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DATE	BUYING	SELLING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2024	L\$180.3082/US\$1.00	L\$182.1653/US\$1.00

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

The New Dawn

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NPA spends 14.04 million on bloated payroll



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Continental News

ECOWAS summit kicks off in Abuja; Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger absent

The 66th summit of ECOWAS, or the Economic Community of West African states, is getting underway with Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger notably absent. These three coup-hit

unfair coup-related sanctions. Chairing the meeting is Nigerian President Bola Tinubu. Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye is set to report to the bloc, after he mediated with Mali, Niger and Burkina

agenda are regional security challenges and the payment of community levy by member states. Ministers are also expected to discuss the implementation is the ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme, which entails free movement of people and goods. Currently headed by Nigeria, ECOWAS is more important than ever, with the region's stability being thrown into danger by coups and security crises. With around a dozen members, including Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana and the Gambia, the bloc was founded in 1975. It has since become the region's leading political authority. -Africanews.



Nigerian President H.E Bola Hammed Tinubu

nations have severed ties with the bloc, accusing it of Faso at the previous summit. Among the topics on the

DRC conflict: discussions between Rwanda and DRC leaders called off

On Sunday, leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda were supposed to meet in order to discuss halting the conflict in the eastern DRC. But according to an official, the talks almost instantaneously hit a deadlock and were called off. According to the DRC, it comes after a Rwandan request that the DRC hold direct talks with M23. Rwandan President Paul Kagame had been anticipated at the discussions in Angola, but it was unclear if he was in the country. Instead, the African

Union mediator to halt the fighting was reportedly meeting on his own with DRC president. Back in August, Angola mediated a ceasefire that quelled the situation on the frontline. But both sides continued to trade fire.

On the ground in the eastern DRC, Rwanda-backed M23 militia has captured swathes of land. The fighting has prompted a humanitarian crisis, and thousands have been displaced. -Africanews



DRC: President Félix Tshisekedi

UN says Central Africa challenged by climate crisis and political transitions

In a briefing to the United Nations Security Council, the UN Special Representative for Central Africa (UNOCA), on Saturday highlighted the dual challenges of electoral transitions and climate crises in the region. Abdou Abarry highlighted the extension of UNOCA's mandate and the adoption of the Pact for the Future. The agreement strengthens multilateralism in addressing conflict prevention, sustainable development, human rights, and regional stability. Abarry said UNOCA is closely monitoring electoral transitions in central Africa, advocating for "free, inclusive,

and peaceful elections". "On 29 December, Chad will conclude its political transition with legislative, provincial, and local elections that will finalise institutions provided for under the constitution of the Fifth Republic, adopted via referendum on 17 December last year," said Abdou Abarry. "Furthermore, Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, and the Central African Republic will hold legislative or presidential elections in 2025, while Congo and São Tomé and Príncipe will have presidential elections in 2026." The UN special representative said while there was progress in governance and conflict prevention, political instability was a major concern.

He noted "unconstitutional changes of government and the resurgence of insecurity linked to groups like Boko Haram". Abarry said the climate crisis was also a huge issue in the region. "Since the beginning of 2024, almost every country in Central Africa has been affected by extreme climate events, resulting in deadly and destructive floods that have impacted more than 3.2 million people, exacerbating social and economic tensions in the sub-region." He said it was crucial to secure funding to protect this vital ecosystem and enhance the resilience of populations in the region. -Africanews

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso promise visa-free travel to rival bloc

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have strained relations with neighbouring states. Three West African states ruled by military leaders have announced visa-free travel and residency rights for citizens in the 15-member regional bloc Ecowas, ahead of the trio leaving the group. The leaders of the states - Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger - said the visa and residency decision had

[West African bloc pins hopes on ambitious superhighway](#)

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger were founding members of Ecowas in 1975. With their planned departure, the bloc will lose 76 million of its 446 million people and more than half its total geographical land area. This is the first split in Ecowas, with the three breakaway states forming their own bloc, the Alliance of Sahel States. In a statement, the new



been taken in the spirit of friendship, and to strengthen centuries-old ties among African people. The trio plan to withdraw from Ecowas in January after refusing the bloc's demand to restore democratic rule. Ecowas leaders are meeting in Nigeria to discuss the decision, with fears their withdrawal would be a major blow to regional unity and efforts to boost economic and security cooperation. At the opening of the summit, Ecowas commission head Omar Touray said their "impending exit" was "disheartening", but he wanted to "commend the ongoing mediation efforts", AFP news agency reported. Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye has spearheaded efforts to persuade the military juntas to remain in the bloc, but they have refused. After a ministerial-level meeting on Friday in Niger's capital, Niamey, the three states said in a joint statement that their decision was "irreversible".

alliance's chairman, Mali's military ruler Assimi Goïta said the right of Ecowas citizens to "enter, circulate, reside, establish and leave the territory" of the new bloc would be maintained. His statement was seen as a signal to Ecowas leaders that Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger wanted to maintain good relations, despite quitting the bloc. The three states gave notice to Ecowas in January 2023 that they will withdraw in a year, meeting the timeline set by the bloc for states that decide to leave. Relations between the bloc and the three countries have been tense after military coups took place in Niger in July, Burkina Faso in 2022 and Mali in 2020. Ecowas condemned the coups, and suspended their membership, hoping they will restore civilian rule. But the coup leaders dug in their heels and have pivoted towards Russia. They accuse Ecowas of being too close to Western powers and are increasingly relying on Russia to fight armed jihadists who are waging an insurgency in the region. -BBC

EDITORIAL

The belated LCC statement

Call by the once viable Liberia Council of Churches for both sides in the leadership impasse at the House of Representatives to uphold the law is little too late and disappointing. After more than two months of in-fighting that was sometimes characterized by threats of violence and police brutality, stalling the business of the Liberian people for this long without any intervention, was the LCC constrained to speak so lately and faintly?

We say faintly because even after the final arbiter of Justice in the land, the Supreme Court of Liberia, had spoken albeit indefinitely, with the majority bloc remaining belligerent backed by the Executive, what impact is the LCC's call.

Speaking in a reconciliatory dialogue meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia, the President of the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Reeves, Jr, called on Majority Bloc members of the House of Representatives and embattled Speaker J. Fonati Koffa to uphold recent opinion of the Supreme Court, urging adherence to the principles of justice and the rule of law.

The Supreme Court, referencing Articles 33 and 49 of the Constitution of the Liberia recently, called on both parties to act in conformity with the law, and for honorable conduct from all parties involved.

Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Reeves said that the Supreme Court, as interpreter of the Liberian Constitution, has laid down a ruling that serves as a foundation for good governance. But we beg to differ. The Court did not rule with a specific stance or interpretation. Rather, it advised all sides to return and act in confines of the law.

One had thought that the Church, as the moral conscience of our society, would have spoken long since. But its conspicuous silence in the last two months on the issue that has a propensity to derail the governance of the state and stifle the already bleeding economy, left a vacuum that politicians took advantage of and provided interpretations that suited their quest.

At the eleventh hour when a new Speaker has been elected outside of Articles 33 and 49 of the Constitution

Article 33 of the Constitution reads, "A simple majority of each House shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a lower number may adjourn from day to day and compel the attendance of absent members. Whenever the House of Representatives and the Senate shall meet in joint session, the presiding officer of the House of Representatives shall preside", while Article 49 says, "The House of Representatives shall elect once every six years a Speaker who shall be the presiding officer of that body, a Deputy Speaker, and such other officers as shall ensure the proper functioning of the House. The Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and other officers so elected may be removed from office for cause by resolution of a two-thirds majority of the members of the House."

But the two-thirds majority, as legally required, was never met by the majority bloc in electing a new Speaker to replace Speaker J. Fonati Koffa. Notwithstanding, the Executive branch of the government gave approval, endorsing ruling Unity Party Representative, Richard Nagbe Koon as Speaker.

We deem the LCC's call as a face-saving move to give an impression that it spoke when the nation needed moral advice and direction, but the voice lacks weight and is belated.

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COMMENTARY

By Togba-Nah Tipoteh

The Truth and Nothing Else

The Truth and Nothing Else is the short version of the Expression: The Truth but nothing than the Truth So Help Me God. The Truth is always the same Expression that has come from Our Creator. This Expression is used when a person is taking the Oath of Office, holding his or her right hand up.

The problem here is that many persons take the Oath but they do not carry out the Oath. This is why there is still the longstanding and widespread of poverty that has now become the pretext for violence. This Commentary is most necessary because the people of Liberia have declared that they do not want violence.

The people say that violence is the wrong direction, and it solves no problem (Afrobarometer, 2022). The people of Liberia know what they are talking about because they have experienced forms of violence as seen in the coup d'etat and civil war in Liberia. These forms of violence took the lives of at least 300.000 persons and injured many more.

There is still violence taking place but it is much less than what took place were the people had not had the violent experience and the awareness related to it.

This awareness is precisely the awareness raising that continues to be carried out by the peace loving people of Liberia.

This awareness raising is working well as seen in the large number of persons who were not re-elected into the National Legislature during the Election of October 10, 2023. This trend is highly likely to continue in the ensuring elections.

This is precisely the reason for the holding of the Friday, December 13, 2024 Meeting of the Inter Religious Council of Liberia (IRCL).

This Meeting provides the opportunity for the Religious Community to show that the confusion in the National Legislature of Liberia is money-driven. In effect, there is no confusion because the Constitution of Liberia is at once clear and correct when it calls for the removal of any Legislator by the Rule of Law as seen in the Constitution of Liberia and carried out correctly by the Supreme Court of Liberia.

It is this awareness raising that led to the reduction in the cheating by the National Elections Commission (NEC) of Liberia.

This minimization of the corrupt practices of NEC explains the transformation of the unfair prevailing electoral system into the fair enduring electoral system. It is only through this transformation that persons with good records can get elected to bring in the system of Justice, the indispensable ingredient of Peace and Progress in Liberia and in any other country.

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OP-ED

by Walter O. Ochieng,
Tom Achoki

Investing in Global Health Enhances US National Security

NAIROBI - US President-elect Donald Trump's return to the White House signals a potential break from decades of American leadership in global health. While Trump's isolationist “America First” agenda may resonate with voters eager to see their tax dollars redirected toward domestic priorities, a US withdrawal from multilateral public-health initiatives would carry serious risks.

To be sure, there is a strong case for health self-sufficiency. Operation Warp Speed, launched during Trump's first term, accelerated vaccine development and deployment, playing a pivotal role in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitating America's economic recovery. But the notion that isolationism could shield Americans from the effects of global health crises is deeply misguided. The 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa cost the United States \$1.1 billion and 12,000 jobs, even with just 11 cases reported on American soil.

The ongoing mpox outbreak, which originated in Central Africa and has since spread to more than 120 countries, serves as a stark reminder of how quickly public-health threats can escalate into global emergencies. A true “America First” strategy would focus on investing in robust surveillance and containment systems.

Investing in global health also makes strategic sense. As US firms seek to diversify their supply chains away from China, they require alternative manufacturing hubs with healthy and productive workforces. Countries with robust health systems are best positioned to fill this role.

Moreover, strengthening health systems in developing countries reduces migration pressures - a key concern for US voters - by addressing the root causes of displacement. Consider, for example, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), launched by then-President George W. Bush in 2003. With \$110 billion in overall funding, PEPFAR has saved 26 million lives and accelerated economic growth in recipient countries since its inception. Studies comparing data from 2004 to 2018 revealed that PEPFAR contributed to a 2.1-percentage-point increase in the rate of per capita GDP growth, leading to a remarkable 45.7% rise in per capita GDP compared to 2004 levels.

Beyond its direct impact, PEPFAR's disease-surveillance infrastructure has proven invaluable in managing subsequent health crises. It has also bolstered America's global standing, with countries receiving PEPFAR support consistently reporting higher approval ratings for the US.

But the traditional aid model is long overdue for a radical transformation. Across the developing world, particularly in Africa, market-driven solutions are revolutionizing health care. In countries like Kenya and Nigeria, entrepreneurs are pioneering innovative, profitable models that combine digital systems, standardized protocols, and strategically located clinics to provide quality health care to middle- and lower-income populations.

Such ventures present significant opportunities for US investors seeking to enter the growing market for accessible health care in emerging economies. With some adjustments, America's development-finance tools could facilitate the transformation of Africa's health-care systems. The US International Development Finance Corporation, which has \$60 billion at its disposal, is well-positioned to de-risk private investments in health ventures and attract additional capital through various forms of financing.

Early experiments appear promising. Stichting Medical Credit Fund, for example, has provided more than \$100 million in loans to health-care facilities across the continent while maintaining a remarkable 96% repayment rate. Other innovative mechanisms, such as development-impact bonds, have shown that market incentives can improve health outcomes.

Nearly five years after the start of the pandemic, the world is grappling with several major health threats, from HIV/AIDS to malaria, which kills 619,000 people annually, most of them children. Critics may argue that eliminating these diseases is a pipe dream, but the same was once said about eradicating smallpox. If anything, Operation Warp Speed has demonstrated that American ingenuity, when harnessed effectively, can achieve the seemingly impossible.

The stakes are much higher than they may seem. In recent years, Africa has emerged as a key battleground in the escalating Sino-American rivalry. Through the “Health Silk Road” - an extension of its Belt and Road Initiative - China has funded 400 health-care infrastructure projects across the continent. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it sent medical experts to 17 African countries, using bilateral agreements to deepen trade and diplomatic ties.

America stands to lose far more than influence. To meet the needs of its growing population, Africa must finance massive investments in health infrastructure. The world power that fills this gap will not only reap financial rewards but also will gain preferential access to the continent's vast reserves of critical minerals - essential for clean-energy technologies and advanced manufacturing. Notably, in African countries and regions where US health programs have been curtailed, Chinese firms have quickly stepped in, building hospitals and providing medical equipment, often in exchange for mining rights.

As competition for these resources intensifies, health diplomacy will become increasingly vital for securing America's industrial future, a central pillar of Trump's economic agenda. By focusing on targeted investments in areas where its interests align with global health priorities, the US can generate significant returns while maintaining cost efficiency.

In an increasingly interconnected world where the next pandemic disease outbreak is only a matter of time, investing in global health security is a form of disaster insurance. The choice facing the incoming Trump administration is clear: reclaim America's health leadership or grapple with the far-reaching consequences of disengagement.

Persuading a skeptical electorate that investing in global health serves US interests will undoubtedly be challenging. But Trump has an opportunity to silence his detractors and create a health legacy that surpasses anything his predecessors achieved.

OPINION

by Doris Hafenbradl

Public Guarantees Would Boost European Green Industry

MUNICH - Over the past two years, the European Union has made scaling up its cleantech sector a high priority. As European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has emphasized, the sector is essential to the bloc's economic competitiveness, energy security, and industrial leadership.

The EU has an innovation edge in several clean technologies, from green hydrogen to long-duration energy storage. But it is difficult to achieve commercial scale for these technologies on the continent. An investment gap of around €50 billion (\$52 billion) must be filled to manufacture, by 2030, at least 40% of the solar and wind devices, batteries, heat pumps, hydrogen electrolyzers, and carbon capture and storage technology the EU must deploy.

When he presented his recent landmark report on European competitiveness, former Italian prime minister Mario Draghi succinctly summed up the problem: “There are too many barriers to commercializing innovations and scaling them up in the European Union.” In particular, the EU needs to develop new production methods and new methods of financing the construction of “first of a kind” plants, which require long lead times, access to large amounts of capital, and highly skilled labor.

The United States and China, recognizing that green industries can generate jobs and prosperity, have channeled billions of dollars into these sectors. US President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, which offers tax credits for domestic cleantech production, is expected to unlock upwards of \$3 trillion in private investment over the next decade, according to analysis by Goldman Sachs. China, for its part, has heavily subsidized its solar industry, among others.

The EU lacks the fiscal firepower of China and the US. So, instead of building these industries through generous subsidies and tax incentives, European policymakers must use government funds in a way that will crowd in private capital. That is where public guarantees come in.

Customers often expect companies selling technology that is unproven at commercial scale to issue extensive warranties in case the product does not perform as advertised. These warranties are backed by bank guarantees, for which firms are required to hold full collateral. But cleantech companies need comparatively high levels of investment to develop and expand their businesses, and holding large amounts of cash as collateral locks up capital that could be better spent building additional facilities, hiring and training workers, and fulfilling customer orders.

To ease this burden, the public sector could provide counter-guarantees, promising to reimburse part of any payout that a bank makes to a customer. Industry experts have advocated this instrument as a way to decarbonize energy-intensive industries and derisk investments in clean technologies. It also featured prominently in Draghi's report, which calls on the EU to increase substantially “the use of guarantees ... in support of strategic sectors of the economy.”

Public guarantees have already proven effective in scaling up cleantech innovation in Europe. In 2022, Bpifrance, the French public investment bank, guaranteed €51 million of financing for Verkor, a French battery manufacturer. The guarantee helped Verkor secure private investment and a commitment from Renault to source electric-vehicle batteries from the firm, enabling it to break ground on its first gigafactory, in Dunkirk.

These guarantees are highly efficient, with each euro of public money unlocking up to thousands of euros of working capital for innovators. For example, a €5 billion guarantee facility created by the European Investment Bank for companies in the wind sector will support up to €80 billion of new investment in this important renewable energy source.

Moreover, taxpayer money is spent only if a claim ends up being made, and the available evidence suggests that this is a rare occurrence. The International Chamber of Commerce estimates that the average loss rate for guarantees is between 0.2% and 1.7%. While the risk is higher for innovative technologies, it is a risk worth taking in order to support climate solutions that could reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and create green jobs and future tax revenues.

One positive development is that the EIB has proposed a €500 million counter-guarantee instrument for cleantech companies, pending approval by its board of directors in early 2025. If the EIB turns this pledge into a reality, some of the EU's most promising cleantech companies will likely achieve financial viability, which would benefit the bloc's economic competitiveness and be a boon for the planet.

NPA addresses legacy challenges of high payroll costs and limited port investments

The National Port Authority (NPA) has outlined plans to address an unsustainable wage bill and lack of investment in Liberia's ports.

Friday, December 13, 2024/ In 2024, the NPA spent \$14.04 million—nearly 60% of its total revenue of \$24.4 million—on salaries and benefits for its 1,945 employees. Spending almost 60% of NPA's revenue on salaries has constrained its ability to save and invest in critical infrastructure, expand operations, create sustainable jobs, and increase support to the government of Liberia.

NPA workforce grew from 450 personnel in 2018

address these challenges. "We are committed to running a financially stable and operationally efficient port. We have implemented austerity measures, including a 64% reduction in supply costs, a 20% reduction in total operating expenses, and a 45% reduction in administrative expenses. Still, all these measures are not enough to address the challenges posed by the huge wage bill," he explained.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the NPA management says it has designed a comprehensive plan to achieve financial stability and operational efficiency while being sensitive to the rights and livelihoods of employees. The Managing Director emphasized, "Our plan protects the rights and

Recognizing this gap, the Managing Director said his team is attracting investments to modernize the ports. Earlier this year, the NPA announced two significant port expansion and investment projects in collaboration with China and Morocco. These initiatives aim to help address the long-overdue infrastructure and capacity needs of the Monrovia and Buchanan ports, ensuring they are equipped to facilitate trade and support Liberia's economic transformation. He said beginning 2025, more practical actions on these opportunities will be rolled out among stakeholders in the Executive and the Legislature.

The NPA management acknowledges that



to 1,945 workforce by 2024, leading to 266% increase in the monthly wage bill—from approximately \$300,000 in 2018 to over \$1.4 million in 2024—without any significant expansion in revenue or operational capacity. The most significant jump, a 47% increase, occurred during the last six months of the 2023 general elections, while the lowest rate (13%) of increase occurred in the last 11 months.

During a recent budget hearing at the House of Representatives, the Managing Director of the NPA, Hon. Sekou A.M. Dukuly, outlined plans to

well-being of our staff through a fair process while we empower the NPA to save, reinvest in the ports, create more sustainable jobs, and increase the port's contribution to Liberia's economic growth."

Liberia imports over 80% of its food and non-food items and relies heavily on the export of raw materials. These trade activities are conducted almost entirely through Liberia's seaports, making their effective management and modernization essential for national development. However, Liberia's ports have seen little investment in recent decades.

addressing the unsustainable wage bill and the investment needs of the ports requires additional consultations to ensure they happen urgently and in ways that are fair and able to address the inefficiencies and reallocation of resources toward strategic investments to make the NPA a competitive hub that drives economic growth and job creation in Liberia. "We inherited many of these challenges but are determined to resolve them responsibly. Our focus is on building a port system that is financially viable, operationally efficient, and capable of contributing significantly to Liberia's development," the Managing Director stated.

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Liberia National Red Cross Society prepares for 52ND General Assembly in Gbarnga

The Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS) is set to host its 52nd General Assembly (GA) on December 18-19, 2024, in Gbarnga, Bong County to elect a new national Governance leadership who will govern the affairs of the Red Cross for the next four years.

Monrovia, December 16, 2024/ The GA through the County governance heads, national youth representative and the National Executive Board will elect a new national president, three regional vice presidents, a national Treasurer, and heads of various constitutional commissions to guide the institution in fulfilling its humanitarian mandate. The General Assembly which is the highest decision-making body of the Liberian Red Cross is held every two years for review and approval of reports, plan and budget but in the fourth year the General Assembly is focused on electing a new national leadership. At least 50 delegates including the county governance leadership and the national leadership are expected to attend this General Assembly under the theme: “Enhancing Governance and Leadership for Growth and Sustainable

Development. The Red Cross management team, Election Committee members, and esteemed guests from its movement partners and government institutions will also attend the GA which will set the priorities for the Liberian Red Cross for the coming years. The two-day event will also review and approve the Liberian Red Cross Annual plan and budget for the next year and review, discuss, and approve the reports of the President, regional vice presidents, the National Treasurer, and the Secretary-General. The Red Cross 52nd GA follows the successful completion of local leadership elections of the Liberian Red Cross in the 91 branches and 15 chapters or counties. These elections reinforced the organization's commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusive leadership. A total of 578 individuals comprising 382 males and 196 females—were elected into various leadership positions at the branch level, including

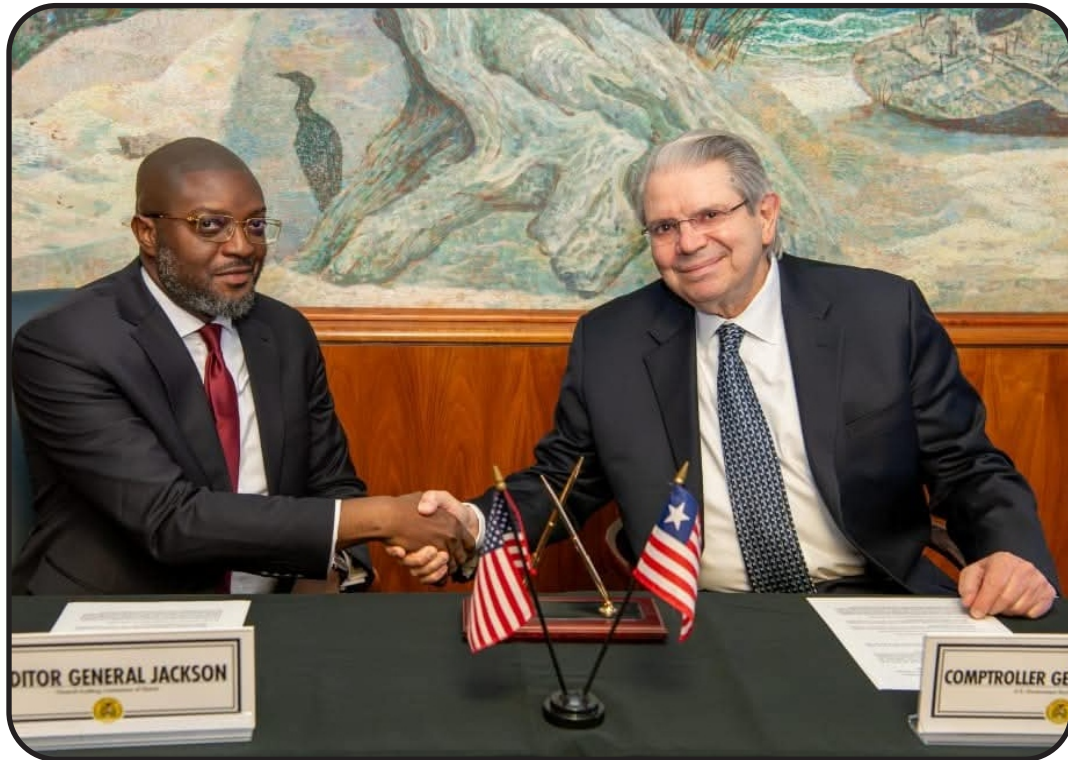


Branch Coordinators, Assistant Coordinators, Treasurers, and Youth Representatives. At the county level, 92 leaders were chosen through a credible secret voting process for key positions, such as Chapter Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, Treasurers, and Youth Representatives. The elections marked significant progress toward achieving gender parity, with women in the Red Cross local leadership comprising 43% of elected positions. The newly elected leaders represent

diverse religious backgrounds and include individuals with varying physical challenges, reflecting the LNRCS's commitment to inclusivity. These leaders are poised to strengthen the organization's grassroots capacity to deliver humanitarian services. Mr. Jerome N.J. Clarke II who has led the Liberian Red Cross-National Governance Board for two successive terms will not seek re-election. This transition presents an opportunity for fresh leadership and innovative

perspectives to guide the LNRCS. The LNRCS invites all stakeholders, partners, and the public to remain engaged and supportive as it upholds its mission of alleviating human suffering with compassion and integrity. The organization's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and accountability remains steadfast as it charts a course for sustainable development and impactful humanitarian action.-Press release.

GAC, US Gov't accountability office MoU Signing ceremony in pictures



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Bishop Brown calls for unity and reconciliation -between the House and the Executive

A Liberian clergy Bishop Dr. Kortu Brown, calls on the 55th Legislature and the Executive Branch of the government to reconcile and unite in order to prioritize interests of the State.

By Naneka A. Hoffman

Brewerville, Liberia, December 16, 2024 - Bishop Kortu Brown, former President of the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) is calling for unity and reconciliation between the Executive and the National Legislature, particularly the House of



Representatives, urging them to prioritize the country's welfare and the needs of its citizens. He emphasizes the importance of healing the "injured Legislature" and restoring the rule of law within the First Branch of Government, which has been compromised by internal conflicts. Bishop Brown explains that the Liberian Legislature has been "injured" due to the dysfunction within the House of Representatives since October 2024. The Constitution mandates that legislative power is vested in the Legislature, which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. However, due to infighting, two sessions of the House of Representatives are being held simultaneously, which is causing a breakdown in the legislative process. This internal wrangling has also impacted the Senate's ability to function properly, making it legally crippled in terms of legislation and rule of law. The conflict stems from a failed attempt by over 40 members of the House to remove the Speaker. However, these members have not met the constitutional requirement of 49 votes needed for such a removal, as stipulated in Article 49 of the Liberian Constitution, which requires a two-thirds majority for the removal of any elected official of the House. While Article 33 allows a simple majority to form a quorum for business, the process of removing the Speaker specifically requires two-thirds approval, a condition that has not been met. Bishop Brown describes the current situation as a setback for Liberia,

particularly for a country still grappling with the challenges of post-war recovery and economic hardship. He expresses disappointment that the Supreme Court, which was expected to resolve the constitutional issue, instead, contributed to confusion in its recent opinion. In his appeal, the LCC former President

urged all political leaders across the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary branches to take swift and decisive actions to heal the "injured Legislature." He referenced the Book of Isaiah 1:18 in the Holy Bible, where God calls the Children of Israel to come together and reason with Him, promising that if they are willing and obedient, they will prosper, but if they continue in rebellion, they will face dire consequences. Bishop Brown encourages Liberia's political leaders to follow this divine example and find common ground for the country's benefit. He also reflects on lack of ideological differentiation in Liberian politics, noting that political allegiances are often driven by personalities rather than a set of values or ideas. This, he argues, makes it easier to resolve the current impasse if all parties are motivated by the country's well-being, rather than personal interests. As Liberia enters the season of Advent, Bishop Brown urges lawmakers, including the Speaker, to reflect, engage in dialogue, and work towards resolving the current crisis. He calls on them to allow the peace of Christ to guide their hearts, to set aside bitterness and division, and to reunite as one House of Representatives to serve the people. He made the call on Sunday, December 15, 2024 at the New Water in the Desert Pentecostal Church in Brewerville, Montserrado county, cautioning that the nation must not carry this confusion in the New Year, 2025, while Liberians a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Who's protecting NPA & LPRC's defiant posture? -Senate raises critical questions at budget hearing

The Liberian Senate raises concern over the failure of State-Owned Enterprises to contribute to the National Budget as required.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, Liberia, December 16, 2024 - The Liberian Senate has begun raising critical questions to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the Liberian Revenue Authority, who is protecting State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in their defiant posture towards the Account Review oversight Policy. During the budget hearing over the weekend, some members of the Liberian Senate, namely River Gee County Senator Francis S. Dopoh, II, J. Gbleh-Bo Brown, and Senator Alex Taylor of Bomi County, among others, questioned authorities of SOEs for their failures to comply with the LRA and Finance Ministry. Among the SoEs, the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company, headed by Mr. Amos Tweh, Secretary General of the Unity Party, and the National Port Authority, headed by Mr. Sekou Dukuly, failed to comply with the Account Review Oversight policy. Responding to the senator's questions, Liberia Revenue Authority Commissioner General James D. Jallah said that despite being empowered by the Liberian Senate by enacting a law that grants them the viewing rights to all the accounts of SOE, they are yet to exercise such authority. According to him, they don't have viewing rights now, but they are working to ensure they exercise them. He added that the LPRC and NPA are the most non-cooperative SoEs that continue to defy them. "You also gave us the power to garnish the accounts of SoEs. We started the process of garnishing two of the SoEs that we felt were non-cooperative, and we got to the point where we brought the matter before the court, but then the Executive and the Ministry of Justice intervened and later decided that the matter should be discussed internally, among ourselves", he revealed. The LRA boss indicated they had a couple of meetings with the SoEs concerned. Unfortunately, the period and promises they made were not upheld, so we've returned to the Ministry of Justice and acknowledged that we want to continue the garnishing process. So, as soon as the Ministry gives us the green light, if they continue to remain defiant, we will go after them, but if they are cooperative and contribute, we will work with them to ensure they comply. We will pursue and exercise the authority given us", he vowed. The senator was mostly concerned about why there is no information about SOEs in

the 2024 draft budget and why they are contributing so little to the government. With that concern, they told the Ministry of Finance and the Liberia Revenue Authority to clearly tell what is stopping the SOEs from upholding the Account Reviewing Right Policy. "Where is the power? Is the power in the Executive Mansion? I will not be on this committee and pretend. The SOEs work for the Liberian people. The Ministry of Finance has the oversight. Why are they not working with you? The Law says 50% of the revenue from NaFAA should contribute, so who is sitting somewhere and taking that power"? Senator Dopoh wondered. For his part, Maryland County Senator J. GBLEH-BO Brown said that it's shameful on the part of the NPA and LPRC that the Liberia Immigration Service, whose core responsibility is to take care of the country's borders are, raising over US\$4.7 million for government revenue and they can't contribute anything meaningful. "LIS raised US\$ 4.7million; Ministry of Labor raised US\$8.5, NPA and LPRC can't bring 3 million. If those people can contribute, the SOEs are getting huge funds. So, we want to know where and who is protecting them." He concluded. Also, Bomi County Senator Alex Taylor said that it's believed that those SOEs are getting or drawing their power from the Executive and so it's important that they deal with the matter. But, responding to the Senators' concern, Deputy Finance Minister Anthony G. Myers said that they reviewed the SOEs' operation and that the review will be shared with the President and legislature, but NaFAA and others have contributed nothing. He complained that the Law on the Account Viewing Rights Policy and the Public Financial Management Law regarding SOE accounts need to be looked at properly. According to him, the PFML Law allows the SOEs to report to the Ministry of Finance on their annual financial performance operation Report and estimates, while in some areas, to the President. "The PFML says that they should report to the Ministry of Finance on their annual financial performance and estimate. It's empty. In some areas, to the President while the PFML to the Minister of Finance shows a change of direction. And so, we need law to give clear direction to improve financial transparency", he concluded. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**



Français

L'Autorité Nationale des Ports (NPA) confrontée à une masse salariale insoutenable

L'Autorité Nationale des Ports (NPA) consacre une part disproportionnée de ses revenus à sa masse salariale, compromettant sa capacité à moderniser les infrastructures portuaires essentielles au développement économique du Liberia. En 2024,

également son soutien financier au gouvernement libérien. Entre 2018 et 2024, les effectifs de la NPA ont explosé, passant de 450 à 1 945 employés, entraînant une hausse de 266 % de la masse salariale mensuelle, qui est passée de 300 000 dollars en 2018 à plus de 1,4 million de dollars en 2024. Cette augmentation a culminé

d'austérité rigoureuses, notamment une réduction de 64 % des coûts d'approvisionnement, une diminution de 20 % des dépenses opérationnelles et une baisse de 45 % des charges administratives. Cependant, ces efforts restent insuffisants face à l'impact massif de notre masse salariale », a-t-il expliqué.

Une stratégie pour la durabilité

Pour garantir une stabilité financière à long terme, la NPA a élaboré un plan global visant à réduire les dépenses tout en préservant les droits et le bien-être de ses employés. Selon M. Dukuly, ce plan permettra de réorienter les ressources vers des investissements stratégiques, de renforcer les infrastructures portuaires et de créer davantage d'emplois durables.

« Nous sommes déterminés à transformer nos ports en des infrastructures modernes et efficaces, capables de répondre aux exigences du commerce international tout en contribuant activement à la croissance économique du Liberia », a affirmé le Directeur Général.

Des ports négligés, un enjeu stratégique

Le Liberia importe plus de 80 % de ses biens de consommation et repose principalement sur l'exportation de matières



l'institution a alloué 14,04 millions de dollars - soit près de 60 % de ses recettes totales estimées à 24,4 millions de dollars - aux salaires et avantages sociaux de ses 1 945 employés.

Cette dépendance excessive vis-à-vis des salaires limite la capacité de la NPA à épargner, à investir dans des infrastructures stratégiques et à créer des emplois durables. Elle réduit

avec une hausse de 47 % durant les six derniers mois de l'année électorale 2023.

Des mesures d'austérité insuffisantes

Lors d'une récente audition budgétaire devant la Chambre des représentants, le Directeur Général de la NPA, Sekou A.M. Dukuly, a reconnu les défis financiers auxquels l'institution fait face et a présenté un plan d'action pour y remédier.

« Nous avons adopté des mesures

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La Directrice Générale de la NaFAA prend la présidence du Comité des Pêches du Golfe de Guinée Centre-Ouest

La 15^e conférence du Comité des Pêches du Golfe de Guinée Centre-Ouest (FCWC) s'est achevée le vendredi 13 décembre à Monrovia par l'élection de l'Honorable Emma Metieh Glassco, Directrice Générale des Pêches et de l'Aquaculture du Liberia, à la présidence de cette organisation régionale.

Lors de la session ministérielle de clôture, en présence du Président Joseph Boakai et de son entourage, le gouvernement libérien, par l'intermédiaire de l'Autorité Nationale des Pêches et de l'Aquaculture (NaFAA), a présenté un projet ambitieux visant à élargir l'adhésion au FCWC, actuellement composé de six pays, pour atteindre un total de dix États membres. Une vision audacieuse pour le mandat libérien Dans son discours

d'investiture, l'Honorable Emma Metieh Glassco, qui succède à l'ancienne présidente ghanéenne Mavis Hawa Koomsom, a déclaré :

« Sous la présidence du Liberia, je m'engage à explorer les opportunités d'élargir le FCWC à dix États membres. Je suis convaincue que cet objectif est non seulement atteignable, mais

qu'il permettra aussi de renforcer l'impact et la portée de notre organisation.

»

Madame Glassco a également mis en avant sa vision de dynamiser le commerce interrégional entre les États

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Éditorial

La chute de la maison Assad

Par Daron Acemoglu

TEL AVIV - L'effondrement rapide d'une dynastie al-Assad vieille de 54 ans en Syrie vient transformer le paysage géopolitique du Moyen-Orient. L'offensive éclair de la milice islamiste Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) a surpris tous les voisins de la Syrie, comme le reste du monde. L'annonce de la [fuite](#) du président Bachar al-Assad en Russie confirme une vérité incontournable s'agissant des guerres : des conséquences inattendues peuvent s'étendre bien au-delà du champ de bataille.

L'attaque du 7 octobre 2023 perpétrée par le Hamas contre des communautés civiles israéliennes à proximité de la frontière de Gaza a provoqué plusieurs séismes dans l'ensemble du Moyen-Orient. L'impitoyable offensive menée par Israël pour détruire le Hamas à Gaza et le Hezbollah au Liban a quasiment anéanti « l'axe de résistance » iranien, tandis que les États-Unis et le Royaume-Uni ont bombardé les Houthis soutenus par l'Iran au Yémen, en réponse à leurs attaques contre des navires commerciaux internationaux.

La guerre civile syrienne a débuté en 2011, lorsque le régime d'Assad a écrasé les manifestations pacifiques du « Printemps arabe ». Puis les combats se sont largement atténués après 2015, l'intervention de la Russie, avec l'aide de l'Iran et du Hezbollah, ayant inversé le cours de la guerre en faveur d'Assad. Dernièrement, les proxies de l'Iran ayant été détruits, et les capacités de combat de la Russie étant éprouvées par la difficulté du conflit en Ukraine, les rebelles ont saisi l'opportunité.

Avec l'[appui](#) de la Turquie, et semble-t-il du Qatar, les rebelles ont facilement pris d'assaut les défenses étonnamment fragiles du régime syrien, et l'armée d'Assad a capitulé sans combattre. L'Iran et la Russie, protecteurs d'Assad, ayant précipitamment [évacué leurs troupes](#) et abandonné le dictateur à son sort, le régime syrien fondé sur la torture et les massacres n'inspirait plus la peur.

La fin de l'alliance de l'Iran avec la Syrie, principal bastion du régime de Téhéran dans le monde arabe, est vouée à redéfinir l'équilibre régional des puissances. Comme l'[exprimait](#) l'ancien vice-président iranien Mohammad Ali Abtahi deux jours avant la fuite d'Assad, un effondrement du gouvernement syrien « constituerait l'un des événements les plus importants dans l'histoire du Moyen-Orient... La résistance dans la région se retrouverait privée de soutien. Israël deviendrait la puissance dominante ».

« Hayat Tahrir al-Sham » signifie la libération du Levant, qui dans le lexique politique du premier califat inclut la Syrie, le Liban, la Jordanie et la Palestine. Le chef du groupe islamiste HTS, Abou Mohammad al-Joulani, tente néanmoins de projeter l'image d'un islamiste d'un nouveau genre. Il semble avoir tiré les enseignements nécessaires des échecs d'al-Qaïda et de l'État islamique (EI), et se considère désormais comme un pragmatique [aspirant](#) uniquement à « libérer la Syrie de son régime tyrannique ».

Signe de ce nouveau pragmatisme, Joulani a [ordonné](#) à ses hommes de laisser le Premier ministre syrien Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali continuer de gérer les institutions publiques jusqu'au [transfert officiel](#) du pouvoir. Par opposition, l'EI aurait certainement procédé à des exécutions massives de soldats et responsables publics.

Joulani n'en demeure pas moins à la tête d'une organisation islamiste radicale. Ceux qui [s'attendent](#) à ce que la Turquie tempère l'extrémisme du HTS présument que Joulani sera le soldat obéissant d'Ankara. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que Joulani va devoir composer avec de puissantes contraintes politiques, notamment avec les nombreuses milices rivales qui se sont unies pour faire tomber Assad, ainsi qu'avec les forces kurdes qui se sont [empressées de prendre le contrôle](#) de nouveaux territoires dans l'est de la Syrie, tout en subissant les [attaques](#) des forces turques au nord.

Aux yeux du président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan, les ambitions des Kurdes de Syrie menacent d'alimenter une rébellion nationaliste au sein des communautés kurdes de Turquie. En 2019, Erdogan a ordonné à son armée de mettre en place une « zone de sécurité » de 30 kilomètres de large dans le nord de la Syrie, et de repousser les combattants kurdes loin de la frontière turque, zone dans laquelle les Kurdes avaient saisi l'opportunité de la guerre civile pour consolider une enclave autonome.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, ancien ministre israélien des Affaires étrangères, et vice-président du Centre international de Tolède pour la paix, est l'auteur de l'ouvrage intitulé [Prophets Without Honor: The 2000 Camp David Summit and the End of the Two-State Solution](#) (Oxford University Press, 2022).

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Français

Starts from page 8 **L'Autorité Nationale des Ports (NPA) confrontée**

premières. Les ports jouent un rôle central dans ces activités commerciales. Pourtant, ces infrastructures essentielles ont souffert de décennies de sous-investissements. Pour remédier à cette situation, la NPA a annoncé en 2024 deux projets majeurs de modernisation en partenariat avec la Chine et le Maroc. Ces initiatives visent à répondre aux besoins critiques des ports de Monrovia et de Buchanan, en augmentant leur capacité opérationnelle et en renforçant leur compétitivité. M. Dukuly a indiqué qu'à partir de 2025, des consultations intensives seront engagées avec les principaux acteurs de l'Exécutif et du Législatif pour accélérer la mise en œuvre de ces projets. **Une vision ambitieuse pour l'avenir** La direction de la NPA reconnaît

que relever le défi de la masse salariale, tout en investissant dans des infrastructures modernes, nécessitera des réformes audacieuses et des consultations approfondies. Cependant, elle reste engagée à transformer l'institution en un hub portuaire compétitif, moteur de croissance économique et de création d'emplois. « Nous avons hérité d'une situation complexe, mais notre objectif est de bâtir un système portuaire financièrement viable, opérationnellement efficace et capable de soutenir de manière significative le développement national », a déclaré M. Dukuly. Avec une vision tournée vers la modernisation et l'efficacité, la NPA s'affirme comme un acteur clé de la transformation économique du Liberia, tout en consolidant sa position sur la scène internationale.

Starts from page 8 **La Directrice Générale de la NaFAA prend**

membres, en particulier pour le Liberia, qu'elle décrit comme disposant d'un secteur halieutique en pleine croissance, avec d'énormes potentiels inexploités dans la pêche de capture et le développement de l'aquaculture. Des priorités stratégiques ambitieuses Au cours de son mandat, la nouvelle présidente du FCWC prévoit de :
• Renforcer la coopération régionale grâce à des échanges techniques et à l'harmonisation des politiques, notamment en matière de régimes de licences ;
• Établir des protocoles régionaux communs pour négocier des accords de partenariat durable en matière de pêche avec des partenaires internationaux comme l'Union européenne ;
• Mobiliser des financements auprès des bailleurs de fonds afin de soutenir les projets régionaux au bénéfice de tous les États membres. En signe de sa prise de fonction officielle, l'Honorable Emma Metieh Glassco a reçu le drapeau du FCWC, marquant ainsi le début de son mandat à la tête de cet organe sous-régional chargé de la gestion des ressources halieutiques. Promouvoir une pêche durable et des conditions de travail décentes Revenant sur le thème de la conférence, « Promouvoir le travail décent et renforcer la résilience des écosystèmes marins pour la durabilité du secteur halieutique », Madame Glassco a souligné les défis de sécurité associés à la pêche,

l'une des professions les plus dangereuses au monde. Elle a exhorté les États côtiers, portuaires et de pavillon à respecter les règles et traités internationaux, tout en veillant à une mise en œuvre stricte des normes de l'Organisation Internationale du Travail (OIT) pour garantir la sécurité des travailleurs maritimes. Adoption de la Déclaration de Monrovia Un des temps forts de la réunion ministérielle a été l'adoption de la Déclaration de Monrovia, par laquelle les États membres s'engagent à renforcer la coopération régionale. Ce texte prévoit notamment :
• L'organisation de patrouilles conjointes pour lutter contre la pêche illicite ;
• La mise en œuvre de périodes de fermeture synchronisées ;
• D'autres initiatives techniques en faveur d'une gestion durable des ressources halieutiques. Le Nigeria accueillera la prochaine conférence La 15^e session ministérielle, qui a marqué la fin de trois jours de discussions internationales sur le développement de la pêche dans la région, a réuni plusieurs hauts responsables des six États membres du FCWC. Il a été annoncé que le Nigeria sera l'hôte de la 16^e conférence ministérielle. Avec cette présidence, le Liberia s'affirme comme un acteur clé dans la promotion d'une gestion collaborative et durable des ressources marines, consolidant ainsi sa position sur la scène régionale.

L'Agence de la Fonction Publique n'a pas compétence pour examiner une plainte de licenciement abusif



La Commission Nationale des Élections (NEC) a affirmé que l'Agence de la Fonction Publique (ACF) n'a pas la compétence juridique pour examiner une plainte déposée par certains employés de la NEC alléguant un licenciement abusif.

Dans une déclaration officielle transmise par son avocat, la NEC a soutenu que la loi de 1973, qui a créé l'ACF en tant qu'entité de l'Exécutif, ne confère à cette agence aucune autorité pour intervenir dans les affaires d'emploi ou pour réviser des décisions concernant la NEC.

« La loi de 1973 n'accordant pas cette autorité à l'ACF, cette dernière ne peut se l'arroger par le biais d'un ordre permanent », a déclaré la NEC.

La Commission a rappelé qu'elle a été établie comme un organe indépendant conformément à l'article 89(B) de la Constitution de 1986 et qu'elle gère ses affaires internes sans interférence de l'Exécutif.

La plainte et les contestations

Cette déclaration fait suite à un communiqué publié par l'ACF le 10 décembre 2024, annonçant qu'elle avait reçu une plainte de 25 employés licenciés par la NEC. Ces derniers accusaient l'institution de licenciement abusif.

Dans son communiqué, l'ACF a indiqué qu'elle avait lancé une enquête sur cette plainte. Toutefois, la NEC a nié toutes les accusations et a officiellement demandé à l'ACF de classer l'affaire.

En particulier, la NEC a signalé que l'un des signataires de la plainte, M. Rennie B. Gleebar, est toujours employé par la NEC et n'a jamais été licencié.

« En tant qu'employé actif, M. Gleebar n'a ni la capacité légale ni la légitimité factuelle pour déposer une plainte pour licenciement abusif », a précisé la NEC.

Un groupe non reconnu

La NEC a également contesté l'existence d'un collectif intitulé « Le Personnel Mécontent », affirmant qu'aucune

preuve officielle n'a été présentée à l'ACF pour démontrer que ce groupe est légalement reconnu, que ce soit en tant qu'entité incorporée ou non incorporée.

De plus, la Commission a souligné que M. Gleebar, en tant que non-juriste, n'est pas habilité à représenter d'autres individus dans une affaire de licenciement.

Si M. Gleebar souhaitait agir au nom de ses collègues, il aurait dû fournir des autorisations écrites de leur part, lui conférant légalement le droit de les représenter. Faute de ces documents, la NEC considère que la plainte est irrecevable pour défaut de capacité juridique.

Des incompatibilités légales

S'appuyant sur la loi de 1973 et les ordres permanents de 2012, la NEC a rappelé qu'un employé non nommé en vertu de cette loi et n'ayant pas réussi l'examen de la fonction publique ne peut faire appel devant le Comité d'Examen ou le Conseil d'Appel de l'ACF.

La NEC a précisé que le plaignant a été recruté sous l'autorité de la Nouvelle Loi Électorale de 1986, telle qu'amendée, et non en vertu de la loi de 1973.

« Par conséquent, cette plainte doit être rejetée », a conclu la NEC, ajoutant qu'elle a déposé une requête formelle pour son rejet auprès de l'ACF.

Une mise en garde sur le respect des cadres juridiques

La NEC a réitéré l'importance de respecter les compétences institutionnelles et les cadres juridiques établis. Elle a insisté sur la nécessité de se conformer aux lois en vigueur pour garantir une gestion transparente et équitable des affaires publiques.

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Liberian Red Cross welcomes additional \$592,000 Funding for GIRL Project from Swedish Embassy

Monrovia, Liberia -December 13, 2024 - The Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS) has expressed profound gratitude to the Embassy of Sweden for its confirmation of an additional \$592,000 in funding to support the ongoing Green, Inclusive, and Resilient Liberian Communities (GIRL) Project in the southeastern region. The GIRL project which began in 2023 aims to enhance community resilience, promote climate change adaptation, and

addressing disaster risks, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and improving community-based health care and with the additional funding, the Liberia Red Cross will further expand the project from 12 communities to 45 communities in the three counties.

The Secretary General of the Liberian Red Cross, Gregory Blamoh, stated: "This additional funding from the Swedish Embassy is a true testament to the progress we have made together

serious threat to vulnerable communities in Liberia but added that the new funding enables the Red Cross to equip more communities with the tools, knowledge, and resources they need to adapt and thrive. "By expanding our efforts, we are not only responding to immediate needs but also laying the groundwork for sustainable, long-term development."

The LNRCS acknowledges the pivotal role of its partners, particularly the Swedish Embassy



strengthen local capacity in health and disaster risk reduction in communities in Sinoe, Grand Kru, and River Gee counties

The Swedish Embassy, as a key donor for the three-year GIRL project, was impressed by the significant progress made since the project began in 2023 and confirmed the additional funding during the December 9 annual review meeting with the Liberian Red Cross. The annual review meeting was organized for both partners to assess the project's progress, impact, and challenges.

The GIRL Project, has already made substantial strides in

under the GIRL Project and also underscores the Swedish Government's commitment to empowering Liberian communities and building resilience".

Mr. Blamoh added that the additional funding will allow the Red Cross to reach and address the needs of more communities facing the harsh realities of climate change. "With these resources, we will strengthen community structures, enhance livelihoods, and improve access to safe water and health care, while building resilience against future disasters", he added.

Mr. Blamoh further noted climate change continues to pose a

and the Swedish Red Cross, in making this project a success. "We are deeply grateful to the Swedish Embassy and the Swedish Red Cross for their unwavering partnership and trust in our work."

Looking Ahead; The Liberian Red Cross remains committed to addressing local needs and fostering sustainable development through innovative and impactful initiatives like the GIRL Project. As the project scales up, it will bring transformative change to more communities, improving lives and fostering resilience in the face of climate change.-Press release

GAC signs MoU with US accountability Office

The Auditor General of Liberia, P. Garswa Jackson Sr., and his team, were invited to Washington, DC.

Monrovia, December 16, 2024/ On Thursday, December 12, 2024, Liberia's Auditor General P. Garswa Jackson signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). GAO is the gold standard of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) renowned for providing top-notch capacity-building initiatives to SAIs globally.

As part of the MoU, the General Auditing Commission (GAC) of Liberia will benefit from capacity-building initiatives from the U.S. GAO Center of Audit Excellence through online and in-person training, and at least one auditor from the GAC will benefit from a three-month secondment program through the prestigious International Auditor Fellowship Program of the GAO annually beginning in April 2025.

"We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the

Honorable Comptroller General of the United States and Head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office, Mr. Gene L. Dodaro, and his team, for the recognition, collaboration, and invaluable opportunity to enhance the capacity of our staff at the GAC. Special thanks also go to the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Liberia for the respective roles they played in validating the impact of our work, leading towards the signing of this MoU," a statement from the GAC released on Friday said.

The Auditor General and his team will hold several other high-profile profile meetings with the following institutions: Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC);The Global Anti-Corruption Office, U.S. Department of State; Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), U.S. Department of Treasury; and The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Senate ends 2025 Revenue budget hearing

-anticipates implementation in January

The Senate on Capitol Hill has completed hearing on the revenue component of the draft National Budget for 2025.

By Lincoln G. Peters Chairman of the Senate Committee on Ways, Means, Finance and Budget, hearing on Saturday, the Senator Prince Moye of



Bong County, indicated that the 2025 draft Budget was well structured by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, considering major needs of the Liberian people.

According to Senator Moye, in the spirit of transparency and an open budget process, the revenue hearing which had long been held in "closed door", was opened to the public based on instruction of President Pro-Tempore, Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence. Chairman Moye states that considering the analyses done on the revenue component of the draft

instrument, especially domestic revenue and International contributions, the 2025 budget, which accounts for over eight hundred and fifty-one Million United States dollars, will have a safe landing.

Based on the conclusion of the revenue hearing, he adds that the Committee has reverted to the committee room for any other revenue consideration or discussion.

Responding to an inquiry on the failure of the National Port Authority and National Fishery and Aquaculture Authority to contribute their proposed contributions to the national Budget, Chairman Moye notes that the Liberia Revenue Authority will further make an

assessment and inform the committee with respect to said decision.

He discloses that with the level of work being done by the committee, there is a prospect for the discovery of other revenue sources that may further push the national budget to over Nine Hundred Million United States Dollars.

Following the conclusion of the revenue hearing, the Senate Ways, Means, Finance and Budget Committee Chairman revealed that the hearings for the expenditure component of the budget will commence today, Monday, December 16, 2024, adding, "We want to ensure that the Budget is passed before January 2025".

Editing by Jonathan Browne

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Gov't fails in US\$42.426m

States dollars in the approved budget. According to him, of that amount, six hundred and ninety-four point six two six million United States dollars was for domestic revenue, while also in the approved budget of 2024, forty-two point four two six million was expected to have come from external sources, unfortunately, they have not managed to get that money.

Also, he lamented that in the recast budget of 2024, the budget numbers remain the same, with external resources projected at Forty-eight million, but then the domestic resources envelope was cited from six hundred ninety-six point four million to six hundred and ninety point eight six Million.

"Now, based on that recast number, overall, we have been able to raise six hundred and nineteen point nine, nine two million, which constitute 84% of the overall recast envelope, but if you also look at it in the context of domestic resources mobilization, it also constitutes 90% of our target of six hundred and ninety million that was in the recast budget. The balance to be collected for the domestic resources is US\$70 million, and we are struggling and doing our best to raise that," he promised.

Giving update on State Own Enterprises

(SoE) revenue contribution and collection to the National Budget of 2024, he added that on shared task with the SoE, they were tasked to collect three point two nine million as a contribution to the budget from LPRC, but, LPRC has done only two point five million which indicates 65%.

"Now, LPRC has one point three two nine million to contribute. Also, the National Port Authority, or NPA, was given a target of seven point five million. The original budget was recast to six point three eight two million; they have been able to do three million of that, which is a 47% performance level. And so, they have a balance of three point three eight two million", Jallah explained.

Also, for the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority, he pointed out that NaFAA was in the recast budget tasked to provide one point two seven six million, but, to date, they have not provided or made any contribution at all against that target.

"They still have one point two seven six million to contribute as the budget of 2024 ends next January. We've dividend of other public entities at five hundred thousand United States dollars, and today, nothing has been done", he concluded. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

NaFAA boss assumes FCWC Chairmanship

Monrovia, December 16, 2024/ The Liberian Government through the National Fisheries Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) Friday, December 13, 2024, disclosed an ambitious plan to explore possibilities of increasing the membership of the Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) from (6-10) while assuming the Chairmanship of the regional fisheries body during the Ministerial session of which was attended by President Joseph Boakai and entourage.

"Under Liberia's Chairmanship, I do have an ambitious plan of exploring possibilities of increasing FCWC member states from (6-10) and I am confident this goal is attainable".

Making remarks, the new Chairperson the Director General of NaFAA, Hon. Emma Metieh who took over from the outgoing chairperson Mavis Hawa Koomsom Ghanaian former Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, among other things stated that her greatest vision as Chair of FCWC is to foster and facilitate inter-regional trade among members states, particularly Liberia which according to her has an emerging fisheries sector with untapped opportunities in captured fisheries and Aquaculture development.

Moreover, the new Fisheries Chair also plans to strengthen bilateral cooperation through shared and technical experiences and harmonized policies on license regimes, establish regional protocols for negotiating Sustainable Fisheries Access Partnership Agreements with the European Union, and source donor support that benefits all member states of FCWC.

Liberia's Fisheries Director General Hon. Emma Metieh Glassco received FCWC Flag as the New Chairperson to manage the affairs of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Body.

Reflecting on the theme of the regional

fisheries conference "promoting decent work and strengthening Marime and Ecosystem Resilience for the Sustainability of the Fisheries Sector", Madam Glassco mentioned that fishing is associated with very high risks and is considered one of the world's most dangerous jobs. She therefore said responsible Coastal, Flag, and Port States must uphold the rules and treaties they are party to and ensure that the International Labor Organization (ILO) standards are fully implemented to safeguard local seafarers.

During the Ministerial meeting in Monrovia, the Ministers and Fisheries Technicians from Member States adopted and signed the Monrovia Declaration which would ensure joint fisheries operations such as joint fisheries patrols and joint closed fishing seasons among other technical issues.

Meanwhile, the 15th Ministerial session which climaxes the three days of International Fisheries discussions on the development of fisheries within the region, brought together several dignitaries from all member states of the Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC). It was announced that Nigeria will be the host of the 16th Ministerial Conference.



NPA spends 14.04 million on bloated payroll

As management struggles to address high payroll costs and limited port investments

National Port Authority (NPA) has outlined plans to address an unsustainable wage bill and lack of investment in Liberia's ports.

Friday, December 13, 2024/ In 2024, the NPA spent \$14.04 million—nearly 60% of its total revenue of \$24.4 million—on salaries and benefits for its 1,945 employees. Spending almost 60% of NPA's revenue on salaries has constrained its ability to save and invest in critical infrastructure, expand operations, create sustainable jobs, and increase support to the government of Liberia.

NPA workforce grew from 450 personnel in 2018 to 1,945 workforce by 2024, leading to 266% increase in the monthly wage

NPA to save, reinvest in the ports, create more sustainable jobs, and increase the port's contribution to Liberia's economic growth."

Liberia imports over 80% of its food and non-food items and relies heavily on the export of raw materials. These trade activities are conducted almost entirely through Liberia's seaports, making their effective management and modernization essential for national development. However, Liberia's ports have seen little investment in recent decades.

Recognizing this gap, the Managing Dukuly said his team is attracting



bill—from approximately \$300,000 in 2018 to over \$1.4 million in 2024—without any significant expansion in revenue or operational capacity. The most significant jump, a 47% increase, occurred during the last six months of the 2023 general elections, while the lowest rate (13%) of increase occurred in the last 11 months.

During a recent budget hearing at the House of Representatives, the Managing Director of the NPA, Hon. Sekou A.M. Dukuly, outlined plans to address these challenges. "We are committed to running a financially stable and operationally efficient port. We have implemented austerity measures, including a 64% reduction in supply costs, a 20% reduction in total operating expenses, and a 45% reduction in administrative expenses. Still, all these measures are not enough to address the challenges posed by the huge wage bill," he explained.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the NPA management says it has designed a comprehensive plan to achieve financial stability and operational efficiency while being sensitive to the rights and livelihoods of employees. The Managing Director emphasized, "Our plan protects the rights and well-being of our staff through a fair process while we empower the

investments to modernize the ports. Earlier this year, the NPA announced two significant port expansion and investment projects in collaboration with China and Morocco. These initiatives aim to help address the long-overdue infrastructure and capacity needs of the Monrovia and Buchanan ports, ensuring they are equipped to facilitate trade and support Liberia's economic transformation.

He said beginning 2025, more practical actions on these opportunities will be rolled out among stakeholders in the Executive and the Legislature.

The NPA management acknowledges that addressing the unsustainable wage bill and the investment needs of the ports requires additional consultations to ensure they happen urgently and in ways that are fair and able to address the inefficiencies and reallocation of resources toward strategic investments to make the NPA a competitive hub that drives economic growth and job creation in Liberia. "We inherited many of these challenges but are determined to resolve them responsibly. Our focus is on building a port system that is financially viable, operationally efficient, and capable of contributing significantly to Liberia's development," the Managing Director stated.

The Government of Liberia fails to meet external revenue target, totaling US\$42.426 Million for 2024.

Monrovia, Liberia, December 16, 2024 - The Government of Liberia, through the Liberian Revenue Authority (LRA), has failed in US\$42.426 million External Resources point two seven six million United States dollars as tasked in the 2024 National Budget. Making the disclosure over the weekend during the 2025 Budget hearing at the Liberian Senate, Liberia Revenue

Providing the revenue performance update for 2024, he said that the total resources envelope for 2024 was US\$738.86M) seven hundred and thirty-eight point eight six Million United



Also, disappointingly, National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) has failed to contribute (US\$1.276m) one

Authority Commissioner General James D. Jallah said the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company and the National Port (LPRC) Authority (NPA) are still struggling to contribute what they promised to the National

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