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

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2022	L\$153.3066/US\$1.00	L\$152.6132 /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.

The New Dawn

French Version Inside

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'God will punish CDC government'

-Boakai prophesizes



'We are prepared to be refugee'

-Gongloe beats early war drum?

What are we doing today?



Continental News

Climate change fuels southern Africa storms

Climate change fuelled heavier rainfall during a series of storms that battered southern Africa earlier this year, scientists say.

Analysis from the World Weather Attribution group also showed that such extreme rainfall was more common now.

The results of this study show that the damage inflicted by storms in the region was exacerbated by global warming, researchers said.

The region was hit by three cyclones and two tropical storms in six weeks.

In total more than one million people were affected by extreme rainfall and floods in the region, with 230 reported deaths, World Weather Attribution (WWA) said.

However, the scientists say they cannot directly link the frequency of the storms to climate change due to a lack of long-term data.

The devastating storms began in January when storm Ana caused widespread damage in Madagascar,

Mozambique and Malawi. Dozens were killed with tens of thousands cut off from assistance as roads and bridges had been washed away.

In Malawi the president declared a state of emergency and the roads were so severely affected that relatives of the deceased had to carry the bodies to burials.

This was followed in quick succession by Batsirai, Dumako, Emnati and Gombe.

In the study the scientists analysed weather patterns today

compared to the past, however they say "the precise contribution of climate change to the event could not be quantified, due to the absence of comprehensive historical records of rainfall in the region".

They say that just four of the 23 weather stations in affected areas of Mozambique had data going back to 1981, while neither Madagascar no Malawi had any weather stations with suitable data for the study.

One of the scientists involved in the study confirmed to the BBC that climate change was making the storms worse.

"The rainfall associated with such storms has become more likely and more intense," Dr Friederike Otto from Imperial College London said.

"What we can say for sure is, the damages of such storms have become worse," Dr Otto continued.

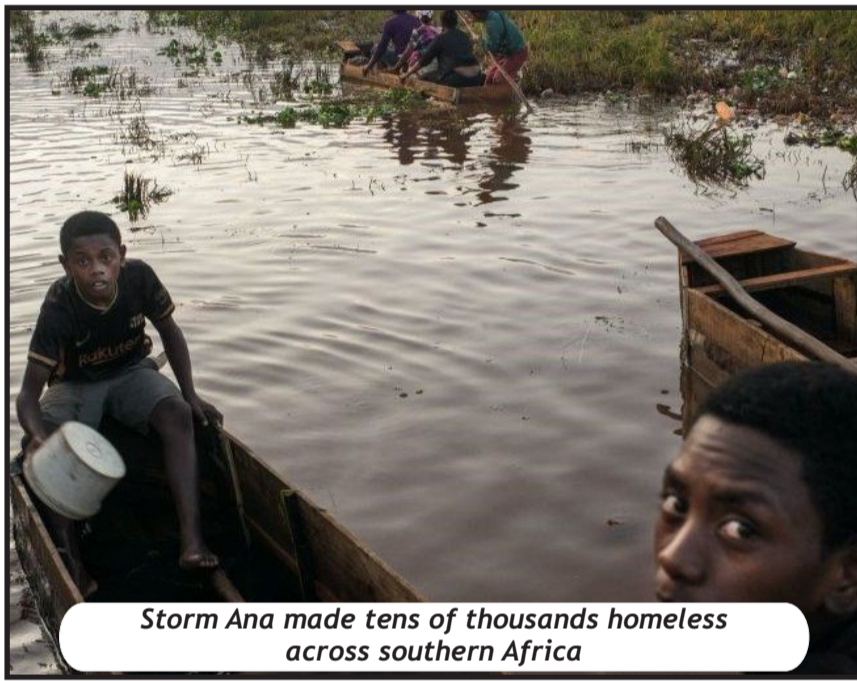
The scientists behind the study had strong words for global leaders, urging them to act to curb climate change.

"Again we are seeing how the people with the least

responsibility for climate change are bearing the brunt of the impacts. Rich countries should honour their commitments and increase much-needed funding for adaptation, and for compensating the victims of extreme events driven by climate change," Dr Otto said.

Another scientist called for the strengthening of scientific resources in Africa, to better record the impact of climate change in the region.

Dr Izidine Pinto from the University of Cape Town said such a change would "help us better understand extreme weather events fuelled by climate change, to prepare vulnerable people and infrastructure to better cope with them". BBC



Storm Ana made tens of thousands homeless across southern Africa

'Act now or 350,000 children will die in this drought'

As Somalia faces what experts call its worst drought in a decade, children are bearing the brunt. Parents are struggling to feed them, with nearly half of the country's under-five population likely to suffer from acute malnutrition by June.

Nimco Abdi gently places her six-month-old baby girl onto a plastic basin supported with sisal ropes. The weighing scale from which the basin hangs reads

0.6 stone (4kg). That is almost less than half of what the child's ideal weight should be. She is too tiny for her age. Her eyes are sunken, bones are protruding and her skin is wrinkled and pale. She lets out a feeble, barely audible cry as Nimco picks her back up.

"I used to breastfeed her. But I became so sick from lack of food. And she got so thin, I decided to bring her here. At least she can get milk and drugs," says Nimco.

Nimco has just arrived at a malnutrition stabilisation centre

in Luuq, 310 miles (500km) from Mogadishu in south-western Somalia. She is given a bed inside the facility, which she will have to share with another mother.

Her story is one among many mothers who are facing the potential death of their children by malnutrition.

"If nothing is done, it is projected that by the summer of this year, 350,000 of the 1.4 million severely malnourished children in the country, will perish," warns Adam Abdelmoula from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha).

"Already in this country, 70% of school-age children are not attending school. In just one state in Juba land, the drought has led to closure of 40 schools and that is going to be the trend in many drought-affected areas," he continues, adding that some girls are being married off early because their families cannot feed them. Fatuma Mohamed, a nurse at Luuq's malnutrition centre, says the bed capacity is 18, but more than 50 children and their mothers are here.



Nimco Abdi's daughter is suffering from malnutrition

Nigeria VP Osinbajo announces run for presidency

Nigerian Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo has formally declared his intention to contest in next year's presidential election. He hopes to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari whose tenure ends in May next year.

Prof Osinbajo, a lawyer, was elected as Mr Buhari's deputy in 2015.

In a short video posted on social media, he promised continuity in improving security and prioritising the economy, infrastructure, fighting poverty and reforming the justice system.

He also praised his boss as a "true Nigerian patriot and a servant of the nation".

He said their administration had done well for Nigerians on the security front despite facing "some of the most difficult times" in the country's history. The 65-year-old vice-president will face-off with other aspirants within the ruling APC party to clinch the presidential ticket.

They include his benefactor Bola Ahmed Tinubu - the former governor



of Lagos - who has often been described as the strong man of the party.

Others are the governor of Kogi state, Yahaya Bello, and the current Transport Minister Rotimi Amaechi.

The main challengers in the opposition PDP party are former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, Governor of Rivers state Nyesom Wike, Governor of Bauchi state Bala Muhammad, Governor of Sokoto state Aminu Tambuwal and former Senate President Bukola Saraki.

The presidential election is scheduled for February next year.

Both the ruling and opposition parties are struggling to pick a southerner for the presidency - based on a controversial informal agreement to rotate the presidency between the north and the south of the country for national cohesion.

President Buhari is a northerner serving his second and final term. BBC

"Our worry is the big numbers that we are getting. We are overloaded and operating beyond our full capacity. We have been running short of medical supplies," she says. Some of the children are so feeble, they die on the way.

"The women are coming with severely malnourished children. And most of them also have acute watery diarrhoea and measles," she continues.

This centre is only a glimpse of the situation across Somalia. The drought has affected 4.5 million people. BBC

EDITORIAL

Paying lip service to agriculture

INFORMATION THAT THE Weah administration is preparing a supplementary budget to allocate US\$12 million for rice importers when the country's entire budget for agriculture is just about US\$6 million clearly demonstrates that this administration is paying lip service to food sufficiency in Liberia.

THIS PAPER HAS gathered that the US\$12 million, which would be in the form of subsidy to importers, is intended to offset extra cost incur during importation and eventually avoid extra charge to consumers. This may sound politically expedient in the short-run, but is neither sustainable nor financially prudent.

WITH ELECTIONS SCHEDULED for 2023, President Weah and his government are clearly sacrificing rice production here that could lead to self-sufficiency in food for personal political interest hence, subjecting a hungry population to rice politics.

IT IS HIGHLY incomprehensible that a government with a US\$5,561,226 annual budget for agriculture, is planning a supplementary budget to allocate US\$12 million to subsidize rice importation in the face of a fertile soil and conducive climate for agriculture.

BY ALLOTING HIGHER budget for rice subsidy over national agriculture program, what message is the government sending to international partners and friendly governments about the will to feed ourselves. Should our enviable rain forestry continue to lie in waste while we look up to India, Pakistan, Malaysia and China for our staple food? Have we lost pride as a nation or is this sheer laziness?

FUNDAMENTALLY, THIS ADMINISTRATION has failed to govern properly by trying to allot US\$12 million on quick fix solution rather than tackling the key issue of lack of a clear, demonstrative agriculture policy.

INSTEAD OF LEADING by example by cultivating a presidential farm (like slain President Samuel K. Doe) that would encourage or motivate his cabinet and the other two branches of government to invest in the soil, President Weah believes that diverting scarce resources to subsidizing rice importation will make price stable and ensure uninterrupted supplies.

BUT THERE IS NO guaranteed that food produced in other countries that may equally face unforeseeable challenges such as climatic changes, political upheavals or natural disasters would always serve our national demand. This could be nothing else other than suicidal illusion.

IF THE WEAH-LED government means well for the Liberian people, it should come up with a workable national agriculture policy that would return citizens to the soil to grow rice, the nation's staple rather than striking deal with importers that are driven by profits. There can be no sustainability because nothing is certain in today's global trade.

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COMMENTARY

By Juan Manuel Santos

Peacemaking After the Pandemic

BOGOTÁ - In Paradise Lost, the English poet John Milton encapsulates a fundamental truth about the struggle to end a violent conflict and establish a sustainable peace:

“Who overcomes by force,
Hath overcome but half his foe.”

This insight was crucial to my own understanding of how to chart a way to end Colombia's long and costly civil war, and it is acutely relevant to our shared global challenges today.

To build peace, leaders need to foster hope and anchor policies in empathy, solidarity, and a long-term vision of the common good. This is precisely the approach we must take now to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and build a more resilient world that can better withstand future shocks and crises.

Humanity's collective experience of COVID-19 has reminded us all how precious, fragile, and intertwined life can be. Each person's existence on this planet is inextricably connected with that of our brothers, sisters, and neighbors, as well as with our forebears and unborn generations. As we begin to map a post-pandemic recovery, recognizing our shared destiny makes it critical that we draw inspiration from the legacy of previous successful leaders.

In this regard, there is no better model than Nelson Mandela, a man of infinite courage and determination who defied a particularly evil system of racial oppression and became the greatest peacemaker of his generation. Mandela endured nearly three decades of imprisonment, led his people to freedom, and built a resilient, multiracial democracy in South Africa that endures to this day.

Mandela's abiding humility and his iron faith in democracy helped lay the foundations of modern South Africa. These qualities also resonated globally, because Mandela always placed the African National Congress's liberation struggle in the context of the wider international fight against colonialism, racism, and discrimination.

This affirmation of our common humanity lay at the heart of Mandela's decision to found The Elders, the group of independent global leaders of which I am a member. In his speech at the organization's launch in Johannesburg in July 2007, Mandela charged the group with a specific mandate: “Support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair.”

Today more than ever, we must recommit to this approach in the face of the pandemic, as well as even greater existential threats such as climate change and nuclear

weapons. We urgently need an explicit recognition by global leaders that solidarity matters, and that they must act decisively to defend and rejuvenate multilateralism.

This ambition and sense of hope is essential. One sobering example of its absence is the underwhelming collective reaction to the March 2020 call by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres for a “global ceasefire” in response to COVID-19. True, Guterres's appeal was compelling, and the UN estimated that warring parties in 11 countries had heeded it by early April last year. But the UN Security Council took more than three months to pass a resolution endorsing Guterres's appeal. And too many conflicts continued unabated throughout 2020 and still rage today.

The toll on human life, particularly among unarmed civilians, has been devastating. By mid-2020, violent conflicts had contributed to a rise in the number of forcibly displaced people, to nearly 80 million. And by the end of the year, almost 100 million people faced severe food insecurity as a result of conflict - up from 77 million in 2019.

This is a damning indictment of collective failure, especially by the Security Council's five permanent members. But we must understand the Council's near-paralysis in the wider context of the many global leadership failures laid bare by COVID-19. These include insufficient coordination and information-sharing to contain the pandemic, inadequate collaboration by the G20 to protect the global economy, a dearth of financial assistance to support the Global South, and the moral catastrophe of “vaccine apartheid.”

Contemplating this litany of challenges and disappointments, it is easy to be overwhelmed by pessimism. But resigning ourselves to failure is not only an indulgence of the world's privileged, who do not have to endure the pain and loss of war, but also a betrayal of its victims. Hope persists, and so must our determination.

As for me, I am hopeful and determined that we will recover from the pandemic in a way that affirms the words of my compatriot, the great writer and Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez: “Neither floods nor plagues, famines nor cataclysms, nor even the eternal wars of century upon century, have been able to subdue the persistent advantage of life over death.” In that spirit, we must then get on with the life-affirming task of building peace.

Juan Manuel Santos, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, is a former president of Colombia (2010-18), a visiting professor at the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford, and a member of The Elders.

O-PED

By Eric Posner

Biden's Antitrust Revolutionaries

CHICAGO - With the prominent anti-monopoly advocate Lina Khan having been appointed the new chair of the Federal Trade Commission, it is a good time to consider what influence the so-called New Brandeisians will have on US antitrust law. Khan is a leading figure in that movement, and another prominent exponent, Tim Wu, now sits on President Joe Biden's National Economic Council. Arguing that antitrust law and enforcement are too weak and ineffectual, the New Brandeisians, named for the US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, are more open than traditional antitrust experts to breaking up monopolies.

Even before the New Brandeisians achieved prominence, there was a growing consensus that US courts and regulatory agencies do not enforce antitrust law as vigorously as they should. A long period of lax enforcement has led to more concentrated markets, higher prices for consumers, and skyrocketing corporate profits. A partial solution is to give regulators more resources and strengthen the standards that regulators use to approve big business mergers. A bill sponsored by Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota proposes to do precisely that.

But beyond supporting these simple measures, the consensus among antitrust experts dissolves. The debate is shaping up as one between centrist or center-left technocrats who consider more enforcement resources and higher merger standards sufficient, and New Brandeisians who seek much more. (The right seems to be sitting on the sidelines, merely grumbling that Big Tech companies discriminate against Republicans.)

For their part, the technocrats are committed to traditional antitrust analysis, which weighs the benefits of market competition against the advantages of size. They believe that firms should be allowed to grow by offering superior products and services, even if they end up dominating markets. Mergers should be permitted as long as they generate economies of scale that outweigh the anticompetitive effects.

The New Brandeisians draw their inspiration from the anti-monopoly agitation of the Gilded Age. Late-nineteenth-century populists and twentieth-century progressives like Brandeis were not primarily concerned with efficiency, nor did they distinguish carefully between the effects of monopoly on prices, wages, competition, and other economic variables. Their argument was that the "robber barons" - men like the oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller and the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie - and their companies were simply too powerful. Their political and economic power were inconsistent with democratic self-government. It was this problem that antitrust law was meant to solve.

In the new antitrust debate, Big Tech is the flashpoint. When the technocrats look at that sector, they see firms that offer superior products and services at low prices, or even at no price at all. Business practices that raise antitrust concerns can be handled under prevailing standards, and should be condemned only after proof that, despite appearances, they raise prices. But the New Brandeisians see the recurrence of Gilded Age monopolization and insist that while the harms are not recognized by traditional antitrust analysis, they are harms just the same.

One such harm is political interference. Monopolies no longer dole out bribes to legislators as they did in the nineteenth century, but Big Tech clearly exerts substantial influence on US politics. Democrats are still seething that the Russians used Facebook to propagate misinformation before the 2016 election, while Republicans complain that Facebook and Twitter kicked Donald Trump off their platforms. Depending on how you look at it, YouTube either spreads conspiracy theories or censors legitimate political dissent.

Another concern is perceived unfairness. Google supplies search results that include listings for Google-owned products and services. The Apple App Store sells Apple apps that compete with third-party apps. Critics argue that these and other companies take advantage of information they obtain from competitors who use their platforms to give their own products and services a competitive edge.

Yet another problem is the loss of consumer autonomy, stemming from the fact that Big Tech knows everything about us, from our shopping habits and search histories to our medical records and personal communications. Never before has so much been known about so many people. In authoritarian countries, this information is shared with the government. In the US, not so much; but it is shared with other companies, and it often falls into the hands of hackers and other bad actors. Worse, some tech companies have used their engineering prowess and psychological know-how to addict and manipulate users.

Finally, the Big Tech companies are seen as a threat to a diverse, textured internet economy. Many people lament the loss of quirky online offerings, which have been replaced by the drab monocultures of Facebook, Google, and Apple. The suddenness of this change helps to explain why people were once so upset when Walmart moved in and destroyed many small towns' central shopping districts. While prices fell, a unique, often beloved, local commercial ecosystem was lost. Now, many towns are plowing taxpayer dollars into downtown revitalization efforts, using public funds to recreate amenities that the public valued and that the market destroyed.

Against this backdrop, traditional economists argue that antitrust - a technical area of the law concerned with economic efficiency - is not the solution. Threats to small towns or larger democratic and economic values are better addressed with campaign finance laws, zoning laws, health and safety regulations, and so forth. There is much good sense to this view: if we replace antitrust law with an all-things-considered judgment about the good and bad that any large firm may do, regulators and courts will flounder, and political considerations will intrude. It would be better to address the pathologies of the tech market with well-defined legislative reform.

But New Brandeisians would counter by pointing out that big companies can use their political power to obstruct those very reforms. After all, the tech giants have already opposed privacy and data protections, and regulations of corporate speech will go nowhere with the current Supreme Court precedents that protect it.

Remember, the main nineteenth-century worry about monopolies was that they wielded too much political power. If you cut them down to size, perhaps they won't, allowing democracy to flourish. Antitrust law is the only existing tool in US law for converting a big company that has too much power into a bunch of small companies that don't.

Eric Posner, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, is the author, most recently, of *The Demagogue's Playbook: The Battle for American Democracy from the Founders to Trump*.

OPINION

By Daniel Cohen

Putin's War Blows Up the French Election

PARIS - Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine has had a powerful impact on the French presidential campaign. Before the Russian invasion, there were three Putin supporters among the leading candidates: the far left's Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the far-right contenders Marine Le Pen and Éric Zemmour.

While Le Pen has proudly staged photo ops with Putin (in 2017), approved of his annexation of Crimea, and presided over a party that received loans from Russian banks, Zemmour has expressed his admiration for Putin, whom he has described as a "patriot." And Mélenchon, for his part, has long advocated a French exit from NATO, reflecting his anti-Americanism and affinity for the Latin American left of Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez. All three candidates confidently insisted that Putin would not invade Ukraine.

Though Putin took all three candidates by surprise, Zemmour has been the only one to pay a political price so far. Le Pen immediately denounced the invasion and reoriented her campaign to focus on pocketbook issues like the sudden surge in energy prices. Mélenchon's response has been more muddled: while saluting Ukrainians' heroism, he balks at sending them weapons. As with Le Pen, his campaign is primarily focused on domestic social issues, and he has been avoiding discussion of the war whenever possible.

By contrast, Zemmour's entire campaign has been about shunning immigrants, which has made adapting to the onset of war difficult. He has expressed reservations about welcoming Ukrainian refugees, and with nothing specific to say about rising energy prices, his candidacy has come to seem increasingly irrelevant. He is now polling far behind Le Pen, whom he had previously hoped to challenge for pre-eminence on the far right. In the campaign's final stretch, the three leading contenders are the incumbent, President Emmanuel Macron, with around 27%, followed by Le Pen and Mélenchon, with around 23% and 16%, respectively.

Among the clearest effects of the war is that the candidate of the traditional, Republican right, Valérie Pécresse, has effectively fallen out of the running. In addition to mismanaging her campaign, her candidacy has been hit hard by a shift in support toward Macron, who has not just reaped the political benefits of the Ukrainian war but has also co-opted some of Pécresse's policy proposals.

Pécresse has responded angrily to her change in fortune, accusing Macron of "counterfeiting" her program. But the problem for the Republican right is not just that Macron is peeling away some of Pécresse's supporters. It is that he has systematically adopted its core positions, including retirement at 65, work requirements for welfare beneficiaries, and a reduction in the inheritance tax. This amounts to a full-scale takeover of the French center right. If Macron is re-elected, he will preside over a formidable big-tent party, and the Republicans will be left with crumbs, squeezed between a resurgent far right and a governing party that is intent on devouring them.

Macron's goal is clear. He does not want to suffer the same fate as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, whose seven-year presidency left no trace in French political life. Like Charles de Gaulle following his return to power in 1958, Macron wants to rebuild the right from the ground up.

The calculation is simple. All told, the French right commands some 75% of the electorate - including supporters of Macron's own party, *La République en Marche*. Within this broad cohort, there is room for two big forces: the far right, which accounts for 30-35% of the electorate, and a united front comprising the remainder of conservative voters. Together with Macron, this latter bloc could govern France for quite a long time, echoing the legacy of Gaullism and its multiple reincarnations after de Gaulle's death.

Assuming that the far right seizes the opportunity, it could recombine itself and become a powerful bloc capable of taking power one day. Just as de Gaulle forced the socialist and communist left under François Mitterrand, Macron's play for traditional conservatives could produce a consolidation of forces to his right. The far right need only position itself as the only alternative to the new Gaullist power.

As for the left, it seems hard-pressed to challenge this reality. Whatever its moral authority on ecological or social-justice issues, the left is playing a zero-sum game from a weak position, commanding the support of around 25% of the electorate. Nor has the war in Ukraine helped. The left is divided over the response and the role of Europe, France, and NATO in it. The Green candidate, Yannick Jadot, and the socialist candidate, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, have accused Mélenchon of supporting autocrats, though with little effect on his relative popularity.

Behind the Ukraine dividing line, there are two clashing views about how to reconstitute the French left. The first is to match the radicalism on the far right, whose rise seems to reflect the demands of an electorate that feels betrayed by the mainstream. The second asserts that the left has become repellent to most of society precisely because it has lost its moderate elements. To return to power, it must appeal to voters who are interested in issues such as ecology but suspicious of radicalism. In fact, both views are true; the left's problem is the absence of anyone capable of producing the necessary synthesis.

Thanks to Putin, it is now all but certain that Macron will face Le Pen in the second round, as he did in 2017. The polls predict that Macron will win, but with a margin much tighter than five years ago. Some polls suggest that Le Pen could receive as much as 47% of the second-round vote - an unprecedented level of support for a French far-right candidate. The increase in fuel prices has buoyed Le Pen's candidacy. With none of Macron's commitment to fiscal prudence, she can promise drastic cuts to fuel taxes.

Putin's war has reshaped the French presidential race. Even if the outcome seems clear, it seems no less clear that the collateral effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine are likely to complicate politics elsewhere in Europe as well.

Daniel Cohen, President of the Board of Directors of the Paris School of Economics, is the author, most recently, of *The Inglorious Years: The Collapse of the Industrial Order and the Rise of Digital Society* (Princeton University Press, 2021).

ARTICLE

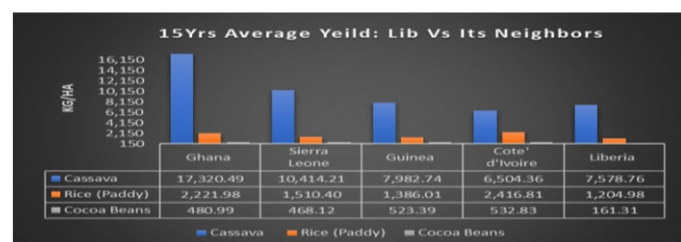
ARTICLE

Liberia Abandons Agricultural Transformation to NGOs: Hundreds of millions spent, but farm productivity falling, and farmers' losses and food insecurity rising

By: **AMBULAH MAMEY**, International Agricultural Development Practitioner

Liberians must sit up, shine their eyes, and begin to demand real sustainable results from stakeholders in the agricultural sector- especially NGOs and the Government. Liberia produces less than half (0.2) cup of rice (its staple food) per Liberian, per day. But on average, a Liberian need a little over 1cup of rice per day. The rice per capita deficit is happening after decades of multiple donor and government projects- costing hundreds of millions of United States Dollars- that promise to make the country self-sufficient in rice production. Most recently, from 2018 to 2022, almost half of a billion (437.02 million USD) accounts for financial flow to Liberia's agriculture sector- specifically the crop-subsector. This amount does not include financial flow to other subsectors including a 40 million committed to the fishery subsector and several other millions spent on "improving" Liberia's agricultural sector by an army of NGOs deployed across the country. Of the 437.02 million, 145.9 million (33%) was committed before 2018, but only 18.6million was spent before 2018; leaving the remaining 127.2 million available for the current Administration to spend. The 437.02 million is in the form of grants 172,118,287.9 (39%), FAO's projects 7.84M (2%), Government of Liberia's budgetary support to agriculture 19.01M (4.35%), loans that Liberia will repay with interest, 185.6 M (42%) and 52.4 M (12%) from other sources including beneficiary and private sector contribution to donor projects, and the Government of Liberia's indirect support that includes tax waivers.

Data are scarce in Liberia, and when they are available, they tend to be incomplete. Hence, the data collated and presented above- may not be the most accurate but



present a good picture of agricultural spending and commitment between 2018 and 2022. Anecdotal estimate has it that- before 2018- over a billion was spent to make Liberia self-sufficient in rice production. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Bank, African Development Bank (AFDB), USAID, and FAO were and are currently the major donors or lenders. There is also an "army" of agricultural NGOs working to improve Liberia's agriculture sector.

Except three of the current projects that are scheduled to last for 4-6 years, funds from these organizations are spread across short-term (2-3yrs) projects, implemented in piecemeal across Liberia. The projects are designed a bit differently with unique acronyms to match, but all project work practically towards the same goals: to enable smallholder farmers improve productivity and increase production and to improve agricultural markets. The projects also seek to increase farmers' income, reduce poverty, and food import and improve food security and nutrition. For example, the AFDB and the Global Agriculture and Food and Security Program (GAFSP) say their "Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Commercialization Project" and "Smallholder Agriculture Development for Food and Nutrition Security (SADFONS) are being implemented to "Increase farmers' income through crop intensification, value addition and market development and to improve food and nutrition security and reduce poverty; respectively. The World Bank says its "Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP)" is aimed at "increasing productivity and market access for farmers and agri-enterprises" while IFAD's Tree Crop Extension Projects have been seeking to improve the incomes and climate change resilience of smallholder cocoa producers.

Short-term agricultural loans, grants, and projects promising pathways to food self-sufficiency, and poverty alleviation have old footprints and not new in Liberia. The AfDBs first agricultural project was implemented in Liberia in 1968 and it sought to increase rice production. Later in 1977 the FAO entered Liberia and has been working to revitalize the agriculture sector. IFAD came in 1981 with its first smallholder rice seed project to increase rice

production and has not left- except during the war. But previous and current interventions- costing billions of dollars- have not been able to transform Liberia's agriculture to deliver what the country desperately needs and what its agricultural sector holds the key to provide: strong economic growth, food, and nutrition security and sustained rural poverty reduction and jobs for urban youths.

NOT ON TRACK to Agricultural Transformation: 15 years of Poor Agricultural Productivity, Low Production, Increased Rice Import, and Poor Nutrition Outcome

After decades of spending billions to transform Liberia's agriculture, the following facts ought to make Liberians sit up, pay attention, and begin to demand accountability from NGOs and the government. Since 2017 (the year the African Union began tracking its members' progress towards a transformed agricultural sector) Liberia has been consistently ranked "NOT ON TRACK" to transforming its agricultural sector. On the AU's latest scorecard, Liberia failed 22 of the 24 indicators of progress; including, 0 out of 3 points for its capacity to engage in evidence-based agricultural intervention, 1.3 out of 8.25 points for farmers' access to fertilizers, seeds, and other inputs, 0.58 out of 10 points for farmers' access to finance and 2.38 out of 10 points for public expenditure on agriculture and 1.69 points out of 3 points for food security and nutrition.

The "NOT ON TRACK" is consistent with many situations in Liberia and the following highlights of the agricultural input market- especially for seeds and fertilizers- are revealing. Agricultural Input Markets are among the first set of structures required to ensure the adequate supply of improved inputs (seeds, fertilizers, insecticide, and technology) to farmers, to boost productivity on their farms and increase production. But in Liberia, the market remains largely informal, disorganized, and hence, continuously failing to provide the quality and quantity of farm inputs the farmers need.

Up to 2017, about 96% of farmers in Liberia relied on the informal and unregulated market as the primary source of inputs. This informal market features traders from neighboring countries who supply mostly counterfeit/uncertified seeds, and fertilizers that contribute to low production quantity and poor quality that has kept many farmers in recurrent financial losses, and food deficit after months of hard labor. The number of farmers that use certified seeds in Liberia for the major crops (including rice and cassava) is just 8,137 (4%) of the approximately 203,442 farmers because the input market is nonfunctional and there is less attention directed to developing and enforcing policies that increase confidence for private investment. The dire situation with Liberia's agricultural market is further explained in the "Enabling The Business for Agriculture (EBA)", a World Bank study that examines to what extent governments make it easier or harder for farmers to operate their businesses. The EBA ranks Liberia the worst (101 out of 101 countries studied) in its overall 2019 ranking; revealing that fragile countries, including Haiti, Mali, Sudan, and Iraq, scored better than Liberia in the overall ranking for enabling agricultural business. On a scale of 0 to 100 for registering fertilizers and supplying seeds, Liberia scored 0 for registering fertilizers and 7.4 for seed supply. Something very disturbing about the World Bank's EBA report is that Liberia's miserable performance is reported after another unit of the World Bank, USAID, AFDB, the Swedish Government and other NGOs have spent at least 200 million on no less than six projects (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) that are focused- in a significant part or whole- on "developing agricultural market", reforming agricultural markets", "improving market access for farmers and agri-enterprises".

These poor outcomes are furthered revealed in the trend and status of the productivity and production of major crops in Liberia, food imports and its attendant cost, and nutrition outcome -especially food related non-communicable diseases. For the past 15 years (2006- 2020) the average yield per hectare for rice, cassava, and cocoa farmers in Liberia were significantly lower than their counterparts in neighboring countries (See Figure-2).

Figure-2: Source- Computed using FAO Data

Cocoa, farmers in Liberia received 69.79% less average yield/hectare than farmers in Cote d'Ivoire, 69.22% less than farmers in Guinea, 65.6% less than farmers in Sierra Leone and 66.6% less than farmers in Ghana. Rice farmers in Liberia received 50.2% less average yield/hectare than farmers in Cote d'Ivoire received; 13.1% less than farmers in Guinea, 20.2% less than farmers in Sierra Leone and 45.8% less than farmers in Ghana. Rice is Liberia's staple food, and almost every past and current leader in Liberia (President, Senator, Representative)- has promised to make Liberia self-sufficient in rice production. But after 15years of uninterrupted peace and spending billions to

increase rice production, Liberia remains a food deficit country with a 15 years (2006-2020) average rice (milled) production of 181,411.13 metric tons; 568,588.87 metric tons or 68.17% less than the 750 thousand metric tons Liberians demand every year. At the current average production (181,411.13 MTH) and the current population of 5.058 million, Liberia's rice value chain provides less than half (0.2) cup of rice per Liberian per day. On average, a Liberian consumes over 1cup of rice per day. Instead of taking bold but evidence-baked action to increase rice production and address the per capita rice deficit, Liberia finds comfort in importing rice. As the population grows, the rice deficit increases, and the import quantity and cost to import rice grows. Over the last 15years, rice import has gone north: from 210 thousands metric tons in 2006 to approximately 400 thousand metric tons in 2020; costing Liberia at least 200million on average.

The stark underperformance of the sector is influencing diet related non-communicable diseases and other poor nutrition outcomes among Liberians as many revert to inadequate or low-quality food because of the unavailability and unaffordability of their required diet. Except for child wasting and stunting, Liberia is either off course or experiencing worsening conditions for the remaining 11 global nutrition targets. Particularly stark is Liberia's limited progress towards reducing diet-related non-communicable disease.

Do We Still Need the Army of NGOs and Short-Term Multilateral Projects to Transform Liberia's Agricultural?

The state of agriculture in Liberia could be worst without the NGO and multilateral projects, but Liberia's agricultural sector will not get significantly better by relying on NGOs and multilateral projects as we do now NGOs have very important roles to play. They are good at diagnosing and "treating the symptoms" of agricultural development problems but have no good record of "curing" those problems. Liberia's chronic agricultural development problems need urgent cure, and because the country's policy makers' longstanding conviction in NGOs' and multilateral short-term projects has proved naive, it is time for a structural reorientation of the approach to agricultural transformation.

Such reorientation demands a lot; but to begin, Liberians needs a strong showing of their government in the agricultural sector as a strategic and major participant with predictable interventions and as an effective enabler of private capital flow and functional agricultural markets. "Political will" must be manifested in increased agricultural spending, but only on evidence-informed, outcome-based, and impact focused interventions that are intentionally designed to be rigorously assessed for progress, challenges, and new lessons. Obviously, the current purchase and untargeted distribution of mineral fertilizers to farmers- without knowing the nutrient needs of their soil- is not one of the interventions.

For the army of NGOs and multilaterals, they will need to retreat faster than the current snail pace to doing what the evidence shows is the best ways to use their resources: facilitate, encourage, and support locally owned and managed initiatives and enhance the responsiveness of government services. Most importantly, Liberia needs Liberians, the media, and project beneficiaries or participants to sit up, pay keen attention, and begin to demand transparency and accountability from NGOs and the government for funds they receive, projects they implement, and what they promise those projects would deliver.

A well-functioning agricultural sector is the fastest and most equitable "forklift" to lift and keep Liberians out of poverty. Absolutely nothing than agriculture can be a more reliable source of food security, jobs for rural and urban youths, foreign exchange, savings, and sustainable economic development for Liberia. From Asia, Europe, the Americas, it is growth in agriculture- for the most part- that enabled countries to record remarkable economic transformation and improve living standards. In Africa- closer to Liberia- the impressive economic transformation across Africa (South of the Sahara) beginning in the 2000s was driven mainly by agriculture production growth rate. With all that has happened over the past 15 years (2006-2020), it is urgent that every Liberians sit up, shine their eyes and begin to demand real sustainable results from stakeholders in the agricultural sector- especially the NGOs and the Government.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Dozens benefit free medical treatment from Abraham Hoff Foundation

By Lincoln G. Peters

Dozens of residents of Montserrado County District #1 in Careysburg City over the weekend benefited free medical treatment from the Abraham Hoff Humanitarian Foundation.

The Abraham Hoff Foundation is a humanitarian group that has been working

Crusersville, Mount Coffey, and Local Village King's Farm, among others. People were all in their numbers to form part of the Medical Mobile Outreach in Careysburg.

The first phase of the project provided services to over 500 people while the cost of the project is worth LRD\$450,000.00. Speaking at the start of the Medical

into the activities to help old folks and youth who are unable to get money to pay for treatment at clinics or hospitals.

He said that it's important for the foundation to undertake such a life touching project because there are many people who are denied proper treatment only because they are not having money to facilitate their treatment.

Rev. Paye said this contributes to the untimely deaths of many.

According to Rev. Paye, it only takes a person with a giving spirit to give back to humanity, and as such, he wants to express his thanks and appreciation to Mr. Abraham Hoff who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for thinking in this direction of health service.

"My son, it will beat your imagination to note that our people are dying of malaria only because they [do not have] money to go to hospital. Common headache our people are dying from," he said.

He detailed that the outreach was intended to afford people the opportunity to check and know their health issues so that they can be addressed.

According to him, it's time that all those who are sons and daughters of Electoral



in District #1 from 2008 up to present and has over the years provided basic services to the people of the district including education, healthcare services, infrastructure, and scholarship, among others.

The Mobile Medical Outreach program's second phase benefited old folks and youth from Bensonville,

Mobile Outreach on Saturday, 9 April 2022, an executive and a spokesperson of the Abraham Hoff Humanitarian Foundation, Rev. George Paye, said after listening to the plight and concern of the ordinary Liberians in the district concerning their quest for better healthcare, they have decided to engage

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Cllr. Gongloe rejects Senator Koung's assertions

Team Gongloe, a political group supporting the presidential bid of Liberian human rights lawyer Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe, has issued a statement to clarify what it calls the misrepresentations made by Nimba County Senator Jeremiah K. Koung about their political leader, Cllr. Gongloe recently.

The group said Senator Koung on Wednesday, 6 April 2022, in his conversation with OK FM, had alleged that Cllr. Gongloe was not on speaking terms with certain sons of Nimba County.

Koung named R. Matenokay Tingba, former superintendent of Nimba; Mr. David Dorr Cooper, Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay and Liberia's Chief Justice Francis Saye Korkpor, Sr., as those to whom Cllr. Gongloe was not speaking.

"As such, we wish to

categorically state that currently there exists no problem between Cllr. Gongloe and the persons mentioned during the interview," Team Gongloe said.

Last week, Senator Koung stated in a live talk show on OK FM that when you go

across Nimba, people are saying that Cllr. Gongloe is not noted for supporting his friends.

Koung advised Cllr. Gongloe that "there are too many senior brothers in the county (Nimba) that are very bitter; and if you wait for that time to come and they get out, it could



Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe

UL's LUX Radio launches press club for high school students



LUX Radio 106.5, a teaching broadcasting station of the University of Liberia has launched its 'Press Club' for students in high schools throughout the Country, beginning with institutinos in Montserrado County on Thursday, April 7, 2022. The first of its kind in the history of the State-university and the broadcaster, the initiative kicked off at the station's broadcasting studios situated in the Department of Communication and Media Studies, on the Fendall Campus of the University.

Senyon Kieh who proxy for the Chairman of the Department of Communication and Media Studies, Euriahs Togar, admonished members of the Press Club, predominantly females, to be curious and courageous in order to become successful journalists.

He also asked the students to develop keen interest in reading, particularly newspapers, magazines, books as well as scientific journals. Additionally, Mr. Kieh advised the journalism mentees to

listen to radio at all times to enhance their skills in reading, writing and pronunciation.

According to LUX Radio Program Director, J. Korvah Beyan, who provided the overview of the project, the 10 schools that signed up from the onset were represented at the launch by their students totaling 70.

He said the prime objective of the program was to help the students to start their careers in journalism stressing that there were 'Dos and Don'ts' that entail reporting the news with accuracy, balance and clarity using the '5Ws and an H' as the guidepost.

As part of the project, Mr. Beyan stated, the students would be given lessons in the fundamentals of journalism, and dispatched to cover news stories in their schools and communities to be reported on LUX RADIO periodically.

The initiative, he mentioned, was LUX Radio's Grassroot Media Development Program meant to groom high school journalists to become professionals ultimately.

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be difficult."

"So the Dr. [Joseph] Kortu, the Chief Justice Francis Korkpor, Gbeisay, you know, every group of people coming up there's a clique. Y'all find yourselves into groups. So Kortu ran in 2005, Tiawan didn't support Kortu. Though Kortu won Nimba, Tiawan supported Madam Sirleaf," Sen. Koung explained.

"So the best to do now is to start to reach out to some of those people who believe you hurt them," he added.

But Team Gongloe explained that in the past, like Senator Koung, the persons named above were unhappy with Cllr. Gongloe for supporting his younger sister Madam Edith Gongloe Weh against them.

Regarding Chief Justice Korkpor, Sr., Team Gongloe said

the disagreement between him and Cllr. Gongloe was not personal but grew out of the latter's position as the President of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA).

In other words, the group said, he was stating the LNBA's position on the removal of Associate Justice Kabineh Ja'neh from the Supreme Court Bench.

"When the Nimba elders felt that a problem was evolving between the two sons of Nimba, they called them and resolved the matter," the group continued.

However, Team Gongloe said if there were problems between Cllr. Gongloe and any of the sons of Nimba County named, it was the responsibility of Senator Koung to resolve those differences rather than highlighting them on a public radio.--Press release

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

GAC takes employment verification to Maryland

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

Amidst efforts to scrutinize government payroll, the General Auditing

“Some of us have been working and receiving high school graduate salary, now we have obtained degree but for the past two years, we are still receiving the same

remove people from government payroll but to make the formation straight and clear to our people”, he added.

He continued that the nationwide headcount and verification of civil servants would help the government to have a clear data-based system that will save the state from many loses.

He stressed that the exercise is also meant to verify some key documents of employees such as National Identification Registry, Citizen’s ID, Working ID card, Letter of Employment, academic credentials, and social security ID card, among others.

Mr. Kaba said the headcount started in Harper and Pleebo from April 4th to 10th, and will continue in Barrobo district from 11th to 13th of April, 2022 to be followed by Karluway, Maryland County Electoral District#3 from 14th to 16th April, 2022 respectively.

The GAC Team Lead however, encouraged government employees to see the ongoing exercise as an opportunity to solve or correct problems they may have faced with their employment status.

Meanwhile, several civil servants have lauded the government for the exercise, which they said will help solve employment-related problems.

They expressed optimism that at the end of the exercise, issue of salary structure.

money and I am hoping that this verification and headcount will capture my name this time around”, Mr. Weah said.

Robert Boulay Kaba, head of the General Auditing Commission team in Southeast Liberia revealed that the process is expected to last for one month.

Mr. Kaba explained the move is intended to validate the legitimacy of old and new employees of the Government whose names have been on the payroll.

“We have come to know exactly who are those that the government are spending its money on, if they are still alive and working; this process is not meant to



Commission (GAC) has launched a massive verification headcount for civil servants in Maryland County.

The exercise was hugely attended by local government workers from all sectors recently including those from the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Internal Affairs, Justice, Fisheries, Security, and Health, amongst others.

Speaking to reporters during the start of the exercise at Harper Administration building in Harper City, Maryland county, an employee of the Ministry of Health, Jocab Weah, noted that the GAC process is free, fair, and transparent.

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Dozens benefit free

District #1, Montserrado County, emulate the good example of Mr. Hoff who he said is doing so much in the lives of the ordinary people since the establishment of the organization.

One of the beneficiaries who spoke to reporters said she was happy to be part of such a great

exercise. Mandan Rose Kollie, a resident of White Plains, said this is the first time in their lives to see someone doing such good service in their towns and villages.

She noted that they will always support the foundation in whatever direction they want to go in the interest of the people.

Starts from page back to 11 -7

Weah points

democracy, reduce poverty, solve infrastructure constraints in roads, electricity, port and telecommunications as well as improve agriculture as well as transform governance, improve business climate and provide the means for private sector-led growth.

He stresses that the Steering Committee Meeting is important to take stock of what have been achieved collectively over the last three to four years of the PAPD and face the challenges of the future together.

President Weah thanks the Cabinet, Development

Partners, and friends of Liberia for the tremendous support towards implementation of the PAPD, and specifically lauds the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for coordinating with all stakeholders to arrive at the Steering Committee Meeting following several pillar and sectorial meetings.

“Let us all deliberate in the spirit of frankness and openness, knowing that when united, we can resolve the many problems and challenges that confront us as a nation, a government, a people and as partners”, he challenges participants.

Starts from page 6

UI's LUX Radio launches

LUX RADIO Deputy Program Director who is one of the brainchildren of the Press Club, Weemon Jallahcole was excited, speaking of how crucially significant the initiative was. She hinted that the project would contribute to solving the problems students leaving high schools face, as a result of having little or no career counseling.

Weemon, also lead supervisor of the project, presented Inez Reeves Soko, Moses B. Kpakolo, Rita Jlogbe-Duoe and Nathaniel Sieh - few products, and a student of the Department of Communication and Media Studies who would collaborate with the schools' press clubs to coordinate the project and mentor the students.

“I applaud the University for making its facility available for us to start the project. I humbly request goodwill from individuals and organizations to buttress this worthy effort,” Weemon pleaded.

On his part, LUX Radio Manager, Sydney L. Nicol, Jr. said the broadcasting house was proud to be part of efforts to guide the students in choosing their careers.

He encouraged members of the Club to work hard because hard work is the hallmark of journalism. “If your decision to join the Press Club is to lead you to journalism, then you have made a bold and noble decision especially at this time when career counseling is not common in our schools,” He stressed.--

Press release

ECOWAS Mission Observes the National Assembly Election in The Gambia

The Election Observation Mission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS-EOM) to the National Assembly Election in The Gambia, led by H.E. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, former President of the ECOWAS Commission observed the National Assembly Election in The Gambia, today April 9, 2022.

ECOWAS deployed 40 Election Observers to all the seven (7) Administrative Regions in The Gambia to monitor the electoral process.

Speaking after observing the election process in Banjul, H.E. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Head of the ECOWAS-EOM, stressed the importance of elections in democratic processes. “Generally, the election was

conducted in a calm and transparent atmosphere, using the Gambian electoral process” he added.

The Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government is determined to accompany the people

and the government of The Gambia through the Legislative Elections in line with the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001.



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The ECOWAS Commission has extended support to the democratic process in The Gambia. This support includes several preventive diplomacy missions, the operational deployment of the ECOMIG Mission, engagements with the

country institutions, training on Dialogue and Mediation for Peace Actors and other stakeholders in The Gambia, among others. This indicates the importance ECOWAS places on peaceful electoral processes in the Region.

Français

L'Etat du Libéria a décidé de verser 12 millions de dollars aux importateurs de riz

Le gouvernement du Libéria veut verser 12 millions de dollars aux importateurs de riz afin d'empêcher une augmentation du prix de détail de l'aliment de base du pays, a appris ce journal.

Cette décision fait suite à la demande des importateurs d'une augmentation du prix de détail du riz de 13,50 à 16

US par sac de 25 kg sur le marché local en raison de la hausse du coût d'importation.

Les 12 millions de dollars américains, qui seraient sous forme d'une subvention, visent à couvrir les coûts supplémentaires des importateurs, de sorte que des frais supplémentaires ne soient imposés aux consommateurs.

La décision du gouvernement

intervient également à un moment où les détaillants se bousculent dans les magasins à Monrovia pour s'approvisionner en riz qui semble avoir disparu du marché.

La semaine dernière, les détaillants ont accusé les importateurs de refuser de mettre le riz à leur disposition. Il y a même eu des heurts entre les commerçants et des policiers dans le quartier commercial de Bushrod Island.

Le mardi 5 avril 2022, plusieurs commerçants de riz ont exprimé leurs frustrations face à la rareté, proférant des menaces. Hawa Pawoo, a révélé qu'un sac de riz de 25 kg est vendu à 20 dollars américains ou l'équivalent de 3 000 dollars libériens.

Madame Pawoo appelle le gouvernement à intervenir et à arrêter la hausse du prix du riz afin qu'elle continue son commerce, rappelant que le président George Weah avait

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« Nous auront raison », promet Cummings

Le chef politique du Congrès national alternatif (ANC), M. Alexander Cummings, a rassuré des centaines de partisans qu'il sera disculpé dans le procès pénal en cours parrainé par l'État. Il a insisté sur le fait que les accusations sont basées sur du mensonge et la mauvaise foi de ses détracteurs.

Cummings répondait aux questions de ses partisans lors d'un entretien le vendredi 8 avril dans la communauté Samuel Dahn, c'est dans le district n° 6 du comté de Montserrado. Le district n° 6 compte environ

26 000 électeurs inscrits selon les rapports.

M. Cummings a déclaré que le procès pénal relatif au document-cadre de la Collaboration des partis politiques d'opposition (CPP) fait partie d'un complot et des stratagèmes orchestrés par le gouvernement et ses amis pour contrecarrer son programme de véritable changement au Libéria.

Les questions posées à M. Cummings allaient des routes communautaires déplorables, au manque d'opportunités d'emploi et d'investissement, en passant par la détérioration de la situation économique qui a

rendu les parents indigents, sans oublier l'abus de drogues alarmant et le mauvais système de prestation de soins de santé au Libéria.

Répondant, M. Cummings a imputé la détérioration des conditions économiques à la mauvaise gestion et à l'inefficacité flagrantes du pouvoir national. Il a aussi accusé les libériens d'être également responsables pour avoir élu les mauvaises personnes au pouvoir.

Le leader politique de l'ANC a parlé de l'énorme richesse et des ressources que Dieu a données au Libéria. Il

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Éditorial

Ils ne font que parler de l'agriculture des bouts de lèvres

A en croire nos informations, l'administration Weah serait sur le point de préparer un budget supplémentaire pour allouer 12 millions de dollars américains aux importateurs de riz. Alors que le budget total du pays pour l'agriculture est d'environ 6 millions de dollars américains, si cette information est avérée, cela montrera clairement combien cette administration ne fait pas preuve de volonté politique dans le cadre de l'auto-suffisance alimentaire.

Ce quotidien a appris de sources dignes de foi que les 12 millions de dollars américains, qui seraient sous forme d'une subvention, sont destinés à compenser les coûts supplémentaires encourus lors de l'importation de sorte que aucun frais supplémentaire ne soit imposé aux consommateurs. Cela peut sembler politiquement opportun à court terme, mais ce n'est ni durable ni financièrement prudent.

La production de riz devrait accompagner le pays vers l'autosuffisance alimentaire. Mais hélas, avec les élections qui sont prévues pour 2023 et pour des intérêts politiques personnels, le président Weah et son gouvernement sont en train de sacrifier clairement l'agriculture, soumettant ainsi une population affamée à la politique du riz.

Il est tout à fait incompréhensible qu'un gouvernement doté d'un budget annuel de 5 561 226 dollars américains pour l'agriculture prévoit un budget supplémentaire pour allouer 12 millions de dollars américains pour subventionner l'importation de riz alors que ce pays dispose de terres fertiles et bénéficie d'un climat propice à l'agriculture.

Quel message le gouvernement envoie-t-il aux partenaires internationaux et aux gouvernements amis lorsque la subvention accordée à l'importation du riz est largement supérieure au budget du programme agricole national. Notre enviable forêt tant fertile devrait-elle continuer à rester intacte pendant que nous nous tournons vers l'Inde, le Pakistan, la Malaisie et la Chine pour nous nourrir ? Avons-nous perdu la fierté en tant que nation ou est-ce de la pure paresse ?

Fondamentalement, cette administration n'a pas réussi à procéder correctement par le fait de débloquer 12 millions de dollars américains comme une solution rapide et immédiate, au lieu de s'attaquer plutôt au problème clé, à savoir le manque d'une politique agricole claire et tangible.

Au lieu de donner l'exemple en créant un champ « présidentiel », comme le président assassiné Samuel K. Doe, ce qui encouragerait ou motiverait son cabinet et les deux autres pouvoirs de l'État à investir dans le sol, le président Weah estime que détourner des ressources rares pour subventionner l'importation de riz stabilisera le prix du riz et assurera un approvisionnement ininterrompu.

Mais rien ne garantit que les aliments produits dans d'autres pays qui peuvent également faire face à des défis imprévisibles tels que les changements climatiques, les bouleversements politiques ou les catastrophes naturelles serviront toujours notre demande nationale.

Si le gouvernement dirigé par Weah avait de bonnes intentions pour le peuple libérien, il proposerait une politique agricole nationale viable qui encouragerait les citoyens à retourner à la terre pour cultiver du riz, l'aliment de base du pays. Il ne conclurait pas simplement un accord avec des importateurs qui ne sont motivés que par leurs intérêts.

Français

L'Etat du Libéria a décidé de verser 12

promis aux Libériens que sous son administration, ils ne seraient pas spectateurs de leur propre économie.

Elle se demande comment le président Weah s'attend à ce que les commerçants et les Libériens en général survivent au milieu de la crise économique quand il ne tient pas ses promesses.

Une autre commerçante, Sadiya Guha, une veuve, s'est dite incapable de nourrir ses quatre enfants face à la hausse du prix du riz qui est maintenant à 3 000 LD.

Quant à Mary William, une autre détaillante, elle a affirmé que le gouvernement devrait tout faire pour réduire le prix en détail de la marchandise, car c'est l'aliment de base du pays.

Madame William s'étonne que le président Weah se dise être envoyé par Dieu pour sauver les Libériens pauvres et moins fortunés, alors que les choses deviennent pires dans le pays, que ce soit l'économie, la sécurité ou les problèmes sociaux.

Dans un communiqué de presse publié tard le mardi 5 avril 2022, le ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie a reconnu avoir observé que les commerçants détaillants augmentent constamment le prix de détail d'un sac de riz sur le marché malgré le prix de gros officiel qui reste 13 USD.

« Le ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie veut qu'il soit parfaitement clair que le prix de détail approuvé par le gouvernement du Libéria pour un sac de riz est de 13,50 USD et ne doit pas dépasser 14,00 USD. »

« Nous auront raison », promet Cummings

est pour lui inacceptable que la grande majorité des Libériens vivent dans une pauvreté abjecte, tandis que quelques-uns vivent confortablement.

Sur la question de l'abus de drogue, M. Cummings a parlé de la nécessité d'autonomisation par la création d'emplois et la formation.

Le leader politique de l'ANC a déclaré que les Libériens doivent changer la

Le ministère a dit avoir reçu des informations selon lesquelles certains commerçants vendent un sac de riz à 22 USD. « C'est illégal et totalement inacceptable. Que cela cesse dès maintenant », a averti le ministère.

Les autorités déplorent le fait que les importateurs refusent de vendre le riz aux détaillants et au grand public, bien qu'elles soient en train de faire tout ce qui est en leur pouvoir pour faire face à l'augmentation des prix des denrées alimentaires, dont le riz, sur le marché mondial. Cela, selon le Ministère, est inacceptable et susceptible d'entraîner des conséquences fâcheuses.

Par ailleurs, le ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie met les commerçants en garde contre la vente du riz au-dessus du prix approuvé par le gouvernement, sous peine d'une sévère pénalité.

Il a ainsi mis à disposition des numéros verts (0776512224 ou 0886552058) pour que le public puisse dénoncer quiconque se rendra coupable de violation.

La semaine dernière, plus précisément le jeudi 31 mars, le gouvernement du Libéria a annoncé qu'il n'y avait absolument aucune pénurie de riz sur le marché libérien, et a donc mis en garde contre toute forme de panique.

Le communiqué indiquait que la panique fait suite à une confusion qui a éclaté le mardi 29 mars 2022 entre les distributeurs de riz et certains commerçants suite au refus des premiers de vendre leurs produits. Mais le gouvernement a souligné qu'il avait déjà suffisamment de stocks dans le pays, tandis que des envois supplémentaires sont attendus.

façon séculaire de faire les choses et s'éveiller aux réalités pour changer le Libéria, pour le rendre meilleur et prospère, "nous devons élire des gens qui ne sont pas corrompus et qui ont la vision de changer les choses."

M. Cummings a réaffirmé le ferme engagement de l'ANC en faveur d'un véritable changement qui autonomisera les femmes et les jeunes, sortira les Libériens de la pauvreté et améliorera les conditions de vie de la grande majorité.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Juan Manuel Santos

Faire la paix après la pandémie

BOGOTÁ - Dans une formule lapidaire de son ouvrage *Le Paradis perdu*, le poète anglais John Milton énonce une vérité fondamentale sur les efforts visant à mettre fin à un conflit violent en vue d'établir une paix durable :

« Qui vainc par la force,
Ne vainc son ennemi qu'à moitié. »

Cette idée a joué un rôle central pour trouver un moyen de mettre fin à la longue et coûteuse guerre civile en Colombie. En outre, elle est parfaitement transposable dans le champ des défis mondiaux communs que nous traversons actuellement.

Pour établir la paix, les dirigeants doivent encourager l'espoir et ancrer les politiques dans l'empathie, dans la solidarité et dans une vision à long terme du bien commun. C'est précisément l'approche que nous devons adopter à présent pour surmonter la pandémie de COVID-19 et pour construire un monde plus résilient, capable de mieux résister aux chocs et aux crises à venir.

L'expérience collective de l'humanité durant la COVID-19 nous rappelle à quel point nos vies peuvent être précieuses, fragiles et étroitement liées les unes aux autres. L'existence de chaque personne sur cette planète est inextricablement liée à celle de nos frères, de nos sœurs et de nos voisins, ainsi qu'à celle de nos ancêtres et des générations futures. À l'heure où nous commençons à planifier une relance post-pandémie, notre capacité à reconnaître notre destin commun nous intime de nous inspirer de l'héritage des réussites des dirigeants qui nous ont précédé.

À cet égard, il n'y a pas de meilleur modèle que Nelson Mandela, un homme au courage et à la détermination sans faille, qui a défié un système particulièrement néfaste de l'oppression raciale et qui est devenu le plus grand conciliateur de sa génération. Mandela a enduré près de trois décennies d'emprisonnement, a conduit son peuple vers la liberté et a construit en Afrique du Sud une démocratie résiliente et multiraciale qui a perduré jusqu'à ce jour.

L'humilité inébranlable de Mandela et sa foi inflexible en la démocratie ont contribué à jeter les bases de l'Afrique du Sud moderne. Ces qualités ont également trouvé un écho à l'échelle mondiale, en ce que Mandela a toujours placé la lutte pour la libération du Congrès national africain dans le contexte de la lutte internationale plus large contre le colonialisme, le racisme et la discrimination.

Cette affirmation de notre humanité commune est au cœur de la décision de Mandela de fonder « The Elders », le groupe de dirigeants mondiaux indépendants auquel j'appartiens. Dans son discours lors du lancement de l'organisation à Johannesburg en juillet 2007, Mandela a chargé le groupe d'un mandat spécifique : « Défendre le courage face à la peur, encourager la concorde face au conflit et inspirer l'espoir face au désespoir. »

Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, nous devons renouveler cette approche face à la pandémie, ainsi que face à des menaces existentielles encore plus graves comme le changement climatique et les armes nucléaires. Il est urgent que les dirigeants mondiaux reconnaissent explicitement l'importance de la solidarité, ainsi que leur devoir d'agir de manière décisive pour défendre et rajeunir le multilatéralisme.

Cette ambition et ce sens de l'espoir sont essentiels. Un exemple frappant de son absence est la réaction collective décevante à l'appel lancé en mars 2020 par le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies António Guterres en faveur d'un « cessez-le-feu mondial » en réponse à la COVID-19. Il est vrai que l'appel de Guterres fut convaincant et l'ONU a estimé que les parties belligérantes de 11 pays en ont tenu compte au début du mois d'avril de l'année passée. Mais le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU a mis plus de trois mois à adopter une résolution approuvant l'appel de Guterres. Et trop de conflits se sont poursuivis sans relâche tout au long de l'année 2020 et font encore rage aujourd'hui.

Le nombre de morts, en particulier parmi les civils non armés, a été dévastateur. À la mi-2020, les conflits violents ont contribué à une augmentation du nombre de personnes déplacées de force, qui s'élève à près de 80 millions. Et à la fin de l'année, près de 100 millions de personnes ont subi une grave insécurité alimentaire à la suite d'un conflit, contre 77 millions en 2019.

C'est une mise en cause sérieuse de notre échec collectif, en particulier de celui des cinq membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité. Mais nous devons comprendre la quasi-paralysie du Conseil dans le contexte plus large des nombreux échecs mondiaux de leadership que la COVID-19 a révélés. Il s'agit notamment d'une coordination et d'un partage insuffisants d'informations en vue de contenir la pandémie, d'une collaboration inadaptée du G20 pour protéger l'économie mondiale, d'une pénurie d'aide financière pour soutenir la moitié Sud de la planète et de la catastrophe morale de « l'apartheid vaccinal ».

Face à cette litanie de défis et de déceptions, il est facile de se laisser gagner par le pessimisme. Mais se résigner à l'échec n'est pas seulement un aveu de complaisance des privilégiés du monde qui n'ont pas à supporter la douleur et les pertes de la guerre, mais également une trahison envers ses victimes. L'espoir persiste - tout comme notre détermination doit également persister.

Quant à moi, j'espère et je suis déterminé à ce que nous nous relevions de la pandémie de manière à affirmer les paroles de mon compatriote, le grand écrivain et prix Nobel Gabriel García Márquez : « Ni les inondations, ni les fléaux, ni les famines, ni les cataclysmes, ni même les guerres éternelles de siècle en siècle n'ont pu surpasser l'avantage tenace de la vie sur la mort. » Dans le même esprit, nous devons alors persister dans cette tâche porteuse de vie qui consiste à faire la paix.

Juan Manuel Santos, prix Nobel de la paix, ancien président de la Colombie (2010-18), professeur invité au Département du développement international de l'Université d'Oxford et membre du groupe « The Elders » (Les Anciens).

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LIBERIANS DEBATE

Mysterious deaths in Monrovia and parts adjacent have left residents griped by panic with many fighting daily to get home as early as 6 or 7pm. Government's response is found wanting especially when most investigations seem inconclusive. In this random interview, The New Dawn seeks views of some residents in the capital about the situation that is breeding citizens' distrust in the government.

By Naneka Hoffman



Titus Siakor

"Mysterious death is a very serious situation that every citizen is in worry, because no one knows who's next. Mysterious death is really causing problem among the public because everybody is afraid, people want to go home soon, nobody trusts anybody anymore even whenever people are riding on motorbikes or cars, they are careful. The Government needs to set up speedy

investigations because more often they delay in investigating and other tactics cause the public to lose hope or confidence. The security system is not really active especially, at night, the security people say they don't have logistics and the criminals are more equipped; this is the reason at night we cannot see security in the streets. Criminals harass people in the street broad day and walk away with impunity so, this is just a culture whenever criminal harasses someone in the street, people just standby and look. The Government needs to deploy more security in the streets at night and observe cars with tainted windshield. The authorities should put restriction on motorbikes because motorbikes are the main instruments being used to carry out criminal activities in the country, so Government needs to set deadline for motorbikes to stop transporting passengers at night."

'Mysterious death in the country is saddening news for us young people because when we look around every day, we see dead bodies lying in the streets and we see dead body news on the internet; people are dying mysteriously, there is no accountability, so we are in a country that doesn't have security. It's binding on the Government of Liberia to provide security for the citizens, I think they are in power and that is their responsibility to provide



Mark Allison

security for their citizens. But I think they are failing on this."



Stephen Koryon, Jr.

"Mysterious death is happening in the country every day, but the government is not doing anything towards it. As you can see every day, family members are grieving all over the community, so we really need the Government of Liberia to intervene to see how best mysterious death rate can be minimized in the country. I think what the Government of Liberia needs to do to help us the citizens is to provide more security forces to see how best they can protect citizens' lives."



Mohammed M. Sedibey

"Actually, mysterious death is not welcoming, but it happens to every country and that is not strange to Liberia. Government is minimizing it through frantic effort but as a citizen, you cannot read everybody's heart; some people are very wicked, they want to damage the reputation of the country or the government."

'Mysterious death is something that undermines the peace and tranquility that we enjoy because it creates a sense in which people take onto the streets to protest for justice. If governments around the globe and the Government of Liberia are not careful, it creates a scene in which it jumps to chaotic situation. But then people will say it's not strange to our country. They can have this situation fairly investigated to ensure that victims or those who have committed such acts (perpetrators) are brought to book through means of justice. But one thing I will say to Government is that to minimize mysterious deaths, let's give life for life, I will say so because a person who takes away another



Christian Nyanti

person's life and is being culpable deserves to die. Nobody kills a person in a tragic situation and leaves family in pains and tears then you want to walk away."

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'God will punish CDC government'

By Lincoln G. Peters

Former Vice President Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai says God will punish the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) government and its officials for wastefully, uselessly and recklessly spending the country's money.

"The God we serve, every money that you waste that [is] supposed to benefit the people of Liberia to ensure that opportunities, projects

to benefit its citizens by creating jobs and opportunities across the country.

According to the standard - bearer of the former ruling Unity Party (UP), every money that the CDC government is allegedly looting from the state and its people to enrich officials of government will be replaced and they will be punished by the same God whom they always claimed has brought them to power.

Mr. Boakai is seeking the presidency in the 2023 elections after his first attempt in 2017 failed in a race with incumbent President George Manneh Weah.

and make money out of drugs are criminals and it's time to enforce the law that the Legislature passed, making drugs distribution and sale non-bailable.

The former Vice President indicated that he wants to make sure that people who think the only way to get money is to sell drugs are put out of business, saying if elected president, his administration will not just make laws, but it will enforce laws.

The District 13 Drug Awareness & Resistance Education program was hosted by representative aspirant Mrs. Kruah-Togba.

According to Amb. Boakai, Liberia has good laws, but they are just on paper. He said the enforcement component of laws here is always difficult, thereby recommending that some actions be taken to make a difference because the youthful population is gradually losing its potential.

Boakai suggested that Liberia's drugs and trafficking law should be given attention because there are big people that are making money out of the sale of drugs in the country and it's a blood money.

"These children are Liberia's pride and future because they are products of the country. If we will rehabilitate our youthful population, it's good but we have to leave them with something to start life, and it's skills," said Mr. Boakai.

"This is very serious and all those disadvantaged youths are having potentials and talents that the country needs. We just need to help them to achieve," he continued.

He said he is excited to form part of the initiative, assuring that he will make sure that this is achievable.

"We will make sure that under the UP next government, our youth are protected and all those engaged in the importation of drugs across the country have no place for such harmful attitudes," Amb. Boakai assured.

'We are prepared to be refugee'

By Lincoln G. Peters

Renowned Liberian human rights lawyer and presidential aspirant Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe has warned the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) - led government against tampering with results of the pending 2023 presidential and legislative elections, claiming that the people are prepared to be refugees again if elections results are tampered with. Addressing a local intellectual center Sunday, 11 April 2022 on the Hotel Africa Road, Lower Virginia, Cllr. Gongloe accused the government of allegedly carrying out a mass employment of CDC partisans at the National Elections Commission (NEC) because the ruling party desperately needs the elections.

"If they have not learned from history, then they are prepared to be refugees

government will not tamper with the election result, arguing that the government here knows that the 1985 election result was what led to the conflict in the country.

Gongloe added that it's something that the CDC government should learn from if it does not know history.

He stated that an election result that is not reflective of the people's will is completely unacceptable and will be resisted by the masses. Cllr. Gongloe continued that the CDC government will be compelled to conduct free, fair and transparent elections that will reflect the votes of the Liberian people because they are not ready to re-elect this government.

Cllr. Gongloe said the government has lost the fight against corruption and because of that, the people here no longer have trust and confidence in the governance process of the country.

He claimed that the people are now contemplating replacing the



and programs are instituted to benefit our people, are squandered, God will punish you for it," Amb. Boakai said at the weekend.

Officially launching the Montserrado County District 13 Drug Awareness & Resistance Education (DARE) Movement on the New Georgia Nigerian Shop Football Field, Mr. Boakai accused the government of squandering the opportunities of the states that should be used

"God says I put you there for some reasons and if you do not do it, I will hold you responsible. Sometimes, we just take it for play," Mr. Boakai said.

In Liberia, he said, the government does not plan for generation as others countries do. "Let me make this clear that every child is important. The Liberian people are tired of promises and they have resolved to change the narrative of the country," Amb Boakai noted.

Commenting on drugs addiction and substance abuse in the country, Amb. Boakai said people who sell drugs to children



because the Liberian people will not accept anything that will not reflect them. Their plan to hijack this election is not going to work because Liberians will not accept any stage managed election result," Cllr. Gongloe warned.

The former president of the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA) cautioned the government to desist from any act that has the propensity to undermine the peace and security of the country during the elections period.

Speaking on the topic "The State of the Governance Process and Fight Against Corruption," Cllr. Gongloe told a gathering of young and elderly people at the Mohammed Sesay Intellectual Forum in Lower Virginia that there is an alleged stocking of CDCians who are being employed at the NEC ahead of the 2023 presidential and legislative elections. But he insisted that in spite of this, the

CDC government, but the government is finding a strategy to resist the people's will by allegedly seeking to twist the election result.

Gongloe noted that because the government here is so corrupt, the Liberian people are not even thinking of giving it a second chance.

He suggested that governance is about the protection of the people and seeking their welfare, but accused the CDC government of failing in executing that mandate.

"Corrupt government of former President Charles Taylor produced so many mysterious deaths. Corrupt government of Mr. Weah has produced so many unexplained and mysterious deaths across the country," Cllr. Gongloe noted.

"A corrupt government will not have enough resources to seek the welfare of the people because nobody or international partners [are not] willing to trust them," Cllr. Gongloe claimed.

He said since the founding of

Cummings' trial takes

Starts from back page

messages, it produced and included upon demand by ANC defense lawyers.

State Prosecutors on March 30, 2022, admitted to omitting the four pages of text messages and conversations between July 2, 2020 - and July 18, 2020, from the evidence presented in court, and said the pages were inadvertently extracted.

ANC Defense Lawyers

in countering the request said it would be irregular and a serious reversible error on the part of the Monrovia City Court to order the removal of the four pages of social media text messages following its ruling on March 30, 2022, marking it as evidence in the trial. ANC Defense Lawyers said the four pages of extracted text messages discovered and later ordered included are crucial to vindicating the ANC Political

Leader and others of the charges of forgery and criminal conspiracy.

Regarding State Prosecutors' request to postpone the trial for the third time, twice for their unavailability and the third due to the claimed "illness" of State witness Theodore Momo, it was vehemently objected to by ANC Defense Lawyers and rulings were reserved by the Court in all instances.

Weah points

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difficulties, we moved swiftly as a government to prioritize public expenditure and aggressively grow domestic revenue."

President Weah maintains that the PAPD

remains the best expression of his government's collective ambition to achieve peace, prosperity, and national development and address the critical constraints to growth, such as regional disparity, low human capacity, and poor

distribution of the national wealth.

He says the aim of the PAPD is to place Liberia on a higher trajectory of inclusive economic growth, secure peace and

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Cummings' trial takes another dramatic twist

-State lawyers make another request



The trial of opposition leader Alexander B. Cummings took another dramatic twist on Tuesday, April 12, when the presiding judge rejected requests of state prosecutors seeking travel documents and WhatsApp messages of Mr. Cummings.

State Prosecutors had requested that Mr. Cummings be made to produce his Liberian passport with an American visa and Whatsapp text messages in the trial involving the alleged alteration of the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) framework document.

But Magistrate Jomah Jallah of the Monrovia City Court said state prosecutors' request for Mr. Cummings passport was beyond the court's jurisdiction and that the request for Whatsapp text messages from its service providers is also outside the bailiwick of the court.

The Alternative National Congress (ANC) Political Leader, its National Chairman, Senator Daniel Naatehn, and Secretary-General Cllr. Aloysius Toe, are facing trial for forgery and criminal conspiracy for alleged alteration of the CPP framework document.

Mr. Cummings has repeatedly rejected and denied the charges describing them as bogus and politically motivated, and as part of conspiracies between the All Liberian Party of Benoni Urey and the ruling Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) with ulterior motives.

Meanwhile, State Prosecutors led by the Solicitor General Cephus have again made two requests for the court to extract the four pages of WhatsApp text

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Weah points to successes

By Jonathan Browne

President George Manneh Weah says over the last three years, his government has made tremendous efforts in meeting expectations of Liberians through massive investment in road infrastructure, expansion of

electricity to both rural and urban areas, and investment in health and education, respectively.

"In health we have moved to provide new health facilities and to address challenges to the quality of care. In education, we are building nearly 100 new

schools and have taken steps to bring more Liberians into higher education by abolishing payment of tuition fees at public colleges and universities and have reduced the burden on parents by having Government pay the West African examination fees for 12th graders", he says.

Addressing the first Steering

Committee Meeting of the PAPD on Monday, April 11, 2022 at the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex in Congo Town, President Weah however, noted that

macroeconomic shocks in 2018 gravely affected the PAPD.

He says considering these challenges, government had

to revise and recalibrate the ambitions of the PAPD, but this first Steering Committee meeting of the PAPD but despite these revisions, the PAPD remains on course and has been able to achieve a lot, while still dealing with numerous challenges, adding

"In the course of these recent

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