this. Has the project been completed?
5. President Weah, in 2020 said 'our Government has therefore identified the expansion and pavement of the Forty-five kilometer (45 km) RIA highway, complete with appropriate safety and lighting facilities, as a project of national significance. Towards this end, preparations are being concluded to commence construction works on this corridor by March 2020'. In his 2021 SONA, he says construction will begin this year. This shows that this was a failed promise.
6. In 2020, the Head of State said 'the World Bank has been very exemplary in lending support to our road sector and is now playing a lead role in our engagement with the private sector for the financing and construction of the Two Hundred and Twenty-five kilometers (225 km) Ganta to Tappitta to Zwedru highway. Consequently, the process of hiring a Contractor for the first phase of this project (Ganta - Tappitta) is ongoing. According to the project

implementation schedule, construction works will begin by the second half of this year'. This is another failed promise. In the 2021 SONA, the president has promised to undertake this same project that was never begun as promised in the 2020 SONA.

7. In 2020, President Weah also said 'my Fellow Liberians, I am pleased to announce to you today, that the Government of Liberia, through the Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority (LPRA), will open up the entire Harper Basin during the next Licensing Round beginning in April. Nine (9) offshore blocks will be put up, allowing competent and reputable international oil and gas companies to bid with the hope of recommencing exploration programs, following years of inactivity. Details of the Licensing Round will be made available in the coming weeks through a partnership between LPRA and NOCAL'. In the 2021 SONA, he failed to provide update on what he promised.
8. Equally, the President asserted in 2020 that 'with the program to connect the various communities and counties through quality paved road networks now fully mobilized, funded and underway, the next big push by my administration this year will be to reorganize the agriculture sector and put it at the front burner of our national development initiatives. Liberia's comparative advantage lies in its fertile soil, vast quantity of arable land, and suitable climatic conditions. We must therefore make the best of what we are gifted with. I therefore invite everyone, particularly the youths, to join us as we overhaul the



agriculture sector'. President Weah did not provide update on what has happened thus far. However, in the 2021 SONA, he says 'everyone must get back to the soil.. Does the President have a farm? If yes, where? While we agree that Agriculture remains the bedrock of economic growth in Liberia, we think the Government need to provide substantial support to this sector going forward.

9. Last year, President Weah said 'the Special Economic Zone is a vehicle that will create job opportunities, increase personal incomes and add value to unprocessed raw materials for export. Thanks to our partners, feasibility studies have already begun for the development of a Special Economic Zone in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. In the meantime, we intend to test a pilot project in the Free Zone Area located within the vicinity of the National Port Authority in Monrovia'. President Weah failed to provide information on what was done in the Free Zone area. In his 2021 SONA, he restated Grand Bassa being the area for 'Special Economic Zone', meaning that this was another failed promise.
10. IN 2020, the President said, 'an assessment of traffic lights in the city of Monrovia has been concluded, a contractor has been hired, and our traffic lights will soon be on again'. In 2021, the traffic lights are still off, and the President failed to provide an explanation.
11. In 2020, President Weah said 'as you are aware, the Executive Mansion, which is the home to the Presidency of our Country, has been under renovation

since an unfortunate fire incident about 14 years ago. My Administration is determined to bring to an end this protracted period of renovation, by ensuring the full restoration of the Executive Mansion by the end of this year. Towards this end, we are providing the needed resources required to complete the Executive Mansion renovation works'. Has the renovation of the Executive Mansion been completed as promised?

II. Things reported with links to the National Legislature and Judiciary

12. The President said that '26 laws passed, and 25 signed by him and that most laws promised last year did not pass' (ex. An Act to Endorse the National Youth Policy of Liberia: An Agenda for Action; An Act Prohibiting the Tenure of Public Officials within the Executive Branch of Government; The Revised and Restated Charter of the University of Liberia; The Whistle-Blower and Witness Protection Bill; The International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement; The Presidential Transition Act; The Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, Preventive Measures, and Proceeds of Crime Act, 2019). I think, the President was right for reporting this. The Legislature should not sit on proposed laws that the Executive submits. They must be robust in doing their and work and clear laws in Committees rooms. They need to act swiftly.
 13. The President promised to propose a Bill on Extended terms of court. This is a very good move. I hope such bill will call for courts to operate from Monday to Fridays and work full time to improve the justice system.
 14. The President informed that the Government is conducting several anti-corruption processes. He wants the creation of Criminal Court F, prosecutorial powers and assets declaration control by the LACC. This is good, but keeping the current Chairman, when the Senate has declared a Vote of No Confidence in him, is unproductive..
 15. In the 2020 SONA he said 'there will be no sacred cows as we take stronger measures to end this societal menace. We will therefore introduce new legislation to amend the law creating the Liberia Anti-corruption Commission, in order to give it more prosecutorial powers, and we are working to improve our anti-money-laundering framework. To help spur the business climate this year, we will support and re-launch the National Judiciary Conference under the leadership of His Honor the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The aim of this conference is to allow the judiciary to play a significant role in business climate reforms. The Government needs to take concrete steps on this promised made last year.
- #### III. The Liberian Economic Standing
16. On the economy, the President informed that 'Public debt is 1.580 billion'. This means that Liberia's debt is increasing. This is a bad sign. Domestic debt has increase thereby shrinking national economic activities. In 2020, the President said 'the Government's public debt has increased, largely because the country has had to finance major infrastructure projects over the last several years. As at end-December 2019, the total stock of public debt amounted to One point Twenty-Seven Billion United States Dollars (US\$1.27 billion)'. Clearly, the 2021 SONA tells Liberians that our debt is increasing annually rather than decreasing. We must manage our public debt; else, it might block opportunities for future borrowing for national investment and development.
 17. The President says 'Liberia's economy is projected to grow at 3.2 percent growth rate in 2021. SMART efforts must be come to bear on our economic policy so that we can invest in more economic growth corridors with emphasis on Agriculture. Thanks to the IMF for its 48.8 million; however, accountability and transparency must become the order of the day in managing these resources because they are not grants. Even if they were grants, we must use them for the economic growth of Liberia's economy. By the way, we need to increase domestic revenues rather than relying on Official Development Assistance.

Weah lights up Monrovia

President George Manneh Weah has switched on street lights in Monrovia and its surroundings, describing the lighting of the streets after several decades as "monumental" to the government's development drive, despite some criticisms from the

Efforts by Mrs. Sirleaf's regime to restore electricity in the country attracted international support that saw Liberia's Mount Coffee Hydro power plant which had been in ruin following the 14 years civil war come on once more.

While residents in the capital have struggled with power supply, they have also

caught", he cautions.

Mr. Weah discloses that the project will be extended to the outskirts of Monrovia for the benefit of all.

He also indicates that the government is determined to take the project to each and every county of Liberia.

"Let there be light," the President says, mimicking



opposition.

During the ceremony on Friday, 5 February, Mr. Weah warned that unscrupulous individuals bent on destroying national installations, such as the street lights, risk arrest and prosecution.

His predecessor Mrs. Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf switched on small lights in parts of Monrovia few months after she took office in 2006, as she had promised 'Big Lights Tomorrow.'

yearned for street lights to help reduce the high level of insecurity at the hands of criminals and accidents when commuting during late hours.

In a brief remark before formally switching on the street lights on the Bushrod Island, President Weah called on every citizen to own and ensure the protection of the poles.

"Those who are unscrewing these poles must desist from such behavior as there would be tougher actions if they are

the Biblical command, as he switches on the lights on the Bushrod Island.

The process was also simultaneously carried out by Senator Saah Joseph of Montserrado County and City Mayor Jefferson Koijee for other parts of the city.

The street lighting project was initiated last year when President Weah switched on the first phase covering the ELWA junction to Samuel Kanyon Doe (SKD) Boulevard in Paynesville.

Grand Kru election results head to S/Court

Lawyers representing the Liberia National Union, LINU, by and through Nathaniel Blama, Chairman and Candidate Nathaniel Barway, in the Grand Kru December 8, 2020 senatorial dispute has vowed to take an appeal at the Supreme Court.

The move follows the ruling of the Board of Commissioners (BOC) of the National Elections Commission (NEC), on Saturday, which affirmed and confirmed its earlier declaration ruling declaring Numene T. H. Bartekwa as winner of the 8 December 2020 Special Senatorial Elections in Grand Kru County.

The unanimous administrative ruling of the BOC of NEC Saturday, 6 February 2021 was read by Commissioner Barsee Leo Kpangkai.

However, lawyers representing LINU, led by Cllr. J. LeveliSupuwood has

three polling places.

The BOC notes that after the conduct of the rerun in the three polling places and the matter was reserved, the complainant again filed to the Board a consolidated appeal for a pray to grant to conduct rerun in the remaining 110 polling places.

The ruling also follows that of an earlier ruling on Friday February 5, where NEC reaffirmed and confirmed the candidate of the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) J. Brownie Samukai as winner of the 8 December 2020 Special Senatorial Elections in Lofa County.

The seven-person Board of Commissioners unanimous decision was read Friday 5 February 2021 by Commissioner Josephine Kou Gaye.

However, lawyers representing the complainants, led by Cllr. Samuel Kortimai accepted to the ruling and announced an appeal to the



accepted the BOC's ruling and announced an appeal to the honorable Supreme Court of Liberia.

The action grew out of hearing on an Appeal case filed by the registered political party, LINU, by and through candidate Nathaniel Barway, versus NEC, as first respondent, and Hon. Numene T. H. Bartekwa as Second respondent in the 8 December 2020 Special Senatorial Election in Grand Kru county.

Commissioner Leo Kpangkai reading the ruling said the complainant suffers wavers and lashes when it fails to properly take advantage of the law.

The NEC Commissioner said the complainant refused to ask for rerun in the 110 polling places before but agreed to the Board's ruling when it granted the complainant's pray to conduct a re-run in

Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia.

The two appeals were granted by the Head of the Administrative Hearing, Davidetta Browne Lansanah in keeping with law and subsequently dismissed the matters. Still at the NEC, Board of Commissioners has reserved ruling in the hearing on an Appeal, CDC, by and through Alfred KaiwonGbarpolu County and BotoeKanneh, Candidate Gbarpolu County Special Senatorial Elections.

All seven members of the BOC, including Chairperson Davidetta Browne Lansanah, Co-chairperson Cllr. P. Teplah Reeves, Commissioners Boakai A. Dukuly, Barsee Leo Kpangbai, Cllr. Ernestine Morgan Awar, Floyd Oxley Sayor and Josephine Kou Gaye heard and signed the three elections cases.

Cont'd from page 10

My 30 Counts Analysis

6. Reduction of inflation from 30 percent to about 12 is good but there are adverse consequences. The government forced the inflation rate down; this is unsustainable. Market forces must be the fundamental determinant for controlling inflation.
7. How can you ask the Legislature to approve printing of cash when the government cannot account for what's already on the market? 'Requesting the Legislative approval for the printing of an additional in addition to the previous 4 billion Liberian dollar banknotes printed to help mitigate the current Liberian dollar liquidity constraints facing the economy is a wrong way of addressing the liquidity problem. Therefore, the National Legislature should not accept this request. The First Branch of Government must demand accountability for Liberian Dollars in the economy. The President says that the 'CBL does not have control over about 90 percent of Liberian dollars on the market. Why and how come? The CBL must take leadership in solving this problem, but not through the printing of additional banknotes.

entire Covid-19 handling of donor and domestic resources for COVID-19. The 87 million direct contribution to COVID-19 and the so called 6 million directly spent must be fully accounted for. The President says 'for food distribution for Covid-19, about \$25 million was transferred to WFP and more than 1 million Liberians got food thus far. The no cost extension signed with WFP to end distribution in March 2021 is welcoming. However, the WFP must publish the statistics of who all received these food items. In fact, there is a need to audit the entire process to establish accountability and transparency standards around the food distribution process. The Government also needs to provide detailed information and report on LEC Covid-19 token. This could have been one of the ways nationally resources could have been corrupted..

9. The president reported that 2 million to market women is in the CBL. Doing what there? News about USAID's 10 million cash transfer is welcoming. I urge the government to ready my peer reviewed publication on how cash transfer helps to reduce poverty (see Kaydor T. (2021) Cash Transfer: A Strategic Determinant for Poverty Reduction.

In: Leal Filho W., Azul A.M., Brandli L., Lange Salvia A., Özuyar P.G., Wall T. (eds) No Poverty. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable

To be cont'd

II. COVID-19: The Blame Taker

8. On Covid-19, Liberia is doing well, but he did not speak on the corruption surrounding the

AfCFTA workshop opens at Commerce Ministry



Commerce Min. Mawine G. Diggs

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), is expected to conduct a two-day stakeholders' Workshop on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Monrovia from February 9-10, 2021.

The African Continental

Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was established in January 2012, in Addis Abba, Ethiopia, and entered into force on January 1, 2021, with a focus on creating a single African market for goods and services.

The idea is also aimed at facilitating the free movement of persons and capital to deepen

economic integration and accelerate the establishment of a single continental customs union.

State parties to the AfCFTA, agreed to a 90% elimination of tariffs on goods and that the remaining 10%, 7% may be designated as sensitive, while 3% of the tariff lines can be excluded from liberalization.

By implementing the AfCFTA Agreement, Liberian industries and manufacturers will have increased access to the wider African markets of around 1.3 billion consumers.

Liberian exports will also face lower or no import duties in designated importing African countries.

Specialization and trade diversification of products are also expected to increase, thus enhancing innovation, improved product quality and consumer preferences, if the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement is implemented.

The overall objective of the two-day workshop is to create awareness and build capacity

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

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Ibrahimovic belittles 500-goal achievement: My job is to score!

Zlatan Ibrahimovic was not immediately looking to celebrate his latest achievement on Sunday after passing 500 club career goals in Milan's 4-0 defeat of Crotona.

The veteran Rossoneri striker increased his tally to 501 in club action with his sixth Serie A brace of the season at San Siro.

The first of Ibrahimovic's two strikes, assisted by Rafael Leao, arrived 15 minutes before the break to belatedly bring up the milestone.

The 39-year-old had been stuck on 499 for almost two weeks after a red card against Inter and a missed penalty at Bologna.

Ibrahimovic was asked by Sky Sport at half-time of his accomplishment but was not interested in discussing personal glory.

"It means I've scored a few goals in my career," he said. "But the important thing is to help the team. My job is to score."

Ibrahimovic added his second following the restart, and Ante Rebic then also netted a double,



teed up twice by Hakan Calhanoglu in the space of 70 seconds.

Meanwhile, Milan kept their eighth league clean sheet of the season, a division high.

Coach Stefano Pioli was therefore keen to share the praise around at full-time, even as he hailed Ibrahimovic's efforts.

"He has great qualities and is a champion who is doing well," Pioli said. "He has great ambition and is competitive, which is why he always manages to stay at high levels."

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