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MARKET BUYING AND SELLING RATES
LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2023	L\$160.9181/US\$1.00	L\$163.0014/US\$1.00

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

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US Amb. McCarthy

US canvas full funding for NEG

P11

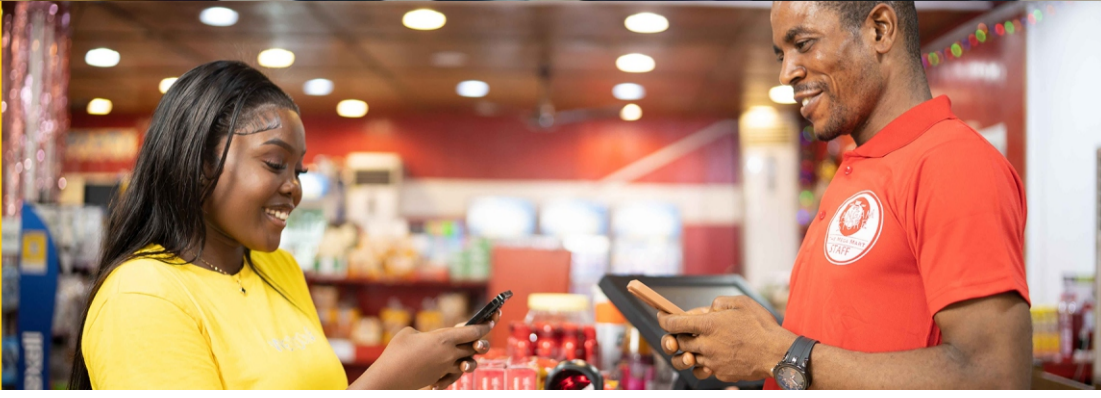


Finance Min. Tweah



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Continental News

Mozambique Begins Massive Post-Cyclone Cholera Vaccination Drive

Health officials in Mozambique are set to hold a massive cholera vaccination campaign

precaution, everyone in the city will be vaccinated.

Caetano says, "we are ready to start the vaccination campaign

On Tuesday, Mozambique received 1.7 million doses of cholera vaccine, obtained by UNICEF, to start the vaccination campaign.

The Ministry of Health said in a statement that the newly arrived doses are intended for the cities of Quelimane in Zambézia province, Chimoio in Manica province and Beira and Marromeu in Sofala province. Quelimane, in particular, recorded a significant increase in cases, a situation caused by floods and the destruction of the water supply network by Cyclone Freddy. Due to the lack of drinking water in the taps, in recent days thousands of Quelimane residents have been traveling in vehicles or on foot with buckets and other containers, looking for alternatives. Most people consume water from wells, which may be contaminated.

Health authorities have warned that the stock of water purifiers is running out and recommend that those who have money buy the product from private sellers instead of waiting for free distribution.

At the same, Mozambique has to deal with a humanitarian crisis in the north, where the government is fighting an Islamist insurgency. An estimated 2 million people need assistance there. VOA



This handout photograph taken and distributed by UNICEF on March 12, 2023

in Quelimane, a city hit hard by Cyclone Freddy earlier this month. The director of health in Zambézia province, Blayton Caetano, told state radio Tuesday that the two-week vaccination drive is aimed at bringing down the soaring number of cholera cases in the aftermath of the historic storm.

Quelimane suffered significant damage when long-running Cyclone Freddy passed over Mozambique a second time this month, killing 19 people in all and forcing 50,000 others into temporary housing. Caetano said that as a

and I think that in 24 or 48 hours we will start a vaccination process for cholera with greater focus on the city of Quelimane. He says, "vaccination criteria is that all Quelimane residents with or without cholera, including those of us in this room, we are going to vaccinate against cholera so that in two weeks we can start registering the reduction of cholera cases." In a recent media statement, the U.N. children's fund, UNICEF, said that as of March 18, nearly 10,000 cases of cholera had been reported across Mozambique, more than tripling case reports since early February.

Malawi Using Excavators to Unearth Cyclone Freddy Dead Bodies

Authorities in Malawi have deployed excavators to help locate dead bodies believed to be trapped under the rubble after Cyclone Freddy destroyed houses two weeks ago. The cyclone, which also hit Mozambique and Madagascar, killed nearly 600 people in Malawi and left over 500,000 people homeless.

Charles Kalemba, Malawi's commissioner for the Department of Disaster Management Affairs, said besides finding bodies, the work would help clarify what was happening with cyclone damage. He told state radio Tuesday the move to use excavators follows reports from communities that blood is oozing on top of the rubble of destroyed houses.

Those reports are not true, he said.

"What we have noted is that actually it's not blood," Kalemba said. "The water is drying and because it was stagnant, normally you have green algae or red algae, so this

is red algae."

Rashid White is a traditional leader for Nkulinga village, which was heavily affected by mudslide in the Blantyre. He told VOA that he believes many more bodies remain buried under the rubble because most of the people in his area remain missing.

Government statistics show that Cyclone Freddy has so far killed nearly 600 people with over 500 others still missing. Malawi President Lazarus Chakwera had earlier asked authorities to ensure that the missing are accounted for.

Police had earlier used sniffer dogs which helped to locate dead bodies of people buried under the rubble.

Casper Chalera, deputy inspector general of police responsible for operations, said he was trying to partner with the Malawi Defense Force in the search. "In some of the areas, we need actually an excavator so that we can actually sift through those rubbles," he said, "maybe come up with anything that we can find."



In this photo taken on March 17, 2023, Malawi Defense Force soldiers and civilians work to recover body of a victim of a mudslide

South Africa Mulls Options After ICC's Putin Arrest Order

With an International Criminal Court arrest warrant out for Vladimir Putin, South Africa is weighing what to do if the Russian president accepts an earlier invitation to attend an August summit in the country.

The court in The Hague issued an arrest warrant for the Russian leader on March 17 for war crimes involving the deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. South Africa is a signatory to the ICC's Rome Statute that obligates countries to execute the court's international arrest warrants.

But Pretoria is also a close ally with Moscow and has

China, and South Africa. South Africa is due to host a summit of the bloc's leaders this August. Moscow has not yet confirmed whether Putin will attend in person.

Pandor also criticized the ICC for not having what she called an "evenhanded approach" to all leaders responsible for abuses of international law, and for focusing on some states rather than others.

But Darren Bergman, shadow minister for international relations with South Africa's main opposition party the Democratic Alliance, said the government must stick by its ICC commitments.

"The Democratic Alliance believes that the Cabinet should not be extending the invitation any more to President Putin and therefore should withdraw that



Russian President Vladimir Putin and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa speak during a Russia-Africa Summit in the Black Sea resort of Sochi

refrained from criticizing Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine - going as far as holding bilateral talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov earlier this year and hosting Russian war ships in February for joint military exercises.

Naledi Pandor, South Africa's minister for international relations, told local radio station SAFm in an interview that the government was awaiting a refreshed legal opinion on the matter and would then consider its options.

"It is a difficult situation, but, you know, I think that the Cabinet needs to discuss this," she said. "Once I have the opinion I will take it to Cabinet, so our actions will be guided by the overall views of government."

However, the minister demurred on the possibility of withdrawing Putin's invitation to the summit of the group of emerging economic powers known as BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India,

invitation," he said. "If they do not, they should be ready to effect the warrant of arrest on President Putin."

Steven Gruz, a Russia analyst at the South African Institute for International Affairs, told VOA there are a number of routes the government could take. It could dodge the issue by making the BRICS summit virtual, withdraw from the court entirely, or, most likely, he said, they could try looking for some sort of diplomatic immunity for Putin as a sitting head of state.

"We've seen this dilemma before," he said. "In 2015, Omar al-Bashir of Sudan came to South Africa for the African Union Summit and South Africa was ordered to arrest him. There was a local court order. But this was ignored and defied, and he was allowed to escape from a military base."

Lunga Ngqengelele, a spokesman for South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation told VOA the Cabinet would likely discuss the matter this week. VOA

EDITORIAL

2023 electoral glitches: Why NEC is not the only culprit here

FEARS THAT LIBERIA is on the brink of a constitutional crisis, as the country prepares for its October 10 polls, are unimaginable. This is due in parts to several factors and NEC is not the only culprit here.

ELECTIONS, AS WE all know, are processes conducted within a time frame, a delay in executing one event would subsequently affect the proceeding one.

THEREFORE, THE CURRENT looming constitutional crisis cannot be attributed to NEC Commissioners' inability to perform the task ahead as required by law. The Legislative and the Executive Branches of government are equally liable.

ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 80 (c) of the Liberian Constitution, "every Liberian citizen shall have the right to be registered in a constituency, and to vote in public elections only in the constituency where registered...". According to (d) of the same Article, a constituency "shall have an approximately equal population of 20,000, or such number of citizens as the Legislature shall prescribe in keeping with population growth and movements as revealed by a national census; provided that the total number of electoral constituencies in the Republic shall not exceed one hundred."

AT (E), THE CONSTITUTION provides that "immediately following a national census and before the next elections, the Elections Commission shall reapportion the constituencies in accordance with the new population figures so that every constituency shall have as close to the same population as possible; provided, however, that a constituency must be solely within a county."

THE DELAYED CONDUCT of the National Housing and Population Census in 2018, taking place 4-years later, now referred to as the 2022 National Housing and Population Census was the beginning of the brink of the Constitutional crisis created by the Executive Branch of Government aided and abetted by the Legislative Branch, which has since 2018 used "Resolutions" to circumvent constitutional requirements.

HAD THE LEGISLATIVE Branch acted to uphold the Constitution by compelling the Executive to conduct the National Housing and Population Census as mandated by the Constitution and not a "Resolution" to circumvent such an important requirement, NEC would have worked in line with Article 80 (e); because one would expect that a responsible Legislature would have conducted its businesses responsibly.

BUT AS IF THAT has not been enough, funding for the election itself has also been lacking. Few days ago, NEC Chair informed Senators here that as at the 9th of March, 11 days to begin the Voters Registration process, the Commission was yet to receive an initial amount of US\$4 million from the Ministry of Finance to begin the 2023 elections process.

WHAT THIS MEANT was that whatever preparation that should have been made days earlier, had to be pushed ahead due to lack of funding.

THIS INCLUDES DEPLOYMENT of staff, equipment and logistics, payment for rented facilities, etc. These equipment would have been deployed ahead of time and tested days before the first citizen could show up to register. Venues negotiated for would have also been paid for to avoid the current embarrassment, where NEC staffs are being kicked off premises, and would not have reverted to changing registration centers moving some to nearby constituencies.

AGAIN, CREATING ANOTHER confusion ahead of voting day, when a person residing in say, District 3, but had registered in District 8, will be compelled to choose a Representative Candidate that has no responsibility toward his or her District. This is chaotic situation, that must be corrected not just by NEC but the Legislature and the Executive as well.

EACH OF THE two branches of government herein mentioned have played their respective role in creating this chaotic situation. They must now act responsibly to get the country out of this impending chaos - hopefully not by another "resolution."

COMMENTARY

By Jean Pisani-Ferry

Can "Cooperative Rivalry" Work?

PARIS - On the same day that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its latest report on the urgent need for climate action, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. There, the two leaders issued a statement criticizing the West and emphasizing their intention to deepen the Sino-Russian strategic partnership.

It was a revealing coincidence, highlighting the extreme tension in today's international relations. On one hand, preserving global public goods - such as the climate and biodiversity, as well as institutions and procedures to prevent future pandemics - requires urgent coordinated action. On the other hand, geopolitical fragmentation and the intensifying Sino-American rivalry are making coordination increasingly difficult.

Such tension is not entirely unprecedented. Admittedly, geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union did not prevent the two Cold War powers from cooperating to prevent a direct confrontation and curtail nuclear proliferation. But the hierarchy of issues was not the same back then. When the post-World War II order was conceived, the focus was not on managing the global commons, but rather on fostering economic ties through trade and investment, in the hope that this would strengthen political alliances. Preventing climate change, preserving biodiversity, and avoiding the depletion of high-sea fisheries were not on anyone's radar.

More surprisingly, the global commons remained a low priority even into the early 1990s, after the Soviet Union's collapse created an opportunity to rebuild the world system. Although the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro raised awareness about planetary limits, most of the focus in these years was on integrating the newcomers - China, Russia, and Central and Eastern Europe - into the pre-existing web of trade and investment agreements. There were talks about creating a global environmental institution, but these did not go far.

The obstacle was not so much the Cold War's legacy, but rather the global north-south divide. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol on climate change treated Russia, Poland, Hungary, and other ex-communist countries as being on par with advanced economies, but it exempted emerging economies like China and India from meeting similar emissions-reduction targets on development grounds.

While balancing cooperation with geopolitical rivalries is not an entirely new challenge, most of the lessons from the past are ambiguous. While the US and the Soviet Union did avoid a nuclear confrontation, they failed to create a World Health Organization that would be strong enough to overcome geopolitical tensions and protect us from emerging pandemic diseases. On the contrary, the WHO became a field for ideological confrontation.

Unless the US and China can cooperate effectively, despite their deepening rivalry, there will not be much hope of tackling global challenges. The two countries did cooperate in the past. The joint declaration issued by US President Barack Obama and Xi in November 2014 was instrumental in paving the way for the Paris climate agreement the following year. And more recently, John Kerry, President Joe Biden's climate envoy, has continued to communicate with his Chinese counterpart.

Moreover, Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, has stressed that rivalry does not exclude cooperation. As he made clear upon the release of the latest US National Security Strategy, "we've come to a point where we can and simply have to tackle both geopolitical competition and shared transnational challenges on an equal plane. So, we are building a strategy fit for purpose for both competition we cannot ignore and global cooperation without which we cannot succeed." The implication is that cooperation does not require geopolitical alignment or belief in the virtues of democracy.

These are excellent principles. But will deeds match words? Recent events highlight the difficulty of threading this needle. Consider the dispute over the origins of COVID-19, which remains a bone of contention between China and the West. The US and its allies suspect that China is concealing evidence, whereas China regards the demand for an independent international enquiry as an encroachment on its sovereignty. Vaccines also remain a stumbling block, with China paying a high price for having refused (on sovereignty grounds) to purchase vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna. China has also been muddying the waters by insisting that the US give way on unrelated matters in exchange for cooperation on climate-mitigation efforts.

Good intentions will never last long in an environment of mistrust. Unfortunately, no word better describes the current state of the US-China relationship. Last month, the appearance of a Chinese balloon over the US led Secretary of State Antony Blinken to cancel a planned visit to Beijing, and Democrats and Republicans in Washington are now trying to outcompete each other for hawkishness. As the recent congressional grilling of TikTok's CEO showed, neither party wants to be seen as going easy on America's top rival.

The state of the global commons is too serious a matter to be held hostage to permanent political feuding. China and the US must find ways to separate cooperation from rivalry. Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin famously claimed that he would fight terror like there were no peace talks and make peace like there was no terror. To save the planet, today's leaders must take his words to heart and make a similar commitment.

OP-ED

By Nico Muzi, Robin Willoughby

The Food-System Revolution Is Coming

LONDON - Disruption is coming to the agriculture sector. Around the world, livestock farmers are leaving the land, policymakers are targeting the harmful environmental and social effects of industrial meat production, and consumers are shifting away from meat to embrace healthier, more sustainable alternatives. With the sector approaching a crossroads, decision-makers in government, industry, and civil society will need to heed the lessons from major transitions in other industries and start preparing.

The preparation will require a careful inventory of farmers, workers, and consumers' needs. While farmers are growing older and leaving the land for other pursuits or retirement, the agriculture sector is struggling to attract new entrants - and not just in richer industrialized countries. For every farm manager under 40, there are three over the age of 65 in Europe; and from Sub-Saharan Africa to Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the number of older people living in rural areas is increasing while the number of young people declines.

At the same time, farms are becoming larger, and small farm operations are being squeezed. Owing to the challenging economics of farming and the power of a small number of giant industry incumbents, farms are being consolidated in the name of efficiency and economies of scale. As a result, the European Union lost more than one-third of its farms, and 40% of its livestock farms, from 2005 to 2020. Policymakers are thus left to consider whether and how to protect family farms, and how to avoid the risks of animal-welfare violations, poor working conditions, and diseases that are inherent in industrial livestock farming.

Policymakers are also waking up to the compelling body of evidence about industrial meat production's environmental harms. While agriculture accounts for nearly one-third of all greenhouse-gas emissions, livestock alone (particularly cattle) contribute nearly 15%. Moreover, animal agriculture is the main cause of deforestation and biodiversity loss. Forests are razed to free up land not just for animal grazing but also for the additional crops needed to feed those animals. Beef production alone takes up some 60% of land used for agriculture, even though it contributes less than 2% of total calories consumed globally.

In Spain, factory-farm pollution has become so pervasive that pig manure has contaminated nearly one-quarter of all ground and surface water in the country. No wonder regulators are urgently seeking ways to target livestock pollution and produce more on less land. Given the increasing risk that infectious diseases will spread from animals to humans (zoonoses) through industrial livestock farming, the impetus for tighter regulation will only grow.

While livestock and agriculture have traditionally been excluded from most emissions-reduction schemes, policymakers in Denmark, the Netherlands, and New Zealand are already working to close this gap, and many other countries will soon follow suit. The question now is not whether there will be increased regulation of the livestock industry, but what shape and form it will take. Farmers and companies alike should be prepared to adapt to changes that are now inevitable.

Finally, consumers, too, are shifting away from meat and dairy. Over the past decade, the average person's meat consumption has decreased by almost 17% in the United Kingdom and by 11% in Germany. Notwithstanding a recent slowdown, there is still growth in the uptake of alternative proteins - a food source that produces only a tiny fraction of the negative environmental and animal-welfare effects of traditional meat products. Plant-based meat and milk sales are already trending up across the board in the EU, but also in countries like Thailand and South Africa. When these products reach taste and price parity with meat, their uptake by consumers could accelerate very quickly indeed.

Public policy also has a role to play. Livestock farming tends to be heavily subsidized in many countries, owing to the sector's low margins and high levels of debt. As sales fall, declining revenue is likely to have significant welfare implications for farmers and other workers tied to the industrial meat-production systems.

Given the complexities of these interacting trends, policymakers and corporate leaders need to start getting in front of this issue now. The experience of other sectors that have begun decarbonizing - not least energy - shows that a planned and guided transition is always better than an ad hoc, unmanaged process.

One need look no further than last year's farmer protests in the Netherlands or New Zealand to see how abruptly climate policies can be disrupted when workers and communities feel left out. Unfortunately, we still have only a limited understanding of how best to integrate policy and corporate action to reduce food-system emissions while also protecting livelihoods. Since resisting change is not an option, policymakers and corporate leaders would do well to start thinking about how they will manage it in the coming years.

OPINION

By Raghuram G. Rajan and Viral V. Acharya

The Fed's Role in the Bank Failures

CHICAGO - The recent bank collapses in the United States seem to have an obvious cause. Ninety percent of the deposits at Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and Signature Bank were uninsured, and uninsured deposits are understandably prone to runs. Moreover, both banks had invested significant sums in long-term bonds, the market value of which fell as interest rates rose. When SVB sold some of these bonds to raise funds, the unrealized losses embedded in its bond portfolio started coming to light. A failed equity offering then set off the run on deposits that sealed its fate.

But four elements of this simple explanation suggest that the problem may be more systemic. First, there is typically a huge increase in uninsured bank deposits whenever the US Federal Reserve engages in quantitative easing. Because it involves buying securities from the market in exchange for the central bank's own liquid reserves (a form of cash), QE not only increases the size of the central-bank balance sheet, but also drives an expansion in the broader banking system's balance sheet and its uninsured demandable deposits.

We (along with co-authors) called attention to this under-appreciated fact in a paper presented at the Fed's annual Jackson Hole conference in August 2022. As the Fed resumed QE during the pandemic, uninsured bank deposits rose from about \$5.5 trillion at the end of 2019 to over \$8 trillion by the first quarter of 2022. At SVB, deposit inflows increased from less than \$5 billion in the third quarter of 2019 to an average of \$14 billion per quarter during QE. But when the Fed ended QE, raised interest rates, and switched quickly to quantitative tightening (QT), these flows reversed. SVB started seeing an increase in outflows of uninsured deposits (some of which were coincident with the downturn in the tech sector, as the bank's stressed clients started drawing down cash reserves).

Second, many banks, having benefited from the firehose of deposits, purchased liquid longer-term securities such as Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities, in order to generate a profitable "carry": an interest-rate spread that provided yields above what the banks had to pay on deposits. Ordinarily, this would not be so risky. Long-term interest rates had not moved up much for a long time; and even if they did start to rise, bankers understand that depositors tend to be sleepy and will accept low deposit rates for a long time, even when market interest rates move up. The banks thus felt protected by both history and depositor complacency.

Yet this time was different, because these were flighty uninsured deposits. Having been generated by Fed action, they were always poised to flow out when the Fed changed course. And because large depositors can coordinate easily among themselves, actions taken by just a few can trigger a cascade. Even at healthy banks, depositors who have woken up to bank risk and the healthier interest rates available at money-market funds will want to be compensated with higher interest rates. The juicy interest-rate spreads between investments and somnolent deposits will be threatened, impairing bank profitability and solvency. As an apt saying in the financial sector goes, "The road to hell is paved with positive carry."

The third concern is that these first two elements have been magnified today. The last time the Fed switched to QT and interest-rate hikes, in 2017-19, the increase in policy rates was less sudden and sizable, and the volume of interest-sensitive securities held by banks was smaller. Consequently, the losses that bank balance sheets needed to absorb were small, and there were no depositor runs, even though many of the same ingredients were in place. This time, the quantum of interest-rate increases, their rapidity, and bank holdings of rate-sensitive assets are all much larger, with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation suggesting that losses on available-for-sale and held-to-maturity bank securities holdings alone could exceed \$1.5 trillion.

The fourth concern is unwitting supervisory coordination with the industry. Clearly, too many supervisors failed to see banks' rising interest-rate exposure, or they were unable to force banks to reduce it. Had supervision been more forceful (we still are trying to gauge the extent to which it fell short), fewer banks would be in trouble today. Another problem, however, is that supervisors did not subject all banks to the same level of scrutiny that they applied to the largest institutions (which were subject to stress tests, among other things). These differential standards may have caused a migration of risky commercial real-estate loans (think of all those half-empty office buildings during the pandemic) from larger, better capitalized banks to relatively weakly capitalized small and midsize banks.

The upshot is that while many vulnerabilities in the banking system were created by bankers themselves, the Fed also contributed to the problem. Periodic bouts of QE have expanded banks' balance sheets and stuffed them with more uninsured deposits, making the banks increasingly dependent on easy liquidity. This dependency adds to the difficulty of reversing QE and tightening monetary policy. The larger the scale of QE and the longer its duration, the more time the Fed should take when normalizing its balance sheet and, ideally, raising interest rates.

Unfortunately, these financial-stability concerns conflict with the Fed's inflation-fighting mandate. Markets now expect the Fed to cut rates at a time of significantly above-target inflation, and some observers are calling for a halt to QT. The Fed is again providing liquidity in large quantities through its discount window and other channels. If financial-sector problems do not slow the economy, such actions could prolong the fight against inflation and make it more costly.

The bottom line is clear: As it re-examines bank behavior and supervision, the Fed cannot afford to ignore the role that its own monetary policies (especially QE) played in creating today's difficult conditions.

Raghuram G. Rajan, former governor of the Reserve Bank of India, is Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and the author, most recently, of *The Third Pillar: How Markets and the State Leave the Community Behind* (Penguin, 2020). Viral V. Acharya, a former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India, is Professor of Economics at New York University's Stern School of Business.

ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

No Jail house for president

Liberia's President George M. Weah departed the country on Friday, March 17 to honor an invitation by US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief, Bill Burns following the latter's visit here early this year.

Unlike regular official visits where the nation is kept updated with the President's activities abroad via dispatches or press releases accompanied by videos, photographs, and social media posts, this visit had none to show.

The inconspicuous nature of the President's meeting at the CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia, U.S.A. has left much room for speculations.

Some Liberians at home and abroad are suggesting that the president was placed under investigation to answer to crimes of money laundering, extrajudicial killings, plundering the country's resources, drug trafficking, and the like.

Others say the president was summoned to be given the matching order, but instead was given a deal of his presidential lifetime support by the CIA for the establishment of a CIA sub-headquarters, but all of these remained speculations.

President Weah was accompanied by Amb. Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Cllr. Musah Dean, Minister of Justice; Maj. Gen (Rtd). Daniel Ziankahn, Minister of National Defense; Mawine Diggs, Minister of Commerce and Industry; Ledgerhood Julius Rennie, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism; Samuel D. Tweah, Jr., Minister of Finance and Development Planning; and Lenn Eugene Nagbe, Commissioner of Liberia Maritime Authority.

Sources close to the Langley say, no member of the President's delegation except for Cllr. Dean and his private lawyer, Deputy Speaker Cllr. Fonati Koffa who traveled solo via Accra were said to have attended what has been speculated as interrogation of Mr. Weah by the CIA.

But why would the CIA want to investigate a sitting president?

Historically, the CIA is not noted for inviting sitting presidents to its headquarters for investigation or for coronating same as its agent.

What the CIA is noted for historically is its alleged roles in the assassination of dictators around the world and installing puppets of the US in place of those dictators.

Since the 19th century, for instance, the United States government has participated and interfered, both overtly and covertly, in the replacement of many foreign governments.

In the latter half of the 19th century, the U.S. government initiated actions for regime change mainly in Latin America and the southwest Pacific, including the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars.

At the onset of the 20th century, the United States shaped or installed governments in many countries around the world, including neighbors Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

In short, there would have been no need for much publicity if the CIA had found president Weah as a person of interest.

There are many ways the spy agency would have gotten at President Weah as it has operated in the past if its intention is to have him answer to alleged atrocious crimes committed under his watch.

However, could it have been possible that the CIA intended to tell the President to his face how his actions and inactions are affecting the US interests in the sub-region? That too could have been done quietly as the CIA is well known for its secret operations.

But none of the above is known except for the speculations coming out of Langley that Mr. Weah had been placed under investigation to the delights of many.

From all indications, it appears that there are some Liberians who would have celebrated the arrest of the president since in their mind that would have been the right thing to do.

Weah and his delegation are expected back home on Tuesday, March 28, the press statement pertaining to this much-speculated visit would only clarify or leave room for more questions than answers. Until then, we will never know what transpired at Langley.

Lonestar MTN launches MoMo heroes

Starts from back page

participate. Nomination is currently ongoing and will last for two weeks.

After the nomination process, all nominees will be researched and investigated by the governing council and the board of judges headed by Leymah Gbowee and Carter Center Liberia Executive James Dorbor Jallah, among others.

The program is expected to climax in June 2023 at the EJS Ministerial Complex in Congo Town.

Speaking at the official launch of the initiative, Lonestar Cell MTN Deputy Chief Executive Officer Mr. Ali Fakih said they are doing this as a means to celebrate and recognize the impact and effort of ordinary Liberians in helping change their society and community.

He urged all Liberians to be compassionate, support each other, and be a mountain behind the heroines and heroes of change in their various communities. According to him, since Lonestar Cell MTN was established, the company has helped to improve community creativity, school bathrooms, installation of computer labs, and several other community development initiatives.

Mr. Fakih explained that the project is in line with the Universal Principle of Human Rights, Labor, Environment, and Act 17 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). "The Momo Heroes of [a] change program is a continuation of our commitment to giving back to the Liberian People and the community we operate," he said. "There are thousands of people in Liberia who



are working steadfastly to improve the lives of people in their community. There are different developments they are involved with."

He noted that these heroes and heroines are changing communities around Liberia for the globe.



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- The University of Liberia College of health Sciences through the Office of Fiduciary Services (ULCHS-OFS) receive a grant from the USAID/PEER/NAS towards Strengthening medical training and build specialty and subspecialty medical capacity of Liberia's next generation of medical doctors. The ULCHS-OFS intends to apply part of the grants to payments under the Contract for refurbishing of three laboratories (Chemistry, Physics, & Biology) at university of Liberia Fendel Campus and one at ULCHS Medical School.
- The University of Liberia College of Health Sciences (ULCHS) is hereby soliciting quotations from eligible and interested vendors to Supply Assorted Laboratory Equipment and Reagents. The Goods are to be quoted with the below details and subsequently supplied and installed. All Goods must be in a good condition and must amount to the absolute value for Donor's money. Only prices within acceptable range for standardized and quality Goods will be considered.

NO.	RFQ REFERENCE NO.	DESCRIPTION
1	RFQ-ULCHS/OFS/2023/021	Supply Assorted Laboratory Equipment- Lot 1
2	RFQ-ULCHS/OFS/2023/022	Supply of Assorted Chemical & Reagent- Lot -2

- The Office of Fiduciary Services of the University of Liberia College of Health Sciences now invites sealed Quotes from eligible and qualified Suppliers for the listing supply contracts listed above.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the **University of Liberia College of Health Sciences Office of Fiduciary Services (Attention: email: ulchsofs@ul.edu.lr)** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 0900 hours 1600 hours each working day;
- A complete set of **Request for Quotation Documents** in ENGLISH may be attained obtained by interested bidders on the submission of a written Application to the address below at the offices of the **ULCHS-OFS Office at the A. M. Dogliotti School of Medicine, Congo Town adjacent Catholic Hospital** for **FREE OF CHARGE**.
- Bidding will be conducted through **Request for Quotation (RFQ)** and is open to all bidders within Liberia. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and specification of goods will be indicated in the RFQ document.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **April 19, 2023, at the hour of 1:00 P.M local time**. Electronic bidding **WILL NOT BE PERMITTED**. Late bids will be rejected.
- Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend in person at the address below at the **Main Conference Room of the ULCHS** on **April 19, 2023, at the hour of 1:15 PM local time**.
- Pre-Bid meeting for all interested bidders will be on Friday, April 4, 2023 at the hour of 2:30 p.m. at the Main Conference Room of the ULCHS.**

The address referred to above is:

Attention: Dr. Bernice T. Dahn
Vice President- University of Liberia College of Health Sciences
Republic of Liberia

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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“Sustain the Spotlight on Water Issues”

- Amb. Fyneah Urges Leaders at UN Water Conference

Liberia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Her Excellency Sarah Safyn Fyneah, is urging the world to

Action on Water and Sanitation and SDG 6--Clean Water and Sanitation.

The Liberian Diplomat called for enhanced cooperation, partnerships, and solidarity with developing countries, stressing that such partnerships must prioritize assistance through financing, and knowledge and skills sharing, with the aim to accelerate progress towards achieving universal access to safe water and sanitation.

Ambassador Fyneah then reaffirmed the Government of Liberia's commitment to address challenges that are hindering progress and advance the implementation of existing water-related goals and targets.

Ambassador Fyneah: "In our national capacity, we will work diligently and strategically to restore existing water infrastructure to its pre-war capacity, address funding constraints, which impact efforts to roll out policies and implement measures to improve access to safe water, basic sanitation and hygiene; and evaluate the efficiency of service delivery. We further commit to undertaking intentional strides to universal access by 2030, to equitable, safe, affordable, and sustainable water supply and sanitation services for all Liberians; to improve monitoring mechanism at national, county, district, and community level to allow for an

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Amb. Fyneah

sustain the spotlight on water challenges in national, continental, and global forums.

The Liberian Envoy cautioned that the world cannot afford to wait another 50 years to take concrete actions in addressing the severe water-related challenges globally.

Ambassador Fyneah made the call when she addressed, on behalf of His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of Liberia, the 2023 United Nations Water Conference. The Conference

objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development" (2018-2028), and identifying ways to accelerate progress towards universal access to safe water and sanitation by 2030.

Ambassador Fyneah encouraged all stakeholders, including Member States and the United Nations, to make intentional and bold efforts to turn the political momentum created by the 2023 Water Conference into tangible and ambitious actions to implement the UN Decade for

Bong: Rubber Farmers angry with Firestone Liberia

By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan

Aggrieved rubber farmers in Tugbalee District have expressed frustration over the failure of Firestone Liberia to purchase their rubber for nearly five months now. The farmers said they entered an agreement with Firestone to purchase their rubber after harvesting, but the company has not looked to them since November 2022. "We agreed that only Firestone will be buying our rubber but since November last year, they have not even taken one ton from us and our rubbers are being stolen by unknown people. Besides that, they are getting dry in the sun by the day." Moses Kellen, the head of the rubber Farmers in Tugbalee said on behalf of his group.

Mr. Kellen stated that their produce is diminishing by the day as they have been lying in the sun since November. He said the situation has

constrained farmers to sleep by their rubber to protect them from criminals.

They complained that Firestone Liberia's action has rendered them embarrassment and untold suffering, as their



children have been put out of schools, while their wives quarrel with them over their failure to take care of their homes.

They want the company to purchase their rubber

immediately to save them from embarrassment.

Responding to the farmers' quest, Firestone Liberia Purchase Manager, Jimmy Hina appealing to the farmers said the company has been challenged. Hina asserted that the company has a huge

stockpile in its warehouse, because of the reprocessing of huge quantities of rubber shipped back to them by a company in the United States

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

VP Taylor inspires young girls

Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor, encourages Liberian girls to plan their future by aspiring to become women who will be responsible enough to fetch for themselves and then aim for higher heights in the society.

She urges young girls to dream and ensure that their dreams are realized by acquiring education and skills to contribute meaningfully to the changing world of which Liberia is a part.

Mrs. Taylor gave the challenge over the weekend at a one-day mentorship forum organized by the group, Books Before Boys in Monrovia.

She reflects that over the last 20 or more years women leaders in Liberia have been in the full front of advocating for young girls to have the space to grow, learn, dream and inspire to be become productive.

She expresses concern about

for the child to grow up and achieve a reality with support of family and society.

At the same time, she strongly warns young girls against ruining their lives by engaging in unwholesome activities that could expose them to risks and instead, hold themselves in high esteem to command respect from their male counterparts.

She specifically cautions against being influenced by material things, including indecent dress code and early sex that could eventually ruin their lives, leading to frustrations and early death.

"You have to be careful with fast life in doing crazy and strange things; it does not carry you anywhere because if you are not healthy, your dreams and aspirations will die, Vice President Taylor warns young girls here.

Among high profile guests who attended the forum was the British Ambassador to Liberia, Neil Bradley and hundreds of young



Young females at the one-day mentorship forum organized by Books Before Books

the social activities of some young people, who have been carried away by material gains, instead of preparing themselves for the future.

"So as a leader, you have to be yourself because you are the value of who you are," VP Taylor notes, adding "It doesn't matter where you come from; it can be West Point, Slipway and Old Road, you have to make your dream a reality."

"What matters is that God has given you a life and you need [to be] determined in your dreams because the sky is just the beginning and once you make up your minds that is what you want to do or be, you have to be confident in yourself", she continues.

According to her, every child is born with a dream and it is left

girls from schools across Montserrado County.

According to the 2022 Human Rights Report on Liberia released last week by the U.S. States Department, sexual and gender-based violence, early marriage and pregnancy and unequal division of domestic labor pose constraints to girls' education.

"Girls comprised less than half of all students and graduates in primary and secondary schools, with their proportion decreasing progressively at higher levels of education. Poor and rural girls experienced the highest levels of disadvantage, with 14 percent completing primary school, 2 percent completing secondary school, and 57 percent having no formal education at all", the report says. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Liberia faces governance catastrophe

-EFFL alleges

By Lewis S. Teh

The Economic Freedom Fighters of Liberia (EFFL) political party has urged its partisans and Liberians in general to prevent the re-occurrence of a governance catastrophe.

EFFL Commander-in-Chief

endeavor as conscious gladiators of this mass-based political party, the EFFL, and Liberians in general, to prevent this governance catastrophe from its re-occurrence," he said.

"Fellow citizens, we want to inform you that Liberia has consistently experienced a democratic abortion under this

should be above the Judiciary or the Legislature. The EFFL leader contended that the current governance architecture is structured around people he referred to as first-class sycophants, setting unrealistic expectations for Liberia.

"We can't proceed in gross violation of existing laws and still envisage a better nation," Gonquoi argued.

Gonquoi claimed that President Weah has been acting contrary to his oath of office to uphold and defend the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Liberia. He accused the president of appointing members of his ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) to government. Gonquoi lamented that these appointees simultaneously held party executive positions and appointed offices respectively in violation of provisions of the Code of Conduct. According to the EFFL leader, the Code of Conduct prohibits officers or employees in the Executive Branch of Government or any agency from taking any active part in political management or political campaigns.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

Chaos, impunity loom

By Lincoln G. Peters

Liberia's former Information Minister Amb. Lewis G. Brown says the country is gradually descending into serious chaos due to the high level of impunity, and lawlessness here.

"There is a total break down of law and order around us. You compromise one law, you should be ready to compromise all," Amb. Brown said during a press conference over the weekend.

The former Liberian Ambassador to the United Nations is now the chairman of the Campaign Team of presidential hopeful Alexander B. Cummings who heads the opposition Collaboration Political Parties (CPP)/Alternative National

normal to be lawless. He warned that lawlessness will stop all citizens ultimately, thereby suggesting the need for everyone to work collectively to end lawlessness and impunity in the country. "We must end this attitude of lawlessness. I want to speak on this matter of national urgency. All around us we are witnessing fear and violence in our country all because of lawlessness," said Amb. Brown.

He complained about disregard for the rule of law and in some cases agencies, and those with the authority to uphold the law are not doing so. According to him, recently, the University of Liberia was seen not as a place of learning, because it was it had



Emmanuel D. Gonquoi alleged during a press conference in Oldest Congo Town Tuesday, 28 March 2023 that Liberia is experiencing 'democratic abortion' under President George Manneh Weah's rule.

"Fellow citizens, we must

President, and democracy under this President has been replaced by an Absolute Monarchy form of government," he alleged.

Gonquoi claimed that Liberia is on a very terrible path under President Weah, arguing that no one president

Liberia: EPA attributes frequent water-related disasters to Climate Change

The Deputy Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, Hon. Randall M. Dobayou, II has told a gathering in New York, United States of America that climate change is leading to more severe and frequent water-related disasters.

Speaking on Thursday, March 23, 2023, at an interactive dialogue on 'Water for Climate Resilience, Environment, and Biodiversity' at the ongoing United Nations Conference in New York, Hon. Dobayou said climate change also worsens environmental degradation, including pollution, increased water temperatures, ecosystem loss, economies, societies, and the environment.

He disclosed that the water resource potential of Liberia is encouraging, but said that the West African country lacks adequate, and proper management in the context of access to resources.

"Liberia is one of the world's wettest countries but lacks vital networks to reach everyone with clean drinking water," the EPA Deputy

Executive Director said. According to him, the President of Liberia His Excellency Dr. George M. Weah has constantly advocated for a program to distribute quality and safe drinking water to all Liberians.

He further told the gathering that over the last few years, the Government of

Designated Authority (NDA) has struggled to secure finance from the Green Climate Funds to make a significant intervention in the Wash sector because of many bureaucratic challenges," Deputy Director Dobayou said.

He said, "We are therefore asking for a substantial reduction in the bureaucracy



Randall M. Dobayou, EPA Deputy Executive Director

Liberia focused on upgrading the country's WASH infrastructure and service provision. "We want to keep providing universal sustainable and equitable access to safe drinking water. Unfortunately, the EPA as the National

to allow developing countries such as Liberia access resources as we work to increase our strategic urban and rural water supply by 100% under our SDG target by 2030".

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Congress (ANC).

Amb. Brown told the press conference that Liberia is gradually dragging into chaos and violence because of the high level of impunity and lawlessness practiced by the government.

"We have to speak and protect this country because we are in [a] crucial period. If we continue to ignore the violence and conflict that is breeding, Liberia will not be able to stop the conflict tomorrow," he warned.

"Let us pray for our country, Liberia. We are in a difficult time. All this is act of lawlessness happening because there is too much impunity in the country," Amb. Brown said further.

He said in traffic, people drive lawlessly, everybody [is] taking every opposite lane. At the height of this, he lamented that there is this simple truth that there is too much impunity in this country.

Amb. Brown warned that while Liberia descends into chaos, silence is only acting to perform chaos and lawlessness.

According to him, the wrong message is sent when the country becomes so lawless, and when

descended into chaos, dishonor and violence by government officials with authority to provide law and order in the country.

He also stated that many Liberians also lost their lives in a recent tragic car accident because of the same lawlessness in driving.

The former Information Minister contended that chaos and lawlessness will only multiply in the country when those with authority to act decide to not act, even if they are asked to do so by law.

"When you are supposed to act fearlessly, fairly, independently and you fail to do so, then you yourself [are] setting the basis for chaos and confusion in the country," said Amb. Brown. He reminded those in authority that they have a duty to protect the country's democracy, noting that too many give their lives for this democracy that Liberians are enjoying. He claimed that lawlessness and fear are too much to the point that government officials can only speak the truth in private.

Français

Le groupe Women Accountability Room condamne la violence électorale

La Women Accountability Room a exprimé sa préoccupation face aux allégations de violence émergeant dans de nombreuses régions du pays au début de l'opération d'enrôlement des électeurs.

Dans un communiqué de slogans du parti, en dépit du fait que la police ait tenté de les empêcher.

“Dans le comté de Grand Bassa, Me Charlyne Brumskine a affirmé sur Facebook que ses partisans ont remis à la police un certain Mathew Joe, qui aurait menacé d'incendier son bureau”, indique le communiqué.

gardes du corps qui aurait été battu. Ces accusations sont assez graves et ne peuvent être prises à la légère.

Le groupe déplore les actes de violence présumés liés ou non aux élections qui se sont produits ces derniers temps.

Il craint que cela n'ait la capacité non seulement de menacer des vies, mais également de porter atteinte aux moyens de subsistance et de tous les habitants, principalement des femmes, qui ne sont pas été en mesure d'entreprendre des projets pour subvenir aux besoins de leurs familles.

Le groupe a fait valoir que l'article 10.25 de la nouvelle loi électorale stipule que toute personne qui tente, aide ou conspire avec une autre personne pour commettre une infraction électorale est coupable d'une infraction électorale.

“La clause 10:24 (i) identifie la “création de désordre” comme l'un des délits électoraux. En outre, la section 10:25 de la nouvelle [loi] électorale accorde à la Commission électorale nationale le droit de prendre sua sponte l'engagement des contrevenants et imposer une sanction civile s'il est déterminé qu'un contrevenant présumé a commis une infraction

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



presse, le groupe a cité des informations de certains quotidiens locaux concernant l'utilisation de gaz lacrymogène par la police pour disperser des membres de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC) lorsque le chef de la ligue des jeunes du parti et ses militants se sont rendus dans le district # 10 de Montserrado pour s'inscrire, en scandant des

Selon le groupe de femmes, c'est la deuxième fois qu'un agresseur est remis à la police à Grand Bassa.

“Nous nous souvenons très bien des deux appels à l'aide de Me Gloria Musu Scott [avant] l'attaque finale qui a entraîné la mort de sa fille Charloe Musu”.

Il fait savoir que dans le district 7, des plaintes ont été déposées par Madame Wadei Powell concernant l'un de ses

Massacre du 28-Septembre en Guinée : les six premiers mois d'un procès historique

Le 28 septembre 2022 s'ouvrait le procès du massacre du stade de Conakry de 2009. Pour la première fois dans l'histoire de la Guinée, d'anciens maîtres du pays, dont l'ex-capitaine Moussa Dadis Camara, sont jugés pour leur participation présumée à un crime de masse de plus de 150 morts et d'une centaine de viols. Un procès inédit à plus d'un titre.

En décidant d'ouvrir le procès un 28 septembre, le colonel Mamadi Doumbouya, actuel président de transition en Guinée, souhaitait sans nul doute graver son nom dans l'histoire politique guinéenne. En 1958, c'est ce jour que l'ancienne colonie française vote pour son indépendance, portée par son premier président Ahmed Sékou Touré.

Le 28 septembre 2009, dans l'enceinte du stade éponyme à Conakry, les forces de la junte CNDD organisent l'exécution de 156

personnes participant à un meeting de l'opposition. Au moins 109 femmes sont violées durant le massacre et dans les casernes et les hôpitaux les jours qui suivent. Treize ans plus tard, jour pour jour, onze prévenus membres du CNDD dont leur chef, Moussa Dadis Camara, comparaissent devant la justice de leur pays. Une première censée marquer la fin de l'impunité dans un pays tristement réputé pour ses innombrables crimes commis par l'État.

« Le bilan de ces six premiers mois de procès est plutôt positif, estime Me Halimatou Camara, avocate des parties civiles et militante féministe. On ne mesure pas encore l'ampleur des enjeux après 64 ans de culture d'impunité, mais c'est un bon début. »

Malgré ses appréhensions sur les défis sécuritaires et

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Éditorial

Pourquoi il ne faut pas accuser la NEC la NEC

Pendant que le Libéria se prépare pour les élections du 10 octobre, la crainte d'une crise constitutionnelle due en partie à plusieurs facteurs est énorme.

Les élections, comme nous le savons tous, sont un processus qui se fait selon un calendrier donné, tout retard qu'accuse une opération relative aux élections pourrait affecter la suite de l'opération.

Par conséquent, la crise constitutionnelle imminente actuelle ne peut être attribuée à l'incapacité des commissaires de la NEC à accomplir la tâche qui les attend, comme l'exige la loi. Les pouvoirs législatif et exécutif de l'État sont également responsables.

Selon l'article 80c de la Constitution libérienne, « tout citoyen libérien a le droit d'être inscrit dans une circonscription et de voter aux élections publiques uniquement dans la circonscription où il est inscrit... ». Selon le point (d) du même article, une circonscription “doit avoir une population approximativement égale à 20 000 habitants, ou un nombre de citoyens que le pouvoir législatif aura prescrit en fonction de la croissance et des mouvements de population, comme en témoigne les résultats d'un recensement national, pourvu que le nombre total des circonscriptions électorales de la République ne dépasse pas cent.

Au point e, la Constitution prévoit que « immédiatement après un recensement national et avant les prochaines élections, la Commission électorale procède au découpage des circonscriptions en fonction des nouveaux chiffres de la population afin que chaque circonscription ait autant que possible la même population; à condition toutefois qu'une circonscription soit uniquement à l'intérieur d'un comté.

Le retard du Recensement national du logement et de la population qui devrait avoir lieu en 2018, mais qui a fini par avoir lieu 4 ans plus tard. Le Recensement national du logement et de la population de 2022, a marqué le début de la crise constitutionnelle créée par le pouvoir exécutif, aidé et encouragé par le pouvoir législatif, qui utilise depuis 2018 des « résolutions » pour contourner les exigences constitutionnelles.

Si le pouvoir législatif avait agi pour faire respecter la Constitution en obligeant l'exécutif à procéder au recensement national du logement et de la population comme l'exige la Constitution, la NEC aurait travaillé conformément à l'article 80 (e). On s'attendait en tout à ce que le pouvoir législatif soit assez responsable.

Mais comme si cela ne suffisait pas, le financement de l'élection elle-même a également fait défaut. Il y a quelques jours, le président de la NEC a informé les sénateurs qu'au 9 mars, à 11 jours du début de l'opération d'enrôlement des électeurs, la Commission n'avait pas encore reçu le montant initial de 4 millions de dollars du ministère des Finances pour commencer le processus électoral de 2023.

Cela signifie que même si la commission électorale était prête pour quelque activité que ce soit elle aurait été repoussée en raison du manque de financement.

Fût-ce le déploiement du personnel, du matériel et de la logistique ou le paiement des locaux loués, etc, cela ne changerait rien. Ces équipements auraient été déplorés à l'avance et testés des jours avant que le premier citoyen puisse se présenter pour s'inscrire. Les lieux négociés auraient également été payés pour éviter l'embarras actuel, où le personnel de la NEC est expulsé des locaux, et n'aurait pas recommencé à changer de centre d'inscription en déplaçant certains vers les circonscriptions voisines.

Encore une fois, quand une personne qui réside par exemple dans le district 3 s'inscrit dans le district 8 et veut choisir un candidat qui n'a aucune responsabilité envers son district, que fera-t-il. C'est une situation chaotique, qui doit être corrigée non seulement par le NEC, mais aussi par les pouvoirs législatif et exécutif.

Chacun des deux pouvoirs mentionnés a joué un rôle dans la création de cette situation chaotique. Ils doivent maintenant faire preuve de responsabilité pour sortir le pays de ce chaos imminent.

Français

Le groupe Women Accountability Room

électorale. »

À la lumière des incidents signalés, le groupe a demandé à la Commission électorale nationale de prendre note de la violence et de répondre en vertu de sa responsabilité statutaire, comme l'indiqué la nouvelle loi électorale.

« Nous exigeons également que la Police nationale libérienne réponde de manière impartiale et rapide pour éviter la désintégration de la situation. Nous exigeons que chaque plainte fasse l'objet

d'une enquête approfondie, compétente et efficace, conduisant à une justice rapide et définitive », a-t-il ajouté.

En outre, le groupe a déclaré qu'il prévoyait un soutien proactif du secteur de la sécurité pour garantir la sécurité de tous les acteurs politiques, quelle que soit leur affiliation politique.

« Enfin, nous appelons le président George Manneh Weah et tous les dirigeants des partis politiques à condamner la violence qui se produit dans tout le pays et à appeler à un processus d'enregistrement pacifique », a dit le groupe.

Massacre du 28-Septembre en Guinée

politiques, le journaliste et sociologue Boubacar Sanso Barry, du site d'actualité Le Djely, partage un constat similaire : « Finalement, le procès se déroule normalement. Je craignais que sa tenue donne lieu à des protestations, notamment depuis la région d'origine de Dadis », confie-t-il.

La première comparution de « Toumba » va susciter un réel intérêt pour le procès

Dans un bâtiment flamboyant neuf et spécialement construit pour accueillir le procès, les onze personnalités politiques et militaires, dont certains étaient ministres du gouvernement de transition de l'époque, ont tous défilé à la barre pour répondre aux accusations de meurtre, violences sexuelles, torture, séquestrations, entre autres crimes graves.

Le bal s'est ouvert avec le colonel Moussa Tiegboro Camara, ex-ministre chargé de la lutte contre le grand banditisme, la drogue et les services spéciaux, suivi de Marcel Guilavogui, neveu de Dadis, présenté comme l'un des acteurs principaux de la répression du stade.

Mais c'est la première comparution d'Aboubacar Diakité dit « Toumba », aide de camp du capitaine Dadis, qui va susciter un réel intérêt pour le procès. « Ça a été le grand moment du procès, et pourtant, c'était totalement inattendu », se rappelle Alamy Kalla Conté, journaliste spécialisé dans les questions judiciaires à la Radio Télévision guinéenne.

Dans une démonstration gesticulée d'une rare éloquence, vêtu d'un bazin étincelant et ponctuant son récit de versets du Coran, Toumba déroule le fil des événements qui ont conduit à la tuerie du 28 septembre 2009 comme sa rencontre avec Dadis Camara, le « pacte de sang » qu'ils ont conclu,

leur ascension à la tête de l'État par un putsch, la totale désorganisation des forces armées, sa tentative présumée de stopper le massacre du stade, et, devenu fugitif, sa fuite au Sénégal après avoir tiré une balle dans la tête de son capitaine-président qui, selon lui, voulait lui faire porter le chapeau.

« À partir de là, tout le monde a commencé à suivre le procès à la télévision ou sur le téléphone portable, poursuit Alamy Kalla Conté. Ça a permis d'occuper l'esprit des populations, très éprouvées par les violences liées au troisième mandat du président Alpha Condé et au putsch qui l'a renversé un an auparavant. Sans compter la situation socio-économique difficile. »

Déception face à la déposition de Camara

Depuis, Toumba est une star en Guinée. Au point que certains arborent des t-shirts à son effigie et clament d'emblée son innocence. Les vidéos de ses audiences ont largement dépassé le million de vues sur internet. C'est bien plus que Moussa Dadis Camara. Sa comparution était pourtant la plus attendue mais « sa part de vérité » va vite décevoir, tant la défense de l'ancien capitaine est confuse. « Alors qu'il s'est toujours montré ouvert à la tenue d'un procès, l'attitude agacée de Dadis face aux magistrats n'est pas si étonnante, son caractère impulsif et sa déconnexion avec la réalité le reflète tel qu'on le connaît déjà », ajoute Boubacar Sanso Barry.

Le journaliste politique évoque la rencontre, en décembre 2021, à Conakry, entre l'ancien capitaine et le général Sékouba Konaté qui l'a succédé à la tête de la transition. Des retrouvailles organisées par le président putschiste actuel, Mamadi Doumbouya. « À ses yeux, c'est comme si ce procès n'était qu'une formalité pour laver son honneur afin de revenir en politique. Peut-être que les autorités actuelles lui ont laissé croire cela et aujourd'hui, il se retrouve piégé », analyse M. Barry.

Koijee met en garde la NEC contre la discrimination



Charloe Musu

Dr. Benedict Kolee

Le secrétaire général de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC) et maire de Monrovia, Jefferson T. Koijee, a demandé à la Commission électorale nationale (NEC) de ne pas empêcher certains Libériens de se faire enregistrer sur les listes électorales à cause de leur nom de famille. « Nous obtenons des informations selon lesquelles des personnes sont empêchées de se faire enregistrer par la NEC parce qu'elles portent des noms tels que Jalloh, Barry, Kamara et Fofana », a déclaré M. Koijee.

« Nous voulons dire que ces personnes sont des Libériens et que quiconque les empêche de se faire enrôler se livre à la discrimination, ce qui constitue une violation de leurs droits », a-t-il ajouté. Le maire de Monrovia a fait valoir que personne n'a le droit d'empêcher des Libériens de se faire inscrire à cause de leur nom de famille. Dans un développement connexe, M. Koijee a condamné tous les actes de violence qui ont émaillé l'opération d'enrôlement et appelé la police à faire preuve d'impartialité. Son appel est intervenu à la suite de violences répétées dans la circonscription électorale n° 10 du comté de

Montserrado entre des personnes soupçonnées d'être partisans de la Coalition au pouvoir et des supporters du législateur Yekeh Kolubah.

« Vous ne pouvez pas interdire à un groupe de personnes puis permettre à d'autres de se faire enregistrer parce qu'elles sont de l'opposition », a dit M. Koijee.

Il a soutenu que la police a le devoir de protéger la démocratie. Il a condamné les violences du district n° 10 et espère qu'une enquête sera lancée.

« Nous tenons également à féliciter tous les Libériens qui font la queue dans divers centres d'inscription pour s'inscrire afin de participer aux prochaines élections générales et présidentielles prévues en octobre de cette année », a déclaré M. Koijee. Il a en outre dit espérer que l'opération sera prolongée d'au moins une semaine pour que plus de personnes soient enregistrées.

Il a l'intention de se rendre aux États-Unis pour tenter une action en contre des citoyens libériens basés aux États-Unis pour diffamation.

« Les gens doivent être tenus responsables de ce qu'ils déversent contre les autres et nous nous engageons à faire en sorte que cela se produise car en tant que leaders de notre génération, nous ne pouvons pas rester les bras croisés pendant que ces choses continuent de se produire », a-t-il dit.

NEC : les tricheurs seront exposés

La Commission électorale nationale (NEC) a indiqué que son système d'enrôlement biométrique est conçu de sorte que les fraudeurs qui voudraient se faire enrôler deux fois puissent être détectés. « Le système d'enrôlement biométrique est conçu de manière que les enrôlements doubles soient détectés lors du processus d'arbitrage biométrique à travers le système de gestion central. Les informations des électeurs doublement inscrits seront désactivées », a dit la NEC. Des rumeurs font état d'enrôlements doubles. Mais la Commission a expliqué qu'à la fin de la première phase du processus, toutes les données des 1 065 centres d'enrôlement des électeurs dans les comtés de Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi et Montserrado seront synchronisées par les serveurs biométriques où le processus de déduplication commencera. « Le système est très efficace pour comparer des millions d'échantillons biométriques, ce qui facilitera la détection de toutes les doublures dans la base de données. Toute personne qui se fera enrôler deux fois ou plus doit régler ses problèmes avec la Commission avant que ses informations puissent être incluses dans la liste des électeurs », a dit la Commission dans un communiqué.



NEC. Boss Davidetta-Browne-Lansanah

Selon la NEC, se faire enrôler plus d'une fois est un crime. Se faire enrôler plus d'une fois est un risque inutile, car le système biométrique va détecter les coupables qui seront poursuivis en justice. La Commission a indiqué en outre qu'elle a adopté le système biométrique pour disposer d'une liste électorale crédible, dépourvue de doublure. « C'est pourquoi nous prenons les empreintes digitales et l'image du visage », a-t-elle dit. Dans le même temps, la Commission condamne dans les termes les plus fermes les auteurs des violences enregistrées jusque-là au cours de l'opération d'enrôlement des électeurs. Elle a par ailleurs félicité la Police nationale libérienne et le ministère de la Justice, pour sa réponse rapide face à la situation.

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Liberia's 2023 Budget of Misplaced Priorities

By S. Karweaye

Liberians heaved a sigh of relief in December 2022 when the deputy minister for budget and development planning, Tanneh Geraldine Brunson finally submitted the 2023 budget to the national legislature, after a two-month delay in its submission by the Executive, a violation of the Public Financial Management (PFM) Law, which calls for the submission of the budget at least two months before its passage.

In the course of the budget analyses, we would see if like previous budgets, this budget does anything to put Liberia's battered economy on the path of growth or sustained development. What provisions does it offer the millions of unemployed Liberians with no hope of a better future? What are its provisions for rescuing the 64% of Liberians currently living below the poverty line, of whom 1.3 million live in extreme poverty?

Less than one out of every four dollars budgeted in 2023 would be invested in education, healthcare, roads, and electricity. Whichever way one looks at these figures, they confirm surely that this budget is likely to be a failure on arrival. For instance, with all the rhetoric that the cost of governance is reducing, one would expect figures that are closer to 25% as is the internationally accepted standard for recurrent expenditure, but no, the recurrent budget is about 80.21% (US\$623.95 million) more than quadruple the capital expenditure provisions.

Let us look at the performance of the previous budgets for an idea of the possible results of the 2023 budget, considering that the economic team is unchanged and contrary to expectations, the time of commencement of execution of the 2022 budget would most likely replicate that of the previous budgets. By the midyear executive report of the 2020 year, the finance ministry report pegged implementation at 44%. Since the 2020 budget, mid-year performance the Weah administration has failed in reporting budget performance.

Looking at the above picture, it is clear that unless something drastic is done by the government, the 2023 budget implementation will remain at similar levels to that of previous budget performance and the nation's infrastructure deficit will continue to widen. There is a need to put in place checks and balances to ensure that Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) provide services with capital funds that have been budgeted and released to them.

The health sector across Liberia reveals an area of national life that is in dire need of rescue through new policies, regulations, and strengthened institutions. Across the country, treatable diseases like malaria and cholera are still killers, and infant and maternal mortality rates are amongst the worst in the world. The Liberian government has greater responsibility for healthcare than any other tier, being in charge of primary and secondary healthcare. We had hoped that our government budget would be more effective and higher in both quantity and quality. Sadly, that is not the reality of the 2023 proposed budget. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that 15% of national budgets be allocated to healthcare. In the 2023 proposed budget, 9.71% (US\$75.52 million) is budgeted for the health sector; about the entire sum is devoted to recurrent expenditure.

According to the WHO, malaria is endemic in Liberia with a prevalence rate of up to 60% in some regions, and it has been a major cause of death in children under 5 years of age. Our current doctor-to-patient ratio is 1 to 20,000 people and this miserable capital allocation at the tertiary level is not sufficient to adequately address the challenges facing this sector. How does a forward-thinking government justify allocating 9.71% of its budget to the health sector? With the widespread dysfunctions in governance that we are experiencing as a country, the under-budgeting for the sector is worsened by the fact that actual releases are usually far

less than the amounts allocated. Additionally, effective utilization of the little that gets released is hindered by the corruption and incompetence that exist in public sector agencies.

Given the contribution of education to development, the United Nations (UN) recommends that countries allocate 26 percent of their resources to education. In the 2023 proposed budget, Liberia won't meet this budgetary target. The Liberian government allocates only 12.43 percent (US\$96.71 million) of its budget to the education sector, which is lower than comparable African countries such as Kenya (26%), Ethiopia (24%), Sierra Leone (22%), Namibia (20%). Problem is, like health, the major chunk of its allocations are misdirected; US\$51.1 million is allocated to compensation of employees while US\$9.2 million is for goods and services.

Agriculture ought to be the business of the government, but the intervention in the sector has been confused, with mixed results at best. Agriculture is apportioned US\$5.42 million (0.70%) in the 2023 budget. This allocation is not adequate for targeted intervention in a sector, especially with food insecurity in Liberia. The decision to allocate US\$5.42 on the compensation of employees and repairing maintenance of the warehouse, etc instead of



improved seedlings, agrochemicals, fertilizers, extension services, and farm-to-market infrastructure, is indicative of the spend-without-results symptomatic of virtually all Weahian programs since 2017.

Ironically, if you look at the Ministry of States for Presidential Affairs' budget of US\$15 million, you would see that all talk about transparency and accountability is just that, talk. There is a US\$4.3 million provision for the office of the president, while US\$819,600 is allocated to Public Procurement and Concession; US\$2.3 million for Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, 403,627 for Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency and only US\$2.34 million is allocated to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission. Worse still, there is a paltry allocation of about US\$718,120 to the National Disaster Management Agency of Liberia; it is not therefore surprising that the agency is incapable of responding timely to emergencies, and when they do so, often too little, too late.

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 2021 and 2022 national budgets of US\$30,000 for each Senator and Representative in the name of the so-called Legislative Engagement Fund totaling US\$3.6 million. Sadly, 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 2023 proposed national Legislature budget, a total sum of US\$ 43 million was allocated to the national legislature. US\$24 million was for salary costs for the House of Representatives, while US\$14 million was set aside for the salary cost of the Senate. Substantial additional perks of the office come in the form of allowances to cover a range of costs including fuel and lubricants for vehicle vehicles (US\$5 million), other compensation (US\$2 million), constituency visit (US\$980,121), and legislative committee hearings (US\$3million). The number of funding received differs across ranks, with the Speaker (US \$2 million), Deputy Speaker (US \$1.2 million), and Senate Pro Tempore (US \$2 million), receiving substantially more.

Over the years, the public infrastructure deficit in Liberia has become an issue of major concern, The gap includes a lack of good roads and a railway network that can drive economic activities, poor and in some instances, non-existent power generation, transmission and distribution systems, decaying public educational facilities, dilapidated government-owned hospitals (including tertiary healthcare facilities) and even airports amongst others. Generally, infrastructure is the foundation on which economic activities thrive, as poor infrastructure impacts economic growth. According to the World Bank. Liberia has a huge infrastructural deficit (roads, housing, electricity and " a funding gap between US\$250 million and 500 million per year, it will need a combination of increased finance, improved efficiency, and cost-reducing innovations to reach its infrastructure targets in a reasonable time. Without these, Liberians may have to wait for up to 40 years to achieve the targets." Putting this into perspective, the government of Liberia would need to spend the entire 2023 budget of US\$777.94 million, continuously over the next 40 years on capital expenditure to meet the target. The fact that less than US\$71.4 million was appropriated for capital expenditure reflecting the urgency to increase infrastructure spending.

Rather than being a budget of hope, Weah's 2023 proposal is a budget of despair. It won't significantly change the tempo of the economy. Nor will it reduce the country's high unemployment, poverty, and inflation rates. In fact, it could worsen Liberia's cycle of deficits and debts, without the possibility of fostering structural transformation, diversifying the economy, promoting sustainable economic growth, and reducing unemployment and poverty. The budget is consistent with previous Weah administration budgets. Most importantly, it doesn't address structural deficiencies in the Liberia economy. These include the lack of diversification of sources of revenue. These have been responsible for the country's cycle of high budget deficits and government debts.

The first and second quarters of 2023 will be dominated by elections and political transitions. This may have the effect of disrupting economic activities and fuelling uncertainties, especially among domestic and foreign investors. The economy may therefore fall short of the 5.3% growth rate assumed in the budget parameters, which would subsequently result in lower revenues and additional borrowings.

Marylanders reject outsource of electricity

By: Naneka Hoffman

The people of Maryland county, southeast Liberia are opposed to the outsourcing of electricity in the county to an Ivorian company by the Government of Liberia, lamenting

economy under his government. The group's Chairman Gyude Brown, says their attention has been drawn to an attempt by the Liberia Electricity Corporation to economically exploit the county, and render Marylanders spectators in their

Liberians during his inauguration. According to him, during initial discussion held in the county between the European Union (EU) and Local Authority, the EU preferred the outsourcing of the county's electricity to a local company, a replica of the situation in Nimba County, where Jungle Water, a company owned by a citizen of Nimba is managing well. He stresses that the locals are the custodians and should be the ones to sustain their development, while National Government builds capacity. He notes that it is disappointing to witness the government's refusal to employ its citizens at the local level because of individual benefits and centralization.

According to Chairman Brown, Maryland Electricity has been better managed than Monsterrado county over the years under the leadership of CEPA, a local company owned by Mr. Wade Dennis, a prominent son of Maryland like businessman Floyd Toma in Nimba, adding that in time of difficulties, Mr. Dennis provided proficiency in handling the county's electricity.



Chairman Gyude Brown

economic implications. A local group, Citizens United for The Protection and Development of Maryland county says this an attempt to make Marylanders spectators in their own economy, contrary to President George Weah's inaugural promise to have Liberians actively participate in the country's

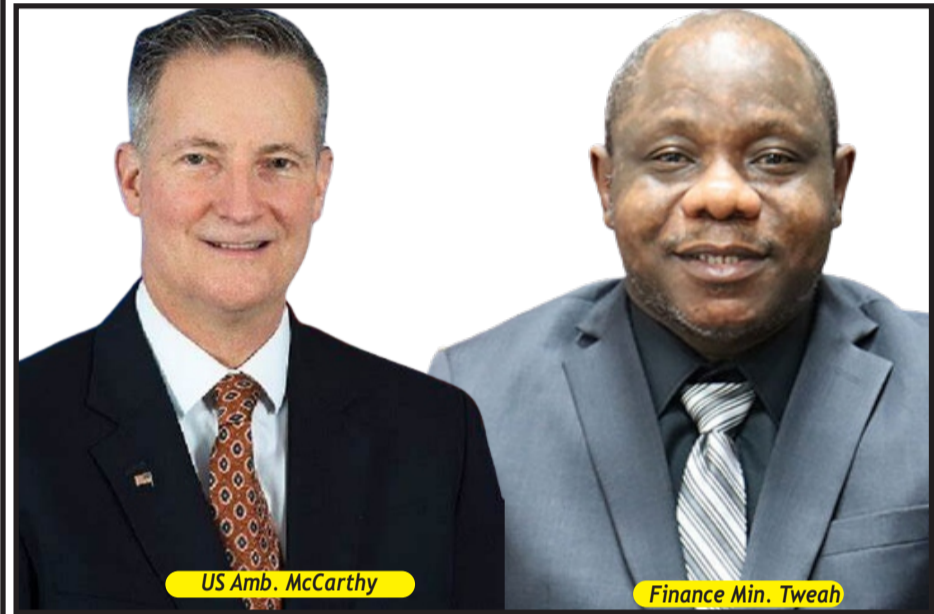
economy. Addressing a live press conference in Harper City, Maryland county on Monday, 27 March Mr. laments that the decision to outsource Maryland Electricity to an Ivorian Company does not only undermine local employment, but also question the sincerity of President Weah's promise to

US canvas full funding for NEC

By Lewis S. Teh

The United States government has urged that Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC) be fully funded to enable it conduct a free, fair, and transparent election this October. Addressing a press conference at the U.S. Embassy near Monrovia Tuesday, 28 March 2023, US Ambassador to Liberia Michael McCarthy said there is a need for the Liberian government to provide the NEC funding support. "Today with one quarter of the calendar year already behind us, the NEC has yet to receive any of its 2023 funding, even though we are less

Envoy pointed out that such a situation should concern every Liberian, urging the Ministry of Finance to immediately provide the NEC with its full 2023 budget. Once the funding is provided, Amb. McCarthy said the NEC can have the necessary resources to effectively prepare for and implement all aspects of the electoral process. Commenting on the ongoing voter registration process, Amb. McCarthy said the U.S. government condemns the violence that occurred at particular registration centers over the weekend. He encouraged all voters to register peacefully and abide by the NEC's guidelines on



US Amb. McCarthy

Finance Min. Tweah

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Bong: Rubber Farmers angry

for proper processing. He stated that the company has not been able to purchase its monthly target since January this year, because of the situation. He pleaded with the farmers to exercise patience; noting that the company is working out modalities to begin active buying beginning May. During the 1920s, the United States access to rubber was restricted by the European colonial powers (Britain and the Netherlands), which held a monopoly in rubber production. Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, considered rubber a vital resource due to its usage for car tires and began working with American rubber companies in order to find a rubber source that was

controlled by US interests. Part of a Department of Commerce - subsidised worldwide search for a place for rubber plantations, rubber magnate Harvey Samuel Firestone sent experts to Liberia in December 1923 to do a soil survey. In 1926, the Liberian government granted Firestone a 99-year lease for a million acres (to be chosen by the company wherever in Liberia) at a price of 6 cents per acre, Firestone then set about establishing rubber tree plantations of the non-native South American rubber tree, Hevea brasiliensis in the country, eventually creating the world's largest rubber plantation. The United States government was involved in the off-shore rubber production

operation from the outset, as scholar Christine Whyte point out: "The deal had the approval of the US State Department, who hoped that the huge contract would keep Liberia within the American sphere of influence, without necessitating direct governmental control. The last-minute addition of a twenty-five-million-dollar loan attached to the concession was intended to ensure that American corporate influence dominated. The Firestone Plantation was originally envisioned for 350,000 people to be employed on the newly created plantations. However, this was more than the number of able-bodied men in the entire nation at the time, which created intense pressure for labor.

than seven months away from election," said Amb. McCarthy. This year, Liberians will be voting in October in a presidential and legislative election. The incumbent President George Manneh Weah and his ruling party Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) are seeking re-election against multiple opposition contenders. With about seven months away from the polls, the U.S., Liberia's traditional ally, has raised concerns about the government's financial support to the electoral house. "I am encouraged by President Weah's statements at the UN General Assembly pledging a free and fair election. Liberia's international partners share that goal, but we believe as with the integrity institutions, it can't be achieved unless the NEC is fully funded," Amb. McCarthy warned. The U.S.

registering where they reside. "I also want to encourage the NEC to move quickly to provide the promised meal and training allowances to the poll workers who are working long hours under difficult conditions," Amb. McCarthy continued. He indicated that the Embassy has its observation teams visiting various polling centers to observe the process. Meanwhile, Amb. McCarthy explained that the recent U.S. State Department's annual human rights report was mandated by the US Congress to inform on its status of internationally recognized human rights. "No country is perfect on human rights practices in the world, and those reports are not meant to be punitive, but rather a sober and fact-based accounting of both positive and negative issues affecting human rights," he said.

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"Sustain the Spotlight

accurate and coordinated institutional planning and review; as well as to improve our WASH sector by rationalizing its current capacity, to undertake capacity building and enhance environment for private sector engagement." The 2023 Water Conference brought together Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and stakeholders in the WASH sector. Liberia's delegation to the Conference included Hon.

Paulita Wie, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Eugene Nagbe, Commissioner, Liberia Maritime Authority, Hon. Randall Dobayou, Deputy Director, Environmental Protection Agency, Hon. Bobby Whitfield, Chief Executive Officer, National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Commission, Hon. Jefferson Koijee, Mayor of Monrovia and Hon. Ethel Pam Belcher, Mayor of Paynesville. Discussions at the conference focused on five thematic areas including water

for health, water for sustainable development, water for climate resilience and environment, water for cooperation and water action decade. At the end of the conference, participants adopted the Water Action Agenda, which captures all water-related voluntary commitments made by countries and other stakeholders to follow up on their progress.

Starts from page 7 Liberia faces governance

"The EFFL and every well-meaning Liberian should call this President to order and request that he respects the laws of Liberia by immediately dismissing all officials of his Government holding both appointed Positions and Political Party Executive Positions in the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC)," he urged. Among several others, Gonquoi named Liberian Foreign Minister Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemaya, Sr., as the political leader of the Movement for Economic Empowerment (M O V E E), Post and Telecommunications Minister Cllr. Cooper W. Kruah, as Chairman of

the Movement for Democracy and Reconstruction (MDR), Liberia's Comptroller Atty. Augustus Janga Kowo as CDC Vice Chair for Legal Affairs, and Monrovia Mayor Jefferson Tamba Koijee as CDC Secretary General. He noted that the EFFL does not support the alleged corrupt cronies of President Weah, accusing the regime of abrogating the law to the detriment of the state for self-glorification, ego, and political patronage. He vowed that the EFFL will resist President Weah and defeat his "unorthodox executive order # 117" through a Writ of Prohibition before the Justice in Chamber at the Supreme Court of Liberia.

Lonestar MTN launches MoMo heroes of change initiative

By Lincoln G. Peters

It is aimed at celebrating the resilient spirit of Liberia and Liberians who are making a tremendous impact on the society and

community through health, education, youth development, women empowerment, and Tech solution.

People can get nominated as MoMo heroes

health, education, youth and women empowerment, tech or local solution, community impact, and youth development. After the nomination process, the governing council and board of judges will vet thirty names that will later be



Giant GSM company Lonestar Cell MTN has officially launched the "MoMo Heroes of change" initiative in Liberia.

community. The program was officially launched Tuesday, 28 March 2023 at a local hotel in Monrovia. The program was graced by several diplomatic partners, social media influencers as well as entertainment promoters, and integrity icons.

The initiative seeks to showcase, celebrate and promote Liberians who are making a change in their

of change when they are recommended by someone by visiting any of Lonestar Cell MTN's pages, or any of its service centers across the country.

The person must fill out the nomination form by stating the name and occupation of the nominee to have them registered.

The categories of nomination include

reduced to five persons after the online voting. Finally, at a grand indoor program, three winners will be selected. The first winner is expected to walk away with 1.5 million Liberian dollars, the second, six hundred thousand Liberian dollars, and the third, three hundred thousand Liberian dollars.

However, the digital nomination is intended to have everyone

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