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LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2022	L$151.6427 /US$1.00	L$153.1843/US$1.00

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

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Continental News

Protests Erupt in Senegal as Government Stymies Opposition

Tensions in Senegal reached a tipping point Friday over the government's decision to keep the opposition off the ballot in planned legislative elections. Thousands took to the streets to show support for opposition leader Ousmane Sonko and to demand President Macky Sall allow his opponents to run.

Plumes of smoke billowed into the air throughout Dakar's southern neighborhoods Friday as demonstrators set fire to tires and plastic bins. Tear gas canisters rained down from the sky, causing protesters to scatter. As they reemerged, they chanted: "Macky Sall is a dictator!" and hurled rocks at police officers.Graduate student Maimina Aidara was among them.

"What Macky Sall is doing to Senegal is an injustice. What he's trying to do is not right," he said. "We, the people here in Senegal, are suffering. We're suffering. We're really suffering. We want Macky Sall to leave office. The protests will continue every day, God willing, until the elections. Macky Sall will step down."

Protesters throw a dumpster on a fire in Dakar, Senegal Friday

Anger has mounted since Senegal's constitutional council invalidated the opposition's list of candidates for the July 31 legislative elections, preventing opposition leader Sonko and other opponents from running.

The result of the elections will determine the makeup of Senegal's 165-member National Assembly, currently dominated by the president's coalition.

On Friday, police were seen barricading Sonko's house, preventing him from attending Friday prayers and from the demonstration.Sonko came in third in the 2019 presidential election and is a candidate for 2024.

Sonko was arrested last year on what many believe were dubious accusations of rape. The incident ignited a week of rioting that led to the deaths of 14 people.

Two deaths were reported at Friday's demonstration, according to Agence France-Presse, and three opposition members were arrested.

West Africa has suffered a string of coups in recent years and any indication of instability in Senegal could have ramifications for the entire region.

Hawa Ba is head of the Senegal office at the Open Society Initiative for West Africa.

"We are in a very volatile subregion. Democracy is at risk, and Senegal is supposed to be a beacon of democracy," said Ba. "It's supposed to be a country that's pulling the region and the continent upwards. And what we are witnessing is Senegal's democracy sliding back since a few years now."

Ba called on international bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union to pressure Senegal to abide by democratic norms. The African Union is led by Macky Sall.Though many protesters at Friday's demonstration said they attended in support of Sonko, others had more general motives.

Seydina Halifa Ababacar said his main concern was inflation. The price of items such as rice and cattle have increased, he said, and with Eid al-Adha around the corner, he is worried the price of sheep will, too.

"They've increased prices on everything. Our families are suffering," he said. "I came here to fight for my future and for that of my children. I'm not here for Ousmane Sonko – all politicians are the same. If we don't [throw rocks at police officers] there will be no solution. Protesting is a right." VOA

Moroccans accuse French tycoon Jacques Bouthier of sexual harassment

Some of the women spoke about their allegations at a press conference in Tangier

Four women in Morocco have filed complaints of sexual harassment against French insurance tycoon Jacques Bouthier.

Now aged between 26 and 28, they had been employed by his firm in Tangier.

The women said they had been sacked after refusing to give in to harassment and intimidation.

The 75-year-old is under formal investigation in France for raping a minor and trafficking. He reportedly says he is the victim of blackmail.

Considered to be one of France's richest men, Mr Bouthier resigned as CEO of insurance brokers Vilavi, formerly known as Assu 2000, last month.

On Friday, the Moroccan Association for the Rights of Victims held a news conference about the allegations alleged to have occurred in Tangier between 2018 until April 2022.

Some of Mr Bouthier's alleged victims appeared, wearing face masks and dark glasses to hide their identities, to tell journalists about their experiences.

"He asked to sleep with me and when I said no, he asked me to introduce him to a sister, a female cousin or a friend, saying he would give me a nice present in exchange," one is quoted by AFP news agency as saying.

The women also accused other French and Moroccan executives of involvement. BBC

South Africa Hails COVID-19 Vaccine Patent Waiver

South Africa on Saturday hailed a WTO agreement to allow developing countries to start producing their own COVID vaccines following a near two-year battle.

"We secured an agreement. It was a strongly fought agreement," said Minister of Trade Ebrahim Patel, who along with India and NGOs had been calling for an intellectual property rights waiver on COVID-related treatments.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) announced a relaxation of intellectual property restrictions on vaccines Wednesday in a move aimed at a providing more equitable access to shots but which many observers criticized for being limited in time and scope.

A logo is pictured outside the World Trade Organization (WTO)

After months of wrangling, and talks going down to the wire this week to win over some major players in pharmaceutical manufacturing to a compromise, the United States and China finally clinched the deal by agreeing on which countries would benefit from the waiver.

Both South Africa and India had been vocal in their demands for such a move which they said was needed to stop "vaccine apartheid."

According to the WTO, 60% of the world's population has received two doses of the COVID vaccine but there are glaring examples of inequity with only 17% having been inoculated in Libya, with the figure at 8% in Nigeria and less than 5% in Cameroon.

In a statement, the South African government saluted a waiver designed to provide local vaccine manufacturers with the right to produce either vaccines or ingredients or elements that are under patents, without the authority of the patent holder, hailing this as a notable step forward — even if limited to five years.

Pretoria added that "to scale up the production on the continent, further partnerships will be needed including access to know-how and technologies."

The accord for the time being excludes, however, tests and costly therapeutic treatments against COVID on which the WTO is to pronounce in the coming six months. VOA

EDITORIAL

Towards an effective public financial management system

The United States Ambassador to Liberia Michael McCarthy has stressed a need for the Government of Liberia to do much more in consolidating government cash balances into a Treasury Single Account. He also pointed out that state-owned enterprises in the country are still not subject to appropriate oversight and accountability for how they use and manage the revenues they generate.

Ambassador McCarthy raised these concerns while speaking on Liberia's public financial management system at a recent forum in Monrovia.

Indeed, consolidating government cash balances into a single account still remains a serious challenge for the Weah administration, characterized by lack of proper accountability and corruption. Without a transparent consolidated account, it is difficult to trace the proper use of public money, as it is unfolding now.

The US Ambassador also called on the government to ensure funds are used for their designated purposes, making specific reference to the diversion of money from the National Road Fund by the Minister of Finance Samuel Tweah to "pay salaries."

"I understand that road rehabilitation and maintenance is a high priority for the Liberian government under the PAPD. However, despite this prioritization, millions of dollars of essential funding from the Road Maintenance Fund have unfortunately been used for other purposes – in violation of the Road Maintenance Act and fundamental public financial management principles", Mr. McCarthy pointed.

It is important that the Government of Liberia listen to these concerns raised by our Traditional Partner – the United States and recalibrate the public financial management system of the state in order to conform with international best practices.

Instead, officials here take pride in justifying the untransparent ways they expend public funds with no regard whatsoever to the hundreds of thousands if not millions of people affected by their missteps. This has to stop!

Take for example, the operations of State-Owned Enterprises like the Liberia Petroleum Refining Corporation, National Port Authority, and others that generate millions annually and expend funds unilaterally without proper account to the public. These places are the bedrock for corruption that even the Executive connive with at the detriment of the people

Another classic example of corruption with the acquiescence of the Executive is what is obtaining at the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information that has led to the repeated postponement of the national census. With apparent blind eyes by the Executive, officials at LISGIS are doing everything currently to silence the whistleblower Mr. Williams, as they bath in the census money. This is unfortunate.

We call on the Executive to muster political will to immediately intervene in what is obtaining at LISGIS that has a propensity to discourage donor partners from contributing to a major endeavor such as the national census that has been dragged to March 2023, barely seven months to presidential and general elections.

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COMMENTARY

By Jayati Ghosh

Let's Count What Really Matters

MEXICO CITY – Despite the well-known problems with using gross domestic product as an indicator of human development, policymakers around the world still seem to be obsessed with it. Governments seek to promote GDP growth through all possible means, often regardless of the wider consequences for the planet and the distribution of rewards. The current focus on quarterly growth reflects a particularly unhealthy short-term perspective. And yet the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral organizations refer to GDP in all assessments of economic performance and make it the sole focus of their forecasts.

But the concept of GDP is deeply flawed. Aggregate or per capita figures are obviously blind to the distribution of income, and GDP is increasingly unable to measure either quality of life or the sustainability of any particular system of production, distribution, and consumption.

Moreover, because GDP in most countries captures only market transactions, it excludes a significant amount of goods and services produced for personal or household consumption. By making market pricing the chief determinant of value, irrespective of any activity's social value, GDP massively undervalues what many now recognize (especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic) as essential services relating to the care economy.

GDP correspondingly overvalues activities, goods, and services that are priced higher because of the oligopolistic structure of markets – financial services being a particularly telling example. The obsession with economic growth, independent of other indicators of well-being, leads to problematic assessments of the actual performance of economies and to poor policy decisions and outcomes.

That is why there is now much more discussion within the United Nations and its Statistical Commission about moving beyond GDP. UN Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly stressed that GDP is no longer the correct way to measure "richness," and argues that it is "time to collectively commit to complementary measurements."

This challenge was taken up by the UN's High-Level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (I am a member), which recently issued a compendium that considers six big questions relevant to achieving a just and sustainable recovery. One important recommendation involves suggesting alternatives to GDP that national policymakers and international organizations should track on a regular basis. The idea is to provide a dashboard that captures some of the key socioeconomic variables that policymakers should monitor and that should be used to judge their performance.

What are these alternative measures? One is a labor-market indicator: the median wage multiplied by the employment rate. The median wage is a better indicator of the conditions faced by most workers than the average (mean) wage, which can be overly influenced by high remuneration at the top. And the employment rate is a useful indicator not only of the state of demand in the labor market, but also of the extent of unpaid labor typically performed mostly by women (since the greater their involvement in such work, the less likely they are to be able to engage in paid employment).

In the United States and the United Kingdom, for example, my estimates suggest that per capita GDP dramatically outperformed the labor-market indicator in the period from 2009 to 2020, with a widening gap between the two. In India, the two measures actually moved in different directions, with the labor-market indicator declining even as per capita GDP increased.

Another alternative metric is the proportion of the population that can afford a nutritious diet (according to the Food and Agriculture Organization's definition). This indicator is likely to become even more important as the global food crisis worsens, and it does not necessarily move in line with income poverty. In India, for example, 71% of the population cannot afford a nutritious diet, while the government and the World Bank's official poverty estimates range from 13% to 22%.

The third measure is a time-use indicator, disaggregated by gender. This is particularly useful for capturing the incidence of unpaid care work, which is still largely performed by women. This measure shows the distribution of time between paid work, unpaid work, and personal leisure and relational time. Many countries now undertake time-use surveys. These need to be conducted on a regular basis everywhere, with the requisite financial and technical resources provided to countries that need them.

Gender-based analysis of time-use data is critical for understanding people's social and material conditions. It shows the extent to which people experience time poverty, which is far more prevalent among women and the poor. Time-use indicators also reveal the extent to which people provide unpaid labor for society, especially care services that are otherwise unrecognized and unvalued.

A fourth crucial indicator, vital in dealing with ongoing climate change and its implications, is per capita carbon dioxide emissions. While this metric does not capture all of the environmental effects of human activity, the carbon footprint (measured in terms of total consumption, not production) may closely track other environmental indicators, including those measuring pollution and depletion of nature.

Here, policymakers must also pay attention to distributive fairness. The ratio of the top 10% of the population's per capita CO_2 emissions to those of the bottom half has increased in most countries. Even more strikingly, the per capita CO_2 emissions of the richest 1% of the global population have increased dramatically and are now set to be 30 times greater than the level compatible with limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius by 2030.

If all countries tracked these four indicators regularly, we would have a very different view of comparative economic performance from the one that emerges from simplistic measures of per capita or aggregate GDP. And public awareness of this revised view of reality could well mobilize support for fundamental different policies at the national and international level.

Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is a member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism.

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O-PED

By Eric Posner

Antitrust Is Back in America

CHICAGO – President Joe Biden is signaling that his administration will get tough on monopoly. With the appointments of Columbia University law professors Timothy Wu to the White House National Economic Council and Lina Khan to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), he has selected two well-known proponents of breaking up the Big Tech monopolies.

Moreover, these appointments come on the heels of a major antitrust reform bill that Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota introduced in the US Senate last month. Klobuchar's bill aims to bolster antitrust enforcement in a number of ways. It would increase funding for the FTC and the Department of Justice Antitrust Division, establish new bureaucratic offices to investigate and monitor antitrust compliance and market conditions, slap new civil penalties on violators, and expose firms to liability for anticompetitive business practices that currently fall through the cracks.

Notwithstanding the fierce Republican opposition the bill is expected to receive, there is good reason to think that the antitrust momentum in the United States will continue. Already during Donald Trump's presidency, the Justice Department and the FTC launched investigations into the tech industry, which have (so far) resulted in lawsuits against Google and Facebook, filed just before Trump left office. While it may simply have been Trump's unhappiness with culturally liberal tech companies that lit a fire under previously sleepy bureaucrats, other Republicans also have begun to rethink their traditional opposition to antitrust liability.

Antitrust law has long straddled ideological divides in the US. Although it involves significant "intervention" in the market by regulatory agencies and private lawyers (which Republicans loathe), the goal of such interventions is to preserve economic competition (which Republicans ostensibly favor).

Decades ago, conservative-leaning economists and lawyers managed to square this circle by contending that markets are self-correcting: because monopolies generate outsize profits, they are juicy targets for other market actors. Moreover, because regulators and courts are hopelessly unsophisticated about economics and industry, any attempt on their part to enforce antitrust law would do more harm than good.

Such thinking provided a convenient excuse for Republicans to claim that they were both pro-market and pro-business, allowing them to take financial contributions from businesses that had no interest in a free market. Businesses fear competition, which drives down profits.

But times have changed, and not only because of concerns about Big Tech. A huge range of markets in the US – from airlines to wireless communications – have become more concentrated in recent decades. While technological change may play a role in this trend, it also reflects a hollowing out of antitrust enforcement since the 1970s.

In his 2019 book, The Great Reversal: How America Gave Up on Free Markets, the New York University economist Thomas Philippon charts the growing concentration of US markets, and draws a sharp contrast with markets in Europe, which became more competitive during the same period, owing in large part to more aggressive antitrust law (or "competition law," as it is known everywhere outside of America). Philippon finds that weaker antitrust law in the US has led to greater market concentration and more anticompetitive behavior, which in turn has led to lower growth, higher prices, and greater inequality.

Moreover, recent economic research points to two additional problems that were previously ignored. First, big firms that dominate markets harm not only consumers (by raising prices), but also workers (by lowering wages). Labor markets across the US are highly concentrated, which means that employers can – and very likely do – suppress wages far below the competitive rate. Following decades in which economists assumed that labor markets were highly competitive, this surprising new research has revolutionary implications for antitrust law. For example, as the US government only recently acknowledged, mergers should be reviewed for their anticompetitive effects on wages, not just prices, as was the tradition.

Second, market concentration has undermined the efficient functioning of capital markets. Recent research shows that just a handful of institutional investors, including BlackRock and Vanguard, have amassed a massive amount of economic power; and some economists have found evidence that this consolidation is leading to higher prices in other sectors, such as the airline industry.

Others disagree, and the institutional investors claim to be using their power for good, by pressuring corporations to behave more responsibility. And that is the question – not whether these giants have power, but how they are using it. Are they really pursuing strategies of noblesse oblige, or are they simply trying to maximize profits, as one would normally expect?

Whatever the answer to this question, there is no doubt that the US economy is oligopolistic and increasingly sclerotic. A few lawsuits against Big Tech will not revive competition. Nor can Klobuchar's bill be regarded as more than an admirable first step. Congress also must clear away various hurdles to antitrust enforcement that the Supreme Court has erected over the years. Employing a death-by-a-thousand-cuts strategy, the Court has introduced procedural barriers to antitrust litigation, limited the scope of class actions, eliminated presumptions that previously helped plaintiffs, and instilled a culture of suspicion toward antitrust claims among lower courts.

It will take a concerted effort by Congress and the Biden administration to reverse decades of antitrust neglect. And their biggest challenge may lie in an unexpected place: public opinion. While many progressives like to evoke the Gilded Age – when a grassroots anti-monopoly movement helped get the first antitrust laws passed – there are big differences between then and now.

Back then, monopolists like Standard Oil were widely loathed, depicted by cartoonists as malevolent octopuses. Now, the tech monopolists are among America's most admired companies. Especially in the context of the pandemic, millions of Americans have depended on Amazon for household goods, and used Facebook to maintain contact with family and friends. Pretty much everyone is now addicted to Netflix, YouTube, and their smartphones.

Some of these people will serve as jurors in antitrust cases, others as judges – and all of them are voters. Legal and regulatory changes are overdue, but the hard work of transforming public opinion remains.

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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OPINION

By Daron Acemoglu

Closing Tax Havens Is the True Test of West's Resolve

CAMBRIDGE – Russia's war in Ukraine may not be going as it had planned, but the worst is still to come. And while Western financial sanctions against Russian institutions and oligarchs have exceeded what some were expecting, they have not targeted the Western-based roots of Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime.

As in many other kleptocratic regimes, Putin's power is based on a deal between an autocrat and oligarchs. The autocrat rules the country however he wants and enriches his allies, who make huge fortunes from the country's natural resources or through regime-sanctioned monopolies.

But there is a catch: As the oligarchs' coffers grow, they become more concerned about the autocrat's power to seize their assets or harm their families. They are left with two options. The first is to develop formal and de facto institutions to constrain the autocrat, perhaps even paving the way for much-needed structural reform. The second option is to move their assets and their families abroad, so that they can avoid the fate of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the leading Russian oligarch whom Putin expropriated and imprisoned in the early 2000s.

Many Russian oligarchs have availed themselves of the second option, which requires two essential forms of Western assistance. First, the Western banking system needs to provide easy opportunities for them to launder their wealth. London, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Jersey, the Bahamas, and many smaller jurisdictions such as the Cayman Islands have been meeting this demand for years. European banks also have been enthusiastic participants in the process, and the US financial system has provided all of them with the critical infrastructure.

Second, Western financial capitals need to welcome the oligarchs' families, allowing them to buy property (often via trusts and shell companies) and enroll their children in premier educational institutions. Cities like London and New York have welcomed oligarchs and their kin to the heart of high society.

It is reasonable to assume that Putin's ability to establish a personalist autocracy would have been substantially curtailed if Russian elites had not had these golden trap doors to the West. But this is not just a Russian story. The superrich in many other countries – including the Gulf petrostates, China, India, Turkey, some Latin American countries, and Ukraine in earlier times – have also secured their illicit gains with the complicity of Western financial institutions and governments.

These arrangements have not only helped to sustain autocratic regimes in Russia and elsewhere. They have also engulfed Western financial institutions and economies. Oligarchs' money has transformed financial markets by injecting huge amounts of liquidity, thereby changing the nature of financial intermediation and contributing to growing global imbalances. Since 1990, the United States, the United Kingdom, and several other Western countries have run large current-account deficits financed by capital flows from the rest of the world.

After three decades of this, the amount of dark money circulating in the international financial system has reached gargantuan proportions. Gabriel Zucman of the University of California, Berkeley estimates that at least 8% of global financial wealth (more than $7.5 trillion) is now held in tax havens – a figure that does not include the other forms of dark money residing at the heart of the Western financial system. Not surprisingly, autocratic regimes account for a disproportionately large share of these dark-money activities. Zucman finds that some 52% of all household wealth in Russia – and even greater shares in the Gulf states – is held offshore.

These illicit flows have exacerbated social and political problems around the world. The demand for luxury housing has fueled disruptive real-estate booms in hotspots like London, New York, and Vancouver. Because prime real estate in these cities was already predominantly owned by the wealthy, the resulting housing-price inflation has exacerbated inequality. Illicit financial flows probably have contributed to the remarkable boom in Western stock markets in recent years as well, further benefiting the rich.

But the most pernicious effects can be found within Western financial and fiscal institutions. The West's accommodation of dark money has accelerated the trend toward more opaque ownership structures and complex trusts aimed at evading taxes, supported by a massive infrastructure of bankers, accountants, and lawyers around the world. When Zucman and his colleagues analyzed data from random audits to determine the scale of tax evasion in the US, they concluded that the richest 1% of American households hide more than 20% of their income using the tools provided by this nefarious industry.

Similarly, through the Panama Papers and then the Pandora Papers, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists has demonstrated that offshore tax evasion is much more systemic and widespread than was commonly believed. Thousands of businesspeople, politicians, and celebrities from around the world have been implicated in what amounts to a global money-laundering operation.

These schemes have left a stain on Western democracies and financial institutions. While the world's kleptocrats have amassed vast, illegitimate fortunes – and while Western elites have gotten in on the action – Western governments have been unable to generate tax revenues from the rich. As a result, welfare-state institutions and services have been cut back, and existing inequalities have deepened.

Shocked by Putin's unprovoked war, Western politicians have rushed to support severe trade sanctions, kicking most (but not all) Russian banks out of the SWIFT financial messaging system and freezing the bulk of the Russian central bank's foreign-exchange holdings. But it will take more courage to clamp down on tax evasion and dark money now that they have become integral features of the current financial system.

Still, if there was ever a moment to change course, this is it. Western policymakers can rein in a tax-evasion scheme that has been unfairly benefiting the world's most powerful corporations and tycoons for years. In doing so, they can also raise sorely needed tax revenues to support new infrastructure and social programs at home. If the West wants to see itself on the right side of history, targeting Russia is not enough. It must clean out its own Augean stables.

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 (Profile, 2019) and The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty (Penguin, 2020).

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Contract Award Notice

Project Name	Public Financial Management Reforms for Institutional strengthening Project (PFMRISP)/Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
Country:	Liberia
Project Number	P165000
Name of Consulting Service	Consultancy to Provide PFM System Help Desk Management Solution for Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
Contract Identification Number	LR-MFDP-222825-CS QBS
Method of Procurement	Quality Based Selection (QBS)
Date of Publication of Request for Expressions of Interest	May 12, 2021
Name of Firm	Alternate Limited & Transdigital Technology Consulting Limited (JV)
Address of Firm	Pine Tree Plaza, 8th Floor, Kaburu Drive, Off Ngong Road, Nairobi, Kenya
Contract Price	US$199,429.50
Contract signature date	June 17, 2022
Duration	Five (5) months
Summary scope of contract:	The scope of work to be undertaken by the firm will include; *i)* Supply, design, customization, configuration, setup, testing, deployment and commissioning of a Helpdesk Management solution to be used by the Helpdesk to support management of multiple PFM systems used by MFDP, MACs and the public. *Detailed functional and performance requirements for the required solution are provided in the TOR* ii) Deliver training including knowledge transfer to selected 25 MFDP Helpdesk and PFM systems support staff on how to effectively manage the helpdesk management system. iii) Provide technical system documentation, training materials and a user manual. iv) Provide post implementation maintenance support.
	Responsibilities of the Helpdesk The Helpdesk will be a central point of contact accessed through various communication protocols (e-mail, self-service web portal and telephone) providing assistance on reported systems and process related issues as well as general PFM inquiries. The Key envisaged responsibilities and requirements of the Helpdesk will include; i) Interaction with users and the public in a respectful and courteous manner. ii) Working with the clients/customers to accurately and thoroughly document the issues/logs together with the description, comments, and resolution. iii) When necessary, escalate, assign, or refer the logged issue to the appropriate persons for further technical support/resolution. iv) Make every effort to respond to and resolve all assigned logs, on time in line with established Services Level Agreements (SLAs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPS). v) Liaising with technical support on the deployment of solutions to reported logs/inquiries. vi) Training clients/customers on how to use the Helpdesk systems. vii) Liaising with IT support to monitor PFM systems availability. viii) Liaising with IT support to coordinate escalation of reported issues to external service providers where necessary. ix) Responsible for Helpdesk internal controls and quality assurance. x) Confirm the resolution of all logs to closing tickets entered on the system. xi) Deliver periodic weekly service level reports to management for review.

Professor Topor wants education prioritized

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

Professor Wollor Emmanuel Topor of the William V. S. Tubman University in Harper City, Maryland County has stressed a need for government to prioritize education of rural residents.

Serving as guest speaker during the graduation of 36 Pre-service teachers from the Webbo Rural Teachers Training Institute in Konowroken, River Gee County recently, he said rural education is critical and has a direct impact on rural income.

Professor Topor noted that many have blamed Liberia's high illiteracy and poor economic performance on the 14 years of civil war, but the situation is being compounded by high dropouts, especially amongst rural dwellers.

According to him, indicators for such claims are based on high rate of school dropouts, lesser opportunities for students to have access to quality and affordable primary education, broken homes that lead children to stay in the streets, illicit drugs and alcoholism, among others.

Professor Topor stressed that the Government of Liberia, like governments around the world, has a responsibility to reduce poverty among its citizens, adding that in the absence of an appropriate tool, education remains the best instrument for effective and efficient mobility of the vast number of people in the society.

"While the elites or the so-called educated people (who most are square pegs in round holes) continue to wrongly use education as a weapon in favor of corruption by exploiting the illiterate masses - milking the poor malnourished cow for their conspicuous consumption, telling this story is for future presentation."

The former dean of the College of Agriculture at the Tubman University believes that unless Liberian children are well taught, they would not have the capability to adapt to socio-economic changes that are required for them to compete globally.

"We all know the consequences of this as the country isn't self-sufficient in food production. It is simple; we cannot feed ourselves", he bluntly added

He said though government has done extremely well by employing more teachers, constructing and

CONT'D ON PAGE 7

USAID | LIBERIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Subject: Request for Information (RFI) No. **RFI-669-2022-LIB-00002**
Activity Name: USAID/Liberia WASH, Health, and Conservation infrastructures
Date of Issuance: June 9, 2022
Closing Date/Time: June 30, 2022 / 17:00 (GMT)
To Email: rcaesar-hne@usaid.gov or akamara@usaid.gov

USAID is publishing this Request for Information (RFI) to gather market data on Liberian companies which are capable and interested in providing a range of construction services for the completion of WASH, Health, and Conservation infrastructure. Specifically, USAID anticipates funding water networks in Voinjama, Sanniquellie, and Robertsport; the rehabilitation of Ministry of Health (MOH) storage and depot facilities; and the construction of conservation infrastructure for rangers, scientists and conservation, and tourists.

The complete RFI can be downloaded from sam.gov using the following link https://sam.gov/ searching by the RFI No. **RFI-669-2022-LIB-00002** or "USAID/Liberia WASH, Health, and Conservation Infrastructure RFI".

Sincerely,

Garth Patterson
Contracting Officer

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Cummings flags danger

-Critiques repeated Census postponement

Opposition Alternative National Congress (ANC) political leader Mr. Alexander B. Cummings has termed as ridiculous and dangerous to Liberia's republican form of government, the repeated postponement of the

conduct of census here.

In a statement dated 17 June 2022, Mr. Cummings argued that previous postponements were due to several reasons from COVID to lack of funding by this administration.

"This is ridiculous. If these postponements did not represent a danger to our republican form of government and the development of our nation, it would be laughable," he said

He lamented that the Fifth National Census has again been postponed from its 19 June date to next year March.

According to him, repeatedly, under President George Weah, the conduct of the National Housing and Population Census continues to be postponed with the last postponement being from March to June 19.

"The latest postponement from June 19 to next year March is being blamed on the rainy season," he noted.

Cummings argued that the conduct of the National Housing and Population Census is not a trivial requirement which can be set aside without consequences for both the constitutional legitimacy of the elections and the fullness of constitutional authority to govern.

He indicated that the Liberian Constitution mandates the conduct of a census every 10 years. Since 2018, he said, the Weah government should have conducted a census.

"Unfortunately, they have not and it appears, have no intentions to do so," said Mr Cummings.

Among other important reasons, including for economic planning, Mr. Cummings said the result of the census determines the size and demarcation of constituencies in the country, from which representation in the House of Representatives of the Legislature, is important.

He stressed that the result of the census is also important because it is used to validate the number of registered voters at a precinct for elections.

Mr. Cummings reminded the government that the result of the census is vital to also determining, for example, how and where to build more schools, hospitals, markets, farm-to-market roads, and to make other needed services like water, electricity,

telephone connectivity and sewer systems increasingly available to the people.

"Our last census in 2008 put our population at 3.5 million. Today, this administration can not accurately tell a prospective investor or donor, the total population of our country or a specific county but continues to rely on a projected estimate of five (5) million," he added.

Without conducting the long-overdue census, he said Liberia risk the members of the House of Representatives continuing to represent land areas and not the people, as mandated by the Constitution.

This risk, he said, will extend to calling into question the constitutionality of the elections in 2023, as well as the constitutionality of the composition of the House of Representatives after the elections.

He warned that this threatens the constitutionality of the entire government, thus urging that such dangerous scenario which will have consequences for Liberia's peace, security and democracy be avoided.

"The conduct of our National Census is essential to knowing the economic, social and political

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EJS Center releases Second Annual Report on Women's Leadership across Africa

The Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development (EJS Center) has published its second annual report, 'Shifting the Landscape: The 2021 Year in Review.'

The periodic publication is part of the EJS Center's ongoing effort to chart the progress of women's public leadership across Africa.

Highlighting the achievements of African women leaders and the many ways in which they have overcome gender barriers and inspired other women and girls to embark on their leadership journeys, the report offers a detailed picture of women's representation in public leadership roles in Africa. It also sheds light on the crucial contributions women make to three key development areas that have profound implications for Africa's future—climate change, technology for economic growth, and health.

Many positive developments were made over the last year as African women continued to push the boundaries to increase women's political representation. The report provides statistical evidence of representation breakthroughs in all government branches.

Three countries—Chad, Cabo Verde, and South Sudan—saw a landmark shift in legislative representation, crossing the threshold of the Beijing Platform for Action goal of more than 30% women's representation in parliament. 2021 also saw women appointed as heads of state in Uganda, Tunisia, and Tanzania, while eight African countries were amongst the top 40 countries globally for women's representation in cabinets.

The report also highlights some women leaders playing significant roles in advancing three key development areas—climate change, technology for economic growth, and health. From civil servants to politicians, government officials, activists, business leaders, and more, the report showcases how African women have been critical drivers of positive change in 2021. Their achievements so far include influencing the adoption of climate policies, helping transform the continent's tech sector, and contributing to improving healthcare systems with a particular focus on the needs of women and girls.

Despite these gains, significant challenges still impact women's access to public leadership positions. Issues such as election violence, biased party structures, and unfavorable public perception stand in the way of women achieving equitable political representation.

By presenting a clear assessment of the achievements and yet-to-overcome obstacles, the report adds further impetus to the EJS Center's work to advance women's public leadership across the African continent.

In 2022, the EJS Center will welcome the third cohort of Amujae Leaders into a growing sisterhood with the collective goal of driving Africa's development, supporting them along their leadership journeys, elevating their profiles, and helping them achieve their goals. This year the EJS Center will also begin the construction of the Presidential Center and Library, which will provide access to archives documenting the life, presidency, and legacy of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf—Africa's first democratically elected woman president. It will also offer a space for training and networking, and present exhibits and programs that advocate for women's rights and democratic freedom—inspiring them to pursue leadership in all spheres.

In addition, the EJS Center recently launched its Data Hub for Women's Leadership in Public Governance, a data dashboard of women's leadership in Africa. It will also commence its baseline study to evaluate the social, political, and economic barriers women experience, providing tools and interventions that support their leadership ambitions.

Commenting on this year's report and the EJS Center's ongoing mission to champion women's ascension to the highest levels of leadership, EJS Center Executive Director Dr. Ophelia I. Weeks said:

"Africa still has a long journey ahead; women's representation in political life and positions of leadership must continue to improve despite the many challenges. We will continue with more determination than ever to advocate for women's public leadership—and highlight the many benefits it can bring to our societies."

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

ULCHS, BRIDGE-U: Liberia launch CTLI this week

The University of Liberia College of Health Sciences (ULCHS), in partnership with the USAID-funded BRIDGE-U: Liberia project, is expected to officially launch its Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (CTLI) with a series of events June 21-23, 2022, at the campus.

The University of Liberia College of Health Sciences Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation is currently funded through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bringing Research to Impact for Development and Global Engagement - Utilization funded BRIDGE-U: Applying Research for a Healthy Liberia Project (BRIDGE-U: Liberia).

BRIDGE-U: Liberia is based at the University of Liberia College of Health Sciences. It is a five-year program aimed at advancing Liberia's national development goals in health and health sciences education through research utilization, investments in the health sciences academic pathway, inter-professional training at all levels of the health sector, entrepreneurial innovation, and experiential learning.

According to a release issued June 19, 2022, by the University of Liberia UL College of Health Sciences, Congo the CTLI, a public-private academic hub for research utilization, inter-professional training, innovation, and knowledge generation in Liberia will deliver faculty development programming; Camp xSEL, an annual science camp for secondary school students; research on utilizing evidence in the health sciences.

The release noted that the Experiential Learning and Assessment Lab (ELAB), a clinical simulation center at John F. Kennedy Medical Center; an evidence-based decision-making course for current policymakers; and innovation and entrepreneurship trainings, mentorship, and venture incubation. ULCHS will host the grand opening of CTLI on June 21, 2022.

This event will introduce the Center's programming and feature spotlight presentations on teaching, learning, and innovation through research as well as a panel discussion by key stakeholders.

The panelists will examine challenges to and opportunities for a localized approach to research utilization in Liberia in the realms of policy, public health, clinical care, teaching, and learning.

Panelists will include Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah, Minister of Health; Ms. Jane MaCauley, Director General, National Public Health Institute of Liberia; Commander Dr. Rachel Idowu, Country Director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and Dr. Kristina Talbert-Slagle, Assistant Professor/PI, Yale University/BRIDGE-U: Liberia. Dr. Bernice T. Dahn, the UL Vice President for Health Sciences and co-PI of the BRIDGE-U: Liberia award will moderate the discussion.

Additionally, ULCHS will host a Health Innovation and Entrepreneurship Seminar on Wednesday, June 22, 2022, connecting health sciences researchers, faculty, and students with businesspeople passionate about economic growth and social impact in the health sector.

The launch will close with a preview of the Experiential Learning and Assessment Lab (ELAB) clinical simulation space at The John F. Kennedy (JFK) Medical Center on Thursday, June 23, 2022.This series of activities will bring together faculty and students; doctors, nurses, and other clinicians; policymakers; international and local health organizations; public and private medical facilities administrators; entrepreneurs and innovators, amongst others.

University of Liberia College of Health Sciences in collaboration with the United States-based Yale University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

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Professor Topor

renovating several schools across the country, Liberia's pre and post- war institutions have no significant difference due to limited qualified teachers, inadequate school buildings, insufficient learning materials and incentives, and unwillingness of trained teachers to take up assignments in rural communities.

He notes that the Zorzor Rural Teachers Training Institute (ZRTTI) in Lofa County; Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute (KRTTI) in Margibi County, and the Webbo Rural Teachers Training Institute (WRTTI) in River Gee were initiated with an objective to supply well trained teachers, especially in the countryside, but the WRTTI had been faced with challenges for which the facilities were used as a high school and residence for Peace Corps volunteers years back.

"So, to you the graduates, you're all valuable assets to the development of current and future generations. It's therefore, anticipated that you're to go back to your assigned schools to meet societal expectation through the knowledge you obtained from here, although while meeting societal expectation, you need to lower your own expectations, because you will also face some challenges along the way," he admonished.

LoneStar Cell MTN embarks on talent hunt

-Launches MTN Y'ello Star Season 2 Online Application

By Lincoln G. Peters

Liberia's leading GSM company LoneStar Cell MTN with sponsorship from SMS Liberia over the weekend officially launched an application process for the LoneStar Cell MTN Y'ello Star Season Two.

The talent hunt is meant to develop, explore and unleash the hidden potentials of Liberian youths across the country through musical art and entertainment.

The elaborate program held at the Ocean Green in Sinkor

was graced by young people on 17 June 2022. It was launched under the theme: LoneStar Cell MTN Y'ello Star "Bigger and Better.

It brought together partners, lovers of the Liberian Music Industry and officials of LoneStar Cell MTN.

The MTN Y'ello Star Season 2 Media launch kicked off the application process for interested young Liberians who want to participate in the next process by uploading their videos on the social media pages of LoneStar Cell MTN.

Videos can be uploaded with a brief self-introduction and singing of a song well known and controlled by them within the space of one minute thirty seconds.

LoneStar Cell MTN y'ello star is a talent hunt initiative that was birthed by the company sometime last year as a means of identifying and unleashing the hidden and untapped potentials of grass root Liberian singers, rappers and musicians.

The programs when established had it first ceremony at the renamed Ellen Johnson Ministerial Complex after several months of growing young and qualified Liberians who were accepted by the judges.

Ms. Candance Cooper emerged as its first winner, thereby paving the way for others.

Giving an overview of the lunch of the MTN Y'ello Star Media lunch project, LoneStar Cell MTN Communication Manager Ms. Abigail Nafeadalai said the first stage to be accepted into the program is for the interested contestants to do a short video of themselves.

The videos are to be sent to LoneStar Cell Liberia MYTN social media pages, including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp, and TikTok, among others.

Further, participants are to tag @lonestarcell-mtn and use the hashtage #yelloowstarlib.

The winner will get prizes that include a brand new SUV, or jeep, 1.5 million Liberian dollars record deal, three hundred thousand cash prize, and a slot to perform at the Liberia Music Union (LMA) in November.

The prizes also include one hundred GB data over a year and six months of free gasoline for the winner.

According to Madam Nafeadalai , the loading of the video starts 17 June 2022 and ends 4 July 2022.

The Lonestar Cell MTN Communication Manager said the process is for all Liberians in every county. However, she said they will be doing the first in-person physical audition for Grand Bassa, Margabi, Cape Mount, Bomi, and Gbarpolu Counties in Montserrado County after the online application selection.

She said the last area will be in Nimba County and it will bring contestants from Lofa, Bong, Maryland, River Gee, and Grand Kru Counties, among others.

Also speaking, LoneStar Cell MTN Product and Service Manager, Adebayo Oyeyipo disclosed that LoneStar Cell MTN has recognized that Liberia is a very blessed and gifted country with good talents and potentials in its youthful population.

According to him, one of the ways to connect with this youthful population is to invest in young people's potential, and LoneStar Cell MTN is very committed to ensuring that it does everything possible to put the interest of the youth above.

Français

Comment Weah a nommé le Dr Yarsuo Weh-Dorliae à la tête de la Commission de la Gouvernance

Ce qui semblait être une blague du président George Weah à l'égard du Dr Yarsuo Weh-Dorliae à l'hôtel de ville de Monrovia le mercredi 15 juin 2022, s'est avéré réel.

De toutes les indications, ni le président Weah ni le Dr Weh-Dorliae ne s'attendait à une nomination quelconque en se rendant au symposium organisé en honneur de feu le Dr Amos Sawyer pour saluer ses œuvres à titre posture.

Les choses se sont plutôt accélérées positivement pour les deux hommes. Le Dr Weh-Dorliae venait de terminer un brillant exposé dans lequel il a décrit les réalisations du Dr Sawyer à la Commission de la bonne gouvernance. Le président hochait la tête tout au long de la présentation.

Ainsi, le Dr Weh-Dorliae s'est adressé directement au président Weah, l'exhortant à faire pression pour l'adoption par le parlement libérien du projet de loi qui porte décentralisation du gouvernement local, tout en promettant de faire sa campagne en retour pour sa réélection en 2023.

Le président Weah a également répondu en disant que "je ferai alors de vous le chef de la Commission de gouvernance". Tout avait l'air d'une plaisanterie.

Le Dr Weh - Dorliae fut commissaire lorsque le Dr Sawyer était alors président de la Commission de gouvernance sous l'administration de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf.

La Commission, sous le règne de Dr Sawyer, a élaboré des documents politiques qui ont été adoptés par le régime précédent. Ces documents politiques contribuent au système de gouvernance du pays aujourd'hui.

Dans ces documents politiques, il y a le projet de loi portant partage des revenus. Ce projet est actuellement devant le Sénat libérien. Le Dr Weh-Dorliae a juré que si ce projet de loi est adopté, il fera campagne pour le président Weah lors des élections de 2023.

Il a expliqué que feu le Dr Sawyer a passé toute sa vie à travailler sur le projet de loi sur le partage des revenus.

" Monsieur le président, je

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Les femmes libériennes exhortées à préserver la paix en 2023

La coordonnatrice du Centre international Angie Brooks (ABIC) Me Yvette Chesson - Wureh a exhorté les femmes à veiller au maintien de la paix dans ce pays avant, pendant et après les élections présidentielles et législatives de 2023.

Elle a lancé l'appel cette semaine au cours d'une rencontre de médiation organisée en partenariat avec ZOA-Liberia, avec un financement du Fonds de consolidation de la paix des Nations Unies dans le cadre du programme phare de la Women Situation Room (WSR).

L'ABIC est une organisation pour l'autonomisation des femmes, le développement du leadership, la paix et la sécurité internationales.

La rencontre de médiation était axée sur la sûreté et la sécurité des femmes avant, pendant et après les élections de 2023.

Le dialogue de médiation s'inscrit dans le cadre du projet intitulé Paix durable et inclusive au Libéria par la promotion du leadership et de la participation des femmes à la vie civique et politique et leur rôle renforcé dans la résolution des conflits.

Le programme a réuni plusieurs femmes de partis politiques, y compris des présidentes et une aile féminine.

Tenu à l'auditorium Cecil Dennis du ministère des Affaires étrangères, le programme a également réuni des femmes qui ont déjà participé à des élections et celles qui aspirent aux prochaines élections présidentielles et législatives.

Des femmes dirigeantes et des présidentes, des jeunes de vingt communautés des comtés de Bong et de Montserrado ont pris part à la rencontre.

Le Congrès national alternatif (ANC), le Parti de l'unité (UP), Parti de la liberté

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Éditorial

La Commission de la Gouvernance s'est trop rabaissée

Le déluge d'injures qu'ont fait pleuvoir deux commissaires de la Commission de la Gouvernance lundi l'un sur l'autre en public a sérieusement érodé la confiance du public dans ce qui est censé être une institution intègre.

La Commission de la Gouvernance est chargée de fixer des repères pour la conduite des fonctionnaires et des institutions publiques, mais sa sortie récente caractérisée par des échanges de propos acrimonieux entre ses employés pour des raisons de poste et de position contredit clairement sa mission.

Deux commissaires se sont insultés sur les antennes ce lundi 13 juin 2022. Les commissaires Elizabeth Dorkin et George W. Howe réclament le poste d'officier responsable, bien que la Commission ait annoncé dans un récent communiqué de presse que le Conseil des commissaires a nommé le commissaire George W. Howe en tant qu'officier en charge et chef du Conseil, en attendant la nomination d'un nouveau président par le président George Manneh Weah.

Mais quand une institution gouvernementale chargée de la recherche et de la rédaction des politiques publiques est engloutie par des luttes intestines pour des questions de position, le public se demande si la réussite de sa mission lui est importante.

Ce qui est encore plus dégoûtant, c'est le fait que ces dirigeants rendent public ce qui est purement une question administrative en tenant publiquement des propos dégradants à l'égard des uns et des autres. C'est dommage.

Le comportement grossier des commissaires Howe et Dorkin confirme clairement que l'époque de Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, de Dr Toga Gayewea MicIntosh et du regretté professeur Dr Amos C. Sawyer à la GC est révolue. Ce qui reste à cette institution n'est plus qu'un cadre d'intellectualisme. Les esprits critiques semblent y être rares.

Quelles leçons les deux dirigeants pensent donner au public libérien en général ? Est-ce si difficile d'aborder la question de savoir qui est responsable lors d'une réunion de cadres supérieurs au point de d'aller sur les antennes pour jeter le discrédit sur cet organe autrefois respecté ?

Que les commissaires Howe et Dorkin répondent à ces questions pour démontrer leur leadership et se racheter. Qu'ils sachent que le président George Weah les a nommés à la Commission pour faire une évaluation critique de la structure de gouvernance du pays et proposer des réformes conformes aux réalités actuelles, plutôt que de se disputer des postes.

Il est temps que les dirigeants de notre nation évitent l'étroitesse d'esprit et adoptent la clairvoyance pour sortir le Libéria de la misère et placer la patrie sur la bonne trajectoire. Les querelles internes et la jalousie mesquine nous ont retenus trop longtemps.

Cependant, tout espoir n'est pas perdu. Nous croyons toujours fermement que la GC peut et fera mieux. Par conséquent, nous exhortons les commissaires actuels et l'ensemble de la direction là-bas à se rassembler et à se concentrer sur la mission la plus importante de construire un Libéria meilleur grâce à des réformes politiques.

Français

Comment Weah a nommé

vous mets au défi, monsieur le président, si vous pouvez adopter ce projet de loi sur les recettes et si vous exigez le respect du genre à chaque niveau du gouvernement local, je serai votre directeur de campagne", a ajouté le Dr Weh-Dorliae.

La déclaration était une déclaration directe de soutien au président Weah. Quelque chose que Weah n'a pas pris à la légère puisque l'un de ses rivaux en la personne de M. Alexander Cummings était assis juste là.

Comme si son commentaire ne suffisait pas à émouvoir le président, il a ajouté que l'institution qui gère la gouvernance dans le pays n'a pas besoin de personnes qui sont à la recherche d'un emploi.

"Il faut trouver les bonnes personnes qui feront l'analyse des politiques et l'analyse du développement pour travailler sur la voie du développement durable du pays", a-t-il dit. Il a dit que c'est ce que la Commission de la Gouvernance doit faire. Après avoir dit cela, il a exhorté le président Weah à examiner la Commission et à la réviser pour faire avancer ce pays.

"Le pays a besoin des Libériens qui ont un esprit critique et capables de faire des analyses statistiques et économiques, des conclusions fondées sur des preuves qui soutiendront et développeront ce pays de sorte à le faire ressembler à d'autres endroits du monde", a-t-il dit.

La déclaration du Dr Weh-Dorliae a apporté de la lumière et de l'excitation dans la salle, en particulier l'aspect de la campagne.

Ainsi, lorsque le président Weah a pris la parole, il a ri et a dit en plaisantant: " Tu as promis de mener campagne pour moi, mais ton gars Alexander Cummings ne sera pas content".

Le président l'a sur le champ nommé à la tête de la Commission de la Gouvernance pour poursuivre, selon lui, les réalisations du Dr Sawyer.

Selon le Dr Weh - Dorliae, lorsque le Dr Sawyer était à la tête de la Commission de gouvernance, ils ont établi et développé plusieurs projets de loi dont la politique nationale de décentralisation et la loi sur le gouvernement local que le président Weah a promulguée. Il y a aussi le projet de loi sur le partage des revenus qui abolira la centralisation de tous les fonds que le gouvernement reçoit à Monrovia.

"Donc, votre Excellence, la Commission de la gouvernance est cette institution que le Dr Sawyer a dirigée pendant dix ans. Pendant de nombreuses nuits, nous avons travaillé, [pensé], élaboré des stratégies et mis en place, et parlé de toutes les politiques et des choses à faire pour rendre la GC grande et efficace », a expliqué le Dr Weh - Dorliae.

"Cet endroit est censé être la vision du Dr Sawyer qui doit penser à nos institutions brisées au Liberia. Le GC n'est pas l'endroit où quelqu'un vient avec un grand diplôme parce que le diplôme peut toujours le couper."

Les femmes libériennes

(LP), la Coalition du pour le changement démocratique (CDC), le Parti du peuple libérien (LPP), le Mouvement pour l'autonomisation économique (MOVEE), le Liberia Restoration Party (LRP), le People's Liberation Party (PLP) et le Vision for Liberia Transformation Party (VOLT), entre autres, y étaient également représentés.

Au cours de la rencontre, les participants ont partagé leurs expériences douloureuses causées par la violence lors des élections précédentes.

"Si je suis le surveillant, c'est l'église de la révolution. C'est là que nous, les femmes, prendrons le contrôle de notre pays et veillerons à ce qu'il n'y ait pas de violence électorale", a déclaré Mr Chesson - Wureh.

« Les femmes des partis politiques se présenteront comme candidates sur un pied d'égalité avec les hommes. A partir d'aujourd'hui, vous ne cuisinerez plus, et vous ne serez plus l'aile mais le corps et la tête de vos partis politiques », a-t-elle ajouté.

Selon elle, les femmes vont prendre leur juste place dans chaque parti politique et elles seront visibles à la table de prise de décision.

« Dois-je vous parler du cas de Botoe Kanneh et de Mme Telia Urey ? Leurs vies ont été chassées et mises en danger comme si elles avaient eu tort de participer aux élections », a expliqué Me Chesson - Wureh .

Le sous-commissaire général du Liberia Immigration Service pour la naturalisation, Me Asatu Bah Kenneh, a donné aux femmes un aperçu de la promotion de la sécurité et de la sûreté des femmes lors des élections, en comprenant le rôle des agences de sécurité.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Jayati Ghosh

Tenir compte des critères véritablement pertinents

MEXICO – Malgré les problèmes bien connus liés à l'utilisation du produit intérieur brut comme indicateur du développement humain, les responsables politiques du monde entier semblent toujours obsédés par cet indicateur. Les gouvernements cherchent à promouvoir la croissance du PIB par tous les moyens, souvent indépendamment des conséquences plus larges pour la planète ou de la distribution des récompenses. L'accent mis actuellement sur la croissance trimestrielle reflète une perspective à court terme particulièrement malsaine. Et pourtant, le Fonds monétaire international et d'autres organisations multilatérales font référence au PIB dans toutes les évaluations de performance économique et en font le seul point central de leurs prévisions.

Mais le concept du PIB laisse vraiment à désirer. Les chiffres agrégés ou par habitant ne tiennent évidemment aucun compte de la répartition des revenus et le PIB est de plus en plus incapable de mesurer la qualité de vie ou la durabilité d'un système particulier de production, de distribution et de consommation.

En outre, le PIB de la plupart des pays ne capturant que les transactions du marché, il exclut une quantité importante de biens et de services produits pour la consommation personnelle ou domestique. En faisant de la tarification du marché le principal déterminant de la valeur, quelle que soit la valeur sociale de toute activité, le PIB sous-évalue massivement ce que beaucoup reconnaissent aujourd'hui (surtout à la lumière de la pandémie de COVID-19) comme des services essentiels liés au secteur des services à la personne.

En conséquence, le PIB surévalue les activités, biens et services dont le prix est plus élevé en raison de la structure oligopolistique des marchés – les services financiers en sont un exemple particulièrement éloquent. L'obsession de la croissance économique, indépendante des autres indicateurs de bien-être, conduit à des évaluations problématiques de la performance réelle des économies et à de mauvaises décisions ainsi qu'à de mauvais résultats politiques.

C'est pourquoi il y a maintenant beaucoup plus de discussions au sein de l'ONU et de sa Commission de la statistique sur ce qui viendra succéder au PIB. Le Secrétaire général de l'ONU António Guterres a souligné à plusieurs reprises que le PIB n'est plus la bonne méthode de mesure de la « richesse » et affirme qu'il est « temps de s'engager collectivement à utiliser des mesures complémentaires ».

Ce défi a été relevé par le Conseil consultatif de haut niveau sur les affaires économiques et sociales de l'ONU (dont je suis membre), qui a récemment publié un compendium qui examine six grandes questions pertinentes pour parvenir à une reprise juste et durable. Une recommandation importante consiste à suggérer des alternatives au PIB que les décideurs nationaux et les organisations internationales doivent suivre régulièrement. L'idée consiste à fournir un tableau de bord qui permette de capturer certaines variables socio-économiques clés que les décideurs doivent surveiller et qui doivent être utilisées pour évaluer leurs performances.

Quelles sont ces mesures alternatives ? L'une est un indicateur du marché du travail : le salaire médian multiplié par le taux d'emploi. Le salaire médian est un meilleur indicateur de la situation de la plupart des travailleurs que le salaire moyen, qui peut être trop influencé par une rémunération élevée au sommet. En outre, le taux d'emploi est un indicateur utile non seulement quant à l'état de la demande sur le marché du travail, mais également quant à l'ampleur du travail non rémunéré généralement effectué par les femmes (étant donné que plus leur implication dans ce travail est importante, moins elles sont susceptibles d'être en mesure de s'engager dans un emploi rémunéré).

Aux États-Unis et au Royaume-Uni, par exemple, mes estimations suggèrent que le PIB par habitant a nettement surpassé l'indicateur du marché du travail entre 2009 et 2020, avec un écart grandissant entre les deux. En Inde, les deux mesures ont en fait évolué dans des directions différentes, avec une baisse de l'indicateur du marché du travail, alors même que le PIB par habitant augmentait.

Une autre mesure alternative est la proportion de la population qui a les moyens de se procurer une alimentation nutritive (selon la définition de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture - FAO). Cet indicateur est susceptible de devenir encore plus important à mesure que s'aggrave la crise alimentaire mondiale et il n'évolue pas nécessairement en phase avec la pauvreté de revenu. En Inde, par exemple, 71 % de la population n'a pas les moyens de se procurer une alimentation nutritive, tandis que les estimations officielles de pauvreté du gouvernement et de la Banque mondiale vont de 13 % à 22 %.

La troisième mesure est un indicateur du budget-temps, ventilé par sexe. Cela est particulièrement utile pour saisir l'incidence du travail de prestation soins non rémunéré, qui est encore en grande partie exécuté par les femmes. Cette mesure montre la répartition du temps entre le travail rémunéré, le travail non rémunéré et les loisirs personnels et relationnels. De nombreux pays entreprennent à présent des enquêtes sur le budget-temps. Ces enquêtes doivent être menées régulièrement partout et les ressources financières et techniques nécessaires doivent être fournies aux pays qui en ont besoin.

L'analyse comparative entre sexes des données sur le budget-temps est essentielle pour comprendre les conditions sociales et matérielles des gens. Elle montre dans quelle mesure les gens font l'expérience de la pénurie de temps, qui est beaucoup plus répandue parmi les femmes et les pauvres. Les indicateurs de budget-temps révèlent également la mesure dans laquelle les personnes fournissent du travail non rémunéré à la société, en particulier les services de soins qui sont autrement non reconnus et non valorisés.

Un quatrième indicateur crucial, essentiel pour faire face aux changements climatiques en cours et à leurs implications, est celui des émissions de dioxyde de carbone par habitant. Bien que cette mesure ne tienne pas compte de tous les effets environnementaux de l'activité humaine, l'empreinte carbone (mesurée en termes de consommation totale et non de production) peut suivre de près d'autres indicateurs environnementaux, notamment ceux qui mesurent la pollution et la dégradation de la nature.

Dans ce cas, les décideurs doivent également prêter attention à l'équité distributive. Le rapport entre les 10 % des plus gros émetteurs de CO_2 par habitant et ceux de la moitié inférieure de la population a augmenté dans la plupart des pays. Fait plus frappant encore, les émissions de CO_2 par habitant des 1 % des plus riches de la population mondiale ont augmenté de façon spectaculaire et devraient maintenant être 30 fois supérieures au niveau compatible avec la limitation du réchauffement planétaire à 1,5° Celsius d'ici 2030.

Si tous les pays suivaient régulièrement ces quatre indicateurs, nous aurions une perception très différente de la performance économique comparée, par rapport à celle qui émerge des mesures simplistes du PIB par habitant ou du PIB global. Et la sensibilisation du public à cette perception révisée de la réalité pourrait bien mobiliser le soutien en faveur de différentes politiques fondamentales, aussi bien au niveau national qu'international.

Jayati Ghosh, professeur d'économie à l'Université Massachusetts Amherst, membre du Conseil consultatif de haut niveau du Secrétaire général de l'ONU sur un multilatéralisme efficace.

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ARTICLE ARTICLE

Liberia: The National Legislature's Budget and Waste

By S. Karweaye

After over 15 years of post-conflict reconstruction and democratic governance, Liberians appear to agree that the country's governance isn't working as it ought to. And at the root of it is the high cost of running the government, which they say unless it is drastically reduced, the developmental dreams of the country would remain a mirage. They point out that even though the country has been borrowing to finance its budget for many years now, a larger percentage of the money goes into recurrent expenditure while the developmental needs of the nation are relegated to the background.

One of the most debated issues about governance in Liberia is arguably the amount being spent to run the country's bicameral legislature. Last year, we were served another national comedy when the national legislature appropriated the 2020/2021 national budget of USD 30,000 for each Senator and Representative in the name of the so-called Legislative Engagement Fund totaling USD 3.6 million.

The Senate in a press statement explained the USD 30,000 received by each Senator and Representative is geared towards the support to their initiatives in their various counties. One of the unintended consequences of the legislature's unilateral action brings to the front-burner questions about the size of government, the excessive cost of governance, and the fraud and corruption in Liberia.

Liberia's lawmakers have a reputation for rent-seeking behavior. They have been considered among the highest-paid parliamentarians in West Africa. According to the 2022 national Legislature budget, the total sum of US64.3 million was allocated to the national legislature. USD 37.4 million was to salary costs for the House of Representatives, while USD 21.1 million was set aside for the salary cost of the Senate.

The legislature also set aside USD 3.6 million for the so-called Legislative Engagement and Public Accessibility. Substantial additional perks of the office come in the form of allowances to cover a range of costs including the purchase of new official vehicles (USD 4.6 million), operational expenses (USD 18.7 million), gas for vehicles (USD3.1), legislative committee hearings (729,000), printer, newspaper, foreign travels, allowances, etc. The number of allowances received differs across ranks, with the Speaker (USD 2 million), Deputy Speaker (USD 1.5 million), and Senate Pro Tempore (USD 2.1 million), receiving substantially more.

In Liberia, the legislative budgets have tended to increase over the years. An important hike occurred in 2009 when the total legislature budget rose from USD 9.4 million in 2007 to USD19 million in 2009. By 2011, this budget stood at USD26 million. By 2013, the legislature budget was at USD39 million and by 2015, the budget was at USD54 million. In 2016 and 2017, the budget was reduced to around USD47 million and reduced again to US44.6 million in 2020. In 2022, another hike occurred to the tune of US$64.3 million, the highest in the history of Liberia.

While our legislators can accrue salaries and allowances during their 6 or 9 years in office, important additional benefits can be gathered through the legislators' access to public revenues via the Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The legislators' oversight power over Liberia's numerous MDAs is commonly used to extract additional revenues from the government.

This takes the form of lawmakers cooperating with – or bribing and extorting. Access to government revenue is mainly organized through the legislative committee system. For instance, current Sinoe County Senator, Milton Teahjay confessed to the FrontPageAfrica newspaper how Senate committee chairs bargain with nominees of the Executive Branch to employ persons of their interest to get their votes to be confirmed. The allocation of civil servant job slots to members of the national legislature also supports the practice of prebendalism.

A closer look at the 2022 legislature budget shows that our elected politicians are not serious about tackling food insecurity in Liberia. When comparing the legislature budget of US$64.3 million to what is allocated to the agricultural sector, reveals that the combined total allocation of US7.3 million (0.9% of the total expenditure) includes the Ministry of Agriculture (US$4.6 million), Central Agricultural Research Institute (US1.6 million), Liberia Agriculture Commodity Regulatory Authority (US$ 550,107), Cooperative Development Agency (US$432,602) and the Rubber Development Fund Incorporated (US$83,997) is eight and a half (8.5) lesser than the national legislature budget.

Liberians have complained about the agriculture sector budget every year not meeting the benchmark to fight food insecurity in the country. The 2003 African Union (AU) Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security committed African countries to allocate at least 10 percent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development policy to tackle food insecurity in the continent, yet the National Legislature which houses 103 legislators, and several aides increased their budget by US$10 million, from 53.9 million to US$64.3 million.

According to the World Food Program (WFP), agricultural production constitutes the most important livelihood for the average Liberians, involving 67% of the population. The sector contributes 26% of GDP, primarily from exports of rubber, palm oil, cocoa, sugar cane, and coffee, but most of the country's food supply is met by imports due to low overall productivity and limited road access. The 2021 Global Hunger Index, (GHI) ranked Liberia 110th out of the 116 countries. With a GHI score of 33.3, Liberia's hunger levels are 'serious' and on the brink of becoming 'alarming.'

Liberia does not produce enough food for internal consumption. According to the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO), the 2020 national rice production in Liberia was estimated at 270 000 tonnes, like the five year average and slightly below the previous year. The 2020 FAO statistics placed Liberia among the highest importer of rice in the world, as well as wheat, and sugar. Rice for human consumption accounts for over 80 percent of imports, whole wheat and maize account for about 13 percent and 6 percent. Sadly, these are all products that can be grown locally if we properly invest in the agricultural sector.

With all the problems of food insecurity in Liberia, how can the Ministry of Agriculture, the government ministry responsible for the governance, management, and promotion of agriculture be allocated USD 4.6 million, but the national legislature budget includes US 4.6 million for new vehicles purchase, US$3.1million for vehicle fuel, $3.6 for the so-called Legislative Engagement and Public Accessibility, etc? This honorarium scale is excessive in a country that is living on loans, a country that is owing pensions, and a country whose educational system, health, agriculture sector, and infrastructures are in shambles. Such funds ought to be meaningfully spent to provide clean water, logistic support for emergency treatment, build classrooms, provide materials, train teachers and pay outstanding workers' salaries.

Liberia has never worked and may never work if we don't rise and confront this system. What do these legislators contribute to be earning so much? What are we paying them for? In the same country, millions are starving, millions are impoverished; unemployment is high and poverty continues to increase! How did we end up putting these guys at the helm of national affairs? How did we put those who keep pushing up waste and spending more? Most of these lawmakers are personal failures in their own system, hence the need to amass wealth by all means possible.

These pretentious politicians, who always claim to have people-oriented and focused leadership qualities, are in fact, the least endowed with the virtues of transparency, probity, and accountability in the running of government business. The end result of all this debauchery is the emergence of a powerful privileged class that has suddenly supplanted the yearnings and aspirations of teeming Liberians with its bloated appetite for opulent and ostentatious lifestyles.

The wasteful spending as evidenced in the nation's legislature budget disproportionately affects the socially and economically vulnerable and pushes them deeper into poverty and deprivation. Liberia is in dire straits financially now, running a deficit budget year in and year out means that we need to save resources by cutting costs as much as we can.

So, having the national legislature gulping money from the national purse is wrong. President Weah had the chance to show that the 2022 budget would not prioritize wasteful spending by the national legislature and the executive over and above urgent national development priorities, and the need to improve Liberians' access to necessities such as interrupted electricity supply, quality education, affordable healthcare, clean water, good roads, as well as pay outstanding workers' salaries across the country, but failed to do so when he signed the budget into law. The spending of public funds by the national legislature suggests that the leadership does not conceive of the national budget as a blueprint for social and economic policy priorities in Liberia.

Rejuvenated Cummings crisscrosses Liberia

The Political Leader of the opposition Alternative National Congress (ANC), Mr. Alexander B. Cummings' political ambition appears to have been rejuvenated since government dropped criminal charges against him weeks ago.

Following his visit to

Kakata, Margibi County a fortnight ago, hundreds of supporters, rural dwellers, backed by cultural masked dancers and auxiliary groups in Goghen Clan, Clay District, Bomi County, over the weekend, greeted him with a rousing and warm welcome into the Clan.

Goghen Town has an estimated voting population of over 2,000 and they are predominantly Muslims. The Clan is located about 25 miles off the Bomi highway.

The visit to Goghen Town, is said to be a furtherance of the ANC Political Leader's community engagement leading to the 2023 Presidential and General Elections in Liberia.

At a special program, the chiefs, elders, women, and youth groups in separate statements, expressed support and pledged to work with the ANC in Bomi County to ensure Mr. Cummings victory in the 2023 Presidential elections.

A local agriculture group, the World Foundation International (WFI), comprising an estimated 3,500 farmers based in Goghen, satched and presented a certificate of honor to Mr. Cummings, designating him as "WFI Farmers' Ambassador." They pledged support and commitment to the ANC in 2023 elections. Statements of support from local groups, elders and chiefs pointed to Mr. Cummings enviable international record and excellent leadership style exhibited, which they said are the leadership qualities needed to institute real change in Liberia.

In remarks, the ANC Political Leader, Mr. Cummings, expressed gratitude to the people of Goghen Clan for the warm welcome and statements of support and solidarity for his presidency in 2023.

He spoke of the country's rich and vast natural resources and the sharp contrast in the deplorable living conditions of the masses.

Cummings blamed the massive suffering and terrible living conditions of the people, especially in rural Liberia, to the high level of stealing by and incompetence of public officials in President George Weah's administration.

He assured Liberians that with a Cummings Presidency, corruption will be arrested, and Liberians will experience unprecedented improvement in their living conditions, by attracting foreign direct investments and creation of jobs and opportunities.

He made a clarion to all well-meaning Liberians including men, women and youth groups for their support to vote out President Weah, considered the head of the most corrupt and inept administration ever in the Liberian history.

The visit was characterized by masked cultural dancing by both the Sande and Poro societies and was attended by rural dwellers from nearby towns and villages in Clay District, Bomi County.

Senate Committee clears Ruth Collins

By Lincoln G. Peters

The Senate Committee on Public Works has unanimously cleared Public Work Minister - designate Dr. Ruth C. Collins as Minister proper.

The committee's decision is pending the approval of the Plenary of the Liberian Senate through the office of the President Pro-Tempore, Senator Albert T. Chie.

Bomi County Senator and Chair on Public Works at the Liberian Senate made the disclosure in an interview with this paper at the weekend.

He said the decision by the committee was triggered by the numerous developmental works that Dr. Collins and her team continue to do at the Ministry of Public Works.

Snowe said Minister Collins has made the Ministry vibrant since the death of her predecessor in terms of road connectivity and infrastructural development across the country.

According to him, he has been following up on Madam Collins' works since he was appointed chair on the Public Works Committee like any other lawmaker.

The Bomi County Senator said he has seen her capacity and her willingness to learn.

"Like I said, the committee has voted, but it's

still subject to plenary decision," he said.

He noted that the plenary is the highest decision - making body, but at least at the level of the Committee, it has pass on it sincerely.

"I am very confident that she will make good minister amidst [all] of the challenges, financial difficulties and I am confident on that," Snowe continued.

He detailed that Dr. Collins was the only nominee that everyone participated in her hearing because it was an open process.

"However, providing the necessary oversight, we will work closely with her ministry till she succeeds," Senator Snowe vowed.

Senator Snowe further indicated that, since Madam Collins left the Senate during the first hearing, they have had a communication with her and all of the additional documents requested for by members of the Senate.

He said it's the knowledge of the Senate to make sure that Madam Collins is confirmed as soon as possible because the Committee has reported to the Senate, voted on the nominee and it's subject to plenary's decision.

For her part, Dr. Ruth C. Collins, expressed excitement and joy over the statement from the Bomi County lawmaker.

She said she is excited and grateful to God and her colleagues for the history making process.

"Today is a very great day, and I am excited and grateful to the President of the Republic of Liberia Dr. George Weah for the opportunity given me to contribute to my country through this unique pubic medium to serve," she said.

Explaining her vision for the Public Works Ministry, Madam Collins noted that she will make sure that the capacity of young professional Liberians are built.

She said with knowledge, the people can do more and better and what she is doing is just the little.

"If am confirmed by the Senate as we are hearing, we will work with the same Senate and the lower house so that when the budget is provided, we will make sure we do what we can do for the plans and visions we submitted to the Ministry of Finance to enable us achieve our dream," she said.

Jeety receives

Starts from back page

mindset - from a beautiful, parked car to a even more beautiful vessel of inspiration, my focus changed," she noted.

She said it helps one see that a particular situation, however tragic, is not unique.

"And that there is nothing new under the sun," she noted, adding: "For whatever has been done before can be done again."

She stated that the destiny of man is not in the low places, but on the high mountains and elevations.

"It helps one see the ultimate triumph of an inspired heart, which can master every circumstance; thus turning it around from one of despair to triumph," she continued.

According to her, it helps one see that there is always a solution to every challenge no matter what.

She said she believes everyone now sees the the crux of the whole matter- "It is simply - to use The Inner Inspiration Given to All Men And be The Change You Desire."

She appreciated the officials of the Episcopal Diocese, the chairman, members of the Board of Trustees and the Acting President of Cuttington University for the recommendation and subsequent approval of her as the 60th commencement speaker and Degree of Doctor of Humane letters (LHD, Honoris Causa).

She also extends hearty congratulations to the members of the 60th Graduating Class for a job well done.

She said for each of the graduates, by their commitment and fortitude to completing this journey; has further cemented the truism that "A sound Education is the surest way out of Poverty."

Meanwhile, Madam Howard - Taylor promised a 100 solar panel light and US$20,000 to the Cuttington University.

Cummings flags

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Opposition Alternative National Congress (ANC) political leader Mr. Alexander B. Cummings has termed as ridiculous and dangerous to Liberia's republican form of government, the repeated postponement of the conduct of census here.

In a statement dated 17 June 2022, Mr. Cummings argued that previous postponements were due to several reasons from COVID to lack of funding by this administration.

"This is ridiculous. If these postponements did not represent a danger to our republican form of government and the development of our nation, it would be laughable," he said

He lamented that the Fifth National Census has again been postponed from its 19 June date to next year March.

According to him, repeatedly, under President George Weah, the conduct of the National Housing and Population Census continues to be postponed with the last postponement being from March to June 19.

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Sports

Jeety receives honorary Doctorate Degree

Dr. Upjit Singh Sachdeva (Mr. Jeety)

By Naneka A. Hoffman

Indian businessman and philanthropist Dr. Upjit Singh Sachdeva (Mr. Jeety) on Friday, 17 June 2021, received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Cuttington University in Bong County.

Speaking during the 60th Commencement of Cuttington University, the Interim President of the University Dr. Romelle A. Horton said Dr. Sachdeva was being honoured with an honorary degree (Honoris Causa) for his numerous contributions to society at large, and the Liberian people.

She appreciated Dr. Sachdeva for his selfless services to humanity and Liberians, the Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate of the Cuttington University conferred on him the Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D) Honoris Causa, with all the rights and privileges thereto appertaining.

The Guest Speaker at the Commencement Convocation, Liberia's Vice President Jewel Howard - Taylor, explained why she looked at the position of Vice President as a beautiful, parked car in a garage.

"Then I asked myself; why had a country girl from very humble beginnings been lifted to this high Office?" said Madam Howard - Taylor.

"I then perceived that I was an Agent of Change whose prime responsibilities was to spread inspiration whenever I found myself; and help lift the spirit of inspiration of women and girls and youth across the nations of the world."

"You see upon this changed

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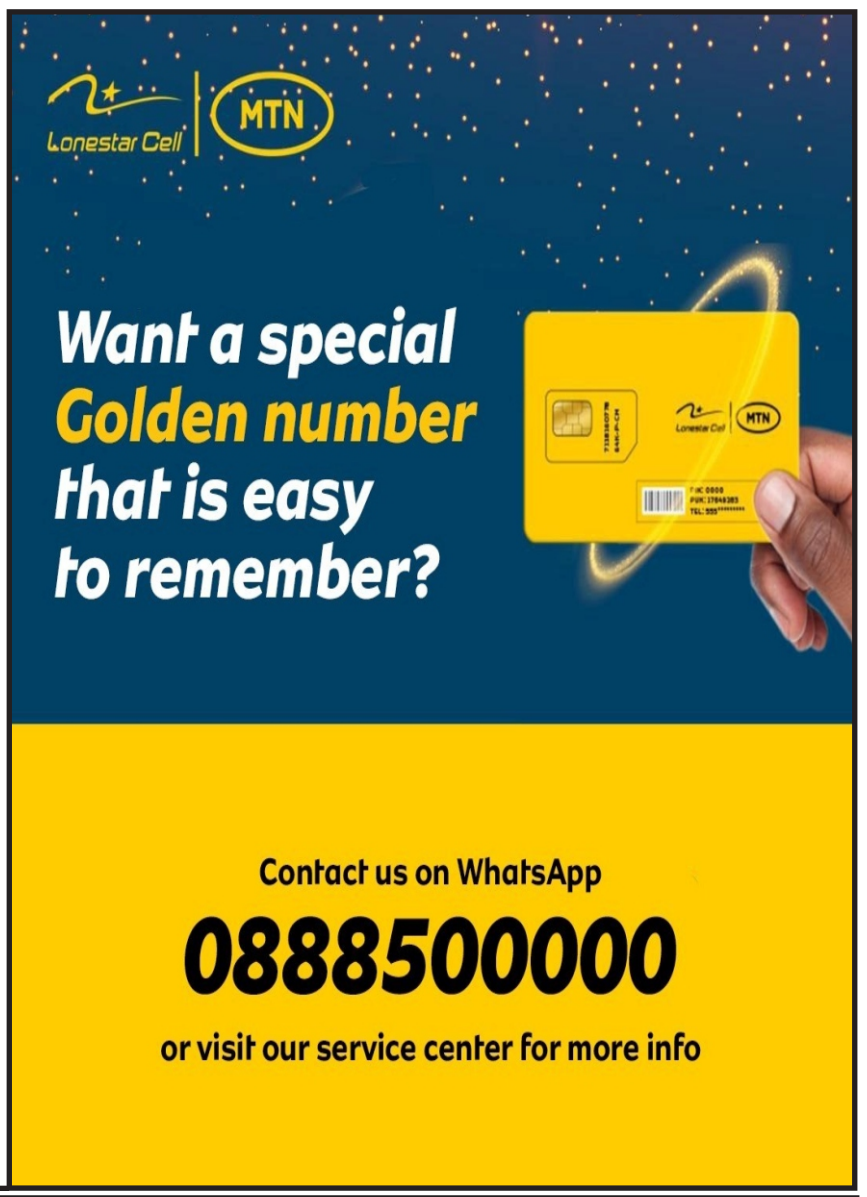

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