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DATE	BUYING	SELLING
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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

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# Family demands cause of death

**-Writes Pres. Weah**

# Boakai faces defense team



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# Continental News

## Fighting for the Kikuyu vote in Kenya's election

The two leading candidates in Kenya's presidential election have chosen running mates from the vote-rich Kikuyu ethnic group to bolster their chances of winning August's much-anticipated poll.

Deputy President William Ruto has picked businessman Rigathi Gachagua while former Prime Minister Raila Odinga has settled for former Justice Minister Martha Karua.

"The two are worlds apart, save for the fact that they come from the Mount Kenya region," analyst Javas Bigambo told the BBC. The Mount Kenya region is home to the Kikuyu community, the support of which could be vital to determining the outcome of the election. Mr Gachagua is a strong mobiliser and has the ear of struggling Kikuyus, who have been backing Mr Ruto over his plans to address economic grievances. Ms Karua is a political icon beyond the Kikuyu - and is known for her passion for judicial reform and campaigns against corruption. Analysts say that while the intellectual elite might go for the avid anti-



Both main candidates for the deputy presidency, Martha Karua (L) and Rigathi Gachagua @, are from the Kikuyu ethnic group

corruption campaigner, this election is mostly about economic reforms.

"Both sides are tainted by corruption allegations and that is why none is pointing fingers. Corruption is no longer an issue. It seems to be our way of life and it has become hard to show a strong leader who is not tainted by corruption," analyst Bobby Mkangi told the BBC.

Mr Gachagua is facing charges of corruption and money-laundering worth \$65m (£53m). He denies the charges, and says he is being persecuted by the state for supporting Mr Ruto. Outgoing President Uhuru

Kenyatta is supporting Mr Odinga, with whom he famously shook hands in 2018 to signal that they had reconciled after years of political acrimony. Analysts say that since then, Mr Odinga, a veteran opposition leader who has failed in four previous attempts to win the presidency, has largely ignored all the rot in government.

His choice of Ms Karua as running mate is also an attempt to win the female vote, but Mr Bigambo is not sure how successful she will be. "She appeals to the women

academically and not practically. She only appeals to part of the middle class and the NGO community who do not have a strong bearing on the election outcome," Mr Bigambo says. Ms Karua ran to be president in 2013 and got 43,881 votes - or 0.36% of the total number cast.

But she is known for being bold and an astute fighter for multi-party democracy.

She has walked out on two former presidents.

In 2001 she stormed out of an event attended by then-President Daniel arap Moi, protesting against comments made against her then-party leader Mwai Kibaki.

Ms Karua resigned as justice minister in 2009 citing frustrations after Mr Kibaki, the president at the time, appointed judges without her knowledge.

"The big question is whether or not she has the capacity to step out as the Mount Kenya supremo now that President Uhuru is retiring. Will she be fully

asks. Mr Gachagua on the other hand has been lauded by analysts for his ability to tap into the political network he was part of while working as President Kenyatta's personal assistant and as a district officer in different regions.

"His ability to negotiate his way to this position considering other names that were fronted and were known nationally is quite something," Mr Mkangi says.

Mr Gachagua is the member of parliament for Mathira constituency in central Kenya, which has produced three of Kenya's four presidents - Jomo Kenyatta, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta.

He is a businessman whose speeches on the campaign trail suggest he understands the issues affecting the Kikuyu.

"He is the feared political bulldog that Ruto needed to be able to counter President Uhuru in the central region," Mr Bigambo says. Despite economic issues emerging in this election as a possible determinant in how people will vote, ethnicity still has a strong influence on the electorate. BBC

## Mali thwarts Western-backed coup attempt - junta



The military rulers have been in power since August 2020

Mali's military junta says it thwarted an attempted coup last week led by "Western-backed" soldiers.

The alleged foiled coup took place on the night between 11 and 12 May, the junta said in a statement without providing evidence.

The statement read out on state television on Monday said: "The attempt was thwarted thanks to the vigilance and professionalism

of the defence and security forces."

It did not give details of the alleged coup plotters' identity and whereabouts, but said they would be handed over to justice.

The AFP news agency quoted a military source as saying that about 10 arrests were made.

Mali's military has seized power twice since August 2020 when it ousted elected President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and has been under pressure to return the country to democratic rule. BBC

## Clashes Rock Tripoli as Libyan Rivals Fight in Capital

Clashes erupted in Libya's capital on Tuesday as the parliament-appointed prime minister, Fathi Bashagha, tried to take control of government from a rival administration that has refused to cede power. Bashagha entered Tripoli overnight after two months of stalemate between Libya's rival administrations, but withdrew hours later as

fighting rocked the capital, his office said. The crisis risks plunging Libya back into prolonged fighting after two years of comparative peace, or returning it to partition between the eastern-backed government of Bashagha and a Tripoli administration under Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah. The stalemate has already led to a partial blockade of Libya's oil facilities, cutting its main source of foreign revenue by half.

Diplomacy to resolve the crisis or lay the ground for new elections is making slow progress. The sound of heavy weapons and automatic gunfire crashed across the capital on Tuesday morning, as schools were canceled and the normally heavy rush hour traffic was sparse.

However, in central areas, away from the clashes on the northeast side of Tripoli, there was little evidence of military activity with the government of Bashagha's rival Dbeibah still in apparent control. Bashagha had entered Tripoli overnight accompanied by allied fighters in the hope of taking over government but was quickly met by opposition from forces aligned with Dbeibah, who was appointed through a U.N.-backed process last year. Bashagha's office had released a statement saying his government would carry out its duties from inside the capital but later said he and accompanying ministers would depart to prevent civilian deaths. VOA



Military vehicles mounted with heavy weapons belonging to pro-PM Dbeibah Constitution Protection Force are pictured in Tripoli



# EDITORIAL

## A game of denial

IT APPEARS THAT no official of the Weah government is willing to take responsibility for the Liberian Diplomatic Passport given to Liberian businessman Sheik Bassirou Kante, who is being interrogated by the United States Government for alleged wire fraud, totaling more than US\$7 million. Sheik Kante is not a diplomat and he does not work for the Government of Liberia, but yet he carries Liberian Diplomatic Passport.

IT'S A KNOWN fact that Sheik Kante has very close ties with Liberia's Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor, but from the Vice President to Montserrado County District#14 Representative Abraham Vamuyan Corneh and Information Minister Ledgerhood Julius Rennie, everyone is distancing himself or herself from the criminal suspect.

EVEN THE MINISTRY of Foreign Affairs that is responsible to process all Liberian passports is being tempted to deny having any knowledge how the Diplomatic Passport got in the hands of Kante, though President George Weah has ordered Foreign Minister Dee Maxwell Kemayan to probe the matter.

WHAT IS CLEAR though is that Kante directly left from Liberia for the United States where he was arrested. He did not come from the sky with the diplomatic passport.

OUR BEST GUESS is that only the Government of the United States will unearth the real truth in this matter because authorities here are locked in a game of denial, portraying innocence.

AND NOW WE have the Foreign Ministry investigating itself. Nothing much should be expected, because the government would not indict itself just as it did not want to try and convict former passport director Adrew Wonplo for selling Liberian Diplomatic Passports to non-Liberians. It took the U.S. Department of State under former Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, who barred Wonplo and his immediate family from traveling to America "due to his involvement in significant corruption" thought of re-trying him which was nothing but a child's play.

SHIEK KANTE IS said to have spent US\$100,000 in Liberia during the bicentennial celebration here, but the government says its is not aware. He brought Nigerian artists P-Square to perform at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex, but Information Minister Rennie said as National Chairperson for the bicentennial steering committee, the committee did not know about it, and Mr. Kante never communicated with them on such matter.

SPEAKING AT THE Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism's regular press briefing on Thursday, May 12, the MICAT boss further clarified that Mr. Bassirou on his own decided to hire the services of Nigerian musicians P-square because of the euphoria of the bicentennial celebration.

"WE DIDN'T KNOW about it, he never wrote us, he never communicated to us, and that brought an uproar amongst the local musicians because it was announced that he had spent US\$200,000 and people said it was the government who gave the money", says the minister.

WITH EVERY OFFICIAL washing his or her hands totally off anything that has to do with Sheik Kante in Liberia and how he obtained Liberian Diplomatic Passport, outcome of the investigation ordered by President Weah into the scandal would become nothing else but 'round peg in a square hole.'

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# COMMENTARY

By Jayati Ghosh

## Building the Green-Recovery Consensus

**D**OHA - While Russia's invasion of Ukraine is capturing global headlines, COVID-19 continues to wreak socioeconomic havoc around the world. The pandemic has taken more than six million lives, pushed 124 million people into extreme poverty, and impeded progress toward achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Fortunately, around five billion people have now received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and the World Health Organization and Gavi have set a goal of vaccinating 70% of people in all countries by this July.

Notwithstanding the horrific war in Ukraine, the pandemic and its lasting toll will continue to top the list of pressing global concerns alongside climate change. The effects of the latter crisis are already being felt daily, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report shows. Just recently, extreme temperatures and droughts have ravaged West Asia and North Africa. Rising sea levels are threatening many island states and low-lying countries. Catastrophic flooding has inundated parts of Europe and China. And wildfires have torn across the American West and large swaths of Australia.

Scientists now warn that "business as usual" will likely increase the average global temperature, relative to the pre-industrial level, by a catastrophic 3-4° Celsius by the end of the century. To keep global warming at a far safer level, below 1.5°C, carbon dioxide emissions will need to fall by 45% (from 2010 levels) by 2030, and then to net zero by 2050.

Now that we know Omicron to be less deadly than earlier COVID-19 variants, we should use this moment to build on the momentum generated last November at the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow. The world needs to draft a recovery plan that goes well beyond pandemic response by also starting to tackle climate change. The recovery must be not only broad-based but also green.

What does this mean in practical terms? In advance of the 20th edition of the Doha Forum on March 26-27, our organizations teamed up to explore 20 targeted initiatives for driving a just, healthy, and sustainable global recovery. These are outlined in a recently published report, Building Back Together & Greener.

To make the recovery green and sustainable, we propose a Global Green Hydrogen Alliance to facilitate more efficient, climate-friendly methods of producing hydrogen. Once established, the next steps would include setting up a global inventory of green hydrogen programs, protecting intellectual-property and licensing rights while expanding global access, and encouraging alliance-wide standard setting for safe storage and transportation.

A fair and inclusive recovery requires more investment in human capital - particularly to upgrade workers' skills - and an emphasis on supporting the people who are most at risk. Planning processes should privilege public and private financing for low-carbon activities and infrastructure that have the greatest potential to generate jobs for young people and other vulnerable groups facing employment

challenges.

To ensure that the recovery supports health and well-being, we need a Global Fund for Social Protection to assist developing-country governments in providing adequate social programs. Such a fund would boost coordination efforts and mobilize domestic and external resources to provide a buffer against economic shocks, including those induced by climate-related environmental disasters.

Finally, to realize the potential of digitalization in advancing the recovery, we need to promote large-scale investment in information- and communications-technology infrastructure, both to achieve digital equity and to leverage the economic, health, and environmental potential of new technologies. International organizations and governments should work with businesses to provide effective and reliable digital connectivity, including through targeted investments in the steady digitalization of most (if not all) public services.

Several significant international meetings will be held over the next seven months, each of which will provide an opportunity to take steps toward a shared recovery. But marshaling governments, businesses, and civil society behind a coherent, representative, and sustained global implementation strategy will require a culminating meeting.

That is why we are calling for a "Green Pandemic Recovery Summit," to be orchestrated by the United Nations and the G20. A two-day event, timed to coincide with the annual UN General Assembly in September, would help to ensure that political leaders at the highest levels commit to pursuing sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development in the post-COVID era.

The trillions of dollars spent by wealthy countries during the pandemic shows that there are financial tools available to tackle serious challenges. What is needed is political will, creative market incentives, and a practical blueprint, with clear goals, timelines, and programming ideas.

Resources drawn from related initiatives can help. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Build Back Better World partnership, and national-level "green deals" are generally aligned in their key objectives. UN Secretary-General António Guterres's Our Common Agenda report offers additional timely and ambitious ideas for delivering global public goods and addressing major risks.

People and countries are understandably still focused on the pandemic, the fear that humanity is nearing the point of no return with respect to climate change, the war in Ukraine, and other global threats. Fortunately, we already have the multilateral institutions that we need to forge a global political consensus for tackling these overlapping crises. We now must leverage these tools accordingly.

*Lolwah Al-Khater, Assistant Foreign Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, is Executive Director of the Doha Forum. Brian Finlay is President and CEO of the Stimson Center.*



O-PED

By Daron Acemoglu

Why Nation-Building Failed in Afghanistan

ISTANBUL - The United States invaded Afghanistan 20 years ago with the hope of rebuilding a country that had become a scourge to the world and its own people. As General Stanley McChrystal explained in the run-up to the 2009 surge of US troops, the objective was that the “government of Afghanistan sufficiently control its territory to support regional stability and prevent its use for international terrorism.”

Now, with more than 100,000 lives lost and some \$2 trillion spent, all America has to show for its effort are this month’s scenes of a desperate scramble out of the country - a humiliating collapse reminiscent of the fall of Saigon in 1975. What went wrong?

Pretty much everything, but not in the way that most people think. While poor planning and a lack of accurate intelligence certainly contributed to the disaster, the problem has in fact been 20 years in the making.

The US understood early on that the only way to create a stable country with some semblance of law and order was to establish robust state institutions. Encouraged by many experts and now-defunct theories, the US military framed this challenge as an engineering problem: Afghanistan lacked state institutions, a functioning security force, courts, and knowledgeable bureaucrats, so the solution was to pour in resources and transfer expertise from foreigners. NGOs and the broader Western foreign-aid complex were there to help in their own way (whether the locals wanted them to or not). And because their work required some degree of stability, foreign soldiers - mainly NATO forces, but also private contractors - were deployed to maintain security.

In viewing nation-building as a top-down, “state-first” process, US policymakers were following a venerable tradition in political science. The assumption is that if you can establish overwhelming military dominance over a territory and subdue all other sources of power, you can then impose your will. Yet in most places, this theory is only half right, at best; and in Afghanistan, it was dead wrong.

Of course, Afghanistan needed a functioning state. But the presumption that one could be imposed from above by foreign forces was misplaced. As James Robinson and I argue in our 2019 book, *The Narrow Corridor*, this approach makes no sense when your starting point is a deeply heterogeneous society organized around local customs and norms, where state institutions have long been absent or impaired.

True, the top-down approach to state-building has worked in some cases (such as the Qin dynasty in China or the Ottoman Empire). But most states have been constructed not by force but by compromise and cooperation. The successful centralization of power under state institutions more commonly involves the assent and cooperation of the people subject to it. In this model, the state is not imposed on a society against its wishes; rather, state institutions build legitimacy by securing a modicum of popular support.

This does not mean that the US should have worked with the Taliban. But it does mean that it should have worked more closely with different local groups, rather than pouring resources into the corrupt, non-representative regime of Afghanistan’s first post-Taliban president, Hamid Karzai (and his brothers). Ashraf Ghani, the US-backed Afghan president who fled to the United Arab Emirates this week, co-authored a book in 2009 documenting how this strategy had fueled corruption and failed to achieve its stated purpose. Once in power, however, Ghani continued down the same road.

The situation that the US confronted in Afghanistan was even worse than is typical for aspiring nation builders. From the very beginning, the Afghan population perceived the US presence as a foreign operation intended to weaken their society. That was not a bargain they wanted.

What happens when top-down state-building efforts are proceeding against a society’s wishes? In many places, the only attractive option is to withdraw. Sometimes, this takes the form of a physical exodus, as James C. Scott shows in *The Art of Not Being Governed*, his study of the Zomia people in Southeast Asia. Or it could mean co-habitation without cooperation, as in the case of Scots in Britain or Catalans in Spain. But in a fiercely independent, well-armed society with a long tradition of blood feuds and a recent history of civil war, the more likely response is violent conflict.

Perhaps things could have turned out differently if Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency had not supported the Taliban when it was militarily defeated, if NATO drone attacks had not further alienated the population, and if US-backed Afghan elites had not been extravagantly corrupt. But the cards were stacked against America’s state-first strategy.

And the fact is, US leaders should have known better. As Melissa Dell and Pablo Querubín document, America adopted a similar top-down strategy in Vietnam, and it backfired spectacularly. Places that were bombed to subdue the Viet Cong became even more supportive of the anti-American insurgency.

Even more telling is the US military’s own recent experience in Iraq. As research by Eli Berman, Jacob Shapiro, and Joseph Felter shows, the “surge” there worked much better when Americans tried to win hearts and minds by cultivating the support of local groups. Similarly, my own work with Ali Cheema, Asim Khwaja, and James Robinson finds that in rural Pakistan, people turn to non-state actors precisely when they think state institutions are ineffective and foreign to them.

None of this means that the withdrawal could not have been managed better. But after 20 years of misguided efforts, the US was destined to fail in its twin objectives of withdrawing from Afghanistan and leaving behind a stable, law-based society.

The result is an immense human tragedy. Even if the Taliban do not revert to their worst practices, Afghan men and especially women will pay a high price for America’s failures in the years and decades ahead.

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

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OPINION

By Eric Posner

COVID and the Conservative Economic Crack-up

CHICAGO - A recent commentary in the Wall Street Journal exposes the dark hole into which conservative economic thinking has sunk since the pinnacle of its influence in the 1980s. Economists Casey B. Mulligan and Tomas J. Philipson of the University of Chicago, both of whom served in Donald Trump’s administration, have used the COVID-19 pandemic to make the case for abandoning what they see as the conventional wisdom among economists: “that the purpose of government policy is to correct market failures.”

Turning this dictum on its head, they argue that “government policy fails much more frequently” than markets do, and that markets correct government policy by rescuing citizens from the terrible decisions that governments routinely make. It thus follows that the COVID-19 pandemic was the result of government policy. Either the virus escaped from a Wuhan laboratory that had received US government funding, or it spread because Chinese authorities failed to inform the world in time, and because the US government flipflopped on its messaging about face masks and lockdowns.

Mulligan and Philipson then argue that it was private enterprise that “quickly controlled” the pandemic (all thanks to Trump, of course), even though the virus is still running rampant. “Getting the government out of the way was essential,” they write. That was “the goal of President Trump’s Operation Warp Speed.”

Operation Warp Speed was indeed a success, but it was also a classic government intervention in the free market. Costing more than \$10 billion, it was designed to correct a market failure - exactly the opposite of what Mulligan and Philipson claim. The market failure was the lack of incentives for private companies to invent and distribute a vaccine, presumably because the costs and risks could not justify the return if they succeeded. The government stepped in by throwing money at the companies, guaranteeing a market, and supplying technical advice and coordination.

This intervention was no different in spirit from mask requirements and lockdowns, which also solve a market failure. Without government regulation, many individuals and businesses would externalize the risk of passing infections on to others by failing to take adequate precautions.

A market failure occurs whenever a private agent’s actions cause social costs that exceed private costs. Such instances are ubiquitous. When people are rational and amoral (as economists normally assume), they have every incentive to dump waste in rivers, drive faster than is safe for pedestrians, cyclists, and other drivers, and spread contagious diseases to others if they feel well enough to go out. The only thing that prevents market failures is the law, which is created and enforced by government. The idea that “government failures” are more common than or worse than market failures is incoherent. Without a government, there would be nothing but market failures.

True, governments make mistakes. Maybe China did regulate the Wuhan lab insufficiently, or the US government unwisely sent funds to a foreign lab without ascertaining first that it operated safely. But what is the alternative? There are researchers around the world studying and modifying dangerous viruses in order to develop vaccines and therapies against them. When done safely, this work is valuable. In a free market for such research and development, the government would impose no safety regulations at all on private labs. Researchers (and anyone else) would be allowed to operate however they liked.

Could this really be what Mulligan and Philipson advocate? Clearly, the only solution to government failure is better government policy, not no government policy. The elimination of government involvement in vaccine research - both to promote and regulate it - would be disastrous.

Mulligan and Philipson might also have argued that the US Food and Drug Administration or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should be abolished, or advocated scrapping the enormous range of federal and state laws that public-health authorities used to shut down businesses and impose mask mandates. These agencies and statutes allow the government to address problems of public health, including contagious diseases - a market failure par excellence.

FDA emergency authorization has been important for overcoming the doubts of the vaccine-hesitant, while CDC guidelines - as frustrating as they may be - have helped local public-health authorities understand their options. These government interventions have been a godsend for businesses, which have relied on them in determining how to treat employees and customers. (Contrary to Mulligan and Philipson’s claim, businesses did not figure these things out on their own.)

In a remarkable statement, Mulligan and Philipson write that, “Politicians craft tax policy to favor certain interest groups, but the private sector corrects such failures by substituting to less-taxed activities.” This, apparently, is another way that “markets” save us from “government failure.”

But, in fact, when economists use the word “tax,” they are referring not just to levies on income, but, more broadly, to sanctions imposed on polluters, fraudsters, criminals, reckless drivers, financial institutions that risk their customers’ money, and anyone else who causes harm to others. When private actors respond by substituting to less-taxed but functionally similar activities, that is called “regulatory arbitrage,” and it is an enormous problem whenever the taxed activity, like pollution, causes harm (as is usually the case).

The “government-bad-market-good” argument had a good run back in the 1980s. But it was dealt a body blow by the 2008 financial crisis, when “good” government, led by the US Federal Reserve, rescued financial markets from self-destruction caused by the deregulation promoted by free-market advocates. Another blow has come with the pandemic, which itself most likely emerged in a free (wet) market in Wuhan, where people could buy and sell live animals without paying adequate attention to the risk of zoonotic infection.

Government programs and interventions such as mask mandates have helped mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic. Trump’s major achievement was using government to create the conditions for rapid vaccine development; his major failure was not going further and undermining efforts by state and local governments to control the pandemic.

Mulligan and Philipson are accomplished economists. It is mysterious that they take the worst market failure in decades as an opportunity for arguing that markets solve the problems created by government. Redefining a massive government intervention as “getting out of the way of business” seems at best an effort to rationalize their former boss’s political opportunism by treating his multiple failures to use government to address the pandemic as continuous with his one real achievement. This kind of argument hardly rescues free-market economics from its latest moral and intellectual failures, and will only sow public confusion as governments gear up to confront another wave of infections.

*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 (All Points Books, 2020).*

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## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# The Litany of Failures and Underperformance of the Weah's Government

By S.Karweaye

The switching on street lights in Monrovia and its surrounding that have since gone dime and the erection of invincible Sports Park was celebrated with much pomp and pageantry by the George Weah administration. To an onlooker or a visitor to the country, the review of the administration's performances over the years was right on course and almost believable. The paradox is that the same people who set the examinations sat for them and graded themselves. Sadly, contrary to the current administration's celebration of success, the grand 'economic' figures that were reeled out mean nothing to the ordinary person. The President, proudly at Invincible Sports Park has asked that we score him by the development is carrying out in Liberia. That is what exactly will be covered by this article; not from the perspective of the Weah and his government but from the angle of the perceived 'beneficiaries' of the various schemes and policies that have been enacted since 2018.

Considering the macro-economic issues which have been celebrated by the current government, the fact is several notable aspects of the economy which the government claims to have improved, only impacted a few beneficiaries. The government claims credit for a GDP growth of about 4%. It also beats its chest on the renovation of the Executive Mansion, having been destroyed during the administration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2006. The government also touts its award of several contracts for infrastructure, especially roads, market buildings and solar panel street lights. Finally, the Weah government is very smugly proud of its so-called Invincible Sports Park, and 14th Military Hospital, but shunned away from the consistent power outages at the Roberts International Airport (RIA) and in Monrovia, poor educational and health services, etc. in the country.

In the area of providing safety and security for citizens, President Weah has just recently declared that government officials and ordinary citizens should buy CCTV cameras for security protection. Before the President's pronouncement, the government had all but capitulated to all manners of security challenges in all parts of the country, from the ritual killing, and mysterious deaths of government auditors to the gruesome murders in cold blood of John Hilary Tubman, William Tolbert, Madam Maude Elliot, Princess Cooper, armed robbery, to all other strains of dissidence. And, of course, the government's own pretense at, and overlooking serial human rights violations and repeated extrajudicial killings of innocent citizens by the security forces.

In the four years since the election of President George Weah, poverty has reportedly increased by 1.1% (50.9 to 52 ) according to the World Bank's 2021 Poverty and Equity Brief. The brief revealed that "44 percent of the population lived under the extreme international poverty live on \$1.90perday and poverty in Liberia is projected to increase over the next few years, driven by increasing food prices, lower commodity prices for minerals, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," Worthy of note is the fact that it was also mentioned by the World Bank that a GDP growth rate of -3% is insufficient to reduce poverty in the country. In practical terms, under Weah's administration, there appears to be No improvement

in the numbers; roughly 2.4 million Liberians are unable to cater to their daily needs of feeding, transportation, and other human engagements. Beyond all the trumpets being blown by the current administration for its performance, poverty still abounds greatly in the country which by all standards and measures should not be, given Liberia's vast natural and human resource endowments. According to the 2010 Revenue Watch Index, Liberia is recognized and ranked 60.5 among natural resources-rich nations. But because these revenues are not properly accounted for and managed terribly, they benefit only a few who have access to the funds to the detriment of the citizenry.

Corruption and inequality are on the rise as attested to by Ms. Dana Banks, head of U.S. President Joe Biden's delegation to Liberia's Bicentennial Celebration. Her analysis of the Liberian situation, however grim, is so true. According to the Special Assistant to President Biden and the Senior Director for African Affairs at the Security Council, "Liberia has a host of anti-corruption institutions. But while these institutions are nominally and legally independent from the Government of Liberia, the truth is that the government fails to adequately fund them and exerts its influence upon them. She lamented that too many of Liberia's leaders have chosen their short-term gain



over the long-term benefit of their country. She said the expectation, sometimes, is that the United States and the rest of the international community will step in to solve Liberia's long-term problems. So let me be clear. The United States is a proud and dedicated partner and friend of Liberia, but ultimately, only the Liberian Government and the Liberian people can tackle corruption, fight for accountability and transparency, and move this country forward." I tend to agree with Ms. Dana Banks and there will be continuous agitations and unrest in Liberia until the country's system is able to guarantee economic justice and equality to the people. It is unacceptable to have poverty amid plenty. Sadly, Liberia, at the end of 2021 ranked as the 136th most corrupt country in the world according to the 2021 Corruption Perception Index. In the 2019 CPI, Liberia was placed as the fifth place among the 10 most corrupt countries in Africa. At this pace, the only thing obvious is the fact that the nation is nowhere close to being taken off the corruption list.

The debt stock of the nation keeps soaring and has currently doubled what it was in 2017. According to statistics available on the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) website, the total debt stock at the end of February 2020 stands at US\$1.47 billion of which

domestic debts account for US\$604.4 million (41 percent) while the external debt stock account for US\$861.8 million (59 percent). What does the Liberian government have to show for its massive external and internal borrowing? Is it the erratic electricity supply or the invincible Sports Park and market buildings that service a fraction of the population? Government borrowing ought to inject needed cash into the social sector of government by funding critical priority areas such as health, basic education, water, and roads. Can we proudly say we have seen considerable improvement in these sectors under Weah?

Incidentally, barely a few weeks after Weah's celebration of 'the achievements of his invincible Sports Park, SN Brussels Airlines aborted to land at RIA due to a dark runway. The plan ended diverting to Sierra Leone on low fuel. According to the United States Aid For Development (USAID), in the capital city of Monrovia, less than 80% of the population still lived in darkness. This indicates that either this government is not reading from the same script or those that authored Weah's brandished 'achievements' live on another planet. It may also be that the government has been caught up in its web of lies, because however carefully managed a lie is, the truth will always come out in the end. Unemployment in Liberia has grown. According to the UNDP 2019 human index report, the

unemployment rate in Liberia is 2.8. Most of the youth simply have no hope for what the future holds for them. The truth is that most of the armed robbery, illegal drug trades and drug addictions being experienced in the country are a direct offshoot of the idleness and unemployment among restless youths.

What is clear though is that not only is President Weah determined that he has passed his four years at the helm with flying colors, but he has also declared that he has passed the 6 years exam too, and will promote himself to a second term whether we like it or not. His surrogate voices like Acarous Gray and Samuel Tweah have

already announced the results of the next presidential elections that we all hope will take place in 2023! These voices have made it clear that mayhem will be visited on the rest of Liberia if Weah does not contest and win the next presidential election. He has also embarked on a journey of annihilating any source of dissent within his toxic party, the opposition, and the country on multiple fronts. within the CDC, he has decided not to support CDC current Chairman Mulban Morlu for daring to gossip about him on audio. The National Patriotic Party (NPP) accused its governing partner, the Congress for Democratic Change, of unilaterally making decisions and policies that impact the ruling coalition's other members. In the light of all these, it is clear that when Weah loses the 2023 presidential elections, he will pull a Laurent Gbagbo stunt, dig in and declare that he has not lost, with his surrogates unleashing violence on anyone perceived to be in disagreement. The next year will therefore be a period of great challenge to Liberians during which round-the-clock vigilance must be the watchword of all those that care for our nation and its people.

We all need to be proactive in insisting that the next elections be free, fair, and credible. The former

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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# Ex-senator Ballout engages citizens ahead of 2023

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

Amidst two consecutive defeats in 2014 and 2020, respectively, Maryland County former senator John A. Ballout is rallying Marylanders, seeking their views on whether he should



recontest during the pending 2023 election. The engagement with his kinsmen was noticed during a recent visit to the county. According to Mr. Ballout, since he left the Senate, there has been no

improvement made by Maryland County current lawmakers. He claimed the county made progress during his stay in the Senate, but since he left, there is nothing that the current Maryland lawmakers can show in terms of development.

"Let me say this; I challenge any of these current lawmakers to show me what they have done for this county, because you can see since I left, only what I have done for the county is what you can see." He

alleged. The former lawmaker recalled renovation of the Pleebo and Harper City Halls, lobbying for the extension of ECO and International Bank, Partner In Health, to the county, and engaging the company heads to have constructed a youth center, among others. He said that during his stay, some community radio stations in the county benefited from US\$15,000 he lobbied for, including elevation of Tubman College to Tubman University in Harper City. He also disclosed that he has engaged the people of Barrobo, Maryland County Electoral district#3 to provide a land space that is currently being occupied by the Tubman University, coco and rubbers farmers. The former senator also said during his term, there was good working relationship among members of the County legislative caucus than what it's now, recalling that he was always one of those lawmakers who was the first to arrive during their meetings and the last to leave. "Let me say this, it was

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10

# House expresses concern over diplomatic passport saga

The leadership of the House of Representatives says it is concerned about the illegal issuance of Liberian Diplomatic Passports to persons of non-diplomatic status. According to a press release, members of the Leadership Committee are troubled by recent reports of diplomatic passport falling into the hands of indicted criminals and people with questionable characters; something the legislators note, borders on national security. The release says during a leadership meeting on Monday, 16 May, Foreign Minister Dee Maxwell Kemayah was invited to brief the body and give accounts on the issuance of diplomatic passport to ineligible individuals. It says Minister Kemayah informed the lawmakers that an investigation by the directive of President George Weah has been launched into the passport saga. The Foreign Minister also

assured the lawmakers that upon completion, findings of the investigation will be submitted to the August body. Meanwhile, Members of the 54th Legislature return to the Capitol on Tuesday, 17 May to resume legislative functions as prescribed in a new Act setting up the calendar of adjournment. The Liberian Legislature in March passed into law, "An

Act to Amend Section 1 of an Act Fixing Day for the Annual Adjournment of the Legislature of the Republic of Liberia. And to establish in lieu thereof An Act Setting the Calendar of Adjournment for the Legislature, to adjourn for its first break the third Friday in March of each year and resume the 2nd Friday in May." The second constituency break shall commence on the



# Demonstrate, transparency, accountability & responsiveness -OGP Secretariat urges GoL



Head of Secretariat Pastor G. Ralph Jimmeh By Lewis S. Teh

The Secretariat of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) says if Liberia must get on par with her neighbors in the sub-region then government should prioritize Open Government Partnership across every sector. "The Secretariat of the OGP calls on the three branches of government under President Weah to demonstrate transparency, accountability and responsiveness to citizens by ensuring full implementation of their respective commitments to the 4th OGP National Action Plan", says G. Ralph Jimmeh, Head of Secretariat. Addressing reporters on Monday, May 16, 2022 at the Secretariat Head Office within the Ministry of Information, Mr. Jimmeh said as Liberia is set to join the world in celebrating the Open Government Week, the OGP Secretariat acknowledges with profound gratitude support from government to make the celebration successful. He says this year's celebration seeks to recognize all doers, thinkers, creators and reformers who have successfully opened government. Rev. Jimmeh explains that the fourth OGP National Action Plan or NAP launched on February 10, 2021, was rated by the Independent Review Mechanism as the most transformative national action plan that Liberia has created, and if implemented, would bring government closer to its citizens, improve service delivery, promote openness and transparency thereby, reducing

public distrust in government activities. "We also call on all public servants (officials) to see it fit to subscribe to the OGP principles and values in the execution of their mandates, as it will produce more doers, thinkers, creators, and reformers in the governance structure", he adds. He says the Secretariat believes that a full Cabinet endorsement of the NAP led by President George M. Weah would show strong evidence of the government's willingness and seriousness to fully implement the OGP action plan, and cause officials responsible for implementation to become more passionate. The Secretariat, according to Jimmeh, is therefore, asking all ministries, agencies and commissions that have commitments within the current NAP to accelerate delivery of specific commitments, and that failure to do so could become counter-productive for Liberia for the fourth successiveness, something, he says would undermine inclusive growth. He says in the same vein, the Secretariat is calling on the National Legislature to ensure passage of the Whistle-Blower bill and the Witness Protection bill which are two of the deliverables in the NAP. The passage of these two legal instruments, he adds, would strengthen the fight against corruption which has become a national epidemic, weakening national growth and development. However, Jimmeh assures that the OGP Secretariat has no doubt that Liberia's delivery on the OGP commitments would move the

third Friday of July of each year and end on the third Friday of October of each year, while the third constituency visit shall commence on the second Friday of December of each year and end on Friday immediately preceding the

second working Monday of January of each year to satisfy the new Public Financial Management (PFM) Law which sets the budget year from January 1 to December 30; replacing July 1 to June 30. Press Release

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MCC recruits 250 university students

**By Lewis S. Teh**

The Monrovia City Corporation or MCC has recruited about 250 university students to serve as numerators for the Corporation's data collection process.

The recruits are from the University of Liberia, United Methodist University, African Methodist Episcopal University, African Methodist Episcopal Zion University and Stella Marie's University, respectively.

Addressing reporters Monday, May 16, 2022 at the Monrovia City Corporation in Monrovia, City Mayor Jefferson T. Kojee said the exercise is intended provide students an opportunity to practicalize what most of them are currently studying at their various universities.

"The city is heavily challenged and we certainly believe that the recruitment of these students would help us in the discharge of our duties and to handle the waste challenge that have engulfed the city.

Today, we are announcing in furtherance of our waste management, we are trying to enhance our responsibility to making sure the city is clean at all times", he says.

He narrates that though the MCC recently launched a new system in which citizens can easily dispose their wastes without difficulty, the recruitment process is geared towards giving students a vocation job and an opportunity to showcase their talents for one month in numeration.

He explains that the responsibility of those recruited is to gather data of every business within the billiwick of Monrovia to be numerated and accounted for that would help the MCC in informing the public and enhancing its operations.

"We not just recruiting the students, but we have written the various presidents of those universities, asking them to select the brightest students



from various departments to work with us for one month period", he adds and notes that some of them could earn a job depending on the way they would conduct themselves."

Giving an update of the recruitment process, the Administrative Secretary to the Mayor, Mohammed Sy said data collection in every country is critical to economic development. He said for the past four years,

information to taxpayers of businesses within the limit of Monrovia that has prompted the city government to recruit students to buttress the efforts of the corporation.

They will go through a thorough vetting process; the issue of 'who knows you' will not be encouraged and allowed. All selectees (candidates) will be strictly based on their knowledge and performance", he stressed.

**Editing by Jonathan Browne**

# Liberia's disable community lacks aggregate data

**-Says Chairperson Paye-Bayee**

The chairperson of the national commission on disabilities Ms Daintowon Dormah Paye-Bayee says lack of aggregate data about persons with disability is a serious concern to members of the disable community in Liberia.

She says without data, it is difficult to truly establish



Ms Daintowon Dormah Paye-Bayee

# Bill Rogers Foundation donates to Konoquelleh Public School



**By: Naneka Hoffman**

Bill RoÖers Youíh Foundation in partnership with Kutoa Afrika has donated one hundred sixty (160) armchairs to the Administration of Konoquelleh Public School in Woryan Town, Cinta Township, Margibi County. Speaking on Monday May 16, 2022 in Margibi County, at the Konoquelleh Public School during the donation ceremony, the Acting President of the foundation Precious G. Olukoya said, it was a very sad moment to see kids sitting on the floor to learn.

She said that they thought it wise to help the school to change their story through the help of sister partner Kutoa

Afrika with the donation of 160 Armchairs to the school.

Margibi County Education Officer, Siephen H. Toe thanked the Bill Rogers Youth Foundation and partner for the kind gesture to the school and students, adding that it's timely and welcoming.

CEO Toe said the foundation will always be remembered for the intervention and his doors are open at all time.

He said in the absence of education, there will be no future leaders, and called on local authorities and peaceful citizens to emulate the good gesture of the Rogers Foundation to lift school kids off the floor in improving their learning environment.

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the 13 categories of disabilities.

However, she reveals that the commission has commenced an acquaintance meeting with UNDP, UNICEF, Sight Savor, Ireland and the Swedish government through its embassy here to interact and know their plans for the disabled population in Liberia.

"We invited them to the commission office to know what is their plans and programs when it comes to disability and to also let them know how the commission intends to move forward in the near future," she adds.

She says after the meeting, the commission decided to visit the government through the Ministry of Finance, Development and Planning (MFDP) to inform the ministry that the compound that houses the commission is inaccessible to people with disabilities.

She stresses that if they must advocate for people with disabilities across the country, knowing that Liberia is signatory to the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, the environment in which they live should be accessible.

She then disclosed that the ministry has provided support and renovation of the building is currently ongoing, adding that persons in wheel chair can access the building at any time, while they await the official dedication of the compound.

Madam Paye-Bayee also revealed the commission is also in the process of reviewing its national action plan that was developed by UNDP in 2018.

"Currently, we have a support from the UNESCO Regional Office in Abuja, Nigeria and we are working closely with them to see how this action plan is aligned with the roadmap we have developed to make it easy for implementation." Meanwhile, she notes that Section 7 of the Act that established her appointment provides that immediately upon the passage of the Act, government should make available budgetary allotment to enable the commission to operate.

"So, one of the things we were able to do over the year is that, the leader has been lobbying with the legislature and giving them our plan but our budget has not exceeded US\$350,000 since we took office." **Editing by Jonathan Browne**



# Français

## Appart la page de signature, le reste du document présenté n'est pas l'original, selon Boakai

L'ancien vice-président Joseph N. Boakai a enfin témoigné dans l'affaire du document-cadre de la Collaboration des partis politiques (CPP) en confirmant que les signatures qui sont sur la page de signature sont authentiques. "Cependant, la page de signature que je regarde également ici dans ce document représente la signature originale", a déclaré l'ancien vice-

président quand il a pris la parole le lundi 16 mai 2022 en tant que témoin à charge. Il a admis dans son témoignage que le document-cadre original de la CPP avait été signé par les quatre partis et leurs présidents, ajoutant qu'il avait signé pour l'UP tandis que son président par intérim de l'époque signait pour le parti. Boakai a en outre expliqué que M. Cummings et le sénateur Daniel Naatehn avaient signé pour l'ANC ; M. Urey et Theodore Momo ont signé pour ALP, tandis

que le sénateur Nyonblee Karngar-Lawrence et le sénateur Steve Zargo ont signé pour LP. "Je vois le sénateur Daniel Naatehn comme président de la CPP et il n'a jamais été président de la CPP, mais [de] l'ANC", a déclaré M. Boakai en parcourant le document qui lui a été présenté par les avocats de l'accusation. Il a expliqué que les quatre dirigeants politiques avaient signé via Zoom en raison de l'épidémie de Covid-19, mais cela n'a jamais été symbolique car ils ont tous signé le même jour. Il a ensuite discrédité le document qui lui avait été présenté, affirmant qu'il n'avait pas signé de photocopie du document-cadre contesté, rejetant la version qui lui avait été présentée pour témoigner. "Le document devant moi n'est pas le document que j'ai signé le 19 mai 2020. Le document que j'ai signé était dans sa forme originale et non une photocopie avec tous les noms des parties par ordre alphabétique", a témoigné M. Boakai.

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## Quand la « ruée sur les terres » en Afrique nuit aux populations locales et à l'environnement

Les investissements fonciers se sont multipliés en Afrique, comme ici au Sahel. Les investissements fonciers se sont multipliés en Afrique, comme ici au Sahel. © Jérémy Bourgoïn, Cirad L'écrasante majorité des investissements fonciers en Afrique ne prend pas suffisamment en compte les populations locales, d'après un rapport du Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement paru lundi. Une situation qui a aussi des conséquences négatives pour le reste du monde. La « ruée vers les terres » en Afrique se fait encore trop souvent au détriment des populations locales et de l'environnement. Une écrasante majorité des investissements fonciers effectués sur le continent ne respecte peu ou pas du tout une série de règles - appelées « directives volontaires pour une gouvernance responsable des régimes fonciers » - censées protéger les populations contre la rapacité

des investisseurs internationaux, selon un rapport du Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (Cirad) publié lundi 16 mai. Sur 740 larges acquisitions foncières (plus de 200 hectares) analysées depuis le début des années 2000, les auteurs du rapport ont trouvé que 78 % des investissements ne faisaient que

peu de cas des intérêts des populations locales, tandis que 20 % de ces contrats ne respectaient aucune des règles. Une « ruée vers la terre » qui remonte à 2007 Ce n'est probablement qu'un tableau incomplet de la situation sur le continent puisqu'il n'y a que 23 pays africains concernés par ce



## Éditorial

### Affaire passeport diplomatique : c'est le déni total

Il semble qu'aucun responsable du gouvernement Weah ne soit disposé à assumer la responsabilité du passeport diplomatique libérien délivré à l'homme d'affaires libérien Sheik Bassirou Kante, qui est interrogé par le gouvernement américain pour blanchiment d'argent d'une valeur de plus de 7 millions de dollars. Sheik Kante n'est pas un diplomate et il ne travaille pas pour le gouvernement du Libéria, mais il a un passeport diplomatique libérien. Tout le monde prend ses distances avec le suspect cheikh Kante, y compris le représentant du district n ° 14 du comté de Montserrado, Abraham Vamuyan Corneh, et le ministre de l'Information, Ledgerhood Julius Rennie, ou encore la vice-présidente du Libéria, Jewel Howard Taylor, avec qui il a pourtant des liens très étroits. Même le ministère des Affaires étrangères chargé de traiter tous les passeports libériens est tenté de nier avoir eu connaissance de la manière dont le passeport diplomatique est tombé dans les mains de Kante. En tout cas le président George Weah a ordonné des enquêtes pour faire la lumière sur cette affaire. Ce qui est clair cependant, c'est que Kante est directement parti du Libéria pour les États-Unis où il a été arrêté. Il n'est pas venu du ciel avec le passeport diplomatique.

Nous pensons que seul le gouvernement américain nous permettra de savoir la vraie vérité sur cette affaire, car les autorités ici se livrent actuellement à un jeu de déni, dépeignant l'innocence. En réalité à quoi faut-il d'attendre quand l'enquête est confiée au ministère des Affaires étrangères alors qu'il est lui-même suspecté. Il ne faut pas s'attendre à grand-chose, car le gouvernement ne s'inculpera pas. Il ne voulait pas essayer de condamner l'ancien directeur des passeports Adrew Wonplo pour avoir vendu des passeports diplomatiques libériens à des non-Libériens. Il a fallu que le département d'État américain interdise à Wonplo et à sa famille immédiate de voyager en Amérique "en raison de son implication dans une corruption importante", pour qu'on le juge. C'est tout simplement un jeu d'enfant. Shiek Kante aurait dépensé 100 000 dollars au Libéria lors de la célébration du bicentenaire ici, mais le gouvernement dit qu'il n'est pas au courant. Il a fait venir des artistes nigériens dont P-Square pour se produire au complexe sportif Samuel Kanyon Doe, mais le ministre de l'Information Rennie a déclaré qu'en tant que président national du comité directeur du bicentenaire, le comité n'était pas au courant et M. Kante n'a jamais communiqué avec eux à ce sujet. S'exprimant lors du point de presse régulier du ministère de l'Information, des Affaires culturelles et du Tourisme, jeudi 12 mai, le patron du MICAT a en outre précisé que M. Bassirou avait décidé de son propre chef de se charger des services des musiciens nigériens en raison de l'euphorie du bicentenaire.

"Nous ne le savions pas, il ne nous a jamais écrit, nous n'avons jamais communiqué, et cela a provoqué un tollé parmi les musiciens locaux car il a été annoncé qu'il avait dépensé 200 000 dollars américains et les gens ont dit que c'était le gouvernement qui avait donné l'argent », a précisé le ministre. Chaque fonctionnaire se lave totalement les mains de tout ce qui a à voir avec le cheikh Kante et comment il a obtenu un passeport diplomatique libérien. Le résultat de l'enquête ordonnée par le président Weah sur le scandale ne deviendrait rien d'autre qu'une « cheville ronde dans un carré ».



# Français

## Appart la page de signature, le reste du document

Il a soutenu en outre que bien que la page de signature du document qui lui était présenté était l'original, les pages de couverture étaient des photocopies, ce sur quoi il a insisté, il n'a pas signé.

Selon lui, la page de signature originale était destinée à être jointe au document original qu'ils ont signé, et non une photocopie.

Il a raconté qu'ils avaient signé cinq exemplaires du document-cadre de la CPP, un exemplaire devrait être déposé auprès de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC) et chacun des quatre partis membres de la CPP devrait avoir un exemplaire.

Pendant ce temps, Boakai n'a pas tardé à souligner également qu'après la signature du document, ils ont invité des avocats à examiner le document-cadre et à conseiller le bloc de l'opposition sur la controverse entourant l'attribution des emplois qui y est inscrite pour les partisans et aussi pour aborder le Clause d'existence de la CPP.

### Quand la « ruée sur les terres » en Afrique nuit

rapport. Des États comme l'Égypte, les pays de Maghreb, l'Angola ou encore le Niger sont, en effet, exclus des conclusions du Cirad, faute de données satisfaisantes. « Il y a globalement une opacité à tous les niveaux. Que ce soit un manque de transparence des gouvernements, des entreprises qui achètent ces terres ou encore du cadastre », résume Ward Anseeuw, économiste du développement au Cirad et coauteur du rapport.

Parmi les pays pour lesquels les données sont suffisantes, la Mauritanie et le Soudan sont les pires élèves de la « ruée vers les terres ». Ils n'ont appliqué que moins de 15 % des règles censées empêcher la spoliation ou l'accaparement des terres. À l'autre extrémité du spectre, il n'y a que trois pays - le Gabon, l'Afrique du Sud et la Zambie - dans lesquels les investissements respectent plus de 50 % des critères retenus par le rapport pour juger de la conformité aux fameuses “directives volontaires”. Pour comprendre les enjeux, il faut remonter aux années 2007-2008 lors de la dernière grande flambée des prix alimentaires. La hausse des

prix avait aiguisé l'appétit des investisseurs internationaux pour l'acquisition de terres un peu partout dans le monde afin d'y faire pousser les cultures les plus demandées.À l'époque, cette « ruée vers les terres » s'était faite sans égard ou presque pour les populations locales, avec une multiplication des expropriations.Les « directives volontaires pour une gouvernance responsable des régimes fonciers », adoptées en 2012 par le Comité de sécurité alimentaire dans le cadre de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO), étaient censées être la réponse de la communauté internationale à cette opération main basse sur les terres, essentiellement dans les pays en voie de développement.

C'était « il y a dix ans, ce mois-ci exactement », précise Ward Anseeuw. Et le rapport du Cirad - qui s'appuie sur des données compilées par l'initiative internationale Land Matrix sur l'ensemble des larges acquisitions foncières dans le monde - fait un peu office de bilan pour l'Afrique de cette tentative de calmer les ardeurs des investisseurs.

Et ce n'est pas glorieux. « Il y a une amélioration au niveau du cadre juridique, mais il y a encore des efforts à faire au niveau de l'application des règles », résume Ward Anseeuw.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Lolwah Al-Khater et Brian Finlay

## Établir un consensus pour la relance verte

**D**OHA - Alors que l'invasion russe de l'Ukraine fait les gros titres, la COVID-19 continue de causer es ravages socio-économiques dans le monde entier. La pandémie a tué plus de six millions de gens, en a poussé 124 millions dans l'extrême pauvreté et a empêché des avancées dans la réalisation des Objectifs de développement durable à l'horizon 2030. Heureusement, près de cinq milliards de personnes ont reçu à ce jour au moins une dose de vaccin contre la COVID-19 et l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé et Gavi ont établi l'objectif de vacciner 70 % de la population de tous les pays d'ici le mois de juillet de cette année.

Malgré la guerre horrible en Ukraine, la pandémie et ses lourdes conséquences vont continuer à se classer en tête des problèmes mondiaux, aux côtés du changement climatique. Les effets de cette dernière crise se font déjà sentir au quotidien, comme le montre le Sixième rapport d'évaluation du GIEC. Jusqu'à récemment, les températures et les sécheresses extrêmes ont ravagé l'Ouest de l'Asie et le Nord de l'Afrique. La hausse du niveau des mers menace de nombreux États insulaires et pays côtiers de basse altitude. Des inondations catastrophiques ont frappé des régions de l'Europe de la Chine. En outre, des incendies ont ravagé de part en part l'Ouest américain et de larges pans de l'Australie.

Les scientifiques nous mettent en garde à présent sur le fait qu'un « retour à notre ancienne manière de faire » va très certainement faire augmenter la température mondiale moyenne, par rapport aux niveaux pré-industriels, à 3 à 4° Celsius d'ici la fin du siècle. Pour maintenir le réchauffement de la planète à un niveau bien plus sûr, en deçà de 1,5°C, il faudra réduire les émissions de CO2 de 45 % (par rapport aux niveaux de 2010) d'ici 2030 puis à zéro émission nette d'ici 2050.

À présent que nous savons que le variant Omicron est bien moins léthal que les précédents, nous pourrions mettre notre temps à profit et continuer sur la lancée initiée en novembre dernier lors de la COP26 sur le Changement climatique de Glasgow. Le monde a besoin de rédiger une première version d'un plan de relance allant bien au-delà d'une réponse à la pandémie, en commençant également à prendre le problème du changement climatique à bras le corps. La relance ne doit pas seulement être générale, mais également verte.

En termes pratiques, qu'est-ce que cela veut dire ? Avant l'édition du 20e Forum de Doha, les 26 et 27 mars, nos organisations se sont associées pour explorer 20 initiatives ciblées visant à favoriser une reprise mondiale juste, saine et durable. Elles sont décrites dans un rapport récemment publié, Building Back Together & Greener.

Pour que la relance soit verte et durable, nous proposons une Alliance mondiale pour l'hydrogène vert afin de faciliter des méthodes de production d'hydrogène plus efficaces et plus respectueuses du climat. Une fois établies, les prochaines étapes pourraient inclure la mise en place d'un inventaire mondial des programmes d'hydrogène vert, la protection de la propriété intellectuelle et des droits de licence tout en élargissant l'accès mondial et la promotion d'un cadre standard à l'échelle de l'alliance pour un stockage et un transport sûr.

Une reprise juste et inclusive nécessite davantage d'investissements dans le capital humain - en particulier pour améliorer les compétences des travailleurs - et un accent sur le soutien aux personnes les plus exposées au risque. Les processus de planification devraient privilégier le financement public et privé pour les activités et les infrastructures à faible émission de carbone qui ont le plus grand potentiel pour créer des emplois pour

les jeunes et pour les autres groupes vulnérables confrontés à des problèmes d'emploi.

Pour garantir que la relance favorise la santé et le bien-être, nous avons besoin d'un Fonds mondial pour la protection sociale pour aider les gouvernements des pays en développement à fournir des programmes sociaux adéquats. Un fonds de ce type stimulerait les efforts de coordination et mobiliserait les ressources intérieures et extérieures nécessaires pour fournir un tampon contre les chocs économiques, notamment contre ceux provoqués par les catastrophes environnementales liées au climat.

Enfin, pour réaliser le potentiel de la numérisation dans l'avancement de la relance, nous devons promouvoir des investissements à grande échelle dans les infrastructures des technologies de l'information et des communications, à la fois pour parvenir à l'équité numérique et pour tirer parti du potentiel économique, sanitaire et environnemental des nouvelles technologies. Les organisations internationales et les gouvernements devraient œuvrer de concert avec les entreprises pour fournir une connectivité numérique efficace et fiable, notamment par le biais d'investissements ciblés dans la numérisation régulière de la plupart des services publics (voire tous).

Plusieurs réunions internationales importantes auront lieu au cours des sept prochains mois, chacune offrant une occasion de prendre des mesures en vue d'une relance commune. Mais pour mobiliser les gouvernements, les entreprises et la société civile en vue de soutenir une stratégie de mise en œuvre globale cohérente, représentative et soutenue, il faudra que cette réunion débouche sur du concret.

C'est pourquoi nous appelons à un « Sommet vert sur la relance après la pandémie », qui sera orchestré par les Nations Unies et le G20. Un événement de deux jours, programmé pour coïncider avec l'Assemblée générale annuelle de l'ONU en septembre, contribuerait à faire en sorte que les dirigeants politiques au plus haut niveau s'engagent à poursuivre un développement socio-économique durable et équitable dans l'ère post-COVID.

Les billions de dollars dépensés par les pays riches pendant la pandémie montrent qu'il existe des outils financiers pour relever des défis préoccupants. Il faut une volonté politique, des incitations créatives pour le marché et un plan d'action pratique, doté d'objectifs clairs, d'échéances et d'idées en matière de programmation.

Les ressources tirées d'initiatives connexes peuvent être d'un grand secours. Le Programme de développement durable à l'horizon 2030, le Partenariat mondial « Reconstruire mieux » et les « accords verts » au niveau national sont généralement alignés sur leurs objectifs clés. Le rapport Our Common Agenda du Secrétaire général de l'ONU António Guterres propose des idées nouvelles, ambitieuses et opportunes, pour la fourniture de biens publics mondiaux et pour la gestion des risques majeurs.

À l'heure actuelle, on comprend aisément que l'opinion publique et les pays soient naturellement concentrés sur la pandémie, sur la crainte que l'humanité n'approche du point de non-retour en ce qui concerne le changement climatique, la guerre en Ukraine et d'autres menaces mondiales. Heureusement, nous avons déjà les institutions multilatérales nécessaires pour forger un consensus politique mondial pour faire face à ces crises qui comptent des aspects communs. Dès à présent, nous devons tirer le meilleur parti de ces outils.

*Lolwah Al-Khater, ministre adjoint des Affaires étrangères au Ministère des Affaires étrangères de l'État du Qatar, directrice exécutive du Forum de Doha. Brian Finlay, président et PDG du Stimson Center.*



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# The Litany of Failures and Underperformance

National Elections Commission (NEC) Chairman James Fromayan has condemned Davidetta Browne Lansanah's leadership of the National Elections Commission (NEC) for what he terms a lack of independence, credibility, and trust to serve the country in line with the Law that created it. According to him, "it was a conflict deeply rooted in the rigged Presidential and Legislative Elections of October 1985. Those Elections were conducted by the then Special Elections Commission (SECOM) under the Chairmanship of the late Emmett Harmon, a veteran of traditional True Whig Party (TWP) politics, who was recruited by Samuel Doe to do for his National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) what Harmon and his likes did over many years for the Grand old True Whig Party." To ensure this, National Election Commission (NEC) must eliminate human intervention and manipulation of election results by ensuring that polling unit-level results go to a computerized collation center via encrypted technology on NEC's VSAT and the nationwide public telecommunications network, thus eliminating paper-based Forms, as well as the collation centers of electoral fraud, manipulation, and corruption.

Governing a country is a continuous process. Every president inherits challenges and opportunities, and it is in the course of managing these that reputations are made. If a government achieves results in sustainably improving power supply or in growing our agriculture, that can only be good for the country. President Weah fails to acknowledge the opportunities he inherited, but is quick to disclaim responsibility for challenges that have only gotten worse under him, like economic hardship, food insecurity, unemployment, poor road infrastructure insecurity. The progress, development, security, and well-being of a country ought always to be a national priority, but the blinkered partisanship of the government is unlikely to promote these national goals.

It is not the President's duty to 'try'. After all, he made promises during his campaign that he ought to fulfill. It is his constitutional duty to protect the lives and property of the citizens and it is our right as citizens to hold our leaders

accountable. Rather than engage in petty arguments and gloating over marginal improvements in figures as compared to previous administrations, this administration needs to demonstrate its plans to not only halt the slide but leave a secure future for the next generation. Instead of taking all criticisms in bad faith, a government that genuinely has the interest of the people at heart should prove critics wrong by improving performance and being accountable to citizens.

The foregoing litany of failures and underperformance of Weah's government in social, political, and economic spheres will fill more pages than this column can take. Things have never been as bad as we have now and no public park or market building can mask the frustration of the people. The few people who praise the performance of this government or the direction it is headed are those who have benefitted inordinately from the skewed opportunities at the expense of the majority. Some of the major sectors of the country's economy which would make a difference now and for future generations (security, electric power, healthcare, employment, and education) are being toyed with for political gains.

In the end, it was a truly shameful spectacle for the president to play around in a public park that does not have a basis in reality and claim achievements that few people can see or even feel.

Presidential hopefully, Judging the four years (lack of) progress of George Weah presidency, Cllr. Tiawan S. Gongloe was right when he said that Liberians voting the George Weah back to power in the coming 2023 Presidential elections is like one committing suicide.

Are you better off now than you were four years ago? Are you more secure than you were a few years ago? Can you pay school fees without breaking the bank? Are more people in jobs than they were a few years ago? Are Liberians better united today than before Weah's 'election'? Do you even feed better than you did four years ago? The verdict is up to you.

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# Ex-senator Ballout

because of that good relationship I had with my colleagues that brought out some of our county development funds for which you have seen some of these developments in almost all of the districts of the county.

But since I left, has the county received some of the developments founds?" He asked.

Ballout: "So, Maryland needs people like John Ballout, who will knock the doors of the minister of finance, including other ministries in order to engage for our people back home."

However, he noted that despite not being successful in the past two consecutive elections, he still believes that he can bring change once he is given another opportunity to serve the people of the county.

"So, my people, let us not look at the issues about how long but how well this person

can do the job because I believe with John Ballout, Maryland can move forward because you all saw what I have done during my nine (9) years in the Senate. You can see, since I left, the current lawmakers can't disclose to you any tangible development they have brought back to the county."

"Look, let me tell you Maryland County has lost many developments since I left the Senate and it's some of the reasons why I still want to continue at the Senate in order for me to give those things that are lacking to my county. See what we have done during our time, you can see the road, the electricity, companies, and renovations, among others."

Former Senator Ballout was elected in 2005 and was rooted out by citizens of the county in 2014 after he lost re-election bid to Senator J. Gble-bo Brown.

He attempted again in 2020, but lost to Senator James P. Biney from the National Patriotic Party.

He vowed to never give up as long as the people of Maryland ask him to contest in 2023. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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# Demonstrate, transparency,

country to effectively achieving her national agenda, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development and the OGP will advance the practice of democracy which will possibly attract more donor support form bi-lateral and multi-lateral partners in different sectors of the country.

The Secretariat also calls on government to increase efforts in the implementation of the current OGP/NAP, as the country is racing against time with implementation, noting that the Secretariat believes that Liberia's failure to adequately implement the NAP would dim its efforts to open government, increase citizens' participation, counter corruption, and accelerate sustainable growth and development. On behalf of the

Secretariat, he congratulates Civil Society as co-creator of the NAP, for forging a strong partnership with government to increase citizens' participation and re-enforce the fight for openness, transparency, and accountability.

At the same time Jimmeh says in the next few days, the Secretariat will embark on a robust evaluation of progress made by every entity that has commitments in the National Action Plan, adding that the success of the NAP depends on the level of implementation by those entities hence, "We require the cooperation and attention of the leadership of these entities as we continue to engage them.

"The OGP Secretariat wants to use this occasion marking the celebration of the Open Government Week to call on national government to demonstrate greater political will in championing OGP in Liberia, identifying allies in Civil Society, and supporting democratic reforms with in government." *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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# Family demands

My name is Mr Massirfufulay Kpehe Musa (CKA Maz Musa), an ordinary citizen of the Republic of Liberia, living in the United Kingdom. Few weeks ago, I lost my thirty-four year old nephew (Mr Prince John Hiama), a member of the Police Support Unit (PSU) who served the Liberian National Police. Mr Hiama was assigned in the Bong Mines area about three/four months ago.

On Wednesday, 20th April 2022, Mr Hiama was reportedly found lying in a field few yards away from his accommodation (a police compound in Bong Mines) without

shirt and unconscious (please see photos).

Early that morning, family members had spoken with Mr Hiama and he was seen washing his clothes during a video chat. The family lost contact with Mr Hiama at about 10:00am until at about 18:00 when his mother (my sister) phoned his number and she was informed that her son was found unconscious and taken to a clinic in Bong Mines.

According to my sister, she phoned a police commander for assistance in transferring her son to the JFK Hospital in Monrovia that evening, but the commander instead began using foul words and switched his phone off. On the following morning, my sister went to Bong Mines and brought her only child to Monrovia to seek better medical attention. Sadly, he passed away on 22nd April 2022

and he was interred on 07th May 2022.

When Mr Hiama passed away, the family registered the case with the Liberian National Police for investigation into circumstances leading to how he was found unconscious when he was supposed to be on police assignment with the Liberian National Police.

Disappointingly, there has been no formal account of how our son who the Liberian National Police (LNP) owed a duty of care not only as a citizen of Liberia, but as an employee of the LNP met his fate.

Sirs, I come to you with a heavy heart to seek your assistance from your offices to kindly help the family in this matter.

Thank you in advance



## CHANGE OF NAME

Before His Honor J. Bioma Kontor Assigned Circuit Judge Presiding

IN REF: PETITION OF ROUGELINE WILSON. OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, LIBERIA PETITION PRAYING THIS HONORABLE COURT FOR COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF HIS NAME TO BE KNOWN REGARDED AND CALLED AS "ROUGE SAAH WILSON".

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME

Whereas Petitioners herein name the above entitled cause of Action having filed a Petition with Affidavit attached thereto requesting an order from this Honorable Court to have the name of the Petitioner to formally and legally change for ROUGELINE WILSON TO "ROUGE SAAH WILSON".

After conducting the necessary interrogations requested by law these proceedings, the courts observed that the intention is just and legal and that there is no objection in the Change of his name Proposed by him therefore it is adjusted as follows: That the Petitioner have shown with justification satisfaction that he was born on May 18, 1992 in Republic of Liberia, into the union of MR. VASELINE S.C.S WILSON AND MS. ALETHA C. TOWNSEND and that change of name will substantially promote his interest in all of the understanding and help to establish just identity more firmly, and being satisfied that he has met all legal requirements for the Change of his name in this jurisdiction it therefore, DECREE as follow:

That the Petition having been heard by and is hereby ordered granted and now render that the ROUGELINE WILSON TO "ROUGE SAAH WILSON" beginning 3rd day of January, A.D. 2022.





# Boakai faces defense team

Former Vice President Joseph Boakai continued on the witness stand, Tuesday, May 17, with cross examination by Defense Lawyers of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) in the ongoing trial involving three ANC officials accused of altering the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) framework document.

Boakai said since signing the CPP framework document on j ay 19, followed by huge public



outcry, and subsequent review and changes by a team of lawyers, he had neither seen nor received a copy of the CPP framework document.

Responding to ANC defense lawyers' qì estion, the former Vice President said after the "amended recommendations" of the CPP team of Lawyers, and subsequent decision to send the framework document to the CPP Validation Committee, he never saw the document again. "I am aware that

the lawyers' amended recommendations was brought to us and discussed. After that, they were supposed to have submitted it to the validation committee. That part is administrative. I never saw the document anymore," Boakai said.

The former Vice President said he was also aware that the CPP, under the leadership of the Liberty Party Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence, commissioned and conducted an investigation of the All Liberian Party allegations that the CPP Framework was altered.

When questioned about the Exit Clause in the CPP framework document supposedly signed May

that after the lawyers' review and presentation to the four parties at the LP HQ, Mr. Boakai never saw the document again.

In response, Mr. Boakai maintained: "I said that the final document after the amendment recommendations, the lawyers and our subsequent decision to send it to the validation committee which was an administrative duty that could only be handled by the chairperson. I have said further that I don't follow discussion and approval of important documents in chat room," Boakai said.

ANC lead Defense Lawyer, Cllr. Abraham Sillah is seeking to establish what he calls contradictions in the testimonies of Mr. Boakai versus state prosecutors' first state witness, Theodore Momo, who testified last February.

Boakai, opposition Political Leader of the former ruling party, the Unity Party, is the fourth state witness to testify for the government in the trial involving the ANC Political Leader, Mr. Alexander Cummings, its National Chairman Daniel Naatehn and Secretary General, Counsellor Aloysius Toe, charged with forgery and criminal conspiracy for reportedly altering the CPP framework document.

The three accused ANC stalwarts have adamantly denied the charges and describe the protracted trial as bogus and politically motivated by the All Liberian Party of Mr. Benoni Urey in cohort with the Unity Party of Joseph Boakai and President George Weah to thwart Mr. Cummings Presidential bid in 2023.

Meanwhile, the former Vice President continues on the witness stand for the cross examination by ANC Defense Lawyers.

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## Liberia hosts AFROPAC

currently.

"As current Chairperson, we are aware of the challenges posed by illicit financial flows (IFF) and the serious threat to Africa's s o c i o - e c o n o m i c transformation and the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda 2030."

Chairperson Nuquay stresses that accountability is critical in the attainment of the African Union (AU) agenda 2063 which provides impetus and direction to Africa's development.

He acknowledges the strategic value of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in enabling oversight and public accountability in Africa.

AFROPAC was established

in September 2013 at the Arusha International Conference Center in Arusha, Tanzania in a ceremony attended by over 400 delegates from across Africa.

Meanwhile, the Director General of the Financial Intelligence Unit of Liberia, Edwin W. Harris says the movement of illicit financial flows can take the following forms such as a drug cartel using trade-based money laundering techniques to mix legal money from the sale of used cars with illegal money from drug sales, an importer using trade mix invoicing to evade customs duties, value-added tax or income taxes.

Director Harris notes that this can occur thru a corrupt public official using an anonymous shell company to transfer dirty money to bank accounts in other jurisdictions as well as a human trafficker carrying a briefcase of

cash across the border and depositing it in banks.

Liberia's Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah says the COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine have affected the status of several economies around the world, including Liberia.

Minister Tweah continues that as the result of the impact of COVID-19, economic recovery is gradually kicking off, but the war in Ukraine is also contributing to the constraint of the Liberian economy, noting that infrastructure deficits have affected several countries in Africa. He acknowledges that Liberia faces serious road and electricity challenges that the government is seeking means to address, and assures government willingness through the Ministry of Finance to work with AFROPAC in strengthening the financial management system. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

# Family demands cause of death



The family of deceased Police Support Unit (PSU) Officer Mr Prince John Hiama has written an open letter to President George Manneh Weah, Justice Minister, Cllr. Frank Musa Dean and Liberia National Police (LNP) Inspector General Col. Patrick T. Sudue, seeking their assistance in establishing the circumstance surrounding the officer's death. The late Officer Hiama's uncle who resides in the United Kingdom, Mr Massirfululay Kpehe Musa (CKA Maz Musa), complained that few weeks ago, he lost his 34 - year - old nephew Mr Hiama, a member of the PSU who was serving the LNP. Mr. Musa said on Wednesday, 20 April 2022, his nephew was reported found unconscious and without shirt, lying in a field a few yards away from his accommodation (a police compound in Bong Mines), and later pronounced dead after being transferred to Monrovia for medication.

According to Mr. Musa, his nephew, was posted in the Bong Mines area about three or four months prior to the incident. "Sirs, I come to you with a heavy heart to seek your assistance from your offices to kindly help the family in this matter," Mr. Musa wrote.

This paper has contacted the Liberia kational Police surrounding the grievances of the late Officer Hiama's family. But Police Spokesman Moses Carter says police officers are not able to tell him where the complaint has been filed.

"I did, but the officers are not able to tell me where the person [file] their complaint. Well, they are not able to tell me whether the complaint will reach the IG (Inspector General) or not the IG," said Mr. Carter on Tuesday, 17 May 2022 in a phone conversation with this paper.

However, Mr. Musa explained that early in the

morning of Wednesday, 20 April 2022, family members had spoken with Mr. Hiama and he was seen washing his clothes during a video chat.

But he said the family lost contact with Mr. Hiama at about 10:00am until at about 18:00 when his mother phoned his number and she was informed that her son was found unconscious and taken to a clinic in Bong Mines.

"According to my sister, she phoned a police commander for assistance in transferring her son to the JFK Hospital in Monrovia that evening, but the commander instead began using foul words and switched his phone off," Mr. Musa alleges.

On the following morning, Musa said his sister, who is Officer Hiama's mother, went to Bong Mines and brought her only child to Monrovia to seek better medical attention.

"Sadly, he passed away on 22nd April 2022 and he was interred on 07th May 2022," said Mr. Musa.

According to him, when Mr. Hiama passed away, the family registered the case with the Liberian National Police for investigation into circumstances leading to how he was found unconscious when he was supposed to be on police assignment with the Liberian National Police.

Disappointingly, he said, there has been no formal account of how Hiama met his fate.

**See Mr. Musa's Letter Below:**

Honourable Abraham Darius Dillion, Senator of Montserrado County - Republic of Liberia

Cllr Frank Musa Dean, The Minister of Justice and Attorney General - Republic of Liberia

His Excellency Dr George Mannah Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia

Dear Sirs: I hope this letter finds you well. First and foremost, I wish to commend you for serving your people (the Liberian people) with diligence.



# Liberia hosts AFROPAC virtual conference

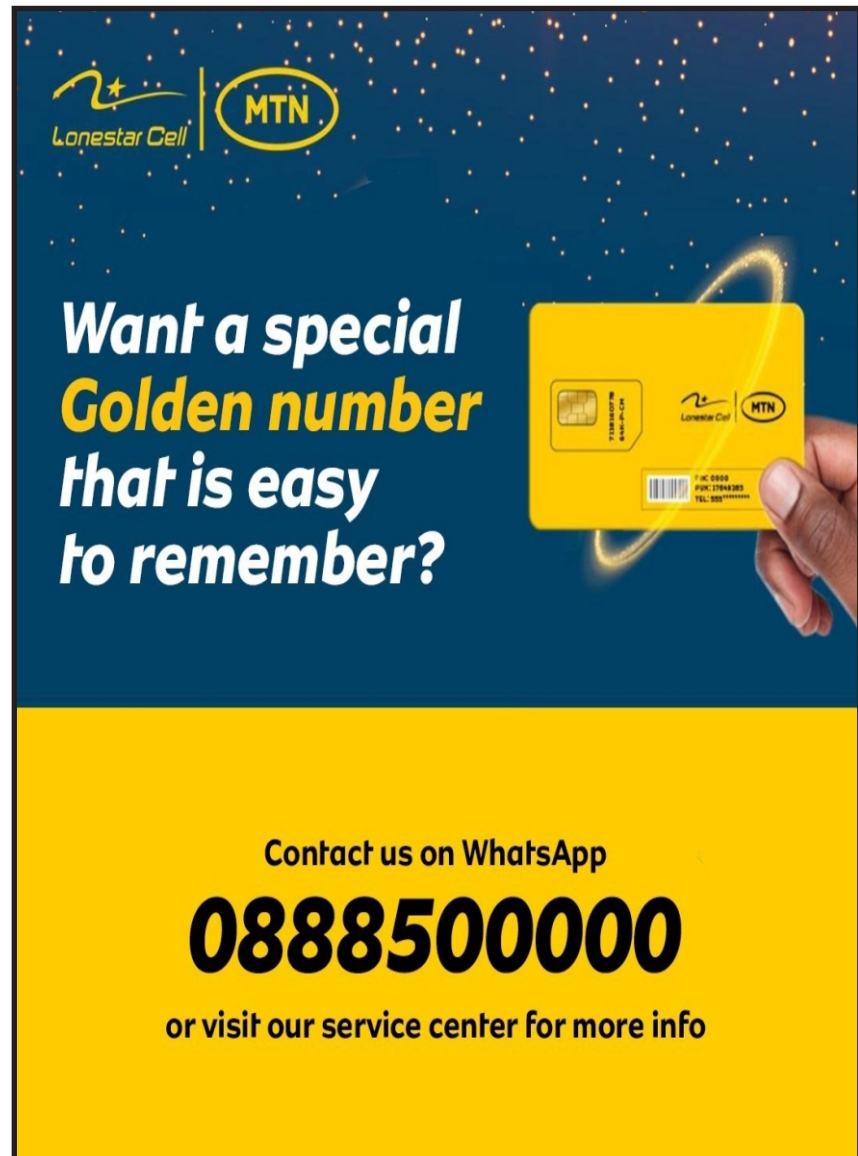


A two-day virtual conference of African Organizations of Public Accounts Committees (AFROPAC) has kicked off in Monrovia. It is being held under the theme "Collect comprehensively, borrow wisely, spend efficiently: public finance oversight in a time of pandemic recovery". The Chairperson of AFROPAC and Chairperson of

the Joint Public Accounts Committee of the Liberian Senate, Margibi County Senator Emmanuel Nuquay says the regional trainings are intended to equip members of parliament and their support staff to increase their knowledge on public financial management in the area of budget cycles in the African Parliamentary Systems and contribution of Legislators in public financial management.

Chairperson Nuquay explains that AFROPAC is also in partnership with other networks such as the African Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI), the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) and the Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI) including other regional networks. He notes that AFROPAC is gaining acceptance as a key voice in many countries in its activities

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