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Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL.

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# Continental News

## Al-Shabab's Grip on Somalia Loosening

**M**INNEAPOLIS — In Somalia, al-Qaida-affiliated militant group al-Shabab has been on a gradual retreat for months, and this could be the beginning of their end, experts told VOA.

In a televised speech in August 2022, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

significant ground from the militants.

Al-Shabab ceded territories and major towns in the central Somali regions of Hiran, Middle Shabelle, Galmudug and South-West State. Government officials say they have killed more than 2,000 al-Shabab fighters, a number VOA could not

service, Ismail Dahir Osman, former deputy commander of Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency, said al-Shabab has been on the retreat since the government started supporting local clan militias fighting with them.

"Since the government offensive began with the support of local citizens, who are fed up with the group's oppressions, al-Shabab has been losing territories and former strongholds in central regions. Thanks to Somali government military operations backed by local clan militias and foreign partners, including the United States," he said.

Colonel Abdullahi Ali Maow, a former Somali intelligence official told VOA that he agrees the militants are on a downward spiral.

"It is obvious that al-Shabab has been losing ground and were squeezed out of major towns and villages they have been controlling for more than 10 years, including Harardhere, a coastal town and former pirate hub captured by Somali government forces on January 16," he said. "I think it is the beginning of their end."

Even if the group's retreat continues, it is not the first time the status of a jihadi group in Somalia was damaged by multiple defeats. VOA



Armed al-Shabab fighters ride on pickup trucks as they prepare to travel into the city

announced a "total war" against the group, days after it staged a deadly hotel siege in Mogadishu, killing at least 21 people and wounding more than 100 others.

The president's announcement came as local clans in central Somalia were revolting against the presence and the oppression of al-Shabab in their territories.

Since July, Somali government military operations in parts of the country have gained

independently verify.

As the government campaign enters its eighth month in February, the Somali government is preparing to open new battlefronts in southern parts of the country Somalia's defense minister said Friday.

A week ago, government forces in Jubaland State took a step forward by capturing Janay Abdalle, a strategic village, from al-Shabab. Jubaland borders Kenya and is one of five Federal-member states in Somalia.

Speaking to VOA's Somali

## Nigeria extends deadline to exchange old cash

**N**igeria's central bank has extended the deadline to exchange old banknotes for redesigned ones.

There have been long queues at some banks as Nigerians have struggled to meet the original deadline of Tuesday.

People now have until 10 February to do the swap.

The redesign of the higher denomination naira notes has been heavily criticised with analysts saying six weeks was not enough time for Africa's most-populous country to phase out the old currency.

It is happening a few weeks before the country goes to the polls in presidential and parliamentary elections.

Local media has been reporting that there are not enough of the new notes in circulation, with people unable to withdraw them from banks.

The move by the the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is seen as a push to encourage Nigerians

to embrace digital payments in a society where cash is king.

It hopes the exchange will bring some of the cash currently being hoarded by individuals and companies back into the banking system.

When the bank announced in October that the 1,000 (\$2.18, £1.75), 500 and 200 naira notes were to be replaced, it said 80% of the notes in circulation were outside banks.

The CBN believes that with the redesigned currency it will have a

better understanding of the money circulating in the economy so it can better manage inflation.

The bank governor said the new deadline of 10 February would allow more people in rural areas, where there are very few bank branches, to exchange the old notes.

He added that Nigerians would then have a further seven days to deposit old notes directly with the CBN. BBC



Nigerians are complaining that it is extremely difficult to get hold of the new naira notes

## Burkina Rally Celebrate Word That French Troops Will Leave

**O**UAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO — Thousands of demonstrators rallied in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou, on Saturday in support of the ruling junta, days after France confirmed its special forces there would withdraw, according to an AFP journalist at the rally.

Packing Nation Square in central Ouagadougou, protesters held signs bearing slogans including "Down with imperialism," "Down with French policy in Africa" and "Forward for Burkina's sovereignty."

"We do not want any more foreign military bases on our soil," Lazare Yameogo, spokesperson for the Inter-African Revolutionary

jihadists," said Alassane Kouanda, head of an association backing the planned transition to civilian rule.

Some observers say the Burkinabe government's request for France to withdraw its troops is reminiscent of the ideals of former president, left-wing anti-colonial hero Thomas Sankara.

A coalition of organizations supporting Sankara's ideas welcomed "the complete liberation of our country from the yokes of FrancAfrique, imperialism and deadly capitalism," using a term to describe French influence in its former African colonies.

Mahamadou Sawadogo, leader of the Burkina-Russia association, said during Saturday's protest that there were "other opportunities for cooperation" in the fight against jihadis, notably from Moscow.

Some protesters on Saturday



A protester holds a sign that reads, "No to France the thief of Africa"

Movement told the crowd. "We want respect and a win-win cooperation.

"We will remain on the lookout until Burkina Faso is liberated from Western imperialism," he added.

Former colonial power France has special forces based in Ouagadougou, but its presence has come under intense scrutiny as anti-French sentiment in the region grows.

Paris confirmed this week that the troops, deployed to help fight a years-long jihadi insurgency, would leave within a month.

Anger within the military at the government's failure to stem the insurgency, which has raged since 2015, fueled two coups in Burkina Faso last year.

Violence by insurgents linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group has killed thousands of people and forced around 2 million more to flee their homes.

Junta leader Captain Ibrahim Traore was acting for the West African state's sovereignty and "an army powerful enough to fight

held Russian flags and giant posters of the leaders of Mali and Guinea, West African neighbors that, like Burkina Faso, are ruled by military juntas following coups.

Monique Yeli Kam, a former presidential candidate and a major figure in the anti-France movement, told AFP Burkina Faso's turn toward Moscow and the Russian paramilitary group Wagner was "also a form of sovereignty."

"The old powers tend to treat us like children by saying we don't know how to choose," but Burkina is now independent and able to act freely "according to our interests," she said.

Turning away from France in favor of Russia in the anti-jihadi fight has not convinced all Burkinabe citizens.

"We demanded the French soldiers' departure. Now that it's done, we must not let in other imperialists," said Ibrahim Sanou, a 28-year-old shop worker. "It's up to us to take full responsibility because the fight for true independence in Burkina Faso begins now."

Civil servant Desire Sanou added: "We must be ready to hold out to free the country from these hordes of terrorists. We don't even need Wagner or other forces." VOA



# EDITORIAL

## Senator Bartekwa's belated cry

**GRAND KRU COUNTY** Senator Numene T. Bartekwa's cry against hospitals and other health facilities across the country for refusing or turning away patients reportedly for lack of beds without doing anything to stabilize them, is belated.

**IN A COMMUNICATION** to Senate Plenary on Tuesday, 24th January he asked the Liberian Senate to consider amending the National Health Law of Liberia that would require hospitals and health facilities not to reject emergency cases from 6PM to 7AM daily.

**ACCORDING TO HIM**, if patients hear health authorities saying 'no bed', it further breaks them down and exacerbate their situation.

While the concern raised by the Grand Kru county Senator is germane, we think it is belated and a mere publicity stunt, because this is a practice that has existed for so long in our health sector. Be that as it may, the power to act in remedying this situation squarely lies with the senate.

**WE ARE HOWEVER** glad that he has written Plenary of the Senate, asking his colleagues of intervention in a matter that has caused the untimely deaths of so many of our compatriots.

**POOR SERVICES OR** the lack of services in our health sector has affected our people in so many ways and this should stop.

**THE ONUS IS** with lawmakers on Capitol Hill who presides over the national budget and make appropriations to increase allotments for the health sector and make sure areas that are lagging get attention.

**TOO OFTEN, WE** hear hospitals and other health facilities refusing helpless patients brought to the care for so-called lack of beds or space. Family members, already stressed up, are constrained to move from hospitals to hospitals with sick relatives, especially during night hours in search of service.

**THE QUALIFICATION OF** a health institution is not the physical structure or building but the quality of staff and services provided to the public with the primary objective of preserving lives. Sadly, in our country, this is not the case, as bureaucratic bottlenecks seem to take over the key function of saving lives.

**DISAPPOINTINGLY IN LIBERIA**, hospitals lack adequate beds, gloves, PPEs, electricity, generator and fuel, needless to talk of C.T. Scan and dialysis machines to serve patients, which lead to their early death.

**WE WONDER WHEN** did Senator Bartekwa, who has served in the legislature twice, recognize poor services in our hospitals? Is it because a family member or a close friend of his has been a victim that has prompted his letter to Plenary?

**THE GRAND KRU** Senator should be told in no uncertain term that as public servants, the welfare of the people should always be prioritized, particularly a critical issue like health irrespective of our diversity, not only when we are directly affected, for the senator's cry is belated.

# COMMENTARY

By Carlos Lopes

## Helping Middle-Income Energy Exporters Kick the Fossil-Fuel Habit

**CAPE TOWN** - The ongoing volatility in oil and gas markets has come as a shock to many people across the developed world. But its impact on developing countries that rely on producing fossil fuels has been far worse.

Over time, as the world increasingly shifts to cheaper and cleaner energy sources, fossil fuels will likely become less profitable, forcing energy-exporting countries to find other sources of income. What would that mean for "middle-income" developing countries which together account for 48% and 52% of global oil and gas output, respectively?

While oil and gas have propped up the economies of countries like Nigeria, Mexico, Ghana, and Argentina over the years, dependence on them has led to a host of problems, from environmental pollution that harms public health to overreliance on fossil-fuel exports at the expense of the development of other sectors.

But breaking free from the addiction to fossil fuels will not be easy. Middle-income energy exporters are poorer than their developed-country counterparts and therefore have fewer resources with which to support workers and communities through the clean-energy transition. Nearly half the world's fossil-fuel workers live in Africa, Asia, or South America, and they would need to find new jobs - and the training to fill them. In addition, these countries' oil and gas industries employ many more people indirectly, including contract workers who do not have the same protections as permanent and unionized workers.

But worker displacement is only one of the risks for which middle-income countries must plan if they are to kick their fossil-fuel habit. Given that the oil and gas industries are a major primary source of their tax revenue, many cash-strapped governments would be unable to fund essential services, such as health care and education, if those proceeds suddenly disappeared.

Price volatility has already devastated economies that grew too dependent on fossil fuels. Following the 2020 crash in oil prices, for example, Nigeria proposed cutting education spending by up to 55%. And in response to the 2014 oil-price crash, Mexico pared public spending by close to 0.7% of GDP. Although high prices may lead to economic booms, they inevitably fall - and often drag down the economy with them. Ultimately, relying on finite resources is no way to fund a twenty-first-century economy.

Developing and implementing the right strategies to shift away from fossil fuels will not happen overnight. But policymakers in middle-income energy-

exporting countries can already take three immediate steps to ensure that the clean-energy transition does not harm their workers, communities, and economies - and that it lays the groundwork for a more prosperous future.

First, governments must engage in long-term planning, particularly when it comes to the economies of regions that would most likely be affected by the green transition. To that end, policymakers should consult various stakeholders, develop inclusive plans to help displaced workers and affected communities, and strengthen social safety nets. Closing data gaps regarding demographics, wages, and skills will be essential to assisting oil and gas workers, especially female workers.

Second, given that oil and gas revenues will most likely decline over the long term, middle-income exporters must double down on economic diversification. This would involve studying and developing other promising sectors, such as agricultural processing, manufactured goods, and business services.

By developing domestic clean-energy sectors, policymakers could complement their diversification strategies. Given the changing geopolitical landscape and growing demand for energy, renewables could stabilize prices, revenues, and employment. To support these efforts, governments should harness the power of civil society and the private sector, including oil companies.

Lastly, governments must provide the funding necessary to complete the clean-energy transition. In the near term, they could use income from fossil-fuel production to diversify their economies and invest in green projects. They could also reallocate funds currently used for subsidy programs and require the oil and gas industries, especially multinationals, to help cover the costs of environmental remediation and support programs for affected workers and communities.

But while middle-income countries could fund some of these measures by mobilizing internal resources, developed countries and international financial institutions must also offer the financing and technical assistance that these countries need to pursue their diversification strategies.

Shifting away from fossil fuels is not only necessary to avert a climate catastrophe, but also represents an opportunity to build a healthier and more equitable future for all. But developed countries must not expect middle-income fossil-fuel exporters to give up their main revenue source without international assistance. Ensuring that the net-zero transition does not leave anyone behind is a moral imperative. It is also smart climate policy.



# ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

## Exploring PYJ's new anti-Weah posture

Nimba County's current longest-serving Senator Prince Yomie Johnson affectionately called PYJ has gained his voice of late as a bitter man.

The Senator has been hoofing and puffing lately- spewing venoms at President George Weah and his Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) Government, signing off his messages with threats to dump him (President Weah) ahead of the 2023 general and Presidential elections.

PYJ has gone beyond just threats and has become personal as demonstrated in his message to supporters last week in Nimba: "No matter the amount of monies you paid to bring crowd, I tell you this, if you f\*\*k with me, I will dump you!"

Now, the crowd referred to in this passage by PYJ has to do with a planned program organized by Cdcians in Nimba for the re-election of President Weah in 2023. It is claimed that US\$25K was doled out to the local chapter to organize the program ahead of the President's visit.

There were reports of crowd being transported from nearby Bong County to add to the momentum.

However, as it turned out President Weah was not in attendance. Rather, Monrovia City Mayor Jefferson Kojjee, CDC's new secretary general represented Mr. Weah.

Why is PYJ so angry with Weah?

PYJ is bitter that President Weah never kept his promise to appoint citizens of Nimba to key positions in government as part of an apparent deal that consummated his 2017 support to the CDC. He considers President Weah a betrayer and wants nothing to do with him unless he complies with his demands.

That is not all. The Senator has also roped in Arcelor Mittal Liberia's US\$7.5 Million Social Development fund. He says the Weah's administration has failed to remit the money to the three counties-Bong, Bassa and Nimba for the last six years but has chosen to spend money on rallies for his re-election bid.

But there is more

Over the years, politicians desiring to capture state power have considered Nimba, the second most populous country or region, a go-to place. This is where PYJ gains his notoriety as the King Maker.

In both the 2011 and 2017 elections that ushered in Mrs. Sirleaf's second term and President Weah's first term respectively, Senator Johnson played crucial roles in making sure his compatriots voted for Mrs. Sirleaf's UP and Weah's CDC following his endorsements but not without a commitment in return of the overwhelming support.

In the instant case of President Weah, Sen. Johnson has repeatedly accused the former of not keeping his promises to his people. In one case, he described the appointment of Cllr. Cooper Kruah at the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication is a non-lucrative portfolio. It is nothing to count on while demanding appointment of more Nimbains in lucrative positions in government.

But this is the man Prince Johnson, he says one thing and does another. It is possible that there is more hidden agenda under the new posture of the controversial Senator-conned Evangelist than one could read from his recent public utterances.

There are many conspiracy theories about this. PYJ's bitterness against the Weah regime started to creep in the public glare following the US sanction Pay for Play.

It is possible that he blamed the CDC for not protecting him. "They threw me under the bus," he could claim.

This could be analyzed in his latest statement against the Weah regime: "No matter how much monies you paid to bring crowd, I tell you this, if you f\*\*k with me, I will dump you!"

Another conspiracy theory suggests that PYJ is broke and he needs money for his upcoming Senatorial Campaign and is therefore using blackmailing tactics against the CDC government to get what he wants. But Weah appears not to be playing along for now.

# OP-ED

By Mariana Mazzucato

## For the Common Good

**L**ONDON - After leaders of government, business, and civil society met at this year's World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, the observation that we are living in the age of a "polycrisis" has spread. The simultaneous occurrence of multiple catastrophic events is a cornerstone of today's socioeconomic and geopolitical climate.

In the face of challenges as immense as global warming, broken health systems, a growing digital divide, and financialized business models that are driving income and wealth inequality ever higher, it is no surprise that disillusion with politics is mounting - ideal conditions for populists promising quick fixes. But the real solutions are complex and will require investment and regulation, as well as social, organizational, and technological innovations, not only by government or business, but also by individuals and organizations across civil society.

Governments, believing that policy can at best fix market failures, often do too little too late. Even public goods (like funding of basic research and development) are seen as fixing a positive externality problem, while carbon taxes are fixing a negative externality problem. Achieving transformative change that produces inclusive and sustainable growth requires less fixing and more shaping and creating of markets. This requires complementing the notion of public goods with that of the "common good," which is not just about the what, but also the how.

The common good is an objective to be reached together through collective intelligence and sharing of benefits. It builds on the idea of the commons, but goes further by focusing on how to design the investment, innovation, and collaboration needed to reach a shared objective. Common goods are the product of collective interactions and investment that require shared ownership and governance models. As a result, the rewards arising from such activities must be shared collectively. The common good also addresses the need for effective international governance, emphasized in the notion of global public goods informed by my brilliant colleague, the late Inge Kaul, who helped inform the work of our Global Commission on the Economics of Water.

In his May 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis argued eloquently for common-good thinking in an ever-changing world. This is not just abstract idealism. The common good offers a useful framework both for setting shared goals and for working out how to achieve them. Francis talks about the need for subsidiarity (the principle that particular issues are best addressed at the most local level possible), and that we view the world through the eyes of the most vulnerable.

The priority for all social, economic, and political change, according to Francis, should be to protect the essential conditions that sustain human life. Decision-making for the common good means defending the dignity of the socially, politically, and economically marginalized - not just with words but with policies and new forms of collaboration. It means building a network of solidarity through which the unheard can partake in critical decision-making processes.

These objectives can be advanced through a new growth model pursued with those who have been excluded, not simply implemented on their behalf. Co-op organizations, for example, have proved effective in bringing people of limited means together and giving them opportunities for agency that they would not have had otherwise.

Francis also understands that, with some economic sectors now exercising more power in certain domains than governments do, it is the state's obligation to defend the common good on everyone's behalf. Countering this trend and tackling our biggest challenges will require a fundamental change in political economy. Whereas the principle of the common good currently is seen as a corrective for the current system's excesses, it should constitute the system's central objective.

Money is not enough. Equally important is the type of collaboration we foster. In the case of COVID-19, we made massively successful collective investments in the research to create vaccines. But we did not ensure that the final result translated into a "common good": namely, a fully immunized global population.

All too often, we are lazy about partnerships. Just because you have "partnered" does not mean that you are working well together for the common good, which requires also setting the objective together and aligning risks and rewards. All parties must be on the same page about the "what" in addition to the "how." That is how you not only develop vaccines but also make them accessible to all.

With a common-good approach, each step of the process is almost as important as the final result. In the United States, the government funnels billions of dollars of public investment into health R&D each year (\$45 billion from the National Institutes of Health alone in 2022), but then allows all the profits to be kept in private hands. When the "rewards" from a collective effort materialize - often as profits for business, or as valuable knowledge - they should be shared to the same extent that the risk was shared.

As I show in my book *Mission Economy*, there are many ways to do this. Intellectual property or pricing conditions could be attached to public support, or profit sharing could be required, such as through an equity model. Collective ownership structures can also help share value more equitably with all members of society. These arrangements all offer opportunities to challenge the undue concentration of power in the hands of a few privileged individuals and firms.

Nor are these problems confined to health. The digital economy has been expanding on the back of massive public investments for years. Because most of the data is controlled by a few powerful companies, key technologies such as artificial intelligence are reproducing pre-existing biases and injustices. To counter this, we need to design a more inclusive and transparent framework - requiring, for example, that digital services' terms and conditions meet certain ethical standards.

Finally, we must encourage a greater appreciation for the power of collective intelligence. In the same way that ESG (environmental, social, and governance) metrics help companies report on their organizational culture and behavior, a common-good approach would require more robust reporting on inter-organizational and public-private dynamics to capture the whole ecosystem of collaboration (or parasitism, as the case may be).

The common good is about intense collaboration, collective intelligence, the co-creation of both ends and means, and a proper sharing of risks and rewards. Mission-oriented industrial and innovation policies show how these principles can be put into practice. A government or international body sets a clear target - often in consultation with other stakeholders - and then creates the conditions for intense public-private collaboration to get there. Critical to this process is trial and error. While the direction of travel must be clear, there also should be plenty of room for bottom-up experimentation.

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# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Boakai attends Dr. Cassell's funeral

Unity Party Standard Bearer, Ambassador Joseph Nyuma Boakai, at the head of a mammoth congregation pays last respect to fallen PLP Leader Dr. Daniel E. Koholo Cassell in the USA

Liberation Party, Dr. Daniel Cassel had a clear view of what Liberia is going through.

"Dr. Cassell built an institution the Former Vice President said and was determined, and he always consulted to catch up on issues in the country."

Earlier, the National Chairman of the People's Liberation Party, Mr. Taplah Doe told Ambassador Boakai that Dr. Cassell came back to foster his dream of transforming Liberia, because Liberia is in a terrible state.

Mr. Doe emphasized that the PLP will work with like minded Liberians to achieve the dreams of Dr. Cassell.

The PLP Chairman praised Ambassador Boakai saying if He Boakai wanted to get rich at the expense of the Liberian people he would have gotten rich.

As a traditional Uncle to Dr. Cassell the PLP looks forward to a good working relationship with Ambassador Joseph Nyuma Boakai.

Those present at the signing of the book of condolence from the PLP included Mr. Taplah Doe, National Chairman, Mr. Daniel Gayou, National Secretary General, Mr. Kalifal Kromah, Vice Chair for Media Relations, Snob Jabbah, Women Assembly, Chairlady and Pascal Bahntee, Assistant Secretary General for Press and Publicity.

Earlier the Unity Party Standard Bearer paid a tribute to the People of Kolahun District, Lofa County, the People's Liberation Party and the family of Dr. Cassell.

Ambassador Boakai made these assertions when he signed the book of condolence for the fallen political leader and Standard Bearer of the People's Liberation Party, Dr. Daniel Cassel at the Party's headquarters in Sinkor, on January 4.

Ambassador Boakai expressed sympathy on behalf of the Unity Party, and his family and pointed out that we all will miss him.



Amb. Boakai

The funeral Service took place at the Victory Harvest International Church in Philadelphia, PAUSA.

The service was attended by scores of Diasporas Liberians, and family of the deceased.

On his visit to the offices of the PLP following the death of Dr. Cassell, the Unity Party Standard Bearer said that the fallen political leader of the People's

## Aspiring health entrepreneurs begin Creation Phase at ULCHS

Six groups of aspiring health entrepreneurs at the University of Liberia College of Health Sciences (ULCHS) are participating in a six-month Creation Phase meant to identify and solve healthcare delivery problems in Liberia.

ULCHS, through the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (CTLI) under its innovation program: Health Entrepreneurship Advancement Leveraging Research (HEALR), launched the USAID-funded BRIDGE: U-Liberia project last October to expose participants to strategic approaches to identifying, researching, and developing solution-oriented ideas as an entrepreneur.

It is intended to assist aspiring entrepreneurs to develop innovative solutions to health problems/challenges in Liberia.

The Creation Phase which kicked off at UL Medical School in Congo Town on January 24, 2023 followed the Ideation Phase that ran from October to December 2022.

In the Ideation Phase, participants generated some ideas and how they could be put into perspective.

Six groups are involved in the Creation Phase after being found eligible from the Ideation phase.

The six-month Creation Phase is expected to conclude in June 2023, followed by an expected awarding of small grants to the winners.

have a team of mentors, some from Boston, U.S.A, and others from Ghana.

Among them, she said there are experienced people with 30 to 40 years of experience.

Dr. McClain told the interview that the mentors want to help the participants identify certain health problems and issues.

She said they want participants to be able to come



In an interview at the start of the Creation Phase, Dr. Plenseh D. Paye McClain, BRIDGE: U Liberia Deputy Director for Innovation said for the next six months that the creation phase will run, they

down and create a business from those problems that have been identified.

While some of the participants are nurses, and

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

## Customs Officers urged to serve with diligence

By Bridgett Milton

Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) Commissioner General Mr. Thomas Doe Nah has cautioned newly graduated Customs Officers to serve the Liberian people with vigilance and dedication.

Commissioner Doe Nah challenged the LRA's 4th Customs graduating class during the 71st International Customs Day celebration last week.

For the last three months, the LRA boss said, members of the class went through a knowledge acquisition exercise, reminding them that knowledge is the foundation that LRA stands on.

He said LRA was glad to join other counties around the world to celebrate International Customs Day (ICD) and to nurture the next generation.

efforts to support their customs officers through encouraging knowledge-sharing and heightening the sense of belonging to the global customs community.

"It places human capital, and especially the new generation of customs officers, at the heart of this transformative process," he said.

"This reminds us that the process of building the future of customs depends on our human resource management recruitment policies, which should be streamlined towards recruiting young, energetic, and talented officers for Customs."

According to Saamoi, the future of customs depends on the young generation, adding that they are physically stronger, creative, flexible, and adaptive to changing environments, technologies, and new lifestyles.

In line with this year's ICD theme, he said the customs



LRA Boss Mr. Thomas Doe Nah

Also speaking, LRA Commissioner for Customs Saa Saamoi said the World Customs Organization (WCO) is the outcome of the post-conflict recovery efforts of Europe following the end of the disastrous global war - World War II.

Saamoi noted that the graduation exercise for the LRA Customs Officers was the fourth since 2021 following the launch of the institution's Customs Security Program.

The Customs Security Program was launched in July 2019, to build customs competencies in the area of security as a direct response to the growing regional and global security threats to the international supply chain.

He added that this year, they celebrate the customs pride on the theme "Nurturing the Next Generation: Promoting a Culture of Knowledge-sharing and Professional Pride in Customs."

He said this theme is reflective of ongoing national

management team will in the next two weeks consolidate and launch the 'each one nurture one' mentorship.

He indicated that the program is aimed at building organizational morale, behavioral norms, values, and specific skills and knowledge transfer to younger officers of the future.

This, he said, will include mentees' professional access to mentors at all times and mentees' participation in training with their mentors and travels related to mentors' professional activities.

Serving as the keynote speaker, National Security Advisor to the President Mr. Jefferson A. Karmoh paid homage to the men and women at LRA for the role they continue to play in ensuring that goods entering and leaving the country pass through the laws and regulations of Liberia.

Karmoh encouraged graduates to always remember their code of responsibility, safe guiding society from harmful goods, and secure the boarders against harmful trade

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10



# Speaker Chambers & President Weah Re-election Boosted in Maryland County

The re-election bids of House Speaker, Dr. Bhofal Chambers and President George Weah, have received a major boost.

It followed commitments by citizens of District 2, Pleebo Sodekan District in Maryland County.

The citizens renewed such commitments during a mass welcoming ceremony as part of his Christmas visitation to Kwiloken, Barriken, Gbolorbo Sedaken among other towns and villages.

The citizens among others also lauded the Honorable Speaker and President George Weah for the numerous development projects including scholarships, loans, medical drugs to health

centers, the constructions of market, schools, churches, radio station and provision of jobs.

The Marylanders were grateful to the Speaker and the Liberian President for commitment toward the pavement of the southeastern road corridor.

Meanwhile, Speaker Dr. Bhofal Chambers, on behalf of the Liberian Leader, thanked citizens of Maryland for reposing their renewed commitment.

Speaker Chambers was also grateful to the citizens for regularly following the workings of the CDC Government.

He then assured south-eastern citizens of massive benefit from what was accrued during President George Weah' recent trip to Qatar, the USA among

others.

The Liberian Speaker had also grateful of the steady progress on government's ongoing road construction between Nimba, River Gee and Maryland Counties respectively.

On the sideline of the Speaker's visit, the Pleebo Citizens have offered special prayers for him, presented him gifts, and certified him, among others.

The Speaker also reciprocated by organizing Christmas celebrations in different quarters of Pleebo and nearby with one hundred children at Pleebo Town Hall.

During these festivities, the Liberian Speaker extended Christmas greetings to his kinsmen.



Speaker Dr. Bhofal Chambers at St. Francis Parish in Pleebo..



Speaker Chambers receives Traditional Welcome with kula nut



Children Hail Speaker for Party in Pleebo



Speaker Chambers interacts with Islamic Leaders



St. Francis Parish Father meet Speaker Chambers..



Gbolorbo Sedeken Citizens Welcome Speaker Chambers



Pleebo Community Garden Association (PLEGA) Honors Speaker Chambers



Kwiloken Vow to re-elect Speaker Chambers



# Speaker Chambers & President Weah Re-election Boosted in Maryland County



Speaker Dr. Bhofal Chambers Worship with St. Francis Catholic Church in Pleebo



Speaker meets with Islamic Leaders



Nearby Town Residents listen to Speaker Chambers



Citizens of Gbolorbo Sedeken Welcome Speaker Chambers



St. Francis Parish Congregation listen to Speaker Chambers



Juduken Women vow to re-elect Chambers



Speaker Chambers beats all odd to meet his People...



Speaker with his People





# Français

## Weah plus que convaincu de sa réélection à la prochaine présidentielle

Le président George Weah est fortement convaincu qu'il sera réélu à la prochaine élection présidentielle dont le

Les Libériens doivent se rendre aux urnes plus tard cette année, précisément en octobre, dans le cadre des élections générales et présidentielle.



premier tour est prévu au mois d'octobre. Répondant à l'opposition qui veut faire de lui un président qui aura fait un seul mandat, le Chef de l'État a dit que son bilan « largement positif » parlerait pour lui dans les urnes.

Le président Weah et sa Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) recherchent une réélection dans ce qui devrait être une bataille électorale très tendue.

Les prochaines élections seront organisées dans un contexte où M. Weah est extrêmement critiqué par l'opposition, l'accusant d'être

la cause des difficultés que les Libériens vivent au quotidien.

La Collaboration des Partis Politiques (CPP), une coalition de l'opposition dirigée par l'ancien directeur de Coca-Cola, Alexander B. Cummings, a récemment invité des milliers de citoyens dans la rue dans le cadre d'une marche pacifique pour exprimer leur ras-le-bol face aux souffrances qu'ils endurent.

Le rassemblement visait à envoyer un message au monde extérieur comme quoi les Libériens souffrent trop sous le régime du président Weah.

M. Cummings a promis à plusieurs reprises de faire de M. Weah un président qui aura fait un seul mandat en le battant aux prochaines élections, ce qui a été repris par d'autres personnalités de l'opposition, dont l'ancien vice-président Joseph Boakai du Parti de l'Unité.

Mais s'exprimant le jeudi 26 janvier 2023, lors d'une visite du mini-stade rénové dans le canton densément peuplé de West Point, à Montserrado, dans le district électoral n° 7, Weah a affirmé que l'opposition se trompe, pariant

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

## Stanton Witherspoon arrêté et mis en examen par la justice américaine pour fraude

Les procureurs américains ont inculpé M. Stanton Witherspoon pour avoir prétendument vendu de faux diplômes d'infirmier et d'infirmière à des individus pour avoir de l'emploi.

Selon les procureurs, les acheteurs avaient utilisé ces diplômes faux et frauduleux créés par les défendeurs Witherspoon, Alfred Sellu et René Bernadel pour obtenir des licences en tant que infirmières autorisées dans divers États, dont le Maryland et la Géorgie.

L'acte d'accusation a été déposé le 12 janvier 2023 contre les trois défendeurs et autres conspirateurs anonymes devant le tribunal de district américain de Floride.

M. Witherspoon est le propriétaire et Président Directeur Général (PDG) du Spoon Group of Companies, un empire de stations de télévision et de radio à Monrovia.

Spoon Empire a acheté des stations de radio privées en difficulté qui avaient fait faillite. Des sources crédibles affirment que Witherspoon aurait acheté la station de radio de Kailondo

à plus de 900 000 \$ US dans le cadre d'une expansion des affaires au Libéria.

L'homme d'affaires libérien basé aux États-Unis a également acheté la radio Fabric FM à un coût estimé entre 150 000 \$ US et 200 000 \$ US après la mort de Vic Freeman. Witherspoon a en outre proposé d'acheter la radio Hot FM à près d'un demi-million de dollars américains.

Mais des sources indiquent que feu Daniel E. Cassell, chef politique du Parti démocrate populaire (PLP), aurait choisi le propriétaire de Hot FM, M. Benard Benson (Alias DJ Blue) pour être le président à la mobilisation de son parti politique. Le défunt Cassell

devrait payer des frais commerciaux et permettre à DJ Blue de garder sa station de radio.

Le défendeur Witherspoon a cinq stations de radio, contrairement à la politique publique. Quelque chose qui est contraire à la Commission fédérale de la communication (FCC) aux États-Unis d'Amérique qui dénonce le monopole.

Encore une fois, ces derniers temps, Witherspoon aurait signé un accord de 1,2 million de dollars américain avec le gouvernement du président George Manneh Weah pour les services de



## Éditorial

### La dénonciation du sénateur Bartekwa arrive tardivement

Le sénateur du comté de Grand Kru, Numene T. Bartekwa, s'est plaint du refus et du renvoi des patients par les hôpitaux et autres centres de santé à travers le pays, apparemment à cause du manque de lits.

Dans une communication qu'il a adressée à la session plénière du Sénat le mardi 24 janvier, il a demandé qu'on envisage de modifier la loi nationale sur la santé, pour obliger les hôpitaux et les centres de santé à ne pas rejeter les cas d'urgence entre 18h00 et 7h00.

Selon lui, quand les patients apprennent des autorités sanitaires qu'il n'y a pas de lit, ils sont décompressés et leur état s'aggrave davantage.

Bien que la préoccupation soulevée par le sénateur du comté de Grand Kru soit pertinente, nous pensons qu'elle est tardive et qu'il s'agit d'un simple coup de publicité, car il s'agit d'une pratique qui existe depuis si longtemps dans notre secteur sanitaire. Quoi qu'il en soit, le pouvoir d'agir pour remédier à cette situation appartient entièrement au Sénat.

Nous sommes cependant heureux qu'il ait écrit à l'Assemblée plénière du Sénat pour demander à ses collègues d'intervenir dans cette affaire qui continue de causer la mort prématurée de tant de nos compatriotes.

La médiocrité des services ou le manque de services dans notre secteur sanitaire affecte notre population de tant de façons et cela devrait cesser.

Il incombe aux législateurs de Capitol Hill qui président le budget national et octroient des crédits pour augmenter les allocations pour le secteur de la santé et s'assurer que les domaines qui accusent un retard retiennent l'attention.

Trop souvent, on entend des hôpitaux et autres établissements de santé refuser des patients pour soi-disant manque de lits ou d'espace. Les familles, déjà stressées, sont contraintes d'aller d'un hôpital à l'autre pendant les heures nocturnes en quête de soins pour leur malade.

La qualité d'un centre de santé ne s'évalue pas par la structure physique ou le bâtiment mais par la qualité du personnel et des services dont l'objectif premier est de préserver des vies. Malheureusement, dans notre pays, ce n'est pas le cas, car les goulots d'étranglement bureaucratiques semblent prendre le pas sur la fonction clé de sauver des vies.

Malheureusement, au Libéria, les hôpitaux manquent de lits adéquats, de gants, d'EPI, d'électricité, de générateur et de carburant, inutile de parler de C.T. Scanners et d'appareils de dialyse au service des patients, ce qui entraîne leur mort prématurée.

Nous nous demandons quand le sénateur Bartekwa, qui a siégé deux fois à l'Assemblée législative, a-t-il reconnu la médiocrité des services dans nos hôpitaux ? Est-ce parce qu'un membre de sa famille ou un ami proche a été victime qu'il a écrit sa lettre à la session Plénière du Sénat ?

Que le sénateur de Grand Kru sache qu'en tant qu'élu, le bien-être du peuple doit toujours être une priorité, en particulier une question critique comme la santé, quelle que soit notre diversité, et pas seulement lorsque nous sommes directement touchés. En tout cas c'est le lieu de dire que le plaidoyer du sénateur est tardif.



# Français

## Weah plus que convaincu

qu'il sera réélu.

M. Weah a vanté son bilan, le qualifiant de largement positif. « J'ai tant fait en une période si courte en tant que président, et aujourd'hui les Libériens jouissent tous du développement », a-t-il dit.

Il s'est dit confiant que les Libériens vont le reconduire « en raison du développement qui est en cours dans le pays » lors des prochaines élections pour terminer son programme de développement.

Il a fait valoir qu'il n'y a

personne au sein de l'opposition qui peut le battre aux prochaines élections parce que son bilan parle haut et fort.

« Ces gens, qui ont placé leur confiance en moi et m'ont élu président ne sont pas aveugles. Ils voient tout ce développement jamais réalisé dans tous domaines confondus. Ce sont ces mêmes personnes qui vont me confier un second mandat et personne ne peut arrêter cela, parce qu'elles sont satisfaites du travail que je fais pour ce pays », a déclaré le président Weah.

## Stanton Witherspoon arrêté

relations publiques.

Weah et la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC) recherchent encore six ans de règne supplémentaire tandis que son premier mandat se termine progressivement.

L'acte d'accusation de Witherspoon aux États-Unis a laissé des réactions mitigées dans le pays sur les réseaux sociaux, certains le soutiennent, tandis que d'autres applaudissent le

programme professionnel de formation en soins infirmiers.

Mais l'acte d'accusation indique que Witherspoon et ses conspirateurs ont créé et distribué via des communications par fil interétatique, des diplômes frauduleux à des acheteurs.

Ces faux diplômes ont frauduleusement présenté les acheteurs comme s'ils avaient fréquenté le Siena College en Floride et ont suivi les cours et cliniques nécessaires pour obtenir des diplômes RN ou LPN /



système américain qui lutte contre la criminalité, peu importe qui est impliqué.

Selon l'acte d'accusation, la loi sur les infirmières en Floride stipule que le programme d'études d'un programme pré-licence approuvé doit être composé d'au moins cinquante pour cent de formation clinique pour un programme pratique de formation en soins infirmiers.

Cela couvre également un programme de soins infirmiers professionnels de diplôme associé ou un

VN, alors qu'en fait ils n'avaient jamais terminé les cours ou les cliniques nécessaires.

Le Siena College of Health est géré par Siena Education Center LLC, une société de responsabilité limitée en Floride.

Son cas nous rappelle l'arrestation et la mise en examen de Dr Cassell décédé le jour de Noël, le 25 décembre 2022. L'ambition politique de Cassell de briguer la présidence libérienne en octobre a été éteinte quand il a été arrêté le 17 mars 2022 aux États-Unis pour fraude présumée.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Raghuram G. Rajan

## La Fed entre Charybde et Scylla ?

**C**HICAGO - La Réserve fédérale américaine (Fed) est déterminée à faire baisser l'inflation. Mais personne ne sait de combien elle devra augmenter son taux d'intérêt directeur - et pendant combien de temps elle devra le maintenir à un niveau élevé pour parvenir à son objectif. Aussi beaucoup d'observateurs se demandent si elle ne risque pas de déclencher une récession.

L'inflation diminue, en partie du fait de la résolution des problèmes dans les chaînes d'approvisionnement, en partie du fait de la baisse de la demande. Des taux d'intérêt élevés ont ralenti le marché immobilier résidentiel, et par conséquent le rythme de construction. La hausse du prix des biens et services restreint les dépenses des ménages et limite leur consommation. Et pour l'instant la croissance anémique de la Chine limite le prix des matières premières partout dans le monde.

Quoi qu'il en soit, la Fed n'est pas satisfaite de la situation actuelle. Pour le moment, le marché américain du travail est hypertendu. En attendant qu'il se relâche, la Fed craint que les salaires ne rattrapent l'inflation, la poussant ainsi à la hausse. Elle ne veut surtout pas faire une pause dans son action, car cela pourrait relancer l'inflation, d'autant que les marchés financiers se réjouissent et que le prix des actifs financiers augmente, ce qui encourage la demande. Cela contraindrait les responsables politiques à augmenter encore les taux d'intérêt, et pour longtemps. Il vaut beaucoup mieux que la Fed aille jusqu'au bout une fois pour toutes, plutôt que de procéder par à-coups, cela tant pour l'économie que pour sa propre réputation.

Rien ne dit que la Fed pense qu'un marché du travail moins tendu se traduirait par une hausse significative du chômage. Dans l'idéal c'est surtout le nombre d'emplois à pourvoir qui devrait diminuer, sans grande augmentation du nombre de chômeurs. Même si le chômage augmente légèrement, la Fed ne changera pas de politique. Elle estime que si le ralentissement économique est trop important, elle pourra encourager le retour à la croissance par une baisse des taux. Il y a un certain consensus autour de l'idée qu'elle risque d'en faire trop, car elle pourra toujours diminuer les taux en cas de ralentissement. A voir l'évolution des marchés, on peut penser que la Fed reviendra à une baisse des taux au cours de l'année. Qu'est-ce qui pourrait mal tourner dans cette vision consensuelle ? Considérons deux scénarios :

Premier scénario : la Fed fait faire entrer l'économie en récession, avec une inflation restant obstinément au-dessus de sa valeur cible de 2%.

Une telle stagflation (qui ressemblerait à celle des années 1970, lorsque les attentes inflationnistes se sont fixées à des niveaux très élevés) pousserait la Fed à augmenter encore les taux au moment même où l'économie se contracte. C'est alors que son zèle à combattre l'inflation et sa capacité à résister aux pressions politiques seraient véritablement mis à l'épreuve.

Deuxième scénario : l'inflation diminue, mais avec une chute brutale de la croissance. Examinons le marché du travail aujourd'hui. Les petites et moyennes entreprises qui ont du mal à trouver des travailleurs gardent leur personnel (contrairement aux grandes entreprises qui annoncent des licenciements). Elles font cela parce qu'elles savent à quel point le recrutement est devenu difficile. Certaines continuent à

embaucher, encouragées par la perspective de recruter davantage de travailleurs de qualité, maintenant que les grandes entreprises arrêtent de recruter.

Mais si le marché du travail se détend, ces petites entreprises ne seront plus dans la crainte de ne pas trouver des travailleurs de qualité. Elles pourraient alors elles aussi arrêter de recruter, ou même licencier certains des travailleurs embauchés lorsque le marché du travail était tendu. Autrement dit, les licenciements auquel nous assistons déjà pourraient se transformer en un énorme flot. Cela affecterait d'autres marchés.

Ainsi les ventes de maisons ont considérablement ralenti aux USA, mais leurs prix se sont généralement maintenus, probablement parce que l'offre n'est pas très importante. Les taux hypothécaires ayant fortement augmenté au cours de l'année dernière, un propriétaire ayant contracté un prêt à 4 % sur 30 ans devra déboursier beaucoup plus en mensualités s'il décide d'acheter une maison de meilleure qualité avec un nouveau prêt à 7 %. Comme il n'a pas les moyens d'acheter, il ne vend pas. Et comme cette dynamique limite l'offre immobilière, il n'y a guère de pression à la baisse sur les prix.

Toutefois, s'il y a plus de licenciements, de plus en plus de propriétaires seront dans l'impossibilité de rembourser leur prêt à 4 %, et seront contraints de vendre en catastrophe. L'offre augmentera alors brutalement, les prix des maisons chutera tout autant, et la combinaison d'une plus grande incertitude en matière d'emploi et d'une baisse de la richesse immobilière pourrait ébranler la confiance des consommateurs, ce qui réduira encore la croissance.

Considérons un autre domino qui pourrait tomber. Nous venons de traverser une période de 3 ans durant laquelle le nombre de faillite d'entreprises a diminué, notamment en raison de l'aide dont elles ont bénéficié lors de la pandémie. Pourtant, au-delà de quelques signes récents de difficultés, il semble que bien plus d'entreprises en difficulté devraient faire faillite. Pourquoi n'est-ce pas le cas ? Cela tient au fait que profitant des facilités de crédit pour retarder l'échéance de leur dette, de nombreuses entreprises se sont refinancées dès les premiers mois de la pandémie.

Mais les entreprises les plus vulnérables n'ont pas fait davantage, et le volume de leurs dettes arrivant à échéance va bientôt augmenter. Si cette dette doit être renouvelée dans un environnement économique de plus en plus sombre, il y a fort à parier que beaucoup d'entre elles ne seront pas en mesure de se refinancer et que les faillites d'entreprises augmenteront considérablement. Le secteur financier traditionnel a peut-être été assez intelligent pour se tenir à l'écart de la crypto-monnaie, mais il n'est pas à l'abri de la détresse des ménages et des entreprises. Et comme l'Histoire nous l'a appris, les pertes du secteur financier peuvent rapidement conduire à des scénarios catastrophiques.

La Fed sait au moins ce qu'elle devra faire dans le cas du premier scénario : augmenter les taux pour lutter contre une inflation obstinément élevée. Mais si la situation économique se dégrade de manière non linéaire, il est difficile de savoir à quels repères la Fed pourra se raccrocher pour naviguer entre Charybde - le risque d'en faire trop et voir l'économie s'écrouler - et Scylla - le risque de ne pas en faire assez et devoir recommencer.

La meilleure chose qu'elle puisse faire est peut-être de ne pas trop croire à la capacité de l'économie à plier sans se briser, et de faire très attention à l'évolution des indicateurs alors que nous entrons dans une période de danger maximum.

Traduit de l'anglais par Patrice Horovitz


<https://thenewdawnliberia.com>









# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## NEC certifies over 400 CSOs for 2023

The National Elections Commission (NEC), Friday certificated and accredited over 400 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Faith based and Community based organizations, to provide voter education during the 2023 General Elections in Liberia.

Lansanah said, the certification process of civil society organizations testifies to the Commission's willingness to collaborate with the civil society organizations to ensure effective and efficient information dissemination to the public on the electoral knowledge of the citizens and has encouraged more Liberians to participate in all of the electoral processes.

Some of the civil society organizations certificated Friday were, the West Africa Peace Building Network,



NEC Boss, Madam Browne Lansanah presents the first symbolic CVE certificate to a member of CSOs.

the electoral process. A statement from NEC issued Friday, 27 January 2023, Madam Browne Lansanah said, the Commission appreciates the long-term partnership with the Civil Society, Community Based, and Faith Based Organizations throughout the country.

The NEC Boss said, partnership over the years with CSOs has strengthened the CVE component of the Commission and has increased WAPNET, YMCA, Flomo Theater Group, the Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia and the Civil Society Organizations Network of Liberia.

Meanwhile, the National Elections Commission, with funding from the Government of Liberia has commissioned 31 new twin-cabin Toyota pickups for use during the 2023 General Elections and pending Biometric Voter Registration exercise beginning 20 March 2022 and ending 11 May 2023.

## Defense, Lonestar Cell MTN rollout Armed Forces Day events

By Lincoln G. Peters

The Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) in collaboration with LoneStar Cell MTN have outlined their activities for the 66th Armed Forces Day Celebration.

Speaking to reporters Thursday, 26 January 2023 at the Barclay Training Center (BTC) Barrack in Monrovia, Assistant Defense Minister for Public Affairs Sam Collins said the Armed Forces Day historically was legislated on February 11, 1957.

He said the sole intent was to pay homage to the men and women in arms of the AFL who are making tireless sacrifices to maintain the security of the nation.

He said it was to pay homage to those who sacrificed their lives for their country in the line of their selfless duties.

According to Minister Collins, each year, the President of the Republic of Liberia and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia by proclamation declares February 11 as "Armed Forces Day" to be observed as a National Holiday throughout the Republic.

Minister Collins said on February 11, 2023, the AFL will be celebrating its 66h Armed Forces Day and 115 years of existence, dating back to 1908.

"The Armed Forces Day celebration has always been used as an opportunity for the public, foreign guests, and dignitaries to be acquainted with activities regarding the development and progress within the AFL," he noted.

The Minister disclosed that the theme for the 66th Armed Forces Day is "Inter-Agency Collaboration: Working Together for Peaceful Elections."

He continued that the topic



for the Armed Forces Day Symposium is Fostering Effective Stakeholders Engagement for Sustainable Democracy.

According to Collins, the 66th Armed Forces Day celebrations will begin on 3 February 2023 and are interspersed with several activities.

He revealed that on Friday, 3 February, a Jumma Service for Muslims will be held at the EBK Military Barracks to dedicate the nation and AFL to the Almighty Allah for his continual guidance and protection.

Then on Saturday, 4 February, he said a cleanup campaign will be conducted within the general area of Duport Road from 6 A.M. to 12 noon.

Minister Collins stated that AFL personnel along with employees of the Ministry of National Defense and the residents of Duport Road will give the community a facelift. Medical Outreach will be held within the general area of Po River, Bomi County.

On Tuesday, 7 February, he said a Symposium will be held at the Monrovia City Hall, beginning at 10A.M.

The symposium will bring together relevant stakeholders to deliberate on a carefully selected topic.

Further, Mr. Collins said that

## Eye cancer patient hails Jeety's

Starts from back page

had eye cancer in her left eye, and she needed a CT scan of the brain to check if it had spread to the brain.

The children's doctors at JFK administered six cycles of chemotherapy which helped the tumor to shrink.

Then the eye surgeon removed Annie's eye. After two months, they fitted an artificial eye to match the other eye. The chemotherapy continued for another six months and thus 12 cycles of chemotherapy were completed.

Being advanced cancer in a child from a poor family, an entire treatment was done at no charge to the family through combined efforts of the Liberia Eye Center- L V Prasad Eye Institute, JFK Medical Center, and the famous philanthropist, Mr. Upjit Singh Sachdeva.

Mr. Sachdeva (popularly known as Mr. Jeety) generously supports the chemotherapy of children with eye cancer at the Liberia Eye Center.

Even though Annie's eye is removed, her mother said 'the artificial eye is serving [a] good purpose to match with the other eye.. so overall I am so happy for my daughter!'

Such complex treatments, according to the hospital, are now possible at the eye clinic of

JFK Medical Center and patients don't need to travel to other countries for treatment.

Mr. Jeety is famous for his continued humanitarian activities which continue to impact inmates, less-fortunate folks, and kids, including a routine distribution of hot home-cooked meals.

As part of his feeding program, Mr. Jeety led his team from the Jeety Trading Corporation on Sunday, 29 January 2023 to feed the prison population at the Monrovia Central Prison (MCP).

During the feeding exercise Sunday, Mr. Jeety called on fellow business people across Liberia to start feeding at least ten people a day to help reduce hunger.

"I can guarantee you, nobody will sleep hungry in this country," he said.

"So everybody will have to take initiative for themselves and ... the society. Don't give to get, give to inspire others," Jeety said.

Col. Austin Joel Juah, Deputy Prison Superintendent at MCP, thanked Mr. Jeety and his team for always providing support for the inmates and the prison services.

"There are ... so many projects that you have undertaken in this facility. And with that, like you already said, God the Almighty will replenish whatever you have done for this facility," said Col. Juah.

the topic to be deliberated upon is aimed at ensuring adequate preparation for the 2023 presidential and legislative elections.

The Keynote Speaker for the intellectual occasion is Mr. Stephen Rodriguez, UNDP Resident Representative to Liberia.

Other panelists include Mrs. Josephine Nkrumah, Resident Representative of the President of ECOWAS; Rep. Jonathan Fonati Koffa, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives; and Mr. Eugene Nagbe, Liberia Maritime Authority Boss.

Others are Reverend Father McDonald W. Nah, National Director, National Commission for Justice, Peace and Caritas (NCJPC); Imam Sheikh Ali Krayee, Chief Imam, Republic of Liberia; Madam Williametta Piso Saydee-Tar, Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection; and Senator Steve J.H. Zargo, Senate Committee on Defense, Security, and Intelligence and Veteran Affairs.

Collins explained that several paramilitary institutions, students, and members of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) will participate in this auspicious event.

On Wednesday and Thursday, 8-9 February, he said there will be a Units Display that will last for two days at the Barclay Training Center.



# 5 years ago

By Jonathan Browne

million. "I cannot vouch for the accuracy or completeness of this information, in the absence of verification by a full and proper audit conducted by a competent authority", he

Four: Governance and Transparency.

The heartbeat of his agenda as he announced and still maintains, is road connectivity across the country, including an overly ambitious coastal highway from Buchanan, Grand Bassa county, to Harper, Maryland county, aimed at connecting counties in Southeast Liberia to rest of the country.

However, as first step towards salvaging the broken economy, the President announced a 25 percent in his salary and benefits and directed that said cuts be returned to the

government Consolidated Account for reappropriation as may be deemed expedient.

Since 2018, the economy under President Weah has grown incrementally, by 3.6 percent from negative 3 percent in 2020, and growth for the year ended was projected at 4.7 percent, through increased agricultural and public investments in social compact program, while in nominal value, it expanded by more than US\$300 million in 2021, with inflation reduced to less than 6 percent in November 2021, from 13.1 percent in December 2020.

This upward trend of the economy may likely continue steadily, as President Weah addresses the Sixth Sitting of the 54th Legislature in Joint Session today, Monday, January 30, which is his last Annual Message before seeking re-election in October.

reported.

President Weah bluntly told members of the first branch of government that the state of the economy that he inherited leaves a lot to be desired, saying "This is plain for all to see, for we are all affected by it. Our economy is broken, our government is broke, our currency is in free-fall, inflation is rising, unemployment is at an unprecedented high, and our foreign reserves are at an all-time low."

But he was resolved to changing the ugly picture around, using the four pillars of his government's development roadmap, the Pro-poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity, PAPD for short, as working tools.

The President then laid out the four pillars of the PADP as Pillar One: Power to the people; Pillar two: Economy and Jobs; Pillar Three: Sustaining the Peace and Pillar

President George Manneh Weah delivered his first State of the Nation Address to the First Sitting of the 54th



Legislature on Monday, January 29, 2018, unfortunately just one week after he assumed office, a task that was imposed on him by Article 58 of the Constitution despite having no direct involvement with revenue and expenditure for the period reported, which was under his predecessor Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. But if the grim state of the economy he painted in the presence of Madam Sirleaf herself at the Capitol Building is anything to go by, Mr. Weah and his Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) had a rough takeoff.

The government inherited a significant revenue decline from the Sirleaf Administration, as President Weah reported total revenues collected from 2017, that was also elections' year at US\$489.1 million, a 13 percent decline from 2016, which was US\$565.1

## Aspiring health entrepreneurs begin Creation

Starts from page 5

student doctors, Dr. McClain explained that some are not health practitioners. She said some of the participants are public health specialists, and two are faculty members.

"This is entrepreneurship, and this is innovation. So, we are talking about entrepreneurship, making business. But it's not just about making business, it's about finding new ways," said Dr. McClain.

Giving an example, Dr. McClain explained that participants are seeking to solve how filling out a form

that probably takes patients about 10 minutes at hospitals can now be done in a lesser time.

"But how can you do it differently [so] that maybe that form can just be filled in for just two minutes, and that's it and the patient is able to get to the next step? These are things that we are talking about when it comes to innovation," said Dr. McClain.

She said the idea is to just change the way things are done a little bit which can be utilized in the healthcare delivery system.

According to her, there are a

lot of entrepreneurs in Liberia, but what is particular about the BRIDGE: U innovation team is that it is concerned with healthcare.

When it comes to healthcare and entrepreneurship, she said it is very difficult because ethical issues are looked at a lot.

"Because you deal with patients, you are talking about health, and you are talking about patients, you are talking about human beings. So, if you don't do it right, the person will die and that becomes a problem," she continued.

# Prioritizing the plights of the people

House Speaker Bhofal Chambers has repeated his recent charge to colleagues' lawmakers at the capitol to prioritize the plights of the people as they conduct the affairs of the state.

It could be recalled that during the official opening of the 6th Session of the 54th Legislature on Monday, 16 January 2023, Speaker Chambers cautioned that it is a glaring signal for lawmakers to do their work in this 2023 with dedication, commitment, character, and a deep sense of patriotic fervor or alertness.

"Today, we are beginning our 6th Sitting, which is also culminating into the final sitting of the 54th Legislature, as the next second-working Monday of January will be in 2024, at which time, the 55th Legislature shall begin," Chambers said.

The ceremony was held in line with Article 32(a) of the Liberian Constitution.

The provision among other things mandates that the

of socio-political and economic challenges.

With a constructive governance architecture, he said the Legislature, specifically the House of Representatives, meaningfully and dutifully worked with the other branches of government to realign all programs for the assurance of positive outcomes.

Chambers continued that as the world looks to security, Liberia has had its share and experience of crisis.

He added that with the engagement(s) and service-oriented passion of his colleagues, coupled with the masterful stewardship of President George Manneh Weah, rapid and positive improvements were generated with qualitative results.

"For the year 2022, the Fifth Sitting of the 54th Legislature, several legislative actions were taken, 65 Regular Sessions, 1 Special Session, 36 Executive Sessions, and 24 Appearances of Ministers/Directors," said Chambers.

He noted that now that the Legislature has commenced its



Legislature shall assemble in regular session once a year on the second working Monday in January each year.

All seventy-three (73) members of the House of Representatives are due for reelection this year. Speaker Chambers said this was his passionate appeal.

"It is my impassioned and/or fervent hope and prayer that we all will meet again in session in the year 2024," he said.

Chambers said as a government, in the year 2022, they experienced some degree

sitting, several legislative instruments such as the draft Nation Budget to the tune of US\$777.9 million are before that august body for scrutiny and will be acted upon.

Meanwhile, political analysts believe that lawmakers will be more focused on their re-election bid.

As such, there are suggestions that not much will be done to improve the suffering conditions of ordinary Liberians through the enactment of appropriate legislation.

## Customs Officers urged

Starts from page 5

and customs revenue.

Fifty-eight custom officers were awarded certificates after 12 weeks of intensive training in basic police science, customs procedure, Liberian laws, criminal investigation, case filing, court processes, human rights, gender, and tactical security skills.

Previously, 153 LRA customs officers graduated from the Liberia National Police Training

Academy since the commencement of the LRA Customs Security program in 2021.

The security program aims at building the law enforcement capability of Customs Officers to be commensurate with other national security institutions.

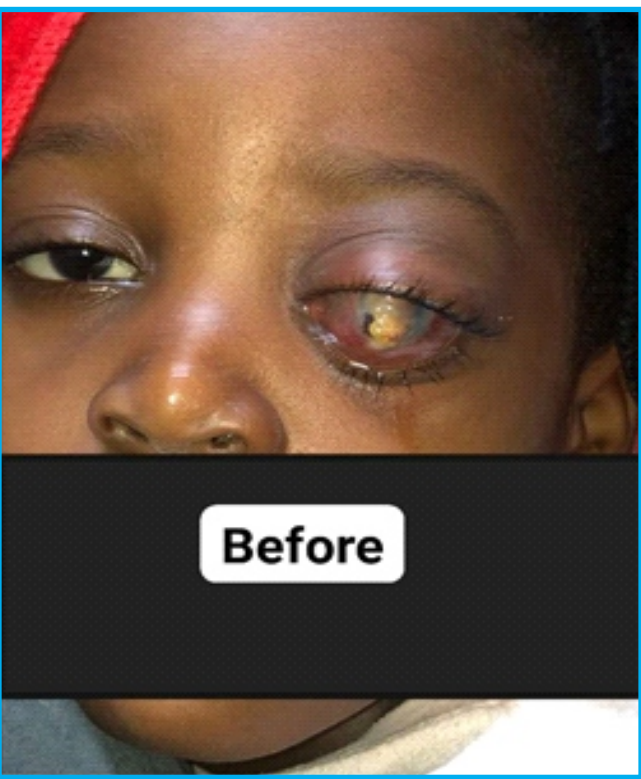
It is a vital requirement in meeting the standards of the World Customs Organization (WCO). -- Edited by Winston W. Parley



## Eye cancer patient hails Jeety's support

**M**s. Annie (Not her real name) and her mother are celebrating her (Annie's) successful treatment for eye cancer at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center through the combined efforts of the hospital, doctors removed her eye, but am happy that now she does not have eye pain and her life is saved.' According to Annie's testimonial shared on JFK Medical Center's Facebook page following her treatment at the

have asked several people in her community and all replied that 'some children are born like that, and they become alright with time.' As time passed, the eye started looking worse and the mother got alert. Through a friend, she got to



Indian philanthropist Mr. Upjit Singh Sachdeva, and the Liberia Eye Center- L V Prasad Eye Institute. At the end of her treatment, Annie's mother said, 'I don't care if the

Liberia Eye Center/ JFK Medical Center, the patient's mother noticed that her left eye looked different from the age of six months. The mother is said to

know about the eye clinic at the JFK hospital and she decided to go there. After a thorough examination, the doctors told her that Annie

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10

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