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CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA
MARKET BUYING AND SELLING RATES
LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022	L\$147.5417 /US\$1.00	L\$149.4990 /US\$1.00

These are indicative rates based on results of daily surveys of foreign exchange market in Monrovia and selected cities of Liberia. These rates are collected from the Central bank, commercial banks, parallel market and the license forex bureaux. The rates are not set by the Central Bank of Liberia.
Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL

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VOL. 11 NO. 240

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022

PRICE LD\$40.00

Liberia owes US\$9m for electricity



-Senate Pro-Tempore Chie reveals



The G.W. Harley memorial hospital in Sanniquellie

Over 10 women died in childbirth

Christmas season na come!

Watch out for lots of goodies from *Y'ello* Santa.





Continental News

Author charged over tweets about Uganda president

Award-winning Ugandan author Kakwenzu Rukirabashaija has been charged with two counts of "offensive communication" after making unflattering remarks about the president and his son on Twitter.

The prosecution alleged that he had "used his Twitter handle to disturb the peace" of President Yoweri Museveni and his son Lt-Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba.

Mr Rukirabashaija pleaded not guilty to the charges, local media report.

He had tweeted that Lt-Gen Muhoozi was "obese" and a "curmudgeon".

The author had also tweeted that "the Musevenis have imposed enormous suffering on this country".

President Museveni, 77, has been in power in Uganda since 1986, and there has long been speculation that he was grooming his son - a powerful figure in the military - to succeed him. Kakwenzu Rukirabashaija is best known

for *The Greedy Barbarian*, a satirical novel which describes high-level corruption in a fictional country, and *Banana Republic: Where Writing is Treasonous*, an account of the torture he was subjected to while in detention in 2020.

Last year, he won the Pen Pinter Prize for an international writer of courage.

Local opposition parties and

civil society groups - along with the United States and the European Union - have been calling for the writer's release since his detention on 28 December.

On Tuesday, Mr Rukirabashaija appeared in court in the capital, Kampala, for the first time since he was detained.

His lawyer, Eron Kiiza, told

the magistrate that the 33-year-old author's health was failing.

Mr Kiiza had previously alleged that Mr Rukirabashaija had been tortured in detention.

The author has been charged with two counts of "offensive communication" under the Computer Misuse Act.

The prosecution alleged that Mr Rukirabashaija had "wilfully and repeatedly used his Twitter handle to disturb

the peace of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, Gen Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, with no purpose of legitimate communication".

He is facing a similar charge in relation to the president's son.

If convicted, Mr Rukirabashaija could be imprisoned for up to a year, according to Reuters news agency.

The magistrate remanded Mr Rukirabashaija in custody, and the case was postponed until 21 January. BBC



Kakwenzu Rukirabashaija, who is best known for *The Greedy Barbarian*, won a prestigious prize last year for courageous writing

SA parliament fire suspect faces terrorism charge



State prosecutors added a charge of terrorism against Zandile Mafe on Monday

South Africa's prosecuting authorities have added a charge of terrorism against the man accused of setting the country's parliament alight last week.

The suspect is appearing in a Cape Town court to apply for bail.

Zandile Mafe has made his second court appearance following his arrest a week ago for allegedly setting the parliament on fire.

He was initially charged with two counts of arson, house breaking and theft.

Prosecutors allege that Mr Mafe was found in possession of explosive devices and have charged him under a law aimed at protecting essential infrastructure in the country.

Mr Mafe's lawyer, Luvuyo Godla, says that his client is being made a scapegoat and wants him to be released on bail.

The additional charge of terrorism is considered a Schedule Six crime in South Africa, one of the most serious, and may see Mr Mafe's request for bail denied. BBC

Biden Voices Concerns About Ethiopia Fighting in Call to Prime Minister

U.S. President Joe Biden spoke with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Monday, expressing his concern about ongoing hostilities in the country and recent airstrikes that killed dozens of civilians in the Tigray region.

The White House said the two leaders "discussed ways to accelerate dialogue

toward a negotiated ceasefire" after a year of civil war in the country that has left thousands of people dead and forced more than two million from their homes.

The White House said Biden stressed "the urgency of improving humanitarian access across Ethiopia, and the need to address the human rights concerns of all affected Ethiopians, including concerns

about detentions of Ethiopians under the state of emergency."

The Biden administration gave no indication of Abiy's reaction to the U.S. leader's concerns. The White House, in a statement about the call, said Biden "expressed concern that the ongoing hostilities, including recent air strikes, continue to cause civilian casualties and suffering, and he reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to work alongside the African Union and regional partners to help Ethiopians peacefully resolve the conflict."

"Both leaders underscored the importance of the U.S.-Ethiopia relationship, the potential to strengthen cooperation on a range of issues, and the need for concrete progress to resolve the conflict," the White House said.

Biden made the call as aid agencies ceased operations in a northwest area of Ethiopia's Tigray region, near the border with Eritrea, after an airstrike there late Friday killed 56

civilians displaced by the conflict and wounded 30 others. "Humanitarian partners suspended activities in the area due the ongoing threats of drone strikes," the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement Sunday.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front, the party that has ruled Tigray for decades, condemned the airstrike.

In statement Saturday, the

TPLF accused the Ethiopian government of targeting civilians and also accused Eritrean forces of attacking Tigrayan fighters in northwest Tigray.

Ethiopia's federal authorities did not immediately comment on the accusations or the U.N. announcement on the aid groups' withdrawal.

But, since the outbreak of the war with Tigrayan rebels in November 2020, authorities have denied targeting civilians. VOA



In this image taken through a window, U.S. President Joe Biden talks on the phone in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington

EDITORIAL

No need for bloodshed

FRACAS BETWEEN ONLOOKERS believed to be supporters of opposition leader Mr. Alexander B. Cummings of the Alternative National Congress and security forces that left at least three officers wounded last Thursday, 06 January 2022 at the Monrovia City Court, Temple of Justice in Monrovia was unfortunate and unwarranted. There was no need to have engaged in violence in what is supposedly a legal matter.

MR. CUMMINGS' BUDDY from the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) Benoni W. Urey of the All Liberia Party (ALP) has dragged him to court for allegedly altering the Constitution of the CPP. But he has denied, and it is only the court that can adjudge who is right or wrong.

THEREFORE, ONLOOKERS, SUPPORTERS and security forces had no reason to clash on the grounds of the Temple of Justice, resulting to injuries. No matter how zealous supporters may be, it does not give them right to resort to violence.

PARADOXICALLY, THE VIOLENCE came on the eve of the Bicentennial Celebration that marked Liberia 200 years since it was founded as a nation by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1822. With 200 years of existence, maturity demands that we learn to handle our differences or disagreements with a high degree of tolerance and allow the law to take its course.

IT SPELLS A bad omen for us to kick off celebration of 200 years with shedding blood for whatever reason. The Bicentennial Celebration should unite all Liberians towards a common goal - building a more prosperous nation that posterity will enjoy.

GASHING ONE ANOTHER for political or whatever reason is counterproductive to the survival of the Motherland that binds us as a people. Hence, we shame and condemn all those behind last week's violence at the Monrovia City Court. It was not necessary at all.

AFTER 200 YEARS, we Liberians ought to do better by now, rather than continue to live as beasts and salvages. Lest we forget, we have already caused much embarrassment for the sub-region and the rest of the world from our 14-year bloody civil war.

IT'S TIME TO heal and build, instead of returning to the ugly past. In this era of the novel Coronavirus that is characterized by various strains, we should be ashamed of ourselves of self-destructing and believing that other countries will abandon their most important problems to come address the mess we create for ourselves.

LIBERIANS! CAN'T WE learn from our mistakes? How has violence helped the country and better our lives? How has it improved our education and health systems or the economy?, Let's take a look: from the April 14, 1979 Rice Riot to the April 12, 1980 Military Coup and the December 24, 1989 Rebel Invasion, are we better off now than before? Surely not!

MR. UREY DID the most honorable thing by going to court to support his claims, likewise Mr. Cummings has in person, appeared twice in court to answer to charges brought against him and, has personally expressed confidence in the judiciary to dispense justice. It is but prudent that all sides exercise restraint by avoiding violence to allow the law to take its course.

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

COMMENTARY

By Dani Rodrik

Inflation Heresies

CAMBRIDGE - The specter of inflation is once again stalking the world, after a long period of dormancy during which policymakers were more likely to be preoccupied by price deflation. Now, old debates have resurfaced on how best to restore price stability.

Should policymakers step on the monetary and fiscal brakes, by reducing spending and raising interest rates - the orthodox approach to fighting inflation? Should they instead move in the opposite direction by lowering interest rates, a route followed by Turkey's central bank under the direction of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan? Or should policymakers perhaps try to intervene more directly, through price controls or by clamping down on large firms with price-setting power, as some economists and historians in the United States have argued.

If you have a knee-jerk reaction to these policies - immediately endorsing one remedy while rejecting others out of hand - think again. Economics is not a science with fixed rules. Varying conditions call for different policies. The only valid answer to policy questions in economics is: "It depends."

Orthodox remedies for inflation often have costly side effects (such as bankruptcies and rising unemployment) and have not always produced the desired effects quickly enough. Price controls have sometimes worked, during wartime for example.

Moreover, when high inflation is driven predominantly by expectations rather than "fundamentals," temporary wage-price controls can help coordinate price-setters to move to a low-inflation equilibrium. Such "heterodox" programs were successful during the 1980s in Israel and in a number of Latin American countries.

Even the idea that lower interest rates reduce inflation is not necessarily outlandish. There is a school of thought within economics - dismissed by most mainstream economists today - which associates inflation with cost-push factors, such as high interest rates (which boost the costs of working capital).

The inflation-producing effects of high interest rates is called the "Cavallo effect," after former Argentine finance minister Domingo Cavallo, who discussed it in his 1977 Harvard doctoral thesis. (Ironically, Cavallo would resort to a very different inflation-fighting strategy - based on a fixed exchange rate and full currency convertibility - when he assumed office in perennially high-inflation Argentina during the 1990s.) The theory has even received some empirical support in particular cases.

That is why ridiculing currently unfashionable ideas on inflation as "science denial" akin to rejecting COVID-19 vaccines, as some prominent economists have done, is so misplaced. In fact, when a particular claim about the real world appears inconsistent with existing theories, this is often an invitation for a young, smart economist to demonstrate that the claim can indeed be justified, under certain specific conditions. The true science of economics is contextual, not universal.

What might a contextual approach to inflation imply today?

Current inflation in the US and many other advanced economies differs significantly from the

inflation of the late 1970s. It is neither chronic (so far), nor driven by wage-price spirals and backward indexation.

Inflationary pressure seems to derive largely from a transitory set of factors, such as the pandemic-related reallocation of spending from services to goods, and supply-chain and other disruptions to production. While expansionary monetary and fiscal policies have boosted incomes, these policies, too, are temporary. The alternative would have been a dramatic collapse in employment and living standards.

Under current circumstances, then, policymakers in developed countries should not over-react to the spike in inflation. As the historian Adam Tooze has argued, transitory inflation calls for a restrained response, whether through regulation or monetary policy.

The best argument against price controls is not that they are "incompatible with science" but that nothing so radical needs to be considered for now. The same caution would apply to orthodox policy as well: central banks should be patient before raising interest rates.

What about Erdogan's continued insistence that high inflation is the result rather than the cause of high interest rates? The validity of his argument has always been in doubt, given that Turkey's macroeconomic imbalances are legion and have been building up for quite some time.

Even when an argument cannot be settled beforehand, facts eventually allow us to distinguish among theories that do and do not make sense in a given place. In Turkey's case, the evidence that has accumulated since policymakers embarked on Erdogan's experiment speaks loudly and clearly.

In particular, despite the lowering of the Turkish central bank's policy rate - the interest rate that the monetary authorities control directly - market interest rates have continued to rise. Depositors and savers have demanded higher rates, driving up the price of credit for borrowers.

This undermines the argument that lower policy rates could effectively reduce production costs for firms. It indicates that the rise in interest rates reflects more fundamental problems with the economy, uncertainty about the conduct of economic policy, and higher inflation expectations for the future.

Sometimes, as in Turkey's case, the orthodox economic argument is indeed the correct one. Experiments that depart from conventional policy can be costly. But this does not mean that there are universal rules in economics or that the prevailing view among mainstream economists should determine policy. Otherwise, some of the most important policy innovations in history - think of the New Deal in the US or industrial policy in post-World War II East Asia - would never have occurred.

In fact, today's dominant monetary policy framework, inflation targeting, is itself a product of the peculiar political and economic circumstances that prevailed in New Zealand during the 1980s. It sat uncomfortably with the theory of monetary policy of the time.

Economists should be humble when they recommend (or dismiss) various inflation-fighting strategies. And while policymakers must pay attention to economic evidence and arguments, they should be skeptical when the economists who advise them display excessive confidence.

OPINION

By Lakhdar Brahimi

How to Prevent Famine in Afghanistan

As Afghanistan slides further into a devastating economic and humanitarian crisis, the United Nations is the one global actor that can help the country pull through. The international community must deliver aid where it is most needed, and support national reconciliation and peace processes for as long as necessary.

PARIS - In August, the world watched in shock as the Western-backed Afghan government rapidly collapsed and the country spiraled into chaos, culminating in the Taliban's takeover of the capital, Kabul, and return to power after nearly 20 years.

Since then, Afghanistan has faded from global view. But almost nine million Afghans are now at risk of famine, and a further 14 million are facing acute hunger, owing to a drought and an economic collapse triggered by the sudden suspension of foreign aid. The World Health Organization warns that one million Afghan children are at risk of dying this winter.

In December, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution exempting humanitarian aid from sanctions against the Taliban. But that is just one piece of the puzzle in addressing the humanitarian and economic crisis in Afghanistan. The global community is facing an urgent challenge to prevent mass starvation and avoid a complete collapse of basic services.

The Council on State Fragility, of which I am a member alongside prominent global leaders, is calling on the international community not to abandon the people of Afghanistan, and to act now to head off imminent famine. Specifically, we urge world leaders to focus on three key imperatives.

First, as Afghanistan slides further into a devastating economic and humanitarian crisis, the UN - the one global actor that can help the country pull through - can still support Afghans, even as its member states continue to debate whether to recognize the Taliban government. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, acting with the full backing of the Security Council, should strengthen the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and send a special envoy to be based in Kabul with UN agencies' staff. Furthermore, Guterres should task the UNAMA with maintaining clear and consistent communication channels with the Taliban leadership and ensuring an integrated approach to humanitarian, development, and peace efforts.

The UN and its agencies are not new to such challenges. Similarly strong and coordinated UN responses have had a clear impact in other difficult contexts, including in North Korea, Yemen, and Sudan. In Afghanistan, UN agencies have excellent local staff: well-trained, experienced, and devoted men and women, many of whom successfully delivered aid programs under the Taliban's previous regime in the 1990s. They have done the same in Taliban-controlled areas in the recent past.

Second, inclusivity is essential to a stable, lasting peace. An inclusive political settlement in Afghanistan remains as necessary today as it was before the Taliban retook control of the country. Rather than writing off the Afghan peace process as dead in the water, the international community should view it as a multi-year, adaptive, and ongoing process of bringing all sides together to build bridges and reach a common understanding regarding the country's future.

The winner-takes-all politics that has long plagued Afghanistan must be avoided at all costs, because exclusion will only fuel endless cycles of conflict. National consensus-building mechanisms, chief among them a well-prepared and well-led Loya Jirga - a traditional gathering of ethnic, tribal, and religious leaders - can help to foster agreement among the country's communities and lead to the patient construction of the new dispensation Afghanistan needs.

Lastly, Afghanistan's immediate neighbors and near-neighbors - primarily Iran, Pakistan, China, and India, as well as key regional actors such as Qatar and Turkey - have a critical role to play in stabilizing the country. The international community should urge these countries to contribute to peace efforts in Afghanistan, and support existing constructive engagement by regional players, such as Qatar, that have established a track record as trusted interlocutors between the Taliban and the outside world.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is severe, and millions of lives are at stake this winter. The international community, with strong UN leadership, can and should step up to support Afghans at this challenging time. The world must deliver aid where it is most needed, and support national reconciliation and peace processes for as long as necessary.

O-P-E-D

By Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

Whatever Happened to Soft Power?

With the news dominated by dramatic examples of countries using coercion, intimidation, and payoffs to advance their interests, the power of attraction would seem to be irrelevant in international relations. But it still matters, and governments ignore its potential at their peril.

CAMBRIDGE - As 2021 drew to a close, Russia had massed troops near its border with Ukraine; China had flown military jets near Taiwan; North Korea was still pursuing its nuclear-weapons program; and Taliban fighters were patrolling the streets of Kabul. Seeing all this, friends asked me: "Whatever happened to soft power?"

One answer is that it can be found in other recent events, such as President Joe Biden's virtual Summit for Democracy, which was attended by representatives from more than 100 countries. Having been excluded, China took to the airwaves and social media to proclaim that it had a different and more stable type of democracy than the one being extolled by the United States. What we were seeing was a great-power competition over soft power, understood as the ability to influence others by attraction rather than by coercion or payment.

When I first wrote about soft power in 1990, I was seeking to overcome a deficiency in how analysts thought about power generally. But the concept gradually acquired more of a political resonance. In some respects, the underlying thought is not new; similar concepts can be traced back to ancient philosophers such as Lao Tse. Nor does soft power pertain only to international behavior or to the US. Many small countries and organizations also possess the power to attract; and in democracies, at least, soft power is an essential component of leadership.

Still, the concept is now generally associated with international relations. As the European Union developed into its current form, European leaders increasingly made use of the term. And ever since 2007, when then-Chinese President Hu Jintao declared that China must develop its soft power, the government has invested billions of dollars in that quest. The challenge now is for China to implement an effective smart-power strategy. If it can effectively pair its growing hard power with soft power, it will be less likely to provoke counter-balancing coalitions.

Soft power is not the only or even the most important source of power, because its effects tend to be slow and indirect. But to ignore or neglect it is a serious strategic and analytic mistake. The Roman Empire's power rested not only on its legions, but also on the attraction of Roman culture and law. Similarly, as a Norwegian analyst once described it, the American presence in Western Europe after World War II was "an empire by invitation." No barrage of artillery brought down the Berlin Wall; it was removed by hammers and bulldozers wielded by people who had been touched by Western soft power.

Smart political leaders have long understood that values can create power. If I can get you to want what I want, I will not have to force you to do what you do not want to do. If a country represents values that others find attractive, it can economize on the use of sticks and carrots.

A country's soft power comes primarily from three sources: its culture; its political values, such as democracy and human rights (when it upholds them); and its policies (when they are seen as legitimate because they are framed with an awareness of others' interests). A government can influence others through the example of how it behaves at home (such as by protecting a free press and the right to protest), in international institutions (consulting others and fostering multilateralism), and through its foreign policy (such as by promoting development and human rights).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, China has tried to use so-called "vaccine diplomacy" to bolster its soft power, which had been damaged by its secretive handling of the initial outbreak of the coronavirus in Wuhan. The government's efforts have been aimed at reinforcing its Belt and Road Initiative, which supports infrastructure projects in many parts of the world.

But international polls show that the results have been disappointing. In measures of attractiveness, China lags behind the US on all continents except Africa, where the two countries are tied. One reason for China's lower level of soft power is its heavy-handed use of hard power in pursuit of an increasingly nationalist foreign policy. This has been on full display in its economic punishment of Australia and in its military operations on the Himalayan border with India.

China has a smart-power problem. After all, it is difficult to practice vaccine diplomacy and "wolf-warrior diplomacy" (aggressive, coercive browbeating of smaller countries) at the same time.

True, international polls showed that the US also suffered a decline in soft power during Donald Trump's presidency. But, fortunately, America is more than its government. Unlike hard-power assets (such as armed forces), many soft-power resources are separate from the government and are only partly responsive to its purposes. For example, Hollywood movies showcasing independent women or protesting minorities inspire others around the world. So, too, does the charitable work of US foundations and the freedom of inquiry at American universities.

Firms, universities, foundations, churches, and protest movements develop soft power of their own. Sometimes their activities will reinforce official foreign-policy goals, and sometimes they will be at odds with them. Either way, these private sources of soft power are increasingly important in the age of social media.

The January 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol certainly damaged US soft power. But those who would mourn the death of American democracy prematurely should bear in mind that the 2020 election drew an unprecedented turnout despite the pandemic. The American people are still able to unseat a demagogue in a free and fair election.



MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

REQUEST for EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)
FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICE (INDIVIDUAL)
(PUBLIC PERCEPTION SURVEY)
(RFP No. MFD/PROJ/IC/01/2022)



1. **Background:**

Prior to 2006, the Liberian Government was perceived to have been rampantly corrupt, beclouded with deep-rooted secrecy, use of power that marginalized and excluded the public from active participation in the governance and management of state resources and the economy as well as the non-existence of any legislation or public policy that promotes transparency and accountability in the public sector. These, amongst many other reasons led to the 14 years of civil war which ended in 2003. Following the end of the civil war, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which was consummated in Accra, Ghana, and a National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) was installed on October 3, 2003 with support from a 15,000-strong member peacekeeping force under the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The NTGL successfully ended its tenure, and with support of the International Community a democratically elected government was formed through the ballots and installed on January 16, 2006.

Being cognizant of the secrecy and lack of transparency and accountability of Liberia over a century, the new Government pledged to subscribe to the principles of public participation, transparency and accountability in governance. Hence, a declaration of war on corruption, terming it as "public enemy number one" and putting an end to the deep-rooted, prolonged secrecy of doing-business-as-usual. This meant that the government would be "open", especially in all of its financial matters. The first Draft National Budget of FY2006/2007 made public and ignited interesting public debates, enhanced by the opinion of the General Auditing Commission (GAC). In that draft national budget, there was deliberate allocations of US\$1 million for the exclusive use for local government development for all 15 counties, in the form of county development fund (CDF). However, the lessons learned from these public policy actions was that there was no legislation to support and sustain the government efforts.

In an apparent clear attempt to address the challenges experienced over the years, the Government of Liberia embarked upon an ambitious public sector reforms agenda, which included the introduction of a credible public financial management system that promotes public access to fiscal data, a more open government, public participation, transparency and accountability. This led to the passage of the Budget Transfer Law in 2008, and subsequently the enactment of the first ever public finance management (PFM) law in 2009, which was amended and restated in 2019. In this law, Section 19, Subsections (1)(2) state that: (1) The Proposed Budget will be made available to the public immediately following its submission to the Legislature; (2) The Approved Budget will also be available to the public immediately following its publication into handbill.

With these accomplishments, the International Budget Partnership (IBP) in 2008 admitted Liberia into its global Open Budget Survey (OBS) for the first time ever, rating Liberia at 8% on the transparency scale. In order to sustain and improve upon the gains made and to implement the new provisions of PFM Law on Public Access, the government established the Open Budget Initiative (OBI) in 2012, erected an electronic digital billboard at the Ministry of Finance, launched the budget outreach program across the country, with the production and distribution of the first edition of the Citizen's Guide to the National Budget and formally signed on to the principles of Public Participation, Transparency and Accountability with the Open Government Partnership (OGP) the same year.

These latest efforts led to Liberia's membership and participation into the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the International Budget Partnership (IBP), Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Global Assessment and most recently in 2019, the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT). Under the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Agreement, Liberia is required to produce annually and make publically available, in a timely manner, 10,000 copies of the Citizen's Guide to the National Budget, hold 15 town halls meetings, conduct 15 live phone-in radio talk-shows to discuss and respond to questions from the public on its fiscal reports, including the national budget, and to publish in at least five (5) widely read local dailies the budget timetable and the national budget, and the publication of all of its fiscal reports and key information regarding the preparation of national budget on government websites. Also, under the OBS, Liberia is required to publish and make available to the public eight (8) types of budget documents in a machine-readable format free-of-cost, and in a timely manner as set by law.

The Open Budget Initiative (OBI) is the mechanism for achieving Government's fiscal transparency goals. This mechanism is designed for disseminating fiscal information to the public and budget outreach strategies annually. Since the establishment of the OBI, a number of initiatives were designed and implemented, including the publication of Budget Calendar (Timetable), Pre Budget Statement, Executive Budget Proposal, Enacted Budget, Citizen's Budget, Mid-Year Review, In-Year Report, Audit Reports and End-of-Year Report through the print and electronic media outlets and on government websites. Other program undertaken include training of civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in understanding of budget classifications, revenue sources, donor budget support, special allocations for counties through focused group discussions, public debates of the budget through town hall meetings with high schools, universities and communities, intellectual forums at various established community centers and live phone-in talk-shows on community radios.

Since its admission in 2008 into the Open Budget Survey which is periodically conducted every two years by the IBP, an offspring of the World Bank Group, Liberia has participated in six (6) rounds of the OBS, a result which is used by development partners (the World Bank, EU, SIDA, USAID, AfDB and the IMF) to determine the size of annual budget and off-budget support to the Government of Liberia. As of 2016, current ratings of Liberia's transparency index in the various assessments of the OBS, PEFA and U.S. State Department Fiscal Transparency Report (USDFTR) indicate a decline in fiscal transparency, accountability and public participation, especially considering the speed with which improvements were achieved from the early start. For instance, the most recent index scores of Liberia from the OBS, PEFA and USDFTR as of 2019 indicate a declining trend, largely due to untimely publication of the required eight (8) budget documents, limited or no adoption of a public participation mechanism to the national budget process, failure of budget document contents to meet minimum standards of machine-readable formats, and non-existence of a dedicated citizen's budget portal that is accessible with ease, free-of-cost, user-friendly and interactive. In the most recent OBS report of 2019, Liberia made slight improvement, from 36% to 38% on its transparency scale but with a number of recommendations for better improvements.

2. **The Assignment**

2.1 **Brief Description of the Assignment**

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning allocated in the Special National Budget for FY2021 fund to support its fiscal transparency initiatives. One of the primary objectives of the fund is to implement programs with higher outcomes of improving the transparency index of the Government. Hence, portion of the fund will be applied to eligible payments under the program to hire a consultant to conduct a Public Perception Survey as part of preliminary works which would inform the contents design of a dedicated open budget portal for citizens, residents and other interested individuals to have ease of access to government's information. GOL envisages a portal that is easily accessible, user-friendly, interactive with visuals and infographics and supported by various kinds of social media platforms and capable of



MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

REQUEST for EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)
FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICE (FIRM)
(WEB PORTAL DEVELOPMENT)
(RFP No. MFD/PROJ/CONS/01/2022)



1. **Background:**

The years prior to 2006, the Liberian Government has been perceived to have been rampantly corrupt, beclouded with deep-rooted secrecy, use of power that marginalized and excluded the public from active participation in the governance and management of state resources and the economy as well as the non-existence of any legislation, law or public policy that promotes transparency and accountability in the public sector. These, amongst many other reasons led to the 14 years of civil war which ended in 2003. Following the end of the civil war, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which was consummated in Accra, Ghana, in which a two-year tenure of a transitional government was formed, was signed between all warring factions and a National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) was installed on October 3, 2003 with support from a 15,000-member peacekeeping force under the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The NTGL successfully ended its tenure, and with support of the International Community through the UNMIL, a democratically elected government was formed through the ballots and installed on January 16, 2006.

Being cognizant of the secrecy and lack of transparency and accountability of the Government of Liberia over a century, the new Government pledged to subscribe to the principles of public participation, transparency and accountability in governance. Hence, a declaration of war on corruption, terming it as "public enemy number one" and putting an end to the deep-rooted, prolonged secrecy of doing business. This meant that the government would be "open", especially in all of its financial matters. The first Draft National Budget of FY2006/2007 of the government then was soon made public and ignited interesting public debates, enhanced by the opinion of the General Auditing Commission (GAC). In that draft national budget, there was deliberate allocations of US\$1 million for the exclusive use for local government development for all 15 counties, in the form of county development fund (CDF). However, the lessons learned from these public policy actions was that there was no legislation to support and sustain the government efforts.

In an apparent clear attempt to address the challenges experienced over the years, the Government of Liberia embarked upon an ambitious public sector reforms agenda, which included the introduction of a credible public financial management system that promotes public access to fiscal data, a more open government, public participation, transparency and accountability. This led to the passage of the Budget Transfer Law in 2008, and subsequently the enactment of the first ever public finance management (PFM) law in 2009. In this PFM Law of 2009, Section 14, Subsections (1)(2) state that: (1) The Proposed Budget will be made available to the public immediately following its submission to the Legislature; (2) The Approved Budget will also be available to the public immediately following its publication into handbill.

With these accomplishments, the International Budget Partnership (IBP) in 2008 admitted Liberia into the global Open Budget Survey (OBS) for the first time ever, rating Liberia at 8% on the transparency scale. In order to sustain and improve upon the gains made and to implement the new provisions of PFM Law on Public Access, the government established the Open Budget Initiative (OBI) in 2012, erected an electronic digital billboard at the Ministry of Finance, launched the budget outreach programme across the country, with the production and distribution of the first edition of the Citizen's Guide to the National Budget and formally signed on to the principles of Public Participation, Transparency and Accountability with the Open Government Partnership (OGP) the same year.

These latest efforts led to Liberia's membership and participation into the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the International Budget Partnership (IBP), Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Global Assessment and most recently in 2019, the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT). Under the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Agreement, Liberia is required to produce annually and make publicly available, in a timely manner, 10,000 copies of the Citizen's Guide to the National Budget, hold 15 town halls, conduct 15 live phone-in radio talk-shows to discuss and respond to questions from the public on its fiscal reports, including the national budget, and to publish in at least five (5) widely read local dailies the budget timetable and the national budget, and the publication of all of its fiscal reports and key information regarding the preparation of national budget on government websites. Also, under the OBS, Liberia is required to publish and make available to the public eight (8) types of budget documents in a machine-readable format free-of-cost, and in a timely manner as set by law.

The Open Budget Initiative (OBI) is the mechanism for achieving Government's fiscal transparency goals. This mechanism is designed for implementing budget outreach strategies annually for disseminating fiscal information to the public. Since the establishment of the OBI, a number of initiatives were designed and implemented, including the publication of Budget Calendar (Timetable), Pre Budget-Statement, Executive Budget Proposal, Enacted Budget, Citizen's Budget, Mid-Year Review, In-Year Report, Audit Reports and End-of-Year Report through the print and electronic media outlets and on government websites. Other programmes undertaken include training of civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in understanding of budget classifications, revenue sources, donor budget support, special allocations for counties through focused group discussions, public debates of the budget through town hall meetings with high schools, universities and communities, intellectual forums at various established community centers and live phone-in talk-shows on community radios.

Since its admission in 2008 into the Open Budget Survey which is periodically conducted every two years by the IBP, an offspring of the World Bank Group, Liberia has participated in six (6) rounds of the OBS, a result which is used by development partners (the World Bank, EU, SIDA, USAID, AfDB and the IMF) to determine the size of annual on-budget support to the Government of Liberia. As of 2016, current ratings of Liberia's transparency index in the various assessments of the OBS, PEFA and U.S. State Department Fiscal Transparency Report (USDFTR) indicate a satisfactory progress but not significant enough, especially considering the speed with which improvements were achieved from the early start. For instance, the most recent index scores of Liberia from the OBS, PEFA and USDFTR as of 2019 indicate a declining trend, largely due to untimely publication of the required eight (8) budget documents, limited or no adoption of a public participation mechanism to the national budget process, failure of budget document contents to meet minimum standards of machine-readable formats, and non-existence of a dedicated citizen's budget portal that is accessible with ease, free-of-cost, user-friendly and interactive. In the most recent OBS report of 2019, Liberia made slight improvement, from 36% to 38% on its transparency scale but with a number of recommendations for better improvements.

2. **The Assignment**

2.1 **Brief Description of the Assignment**

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning allocated in the Special National Budget for FY2021 fund to support programmes under its fiscal transparency initiatives. One of the primary objectives of the fund is to implement programmes with higher outcomes of improving the transparency index of the Government. Hence, portion of the fund will be used to begin some preliminary works for the construction of a dedicated open budget portal for citizens and residents to have ease of access to the web portal. Therefore, part of the proceeds of this fund will be applied to eligible payments under the programme to hire a firm to construct a dedicated Citizen's Budget Portal that is accessible with ease, user-friendly, interactive with visuals and infographics, supported by various kinds of social media platforms—with the flexibility of providing feedbacks, built with high security features and sensitivity—ability to

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Opposition's absence at Bicentennial kick-off bothers LCC

House invites Youth and Sports Minister

By Lincoln G. Peters

By Bridgett Milton

The President of the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC), Bishop Kortu Brown has expressed concern over the absence of opposition politicians at the launch of Liberia's Bicentennial program Friday, 7 January

United States of America arrived on the Providence Island that lies between Central Monrovia and Bushrod Island on 7 January 1822 after a difficult and hazardous journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

Speaking in an interview after the program over the weekend, Bishop Brown said he was

Pleased with the level of turnout and reception, the Liberian Clergyman said he sees the initiative as an effort to give new vigor to the spirit of unity through historical reflection and engagements.

At the same time, Bishop Brown pointed out that the absence of the opposition political leaders did not augur well in the push for a reconciled nation.

"All of us should work together towards reconciliation to promote unity - it is a timely call," he said, adding that he hopes that the Steering Committee of the Bicentennial can reach out more to the opposition community.

Meanwhile, Bishop Brown said he was thrilled by the statement delivered by President Weah extending an invitation to all political parties' leaders to the next program due 14 February.

"I think that the government and [the] committee should work on that, to reach out to other national leaders to ensure that at the next program they are present," Bishop Brown urged.

Speaking further, he said the Bicentennial will help inspire something that will go a long way in trying to revive

The House of Representatives has invited the Minister of Youth and Sports D. Zoegar Wilson to appear before the House leadership to comment on alleged misuse of the Sanniouellie Youth Resource Center by county sports coordinator Mr. William S. Mandian.

The invitation to Minister Wilson followed a communication from Nimba County district #2 Representative Prince O. S.

abroad is being used for private programs without accountability.

Representative Tokpah said Mr. Mandian has refused to work with the youth leadership, for which purpose the Center was built, and that he has regularly rented the premises for workshops and seminars, generating funds for his personal benefit.

According to the Nimba County lawmaker, his involvement in settling the matter has been disrespected



2022 held on Providence Island.

Liberia's National Bicentennial Steering Committee is holding a yearlong event in honor of Africa's first republic which was founded when a group of freed black slaves from the

bothered when he did not see other Liberians at the program.

"This is a good initiative and I am bothered when I do not see other Liberians. Their absence shows that we still have work to do to consolidate national cohesion, reconciliation and peace," said Bishop Brown.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Min. D. Zoegar Wilson

Tokpah, informing his colleagues about a situation in his district that has the potential to undermine peace amongst the youth.

Rep. Tokpah narrates that on November 13, 2021, his office received a written complaint from concerned youths of Sanniouellie, about misuse of the Resource Center by Mr. Mandian.

He said the facility, constructed thru donations from eminent citizens of Nimba both at home and

more than twice by Mr. Mandian, thereby leaving the situation to become a potential threat despite aborting several attempted demonstrations on said property by youths.

He said without respect to his office and all stakeholders, the Minister of Youth and Sports Zoegar Wilson called his phone and allegedly challenged all of his decisions on the matter without any due diligence.

- Editing by Jonathan Browne

Cape Mount violence angers Senator

By Lincoln G. Peters

Grand Cape Mount County Senator Simeon Taylor has expressed dismay over what appears to be a non-compliance posture he reportedly got from Liberia National Police (LNP) authorities and the head of the National Chiefs and Elders Council of Liberia, Chief ZanzanKarwor, allegedly ignoring his mediation effort when protesters were being tear gassed.

"They fired arm yesterday and I heard the sound, but whether it was teargas, I can't tell. The shooting sound in Grand Cape Mount County, Kinjor, was very heavy and [I] was on the scene. I heard it. I am not telling you they say," Senator Taylor said during conversation with local broadcaster OK FM Tuesday, 11 January 2022.

Senator Taylor claimed that when he got on the scene and saw his people



Senator Simeon Taylor

protesting, he tried negotiating with them, but Chief Karwor responded by saying that they were not there to negotiate, and the police moved on and fired tear gas to disperse the protesters.

"I cannot say ... that the police did not shoot live bullets.

However, I heard a sound of a gun but whether it was a teargas sound or bullet, I can't tell," Senator Taylor added.

According to Senator Taylor, Police Inspector General Col. Patrick Sudue allegedly gave instruction to

his deputy for operations Col. Marvin Sackor to move in and disperse the protesting citizens.

Taylor lamented that when he engaged Sudue, the police chief noted that they were shooting teargas.

But the Cape Mount Senator said he found it difficult to believe what the police chief had said because the shooting sound was too heavy.

It was reported on Monday, 10 January 2022 that one person was feared dead and a three - month - old child had allegedly sustained major injuries after police officers reportedly fired what was

alleged to be live bullets at dispersed protesters at Bea Mountain mining company in Kinjor, Grand Cape Mount County.

But the LNP has since clarified that it did not fire live bullets, saying tear gas was discharged to disperse protesters.

Reports say the protest was organized by aggrieved residents of the county from the affected areas in the gold camp who accused the management of Bea Mountain Mining Company of carrying on bad labor practices.

Local journalists in the county reported that following minutes of police presence among the

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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EPA wants robust action plan in NDCs sectors

The national focus person on Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Mr. Arthur Becker, has stressed urgent need for a robust action plan within the nine Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) sectors in the implementation of the Measurement Reporting and Verification (MRV) System of the EPA.

He notes that the System is now a cardinal focus of the government that is making efforts to measure up on all targets that are indicated in the nine sectors of the NDCs.

Speaking on Monday, January 10, 2022, in Monrovia at a one-day refresher training on the functionality of the MRV System, Mr. Becker explained the 2015 NDCs had five sectors namely;

and targets set up with the NDCs at the sectorial level.”

“This is a continuous process, because five years from now, we will be reviewing our progress to add [to] those areas that will need improvement with the MRV System platform.”

The head of the environmental science program at the University of Liberia Graduate School, Dr. Charles Asumana, giving an overview of the refresher training, said the existing institutional arrangements of the MRV system needs to be strengthened and maintained so that parties can improve in the frequency, quality of the content of the report.

He said there is a need to address the national coordinating process that underpins not only the availability of the national capacity to yield more

countries are now charged with the responsibility to report on their NDCs sectors through the MRV System.

Speaking on behalf of Conservation International (CI), the lead implementer of the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) project Mr. Nelson Jallah, lauded participants for taking off time to sit in the training to enhance their capacities.

However, he urged participants to take seriously the knowledge acquired and pass it on to their respective sectorial hubs for proper implementation as well as to help build the capacity of others for the growth and development of Liberia.

This capacity building chain process of the MRV, he said will contribute immensely to reporting on Green House Gas Emissions Inventory.

Making remarks on behalf of the participants, Mr. MonyanFlomo of the Ministry of Mines and Energy described the MRV trainings as impactful, adding that he as an individual can boast of imputing data into the MRV system, something he previously had no idea of.

“I am going today to give back to my department at the Ministry, the Energy department what I have been thought, this spirit of knowledge sharing will smoothen our work as a department”, Flomo assured.

A female participant, Madam Vermon Lloyd from the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) said the trainings have been fruitful and beneficiary in terms of building their capacities in data collection and finding solutions to mitigating climate impacts on the ecosystem.

She explained that the trainings enable line ministries and agencies to establish hubs that are charged with the oversight responsibility to collect data as per institutional functionalities.

Madam Lloyd stressed a need for collective execution of duties so as to have profitable results, adding, “Coordination makes work easier”.

The term MRV originally came from the Bali Action Plan (BAP); in Bali, Indonesia, the basic understanding of the BAP is that climate change mitigation actions, mainly Greenhouse Gas emissions

Lonestar MTN sets the record straight about IDs and SIM Cards

In the 11 January edition of Frontpage Africa online, the newspaper reported that a customer, seeking to register his SIM at our Broad Street, Monrovia location was not able to update his SIM Card because he presented a passport and not National ID card. The article also reported that Lonestar Cell MTN staff accept \$5 USD fees for customers to obtain National ID.

We would like to set the record straight.

Identification Card.

To comply with this agreement and to provide convenience to customer experience, Lonestar Cell MTN has stationed National Identification Registry and Immigration agents in our service centers so customers can register for a National ID card. The NIR agents collect the \$5 fee for the National ID Card, not Lonestar Cell MTN Staff.

Lonestar Cell MTN regrets any inconvenience this has caused the Press Union of Liberia



Participants of the EPA refresher training

Agriculture, Energy, Waste, Transport and Forestry but it was revised and four additional sectors were included such as Fishery, Coastal Zones, Health and Industry.

He said these are sectors that cannot be overlooked relative to the environment.

Speaking on behalf of EPA Boss, Professor Wilson Tarpeh, he stressed that Liberia as a country must take up the challenge of meeting its NDCs targets because the MRV platform serves as a report card to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

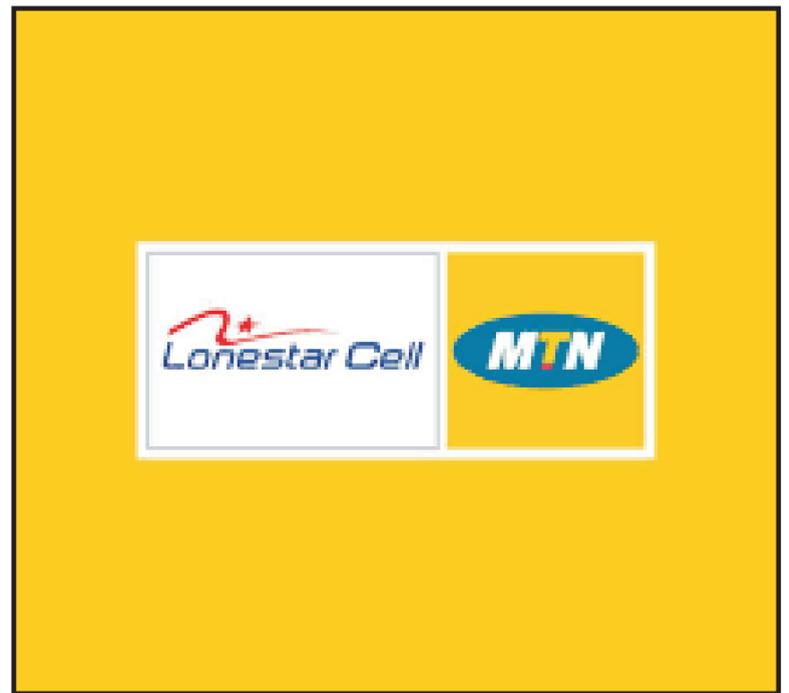
Mr. Becker: “We hope that this refresher training widens the understanding of technicians so that they can complement our efforts that we were able to ensure ideas

technically robust reports, but also the ability to meet the frequency of submissions.

“We must support technicians’ ability to report relevant information in the Measurement Reporting and Verification (MRV) of national report; climate change reduction is a must and it must start with reporting on our MRV Platform”, Dr. Asumana stressed.

“We are also charged with the responsibility to ensure that these technicians understand the relevance and institutional arrangement of the climate MRV System and, to expose them to key MRV procedural issues, we have a goal to achieve a sustainable reporting mechanism and it must be accomplished.”

He reminded that no more flexibility is given to least developed countries, as all



In November 2020, as reported by Frontpage Africa in its article entitled, “Liberia: LTA, NIR, Lonestar MTN, Orange Liberia Launch New SIM/ RUIM Card Registration System,” the Liberia Telecommunication Authority, the National Identification Registry (NIR) and both MNOs signed a Memorandum of Understanding requiring everyone who has a SIM Card at any GSM to have a National

Secretary General during his visit to our Service Center. He has been invited on January 12, 2022, at 9am to Lonestar Cell MTN HQ to rectify update/register/ his SIM Card challenges.

Lonestar Cell MTN also regrets that Frontpage Africa would report on a story without checking the facts and giving all sides an opportunity to comment.



reduction shall be implemented accordingly.

The training was held under the auspices of the Environmental Protection

Agency in collaboration with Conservation International with funding from Global Environment Facility (GEF).
Editing by Jonathan Browne

Français

Mali : les autorités de transition appellent à la mobilisation mais restent ouvertes «au dialogue»

Après les sanctions adoptées dimanche par la Cédéao et l'Uemoa, les autorités de transition maliennes ont réagi en dénonçant des mesures « illégales ». Les soutiens de la junte militaire, au pouvoir depuis le coup d'État du 20 août, estiment que la souveraineté du peuple malien est menacée et appellent à la mobilisation.

Le gouvernement de transition ne semblait pas prêt pour la conciliation, dénonçant dans un communiqué diffusé dès dimanche soir des sanctions « illégales » et « inhumaines ». Pour le gouvernement de transition, la Cédéao et l'Uemoa sont même « instrumentalisées par des puissances extra régionales aux desseins inavoués ». Comprendre : la France et les pays occidentaux partenaires du Mali.

À l'issue d'un Conseil des ministres extraordinaire ce lundi soir, le gouvernement de transition appelle dans un communiqué l'ensemble de la population à une mobilisation générale sur tout le territoire vendredi 14 janvier, décide l'élaboration d'un « plan de

riposte » pour sauvegarder la souveraineté du pays et invite les partenaires sociaux à la trêve « pour faire face aux défis de l'heure ». Ces décisions s'ajoutent aux mesures déjà adoptées par réciprocité - fermeture des frontières aériennes et terrestres avec les pays de la Cédéao et rappel des ambassadeurs dans les pays membres.

Cependant, dans un discours à la télévision d'État ORTM, le chef de la transition AssimiGoïta s'est dit « ouvert au dialogue », tout en appelant à la fois les Maliens à la mobilisation et la Cédéao à une

analyse approfondie de la situation. « La complexité de la situation du Mali n'a pas été prise en compte », a-t-il jugé. Sans évoquer de nouvelle proposition.

Des Maliens appellent à la mobilisation

Les autorités de transition appellent donc à la vigilance et à la mobilisation de tous les Maliens, mais aussi des forces nationales de défense et de sécurité face à l'activation de la Force militaire en attente de

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Nimba : Les opposants à l'accord minier d'ArcelorMittal s'en prennent à leurs élus

La réélection du sénateur prince Yormie Johnson et d'autres législateurs du comté de Nimba aux élections de 2023 est désormais incertaine d'autant plus que les citoyens du comté de Nimba ont décidé de ne pas les reconduire en raison de leur rôle présumé dans l'accord de développement minier d'ArcelorMittal qui, selon eux, n'est dans l'intérêt du

comté.

Les gens du Nimba ont pris cette décision le week-end dernier lors d'une grande conférence sur les opérations d'ArcelorMittal à Sanniquellie dans le comté.

Le président de Nimba Kwado, M. Isaac Dahn, qui a présidé la conférence, a accusé certains représentants dont Joseph NyanSomwarbi de la circonscription électorale n°3 et Prince O.S. Tokpah de la

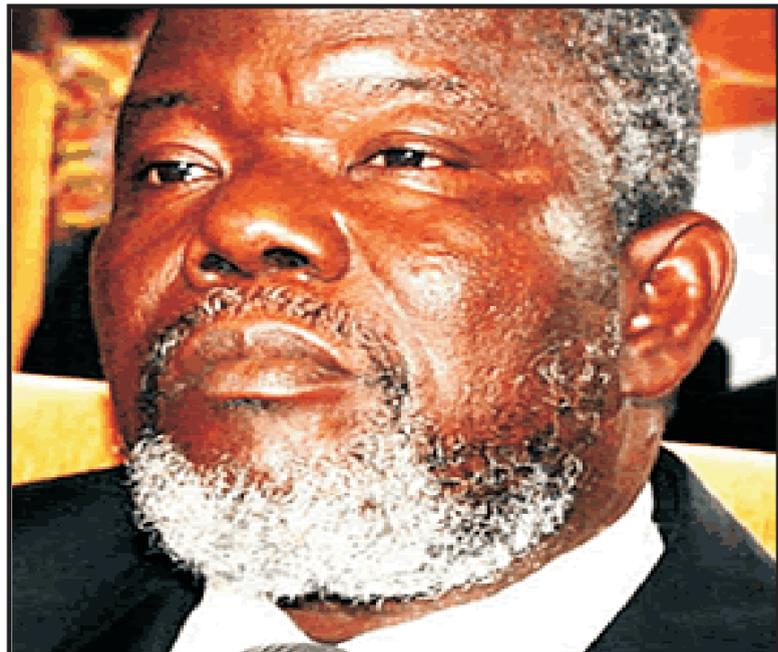
circonscription électorale n° 6 du comté de Nimba d'avoir signé l'Accord de Développement Minier d'ArcelorMittal qui accorde à l'entreprise neuf années supplémentaires d'exploitation minière.

Quant au sénateur Prince Y. Johnson, il ne s'intéresse que de son intérêt personnel au détriment du développement du comté, selon le président de Nimba Kwado.

"Ne votez pas pour ces représentants ni pour le sénateur Prince Johnson pour le rôle qu'ils continuent de jouer dans les opérations d'ArcelorMittal dans le comté de Nimba", a-t-il dit.

L'année dernière, les membres de la Chambre des représentants ont promulgué l'Accord sur le développement minier, en attendant l'approbation du Sénat libérien.

ArcelorMittal Liberia et le gouvernement du Libéria ont signé un accord minier d'une valeur de 800 millions de dollars de dollars, permettant à l'entreprise de bénéficier de neuf années supplémentaires pour ses opérations dans le pays.



Éditorial

Pas besoin d'effusion de sang

Les heurts qui ont éclaté entre les spectateurs qui seraient des partisans du chef de l'opposition, M. Alexander B. Cummings du Congrès national alternatif, et les forces de sécurité le jeudi 6 janvier 2022 au tribunal municipal de Monrovia sont aussi malheureux qu'injustifiés.

Ces actes de violence, qui ont fait au moins trois blessés dans les rangs des forces de l'ordre, n'étaient pas du tout nécessaires, surtout dans cette affaire qui est censée être une procédure judiciaire.

M. Cummings est traîné devant les tribunaux par Benoni W. Urey du All Liberia Party (ALP) pour avoir prétendument modifié le document-cadre de la Collaboration des partis politiques (CPP), la plus grande plateforme de l'opposition. C'est donc au tribunal seulement de juger qui a raison ou tort.

Par conséquent, les spectateurs, les partisans et les forces de sécurité n'avaient aucune raison de s'affronter au Temple de la Justice. Peu importe le zèle des partisans, cela ne leur donne pas le droit de recourir à la violence.

Paradoxalement, la violence est survenue à la veille du lancement de la célébration du bicentenaire du Libéria, un événement qui marque les 200 ans d'existence du pays depuis sa fondation par l'American Colonization Society (ACS) en 1822. Avec 200 ans d'existence, la maturité exige que nous apprenions à gérer nos différences avec un degré élevé de tolérance et permettions à la loi de suivre son cours.

Ces violences, qui se sont soldées par une effusion de sang, sont de mauvaise augure autant plus qu'elles interviennent alors qu'on est sur le point de lancer la célébration des 200 ans. La célébration du bicentenaire devrait unir tous les Libériens vers un objectif commun - construire une nation plus prospère que la postérité appréciera.

S'entailer les uns les autres pour des raisons politiques est contre-productif pour la survie de la patrie qui nous lie en tant que peuple. Par conséquent, nous avons honte et condamnons tous ceux qui sont à l'origine des violences de la semaine dernière au tribunal municipal de Monrovia. Ce n'était pas du tout nécessaire.

Après 200 ans, nous, Libériens, devrions faire mieux maintenant, plutôt que de continuer à vivre comme des bêtes et des sauveurs. Enfin, nous l'oublions, nous avons déjà causé beaucoup d'embarras à la sous-région et au reste du monde à cause de nos 14 années de guerre civile sanglante.

Il est temps de guérir et de construire, au lieu de retourner dans le passé horrible. En cette ère du nouveau Coronavirus qui se caractérise par diverses souches, nous devrions avoir honte de nous autodétruire et croire que d'autres pays abandonneront leurs problèmes les plus importants pour remédier au désordre que nous nous créons.

Libériens ! Ne pouvons-nous pas apprendre de nos erreurs ? Comment la violence a-t-elle aidé le pays et amélioré nos vies ? Comment cela a-t-il amélioré nos systèmes d'éducation et de santé ou l'économie ? Jetons un coup d'œil : de l'émeute du riz du 14 avril 1979 au coup d'État militaire du 12 avril 1980 et à l'invasion rebelle du 24 décembre 1989, sommes-nous mieux lotis maintenant qu'avant ? Sûrement pas !

M. Urey a fait la chose la plus honorable en s'adressant au tribunal pour étayer ses allégations, de même que M. Cummings a, en personne, comparu deux fois devant le tribunal pour répondre des accusations portées contre lui et a exprimé sa confiance dans le pouvoir judiciaire pour rendre justice. Il est prudent que toutes les parties fassent preuve de retenue en évitant la violence pour permettre à la loi de suivre son cours.

Français

Mali : les autorités de transition appellent à la

la Cédéao (lire encadré ci-dessous). Un ton martial qui semble peu propice au dialogue, invoqué par le chef du régime à Bamako.

« C'est un moyen de montrer que la junte ne se laissera pas faire », estime un observateur averti, qui requiert l'anonymat sur ce sujet sensible. Une posture, selon cette source, destinée à rassurer la frange la plus nationaliste de la population, et qui ne présume pas des possibles compromis que pourraient faire les autorités de transition. Une rallonge plus courte de deux ans ou trois ans a souvent été évoquée dans les cercles du pouvoir.

Les Assises nationales de la refondation organisées par les autorités pour que les Maliens se prononcent, entre autres, sur la durée de la transition, avaient recommandé un allongement de six mois à cinq ans. Les cinq, puis quatre ans, proposés par Bamako à la Cédéao pourraient donc être revus à la baisse, sans trahir ces conclusions, afin d'éviter que les sanctions très lourdes de la Cédéao ne pénalisent la population.

Pour autant, de nombreux soutiens des autorités de transition demandent de la fermeté face à des sanctions considérées comme une attaque contre la souveraineté du Mali et contre la volonté des Maliens : pas question de revoir ses ambitions à la baisse et de se plier à un diktat extérieur.

Ainsi, dans le pays, de nombreuses organisations de la société civile affichent leur soutien aux autorités de transition. Le Front pour l'émergence et le renouveau au Mali (FER-Mali) appelle même à la mobilisation.

« Le Mali doit se mettre debout. On ne doit pas compter sur les autres. Donc nous, nous soutenons fermement la vision des autorités de la transition. Le Front pour l'émergence et le renouveau au Mali demande une mobilisation générale de tous Maliens et des amis des Maliens sur l'ensemble du territoire national pour soutenir les autorités de la transition et condamner ces sanctions illégales, illégitimes et inhumaines des présidents de la Cédéao », a déclaré Sory Ibrahima Traoré, président du FER-Mali.

Des rassemblements ont déjà été organisés à Bamako, dimanche soir et surtout ce lundi après-midi. Nul doute qu'il y en aura d'autres.

La Cédéao attend un agenda « acceptable » ?

Mais le conflit est-il tenable, alors que les finances de l'État et plus généralement l'économie malienne pourraient être rapidement

asphyxiées ? « Une partie des dirigeants de la Transition est prête à aller au clash », estime encore un analyste. Qui poursuit : « Ils n'ont peut-être pas pris la mesure du coût financier, mais ils peuvent toujours s'endetter auprès de la Russie, de la Chine ou de la Turquie. »

De son côté, la Cédéao prévoit une « levée progressive » des sanctions dès que Bamako aura présenté un chronogramme jugé « acceptable » et que des « progrès satisfaisants » auront été enregistrés dans sa mise en œuvre.

Les partis de l'opposition malienne se sont réunis aujourd'hui pour analyser la situation au regard du contexte national. Pour Ismaël Sacko, président du Parti social-démocrate africain, et un des porte-parole du Cadre des partis politiques pour une transition réussie, il est urgent qu'une nouvelle date soit fixée rapidement pour les élections.

« L'inclusivité, la neutralité ont manqué aux autorités de la transition, ce qui nous a conduit par leur entêtement à des sanctions lourdes. Donc le Cadre tient pour responsables les autorités de la transition qui n'ont pas souhaité entendre et examiné les propositions que le cadre avait faites pour éviter ces sanctions.

Le Cadre a aussi estimé qu'il est très important de dégager rapidement un chronogramme des élections assez précis, très court, qui permettra de reprendre le dialogue avec les chefs d'État de la Cédéao parce que le Mali ne peut pas vivre en autarcie.

A partir 27 février 2022, la charte de la transition étant caduque, il nous faut une transition civile qui reprendra la relève pour aller vers des élections dans un délai très court et de façon très consensuelle. »

Dimanche, à l'issue d'un sommet extraordinaire à Accra, la Communauté économique des États d'Afrique de l'Ouest a entériné les décisions prises par l'Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine, quelques heures plus tôt. À savoir : gel des avoirs maliens ; aides financières coupées ; fermeture des frontières entre les États membres et le Mali ; suspension des transactions avec Bamako, à l'exception des produits médicaux et de première nécessité, des produits pétroliers et de l'électricité ; gel des actifs et des avoirs du Mali dans toutes les banques centrales des pays membres de la Cédéao ; gel des avoirs du gouvernement et des entreprises d'État du Mali dans toutes les banques commerciales de la Cédéao ; retrait des ambassadeurs de tous les pays membres au Mali ; activation immédiate de la force en attente de la Cédéao, pour prévenir tout risque de déstabilisation.

Qu'est-ce que la force en attente de la Cédéao ?

COMMENTAIRE

Par Dani Rodrik

Inflation, hérésie et politique

CAMBRIDGE - Après une longue période d'absence durant laquelle les responsables politiques s'inquiétaient plutôt du risque de déflation, la menace inflationniste pèse à nouveau sur le monde et le vieux débat sur la manière de restaurer la stabilité des prix fait à nouveau surface.

Les gouvernements doivent-ils resserrer leur politique monétaire et budgétaire en diminuant les dépenses et en augmentant les taux d'intérêt (la stratégie classique pour faire face à l'inflation ou aller dans la direction opposée en baissant les taux d'intérêt, suivant ainsi le chemin de la banque centrale turque sous la direction du président Erdogan ? Ou peut-être devraient-ils intervenir directement en contrôlant les prix et en limitant la marge de manœuvre des grandes entreprises en la matière comme le proposent certains économistes et historiens aux USA ?

Si vous optez instinctivement pour l'une de ces mesures tout en rejetant les autres, pensez-y à deux fois. En économie toutes les situations sont différentes, et chacune appelle à une politique différente. La seule réponse que l'on puisse apporter à la question de ce qu'il faut faire en économie est "Ça dépend".

Les mesures orthodoxes face à l'inflation ont souvent des effets collatéraux coûteux (par exemple les faillites ou la hausse du chômage) et ne produisent pas toujours les effets souhaités aussi rapidement que voulu. Le contrôle des prix a parfois fonctionné, notamment en temps de guerre.

Par ailleurs, lorsqu'une inflation élevée est due essentiellement aux attentes la concernant plutôt qu'aux "fondamentaux", le contrôle temporaire des salaires et des prix peut favoriser la coordination des prix et aboutir ainsi à un équilibre à faible inflation. De tels programmes "hétérodoxes" ont été couronnés de succès dans les années 1980 en Israël et dans un certain nombre de pays d'Amérique latine.

L'idée que des taux d'intérêt plus bas réduisent l'inflation n'est pas nécessairement fautive. Même si la plupart des économistes classiques la rejette, il existe une école de pensée économique qui associe l'inflation à des facteurs d'augmentation des coûts, tels que des taux d'intérêt élevés (qui augmentent le coût des fonds de roulement).

L'effet inflationniste d'un taux d'intérêt élevé est appelé "effet Cavallo", du nom de Domingo Cavallo, l'ancien ministre argentin des Finances qui a traité de ce sujet dans sa thèse de doctorat (soutenue à Harvard en 1977). Paradoxalement, il a utilisé une stratégie de lutte contre l'inflation très différente (fondée sur un taux de change fixe et une convertibilité totale de la monnaie) dans les années 1990 lorsque l'Argentine traversait une période d'inflation élevée. Ceci dit, l'effet Cavallo a reçu un certain soutien empirique dans des cas particuliers.

C'est pourquoi il est inapproprié de ridiculiser les idées passées de mode sur l'inflation en les qualifiant de "déli de science" (à l'instar du rejet des vaccins COVID-19), comme l'ont fait certains économistes renommés. Lorsqu'une affirmation sur le monde réel semble incompatible avec les théories existantes, elle peut constituer un encouragement pour démontrer sa validité dans un contexte donné - une invitation adressée aux économistes jeunes et intelligents. La véritable science économique est contextuelle, non pas universelle. Que pourrait impliquer une approche contextuelle de l'inflation ?

L'inflation actuelle aux USA et dans beaucoup d'autres pays avancés ne ressemble pas à celle de la fin des années 1970. Elle n'est ni chronique (jusqu'à

présent), ni alimentée par la spirale des prix et des salaires ou l'indexation arriérée.

La pression inflationniste semble due en grande partie à un ensemble de facteurs temporaires liés à la pandémie, comme la réaffectation des dépenses des services vers les biens, et les perturbations dans la production et les chaînes d'approvisionnement. Les mesures monétaires et budgétaires expansionnistes stimulent les revenus, mais elles sont elles aussi temporaires. L'alternative aurait été un effondrement spectaculaire de l'emploi et du niveau de vie.

Dans les circonstances actuelles, les responsables politiques des pays développés ne devraient pas réagir de manière excessive à la flambée de l'inflation. Comme le souligne l'historien Adam Tooze, l'inflation transitoire appelle une réponse mesurée, que ce soit par la réglementation ou la politique monétaire.

Le meilleur argument contre le contrôle des prix n'est pas son "incompatibilité avec la science", mais son radicalisme excessif pour la période actuelle. La même prudence s'applique aux mesures orthodoxes : les banques centrales devraient faire preuve de patience avant de relever les taux d'intérêt.

Que penser de l'insistance d'Erdogan à dire que l'inflation élevée est la conséquence d'un taux d'intérêt élevé, plutôt que sa cause ? Son argument a toujours été contesté, car les déséquilibres macroéconomiques de la Turquie sont légion et s'accumulent depuis assez longtemps.

Lorsqu'on ne peut juger à l'avance de la validité d'un argument, c'est en fin de compte la réalité qui permet d'évaluer la pertinence d'une théorie dans une situation donnée. Dans le cas de la Turquie, depuis que les décideurs politiques se sont lancés dans l'expérience d'Erdogan, les faits parlent d'eux-mêmes.

En particulier, malgré la baisse du taux directeur de la banque centrale turque (le taux d'intérêt que les autorités monétaires contrôlent directement), les taux d'intérêt du marché ont continué à grimper. Les déposants et les épargnants ont exigé des taux plus élevés, poussant à la hausse le coût du crédit.

Cette situation fragilise l'idée selon laquelle une baisse du taux directeur réduit les coûts de production. Elle montre que la hausse des taux d'intérêt reflète des problèmes plus fondamentaux : une incertitude quant à la conduite de la politique économique et des anticipations d'inflation plus élevées.

Parfois, comme dans le cas de la Turquie, l'argument en faveur d'une politique économique orthodoxe est pertinent. Les expériences qui s'en écartent peuvent coûter cher. Cela ne veut pas dire pour autant qu'il existe des règles universelles en économie, ou bien que le point de vue majoritaire parmi les économistes doive l'emporter. Car alors certaines innovations politiques majeures comme le New Deal aux USA ou la politique d'industrialisation en Asie de l'Est après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale n'auraient jamais vu le jour.

L'objectif principal de la politique monétaire actuelle, cibler un taux d'inflation donné, trouve sa source dans le contexte politique et économique de la Nouvelle Zélande au cours des années 1980. Or cet objectif ne correspondait pas à la théorie monétaire en vogue à cette époque.

Les économistes devraient faire preuve d'humilité au moment de conseiller ou pas telle ou telle stratégie de lutte contre l'inflation. Certes, les dirigeants politiques doivent tenir compte des fondamentaux économiques, mais ils devraient se montrer suspicieux quand leurs conseillers économiques affichent une confiance excessive.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Monrovia businesses create wealth and employment from plastic waste menace averting tons of CO2 emissions

The mere sight of plastic waste choking waterways across Monrovia and littering beaches is an eyesore that evokes an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. However, not all hope is lost as a number of waste management and recycling

management company, Hysaa Liberia Inc., which used to collect and dispose waste at a landfill, received a grant from UNDP Liberia's Livelihood and Employment Creation Programme to expand its collection, and begin sorting out plastic bottles (PET) for processing into recyclable flakes

from African countries. This implies that the collection, sorting and sale of PET materials, which is used for production of new plastic materials, is a profitable venture," says Fomuso Ridley Fongwen, the company's General Manager.

He says the country's plastic waste has the potential to create hundreds of direct and indirect jobs in managing plastic waste from collection, sorting, cleaning, selection, shredding for recycling and processing into other commercial products, to the sale and marketing of the new products made from recycled waste plastic. Fongwen notes an increasing number of youth are voluntarily collecting and selling plastic bottles to them.

Liberia's Ever Green Recycling Institute (EGRI), a youth initiative, collects and recycles single-use plastics using pyrolysis, a technic that uses heat to breakdown waste plastic into fuels for vehicles, cooking gas and other materials that they are using to make roofing and paving tiles. EGRI produces and sells petrol and diesel to a ready market of motorbikes and the three-wheel vehicles locally called keke.

A grant from UNDP enabled EGRI to purchase additional

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businesses, with support from UNDP, tap into this massive resource to expand and re-imagine their businesses, while creating jobs and averting air pollution from carbon dioxide emissions associated with the burning of waste plastic.

The Monrovia-based waste

in August 2021.

"The main lesson we learned is that plastic has ceased to be waste and is now a resource to which value can be added to improve the lives of young Liberians. The global demand for PET is very high with overseas companies ready to purchase both washed and unwashed PET

Enact arms trade treaty -LANSA urges Legislature

The Liberia Action Network on Small Arms (LANSA) has urged the 54th Liberian Legislature to ratify the draft Act on arms trade treaty to domesticate the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Act establishing the Small Arms Commission here.

The Executive Secretary of LANSA, T. Nicholas Faryombo, lauds President George Manneh Weah for forwarding the Act to the Legislature, which he notes demonstrates the President's commitment to arms control, peace and security in Liberia and the ECOWAS sub-region.

Speaking in an interview over the weekend, he said LANSA particularly appreciates President Weah for the bold step taken, noting that the draft Act seeks to expand the Commission's scope beyond

small arms to all conventional arms.

He said the move is to domesticate the Arms Trade Treaty Act and to amend the Act

establishing the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms which have over the years been scrutinized by national and international partners, security

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The Executive Secretary of LANSA, T. Nicholas Faryombo

Veteran athlete

Cont'd from page 6

Hamburg, Germany but visiting home, Mr. Davis recalled that those he named were players who represented Liberia to several international competitions and won major trophies.

He explained that the game of Table Tennis has contributed vastly to the reintegration, restructuring and rebuilding of the minds of Liberian youths through the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Receiving the materials and cash, the Secretary General of the Liberia National Table Tennis Association Lamie A. S. Freeman, Jr. thanked Mr. Davis for his continued contribution towards developing table tennis in Liberia and assured him the donation will help to develop skills of athletes.

At the same time in a one-

day tournament held at the headquarters of the Liberia National Table Tennis Association in honor of Mr. Junior Siaquiyah Davis, Athletes LasanaWeh and Holder Kaborwen were crowned champions and runner-up respectively.

The Winner Wah received LRD15, 000 and Runner-up Kaborwen walked away with LRD10, 000, while Third and Fourth places received LRD 7,000 and 5,000 individually.

Champion LasanaWeh paid tribute to Mr. Davis for his continued support for the game in Liberia especially, to youths that are developing passion for the game and called on other veteran tennis players in and out of Liberia to emulate his example. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Opposition's absence

Cont'd from page 6

reconciliation and national cohesion in the country.

"I think it is now time for us to take action to actualize national reconciliation especially as we go towards 2023. It is obvious that we will be in political competition, we can be in politics and still be united," he noted.

According to Bishop Brown, the objective of the program is to reflect where Liberia came from, adding that 200 years ago a nation state was established here at Providence Island.

"We encourage Liberians, whether from a political party, to join hands to lift the spirit of our country," he pleaded.

He said the best that Liberians can do for themselves is to continue to forge for national unity, national reconciliation, and also continue to find a way in which they can work together to move the country forward.

The Government of Liberia commenced the celebration of the bicentennial commemorating Liberia's 200 years of existence when the

first batch of freed slaves arrived here from from the US on ship Elizabeth. They landed on Providence Island in 1822.

President George MannehWeah's administration conceived the idea to host what it calls Bicentennial Celebration this year, and Liberians from all walks of life in their national colors and cultures, diplomats and other residents turned out to grace the occasion.

During the ceremony, President Weah said in the spirit of national unity, he welcomed the leadership of all political parties and other national leaders to the official opening ceremony of the 2022 national bicentennial commemoration to be held on 14 February 2022, as the nation memorializes peace, unity, forgiveness and reconciliation.

He called on all Liberians to champion the cause on national unity and to reconcile differences for Liberia's growth and development, calling for peace to reign across Liberia.

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Liberia owes US\$9m for electricity

By Ethel A. Tweh

The Government of Liberia is indebted to the West African Power Pool from neighboring Ivory Coast, in the tone of US\$9m, Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert T. Chie discloses here.

Senate Chie says due to the debt, Ivory Coast is reneging to send power to Liberia until the money is paid.

of the Liberian Senate on Tuesday, January 11, Chie also disclosed that Guinea and Sierra Leone have already signed up to the West African Power Pool, but Liberia is yet to sign up because of indebtedness.

Also speaking, Maryland County Senator Gbleh-bo Brown says he, as a senator pays electricity bills in his county, noting that because the previous and present Liberian administrations fail to put in

house in Grand Bassa County, not the West African Power Pool but residents think he has access to such facility and doesn't want them to benefit as well.

Speaking about their break, most of the senators reiterate issue about bar road connectivity across the country, which they note causes problem for both citizens and leaders.

Maryland County Senator James Biney, now with the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change, says President Weah, Speaker Chambers, Deputy Speaker Kofa, Senate Pro-Tempore Chie and other key officials of government hail from the southeast, but yet road conditions there are very deplorable.

Senator Biney wonders how residents access hospitals in the southeast when the roads are not pliable. However, he assures the southeastern roads will be paved under the Weah Administration to bring relief to citizens.

Montserrado County Senator Abraham Darius Dillon though his county hosts the nation's capital, it also suffers bad road condition, noting that from Brewerville, Artington, Clay Ashland and Todee all look like bush cities due to lack of road and electricity.

Liberia runs an 88 Megawatt hydropower Plant but distribution of electricity across the country remains a serious challenge for the government. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

place regulatory measures for the current, leading people to power theft that has accumulated the amount.

For their part, Senators NyonbleeKangar Lawrence and Jonathan L. Kaipay of Grand Bassa County note that during their annual break, the people of Grand Bassa complained of lack of electricity in the county.

According to Sen. Kaipay, he uses his private generator at his



He explains that Grand Gedeh, Maryland, and Nimba counties, amongst others, have been receiving current from Ivory Coast for a very long time, but only Nimba has been paying her bills.

He says the other counties used the electricity without paying, causing the Government of Liberia to owe this huge amount of money.

Speaking in the Chambers

Over 10 women died in childbirth

Over 10 pregnant women reportedly died in 2021 in Nimba County, while giving birth.

According to report, the women died of childbirth due to lack of health facilities in communities, including long distances they covered before getting to a health center.

Few days ago in the county, a 35-year-old pregnant woman only identified as Tutu died in Gbapa town near ArcelorMittal's concession area in Yekepa, Nimba County, while giving birth, bringing to 11 number of pregnant women who have reportedly died in the county from childbirth.

A New Dawn survey established that in spite government's warning, home delivery is a common practice in Nimba.

Some of those involved in home delivery say this is the



only alternative available to them due to repeated delays and lack of ambulances to respond to emergency calls.

"My son, people who are working to the government hospitals, including G.W. Harley in Sanniquellie, Saclepea health

center, Bahn health center, Karnplay health center and Jackson F. Doe hospital in Tappita whenever we called them to get those pregnant women to the hospital, they will tell us no ambulance or the one ambulance has gone

Enact arms trade

Cont'd from page 10

institutions, Civil Society actors, the media and other stakeholders following Liberia's ratification of the ATT in 2015.

Faryombo continued that LANSA, with support from its mother Coalition (Control Arms) partnered with the Small Arms Commission and held engagement meeting with the Legislature for the speedy passage of the draft instruments.

He said during the meeting, LANSA presented its perspective to the Legislature, something the Arms Advocacy CSO Group believes the Legislature can act on.

He also disclosed that during an inception meeting with the Chairman and Leadership of the Small Arms Commission on the Ready to Engage Project, the Commission was informed that it was important for a further engagement with the Legislature.

Mr. Faryombo, who headed the implementation of the project during the meeting, assured his institution's commitment to the relationship with LINCSEA and other partners in holding meetings with all stakeholders including the Legislature for passage of these instruments

into law.

He noted that the two separate meetings held with the Legislative Committees on Security and Defense and, the Media and CSO were all intended to create awareness on the Arms Trade Treaty and stakeholders' compliance accordingly.

He said, the meetings renewed participants' commitments, including the Legislature to ensuring the draft laws are fast-tracked for passage.

The LANSA Executive Secretary also noted that separate remarks during the engagement meetings indicated stakeholders' interest in Liberia's compliance with the international arms instrument.

He said earlier at the project inception meeting, the Chairman of the Small Arms Commission, Attorney Maxwell Grigsby, acknowledged the efforts and support of national and international partners in having the instruments, especially the approval by the President and now submission to the Legislature for enactment.

He pledged continual collaboration with all stakeholders in ensuring that these instruments are legally concluded. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Monrovia businesses

Cont'd from page 10

equipment and hire 10 additional staff increasing their plastic waste collection and processing from 125Kg per day to 1 ton per day between August and September 2021. This in turn translated into the production of 200 gallons of diesel daily up from 25 gallons per day.

Over and above the socio-economic value both Hysaa and EGRI are creating through their business activities, they are also providing critical environmental restoration services.

Hysaa, which hired 13 more staff as part of its business expansion, increased collection of plastic waste between August and December 2021, of which waste plastic bottles comprised 23 tons, averting the release of 56.2 tons of CO2 into the

atmosphere.

On 18 September 2021, as part of activities to mark the World Clean-Up Day, the company organized a beach cleanup at Sophie Beach in Monrovia collecting a staggering 5 tons of plastic waste in a matter of hours.

"The beach cleanup activity was a big eye opener to us. The amount of plastic waste along the beaches in the city is alarming and appalling. We can only imagine the effect this can have on marine organisms. In just a few hours, we were able to collect over 5 tons of plastics just on a 3 km stretch of the beach," says Fomuso Ridley Fongwen.

The company immediately revised their plastic collection strategy establishing collection points on beaches.

Hysaa also sourced waste

out for sick persons in different areas", they explained.

According to them, some of hospital workers, including their bosses usually ask them to buy fuel for the ambulance before they can respond.

Nearly all of the government hospitals in the county lack ambulances to respond timely to emergency calls.

During a recent visit to Gbapa town, some staffers of ArcelorMittal including Nimba County administrators and the chairman on health at the House of Representatives Joseph Nyan Somwarbi, expressed disappointment and frustrations over the death of Tutu in childbirth, which they said is not good for the county. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

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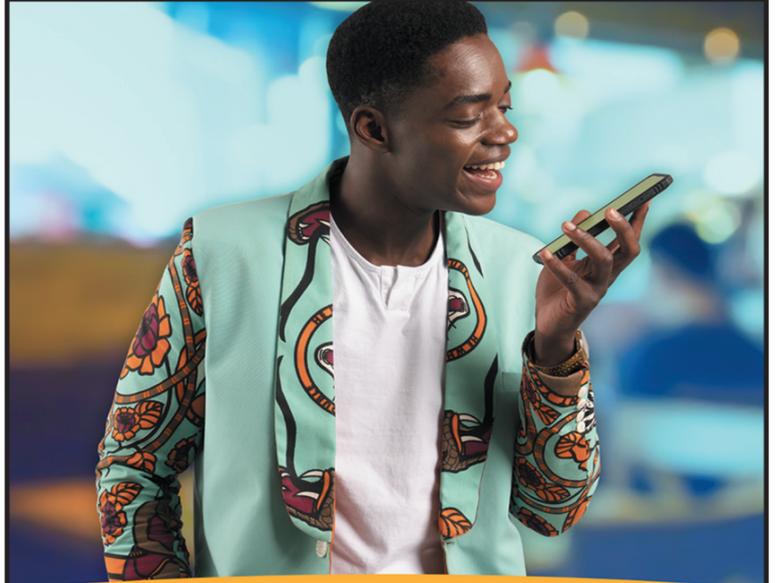


Sports

With Emmanuel B. Juduh

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Veteran athlete donates to Table Tennis Association



By Naneka Hoffman

A veteran Liberian athlete, Junior Siaquiyah Davis has donated sporting materials and cash prize to the Liberia National Table Tennis Association (LNTTA) as his way of contributing to the growth of the sport in the

country. Items donated include balls, rubbers, T-shirts, training equipment and US\$300 cash to the National Table Tennis Association. Speaking during the donation ceremony recently at the Liberia National Table Tennis Association headquarters, Mr. Davis paid

tribute to some veterans of the Table Tennis Association, including the late Isaac Davis and Aaron Nawood, who died in 2014 as a result of Ebola and Deo Jones, who currently lives in the United Kingdom. Now who residing in

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