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DATE	BUYING	SELLING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2022	L\$152.3399 /US\$1.00	L\$154.0749/US\$1.00

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

The New Dawn

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VOL. 12 NO. 127 WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2022 PRICE LD\$40.00

Legislature passes Dual Citizenship Bill

Speaker Bhofal Chambers **Pro-Tempore Albert Chie**

-ALCOD's Eminent Chairman Wettee Praises Pres. Weah, Senate-HOR Leadership & Cllr. Bernard

P11

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Continental News

Somaliland Announces Ban on BBC Broadcasts

MOGADISHU, SOMALIA –The breakaway region of Somaliland has announced a ban on broadcasts by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Somaliland Information

recognized by Somalia or any other country.

The minister, speaking in the Somaliland capital of Hargeisa, said that after long discussions, authorities decided to ban the BBC on the grounds that the network has lost its neutrality and is acting against the

stood on its feet for the last 31 years, with multiple presidential and parliamentary elections.

Somaliland is a former British protectorate and breakaway region of northern Somalia that declared independence in 1991 after Somalia descended into a civil war.

Attack on journalists

In Somalia, meanwhile, journalists and media houses are facing new challenges to their daily activities.

On July 18, a reporter and a cameraman working for Arlaadi media, a Mogadishu radio and TV station, were arrested by security forces, according to station director Ahmed Ali Nuur.

Nuur said the journalist and photographer were attacked, fired at with live bullets, beaten and arrested. Their equipment was taken, and some of it destroyed. Nuur said no information has been provided as to why the men were attacked, but the journalists deserve justice.

Abshir Mohamed Nur Farasa, one of the journalists who was assaulted, said he was reporting on street damage caused by recent

rains in Mogadishu when he was beaten at gunpoint by security officers. He said he was not told why he and the photographer were being attacked. After they were beaten, Farasa said, the officers took the cameraman to the police station and destroyed his equipment.

Somali police spokesman Abdifatah Adan Hassan told VOA that the police took immediate action after the incident and arrested one of the people who assaulted the

journalists. Another is still on the loose.

Hassan said it is possible that individuals dressed in security forces uniforms are creating problems in Wadajir district. He said that after the attack, he spoke with Arlaadi media and the police commissioner, and an individual involved was jailed in Wadajir.

Somalia is one of deadliest countries for journalists in the world, with more than 50 media workers killed since 2010. Reporters Without Borders ranks Somalia as the most dangerous country for journalists in Africa. VOA



The entrance to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) building is seen in White City in western London

Minister Saleban Yusuf Ali Koore told reporters Tuesday that BBC broadcasts have reduced the identity and dignity of the self-declared independent nation not

independence of Somaliland.

He said the ban would go into effect immediately.

Koore said the BBC fails to recognize that Somaliland is a democratic country that has

Burkina Faso Arrests Man After Death Threat to Top Journalist

OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO – Cybercrime police have arrested a man suspected of making death threats on social media against one of Burkina Faso's leading journalists, authorities said.

Last month, a 35-year-old trader issued "defamatory threats, inciting violence against the person of Mr. Newton Ahmed Barry, as well as the destruction of his private goods," the cybercrime brigade said in a statement Monday.

"Go and burn his house, raze his home completely, gather up the sand that's left and leave the land empty," a voice says in the recording first aired on WhatsApp.

The journalist is called a "terrorist" "who does not deserve to live."

The police statement said the suspect had admitted to making the recording.

It was unclear why the death threats were made against Barry, a star state television reporter in the 1980s and former editor-in-

chief of an investigative publication.

However, he risked the wrath of pro-Russian forces last May when he criticized on a private television channel the government's deal to bring in Russian mercenaries to help tackle the jihadist insurgency.

Barry quit as a television presenter after the 1998 murder of investigative journalist Norbert Zongo and three of his colleagues, found riddled with

bullets in a burned-out car.

Barry had heavily criticized the regime of President Blaise Compaore.

He was appointed to head Burkina's Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) after the president's downfall in 2014 but resigned last year. He turned his critical eye back on the country and government, enjoying a strong following on social media.VOA



Journalist Newton Ahmed Barry is seen at a press conference in Ouagadougou

Ghana discharges 39 in isolation over Marburg concerns



The Marburg virus was first detected in the city of Marburg in Germany in 1967

The health authorities in Ghana have discharged 39 out of the 98 people who had been in isolation after coming into contact with one of the two people who recently died after contracting the Marburg virus.

Those discharged had completed the 21-day isolation period and did not show any symptoms.

The country will wait for 42 days without a new case before declaring that the outbreak is over. But that period will only begin once the second of the two men who died has been buried.

There have been concerns over how the two patients were handled by medical personnel in terms of infection prevention and control measures which could have exposed them and others to the disease.

At the end of last month, two men reported to the Adansi North District hospital in the Ashanti region, exhibiting symptoms of acute haemorrhagic fever. They died shortly after being admitted.

Ghana declared an outbreak of the virus 10 days after confirming the two cases following confirmation by a WHO partner laboratory, Institute Pasteur, in Senegal.

Contact tracing and strict infection control measures have been introduced to prevent more fatalities.

Teams are also going into communities to make them aware of the symptoms and to ensure they alert health authorities if any suspected cases emerge.

This is the second time that Marburg has been identified in West Africa. There was one confirmed case in Guinea last year, but that outbreak was declared over in September, five weeks after the case was discovered. BBC

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EDITORIAL

Playing games with the Liberian people

LAWMAKERS ON CAPITOL Hill are feasting in cash withdrawn from the national coffers and disbursed thru covert account, while ordinary citizens continue to die due to lack of drugs in hospitals and basic services across the country.

IN A COUNTRY that lacks running water, effective health services and electricity, it is highly inhumane and selfish that less than 200 legislators would collect US\$30,000 each that they had appropriated unto themselves from the national budget for so-called “engagement” with their constituents without accountability.

WHAT IS EVEN hurting more is the gameplay that has evolved between the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate over the dishing out of the cash that totals more than US\$300 million with one side confirming the disbursement, while the Senate is in complete denial.

THIS MATTER WOULD not have gained magnitude if it had not come from ruling Coalition for Democratic Change Lawmaker Moses Acarous Gray, who revealed here that said cash was deposited in a bulk account at an undisclosed commercial bank, from where they have been having access to the money.

REP. GRAY INSISTS that the Senate receives its share of the booty, but the Liberian Senate says that at no point in time did its members receive US\$30,000.00 each for Legislative Engagement in the 2022 National Budget. However, let it be made clear that Rep. Gray did not say the money came thru a budget line item.

THE CHAIR AND Co - Chair of the Senate Statutory Committee on Ways, Means Finance and Budget, Bomi and Bong County Senators Morris Saytumah and Prince Moye maintain there is a strict mandate from Senate Plenary not to have any budget line for said amount in the current budget.

MEMBERS OF THE ‘House of Wisdom’ seem to be taking the Liberian people for granted, because not placing the amount in the current budget does not mean it cannot be covertly sourced and disbursed.

BESIDES, THERE IS no way that members of the House of Representatives would receive said amount each and their colleagues in the Senate are left out of the booty. No, absolutely no way! Previous disbursements or records prove to the contrary.

SO THEN, IF the disbursement did not go across as the Senate wants Liberians to believe, why would Rep. Gray, Chair of the House Committee on Executive would delight in falsely indicting his colleagues in the Senate? What does the Montserrado County District#8 Lawmaker seek to benefit from his disclosure?

THE SENATE’S CLARIFICATION is faint and desires more to get the ears of citizens. Members of the 54th Liberian Legislature should be told in no uncertain terms that posterity would judge them and their families for constantly dishing out the national cake among themselves, while the people they claim to represent live in abject poverty, darkness, misery and disease.

New Dawn
DAILY INDEPENDENT

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COMMENTARY

By Anuja Malhotra
and Abi Vanak

Ecosystem Restoration Is Good for Your Health

NEW DELHI - Humanity currently faces multiple, interlinked existential crises. The catastrophic consequences of climate change, ecological degradation, and biodiversity loss have cascading knock-on effects on human health and well-being. As the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates, ecosystem damage can contribute significantly to a global public-health emergency. But scientists are also increasingly finding that ecological restoration, by reversing the threats to soil, biodiversity, water, and other ecosystem services, can deliver major health benefits.

There have been many attempts to understand the nexus between ecological degradation and human health. A recent study of over 6,800 ecosystems across six continents provided further evidence that deforestation and extinction of species will make pandemics more likely. Ecosystem damage also leads to water contamination, creating breeding grounds for infectious diseases. Similarly, soil degradation not only reduces agricultural productivity, but also has been linked to disease and increased mortality.

The emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 are closely associated with the health of ecosystems. For example, 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, caused by unsustainable use of natural resources, factory farming of animals, and other industrial-scale anthropogenic factors.

Ecosystem decline has also contributed in recent decades to reduced immunological resilience and an increase in allergic conditions in humans. The effects are not limited to physical health, but also include mental-health problems such as an increase in eco-anxiety, or fear of environmental damage due to ongoing ecosystem degradation.

Conversely, restoring natural ecosystems could provide pathways for reversing some of the effects of climate change and ease the global chronic-disease burden, thus improving human health and well-being. One recent study showed that soil restoration and the reintroduction of native plant species led to a reduction in physical and psychological impacts of certain diseases. In another case, ecological restoration of an urban river in northwest England was linked to psychological benefits for surrounding communities.

There is also evidence that ecological restoration can protect people from extreme climate events and related public-health crises. Finally, using alternative cooking fuels such as biogas in improved stoves, thereby reducing the need for fuelwood and helping to prevent forest degradation, has been shown to improve respiratory health and household diets.

The economic case for ecological restoration is strong. Rising public-health costs and the significant disease burden - exacerbated by the pandemic - strengthen the case further. The World Health Organization estimates that global spending on health rose continuously between 2000 and 2018, to \$8.3 trillion, or 10% of world GDP.

Some prominent international efforts to reap the benefits of ecological restoration to planetary and human health are already underway. The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, running from 2021 to 2030, and the land degradation neutrality program of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification encourage signatory countries to recognize the central importance of ecological restoration. Likewise, the #HealthyRecovery initiative, signed by over 4,500 health professionals from 90 countries, urged G20 leaders to fund projects that enable ecological restoration as part of their pandemic stimulus packages.

In recent decades, researchers have developed various models - including the Mandala of Health, the Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs, and, more recently, the One Health approach - to capture the interconnected relationship between humans and nature. The challenge now is to develop a unifying framework to maximize the synergy of ecological restoration and human health. Policies designed to address one should not exclude the other.

We therefore need to redefine ecological degradation, understand its far-reaching effects on human health, and recognize that these effects cannot be fully addressed without structured, context-specific ecological restoration plans. Achieving this will require institutionalizing and mainstreaming inter-sectoral collaboration between scientists and practitioners from the ecological, medical, and sustainability domains.

Alliances and a sense of ownership among core governance structures of public health and ecosystem restoration will be crucial. In India, for example, a pioneering effort to mainstream cross-disciplinary initiatives is bringing together the government, scientists, and local partners and practitioners with the aim of improving zoonotic-disease control. Such a framework can generate valuable knowledge and insights for similar collaborative initiatives elsewhere.

Ecological restoration is a clear and identifiable way to tackle the global disease burden and improve public health. As the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration commences, policymakers should encourage collective action to spur inclusive, interdisciplinary activities that demonstrate the positive global benefits of restoration for social, physical, and mental health. We owe it to ourselves and to the planet to mitigate at least some of the threats we have created.

Anuja Malhotra is a policy analyst at the Centre for Policy Design at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment (ATREE). Abi Vanak, Honorary Professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, is a senior fellow at the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment (ATREE).

The World Needs a Digital Lifeline

WASHINGTON, DC - In periods of crisis, digital technologies provide a lifeline that keeps people, communities, and businesses functioning. From the COVID-19 pandemic to violent conflicts and natural disasters, being connected has allowed us to continue working, learning, and communicating.

How policymakers have responded to these emergencies has played a large part. In particular, as new paper by the World Bank Group’s Development Committee shows, more agile regulation has accelerated digitalization and unleashed innovation. In today’s global context of several overlapping crises, this needs to become the norm. Secure and resilient internet infrastructure is a fundamental necessity.

During the pandemic, as more and more of our lives went online, internet usage spiked worldwide. In 2020, 800 million people went online for the first time, and 58 low- and middle-income countries used digital payments to deliver COVID-19 relief. To manage that surge, governments and regulators in more than 80 countries moved quickly to change rules, including those governing the allocation of radio spectrum - the electromagnetic waves used for wireless communications. In Ghana, regulators assigned temporary radio spectrum to networks in high demand, and all mobile-service providers were granted permission to expand coverage. This resulted in better-quality service for more than 30 million mobile subscribers, letting them “go” to work, learn online, and access essential services.

Agile regulations have also helped digital technologies offer critical support to people in fragile and conflict situations. In Ukraine, the presence of a strong internet connection through satellite links, even while terrestrial infrastructure is under attack, has enabled the government to communicate with its citizens in real time. At the beginning of the war, shelling and cyberattacks were predicted to take down the internet, but innovations such as the satellite hookups have kept the country online. Here, too, the Ukrainian government moved quickly to speed up permissions and adapt rules.

But a digital lifeline is effective only if it is safeguarded from cyberattack, something that Ukraine knows well. For many years, the country has been a testing ground for strikes on infrastructure. Hackers carried out waves of attacks that hit Ukraine’s distribution centers, call centers, and power grid.

And it’s not just Ukraine. All countries are vulnerable to these incursions. The United States fell victim to cyberattacks last year that took down its largest fuel pipeline, leaving many Americans in long lines to fill their gas tanks. And in Africa, Kenyan internet users endured more than 14 million malware incidents in 2020.

Like cyberattacks, nature can cause damage to communications infrastructure that demands an agile reaction. A volcanic eruption in January this year sent the island nation of Tonga into digital darkness. The eruption cut Tonga’s single undersea telecom cable and threw the country into 38 days of isolation from the internet and much of the outside world. This crisis has prompted discussions about how to strengthen the network and emergency-response systems, so Tongans are not at risk of digital darkness again.

To mitigate such vulnerabilities, unleashing digitalization needs to be a high priority even in periods of relative calm. Potentially transformative yet fast-evolving technologies require policymakers to promote financing, regulations, and institutions that make it easier to test out new ideas in real life. Some countries are starting to make progress. Kazakhstan is using agile regulation to digitalize, decentralize, and decarbonize its vitally important energy operations.

Unlocking the potential of digitalization for the masses through well-targeted regulation can also help close the digital divide and improve welfare. Recent research has shown that the availability of cheaper internet access increases employment among low-income households.

Countries such as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Malaysia provide low-cost plans for poorer users. Digital access is essential for people all over the world, especially residents of under-connected rural areas, the poor, women, and the displaced. In Nigeria and Tanzania, poverty rates fell by seven percentage points in areas with internet connections.

With the world facing multiple emergencies, policymakers need to mobilize digital connectivity to improve the daily welfare of the most vulnerable populations. Right now, innovation is moving so fast that many officials, especially in developing countries, are finding it hard to keep up and ensure that the benefits of digitalization reach the people who need them most.

But we should not need a crisis to accelerate the transformation. Now is the time to build a digital lifeline - before the next disaster hits. Read more about the World Bank’s work on digital development and the digital lifeline that proved crucial in the pandemic in this recent paper on digitalization and development.

The Financial System Africa Needs

ADDIS ABABA - For African economies that have yet to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia’s war in Ukraine could not have come at a worse time. The economic wounds of the previous crisis had been stitched up, but more time was needed for them to heal, let alone for the scars to fade. Now, commodity-price spikes and supply-chain disruptions are compounding inflationary pressures, causing currencies to depreciate and food and fuel costs to skyrocket. Since the war began, oil prices have reached their highest levels since 2008, wheat prices have soared to 14-year highs, and fertilizer prices have surged by nearly 30%.

These macro trends have high human costs. As many as 25 African countries depend on wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine. Rwanda and Tanzania import over 60% of their wheat from the two countries. That figure is nearly 70% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and exceeds 80% in Egypt. Russia alone supplies 45% of Namibia’s wheat, and 100% of Benin’s. With grain products often accounting for a large share of local diets, the risk of hunger and undernourishment is rising fast - and not just for low-income households.

But many African governments have little scope to respond to this escalating crisis. Pandemic-related uncertainty led to massive capital flight from the continent, output shrank, and countries’ debt burdens grew heavier. Over \$40 billion in debt repayments were due in 2021, and debt service is expected to exceed 7% of Africa’s GDP in 2022 even before the Ukraine crisis and the US Federal Reserve’s interest-rate hikes.

As the crisis has intensified, access to international capital markets has tightened. Ghana and Tunisia are virtually shut out, and countries with greater access, such as South Africa, face onerous rates. Nigeria recently sold \$1.25 billion in dollar bonds, due in 2029, with a yield of 8.375%.

Africa’s current plight reflects a fundamental international failure. The continent’s integration into the global economy over the last several decades has not been accompanied by changes to the global financial system aimed at ensuring that its needs - both for growth and support in times of global crisis - are met.

Such changes include accelerating the effort to reform the G20’s Common Framework for Debt Treatments and expanding it beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. It also means improving African countries’ market access. While over 23 African economies have accessed the Eurobond market over the last four years - and emerging African economies do so regularly - they remain weighed down by low credit ratings, wide interest-rate spreads, and negative investment-risk perceptions. While this may take some time to correct, markets have tools with which to address the illiquidity of Africa’s bonds, thereby reducing costs for African borrowers and crowding in more financing.

Secondary markets for trading African bonds typically lack depth. With the G20’s support, however, a “repo” (repurchase) market can be created, with bonds used as collateral to access affordable loans.

The G20 economies - and the international community more broadly - have pledged to help ease African countries’ debt burdens. They must deliver on this promise. But they must also begin to lay the groundwork for a real-sector recovery, underpinned by investments in energy, infrastructure, and services to support trade and job creation.

African countries also need currency markets at scale. In providing financing to Africa, the international community cannot depend on instruments designed for low-income countries. After all, nearly 78% of Africa’s GDP and 75% of its population (including many of its poor) are concentrated in middle-income countries.

Fast-disbursing non-program instruments at the International Monetary Fund represent another possible solution. The IMF’s proposed Resilience and Sustainability Trust is a step in the right direction. But the RST, as currently designed, has some flaws, including overly restrictive conditions for access and a focus on long-term, rather than emergency, support. Without immediate assistance, the long term will be precarious for many.

As it stands, countries accessing the RST would be required to have a regular IMF program in place. To ensure that the RST helps all countries in need, this requirement should be removed. Moreover, to avoid excessive funding delays, RST disbursements should be divided into two categories: smaller loans with less conditionality that can be delivered quickly to enable countries to respond to balance-of-payment shocks, and larger loans that require countries to enter into standby arrangements.

As a long-term facility, the RST would enable funding for investment in sustainable infrastructure - projects that would offer reliable returns, advance the net-zero transition, and support economic diversification. The Economic Commission for Africa estimates that investment in green projects can lead to the creation of 2.5 times more jobs than the equivalent investment in coal- or fossil-fuel-based alternatives. With Africa accounting for less than 1% of global green bond issuance, the upside potential is enormous.

Finally, the world must make the most of special drawing rights. SDRs (the IMF’s reserve asset) can become a true game-changer, easing debt pressures, spurring investment, and driving progress toward inclusive prosperity. But, as economic conditions tighten, a new allocation must be considered to help countries deal with pressing needs. In the future, automatic triggers for new SDR releases, as well as a new allocation system, are needed to deal with the current inequity in allocation. Of the \$650 billion in SDRs the IMF allocated last year, only \$33.6 billion went to African economies. Developed economies received \$420 billion, even though the median high-income country uses only 6% of its SDRs, compared to 53% for Africa.

Africa’s vast economic potential is no secret. But tapping it will be possible only if major developed countries and emerging economies work together to design a global financial system that meets Africa’s liquidity and debt-sustainability needs.



Solway, Arcelor Mittal Mining War, and the media propaganda

Sometime in December of last year, a former Liberian Government official approached this paper claiming to have an article on Solway and their Russian Mafias from a trained Liberian cyber expert.

The key focus of the article was how Solway Russian Mafias were engaged in cybercrime and that this “quote” trained Liberian Cyber expert had written a nice piece of feature article about their activities here.

This former official (name withheld) currently heads the Arcelor Mittal Liberia public relations campaign. His main goal is to sell Arcelor Mittal Liberia to the Liberian populace, make the company wins sympathy and pressure their lawmakers to rectify Mittal Steel’s controversial third Mineral Development Agreement (MDA).

For this campaign, several local media outlets have been enlisted. They are not to write any negative story or article about Arcelor Mittal Liberia and nothing positive concerning rival mining companies like Solway and HPX with investment interest in Liberia should be reported by them.

So, the article was sent at the eleventh hour and being a feature article coming from a “trusted source”, we decided to publish it without further verification of the authenticity of the author and the information-our bad. At that time this paper had no idea who Solway was.

The said article was subsequently published on the New Dawn website the following morning. But upon a second review of the article and the forwarded email, it was observed that the article originated from a member of the political group Council of Patriots (CoP), a political group that led the first and most popular postwar demonstration here demanding the Weah government to step down. This drew the paper’s attention and following several investigations it was later decided that it be taken down and that it was not worth the publication in the first place.

Later, that evening, the paper received a call from an individual claiming to be a cyber expert who had noticed the removal of the article from the New Dawn’s website and wanted to be sure if the health of the website was okay. The paper informed him that the article was removed because the content of the information did not come from a credible source, and it was best described as mere propaganda piece that the paper didn’t want to get involved with.

However, the “quote” Cyber Expert insisted that those Solway-linked Russian Mafias were around and that two other outlets that had reported the same article reported that their sites were hacked and only the article in question was removed-really. Follow-up calls with the outlets involved told this paper that for the same reason given by the New Dawn they personally took the article down.

Few days later, a professional colleague did an article on Mittal Steel’s third MDA and made a case for Solway and the rest of the competitors. Apparently, this did not go down well with someone appearing to be sympathetic to Mittal Steel. The individual first email to this paper was a direct instruction asking it to take down the article. When the paper insisted that it wouldn’t do so after nearly 10 email exchanges back and forth, the individual alleged that the only reason the paper has refused to take down the article is that it had been bribed to publish the same. -Seriously?

This paper has refused to accept monthly monetary payments to be restricted to only promoting Arcelor Mittal and not dwelling on its failures by the company’s external PR firm. Under such an arrangement, it is barred from writing positive stories about its competitors-Solway, HPX, and others.

This is the kind of arrangement that has been made with several local media outlets and a social media talk show host. These media outlets and social media talk show hosts have continued to spew the debate in favor of Arcelor Mittal, while bad-mouthing other competitors.

Why now?
The recent publication in which President George Weah was quoted as asking “the Liberian boy and the Indian man” to negotiate tends to project Solway as a Russian-owned mining Company or company linked to a Russian oligarch. These kinds of propaganda only robbed the Liberian people of the benefits that come with the investments being discussed here.

If the sole aim is to create a public sentiment and pressure lawmakers to pass an MDA that would trap the country for couples of decades to come and prevent other competitors from entering the Liberian because of the money being dished out at the end of every month to some media outlets for public relations purposes, there is a need to rethink country.

This paper has refused to accept such monthly payment because it believes that the Arcelor Mittal Third MDA has issues that should be addressed, which if not, could entrap the country for decades, while Mittal and its shareholders marched at their banks with smiles.
Arcelor Mittal’s initial MDA with the Liberian Government was not placed under a critical microscope like the third because the country at the time needed investment to provide much-needed jobs for some stability since it was just emerging from conflict. Times have changed and the need to encourage other investors in the sector is necessary for the economic growth of the country. -To be continued

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
(CONSULTING SERVICES – INDIVIDUAL SELECTION)

LIBERIA

Public Financial Management Reforms for Institutional Strengthening Project

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.:**D5060 -LR**

Assignment Title: **Individual Consultant for the Writing, Validation and Production of the Gender Disaggregated Statistics (GDS) Survey Report**

Reference No.: LR-MFDP-299311-CS-INDV

The Government of Liberia has received financing from the World Bank, the Government of Sweden and the European Union toward the cost of the Public Financial Management Reforms for Institutional Strengthening Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services forrecruiting an individual consultant for the writing, validation and prduction of the Gender Disaggregated Statistics (GDS) Survey Report

Objective of the Assignment:

The overall objective of this consultancy is to draft a comprehensive Gender Disaggregated Statistics Report that provides the evidence for improve gender planning and budgeting in Liberia. The report is expected to unveil gender equalities and gaps in the health, education and agriculture sectors as well as assist policy makers to bridge improve equity in these sectors.

Scope of Assignment:

The consulting services (“the Services”) include:

- Review of all reports compiled from the Gender Disaggregated Statistics Survey conducted by the Liberia Institution for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (Technical Field Reports, Field Notes from each team, Consolidated Technical Field Report, Transcribed Field Notes from Data Entry Clerks, Quantitative Data provided from Desk Review)
- After the review of all the reports, organize a report writing workshop with a team of technicians
- In collaboration with the team of technicians, develop the draft Gender Disaggregated Statistic Report for onward circulation to relevant stakeholders for their contributions.
- Consolidate and finalize the GDS report
- Submit draft report to key stakeholders for inputs
- Consolidate inputs from stakeholders into the draft report
- Submit Final Report
- The GRPB Policy seeks to address the gender differential needs of women and men, girls and boys, people living with disabilities and other vulnerable groups of the Liberian society. Hence, the consultant shall use the GRPB Policy, Revised National Gender Policy, National Development Plan (PAPD) and other nationally accepted development frameworks in the execution of his/her duties and responsibilities herein stipulated.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be obtained at the address given below.

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) now invites eligibleindividuals (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

- Must have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in Statistics or Social Sciences from an accredited university. Master’s degree and above is an added advantage.
- Must have proven work experience of at least 5 years in data science, data collection, data management, data analysis, data interpretations, especially qualitative data
- Must have knowledge and proficiency in the use of statistical software, Microsoft Applications, i.e. Work, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.
- Knowledge and expertise in gender mainstreaming practices in government

Duration of Assignment: The assignment is for six (6) weeks

Key Tasks:
The consultant is expected to perform the following key tasks during the execution of the assignment:

Consultations with LISGIS and MFDP GDS focal persons
Develop and submit work plan and draft report Table of Content
Collect Desk Review, FGD & KII reports
Organize reporting writing workshop
Conduct report writing workshop for technical agency leads
Consolidate draft thematic reports
Submit draft GDS report for inputs
Present report to key stakeholders (validation)
Submit final report (MS Word and MS Excel)

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers” July2016, Revised November 2017, August 2018, and November, 2020 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with theApproved Selection Methods for Individual Consultants set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours from900 to 1700 hours

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by 1700 hours on August 5, 2022

Attn: Vee-Musa Fofana, Acting Project Manager
Public Financial Management Reform for Institutional Strengthening Project (PFMRISP)
1st Floor Annex, Project Management Unit
Ministry of Finance andDevelopment Planning (MFDP)
Broad & Mechlin Streets
Monrovia, Liberia
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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Lawmakers amend Alien and Nationality law

By Bridgett Milton

The House of Representatives has passed into law an Act to amend and or nullify certain provisions of the Alien and Nationality Law.

It relates to citizenship and restoring the citizenship rights lost as a consequence of certain provisions subsequent to the enactment of the Alien and Nationality



Law of the 1986 Constitution. According to a report from the Conference Committee setup by the Liberian Senate and the House of Representatives, the Alien and Nationality Law discriminates between a person born of Liberian parents (father and/or mother) on Liberian soil on the one hand, and a person born of Liberian parents (father and/or mother) outside of Liberia on the other hand.

The committee said this is in violation of the equal protection clause of the 1986 Constitution.

It said a person who is a negro, or of negro descent, born in Liberia, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof at birth, shall be qualified to be a citizen of the Republic of Liberia.

It added that a person born outside of the Republic

of Liberia by virtue of such adoption if such person is a Negro or of Negro descent.

A child who is a citizen of Liberia by virtue of the provisions of subparagraph (b) of this section shall lose his citizenship unless he has resided in Liberia before attaining his maturity or unless when he attains his maturity.

It provides that before attaining the age of 23, the child shall go before a Liberian consul and take an oath of allegiance to the Republic of Liberia required of a petitioner for naturalization.

According to the committee, a person of negro descent who marries a Liberian citizen shall become a citizen of Liberia by virtue of such marriage without affecting that person's citizenship before the marriage.

Such a person needs to only appear before a Liberian Consul in any country or before a circuit judge in Liberia and take an oath of allegiance. The committee indicated that a child born outside of Liberia to parents either of whom are naturalized Liberian shall become a citizen of Liberia through naturalization of the father or mother.

The condition set for such a child is that naturalization should take place while such child is under the age of 21 years.

Such person should appear before a Liberian Consul in his/her country of residence upon attaining the age of 21 years, but not later than the age of 25.

The child shall take an oath of allegiance to Liberia or appear before a circuit judge in Liberia and take an oath of

allegiance to Liberia.

"A certificate of citizenship shall be issued by a circuit court to such [a] person after taking the oath of allegiance," the Committee said. --*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

"Government Remains Committed to Fiscal Transparency"

-says Minister Tweah



Finance and Development Planning Minister, Samuel D. Tweah Jr, has said the government of Liberia remains committed to fiscal transparency.He made the disclosure on Tuesday July 19, at the official inaugural meeting of Liberia's Fiscal Transparency Advisory Group.

"The Government remains committed to fiscal transparency by making all of its financial reports and documentations available to the public, for example, these reports are in the print and electronic media outlets, as well as on government's websites", Minister Tweah explained.The erudite Finance Minister revealed that the government will continue to involve civil society organizations into the budget process to increase fiscal transparency and accountability.

"Because citizens' participation is key, it's important for them to know how the government generates and spends public resources " he added.Hon. Tweah said that public participation gives citizens an opportunity to participate in decision making, strengthens oversight and improves policy choices.The aim of the advisory board is to allow citizens to increase their participation in the government process, and to know how the government generates, spends public resources and how they could participate in decision making.For his part, the Open Government Partnership (OGP), Representative, G. Ralph Jimmeh said the establishment of the board is a great achievement and knowledgeable venture in fiscal transparency and open governance.

" No government has succeeded without the

participation of its citizens", said Mr. Jimmeh.

According to him, citizens' participation is a driver to inclusive national development and sustainable ownership. It also gives citizens access to government, improves governance and solves public participation challenges which promotes transparency and accountability thereby making government more efficient.

He added that " We believe that the inauguration of the fiscal transparency advisory board is a very fundamental action towards increasing citizens' participation that produces an open government and stimulates more constructive dialogue between CSO and government.

It is my hope that the establishment of this fiscal transparency board will increase citizens' trust and improve public service. Again, these small steps towards fiscal transparency is commendable and an intentional delivery of actions that will improve governance.

This is a positive collaboration between increasing citizens' participation and the fight against corruption. We called for a more cooperative and collective engagement and we believe that this inauguration board work has begun.

The fiscal transparency advisors group is established to meet routinely to provide the MFDP with feed and recommendations on the selection, design and implementation of participation mechanisms.

The advisors group has the role of providing the MFDP with feedback and recommendation on the selection, design and implementation of the participation mechanism to be adopted in Liberia.

The meeting was attended by Government representatives and civil society representatives.

NEC launches arts exhibition competition

MONROVIA, 19 July 2022, Tuesday-The Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC), Monday officially launched the 2022 Inclusive Mural Art Exhibition Competition focusing mainly on women, youths and persons living with disabilities, at the Commission's Lower Montserrado County Magisterial Office, in Brewerville City.

The NEC mural art competition is under the auspices of the Communications Section of the Commission and seeks to promote the idea of "Inclusive Elections" in Liberia.

The NEC Art competition was launched with funding from the United Nations

Development Program, UNDP, Elections Support Office in Liberia, the governments of Ireland and Sweden, and the U.N Women.

Launching the program,

the Chairperson of NEC, Madam Davidetta Browne Lansanah said the competition seeks to use arts to draw public attention to the importance of inclusive election for women, youths and person living with



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Liberia Celebrates International Chess Day

The Liberia Chess Federation (LCF) joins the rest of the federations around the world in celebrating the International Chess Day today, July 20, 2022, with a public demonstration and teaching session in front of the Invincible Sports Park in Monrovia.

As the International Chess Day is observed around the



world, the LCF will be leading the commemoration of the day by conducting public chess training, hosting radio and television programs and visiting and interacting with stakeholders in Liberia.

According to the President of the LCF, Mr. Thomas Karyah, chess players will spend the day evangelizing and

encouraging young people, especially females, to see chess as a tool that molds their minds and prepares them for the plethora of challenges in life.

He also said that it is important for Liberians to know on this day that chess is a professional sport that offers young people educational and career opportunities that go

federations following a proposal by UNESCO.

This year's celebration of International Chess Day comes on the brink of Liberia's participation in the 44th World Chess Olympiad which is scheduled to be held in Chennai, India from July 28 to August 10.

A delegation of 14 persons is expected to depart the country early next week to represent Liberia at the World Chess Olympiad and the General Assembly of the International Chess Federation (FIDE).

July 20, the day of the International Chess Day will also mark FIDE's 98th anniversary. "Like in previous years, we would like to invite you to celebrate and join us in our campaign, encouraging other members of the chess community to spend this day teaching someone how to play chess," a release issued by the International Chess Federation says. The International Chess Federation (FIDE) was founded during the interwar period on July 20, 1924, in Paris, France.

The Liberia Chess Federation (LCF) is the governing body of chess in Liberia. The LCF was founded in 2014 and became an accredited federation of FIDE that same year. It succeeded and replaced the Liberia Chess Association which, unofficially, spearheaded the growth and development of chess in Liberia for many years. -- *Press release*

CDC negotiated with me -Rep. Yekeh Kolubah

By Lewis S. Teh

Opposition Lawmaker Yekeh Kolubah reveals here that the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change negotiated with him to join the Coalition prior to its recent 17th anniversary celebration. This paper tried



treated by this administration.

He further narrates that during the June 28, 2022, Senatorial By-election in Lofa County, the ruling CDC asked him to cross over especially, to release a press statement, pledging support for now Senator-elect, Cllr. Joseph Jallah, but he turned the request down.

Starts from back page

Liberia 'prepared' to

urged unvaccinated members of the public to get their jabs and continue with every preventive measure against the disease.

Symptoms of the Marburg Virus

Marburg is highly infectious and has an incubation period of two to 21 days. Some symptoms include high fever, severe headache, severe malaise, muscle aches and pain, diarrhea, abdominal pain and cramping, nausea, and vomiting.

Spread by body fluids, such as blood and saliva, as of yet no proven vaccine, cure or treatment exists for Marburg - but doctors say drinking plenty of water and treating specific symptoms improves a patient's chances of survival.

The virus is transmitted to people from fruit bats and spreads between humans through the transmission of bodily fluids, health experts say.

Editing by Jonathan Browne

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"My refusal to join them, and stance on critical national issues in the House, that's why I'm being marginalized", Rep. Kolubah explained when he appeared on OK FM recently for a live interview. However, he says following three weeks of negotiation, he demanded US\$3 million from the CDC on grounds that he was about to kill his entire political career, district, family and followers, who admire the work he does, but they resolved to "give me US\$ 75,000.00 and I refused, that's how the talks ended."

Though he didn't mention names of those from the CDC, who led the negotiation, but the Montserrado County District#10 Lawmaker says his refusal was meant to prove to the government that opposition members are still in the country, and that they can't buy everyone.

Rep. Korlubah warns that if the opposition bloc doesn't stand up especially, the way the country's resources is being abused by the CDC-led government, President Weah will be reelected in 2023.

"We the opposition must stand together and put down our ego, pride, and personal interest to put the interest of the Liberian people as first priority, if we must liberate the people." According to him, he still believes the disintegrated Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) should hold a round table because there is need to come together, and notes that no

single party can defeat the CDC at the polls next year.

"What I'm doing as an opposition lawmaker is to hold the spirit that there's still an opposition, but if I get to the point where the leaders in the opposition can't see reason to hold together and understand themselves, the next option is to live with President Weah", Kolubah says.

At the same time, he notes that opposition lawmakers in the House of Representatives have turned "regime collaborators" and lost their origins.

"Look, we don't have any opposition lawmakers in the Legislature especially, the Lower House; we have regime collaborators", he says.

He blames few of his colleagues who are not members of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change for conniving with the current administration to betray the trust of the people, who elected them.

"If you are a real opposition lawmaker, you won't complain about passing budget like 4G; you should have stood up and made your position known", he concludes.

Rep. Kolubah is a stern critic of President Weah, sometimes ranting invectives on the President, something for which, he was suspended in 2021 by the leadership of the House for 16 meeting days (2months) without salary, allowances, and benefits.

Editing by Jonathan Browne

Français

La Chine dit avoir investi 181 millions de dollars au Libéria

L'ambassadeur de Chine au Libéria, S.E.M. Ren Yishen, a affirmé que les investissements directs de la Chine dans des domaines divers au Libéria ont atteint 181 millions de dollars au premier semestre en 2021.

Dans un communiqué publié lundi 18 juillet 2022, l'Ambassadeur Ren a fait observer que la coopération sino-libérienne est un élément important de la coopération sino-africaine.

Selon lui, la Chine a tissé une coopération pragmatique avec le Libéria en suivant la bonne approche pour le plus grand bien et des intérêts partagés. « La Chine a adhéré aux principes de sincérité, de résultats réels, d'affinité et de bonne foi, et a obtenu une série de résultats tangibles », a-t-il dit.

La déclaration de M. Ren a pour thème : l'avantage mutuel et le développement commun sont la principale caractéristique des coopérations Chine-Afrique et Chine-Libéria. Le diplomate chinois a expliqué qu'à l'heure actuelle, la partie chinoise est en train de

mettre en œuvre de manière ordonnée des projets de développement sous forme d'aides au développement pour le Libéria.

Il a cité plusieurs projets dont deux ponts de la capitale dont les travaux de construction n'ont pas encore commencé, le laboratoire de diagnostic clinique et de traitement de l'hôpital militaire 14, l'expansion et la mise à niveau du LBS et les projets de routes Somalia Drive - Sinkor.

Il a précisé que le gouvernement chinois et les

entreprises financées par la Chine ont contracté la plupart des grands projets d'infrastructure au Libéria, et qu'environ 10 routes principales et autres projets ont été achevés ou commencés ces dernières années.

Il a fait savoir que depuis le début de l'épidémie de COVID-19, la Chine a fourni successivement six lots d'assistance matérielle anti-épidémique au Libéria.

A en croire le diplomate

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Le Togo accepte d'aider le Mali à régler son différend avec Abidjan

Le Togo accepte d'aider le Mali à régler son différend avec Abidjan autour des 49 militaires ivoiriens détenus à Bamako. Ces soldats arrêtés le 10 juillet à l'aéroport de la capitale malienne sont accusés par les autorités de la transition d'être des « mercenaires ». La Côte d'Ivoire demande leur libération « sans délai » et

affirme que leur présence dans le cadre d'opérations de soutien à la Minusma était « bien connue des autorités maliennes ».

Le ministre togolais des Affaires étrangères, Robert Dussey, était ce lundi 18 juillet à Bamako. Il a été reçu par le président de la transition malienne. Selon le communiqué conjoint publié après la rencontre, le colonel Assimi Goïta « s'est réjoui de

l'accompagnement fraternel et sans relâche du Togo » et « a salué l'engagement personnel » du président Faure Gnassingbé « pour la réussite de la transition et le retour à l'ordre constitutionnel au Mali. »

Le président de la transition malienne s'est dit « ouvert au dialogue et disposé à œuvrer à un dénouement heureux de cette situation ».

L'affaire de ces soldats ivoiriens arrêtés au Mali crée des tensions entre Bamako et Abidjan qui estime que ses militaires ont été interpellés « injustement ».

Depuis, Bamako a aussi suspendu les rotations militaires de la Minusma, la mission de l'ONU au Mali, qui auraient dû reprendre après la levée des sanctions de la Cédéao le 3 juillet. Dans cette affaire, le colonel Assimi Goïta souhaite donc voir Lomé mener une mission de « bons offices entre les parties concernées ».

Vers un rôle de médiateur régional?

Le ministre togolais Robert



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Éditorial

Que la direction de la LPRC s'explique

La direction de la Liberia Petroleum Refining Company ne dit presque rien sur la disparition présumée de 1,5 million de gallons de produits pétroliers d'une valeur de 6 millions de dollars américains de ses réservoirs de stockage. L'un des principaux importateurs de pétrole dans le pays, Petrol Trade, a récemment sonné l'alarme après avoir observé de manière choquante que son stock qui est à la LPRC a considérablement diminué sans savoir comment cela s'est produit.

La seule explication que la direction de la LPRC a donnée jusque-là est que la société Aminata possède 400 000 gallons de produits pétroliers et la société NEXIUM 300 000 gallons, selon la société Petrol Trade.

Mais comment ont-ils acquis des produits qui ne leur appartiennent pas en premier lieu. La LPRC leur a-t-elle donné ces produits ? Existe-t-il une politique établie à la LPRC qui permet à un importateur de prendre le produit d'un autre importateur sans son consentement et son approbation ?

Nous pensons que si c'était le cas, la direction de Petrol Trade n'aurait pas alarmé le public. En fait, le public a appris l'incident après que Petrol Trade a intenté une action en justice.

Petrol Trade, par l'intermédiaire du cabinet d'avocats Heritage, a récemment écrit à la direction de la LPRC pour lui demander où se trouvent ses 1,5 million de gallons de carburant qui lui avaient été confiés et mis dans ses réservoirs de stockage.

Outre les explications antérieures fournies par la direction de la LPRC, citées par Petrol Trade, le gouvernement du Libéria n'a pas encore donné de clarté ou d'explication sur la situation qui a tendance à éroder la confiance du public et à donner une image très négative du gouvernement et du pays.

La direction de la LPRC a adopté une posture consistant à dire très peu sur une situation qui est une première de son genre dans l'histoire du Libéria.

Y a-t-il des jeux qui se jouent ici ? Les bonnes pratiques commerciales exigent la transparence et la responsabilité, deux valeurs importantes qui sont nécessaires pour rester en affaires.

Mais il semble que l'administration Weah se soucie moins de l'image et de la crédibilité. Tout ce que nous voyons quotidiennement, c'est que le rythme continue, allant de la corruption généralisée à la mauvaise gestion, en passant par les assassinats arbitraires par les forces de sécurité en toute impunité.

Nous appelons la direction de la LPRC de fournir toute la clarté sur les 1,5 million de gallons de pétrole qui sont portés disparus sous sa surveillance afin de racheter son image, en tant qu'entité publique crédible du Libéria. Travailler dans l'ombre pourrait causer des dommages irréparables et négatifs pour ce gouvernement et provoquer un embarras pour le pays dans le futur.

Français

La Chine dit avoir investi 181

chinois, la Chine a mis à disposition 1 million de dollars sous forme d'assistance sanitaire et nutritionnelle au Libéria.

« Au cours des trois dernières années », a-t-il déclaré, « la Chine a eu également à fournir au Libéria chaque année environ 2 500 tonnes de produits alimentaires dans le cadre de son programme d'aide alimentaire ».

Toujours selon M. Ren, la Chine, son pays, a envoyé 14 groupes d'équipes médicales pour aider le Libéria. Et rien qu'en 2021, 5 845 patients ont été diagnostiqués et traités. La Chine a aussi offert au Libéria environ 50 bourses complètes, plus de 150 opportunités de formation à court terme et des opportunités de bourses universitaires.

En outre plus de cela des centaines de "bourses d'ambassadeurs chinois" sont chaque année accordées pour aider à cultiver les talents libériens.

« La mis en œuvre du nouvel accord de coopération économique et technique Chine-Libéria signé en 2021 est en cours », a-t-il expliqué.

« Et l'aide financière chinoise représente une augmentation de 50 % par rapport à la phase précédente. Un certain nombre de projets d'assistance matérielle, notamment des équipements de police, des véhicules et des équipements de laboratoire de comparaison d'empreintes digitales, progressent de manière

ordonnée », a-t-il noté.

L'Ambassadeur chinois a aussi fait savoir que la Chine a l'intention d'annuler les droits de douane sur 98 % des marchandises importées du Libéria. « Les deux parties cherchent également à élargir la coopération dans des domaines tels que la modernisation agricole, le développement de l'industrialisation, l'économie verte, les télécommunications, l'électricité et les routes », a-t-il affirmé.

Il faut dire que la Chine est devenue l'un des principaux partenaires au développement du Libéria d'après guerre.

AM. Ren de rappeler que dans la pratique, la coopération sino-africaine respecte les avantages mutuels et les résultats gagnant-gagnant, ce qui améliore effectivement les conditions de développement économique et social de l'Afrique. Cela a apporté des avantages tangibles aux peuples africain et libérien.

« En entrant dans la nouvelle ère, la Chine continuera à marcher main dans la main avec le peuple africain, à suivre fermement la voie du bénéfice mutuel et du développement commun », a-t-il déclaré.

Il a fait état d'un engagement de la Chine dans une coopération pragmatique approfondie dans divers domaines. « La Chine mettra vigoureusement en œuvre les "neuf programmes" du FOCAC en intégrant étroitement la BRI, l'Initiative de développement mondial (GDI) et l'Initiative de sécurité mondiale (GSI) à l'Agenda 2063 de l'UA et au PAPD sur la base de l'égalité et du respect mutuel », il a dit.

Baba Dakono, secrétaire exécutif de l'Observatoire citoyen sur la gouvernance et la sécurité. « Du côté togolais, il y a cette volonté de jouer un rôle plus important de médiation au niveau régional. Cela conforte les autorités togolaises dans leur ambition de jouer un rôle diplomatique. Côté malien, cela permettrait de décriper un peu cette situation, de faire baisser la tension auprès de la Côte d'Ivoire sans perdre la face auprès de l'opinion nationale. »

Le Togo accepte d'aider le Mali à

Dussey a réaffirmé la disponibilité de son président, Faure Gnassingbé, à « poursuivre son appui à la Transition malienne ». Des relations se tissent entre Lomé et les militaires au pouvoir au Mali depuis août 2020. Le président togolais était déjà le médiateur désigné auprès de la Cédéao pour la levée des sanctions durant le premier semestre 2022.

« Une convergence d'intérêts », selon l'analyste

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COMMENTAIRE

Par Anuja Malhotra et Abi Vanak

La restauration des écosystèmes, c'est bon pour la santé !

NEW DELHI - L'humanité fait face aujourd'hui à de multiples crises existentielles interconnectées. Les conséquences catastrophiques du changement climatique, de la dégradation écologique et de la perte de biodiversité ont des répercussions en cascade sur la santé et le bien-être humain. Comme l'illustre la pandémie de COVID-19, les dégâts causés aux écosystèmes peuvent contribuer de manière significative à une urgence mondiale de santé publique. Mais les scientifiques s'aperçoivent également de plus en plus que la restauration écologique, en inversant les menaces qui pèsent sur le sol, la biodiversité, l'eau et d'autres services écosystémiques, peut apporter des avantages majeurs en matière de santé.

On a tenté à maintes reprises de comprendre le lien entre la dégradation écologique et la santé humaine. Une étude récente menée sur plus de 6 800 écosystèmes et sur six continents a fourni des preuves supplémentaires que la déforestation et l'extinction des espèces vont faire augmenter le risque de futures pandémies. Les dégâts causés sur les écosystèmes conduisent également à la contamination de l'eau, créant ainsi des zones de reproduction pour les maladies infectieuses. De même, la dégradation des sols réduit non seulement la productivité agricole, mais est également liée à la maladie et à l'augmentation de la mortalité.

L'émergence et la propagation de zoonoses comme la COVID-19 sont étroitement associées à la santé des écosystèmes. Par exemple, 75 % des maladies infectieuses émergentes sont des zoonoses, causées par une utilisation non durable des ressources naturelles, l'élevage d'animaux en usine et d'autres facteurs anthropiques à l'échelle industrielle.

Le déclin des écosystèmes a également contribué au cours des dernières décennies à réduire la résilience immunologique et à augmenter les maladies allergiques chez les humains. Les effets ne se limitent pas à la santé physique, mais comprennent également des problèmes de santé mentale comme une augmentation de l'éco-anxiété, ou la crainte de dégâts environnementaux dus à la dégradation continue des écosystèmes.

À l'inverse, la restauration des écosystèmes naturels pourrait permettre d'inverser certains effets du changement climatique et de soulager le fardeau mondial des maladies chroniques, en améliorant ainsi la santé et le bien-être humains. Une étude récente a montré que la restauration des sols et la réintroduction d'espèces végétales indigènes ont entraîné une réduction des impacts physiques et psychologiques de certaines maladies. Dans un autre cas, la restauration écologique d'une rivière urbaine dans le nord-ouest de l'Angleterre était liée à des avantages psychologiques pour les communautés environnantes.

Il existe également des preuves que la restauration écologique peut protéger les gens contre les événements climatiques extrêmes et les crises de santé publique qui en découlent. Enfin, il a été démontré que l'utilisation de combustibles de cuisson alternatifs comme le biogaz dans des cuisinières de meilleure qualité, en réduisant ainsi le besoin de bois comme combustible, qui aident à prévenir la dégradation des forêts, améliore la santé respiratoire et les régimes alimentaires domestiques.

Les arguments économiques en faveur de la restauration écologique sont convaincants. La

hausse des coûts de santé publique et l'importante charge de morbidité - aggravée par la pandémie - noircissent encore le tableau. L'Organisation mondiale de la santé estime que les dépenses mondiales de santé ont augmenté de façon continue entre 2000 et 2018, à 8,3 mille milliards de dollars, soit 10 % du PIB mondial.

Des efforts internationaux importants pour récolter les bénéfices de la restauration écologique sur la santé planétaire et humaine sont déjà en cours. La Décennie des Nations Unies pour la restauration des écosystèmes, qui doit avoir lieu de 2021 à 2030 et le programme de neutralité en matière de dégradation des terres de la Convention des Nations Unies sur la lutte contre la désertification encouragent les pays signataires à reconnaître l'importance capitale de la restauration écologique. De même, l'initiative #HealthyRecovery, signée par plus de 4 500 professionnels de santé de 90 pays, a exhorté les dirigeants du G20 à financer des projets qui permettent la restauration écologique dans le cadre de leurs plans de relance en cas de pandémie.

Au cours des dernières décennies, les chercheurs ont développé divers modèles - dont le Mandala de la santé, la Roue des besoins humains fondamentaux, et plus récemment, l'approche One Health - pour saisir la relation interconnectée entre l'homme et la nature. Le défi consiste à présent à développer un cadre unificateur pour maximiser la synergie entre la restauration écologique et la santé humaine. Les politiques conçues pour traiter l'une ne doivent pas exclure l'autre.

Nous devons donc redéfinir la dégradation écologique, comprendre ses effets de grande envergure sur la santé humaine et reconnaître que ces effets ne peuvent être pleinement traités sans des plans de restauration écologique structurés et spécifiques au contexte. Pour y parvenir, il faudra institutionnaliser et intégrer la collaboration intersectorielle entre les scientifiques et les praticiens des domaines écologique, médical et du développement durable.

Des alliances et un sentiment d'appartenance seront essentiels entre les structures de gouvernance de base de la santé publique et de la restauration des écosystèmes. En Inde, par exemple, un effort pionnier visant à intégrer des initiatives interdisciplinaires réunit le gouvernement, les scientifiques, les partenaires locaux et les praticiens dans le but d'améliorer la lutte contre les zoonoses. Un cadre de ce genre peut générer des connaissances et des idées précieuses pour des initiatives de collaboration similaires dans d'autres endroits du monde.

La restauration écologique est un moyen clair et identifiable de s'attaquer au fardeau mondial des maladies et d'améliorer la santé publique. Alors que commence la Décennie pour la restauration des écosystèmes des Nations Unies, les décideurs politiques doivent encourager une action collective visant à promouvoir des activités inclusives et interdisciplinaires qui démontrent les avantages mondiaux positifs de la restauration pour la santé sociale, physique et mentale. Nous nous devons à nous-mêmes ainsi qu'à la planète d'atténuer au moins certaines des menaces que nous avons créées.

Anuja Malhotra, analyste de politiques au Centre for Policy Design, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment (ATREE). Abi Vanak, professeur honoraire à l'Université du KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, membre senior du Centre pour la biodiversité et la conservation, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment (ATREE)

ARTICLEARTICLE

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 US\$64.3 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 US\$44.6 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 US\$7.3 million (0.9% of the total expenditure) includes the Ministry of Agriculture (US\$4.6 million), Central Agricultural Research Institute (US\$1.6 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.

SUP to protest July 26 celebration

By Naneka A. Hoffman

The University of Liberia's campus-based Student Unification Party (SUP) says it will protest the pending July 26 Independence Day celebration by the government, in the face of extreme hardship, despicable suffering and sordid social decadence in the country.

SUP discloses plan to stage a "fix the country"

sicknesses and hospitals are shut down due to poor support, independence celebration is useless Liberia that declared independence on July 26, 1847, under the watch of free slaves from America, turns 175 next Tuesday, July 26. Already, the Government of Liberia is gearing up for an official celebration.

But the student party says the last five years of the

daily meal and parents cannot afford to keep their children in school because either they lack job opportunities, or they are paid chicken change.

He laments that Liberia is in a hemorrhaging tornado of crisis, adding "There is a general degeneration and sporadic breakdown of the Liberian state." According to him, governance of the State is now taken for wild child's-play, as President Weah and his

economic survival."

SUP observes that today in Liberia, more children are selling in the streets than they were before 2018, and that many more kids are missing basic primary and secondary education due to high cost of living, while government endlessly harmonizes civil servants' salaries. "Dependency is growing. Poverty is multiplying and hunger has reached an unprecedented height. [President] George Weah has consigned a once thriving republic to the pit of acrimonious destitution- a trilogy of everything bad."

SUP points to misappropriation of over US\$ 24.8 million from the National Road

Fund by Finance Minister Samuel Tweah, looting of National Census Fund by LISGIS officials as indicted by the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission June 2022 report, criminal maneuvering at the Ministry of Agriculture under the watch of Minister Jennie Cooper, as indicted by the LACC June 2022 report, and the mysterious death of Princess Cooper, Emmanuel Cooper, including three (3) missing boys involved in the St. Moses saga, as well as secret killings of more than three (3) auditors and all other victims without proper investigation by the police and justice by the state, as some vices of the government that has brought its governance of the State under question. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Members of the Student Unification Party

campaign on July 26, 2022, that would lead to Nation-wide protest against the government for economic failure, massive corruption, and bad governance, among others.

In a statement here Monday, July 18, 2022, SUP Chairman Mustapha N. Kanneh noted that

in a country where people are dying of curable

Weah administration have been very turbulent and tumultuous for the Liberian people, as discontent, hopelessness and frustration have overwhelmed them due to poor leadership.

Chairman Kanneth continues that independence celebration is meaningless in a society where the average citizen finds it difficult to afford

cohorts distribute the national resources amongst themselves, while the countryside bleeds, with citizens sleeping in darkness under odious circumstances, struggling to survive and to see the next day.

"Under these difficult circumstances", he notes; "some young people have either dropped out of school or abandoned school to toil for

Dual Citizenship Bill finally passed by both houses

Monrovia - Lawmakers on Capitol Hill on Tuesday July 19, finally passed the dual citizenship bill ending more than four decades of debates.

The Dual Citizenship Bill had been pushed by All-Liberian Conference on Dual Citizenship (ALCOD) through tireless advocacies, negotiations and maneuverings by Liberians living in the diaspora lobbying for their legislators to enact a bill recognizing dual citizenship.

"It has not been an easy and smooth journey over the years; but finally Dual Citizenship is law of the land," All-Liberian Conference on Dual Citizenship (ALCOD) Eminent Chairman Emmanuel S. Wetsee told this newspaper from his base in the USA State of Ohio.

Eminent Wetsee, who has been one of the main faces of advocates over the years, reiterated the famous saying: "Once a Liberian,

always a Liberian."

He expressed thanks and appreciation to President George Weah, the leaderships of the House and Senate for working together to repeal the 1973 Aliens and Nationality Law. Now Liberia supports dual citizenship and "Once a Liberian, always a Liberian" is the law of the land."

During the voting process

in the Senate Tuesday, 23 senators voted to pass the bill; two abstained, while five senators were absent. The House of Representatives also voted too, on Tuesday, to pass the bill.

The journey to get to the voting process on Tuesday began many years ago in mid 1950s.

Title 3 of the Liberian Code of Laws of 1956, known as the Aliens and Nationality Law,



The Capitol Building where Liberian lawmakers sit

Starts from page 6 NEC launches arts

disabilities in all of the electoral processes.

Madam Browne Lansanah wants parents and the communities to also create avenues for their children to be trained in artistic works, that brings out and sharpens the talents and skills of young

people for future development in the country. she wants parents and the communities to put more emphasis on artistic works.

The NEC Mural art competition on inclusive elections was also launched simultaneously across Liberia.

was amended / repealed through the Fourth Regular Session of the Forty-Fifth Legislature, enacted in lieu thereof as the new Aliens and Nationality Law, to be Title 4 of the Liberian Code of Laws Revised. This was approved on May 15, 1973, and amendments approved on May 9, 1974. It was this amendment that sessions 22.1 and 22.2 prohibit dual citizenship in Liberia.

According to Eminent Wetsee, the advocacy to repeal the 1973 Aliens and Nationality Law started in 2007 by Liberian Citizens Committee for National Consciousness and Progress under the leadership of the late Senator J. Hodo Manston. Senator Manston and his team passed the baton on to Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA). The leadership of ULAA was focused on immigration advocacy (TPS and DED) for Liberians in the US.

In December 2012, the Embassy of Liberia in Washington D.C. and The ULAA sponsored a diaspora conference to discuss the issue of dual citizenship. The diaspora conference birthed ALCOD and Eminent Wetsee was elected Chairman.

And after over 40 years, the House voted to amend the Alien and Nationality Law on Thursday, November 11, 2021. While the Senate voted on Thursday, May 20, 2022, to concur with the House of Representatives. However, the Senate's version of the bill differs significantly from that of what the House had passed and sent to it for concurrence.

The Act that the House had voted for, was co-sponsored by

30 lawmakers from the House of Representatives. It had been submitted and chiefly sponsored by Rep. Acarous Gray. It was read in the Plenary of the House on November 2, 2021. It sought to amend Part III, Chapter 20, Section 20.1; Chapter 21, Sections 21.30, 21.31, 21.51 & 21.52 and Chapter 22, Sections 22.1, 22.1 & 22.4 of the Aliens and Nationality Law of the Liberian Code of Law Revised, Vol. II.

The House passed its version of the bill without any "limitations" for Liberians of natural birth, but with citizenship of another country.

However, the Senate's version didn't follow suit with the House as it passed its version with several "limitations" for Liberians in that category.

It was for this reason that the leaderships of the Senate and the House had to set up a Joint Conference Committee to work to fine tune the bill so that it can be harmonized, and their differences reconciled.

Eminent Wetsee thanked President George Weah, who through the Office of his Legal Advisor, Cllr. Archibald F. Bernard, for working along with legislators to pass the Dual Citizenship Bill into law.

Eminent Wetsee praised Cllr. Bernard for his tireless efforts in working with members of the Senate-House of Representatives Joint Committee on Dual Citizenship until the bill was passed into law.

It can be recalled that during President Weah's first State of Nation's Address, he promised to make dual citizenship is priority.

Liberia 'prepared' to handle Marburg threats

-Health Minister assures



killed more than 200 people in Angola in 2005, the deadliest outbreak on record, the WHO says.

With West African neighbor Ghana, being the latest suffering from the disease that is similar to Ebola Virus, there are fears that the virus may spread unchecked, if it were to hit Liberia. But Liberia's Health Minister, Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah, in an exclusive interview in Monrovia said, considering the 2014 experience in the fight against Ebola, the Country's surveillance system is equipped to detect any eventual disease outbreak.

Dr. Jallah says Liberians shouldn't fear or panic about the Marburg Virus situation in Ghana, as the country's health system is well positioned to defend against any potential outbreak. She also disclosed that about three (3) million Liberians have been vaccinated so far against the Coronavirus Pandemic, and that number of new cases is low, but

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

By: Emmanuel wise Jipoh

Liberia is prepared to deal with any cases of Marburg, the highly infectious virus, Health Minister Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah has assured.

Ghana, the latest African country to report Marburg virus, has recorded two deaths from the virus with nearly one hundred others currently in quarantine.

The first ever Marburg outbreak was in Germany in 1967 where seven people died. Apart from the latest outbreak in Ghana this week, beyond West Africa, previous outbreaks and sporadic cases have been reported in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, according to the World Health Organisation. The virus

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