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VOL.11 NO. 128

MONDAY, AUGUST 02, 2021

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Helen Clark

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P11

# CDC man joins Cummings' Team



Isaac Vah Tukpah Jr.



Atty Moriah Yeakula

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# Continental News

## Tanzania's U-turn on Covid vaccines

President Samia Suluhu has been given a Covid vaccine at the start of Tanzania's vaccination rollout.

The move marks a break with her predecessor, John Magufuli, a prominent coronavirus sceptic, who died in March from heart complications.

The former president did not believe in the value of vaccines, and Tanzania did not sign up to vaccination campaigns. At the ceremony to start the vaccination rollout, President Samia urged all Tanzanians to get vaccinated, saying the country was "not an island."

In June, she let international organisations and foreign embassies import vaccines for their employees.

Tanzania also applied to join the global Covax vaccine distribution scheme, and received a batch of one million doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine donated by the US government on 24 July. The semi-autonomous islands of Zanzibar started their own vaccination campaign about two weeks

ago, using China's Sinovac vaccine.

The African Union also says Tanzania is participating in its vaccine-purchasing programme.

In May, President Samia had appeared doubtful about vaccines, when she told Muslim officials she had noted their concerns about vaccine safety and her government would not accept "all that is brought to us or [what] we are told to do". "So, even on this issue of vaccines,

we will satisfy ourselves before deciding whether to use them or not," she said. It's worth noting that some of the former president's followers continue to be opposed to their use.

For example, evangelical preacher Josephat Gwajima, who is a member of parliament, has claimed without any evidence that they can interfere with human DNA. She has admitted the

virus is circulating and urged people to take precautions such as:

- hand-washing,
- using masks,
- social distancing

In June 2020, after going through the first wave of the pandemic, President Magufuli declared the country coronavirus free and, at least initially, did not encourage the use of face masks or indicate Tanzania would acquire vaccines. Tanzania's hidden Covid epidemic

"I believe... that the corona disease has been eliminated by God," he said.

President Magufuli also promoted: prayers, physical fitness,

steam inhalation, herbal remedies, And on steam inhalation and other remedies, President Samia's break with her predecessor has been less categorical. She has said: people should not be discouraged from using steam inhalation and she had read it could be effective in the early stages of infection

it is not right to "totally ridicule and say no" to herbal remedies

"If you feel steam inhalation helps you, go and do it," President Samia said.

"If you feel taking a particular drug will help you, do it."

But there is no evidence supporting steam inhalation as an effective remedy against Covid.

Tanzania Medical Association head Shadrack Mwaibambe says the government should not be talking about it "because we [the authorities] have decided to follow the science". BBC



President Samia has assured Tanzanians that the Covid-19 vaccines are safe

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## Burkina Faso Sees More Child Soldiers as Jihadi Attacks Rise

Awoken by gunshots in the middle of the night, Fatima Amadou was shocked by what she saw among the attackers: children. Guns slung over their small frames, the children chanted "Allahu akbar," as they surrounded her home in Solhan town in Burkina Faso's Sahel region. Some were so young they

couldn't even pronounce the words, Arabic for "God is great," said the 43-year-old mother.

"When I saw the kids, what came to my mind was that (the adults) trained these kids to be assassins, and they came to kill my children," Amadou told The Associated Press by phone from Sebba town, where she now lives.

She and her family are among

the lucky ones who survived the June attack, in which about 160 people were killed – the deadliest such assault since the once-peaceful West African nation was overrun by fighters linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State about five years ago. As that violence increases, so too does the recruitment of child soldiers. The number of children recruited by armed groups in Burkina Faso rose at least five-fold so far this year, up from four documented cases in all of last year, according to information seen by the AP in an unpublished report by international aid and conflict experts.

At least 14 boys are being held in the capital, Ouagadougou, for alleged association with militant armed groups, some there since 2018, said Idrissa Sako, assistant to Burkina Faso's public prosecutor at the high court in the city. Amadou said she saw about seven children with the fighters who surrounded her home during the Solhan attack. She did not

see them kill anyone, but they helped burn down houses.

"We are alarmed by the presence of children with armed groups," said Sandra Lattouf, the representative for the United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, in the country.

The effects of the conflict on children – including their recruitment as soldiers but also attacks on schools and kids themselves – have become so concerning that this year Burkina Faso was added for the first time to the U.N.'s annual report on Children and Armed Conflict.

Aid groups say they are seeing more children with jihadi fighters at roadside checkpoints in the Sahel – an arid region that passes through Burkina Faso but stretches straight across the African continent just south of the Sahara. In recent years, the western Sahel has become an epicenter of jihadi violence.

During a recent trip to Dori, a town in the region where nearly 1,200 people fled after the attack on Solhan, the AP spoke with eight survivors, five of whom said they either heard or saw children partake in the violence.

"We heard them say, 'we good children have come to change Solhan in a better way,'" said Hama Amadou, a resident, who hid in his shop during the fighting. He said he also heard women directing

the children, saying "kill him, kill him."

Burkina Faso's ill-equipped and undertrained army is struggling to stem the violence, which has killed thousands and displaced 1.3 million people since the jihadi attacks began.

Experts on child recruitment say that poverty pushes some kids toward armed groups. Sako, who works with the public prosecutor, said some children who wanted money to enroll in school joined because they were promised approximately \$18 if they killed someone. Others were promised gifts like motorbikes.

But civil society organizations also accuse army troops of contributing to the problem by committing abuses against civilians suspected of being jihadis.

"There are more security operations ... (so) there are more military abuses," said Maimouna Ba, head of operations for Women for the Dignity of the Sahel, a Dori-based advocacy group. "It is hard for a child to get up in the morning and see that their father was killed." As they get older, children may become angry and start asking why the state isn't helping them, she said.

The army denied these allegations, along with accusations that it was slow in responding to the attack in Solhan, but would not provide a detailed comment. VOA



# EDITORIAL

## A tragedy that nobody wants to take blame for

IT IS VERY ludicrous but sadly regrettable that the Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA) says current investigation into the July 17, 2021 sinking of the vessel Niko Ivanko six (6) nautical miles off the shore of Marshall City, Margibi County is not to determine liability or to hold people accountable but to avoid future reoccurrence.

**WE FIND IT** incomprehensible that the government agency responsible for maritime affairs in the country would want to brush over a tragedy that has left almost a dozen persons fear dead over two weeks since the incident transpired under the pretext of preventing similar marine incident in the future. How can such incident be avoided in the future without the ongoing investigation holding people or institution accountable?

**WE BEG TO** differ with the LiMA boss, Commissioner Lenn Eugene Nagbe on the way he's proceeding with the investigation. From the Liberia Maritime Authority to the Management of the Freeport of Monrovia and the company that operates the dilapidated Niko Ivanko in Liberian waters: Someone should be held to account for what happened that led to loss of lives and properties valued hundreds of thousands, if not millions.

**THE LiMA CONTROLS** the waters of Liberia and everything that sails on its hence, for that institution to relegate facts and circumstances that led to the fatal sinking of a vessel that should be under its watch seems to indicate it is attempting to vindicate itself of any responsibility as an authority, particularly when it had disclosed the vessel was not licensed to sail.

**THIS SHOULD NOT** be the case at all. Instead, the probe should be inclusive and exhaustive in order to dig out all of the facts to allow the chip to fall wherever regardless, who's involved.

**COMMISSIONER NAGBE ANNOUNCED** last week through a press release the hiring of a certified maritime investigator Rishi Mehrotra to probe the tragedy with a view of preventing such thing in the future. Some reports say a Ghanaian national has been brought into the country to conduct the investigation.

**AT LEAST 12** persons, including a Chinese captain were reportedly rescued from the sunken vessel with three bodies recovered since the incident. The fact of the matter is the vessel took off right before the eyes of authorities at the Freeport of Monrovia. It is also reported the Government of Liberia had onboard transformers and light poles that were destined for Harper City, Maryland County.

**IT IS THE** very government that is investigation itself to come up with findings and perhaps recommendation to prevent future reoccurrence. Commissioner Nagbe had said "The LMA wishes to state that the subject vessel was detained and not allow to sail, and this vessel was at no time authorized or permitted to carry passengers or operate as a passengers vessel."

**BUT THIS WAS** exactly what occurred on Saturday, July 17, 2021 when the Niko Ivanko loaded at the Freeport of Monrovia and sailed off before subsequently sinking into deep waters.

**THESE CIRCUMSTANTIAL PIECES** of evidence clearly point that people and institutions should be held to account. They should

# COMMENTARY

By Nancy Qian

## Good and Bad Olympic Nationalism

**CHICAGO** - In addition to being postponed by a year, the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games have been steeped in controversy. According to one recent survey, 78% of Japanese citizens thought the Games should be canceled, owing to concerns about the pandemic. Since then, Japanese media have been shining a spotlight on the fact that not all visiting athletes (including 100 from the United States) are vaccinated against COVID-19.

On top of these unprecedented public-health concerns are the perennial political issues, such as the common complaint that the Olympics encourage nationalism or chauvinism. Every event produces a showdown over anticipated medal counts between big contenders like the US, China, Japan, Great Britain, and Russia (which is participating in the Tokyo Games as the "Russian Olympic Committee," following the country's ban for doping).

Political regimes around the world recognize that sports can strengthen national identity, and that the Olympics, in particular, can confer status on the world stage. Governments have long used the Games to tell their citizens, "We have made it." In 1936, Hitler took full advantage of the Olympics in Berlin, which had been chosen to host the Games in 1931, two years before the National Socialists came to power. In 1964, the Japanese used the Tokyo Olympics to signal their full rehabilitation after World War II. And in the 1980s, the Olympics became a Cold War football, with the US boycotting the Moscow Games in 1980 and the Soviets boycotting the Los Angeles Games in 1984.

The Games' political value is one of the reasons that governments are willing to pay so much to host them. China spent \$40-44 billion - more than any other country in history, at the time - to host the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. It was then surpassed by Russia, which spent an estimated \$50 billion to host the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Between breaking the spending record and annexing Crimea the same year, Russian President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings duly soared.

There is little doubt that international sporting events can amplify the more unpleasant aspects of nationalism, as in the case of the 1936 Berlin Games. Historically, the Games have also reminded conquered people of their lost sovereignty. Until 1924, Polish athletes could win medals only by representing other countries. And for generations, athletes from forcibly annexed Soviet Republics, such as the Baltic states and Ukraine, were forced to represent the Soviet Union or not compete.

But the feelings inspired by international

sporting events aren't all bad. A collective desire to win can mitigate discrimination against minority groups, as when the US establishment recognized the talents of Jesse Owens, who went on to win four track-and-field gold medals at the Berlin Olympics, inspiring generations of young black Americans. And more recently, tennis star Naomi Osaka's phenomenal ability has moved many Japanese to overcome traditional ethnic and gender biases. Osaka's lighting of the Tokyo Olympic torch will have significant social ramifications across Japan, if not all of East Asia.

Sporting competitions also offer opportunities for a new country to establish its sense of nationhood. In 1992, Nelson Mandela's attendance at the Barcelona Olympics symbolized South Africa's emergence from apartheid. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Croats came together to cheer on Wimbledon champion Goran Ivanisevic and basketball star Tony Kukoc; and Belarusians today can take pride in biathlete Darya Domracheva and tennis star Viktoria Azarenka.

Finally, international sporting events also provide unique opportunities for patriotic nation-building in countries with internal divisions. For example, researchers have found that qualifying for the Africa Cup of Nations and the FIFA World Cup substantially reduces ethnic conflict in Sub-Saharan African countries, because participation gives citizens a shared experience and reduces mistrust across ethnic groups.

To be sure, while the International Olympic Committee recognizes 206 national Olympic committees, a mere 14 countries account for almost half of the 11,326 athletes participating in the Tokyo Games. All 14 of those countries are in the OECD, except for China and Russia, which have the world's second- and eleventh-largest GDPs in the world. Not surprisingly, the same 14 countries dominate the medal count and the news cycle.

Nonetheless, the Games matter a great deal to the other 192 countries that we hear little about. For these smaller, newer, or poorer countries, the Olympics are not about winning the most medals or claiming superpower status. The point, rather, is simply to share in the experience of participating. The Games offer national validation and unity, and thus a chance to build economic and political stability.

The 52 Games that have taken place since Pierre de Coubertin founded the modern Olympics have produced plenty of undesirable consequences. But they have also proven to be a positive force in many countries, especially those that seem least important in terms of medals and geopolitical power.

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# OPINION

By Jean Pisani-ferry

## Mario Draghi's Second "Whatever It Takes"

**P**ARIS - To be the prime minister of Italy is to hold one of the world's worst jobs. To paraphrase the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, life in this post is usually nasty, brutish, and short. Very short, in fact: Since Angela Merkel became chancellor of Germany in 2005, she has had eight different Italian counterparts.

Unsurprisingly, Italian leaders achieve little under such conditions. By the time the COVID-19 crisis hit, German GDP per capita had grown by 20% since Merkel took office, while Italy's had declined by 4% during the same period.

Although it is unclear how long current Prime Minister Mario Draghi, a former president of the European Central Bank, will remain in office, the odds are that he will be true to tradition. Speculation in Rome is that he might run for president - a position with influence, but not power - in 2022 or 2023. But, as Draghi's ambitious economic recovery plan makes clear, the expected shortness of his tenure is not preventing him from being bold.

From 2021 to 2026, Italy is set to receive €69 billion (\$82 billion), or close to 4% of GDP, in grants from the European Union to finance green, digital, and infrastructure investments. This alone is significantly more, as a share of GDP, than the 2.6% European countries got under the post-World War II US Marshall Plan. But Draghi has decided to double down by bundling this grant with another €13 billion of EU subsidies and €191.5 billion in loans, also mostly from the EU, so that the whole program amounts to a whopping €248 billion. Some 70% of it will be allocated to new projects. Spain, by contrast, also will receive about €69 billion in EU grants, but does not plan to spend a penny more.

Draghi's choice may look strange at first sight. EU loans are only marginally cheaper than Italy's own cost of borrowing, so why should the government pre-commit to drawing on them so massively? The answer is that he wants Italy to change tack, and has thus announced a shock-and-awe strategy that aims to end his country's two-decades-long stagnation.

By acting so forcefully, Draghi hopes to shift expectations and thereby the behavior of employers, workers, and consumers. In 2012, he famously changed the fate of the eurozone by saying that the ECB would do "whatever it takes" to preserve the euro. The massive multi-year plan amounts to another "whatever it takes." It is intended to signal that the government is determined to ensure a sustained recovery and put the economy on a lasting growth trajectory.

This is the exact opposite of the traditionally cautious fiscal approach that prevails in the EU, where governments have repeatedly acted as if the bigger risk was to do too much and jeopardize macroeconomic stability. Draghi's strategy is much closer to that of US President Joe Biden, who also clearly considers that the greater risk is to do too little. Draghi is certainly not the first European leader to think in this way in recent times, but he is the first to act accordingly. It probably took his credibility as a central banker to convince the EU of the merit of his approach.

Yet, the conditions for success are demanding. The first is that the Italian government spends the money efficiently rather than in a politically expedient way. The problem with EU grants is that they tend to be allocated in such a way that every ministry gets its little bit. Draghi seems to have avoided this trap by setting just a few priorities and handing oversight of the plan's implementation to the Treasury. Where he is taking a risk is by allocating 40% of the total package to Italy's south, a backward and clientelist region where public investments have regularly disappointed.

The second condition is that investment be buttressed by complementary reforms. The EU has been adamant that member states benefiting from grants must embrace difficult measures and implement the European Commission's "country-specific recommendations." Negotiations have been long, detailed, and occasionally tense. The Commission has been getting deep into the weeds, asking governments to amend details of legislation. But Draghi has successfully stuck to a handful of objectives such as reforming the judiciary, strengthening competition, and modernizing public administration. Right or wrong, the reforms are his choice.

The third crucial factor is that financial markets buy into the package. Italy's public debt, as a share of GDP, is the second highest in the EU, after Greece, and Draghi's plan will only add to it. His bet is that investors prefer to lend more to a government that invests to raise a country's potential growth than to remain stuck with the debt of a fiscally cautious one that presides over a moribund economy.

Data suggest that Draghi is right. Italy's debt predicament stems not from fiscal laxity but from a lack of growth. And markets so far seem convinced; the interest spread between ten-year Italian and German bonds has narrowed to about 100 basis points from 150 before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Only time will tell if Draghi's strategy delivers. Italy's dismal recent economic record is only partly due to a lack of momentum. At a deeper level, it is rooted in adverse demographic trends, poor educational attainment, and an enduring duality between a cluster of innovative, world-class exporters and myriad second-rate, low-productivity small firms. Draghi's plan will address some, but not all, of these failings. The big question is whether it will be sufficient to raise productivity.

Ultimately, however, Draghi's main weakness is political. He is the only reason why an unwieldy governing coalition has so far not damaged the recovery plan through political infighting. But the coalition could unravel at any time.

If Draghi succeeds, he will change the European conversation, so that neighborly solidarity and fiscal risk-taking are seen as good investments. If he fails, the EU's recovery plan will be remembered as a waste of money, and fiscal conservatism will regain the upper hand. Italy's latest prime minister is playing for high stakes indeed.

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# OPED

By Nina L. Khrushcheva

## The Gospel According to Q

**M**ARYLAND EASTERN SHORE - "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," Lord Acton wrote in a letter to an Anglican bishop in 1887. Acton was considering how religious historians should handle past crimes committed by the church's leaders. In his view, religious (and political) leaders should be held to a higher moral standard than ordinary people. When historical accounts fail to do that, they "serve the worst better than the purest."

Future historians should bear Acton's guidance in mind when assessing America's religious right and its current leaders.

I know from my experience in the Soviet Union that clerics should not be exempt from moral judgment. Aleksey II, Patriarch of the Orthodox Church during my youth, was long suspected of KGB membership and happily worked hand in glove with the Soviet and then Russian state. Today, Alexey's successor, Patriarch Kirill, has not hesitated to do the bidding of a former KGB operative, President Vladimir Putin, whether justifying Crimea's annexation or stoking fear and loathing of homosexuals.

America, of course, keeps religion and politics constitutionally separate. But for many conservative Christians in the United States today, the First Amendment's prohibition of any "law respecting an establishment of religion" means little. Moreover, what they hope to set up in US law is not the moral code established in the Christian Bible. According to the historian Kristin Kobes Du Mez, modern white evangelicals have remade their faith over the last 75 years, replacing the loving Jesus of the Gospels with an "idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism."

Nowadays, these evangelicals want a "ruggedly masculine" leader who will fight to outlaw abortion. That goal has also put blinders on much of the hierarchy of the US Catholic Church. In recent months, a large group of Catholic bishops has sought to introduce new rules that would deny Holy Communion to politicians who support abortion rights, deliberately disobeying Pope Francis in the process. Their target is President Joe Biden, America's first Catholic president since John F. Kennedy and a regular churchgoer.

Meanwhile, America's religious right exalts Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, because, though louche and tawdry, he opposes abortion (at least publicly), and embraces a macho persona. In an open letter ahead of the 2020 presidential election, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, a former Vatican ambassador to the US, described Trump ("who courageously defends the right to life") as America's only hope against an "infernal deception." Viganò proceeds to describe a "Biblical" contest between the "children of light" - led, absurdly, by the mendacious, libertine Trump - and the "children of darkness," whom we "may easily identify with the deep state."

This hardly sounds like a senior Church official. Viganò calls the COVID-19 crisis a "colossal operation of social engineering," in which "there are people who have decided the fate of humanity, arrogating to themselves the right to act against the will of citizens and their representatives in the governments of nations." This is textbook QAnon. Evil is now supposedly so rampant that David Fulton, a Catholic priest from Nebraska, boasted of performing an exorcism during the US Capitol riot on January 6 in order to drive out a demon named Baphomet who was "dissolving the country."

The QAnon cult is founded on the myth that a cabal of Satan-worshipping liberal elite pedophiles are running a global child sex-trafficking operation and using their prominent positions in government, the media, and finance to try to impose global government. Trump, QAnon followers believe, is leading a righteous battle against this cabal, which has worked relentlessly to take him down.

White evangelicals have been particularly susceptible to this story. In a March poll, the Public Religion Research Institute and the Interfaith Youth Core indicated that 15% of Americans believed the QAnon gospel of Manichean struggle. According to a January study by the American Enterprise Institute, that share was nearly double among white evangelicals.

The failure of the QAnon prophecy that Trump would triumphantly return to the White House on March 4 has apparently done little to discredit the cult. Perhaps this shouldn't surprise us: this kind of blind faith is exactly what evangelists encourage. And, indeed, religious leaders have often been the ones spreading QAnon conspiracy theories.

In fact, there is nothing new about those ideas. QAnon is merely repackaging the contents of The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, a pamphlet that appeared in 1903 and purported to comprise the confidential minutes of a meeting of powerful Jews plotting to take over the world. All of the classic anti-Semitic tropes are there: Jews kidnap and slaughter children, then consume their blood to gain special powers. They control high positions in government, the financial sector, and the media. They promote pedophilia. And they want to weaken the white race through miscegenation.

The Russian Okhrana (the Czarist secret police) probably never expected anti-Semites around the world to embrace their creation, even as it was repeatedly and unequivocally debunked. And they almost certainly would not have guessed that the Protocols would help to fuel the Holocaust. But the pamphlet played an integral role in Nazi propaganda, and its underlying myth shaped the thinking of Hitler and Goebbels.

Likewise, the originators of the QAnon conspiracy might not have intended it to become a unifying religion for violent Trump supporters. And while some QAnon-linked politicians are undoubtedly devotees - US Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, who asserted that California's 2018 wildfires were caused by "a Jewish space laser," is a case in point - others probably see a pool of potential voters.

But the attempted insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6 revealed QAnon's deadly potential. The event looked much like the birth of a religious sect, rooted in white evangelism, supported by reactionary Catholics, and determined to steer the pious toward a political Apocalypse.

Still, Lord Acton can rest easy. Future historians are unlikely to spare the instigators of what Joan Didion once called "the thin whine of hysteria" that can now be heard across America.

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## FEATURE

## FEATURE

# Custodians of 24,449.9 Forest Concession Lack Safe Drinking Water

By Liberia Forest Media

Watch/lfmw.foresreporters@gmail.com

The Community Rights Laws of 2009 seeks to put resources at the disposal of forest communities to decide their own development agenda. It creates the legal framework for communities to control and manage their own forest and its resources. Under such arrangement, the communities have right to 30% land rental fees plus other benefits enshrined in the Social Agreement (CA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), including access to safe drinking water and roads.

Despite such progressive framework, the community forest initiative is gradually turning into a curse for many communities rather than a blessing as was envisioned since 2009. One forest community that has no reason to lack certain basic necessities, but is currently crying woes is the Ziadue/Teekpeh community with ownership of 24,449.9 logging concession, Eric OpaDoue of LFMW reports from River Cess County.

Located in River Cess County; Ziadue/Teekpeh community signed a five years forest contract with E J and J/Brilliant Maju Logging Company on November 7, 2018. The contract gives the company the right to harvest logs on 24,449.9 hectares of land.

Since November 2018, Community represented by members of the Community Assembly (CA) say E J and

Town. He expressed concern about the health situation of residents of Zammie town, which hosts an estimated population of over four thousand. According to him, there are just two functioning hand pumps in this town. Wizard says the company was supposed to build 16 hand pumps in the various affected communities, but this has not happened.

“These pumps are opened to the community on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays of every week, because if we don’t do that way, they will spoil and there will be nowhere to get drinking water from”, Wizard explained.

The CA Chairman says due to the lack of safe drinking waters in the area, there is always outbreak of diarrhea and other waterborne diseases in several communities including Sayee, Johnney and Gumee Towns repetitively.

Wizard reported that as additional requirement, the company was to ensure it protects water sources, but this too is not happening as the company’s equipment is contaminating water sources.

“This company was supposed to protect our sources of drinking water but their machines have contaminated all of the water sources in the area”. The people are getting sick from the contaminated water they are drinking”, Wizard lamented.

Financial Secretary of the Community Forest



respond or may not even respond. “Carrying complains to the FDA is just a waste of your precious time, because we have been complaining but they don’t do anything about it and the company is emptying the forest”, Benneh said.

Officials of the Forest Development Authority has said on numerous occasions that the FDA lacks logistical and financial supports to make follow up on complains coming from communities with concessions.

<https://loggingoff.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/VOSIEDA2019-CountyForestDialogue-Gbarnga-Report.pdf>

Unlike the Financial Secretary, OzrineBenneh, the Secretary of the CFMB GarpueNeewon says he knows about the complaint mechanism, but they have never filed any complain using the form since it was introduced to them.

Neewon accused E J and J/Brilliant Maju Logging Company of failing to among other things, construct an Elementary School, five hand pumps and two compartment concrete latrines which, according to him, should have been done in the first and second year of the company’s operation in keeping with chapter 5 section 8 of the MOU.

The MOU also mandates the company to pay to community the amount of ten thousand five hundred United States Dollars (USD10, 500.00) as scholarship funds annually. But Neewon says the company has not paid anything since August 2019 to Jan 2021.

Meanwhile, the Financial Secretary OzrineBenneh has expressed the need for more capacity building for the CFMB/CA/EC. She says even though the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) and DEN-L have been offering some training on conflict resolution and financial management, the need for more training to manage their forest and its resources cannot be over emphasized.

Benneh wants the government and Civil Society Organizations to put pressure on the company to live up to their Social Obligations “before the people run out of patience”.

But Madam Eliza D. J. Kroyahn of E J and J/Brilliant Maju Logging Company did not respond to LFMW for comments on the allegation made against her company by officials of Ziadue/Teekpeh CFMB. Vowing not talk to the press, she instead lamented that “25” hectares of her concession area in the Forest Management Contract area “B”-FMC-B (which was not the topic for discussion) had been over taken by pitsawing activities, with the full acquiesce of the county authorities.

“I am not prepared to talk the press. Go and ask the superintendent about what is happening to the forest. The people say they own the forest so they have the right to do anything with it. In fact LRA does not send me notice of tax payment reminder anymore because they too know what is happening”, said Madam Kroyahn.



J/Brilliant Maju Logging Company has not met up with any of its social responsibilities as agreed to in the forest contract with the community.

Kpageeyah Town is one of the communities within Ziadue/Teekpeh Authorized Community Forest area. Residents of the town told LFMW that the community has been out of safe drinking water for two years now amidst company’s failure to complete the construction of a hand pump it started since 2019.

“The company dug this big hole here and left it open,” a lady only identified as Esther referring to an opened well dug by the company. “This is a serious risk for our children so we ourselves have to cover it before anyone falls in there.”

As a community of over 4,000 residents struggle for safe drinking water, each Liberian Legislator was recently paid US\$30,000 for what the Government of Liberia referred to as legislative support project, which is being construed for political expediency by critics of the government. <https://thenewdawnliberia.com/statement-by-mr-alexander-b-cummings-political-leader-of-the-alternative-national-congress/>.

Abraham Wizard is the Chairman of the Community Assembly (CA) and resident of Zammie

Management Body’s Executive Committee (EC), OzrineBenneh says since the signing of the contract, there has been no quarterly meeting held with the community even though it was agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Benneh says since June 2021, the community through the CFMB/CA wrote the head of the company Madam Eliza D. J. Kroyahn calling for a quarterly meeting to discuss the way forward. The meeting which should have been held on July 17, 2021 was not held, and there has been no response from Madam Kroyahn”, Benneh, says OzrineBenneh of the CFMB.

“We and them [the company] will sign agreement, but they will never do it,” and there is too many bureaucracies in accessing the funds even if they pay”, Benneh discloses to LFMW.

Like several members of community forest bodies, Banneh is not aware of the complaint filling mechanism developed with the support of the European Union and other forest stakeholders. She says when there are issues, the CFMB often files complain to the EC and EC to the CA for onward transmission to the FDA.

But according to her, carrying complaints to FDA is just a “waste” of time as FDA takes ever so long to

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**Liberia: Sweden, UNDP sign US\$ 4.8 million Financing Agreement to support local Electoral Process**

The Government of Sweden through its Embassy in Monrovia has signed a SEK 40 Million (approximately USD 4.8 Million) financing agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the Liberia Electoral Support Project (LESP) for the period from 1 August 2021 to 31 December 2024.

Swedish Ambassador Ingrid Wetterqvist said during the signing ceremony that "The Swedish support is firmly based on the new Swedish Strategy for

observation. Thus providing a balanced and comprehensive package of support to electoral assistance."

Sweden's commitment to supporting both the Liberia National Elections Commission (NEC) and UNDP efforts to strengthen electoral and democratic processes in Liberia dates back to 2010-2014 when funding was provided for elections basket fund.

The support to LESP will target in particular inclusion, with a specific focus on women's political participation, civic and voter education, capacity development of electoral and

The main objective of LESP is to strengthen electoral and democratic institutions and processes in Liberia, focusing on strengthening inclusion and transparency of the electoral process, enhancing institutional capacity and accountability of electoral stakeholders, and strengthening the peaceful conduct of elections, with particular attention to early warning mechanisms, the conduct of security forces, and violence against women in elections.

Sweden recognizes the overall need to focus on a process-based approach in terms of electoral assistance as opposed to the event-driven approach - for the benefit of the entire country. Effective electoral planning and budgeting is critical here, and is also dependent on strong political will and institutional reforms.

The human rights based approach is also guiding the Swedish support which embraces principles of inclusiveness and participation, with a focus on increasing women's participation in politics and focusing on the poorest and most marginalized, in the process building on lessons of earlier electoral processes. Robust Civic and Voter Education plays a key role here, in building a stronger democratic culture.

Comprehensive planning and support to the NEC and the Government of Liberia on Effective Electoral Planning and Budgeting and Procurement processes will decrease electoral costs ahead of elections. When there is a high level of transparency and integrity in the electoral process, it in turn contributes to minimizing any tension and unnecessary risks of violence.

democratic institutions, as well as prevention of electoral violence.

Acting UNDP Resident Representative Violet Baffour observed "Sweden has been an essential partner in UNDP Liberia's work to develop the capacity of accountable, just, and peaceful institutions that support democratic and electoral processes. Together we are committed to continuing to provide sound and sustainable support to Liberia as it strives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and it's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development."

Development Cooperation in Liberia 2021-2025, and, in particular, strengthened democratic governance and rights, including Women's Political Participation and Leadership, while peace is further consolidated through the higher levels of capacities, integrity, transparency and accountability amongst the electoral stakeholders."

She added, "In addition, a part of the upcoming support from Sweden will also encompass supporting Civil Society, with particular emphasis on election



**13th West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF)**

The ECOWAS Commission and its partners virtually convened the 13th edition of the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF) with various stakeholder groups involved in the internet ecosystem from Member States of the region and beyond to discuss and engage in issues surrounding the Internet and its usage in response to COVID-19.

The three-day virtual

forum with the guiding theme 'Digital Inclusion and Access for a Resilient West Africa' was held from 28 to 30 July 2021 with a view to putting forward some concrete and actionable recommendations to aid the region as it bounces back from the effects of COVID-19.

Delivering the keynote address to the forum, the Minister of Information and Communication Infrastructure of the Republic of The Gambia, Hon. Ebrima Sillah, indicated the

importance of the internet in our daily lives in this COVID-19 era and highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholders since the inception of the first Internet Governance Forum in Athens in 2006, established after deliberations at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis in 2005. He noted the significance and link of the

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

**Senator Teahjay provides LRD\$1.3m to several communities**

Residents of Sinoe County were seen jubilating upon the arrival of their Senator J. Milton Teahjay during a trip when he provided LRD\$1.3 million for several communities in the county as part of his citizens' engagement.

According to a press release issued over the weekend, Senator Teahjay toured the seacoast of Sinoe County, particularly the Dugbe River Statutory District as part of his citizens' engagement and celebration of Liberia's 174th Independence Day in the district.

"Over the past one week, we toured the seacoast of Sinoe County (Dugbe River Statutory District) celebrating the Independence Day

named after the president and the senator for their tremendous efforts in bringing relief to residents of the area, and will further be called the George Weah-Milton Teahjay highway.

However, the release detailed that the construction of an eighth bed room clinic under the name Twoah has begun, while in Nana Kru - a Modern Junior High School Renovation with the provision of eight bundles 32 Gauge Alloy Zinc has already been purchased and delivered.

The release also disclosed the renovation of the King Williams Town modern junior high school with the contribution of LRD\$150,000, while in Setra Kru, construction work has begun for a modern junior high school projected at LRD\$7.6m.

At the same time, Senator



Senator J. Milton Teahjay

together with citizens of the district," the release quotes Teahjay as saying.

He said part of his job is reaching out to his people, regardless of how difficult it is to reach and hear their concerns and having interactions with them on ways to resolve these concerns together.

The release noted that it was an amazing experience walking and sailing from town to town, initiating key projects, some of which includes the Seeton Juaryen - Yuoan Point, passing through lower Tuoh and Twaoh to Yuoan Point, which will provide access for motor road for the first time in those communities.

The highway is set to be

Teahjay has also provided four scholarships for residents of King Williams Town, Yuoan Point and Setra Kru to obtain college education at any university in Liberia.

"In Fish Town we also contributed 100.000 LRD for the renovation of the Wroklee - Modern Elementary school. We also donated 25 bags of cement to the Yuoan Point Clinic, and provided ... 70 German - made power saw to Setra Kru Community," the release continued.

It said all of the above projects are already ongoing and they are far different from cash donations made to these various communities during the tour.—Press release

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# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## GOL addresses 53% of Consortium Workers' grievances -Civil servants president discloses

By Lewis S. Teh

The leadership of the Consortium of Public Sector Workers has disclosed here that the Government of Liberia has addressed about 53% of the grievances raised by the institution over the past months.

Over the weekend, Mr. Moibah K. Johnson, Civil Servants Association president told a press conference at the Headquarters of the National Teachers Association of Liberia (NTAL) on 12th Street,

said.

According to him, the government and the Consortium of Public Sector Workers organizations entered into a memorandum of understanding aimed at addressing eleven categories of problem areas identified after series of consultation and engagement between the two parties.

"While the parties take cognizance of the progress being made to the implementation of the MOU, more challenges still abound," he said, adding that the responsibility still remains on the shoulders of the government

Government of Liberia. However, he called on the government to accelerate the implementation of the outstanding issues in order to put smiles on the faces of all the public sector workers.

Some of the issues raised by the group include Pension Law, February and August 2020 retirement benefits, dismissal of teachers on the basis of test results, transitional retirement of National Social Security Corporation (NASSCORP) pension payroll for social security benefits, challenges with salary payment and disbursement, among others.

The government and the Consortium of Public Sector Workers recently signed an MOU on the workers' grievances. Finance and Development Planning Minister Samuel Tweah recently said the Consortium of Public Sector Workers and the Government of Liberia had resolved to work together to promote the spirit of unity for the growth of the country.

"Today, we are excited to announce that the Government of Liberia and the Consortium of Public Sector Workers have resolved to working in one accord to addressing the misunderstanding between the two parties, including their disenchantments and grievances. Beginning now we will all work together for the growth of the country," Minister Tweah disclosed.



Sinkor that the Government of Liberia has addressed 53% of the main issues they have raised.

"On July 16, 2021, the GOL and the Consortium's technical committee met in order to review and assess the April 18, 2021 MOU [memorandum of understanding]. Following this meeting, we are pleased to inform the public that conservatively, about 53% of the issues raised have been addressed by the government," Mr. Moibah

to fully implement the MOU.

Mr. Moibah continued that considering the progress as reflected by the percentage mentioned on the MOU's implementation by the government, the consortium agrees to an additional three-month extension of the MOU to October 18, 2021 with the utmost hope and optimism that the outstanding issues of the MOU can be completely resolved.

He said their decision is in the spirit of continuous constructive engagement with the

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## Daily

## Funeral Announcement

of Late

August 1, 2021

**Horatio Bobby Willie, Sr.**



The Willie, Nyanfore, Dortu and Kojo families with deep sorrow announce funeral rites over the remains of the late Horatio Bobby Willie, Sr., affectionately called Bobby, former Public Information Officer at the Liberia Telecommunications Authority and former Assistant Minister for Public Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as follows:

On Wednesday 4 August a candlelight vigil will be held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral on Broad Street beginning at 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Funeral services will take place at the St. Moses Funeral Parlor Chapel on the Somalia Drive on Thursday 5 August at 9:00 a.m. and followed by interment at the Kaiser Memorial Lawn in Brewerville City.

The late Horatio Bobby Willie, Sr. passed away on 13 July at the J.F.K. Memorial Medical Hospital following a period of illness.

Bobby leaves to mourn his loss his widow, Mictricia Kojo Willie, his children, Horatio Bobby Willie, Jr., Horine Taloh and Jewel; sisters, Sema G. Tulay, Vivian S. Freeman, Patricia Ocran, Precious S. Willie, aunties, uncles, nephews, nieces, a host of other relatives and friends in Liberia and abroad.

**This announcement was brought in by Jenkins Dortu and Michael Kojo, uncle and father-in-law on behalf of the families.**

Note: As per the safety measures put in place by the government in an effort to combat this deadly covid19 virus the funeral home will allow maximum 20 persons in the chapel at once for the service and viewing of the body.

Cont'd from page 6

## 13th West Africa Internet

WAIGF to the overall attainment of the ECOWAS Regional Infrastructure Masterplan and emphasised the importance of connecting citizens to broadband internet. The Hon Minister rounded off by encouraging the forum to share ideas and come up with a communicate that will advise Member States on ways to bring down the cost of Internet connectivity and make accessibility more possible for the region's rural dwellers.

Addressing the forum on behalf of the Commission, the Ag. Director,

Digital Economy & Post, Dr Raphael Kouame Koffi spoke on the impact the Corona virus had in varying degrees across the region on areas such as internet connectivity, inclusion, cost and accessibility. He noted that the estimated 55.67% internet penetration rate across the region at the end of 2020 highlights how the pandemic also illuminated conversations on the need to use and develop Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) across the region so as to accelerate digital transformation process.

# Français

## La veuve de l'ex-président Samuel Doe traîne son avocat en justice

L'ancienne première dame libérienne, Nancy B. Doe, veuve du président assassiné Samuel Kanyon Doe, a traîné son avocat, Me Milton D. Taylor, en justice. Elle réclame des dommages et intérêts de 10 millions de dollars américains.

Le président Doe a été tué en septembre 1990 pendant

la guerre civile libérienne par les rebelles de l'INPFL fidèles à l'actuel sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson du comté de Nimba.

"L'objectif principal de mon communiqué de presse est d'annoncer que j'ai décidé de poursuivre en justice Me Milton D. Taylor pour diffamation. Je réclame 10 millions de dollars américains comme dommages et intérêts", a déclaré Madame Doe.

Elle accuse Me Taylor de l'avoir publiquement humiliée en publiant à son insu son dossier sur des radios et dans plusieurs journaux à plusieurs reprises pour l'embarrasser.

« Comme nous sommes sur un contrat sans frais, nous n'avons aucune dette envers Me Taylor. La succession ab intestat de Samuel K. Doe, a

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



berian First Lady, Nancy B. Doe

Slain President Samuel K. Doe

## Le Parlement de la CEDEAO se réunit sur un large éventail de questions

La réunion délocalisée du Parlement de la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO) de la commission mixte sur les affaires politiques, la paix, la sécurité et le Mécanisme africain d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP) / Affaires juridiques et droits de l'homme / les Technologies de l'Information et des Communications (TIC) se tient à Winneba, Ghana, pour mettre les membres du comité mixte au fait de la situation actuelle.

La réunion qui a débuté le 27 juillet et se poursuivra jusqu'au 31 juillet 2021, devrait explorer l'application des TIC existantes et à l'horizon qui peut faciliter le développement en ce qui concerne comment trouver des solutions durables aux problèmes d'itinérance, de paix et de sécurité et des droits humains fondamentaux pour le mieux-être de la région de la CEDEAO.

La réunion reconnaît le rôle potentiellement précieux des TIC dans le développement de la région

de la CEDEAO, en particulier dans les domaines de la paix et de la sécurité et des droits humains fondamentaux.

Elle s'appuie sur la réputation et les pouvoirs de convocation des parlementaires dans les politiques publiques pour l'amélioration de la CEDEAO. A l'issue de la réunion de la commission mixte, les membres de la commission mixte sont censés identifier les mécanismes d'intervention pertinents permettant au Parlement d'apporter une

contribution efficace en veillant à ce que des recommandations soient faites à cet effet au Parlement lors de sa prochaine session.

En outre, il est question à la réunion de faire en sorte que les députés soient mieux tenus informés des progrès et des défis par la consultation régulière des experts et des parties prenantes dans tous les

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



The USS Hershel "Woody" Williams near the shores of Liberia

## Éditorial

### « Japan Freeway » apporte un soulagement significatif

C'est un véritablement ouf de soulagement pour les usagers de la route Somalia Drive, devenue aujourd'hui « Japan Freeway », dans la banlieue densément peuplée de Monrovia à Gardnersville, avec l'inauguration officielle de la voie à 4 chaussées et longue de 13,2 kilomètres, qui réduira considérablement les embouteillages, tout en favorisant les échanges et le commerce.

Le projet initialement estimé à 89 millions de yens japonais, soit 1 million de dollars américains, avait été officiellement signé en 2012 sous l'administration de l'ex-présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. La route a été inaugurée officiellement par le président George Manneh Weah le lundi 26 juillet 2021 en marge de la célébration du 174e anniversaire de l'indépendance du Libéria.

Ce n'est pas la coïncidence historique de la journée elle-même qui est importante, mais les immenses avantages économiques dont les Libériens et les partenaires commerciaux étrangers ont déjà commencé à récolter, dont la liberté de mouvement, l'accès rapide, la livraison rapide des biens et de services, qu'il faut applaudir.

Incontestablement, la route est l'un des principaux atouts économiques qui stimulent le commerce et l'économie. La route réhabilitée et transformée en quatre voies, (deux voies de part et d'autre du béton permettant aux usagers, y compris les remorques et autres camions lourds, de circuler de manière aisée), est une première au Libéria. Elle répond aux normes internationales.

Nous disons merci au gouvernement et au peuple chaleureux du Japon pour avoir financé à eux seuls le projet en guise de cadeau au gouvernement et au peuple du Libéria.

Ce geste, exécuté par l'intermédiaire de l'Agence japonaise de coopération internationale ou JICA, contribuera non seulement à cimenter les liens cordiaux déjà existants entre le Libéria et le Japon, mais à maintenir le lien fort d'amitié des peuples des deux pays.

Cependant, maintenant que la « Japan Freeway » est ici, nous, Libériens ordinaires et même le gouvernement du Libéria, avons notre propre rôle à jouer dans le maintien de ce grand bijou. La route, comme toute infrastructure, traverse une période de déchirure et d'usure ou de dépréciation, par conséquent, la nécessité d'un entretien régulier est indispensable.

Cela signifie que les usagers de la route et le ministère des Travaux publics, l'organe gouvernemental chargé de surveiller ces installations publiques, devraient faire tout ce qui est humainement possible pour maintenir la route en bon état.

L'euphorie qui accompagne l'inauguration de la route pourrait céder la place à une déception générale si les remorques défilantes et les camions lourds en panne commencent à occasionner des embouteillages et des risques d'accidents qui auraient pu être évités simplement par l'interdiction de ces engins d'emprunter cette voie pour maintenir la fluidité de la circulation.

Les conducteurs sont également avertis. La nouvelle route n'est pas une carte blanche pour conduire de manière imprudente et excessive au détriment des vies humaines et des biens. Une conduite responsable exige le respect scrupuleux des panneaux de signalisation, des règles et du contrôle technique des véhicules.

La division de circulation de la Police nationale du Libéria a un rôle clé à jouer dans cette entreprise. Elle doit continuer de jouer son rôle dans d'autres régions du pays. La présence d'agents de police de la circulation à chaque intersection le long de la route est importante. Il faut contrôler les conducteurs imprudents, les engins à trois roues et à deux roues.

En bref, nous voulons que cette importante infrastructure publique devienne un atout plutôt qu'une malédiction pour le peuple du Libéria. Par l'entretien efficace et l'utilisation appropriée de la « Japan Freeway », nous pouvons encourager nos partenaires étrangers à faire davantage pour promouvoir le programme de développement de ce pays.

# Français

## La veuve de l'ex-président Samuel

acquis les services de Me Taylor en 2011 pour sécuriser nos propriétés au Libéria. Que l'on sache que Me Taylor a enfreint plusieurs problèmes éthiques majeurs et n'a pas réussi au fil des ans à fournir à la succession ab intestat de Samuel K. Doe une représentation décente et adéquate », a dit l'ex-première dame. Mme Doe a également déclaré que la raison supplémentaire de son action en justice contre son avocat personnel était que Me Taylor aurait exigé qu'elle lui payât 250 000 \$ et 50 % de VAMOMA House, une propriété privée à l'intersection de Airfield et Sinkor, bien qu'il soit pleinement

conscient que VAMOMA est une société privée avec sa propre liste d'actionnaires qui n'ont pas

engagé ses services.

« Nous détenons 87 % des actions de VAMOMA, mais dans sa lettre de protocole d'accord, il a exigé un montant aussi ridicule pour le paiement et j'ai refusé de le signer. Me Taylor a refusé d'éliminer cette accusation et a insisté sur le fait qu'elle était valide. La menace continue de Taylor de ne pas présenter l'affaire VAMOMA au juge si le protocole d'accord de VAMOMA n'était pas signé, car l'affaire doit être entendue par un tribunal », a-t-elle déclaré.

Madame Doe a affirmé que Me Taylor a également facturé à son fils, Samuel Kanyon Doe, Jr., 1 million de dollars US pour l'affaire Samuel K. Doe Junior et Archibald Bernard, ce qui valait 40 % de la valeur globale du terrain.

« Lorsqu'on a demandé à l'avocat de préciser et de détailler ses accusations, il a tenté de nous intimider en menaçant d'abandonner le dossier de la famille devant le tribunal de la CEDEAO », a-t-elle dit. Poursuivant son récit, elle a déclaré que Me

Taylor l'a également mise sous la contrainte avec ses honoraires excessifs pour l'affaire de la CEDEAO, et comme l'affaire devait être entendue au Nigéria, il a contraint la succession à augmenter le pourcentage de 25 à 35% parce que la famille Doe n'avait pas recours à un nouveau conseil à l'époque, notant qu'il s'agissait d'un calcul et qu'il a pris un avantage absolu sur sa position vulnérable.

« Nous avons beaucoup de dossiers en suspens, en appel ou en attente d'affectation. Pourtant, au fil des ans, Taylor a refusé de fournir des mises à jour sur tous ces dossiers. Nous avons des raisons de croire que Me Taylor a saboté personnellement ces dossiers. Il a reçu des paiements illicites et est complice de nos opposants.

Par exemple, nous avons gagné l'affaire VAMOMA devant un tribunal civil en 2015, mais nous n'en avons jamais pris possession. Les accusés étaient censés déposer un recours, jusqu'à présent il n'a jamais été déposé. Six ans plus tard, Taylor a refusé d'expliquer pourquoi nous ne pouvons pas prendre possession de notre propriété et pourquoi l'appel n'a jamais été rejeté ou entendu. J'ai été poursuivie par Archibald Bernard pour reprendre possession du terrain qu'il a vendu à mon défunt mari », a-t-elle expliqué.

« Dans le procès, Bernard a confirmé qu'il avait vendu la propriété à mon défunt mari sans la permission de leurs enfants, bien que les noms de Bernard et des enfants figurent sur l'acte. Après une semaine d'audience, Me Taylor m'a conseillé d'abandonner l'affaire et de céder la propriété sans aucune restitution financière ni négociation. J'ai refusé et j'ai pleuré amèrement au début. Il a expliqué plus tard que c'était la seule façon dont il me représenterait. Je comprends maintenant que les conseils de Taylor n'étaient pas prudents et qu'il a peut-être volontairement perturbé mon affaire pour des pots-de-vin », a-t-elle observé.

## Le Parlement de la CEDEAO

domaines pertinents. La discussion porte sur des sujets tels que le rôle des TIC dans la réalisation de la paix et de la sécurité régionales; l'impact des TIC sur le fonctionnement des systèmes judiciaires dans les États membres; l'influence des TIC sur les élections dans les États membres; les problèmes d'itinérance régionale; Cyber-vie privée et sécurité régionales; et le

rôle des TIC dans le renforcement des droits de l'homme.

Sur le rôle des TIC dans la maintien de la paix et de la sécurité régionales, le mandat final de la réunion indique qu'aujourd'hui le système multilatéral se trouve à la croisée des chemins, ajoutant que l'extrémisme violent, les crises humanitaires et les pandémies mondiales sont plus omniprésents que jamais.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Nancy Qian

### Les dimensions négatives et positives du nationalisme olympique

**C**HICAGO - En plus d'avoir été reportés d'un an, les Jeux olympiques des Tokyo 2020 suscitent aujourd'hui la controverse. D'après un récent sondage, 78 % des citoyens japonais estiment que les Jeux auraient dû être annulés compte tenu de la pandémie. Désormais, les médias japonais placent l'accent sur le fait que tous les athlètes en compétition (dont 100 en provenance des États-Unis) ne sont pas vaccinés contre le COVID-19.

À ces considérations de santé publique sans précédent viennent s'ajouter certaines problématiques politiques de longue date, parmi lesquelles le risque couramment évoqué de voir les JO encourager nationalisme et patriotisme excessif. Chaque événement suscite un affrontement autour du nombre de médailles prévues entre de grands adversaires tels que les États-Unis, la Chine, le Japon, la Grande-Bretagne et la Russie (qui participe aux Jeux de Tokyo en tant que « Comité olympique de Russie », après la suspension du pays pour dopage).

Les régimes politiques du monde entier sont conscients de la capacité du sport à renforcer l'identité nationale, et en particulier celle des Jeux olympiques à conférer un statut sur la scène mondiale. Les JO sont depuis longtemps pour les États l'occasion de célébrer une réussite aux côtés de leurs citoyens. En 1936, Hitler exploitera ainsi pleinement les JO de Berlin, désignée ville organisatrice en 1931, deux ans avant l'arrivée du national-socialisme au pouvoir. En 1964, les JO de Tokyo seront pour le Japon l'occasion de montrer au monde leur plein rétablissement après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. De même, dans les années 1980, les JO deviendront un terrain de guerre froide, les États-Unis boycottant les Jeux de Moscou en 1980, puis les soviétiques ceux de Los Angeles en 1984.

La valeur politique des JO constitue l'un des raisons pour lesquelles les États sont prêts à payer si cher pour les organiser. La Chine a ainsi dépensé 40 à 44 milliards \$ - plus que n'importe quel autre pays à l'époque - pour accueillir les Jeux olympiques d'été de Pékin en 2008. Le pays a ensuite été surpassé par la Russie, qui a consacré d'après les estimations 50 milliards \$ à l'organisation des JO de Sotchi 2014. Pulvérisant le record de dépenses et annexant la Crimée cette année-là, le président russe Vladimir Poutine a vu sa cote de popularité exploser à cette période.

Il ne fait aucun doute que les événements sportifs internationaux sont susceptibles d'amplifier certains aspects plus déplaisants du nationalisme, comme lors des Jeux de Berlin en 1936. Historiquement, les JO rappellent également aux peuples conquis la perte de leur souveraineté. Jusqu'en 1924, les athlètes polonais ne pouvaient remporter de médailles qu'en représentant un autre pays que le leur. Pendant plusieurs générations, les compétiteurs originaires de républiques soviétiques annexées de force, telles que les pays baltes et l'Ukraine, ont été contraints de représenter l'URSS ou de ne pas concourir.

Les émotions suscitées par les événements sportifs internationaux ne sont néanmoins pas

toutes regrettables. Le désir collectif de gagner peut atténuer la discrimination à l'égard des minorités, comme lorsque l'establishment des États-Unis reconnut les talents de Jesse Owens, qui remporta au total quatre médailles d'or en athlétisme aux Jeux de Berlin, inspirant plusieurs générations de jeunes Américains noirs. Plus récemment, les aptitudes phénoménales de la star du tennis Naomi Osaka ont conduit de nombreux Japonais à surmonter leurs traditions préjugés ethniques et relatifs aux sexes. Le symbole d'une Naomi Osaka allumant la flamme olympique de Tokyo entraînera nécessairement d'importantes retombées sociales au Japon, voire dans toute l'Asie du Sud-Est.

Les compétitions sportives sont également l'occasion pour un nouvel État d'établir son sentiment de nation. En 1992, la présence de Nelson Mandela aux JO de Barcelone symbolise l'émergence de l'Afrique du Sud après l'apartheid. À la fin des années 1990, début des années 2000, les Croates se rassemblent pour encourager le champion de Wimbledon Goran Ivanisevic et la star du basketball Tony Kukoc, de même que les Biélorusses peuvent aujourd'hui être fiers de la biathlète Darya Domracheva et de la star du tennis Viktoria Azarenka.

Enfin, les événements sportifs internationaux offrent une opportunité unique de construction d'une nation patriote au sein de pays marqués par des fractures internes. Plusieurs chercheurs ont par exemple observé que la qualification à la Coupe d'Afrique des nations ainsi qu'à la Coupe du monde de football de la FIFA réduisait les conflits ethniques dans les pays d'Afrique subsaharienne, une participation à la compétition conférant aux citoyens une expérience commune, et atténuant l'hostilité entre les différents groupes ethniques.

Certes, bien que le Comité international olympique reconnaisse 206 comités olympiques nationaux, 14 pays seulement représentent près de la moitié des 11 326 athlètes participant aux Jeux de Tokyo. Tous ces États font partie de l'OCDE, à l'exception de la Chine et de la Russie, qui enregistrent le deuxième et le onzième PIB au niveau mondial. Sans surprise, ces 14 pays dominent le décompte des médailles, et occupent la scène médiatique.

Pour autant, les JO revêtent une grande importance pour 192 autres pays dont nous entendons moins parler. Pour ces États moins vastes, plus récemment apparus, ou plus pauvres, les Jeux ne sont pas qu'une question d'accumulation de médailles ou d'affirmation d'un statut de superpuissance. L'objectif consiste davantage à partager l'expérience d'une participation à la compétition. Les JO suscitent l'adhésion, l'unité nationale, et offrent par conséquent une chance de bâtir une stabilité politique et économique.

Les 52 Jeux qui ont eu lieu depuis la création des JO modernes par Pierre de Coubertin ont produit bien des conséquences regrettables. Mais ils ont également constitué un moteur positif pour de nombreux pays, notamment pour ceux rayonnent moins en termes de médailles et de puissance géopolitique.

# Elevating political leadership for Pandemic Preparedness and Response

## Briefing to the UN General Assembly – Remarks from the Former Co-Chairs

**E**llen Johnson Sirleaf: We thank the President of the General Assembly for enabling this briefing session to be held, and we thank all representatives of Member States who are joining us today. We are very grateful for your time.

We have come to you today because the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response has recommended that the UN General Assembly play a key role in ensuring that the international system is better able to act against future pandemic threats. But, first, let me comment on the context in which we meet, and then on the findings of the Panel and how they led to its recommendations.

The daily news continues to bring us scenes of hospitals and health workers overwhelmed, and health systems stretched to breaking point, reminding us of the continuing socio-economic and human tragedy of this pandemic. As ever, where resources are least, people suffer most, but the impact of this pandemic also continues everywhere. In some places, vaccines are blunting the worst of the impact, but for too many countries, supplies are so limited and prospects for access are pushed so far into the future that hope is turning to despair.

Globally, there have been nearly 190 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and more than 4 million deaths reported to WHO, but these shocking figures are almost certainly an underestimate of the real toll of the disease.

This pandemic is an ongoing disaster which the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response believes could have been averted if the countries of the world had heeded the many warnings and prepared their health and surveillance systems - and then, when the outbreak began, if they had moved together in mutual transparency and solidarity.

In May 2020, the World Health Assembly passed a consensus resolution requesting that the WHO Director-General initiate an impartial, independent, and comprehensive review of the international health response to COVID-19.

Dr Tedros then asked Prime Minister Clark and me to convene an Independent Panel for that purpose. Prime Minister Clark is with me today from Auckland, New Zealand.

Our main report was presented to the 74th World Health Assembly in May of this year. The wide attention paid to it suggests that the world may be prepared to change course and agree to take steps to prevent a future pandemic catastrophe. Our Panel believes that it is essential that it does.

The Panel concluded that COVID-19 went from being a localized outbreak to a pandemic because of a myriad of failures and gaps in pandemic preparedness and response. At the outset, there was a failure to learn from the past.

There are reviews of previous health disasters that have gathered dust in basements of agencies and governments - this despite leaders in global health and development frequently warning of the risk of a global pandemic.

I know all too well that after Ebola struck Liberia and our neighbors, sincere promises of 'never again' were made but it took years an effective prevention response leaving us vulnerable to the next devastating pandemic.

So today there is a choice - to carry on with business as usual with the inevitability of a future pandemic catastrophe, or to make real and lasting change.

That choice is clear: now we must act - this must be the last pandemic to cause devastation on the scale we are witnessing today. We need a stronger international system for pandemic preparedness and response that understands the threats, is alert, and is poised to take collective action. The job can't be done by any single country working alone. It can't even be done by a group of countries, no matter how willing, because we are only as strong as our weakest link. Therefore, the UN General Assembly has a decisive role to play in strengthening the multilateral infrastructure so that it can identify and respond more quickly to the next virus with pandemic potential.

**Helen Clark**

Greetings from New Zealand. I join President Sirleaf in thanking you all for joining us today.

In today's audience, there will be those representing

countries with rapidly increasing vaccine coverage. Yet, many others will be representing countries where COVID-19-related illnesses and deaths continue to be on the rise. Alas, the end of the pandemic is not in sight as we speak.

Back in December 2019, clinicians in Wuhan recognized a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown origin. They collected samples and had them tested. When the results showed that this was potentially a new virus, the Wuhan health system issued local alerts. These in turn were quickly picked up by media, global epidemic surveillance networks, some countries, and by WHO.

But, then, the systems designed to validate and respond to such an event were too slow to respond to a fast-moving respiratory pathogen. Our Panel concluded that WHO was constrained, not helped, by the International Health Regulations (IHR). The procedures under which it and the Emergency Committee of the IHR operate are not conducive to taking a precautionary approach. We believe, however, that even with the current systems, a Public Health Emergency of International Concern could have been declared by at least 22 January.

Even so, following the declaration on the 30th of January, the month of February 2020 was wasted by many countries. Far too few recognized that this health emergency could directly affect them. Many adopted, in effect, a wait and see approach, rather than activating preparedness and response systems.

Then as the disease spread rapidly, many health



**Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**

systems began to become overwhelmed. By then, time had run out for many to avert the full impact of COVID-19. The global, "winner takes all" scramble to secure personal protective equipment, therapeutics, and other supplies left many of those in the front lines unprotected.

Too many countries, including some of the wealthiest, devalued science, denied the disease's severity, and delayed responding. As a result, distrust was sowed amongst their citizens with deadly consequences. Global leadership and co-ordination were lacking, as was the capacity to help fill gaps in country responses. Geopolitical tensions and nationalism had weakened the multilateral system which was designed to keep the world safe.

**Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**

There has long been underinvestment in pandemic preparedness. That failure to prepare, and then to use those preparations to respond in a timely manner, has resulted in a runaway pandemic which not only has taken millions of lives, but also is forecast to have a \$22 trillion impact on the world economy by 2025.

The lack of adequate social protection in many countries, which is especially needed in times of crisis, has served to widen inequalities. The most vulnerable in our societies are suffering the most from the pandemic. Tens of millions more people have been pushed into extreme poverty. Those in the informal sector have often had little choice over whether to risk infection - their families must be fed.

Women and girls have suffered a disproportionate impact - the effects of the pandemic have been highly gendered. Sexual and reproductive health services have been disrupted, millions of girls whose education has been terminated were put at risk of early forced marriage; and there have been sharp increases in reported domestic violence around the world.

Despite the bleakness of the world's current predicament, the Panel did find reasons for hope. Frontline health workers have been magnificent during the pandemic, consistently going above and beyond the call of duty for their communities.

The Panel listened to nurses, midwives, and community health workers who have taken on extra risk to try to save lives. At least 17,000 health workers were known to have died by March this year. All governments have a moral duty to keep the health workforce safe - now and in the future.

Then, the speed at which the virus genome was sequenced, and vaccines were developed was unprecedented in human history. Science delivered when the world needed it most, but that science depended on the open sharing of data and knowledge. The benefits must now also be shared freely and openly.

Across income levels and political systems, we have found example of countries that responded well in the first 90 days of the pandemic. The defining factor was competence, and not wealth. Those that heeded the January 30 2020 PHEIC declaration, as well as the lessons of the past, prepared well, were guided by evidence, and engaged communities in the response



**Helen Clark**

through transparent communication tended to be more successful.

The Panel's recommendations flow directly from the findings of our review. If fully implemented, they can accelerate the end of the current pandemic, and they can put the world on course to ensure that this will be the last pandemic to cause devastation on the scale we are experiencing now.

The package of recommendations is ambitious, and requires resolute action, but nothing less is needed if we are to make this the last pandemic crisis of this kind.

The Panel's recommendations are in two sets - one set is focused on preventing a future pandemic and global crisis; the other focuses on the urgent need to act decisively to end the current pandemic. The two-tier response which has developed to pandemic control - where high-income countries have the means to vaccinate all citizens and many low- and middle-income countries have been able to vaccinate few - is both ethically unacceptable and insufficient to end the pandemic. We are all in this together. No one is safe until everyone is safe.

Prime Minister Clark will now outline our recommendations.

**Helen Clark**

Our Panel called on high-income countries with a vaccine pipeline for adequate coverage of their populations to commit immediately to providing

**TO BE CONT'D**

# Panel asks for 2 billion shots

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response formerly Co-chaired by Liberian ex-President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the Prime Minister of New Zealand Helleh Clark calls on high-income countries with a vaccine pipeline for adequate coverage of their populations to commit immediately to providing vaccines to the 92 low- and middle-income countries covered by COVAX.

It sets as a target, redistribution of at least one billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines not later than September 1, 2021 and another one billion doses by mid next year to ease the current pandemic, particularly in low income countries that are lagging behind in response.

The Panel notes that the world is far from meeting those targets, adding that though some commitments have been made, much more needs to be done urgently.

The recommendations, read before the United Nations General Assembly in New York, are contained in the Panel's final report titled, "Elevating political leadership for Pandemic Preparedness and Response."

It calls on the UN General Assembly to play a key role in ensuring that the international system is better able to act against future

pandemic threats.

Former President Sirleaf notes that there has long been underinvestment in pandemic preparedness, and that failure to prepare and use those preparations to respond in a timely manner, has resulted in a runaway pandemic which not only has taken millions of lives, but also is forecast to have a \$22 trillion impact on the world

Assembly through a consensus resolution requested the WHO Director-General to initiate an impartial, independent, and comprehensive review of the international health response to COVID-19.

Accordingly, DrTedros commissioned New Zealand Prime Minister Hellen Clark and former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to convene an

urges

She says globally, there have been nearly 190 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and more than 4 million deaths reported to WHO, but these shocking figures are almost certainly an underestimate of the real toll of the disease, and describes the pandemic as an ongoing disaster which the Independent Panel for

fully funded, saying, "Right now, vaccine demand outstrips supply. Even if all the existing vaccines were redistributed, the total amount available would be grossly insufficient."

She calls for rapid scale up of manufacturing of vaccines, urging WHO and partners to make this happen. "We recommended that WHO and WTO together immediately convene manufacturing countries and manufacturers to push forward on that and are delighted that such a meeting has taken place recently."

According to the New Zealand Prime Minister, vaccine inequity is a key factor in the wave of death seeing across Africa, Asia and Latin America. She says it's astonishing and self-defeating that pharmaceutical manufacturers continue not to share the technology or know-how which could help quickly scale manufacturing, adding, "Because of that, we see the temporary waiver of patents under the WTO's TRIPS agreement as a key tool which should be at countries disposal and urge a swift resolution to the protracted discussion on that."

She discloses that the Panel has called on all countries to utilize all the public health tools available to them to curb COVID-19 transmission, including masking, physical distancing, testing and contact tracing, and isolation, among others

She notes the pandemic has shown the importance of multilateralism, global leadership, and whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches, stressing the international system needs to work as a coherent and effective system as well as work across sectors and silos.

"That is why we have come to you - the UN General Assembly.

Our Panel believes that the General Assembly has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the international system is coordinated and empowered to identify and act against future diseases with pandemic potential.

The Panel proposes that a negotiated political declaration be adopted by the UN General Assembly later this year to set out road map for a stronger international system for the future.

"That roadmap should set out the architecture required and the steps to be taken to create it. It should encompass support for a new high-level oversight council, a dedicated financing mechanism, a new pandemic convention, and a redesigned, permanent mechanism replacing ACT-A based on a global public goods model", MP Clark recommends. -Story by Jonathan Browne



economy by 2025.

She says the lack of adequate social protection in many countries, which is especially needed in times of crisis, has served to widen inequalities while the most vulnerable in societies are suffering the most from the pandemic, pushing tens of millions more people into extreme poverty.

In May 2020, the World Health

Independent Panel.

"Our main report was presented to the 74th World Health Assembly in May of this year. The wide attention paid to it suggests that the world may be prepared to change course and agree to take steps to prevent a future pandemic catastrophe. Our Panel believes that it is essential that it does", Madam Sirleaf

Pandemic Preparedness and Response believes could have been averted if the countries of the world had heeded the many warnings and prepared their health and surveillance systems - and moved together in mutual transparency and solidarity.

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Prime Minister Clark, reading the report, calls for the Access to COVID Tools Accelerator or ACT-A to be

## CDC man joins Cummings' Team

The Alternative National Congress (ANC) political leader, Mr. Alexander B. Cummings' Team received a boost over the weekend when a vocal member of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) joined his rank ahead of the 2023 General elections.

Mr. Isaac VahTukpah, who was one of the loudest critical voices of the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf regime joined the Cummings' Team as Chief of Office Staff replacing Atty. Moriah Yeakula who left the country over the weekend to pursue her Masters in Law (LLM) in the United States.

Mr. Cummings who made the announcement on his official social media page noted that in addition to his (Vah) role as Chief of Office Staff, he (Vah) will help with overall Political and Communications Strategy.

"I believe I.Vah will make a good addition to our team and help me /us move to the next level," Said Cummings.

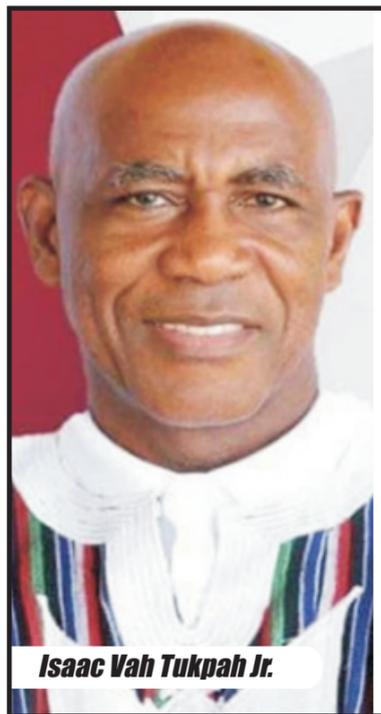
Introducing Vah,

Cummings wrote: "Like many of our ANC founding members, he is a former CDCcian and has run in several elections, the most recent one being last December senatorial bi-election in Montserado as an independent."

Cummings, however, disclosed that he will announce additional members of his office

staff in the coming weeks as "we continue to build our team for the work ahead."

"Atty. Yeakula will be missed, but fortunately will still be engaged and part of the team albeit remotely until her return." He stated adding "Let's wish Moriah much success with her studies and welcome I.Vah to the team."



Isaac Vah Tukpah Jr.



Atty Moriah Yeakula

## Harry Kane determined to join Manchester City



Tottenham Hotspur star Harry Kane is determined to join Manchester City this summer, hoping to team up with England colleague Jack Grealish at the Etihad Stadium. Grealish's departure from Aston Villa may have escalated on Saturday, after the club announced that they had agreed a deal to sign Bayer Leverkusen winger Leon Bailey as a potential replacement for their

captain. And The Telegraph reports that Kane has also made up his mind over his future, and is now pushing to leave Spurs this summer to join England teammate Grealish at the Premier League champions. The 28-year-old has very publicly stated his desire to leave north London throughout the summer, offering a very revealing interview with Gary Neville. Kane explained that he wants to win trophies in his career, and needs to sit down

with chairman Daniel Levy to discuss the club's projects. The England and Tottenham captain has seemingly come to a decision, and is waiting on a potential move to Man City, where he stands a much better chance of claiming silverware. 90min recently revealed that Spurs were not planning on selling Kane this summer, despite the pressure from their Premier League rivals. However, Kane remains unfazed by Levy's stubbornness, and even as recently as this week, he was believed to be 'confident' of sealing a move away from White Hart Lane. Tottenham have the upper hand in negotiations however, with the forward's contract running for another three seasons. The impending arrival of Grealish at the Etihad will have only convinced Kane further of the champions' ambitions to solidify their place at the top of the English tree, and finally end their quest for Champions League glory.



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