

# **Business and Politics in the Muslim World**

## **West African News Monitoring**

### **Weekly Report 117**

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## POLITICAL NEWS

### **GHANA**

#### **NCCE urged to make the 1992 Constitution accessible in every part of Ghana**

Ho, April 28, GNA - Mr Joseph Amenowode, Volta Regional Minister on Wednesday, urged the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) to endeavour to make Ghana's 1992 Constitution accessible to every Ghanaian in the country. He said this would empower every citizen with the opportunity to participate in the democratic governance of the country. Mr Amenowode said this in a speech read on his behalf at the Regional Launch of this year's Constitution Week in Ho. The celebration is under the theme: "Enhancing Constitutionalism through Effective Citizens' Participation for Good Governance." Mr Amenowode commended the NCCE for educating the populace on its civic responsibilities since its inception and urged the Commission to do more to get citizens to be interested in and be conversant with the country's Constitution.

He said government would uphold the principles of constitutionalism, good governance and democratic principles and called on other stakeholders especially the NCCE to do its bit and make the country an oasis of peace and a beacon of hope in the Sub-region.

Mr Fidelis Attoh, Volta Regional Director of NCCE observed that the country was better-off under constitutional rule as it was gradually driving the country from a low-income to a middle income status. He advised politicians and leaders to make the urban, town, zonal, area councils and unit committees functional to avoid "systemic failures." Mr Attoh said decentralization remained the surest way of job creation and rapid engagement of rural youth and urged government to implement the decentralization policy to the letter.

He urged government and all politicians to uphold the principles of good governance and

ensure transparent and accountable leadership. Mr Ransford Ocloo, Regional Coordinator of the National Youth Council during open forum, expressed worry that elderly people including politicians were influencing the youth wrongly to resort to violence at the least provocation. He therefore urged the NCCE to educate the youth more on their civic responsibilities.

## **Kufuor govt overpriced loan agreement by \$102m**

A deputy Energy Minister, Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, says the Mills administration has saved an amount of \$70 million after re-negotiating a loan agreement with Exim Bank of US entered into by the erstwhile NPP administration.

According to him the New Patriotic Party government over-priced a \$350 million loan agreement with the bank by \$102 million in 2008 before its departure from office.

Mr Buah made this revelation in an interview with Joy FM's Super Morning Show host Kojo Opong-Nkrumah on Tuesday.

He was responding to allegations that the NDC government was re-announcing the \$350 million loan package which has already been secured and approved by parliament in 2008, a time the NDC was in opposition.

The loan was to extend electricity to the northern parts of the country.

Whilst conceding that the agreement started in 2008, the deputy energy minister said it was the new government under President Mills which "cleaned it up" by renegotiating the terms of the agreement.

He said Parliament's approval of a loan agreement is no guarantee that the amount has been secured, adding, "Parliament has passed so many loans which have not seen the light of day."

"When the NDC government came in, what President Mills directed was that we look at the loans that have been passed and see those that we can salvage. What immediately came out and was widely publicized was that this \$350 million loan scope was over-priced by over \$102 million.

"We did due diligence and the scope of work was cleaned up and we were able to save the people \$70 million," he added

According to him, further re-negotiation ensured that the local content was improved well over 15% to create more jobs for the local industry.

He stated further that the government under President Mills has in addition to the \$350 million secured well over \$330 million in “less than a year in power” of the NDC government to improve electricity in the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana.

Kweku Kwarteng Head of communications for the NPP and previously government spokesperson on Finance told Myjoyonline.com he would react appropriately after acquainting himself with the details of the allegations.

## **Ghana@50 Mansions: Defaulters in Trouble**

### **GOVT TO PURSUE DEFAULTERS**

The government would soon pursue defaulting private developers and purchasers of the mansions that were built during the Ghana@50 celebrations for sums due to and owed government with interest.

The action by the government is in response to the findings of the Ghana@50 Commission of Enquiry that recommended that the government must take over the mansions.

The Ghana@50 Planning Committee and the Secretariat, with a loan arranged between the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and the African Union Development Consortium Limited (AUDCL), constructed 30 identikit mansions for the celebrations at La Wireless and the Cantonment in Accra. The government also accepted the Commission’s recommendation that it has to recover the sale of the remaining mansions: the value of the of the land, which in 2007 was valued at \$75,000.00 per plot, totaling \$ 2,250,000.00, for the 30 plots, as well as the amounts expended by the government on the project, which totaled as much as GH¢8,288,452.12, as well as GH¢983,716.80 owed to contractors, consultants and suppliers in respect of the La Wireless, Cantonments projects and also the cost of the furnishing totaling GH¢5,604,153.40.

The government, by a whitepaper, accepted recommendation by the Ghana@50 Commission of Enquiry to the effect that the ban on the issue of leases at La Wireless and Cantonment should be lifted and requested the Lands Commission to prepare leases in favour of private developers and lessees who prove full payment of rent payable to government in respect of their respective leases, in the absence of a court injunction against the government on the site. The government stated that it accepts the recommendation by the Commission that the actions of Dr, Charles Wereko-Brobby, Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana@50, and Mr. Kwadwo Okyere Mpiani, Chairman of the National Planning Committee of the Ghana@50, amount to contempt of Parliament because the loan was obtained from SSNIT and AUDCL without Parliamentary approval.

However, the government accepted the recommendation of the Commission that Dr.

Wereko-Brobby and Mr. Mpiani should be pursued for causing that loss, because considering the terms and conditions of the loan from SSNIT and the arrangement between AUDCL and the Ghana@50 Secretariat, it is unlikely that the government can recover the amounts and this would amount to a loss to the state.

The Commission, in its findings, observed that in view of the poor financial status of government and the financial problems that were encountered, particularly in timely payment of contractors on the project, the decision to construct the identikit mansions was an imprudent one.

The Commission observed that government is the appointing authority of the managers and trustees of SSNIT funds and that government, as the trustee, should not have appropriated the loan it arranged between SSNIT and AUDCL. “This conduct is contrary to all well known principles of Law of Trusts which require the trustees to jealously guard the interest of the beneficiaries and not seek any personal benefit from the trust funds,: it stated.

According to the Commissions findings, the loan to AUDCL from SSNIT, as at the end of July 2009 had risen to GH¢12,029,695.44 inclusive of interest, and it is still rising.

The Commission observed that certain lands at North Ridge owned by SSNIT were taken over by the AUDCL for the construction of presidential mansion. SSNIT failed to negotiate and agree on the price of the land before allowing AUDCL to take possession as required of a trustee, SSNIT therefore failed to protect the interest of the beneficiaries of the trust fund.

The government, by the whitepaper, also accepted the recommendation of the Commission to direct SSNIT to take immediate steps to enforce the default clauses in the agreement executed with AUDCL and its guarantors.

According to the Commission’s findings, 15 of the 30 mansions have been sold at GH¢8,250,000.00 per unit. Out of the sum, an amount of GH¢4,350,000.00 has been received.

“The proceeds have been appropriated by the Secretariat and a portion used to pay some of the debts owed to contractors, suppliers and the consultants. GH¢2,000,000.00 of the sum was paid to the AUDCL which in turn paid it to SSNIT as part payment of the loan.

“The AUDCL has taken over the remaining 15 mansions at La Wireless, Cantonments and commissioned Messrs. Amalgam Consult to renovate them at a cost of GH¢20,000.00 per mansion, the estimated cost as at April 2009, to sell each mansion at \$600,000.00 for a commission to recover the sums due and owing by purchasers of the mansions.

“Payment of commission to Amalgam Consult will increase the costs of the project thus reducing government’s income from the sale of the mansions,” the Commission observed

in its findings.

The Commission observed that Margins Suppliers Company Limited (MSC), one of the purchasers of the mansions, sued government over a debt of GH¢2,705, 186 owed it for the supply of calendars for the Ghana@50 celebrations.

The MSC took over four of the mansions in lieu of the debt owed to it by the Secretariat. The MSC paid a deposit of GH¢100,000.00 for each of the four mansions and unilaterally took over a fifth one the price of which stands at \$600,000.00. The debt outstanding for the four is GH¢1,800,000.00. The government has negotiated a settlement with MSC for the payment of the calendars and has paid MSC an amount of GH¢4,009,401.62.

## **Kufuor Lies Again**

Can you believe that Former President Kufuor can lie in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening and even at dawn when everybody is asleep? It is now certain that the ex-President is a double-tongued character with the penchant of spewing out palpable lies whenever he opens his mouth.

Mr. Kufuor, in an interview with US-based magazine, AfricaWatch, lied through his teeth to the interviewer and indeed, the whole world about his government.

When asked why people like former President Rawlings and Mr. Kwame Pianim perceived his administration as corrupt in spite of his “zero tolerant for corruption” rhetorics, Mr Kufuor lied to AfricaWatch and said that Mr. Pianim left the New Patriotic Party (NPP) before he (Kufuor) became President.

“Kwame Pianim resigned from the NPP. Later on he tried to come back and people perhaps thought he is still one of us. The truth is he didn’t work in my government. He is a respected person and apparently he is quite close to President Mills. I know him but he was not in my team,” Mr. Kufuor lied.

The Daily Post can authoritatively state that Mr. Kufuor told a blatant lie when he said Mr Pianim did not work in his government.

Daily Post’s checks have firmly established that it is an incontrovertible fact that Pianim indeed worked in the Kufuor government when he was the Chairman of the Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission (PURC).

He has long ago established himself as someone who should not be taken seriously by any serious-minded person. Mr Kufuor, during his tenure as President of Ghana, had gotten what he always wanted through lies and treachery.

When Mr Kufuor was busted for acquiring a multi-billion dollar hotel, christened, “Hotel De Waa Waa,” he lied to the good people of this country that it was his son who, through

a consortium, bought the hotel. While Mr Kufuor claims that the hotel belongs to his son, his mistress, Gizzel Yagzi, who negotiated for the purchase of the hotel pointed to Kufuor as the real owner. She told an Accra-based radio station at the height of the 'Hotel De Waa Waa' scandal that Kufuor bought the hotel and registered it in the name of his first son, Chief Kufuor.

Immediately he assumed office, Mr. Kufuor was hit by "kickback" brouhaha. He claimed that when people brought bribes and kickbacks to him at the Castle, he always told them to "go and come next time." However, Mr. Harona Esseku, former National Chairman of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) exposed him when he said that Kufuor was personally collecting kickbacks at the Castle.

In a memo to the African Development Bank in Tunis for funds to establish the Kufuor Foundation, Mr. Kufuor claimed that he was awarded 'Order of the Knight of the Bath' by the Queen of England. Checks conducted at the British Embassy as well as with the British government reveal that Mr. Kufuor was never ever given such an accolade. Today, his lies have become the norm rather than the exception so much that what surprises Ghanaians is when he speaks the truth.

## **We shall move into the Jubilee House - Vice President**

Accra, April 28, GNA - Vice President John Dramani Mahama has given the assurance that both he and the President would move into the Jubilee House as soon as arrangements were complete.

"The Chief of Staff has tasked people to do some studies to find out key organizations that would move with the presidency and as soon as that is completed, we shall definitely move into the Jubilee House." Vice President Mahama, who spoke to journalists in an interview in his office, said the National Democratic Congress criticized the construction of the Jubilee House when it was in opposition because the party felt it was not appropriate considering the economic challenges at the time but once it was constructed the government had no option but to make use of it. "Government has the intention of occupying the Jubilee House. After all it has already been built and it belongs to all Ghanaians and we shall make use of it after sorting out things."

He explained that the Jubilee House was too small to contain all the offices housed at the Castle and that was the reason why the Chief of Staff had engaged people to select those that would be sent to the new place. The Vice President said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is temporarily located at the Jubilee House while government finds a permanent place for the workers.

He said the government was on the verge of securing about \$500 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank adding "such monies would support the government to pay government's arrears to contractors and Tema Oil Refinery debts."

The Vice President said the President had tasked all the sectors to draw up programmes

that would create more jobs for the youth in the coming years and as soon as that was completed the rate of unemployment would reduce.

He gave the assurance that government was on track in providing a onetime payment of National Health Insurance Scheme and would implement it before the end of the first term of President John Evans Atta Mills. Vice President Mahama said the current drop in inflation and stability of the cedi against major currencies was boosting the confidence of investors who are already trooping into the country.

## **Panelists on Constitutional review against blanket review**

Accra, April 29, GNA - Panelists at a roundtable on Thursday, agreed that although it is important for Ghana to review the 1992 Constitution, the exercise should be treated with caution to avoid a blanket review. They called for a piecemeal approach to the national exercise in order not to do anything detrimental to growth of democracy and good governance. The panelist expressed these views at a forum organised by the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) as part of activities marking the 10th Annual Constitution Week celebration in Accra.

They held the view that it is important for Ghana to ensure the durability of the constitution deepen Ghana's fledgling democracy. The forum, which brought together participants from academia, judiciary, legislature, civil society organisations and identifiable bodies, was on the topic: "Can Our Present Constitutional Framework Accelerate the Growth and Sustenance of Democracy and Good Governance in Ghana." Mrs. Betty Mould Iddrisu, Attorney General and Minister of Justice noted that the constitution had served Ghana for well over 18 years and ushered the country into democratic dispensation.

She however said the document as presently drafted and operationalised cannot promote the governance ideal intended. She said that it was time to review the operation of the constitution in order to make it more scientific and promote conscious decisions on the governance architecture of the country. Mrs. Iddrisu the exercise could lead to the resolutions of the many problems that now confront the country, "given the immense benefit of experience that now guides us".

"The exercise is meant to give us all the opportunity to take a second look at the operation of the constitution and to determine. amendments or modification. The decision is ours to make, not government." Professor Kofi Quashigah, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Ghana (UG) said even though the constitution needed periodical changes, it should not under go total review. He said the Judiciary should be given the opportunity to let the constitution grow.

Prof. Quashigah said reviewing the constitution entailed that the country recognised its peculiar circumstances and questioned whether the Constitutional Review Commission was the right body to decide what the people want in their constitution and if the nation

was sophisticated politically to address all the issues to be amended in the document. Dr Vladimir Antwi Danso a lecturer at UG said the constitutional review should hasten slowly because changes in certain provisions in the document would not lead to growth in democracy and good governance if deliberative politics is not encouraged. 29 April 10

## **Nana Akufo-Addo is insincere – NDC**

PRESS RELEASE

NANA AKUFFO ADDO IS INSINCERE

At a recent launch of his campaign a flag bearer aspirant of the NPP, Nana Addo Dankwah Akufo-Addo took a swipe at the 16 months old NDC led government and sought to create the impression that the government has failed to achieve expected results. In justifying his claim Nana Akufo-Addo, chronicled figures he sourced to the World Bank as representing the state of poverty in Ghana from 1992 to 2008. Little investigation carried out indicated that Nana Akufo-Addo was insincere with some of the figures he put out, an action reminiscent of a similar behavior on his part in 2008 where at a forum in Accra, he stated that the unemployment level in Ghana at the time was ten percent (10%). Sadly for him it turned out that there was no justifiable basis for the figure he put out as it was believed that nearly 30% of Ghanaians at the time were unemployed.

Nana Akufo-Addo's claim of 39.5% Ghanaians lived below the poverty line in 1999, a year before the NDC (1) lost power to the NPP is debatable because figures put out by the then Government Statistician Dr. Kweku A. Twum-Baah in year 2000, gave the percentage of Ghanaians living below the poverty line as 28% based on the Ghana Living Standard Survey Three (GLSS3).

It is pertinent to note that it was around the same period (1999) that Ghana chalked tremendous success in agriculture when it was ranked third in the world after China and Jordan IN agriculture (food production).

In comparative terms therefore the 28.5% of Ghanaians below the poverty line in 2007 is no achievement to be touted as Nana Addo would want Ghanaians to believe. Besides it is mischievous and misleading on the part of Nana Addo to state that the number of Ghanaians currently below the poverty line has increased by 500,000 persons, a figure he attributed to the World Bank. This is untrue because the World Bank which he sourced his information to is yet to release any figures for 2009 more so for the year 2010. What ridicules this assertion the more is the marked improvement at the end of 2009 in food production as a result of various initiatives pursued by the Mills –led government to revamp the sector.

According to Ghana's Agriculture Ministry, on top of the achievements were a remarkable 29 per cent increase in rice production and five per cent increase in maize

production, while sorghum and millet production went up by 20 per cent each. Groundnuts and cowpea also recorded a three per cent growth rate each.

It is pertinent to note that the man who seeks to superintend over the Ghanaian people will be so insincere to consistently put out misleading figures for public consumption.

This is extremely disturbing because should in the most unlikely event such a person become President of Ghana, it will only mean one thing, the truth will never be told.

Besides is 16 months enough yardstick with which to judge a government that has a four year mandate especially when the state of affairs it inherited was a malaise one? Has Nana Addo forgotten so soon that former President Kufuor, who by close of his first four year mandate had nothing to show and told the Ghanaian people that four years was too short a period and that he needed an additional four years? Maybe Nana Addo needs some reminders except he is being hypocritical. The quotes below are the words of former President Kufuor and they are lines Nana Addo is very familiar with and agrees with. "Our four-year term is really too tight. When a person assumes power his new ministers take not less than a year to get accustomed to working with the civil service, a very complicated system. The second year is the time that the president puts his policies in place. By the third year, as you are getting to settle down you are reminded that next year is election year. In fact, in the final year hardly anybody, including ministers, works because they are all focusing on how they will be returned to power. So what time do you have?"

If it were five years, you would use the first year to learn to work with your civil service, the second year to set your policies straight, the third year to manage or implement some of the policies reasonably well, the fourth year to consolidate and also do some of the things you came to do for people to see that you are really managing the country and national affairs comfortably well. So in the fifth year, if you are to campaign to be returned to power, you would have had two clear years – in the third and fourth years – to do some real work. So this is why I thought an extra year would make a difference".

Given that there are merits in former President Kufuor's position, it must be stated that the Mills administration has so far demonstrated it can achieve needed results in four years and will even do more in eight years.

Richard Quashigah

Signed

NDC National Propaganda Secretary

## **NDC must be sincere to facts - Akufo-Addo**

**\*AKUFO-ADDO'S OFFICE: NDC MUST BE SINCERE TO FACTS\***

On Tuesday, April 26, the National Democratic Congress issued a statement accusing Nana Akufo-Addo of being 'insincere' with the facts about NDC performance in office. The NDC falsely and unfairly accused Nana Akufo-Addo of being "insincere to consistently put out misleading figures for public consumption. This is extremely disturbing because should in the most unlikely even [sic] such a person become [sic] President of Ghana, it will only mean one thing, the truth will never be told."

The Office of Nana Akufo-Addo wishes to inform the general public that when the Propaganda Secretary of the NDC was challenged with confirmation of the facts as presented by Nana Akufo-Addo on Citi FM's \*Eye Witness News\* Tuesday evening, he was left to retreat with the words that he was now going to "cross-check" the very facts he used to accuse Nana Akufo-Addo as insincere.

The NDC statement said Nana Akufo-Addo's statement at the media interaction of Tuesday April 21 "sought to create the impression that the [NDC] government has failed to achieve expected results."

According to the NDC, "Little investigation carried out indicated that Nana Akuffo [sic] Addo was insincere with some of the figures he put out... Nana Akuffo's [sic] claim of 39.5% Ghanaians lived below the poverty line in 1999, a year before the NDC (1) lost power to the NPP is debatable because figures put out by the then Government Statistician Dr. Kwaku A. Twum-Baah in year 2000, gave the percentage of Ghanaians living below the poverty line as 28% based on the Ghana Living Standard Survey Three (GLSS3)."

It is disingenuous of the NDC to misrepresent the statistics as reported by the then Acting Government Statistician. Dr Twum on Monday, October 30, 2000, launched 'The Poverty Report', which was published together with the fourth in the series of Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS4). What he stated correctly, without using the previous GLSS3 of 1992 as baseline, that "the incidence of poverty at the upper line declined from 51.7 per cent in 1991-1992 to 39.5 percent in 1998-1999."

Also, on radio, in some apparent state of statistical discomfiture and confusion, Richard Quashiga of the NDC explained that the GLSS3 report put the number of people in Ghana living under the poverty line at 28%. The NDC, which was in office at the time, could not have been ignorant of the fact that the third Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS3) referred to the period September 1991 – September 1992 and the report was published in March 1995, when Daasebre Dr Oti Boateng was Government Statistician and GLSS Project Co-ordinator.

That report as pointed out accurately by Nana Akufo-Addo put the percentage number of Ghanaians living below the poverty line of US\$1 per day at 51.7%. The NDC should be content with taking credit for reducing the percentage from 51.7% to 39.5% in 1999 and stop making false claims of 28%.

That 28% incidence of poverty claim for 1999 is typical of a party that is not ashamed of making propaganda claims out of important statistics, such as the previous claim of creating 1.6 million new phantom jobs since January 2009.

It may be useful to quote the relevant portions of Nana Akufo-Addo's statement: "After falling short of winning the presidency by less than 0.5% of the total votes cast in 2008, I have had to do a lot of reflection myself. I have listened to my party members and I have heard and seen the suffering of the majority of Ghanaians. There is every indication that the income of the majority of Ghanaians has fallen in just over one year of a 'Better Ghana' and it continues to fall. This is after workers' pay enjoyed an average of 20% increase in real terms from 2003 to 2008 under the NPP. But, should we be surprised? Despite the systematic attempt to denigrate President J A Kufuor's eight-year record, we in the NPP are satisfied that he laid a solid record of achievement in virtually all aspects of our national life. For example, in 1992, with a population of 15.34 million people, the number of poor Ghanaians was estimated to be 7.93 million. By 1999, one year before the NDC lost power, Ghana's population had gone up to 18.21 million, 7.19 million Ghanaians (39.5%) still lived below the poverty line of \$1 a day. By, 2006, after just five years under the NPP, with a population of 22.24 million, the number of Ghanaians living below the revised poverty line of \$1.25 had fallen to 6.34 million, from 39.5% to 28.5%... These are not my figures. These figures are from the World Bank." We wish to refer the ruling party of Ghana, the NDC, to the very report covering a credit facility of US\$300 which they signed with the World Bank last year - specifically, the World Bank Report No. 47723-GH, titled 'International Development Association Program Document For The Economic Governance And Poverty Reduction Credit In The Amount Of Sdr 193.8 Million (Us\$300 Million Equivalent) To The Republic Of Ghana June 15, 2009'. \*

Paragraph 82 of that report talks about the "substantial wage increases in the recent past, as well as an expansion in the number of subvented agencies' employees." It reads, "In 2008, the wage bill increased by 38 percent reflecting a 20 percent overall wage increase (against an inflation rate of 15 percent), an 8 percent increase in staff, and a 6 percent grade inflation. This came on the heels of increases on 36 and 27 percent in the payroll in 2006 and 2007. Increases in average wages – about 40 percent in real terms since 2006 reflect a recovery in real wages after a dip during the stabilization period of 2001-04." The document continues, "In the education sector, for example, wages went up by 10 percent each year in real terms over the 2003-2008 period. Wages increased even faster in the health sector over the same period. Controlling for individual characteristics (education, experience, etc.), unionized public wages are now at least 25 percent higher than in the non-unionized private sector."

The NDC statement should have rather accused Nana Akufo-Addo of being too modest in trumpeting the unprecedented real increases that Ghanaian workers experienced in their purchasing power under President J A Kufuor.

But, typical of their propagandist status, the NDC has issued a statement saying, "Besides it is mischievous and misleading on the part of Nana Addo to state that the number of Ghanaians currently below the poverty line has increased by 500,000 persons, a figure he attributed to the World Bank. This is untrue because the World Bank which he sourced his information to is yet to release any figures for 2009 more so for the year 2010."

Nana Akufo-Addo's stated exactly, "But, as a result of the economic policies adopted by President Mills and his government, the World Bank is now estimating that half a million more Ghanaians will fall below the poverty line by this year alone."

Indeed, Paragraph 36 of that same World Bank report states: "\*In 2009 and 2010 income

poverty could rise further, as per capita private consumption growth is expected to fall\*. Because the planned macroeconomic adjustment entails increased cost recovery in the energy sector and increased taxation, staff forecasts aggregate per capita private consumption growth to fall, which will result in income poverty rising by as much as 2 percentage points between 2008 and 2010 (an additional 500,000 people below the poverty line at US\$1.25 a day) assuming unchanged income distribution. This underlines the importance of protecting vulnerable households...”

In fact, some analysts have considered the World Bank estimate to be too low, considering the fact that public sector workers’ income were generally well below the rate of inflation last year, unlike previous years.

The unfortunate and unnecessary statement, signed by the NDC Propaganda Secretary, Richard Quashiga, only goes to expose the weight of panic Nana Akufo-Addo is capable of sending across the nerve centre of the NDC.

Mr Quashiga’s statement comes on top of Dr Tony Aidoo’s reaction to Nana Akufo-Addo’s statement. Dr Aidoo, who had not been heard of for while came out to accuse Nana Akufo-Addo of encouraging corruption. He sought to explain away the decline in the Ghanaian economy under President Mills by attributing it to the reduction in ‘cocaine business.’

We hope that Dr Aidoo, the head of Government’s Policy Evaluation and Monitoring, is not suggesting that the millions of Ghanaians, including teachers, nurses and civil servants, who have seen their incomes fall since 2009 are all involved in the illicit drug trade. If this is the man monitoring and evaluating government policies then Ghanaians could only dread the kind of findings he is making and recommendations he is giving to the President of the Republic.

Also, Mr Quashiga accused Nana Akufo-Addo of giving false unemployment figures in 2008. it is worth stating that the GLSS5, published in September 2010, stated, “The unemployment rate is 3.6 percent. It is about the same for both males and females. It is more pronounced in urban areas (6.3%, Accra 8.9%) than in rural areas (1.6%).”

According to GLSS5, “some 54.1 percent of an estimated 18 million persons aged 7 years and older, (comprising 8.7 million males and 9.3 million females), are currently economically active. For those aged between 15 and 64 years, seven out of every 10 are economically active. Males recorded a slightly higher economic activity rate (54.9%) than females (53.4%).”

Signed

Mustapha Hamid

Head of Communications, Office of Nana Akufo-Addo

We have provided below a table compiled from the World Bank on basic poverty indicators in Ghana from 1992-2006.

\*Table 1-1: Basic Poverty Indicators, 1992-2006\*

1992

1999

2006

Population (millions)

15.34

18.21

22.24

Number of poor (millions)

7.93

7.19

6.34

Share of poor in population (poverty rate)

51.7%

39.5%

28.5%

Average income of the poor (in proportion of the poverty line)

64.2%

64.8%

66.3%

\*Living in Male-headed households\*

Population (millions)

11.21

13.25

17.03

Number of poor (millions)

6.15

5.44

5.36

Share of national poverty (percent)

77.5%

75.6%

84.5%

Average income of the poor (in proportion of the poverty line)

63.4%

64.4%

65.4%

\*Living in Female-headed households\*

Population (millions)

4.13

4.98

5.16

Number of poor (millions)

1.78

1.75

0.98

Share of national poverty (percent)

22.4%

24.4%

15.4%

Average income of the poor (in proportion of the poverty line)

67.2%

66.2%

71.9%

Source: World Bank staff calculations based on GLLS3, GLSS4 and GLLS5.

## **Mpiani & Wereko-Brobby to refund \$360,000**

Former Chief of Staff and Minister for Presidential Affairs, Mr. Kwadwo Okyere Mpiani, who was the Chairman of the National Planning Committee (NPC) of the Ghana@50 celebrations and his brother-in law, Dr. Charles Wereko-Brobby, Chief Executive Officer of the defunct Ghana@50 Secretariat, and Mr. Sandy Osei Agyemang, Managing Director of United Africa Management Limited (UAML), are to refund an amount of \$360,000 (C5.1Billion) in connection with the rental of Largus Forte Hotel during the Ghana @50 celebrations.

Mr. Mpiani and Dr. Wereko-Brobby, in addition to the refund, may be prosecuted for causing financial loss to the state in accordance with the Criminal Offences Act 1960 (Act 29).

The government accepted this based upon the recommendation of the Ghana @50 Commission of Enquiry.

The government, in a white paper on the report, accepted the recommendation that through the actions of Dr. Wereko-Brobby, the government lost the rent of \$360,000 paid by the Ghana@50 Secretariat to Largus Forte for the first year.

According to the report, the Commission of Enquiry was of the view that the rental of 106 room hotel by the Secretariat for two years was ill-advised because the celebration was declared to be year-long.

Again, the report said that guests were not accommodated in the hotel for free of charge and that there was no evidence that government's guests stayed in the hotel.

In addition to that, the report indicated that the Ghana@50 Secretariat ignored the advice of a consultant that government should control the use of the 106 rooms on a profitable basis to enhance the Secretariat's ability to provide accommodation for official visitors. The report noted further that "The agreement between the Secretariat and the managers of the hotel, United African Management Limited (UAML), did not make any provision for Government to recover the rent of US\$360,000.00 let alone make any profit from the operations of the hotel."

The Commission established that "UAML appropriated all the proceeds from the operation of the hotel," and that "Government, by the actions of the CEO and the Chairman, lost the rent of US\$360,000.00 paid by the Secretariat for the first year of the tenancy."

According to the Commission, by the terms of the agreement signed by the Secretariat with the proprietor of Largus Fort Hotel, the rent for the second year became due and payable in full in advance on the 15th day of February 2008. The report said that the rent for the second year became due and payable in full advance on February 15, 2008. The proprietor of Largus Forte Hotel took timely and appropriate steps to mitigate his loss by ejecting UAML and Secretariat from the hotel which action was beneficial to government.

According to the government, it accepted the recommendation of the Commission that the proprietor was entitled to rent pro rata in the sum of \$150,000 (C2.1Billion) based on the monthly rental of \$30,000 for the period of June 15 to November 14, 2008 when he succeeded in putting the hotel back to beneficial use.

The Ghana@50 Secretariat entered into a two-year lease agreement with UAML by which the Secretariat rented the Largus Forte Hotel for two years for visiting foreign officials to reside in during particularly the Ghana@50 celebrations.

It was also intended that the government should make profit from the operations of the hotel.

Meanwhile, a financial review carried out as part of the commission's work revealed that "the NPC has not accounted for the management arrangement with UAML or for the management operations at Largus Forte Hotel.

#### BACKGROUND

Evidence before the Commission showed that the NPC and the Secretariat made other arrangements for accommodation, which included the renting of the Largus Fort Hotel situated opposite Gulf House near Shiashie in the Accra.

The proprietor of Largus Fort Hotel, Mr. Joe Ofori, presented a petition to the Commission claiming that the Secretariat owed him arrears of rent in the sum of US\$240,000.00 or its equivalent in Ghana cedis for the last eight months of the second year of the tenancy agreement he executed with the Secretariat in respect of the hotel. The tenancy was for a period of two (2) years commencing the 15th day of February 2007. The Secretariat paid the first year's rent of US\$360,000.00 in advance.

The CEO contested the claim asserting that since the proprietor had accepted part payment of the rent in the sum of US\$120,000.00 from a third party, United Africa Management Limited (UAML) the contractual relationship had therefore changed and the Secretariat owed no obligation to pay rent. Indeed, UAML was an agent of the Secretariat appointed by a letter dated the 5th of February 2008 with the heading "Appointment as Managers of Fort Largus"

When Mr. Osei Agyemang appeared before the Commission, he submitted that the 106-room hotel, operated at a loss and therefore there was no money to pay rent arrears. According to the UAML boss, since the proprietor of the hotel had pushed the managers out of the hotel and sold same thereafter it was not obliged to pay any rent arrears. They also contended that they were only agents of the Secretariat and therefore not party to the agreement between the Secretariat and Largus Fort hotel and therefore had no obligation to pay rent.

However, the Commission sighted letters written by UAML to Mr. Ofori proposing to pay the second year's rent in three installments, the first on 20th February 2008, which was paid, the second on 20th April 2008, which was not paid, and the third on 20th May 2008, which was also not paid.

The Commission stated that it studied the tenancy agreement between the Secretariat and the managers of Largus Fort, as well as the "management agreement" between the UAML and the Secretariat titled "APPOINTMENT AS MANAGERS OF LARGUS FORT HOTEL" and dated February 5th, 2007. The commission observed that "the terms of this agreement were inexpertly written by the CEO, possibly, without legal assistance," with Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, and 5 of the letter constituting the operative terms of the management agreement. The commission observed that the letter conveying the terms

of the 'management agreement' was ambivalent thereby rendering it subject to more than one interpretation.

It observed further that one interpretation, which was obviously adopted by Mr. Sandy Osei Agyeman, was that the managers were not in any way required to account monthly to the Secretariat for the management of the hotel even though the Secretariat acting on behalf of Government paid the first year's rent of US\$360,000.

"Simply put, they were to manage the hotel, pay the expenses and pay themselves the agreed management fee. If there is any profit then Government would get some funds from the operations of the hotel," the Commission noted. Truly, on the face of the "management agreement" it appears that UAML was not required to account monthly to the Secretariat for its management of the hotel, the Commission noted.

The commission emphasized that if Mr. Osei Agyeman's interpretation is adopted then the transaction can fairly be said to have criminal flavor or intentions. This conduct amounts to reckless misappropriation of state funds.

"The other interpretation which the Commission in fairness is inclined to adopt is that UAML was, implicitly, expected to render accounts to the Secretariat on a monthly basis," the commission noted, with "The Secretariat would pay 15% of the gross income to UAML on a monthly basis."

The Commission observed that "by implication the Secretariat would then retain a surplus after payment of salaries and other outgoings," observing that from the evidence, "the Secretariat never demanded monthly accounts."

The Commission found it more bizarre that there was "no information to the effect that Government guests were given any free accommodation in the hotel. Nor was there any requirement that the first year's rent in the sum of US\$360,000.00 paid by the Secretariat was to be refunded to the state. Mr. Sandy Osei Agyeman stated that money was to have been refunded if the hotel had made profit. However, the hotel operated at a net loss and therefore there was no money to repay the Government, even though there was enough money to pay the UAML its full management fees.

According to the MD of UAML, the only thing that saved the hotel was that in the beginning, an oil rig company rented the hotel for six months at a reduced rate which gave UAML the initial capital to work with. The first six months period, March to August 2007, was the period within which the Jubilee Celebration and the AU Summit were held. At least during this period, the hotel could not have hosted Government guests.

Mr. Sandy Osei Agyeman, stated clearly that the sum of US\$360,000.00 has been a loss to Government, adding that there was nothing in the agreement with the Secretariat for Government to receive anything from the operations of the hotel. It was revealed during the public hearings that the UAML was incorporated in February 2007 ostensibly for this transaction. The UAML had no track record in hotel management. Its sole shareholder is a company that manufactures hair care products. There was no evidence as to what matters advised the Secretariat to appoint UAML as manager.

From the evidence, the Chairman was aware of the arrangement relating to Largus Fort Hotel, the Commission noted.

## **NPP UK and Ireland Cautions Party Members**

The NPP UK and Ireland is concerned with the recent Comments from Messrs Kennedy Kankam, Kennedy Agyepong, Nana Adu Asabre, P.C. Appiah Ofori Appiah Stadium and other Party members who instead of campaigning and telling the rank and file what they steps they would take to improve and strengthen our party in our constituencies and polling stations are engaging in a fruitless war of insults on radio stations, which does not do us any good. These outbursts are ridiculous, unacceptable and must stop.

The NPP UK and Ireland also wishes to appeal to the National Executive to read the riot act and remind all party members to be mindful of the party's disciplinary code of conduct which is enshrined in our party constitution. Our National Executive must enforce discipline on all members. It is a mistake for anyone to think because of their financial, physical, spiritual or mental capabilities, they are bigger than the party. People come and go but the party will live on. We appeal to our Council of Elders to do more to support the National Executive in mediating and finding lasting solutions.

We call on Presidential Candidate aspirants, Mr. Kwame Kodua, Professor Frimpong Boateng, Mr. Alan Kyerematen, Nana Akufo Addo, Mr. Issac Osei, and their respective campaign teams to be civil and disciplined in their campaigns and to concentrate on telling our party members and potential delegates their vision and direction for the party and why they should be elected as flag bearer to lead the party to victory over the failing NDC government in 2012. Our party must present a message and an image that will resonate with the Ghanaian people and that means our leaders, Our Members of Parliament especially those in marginal seats must interact with the people and apply decorum in all their activities.

NPP or any political party in Ghana cannot expect to do well in any local or General Election, without a United and focused front.

God Bless NPP

God Bless Ghana

## **Govt. Ready to take NPP to court**

Attorney-General, Betty Mould-Iddrisu, says New Patriotic Party (NPP) elements must shut up, go to court and defend themselves rather than holding "useless press conferences".

"Were they not the same people saying 'take us to court'? I am now taking you to court. So shut up!" she said in an exclusive interview with the Daily Post. Ever since the Attorney-General began filing criminal charges against former government functionaries, it has been the stock-in-trade of the NPP and their leaders to hold press encounters where they virtually question the court processes. Betty Mould-Iddrisu told this reporter that the NPP chaps who claim to be legal luminaries should go to court and do the proper thing.

“Court processes are not contested in the media? Those things are supposed to be done in court after appropriate applications are filed,” she observed. “They should know better,” she added.

So far, Betty Mould-Iddrisu has been able to work tirelessly to enable the government drag to court ex-government officials who had allegedly used their positions to engage in financial malfeasance leading to the loss of huge sums of money to the state. The cases include the liquidation of Ghana Airways to give way to Ghana International Airlines (GIA), the Ghana@50 mess, the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and Issa Mobila.

In the GIA trial, former Transport Minister, Richard Anane, former Greater Accra chairman of the NPP, Sammy Crabbe and others have been charged with various counts of wilfully causing financial loss to the state.

Immediately the charges were filed and the accused persons granted bail after court proceedings, the NPP held a press conference accusing the government of political witch-hunt. The NPP also described processes leading to their officials being charged as flawed. Chief Executive of the defunct Ghana@50 Secretariat, Dr. Charles Wereko Brobby and Kwadjo Mpiani, former Chief of Staff are also facing criminal charges over alleged reckless spending during the Ghana@50 celebrations.

Though they had hitherto made a lot of noise for them to be taken to court if they are corrupt, the NPP again went to the public court of arbitration immediately charges were filed against the major players in the Ghana@50 celebrations crying foul. This time, the NPP’s concern was that a white paper should have been issued on the Justice Douse Commission report.

They portrayed the myopic view point that the white paper would have offered the accused persons the opportunity to lodge an appeal at the Higher Courts. Atta Akyea who is the legal counsel for the suspected Ya Na killers also questioned the modus operandi the security agencies used in grabbing the suspects. He also claimed that the proper thing for the government to do in the case of the Ya Na was to go according to the recommendations of the Wuaku Commission. He forgot that the Commission was merely a forum for a grand cover-up.

Additionally, he could not recollect the shabby job done by his clan man, Nana Akuffo Addo, when he was Ghana’s Attorney-General. After the murder of the Ya Na, Nana Akuffo Addo slapped wrong charges on the suspects who were arrested by the security agencies. The courts had no option than to acquit and discharge the suspects.

Betty Mould-Iddrisu told this reporter no amount of rubble-rousing by the NPP would distract her focus.

“We are focused on our job. Delivering social justice and protecting the public purse all

for the rule of law to be firmly established is our goal. Nobody can stop that,” she reiterated.

## **LIBERIA**

### **Furors Hover over Ellen’s Audit Repudiation Edict, Selective Justice**

*Side by side with the Threshold Bill, the recent HIPC audit reports released by the General Auditing Commission (GAC), have kept the public space exceedingly charged with lamentations, denials and defenses between HIPC auditees and the Commission. All but the report on the Ministry of Finance has generated the most uproarious acrimony occasioned by Minister Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan’s damning riposte against sessions of the audit report which hold him culpable, alone with others, for US\$1.2m General Claims and a US\$5m fiscal outturn negligent signing. In joining the debate, President Sirleaf declared the Minister off the hook, a position which some pundits understand to be an arrogation to herself the statuses of “Super Auditor” and/or “Supreme Prosecutor” with powers to determine who is actually guilty or innocent of GAC’s audit findings. The Analyst takes a look at the ramifications of the President’s intervention from the perspective of both critics and supporters.*

President Sirleaf has joined where the Legislature has left the culture of vindication without judicial prosecution of auditees with her recent pronouncement that Finance Minister Augustine K. Ngafuan should not be held liable to account for US\$1.2m General Claims and US\$5m fiscal outturn left in limbo in circumstances which the General auditing Commission says involve the Finance Minister.

The Liberian Legislature opened the Pandora box of audit vindication policy without judicial process when it opened what some pundits called quasi judicial tribunal, tried auditees and declared none guilty but all innocent of claims contained in various audits conducted by the GAC.

Despite overwhelming corroborative media and GAC findings that corruption was commonplace in the fiscal domain of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP), a group of lawmakers declared the management of the public parastral non-guilty and GAC audit findings non-evidential.

The NASSCORP case set the first precedent which was closely followed by another landmark corruption trial at the National Legislature, the Iron Ore saga involving a cabal of public and private business moguls whom the GAC audit report found liable.

Though audit-indicted institutions and organizations must have found solace and relief in the legislative panels, public criticisms soon flared that the “august body” lacked the professional eye, ear and nose and the legal authority to detect fiscal improprieties.

The Legislature was therefore called upon to leave audit judgments with auditors and the courts.

While the Legislative Branch of Government was lulling in the frequency of audit-related trials, it seems President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who principally declared war on corruption at the onset of her tenure has herself begun to step in the shoes of the First Branch of Government.

The pioneering beneficiary of the President Sirleaf’s self-driven judicial policy is Finance Minister Augustine K. Ngafuan.

The Liberian Chief Executive has come to her Finance Minister’s refuge as he barks tumultuously to disclaim and refute GAC audit findings which link him to US\$1.2m General Claims and a US\$5m fiscal outturn negligent signing.

### **Ngafuan’s Lamentations**

Like other audit-indicted public officials before him, Minister Ngafuan has managed to dig out motives for his indictment by the GAC audit.

“I hope this is not politically motivated because I am prepared to defend myself,” the Finance said in his instantaneous reaction following the release of the audit reports. “Linking me to fraud at the Finance Minister is a professional error on the part of the GAC.”

As if the HIPC audit has got no bearing and importance on Liberia’s debt relief crusade, as was wildly thought in the past, Ngafuan said reports gathered from many meetings he has held are extremely positive for Liberia not necessarily because of the audit conducted by GAC. He said the audit was just one of twelve triggers.

“I could punch holes in the audit report, but if I do that, I will be seen as undermining the report,” he lamented further. “The auditor General should stay clean of political imagination...If care is not taken safe havens could be created for criminals, and in the process lost the fight against corruption.”

He said the audit report amounted to his crucifixion when he was not at the Ministry of Finance when issues raised in the report were under implementation.

“The audit was a period July 1-june 30. The scientific fact is that I was not even a janitor in the Ministry. And if we get on that road...if we get on that road, we will start to hold people accountable for acts in their absence,” he struggled to distance himself from culpability. “Let me say this... and let me just hassle this. If you have a ministry with a budget of about 6m and you and say that, 6-million rather, about 6m and 5 million was

stolen...oh God! Jesus! You know, I mean, how can that be? I didn't pay the civil servants..."

Direct reactions of the Finance Minister were complemented by a lengthy, widely syndicated press statement which appears to methodically repudiate findings and conclusions of the GAC report.

Essentially the statement expounded on the Finance Minister's personal lamentations, which range from the argument that he was not at the Ministry during the period audited by GAC and therefore cannot be held liable for the misdeeds of that period.

### **GAC's Findings & Arguments**

So far, the GAC has not recoiled from its findings nor wavered to the stampeding reactions of Minister Ngafuan and his Ministry.

The GAC has said repeatedly that the HIPC audit on the Ministry of Finance noted that the Fiscal Outturn Report, which is prepared and published by the Office of the Finance Minister, reported a total expenditure (Commitment) of US\$6,203,392.00 for the 2007/2008 fiscal year, while the Budget and Finance Office of the Ministry, which has the mandate to raise all the Payment Vouchers and maintain the accounting records on expenditure undertaken by the Ministry, reported a total expenditure of US\$6,108,623.00 for the same period, thus creating an unexplained variance of US\$94,769.

Besides the discrepancies noted in the Ministry's expenditure report, the GAC maintained, vouchers totaling US\$4,950,714.65 made up of US\$726,458.00 payroll payments and 401 vendor vouchers and other related payment vouchers valued at US\$4,224,256.65 for the fiscal year 2007/2008 were presented by management for audit substantiation.

In contrast, the Commission further noted, that records obtained from the Bureau of General Accounting (BGA)'s Commitment Ledger for the MOF indicated that the total expenditure per commitment ledger for the period was US\$3,971,692.89.

"These lapses implied that the BGA did not book the payment vouchers in question and there was no evidence provided to show that there was any reconciliation between BGA and Budget and Finance (B&F)," the GAC asserted.

The GAC argues that though Minister Ngafuan disclaimed responsibility for over US\$5m unaccounted in the 2007/2008 Fiscal Outturn report, stating that he was not then the Minister of Finance during the reporting period, it was indeed he who prepared and signed the financial statement (fiscal outturn) for the 2007/2008 period audited and it was he who submitted same to the President, Legislature and even published it.

If Minister Ngafuan did not believe in the 2007/2008 Fiscal Outturn, the GAC says, he should not have prepared and signed it and submit to the President, the National Legislature, published it in the papers and on the Internet. GAC says Minister Ngafuan cannot hold former Finance Minister Antoinette Sayeh responsible for variances arising

from the Fiscal Outturn which she did not prepare. Minister Ngafuan had the option to have requested Dr. Sayeh to sign and submit the 2007/08 Fiscal outturn, or he should have disclaimed the fiscal outturn.

Fiscal pundits concord that Ngafuan needed to read section 302 of the Sarbanes Oxley, wherein CFOs and CEOs who affixed and certified the financial statements can go to prison for a long time for fraudulent financial report.

On a Liberian level, GAC's Communication Director Ernest S. Maximore said Minister Ngafuan was Budget Director when general claims of US\$31 million were reportedly spent. And then he also prepared, signed and submitted the financial statement as he took office in August 2008, and Sayeh last day was June 30 2008.

Certainly, Maximore said, when Ngafuan in December 2008 prepared and submitted the fiscal outturn in former Minister Saryeh's stead, he did so consciously and did not to do so to deceive the President, National Legislature and the general public. Again it was he, Maximore said, who submitted this fiscal outturn to the GAC on 21 February 2009, after IMF insisted that Auditor General John Morlu finalized the audits of the Consolidated Account by 31 March 2009.

"Sayeh could not have prepared it because she left on the eve of the Fiscal Year ending June 30 2008," Maximore said. "So u see, it is not just a matter of signature. He also spent the money, too."

But again, Maximore said, it was not Sayeh that changed the basis of reporting from cash basis to unknown commitment basis. That alone could have lent him in prison in America, because he did not justify the change in reporting basis, or restate the prior three years fiscal outturn or create Reconciliation Sheet between 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, the GAC Communication Director asserted. "This is the normal way to carryout accounting functions. SFAS 154 I believe will teach him some lesson. Gross negligence is an intentional misconduct wherein one willfully disregard the truthfulness of a financial matter and still submits the financial statement to mislead and misinform the taxpayers. In legal terminology, it is called Scienter."

#### President's Verdict

With both Minister Ngafuan's lamentations and GAC insistence on his culpability, huge public pressure flared up calling for the resignation or dismissal of the audit-indicted Minister. Apparently, the public pressure comes from the backdrop of similar incidents which saw the resignation and/or dismissal of other public officials before, during or after an audit.

Agriculture Minister Chris Toe, LTA Chairman Albert Bropleh, former Minister Laurent Bropleh and recently Internal Affairs Minister Ambulai Johnson were asked to tender their resignations in the throes of controversy bordering fiscal irregularities.

Ngafuan is the lucky one, perhaps for now, because when the President responded to both the audit report and public calls for the Finance Minister's dismissal or resignation, she did so in ways that give observers the impression either that the GAC and its audit on the Ministry are totally irrelevant and inconsequential or she were, as one pundit puts it a supper auditor and/or supreme prosecutor.

The President's press secretary quoted her as saying that she had explicit confidence in the integrity and professional performance of Finance Minister Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan and his predecessor, Dr. Antoinette Sayeh.

Earlier in a major press conference, the President was virtually ambivalent on what she said she would do with the GAC audit reports.

She was quoted as saying that while she was not giving credence to emotional outbursts in reaction to the GAC HIPC audit reports, she would act on the basic evidence.

Now that the President has come out clear to clear Minister Ngafuan of any wrongdoing, pundits are saying that she has done her investigation and found no material evidence to hold the culprits.

"In this way, the President now makes herself a Super Auditor over the GAC and a Supreme Prosecutor over the Ministry of Justice," University of Liberia student James T. Kelleh said in an interview with The Analyst.

"What needs to be done simply is for the Legislature to repeal the act that created the GAC so that it gives the President no parallel authority in the field of audit and repeal the act creating the Ministry of Justice so that it also gives her greater latitude to prosecute all criminal cases, including those arising from audits."

Others have said in reaction to the President's action that she has now brought out from disguise her total lack of political will to fight the war against corruption which she voluntarily declared nearly five years ago.

"For now, anyone who plunders public monies needs nothing as a defense other than President Sirleaf's blessing; this is the paradigm of her fight against corruption," Kelleh said. "With the President doing just what the Legislature did months ago, usurping the functions of the Ministry of Justice and provide sanctuary for public thieves, we now look to the Third Branch, the Judiciary to begin its version of the quasi tribunals for auditees."

The public must now be anxiously waiting how other HIPC auditees similarly indicted by the GAC will be adjudged by the President.

## **Govt. Contemplates Trials for those Indicted by TRC**

Liberia is considering trying perpetrators of the worst crimes committed, during the 1989-2003 civil war, in which child soldiers were recruited, women raped and thousands killed, the justice minister said.

Justice Minister Christiana Tah told Reuters a committee had been set up to review a report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) detailing evidence of atrocities and that it would advise on whether prosecutions should go ahead.

Africa's oldest independent republic is still recovering from the war that left it in ruins.

But unlike neighboring Sierra Leone, which swiftly set up an international tribunal to try war criminals in its closely intertwined conflict, Liberia chose to rebuild first. The twin conflicts killed about a quarter of a million people.

Trials could upset a delicate power balance in a nation that has maintained peace partly by co-opting former combatants.

Some former warlords named in the TRC report have seats in the Senate. Former Liberian president Charles Taylor is being tried for war crimes in The Hague, but only for his alleged involvement in Sierra Leone's war.

"The president set up a committee that includes, I and the head of law reform, because we want accountability. This is not over," Tah said in a weekend interview. "We'll review the report and advise the government on the way forward."

But Tah said no decision had yet been made on the issue.

"For those who committed the most serious atrocities they are recommending prosecution. That's one of the questions we have to examine. We'll try to do that as quickly as possible."

The TRC was established in 2005 to investigate war crimes. Its report caused a storm when it was released last year for recommending that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf be banned from public office for 30 years for backing Taylor's rebellion. The incumbent admits she provided Taylor with money but says she was misled.

Many Liberians doubt Sirleaf, who plans to run for a second term next year, can selectively back the TRC's recommendations for trials while ignoring its demand that she leave office.

"To all intents and purposes this TRC report is dead," said Israel Akinsanya, chairman of the opposition Liberty Party.

"Nobody's going to touch it if she doesn't touch it. How will she prosecute without enforcing the full recommendations?"

TRC president Jerome Verdier told Reuters even if the move toward trials went ahead it would be a drawn out process.

"It would take the next ten years to put all the resources in place to do prosecutions," he said.

"But this is something we cannot escape from. We cannot claim to have ended the conflict in the absence of justice."

## **U.S. Intensifies Threshold Pressure**

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield has informed legislators that setting a population threshold for legislative representation and constituency demarcation is a compelling and essential factor for the 2011 elections.

The ambassador told reporters following one hour of discussions with senate leaders on Monday that the US government was concerned about the timely conduct of the polls, thus it will not "rest" unless the bill is enacted.

Madam Greenfield emphasized that the threshold and other electoral reform bills "must" be enacted to pave way for timely elections.

The US envoy's statement comes amidst reports that influential political stakeholders including legislators are planning for a 'special elections' that will ignore key constitutional provisions and avoid setting a threshold.

Since a bill was introduced in 2008 to establish a population threshold as the constitution requires, both the legislature and the President have failed to reach a decision on the matter thus casting uncertainty over the planned polls.

This development has prompted growing pressures from local and international quarters to ensure the bill is passed.

The head of the UN mission here has expressed doubts about "proper" elections in 2011 in the absence of a threshold.

And national election commission officials have warned there will be no constitutional election in 2011 without a population threshold.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has vetoed the bill twice while the Senate and the House have disagreed on various figures with the House rejecting the Senate's most recent version - 54,500 people per constituency and later setting it at 46,000.

Meanwhile, both chambers are currently discussing the House's version for a possible compromise with election date just 17 months away.

## **VP Boakai's Fate Sealed as UP, LAP and LUP Merger Convention Looms**

As officials, partisans and members of the ruling Unity Party (UP), the Liberian Action Party (LAP) and the Liberia Unification Party (LUP) mobilize for their historic merger convention in Nimba County next Friday, it is now becoming clear that Vice President Joseph Boakai's political fate has been signed, sealed and that it will be delivered when he gets dumped as President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's running mate in the 2011 presidential race.

The ever loyal, soft-spoken veep, whom President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has often referred to as 'My best friend', according to merger document, will be dumped in the 2011 General and Presidential elections and replaced with either the Standard Bearer of the LAP or LUP.

Article X, Section 2 of the Articles of Merger of the three political parties, states: "...The Party Leader shall be the President of Liberia, or the highest elected political official of the Liberian Government from the Unity Party; the Deputy Party Leader [Vice President] shall be the Standard Bearer of any of the other two constituent political parties of the merger, as agreed before the execution of the Articles of Merger.

This means that the Vice President's fate will be sealed once the merger document is ratified next weekend in Nimba. Unsubstantiated rumors have been spreading within the Unity Party and elsewhere that President Sirleaf is likely to opt for another vice presidential candidate with hopes of winning.

Vice President Boakai, commenting on rising speculations of plans to dump him as the President's running mate in 2011 in favor of a yet unnamed candidate, said last week that he will still back candidate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Unity Party even if he is dumped.

Answering questions from journalists last Friday on the local Truth FM radio, the Vice President noted that he is prepared to stand by the President in 2011 even if he is sidelined for another running mate.

Meanwhile, the Central Monrovia UP Partisans Stake Holders Forum (CMUPSF) is calling for "fair-play and justice at the forth coming merger convention in Sanniquellie. In an press release, the group said: "..We the partisans and stake-holders of the Unity Party within Monrovia have observed with deep concern widespread feelings of dissatisfaction and disquiet regarding happenings in our party and its ranks and file on developments leading to the pending merger convention with LAP and LUP.

"The release: "The first concern is with the methodology of selecting delegates to the convention and whether all the three parties will be placed on the same plane in terms in terms of representatives at the convention. On the second note, if representation will be based on party numerical strength, at what percentage will each party be allotted representation?"

Signed by Alphonso Massawalla, Amos Ticker and Mr. Yahaya Jalingo, the release noted that, "...it is the firm belief of the Central Monrovia UP Stake-holders that the Unity Party which is the major partner and undeniably larger and more popular than the two other parties combined must be treated as such in regards to number of delegates slated for the convention in the spirit of fair-play and justice. Taking into account the performance of each of the parties during the last election in relation to votes each party garnered, any parity in terms of delegate representation is unfair..."

## **If I'm Dumped I'll Still Back Ellen- VP**

Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, commenting on rising speculations of plans to dump him as the President's running mate in 2011 in favour of a yet unnamed candidate, says he will still back candidate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Unity Party even if he is dumped.

Answering questions from journalists last Friday on the local Truth FM radio, the Vice President noted that he is prepared to stand by the President in 2011 even if he is sidelined for another running mate.

Rumors have been spreading, though not substantiated, within the Unity Party and elsewhere that President Sirleaf is likely to opt for another vice presidential candidate with hopes of winning.

Asked what he thought might be the reaction from citizens of his county, Lofa, to such a move, the Vice President replied that Lofa, like any other county, comprises people with diverse view points, adding: "my main focus is to support the president who is charting the right course for the country".

"I was born into the struggle and know what it means to serve humanity in whatever way God leads me," he once said. Ambassador Boakai, known for his loyalty since becoming Vice President, has engaged in many activities, ranging from representing the President at several national, regional and international conferences and seminars; visiting the leeward counties to acquaint himself with problems confronting the rural population; and helping to articulate Government's policies and programs.

The VP has not relented in holding talks with local and international NGOs, individuals and business institutions interested in exploring investment possibilities in Liberia as a way of buttressing the President's efforts in the nation's re-building process. However, political observers continue to wonder: 'Will VP Boakai be dumped?'

## **GUNIEA CONAKRY**

### **MRU Concerns about Guinea -Wants To See Free, Fair Elections**

The Summit Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the countries of Mano River Union comprising, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, was held in Conakry, Guinea on 24 April 2010.

The Summit was attended by Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia and Chairperson of the Union; Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of Sierra Leone; and General Sekouba Konate, Interim Head of state of Guinea and host of the Summit.

During their frank deliberations, the leaders deeply considered and reflected on issues of common concern and interest relating to the progress made on the revitalization and operations of the Secretariat of the Union, the draft Strategic Plan prepared by the secretariat, the financial report of the 2009 fiscal year, the proposed budget of the 2010 fiscal year, and the report of the Ordinary Session of the Union Ministerial Council held in Conakry on 23 April 2010.

On all of these issues, the leaders reaffirmed their will and determination to combine their efforts in order to take appropriate and required actions to deal with the current prevailing and emerging challenges facing the sub-region.

The Summit expressed delight over the relative peace and stability prevailing in the Mano River Basin as well as the positive developments geared towards the return to democratic government in the countries of Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

They accordingly expressed their support and commitment to ensuring the conduct of free and fair presidential and legislative elections in Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. The leaders further agreed to direct their efforts towards the promotion of socio-economic development and integration in the Sub-region. To this end and after consideration of the key and associated issues under review, the Summit decided as follows:

They accepted the progress report of the secretary General on the revitalization and operations of the Union secretariat.

That while due note is taken of the positive achievements made, serious attention should be given to addressing the challenges faced by the secretariat so as to reposition it to adequately respond to the needs and realities of the sub region with the welfare and well being of the citizens in view.

That the UMC play a more active role in directing the affairs of the Union to ensure attainment of the noble objectives of the Union; and contributions of Member States respond to needs to be addressed and provided in a timely manner.

While the draft plan as presented is appreciated, steps should be taken to prioritize the proposed projects and programmes taking due note of the capacity of the secretariat and the role of Member States and sub regional and regional partners.

Develop an implementation as well as a monitoring and evaluation plan for pursuing the objectives of the strategic plan and ensure that there is buy-in on the contents of the plan by all member states.

The Heads of state approved the financial Report and Budget with some modifications.

The Heads of state and Government reiterated their profound gratitude to the development partners for the support provided to the Secretariat and to the Member States to ensure the consolidation and maintenance of peace in the MRU region.

The Heads of state expressed satisfaction with the convergence of views on all the issues and concerns raised and expressed particular delight with the climate of mutual understanding and cordiality that prevailed during their deliberations.

The Heads of state further reiterated their strong will to take all required actions to speed up socio-economic development and integration in the Sub-region.

The Heads of State expressed their profound thanks and gratitude to the General Sekouba Konate Interim President of the republic of Guinea and the Government and people of Guinea for their hosting the Summit and for the hospitality extended to them.

The Secretariat of the Mano River Union has a new Secretary General. He is Honorable Thierno Habib Diallo, a former Minister of Energy and External Affairs, and an outstanding seasoned diplomat of the Republic of Guinea.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, the Heads of State of the Mano River Union has endorsed the appointment of Mr. Thierno Habib Diallo, which takes immediate effect.

Diallo served the Government and People of Guinea in several Ambassadorial positions including Ambassador to the United States of America, Canada, Brazil and Liberia, among other senior assignments.

Mr. Diallo replaces Mr. Abraham Boure, a Guinean national, who resigned as MRU Secretary General, effective April 23rd, 2010.

Ambassador William V. S. Bull, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia, who chaired the Ordinary Session of the Mano Union Ministerial Council held in Conakry, the Republic of Guinea on April 23, 2010, submitted the Council's Report to the Summit of Head of State and Government of the Mano River Union held on April 24, 2010 in Conakry.

## ECONOMY

### **GHANA**

#### **Czech Government to support Ghana's Oil Find**

The Czech Government has expressed its willingness to support Ghana to explore to the full, her oil and gas potentials. In addition, it is prepared to provide the needed expertise to increase Ghana's power generation capacity.

These sentiments were made known by Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr Hynek Kmonicek on behalf of Czech Government at a meeting with members of Ghana's Parliamentary delegation currently on a four-day goodwill visit to the Czech Republic.

A statement issued in Accra and signed by Ms. Kate Addo, Deputy Director of Public Affairs in Parliament House, said "Mr Kmonicek observed that his country had been following closely efforts by the Ghana Government to improve the country's economy".

"He was particularly glad that the oil find will further strengthen the economic structures but was quick to add that proceeds from the find could only accelerate economic development if sound management systems were put in place," it added. The Czech Republic, he observed, had supported various countries to develop their energy potentials and therefore would not hesitate to provide the same measure of support to Ghana.

Mr Kmonicek called on Ghana's Parliament to be actively involved in the drive towards attracting potential investors to Ghana, especially with double taxation, investment protection and ratification of treaties. The Speaker of Parliament, Mrs Joyce Bamford-Addo, leading the delegation, called for closer co-operation between Ghana and Czech Republic to further strengthen the existing relations for their mutual benefits. She

observed that such visits were important in promoting peace and understanding across the globe.

The Majority Leader, Mr Cletus Avorka, reiterated Ghana's commitment to good governance and democracy.

He gave the assurance that Parliament would continue to work towards establishing an investment-friendly climate in Ghana. The Minority Leader, Mr Osei Kyei Mensah-Bonsu, said regardless of

the good intentions of the Executive, Parliament should always be involved in the process that would eventually lead to signing and ratifying agreements brought to the House for approval.

## **Ghana Cedi falls to major trading currencies.**

Accra, April 30, GNA - Ghana cedi on Friday depreciated to the major international trading currencies that pushed up the GCS-Cedi Index by 0.54 points to close the week.

This brings the change-year-to-date to -4.17 percent.

The cedi remained flat with the US dollar on Friday but fell by GHp 2.49 to the UK Pound, GHp1.13 to the Euro and GHp0.02 to the CFA. The index, which measures the average performance of the cedi against the major trading currencies, therefore, went up at 139.09 points from 138.55 points on Thursday.

The year-to-date shows an appreciation of the cedi by 0.74 per cent to the dollar, 5.29 per cent to the Pound, 7.72 percent to the Euro and 8.37 per cent to CFA respectively.

The cedi gains value when the index goes down and it loses value when the index goes up.

The Index is calculated as a geometric weighted average of changes in the four currency rates against the cedi at the Inter-bank market, relative to a base of 100 set on 03 July 2007, when the Bank of Ghana redenominated the national currency at a base value of 100.

It is inversely proportional. A quote of 105.50 means the cedi value has depreciated by 5.50 per cent since the base period, while a quote of 85.3 means the cedi has gained by 14.77 per cent since its base year. The following are the exchange rates for the four currencies on Friday, April 30, 2010.

## **Netherlands investment group in Ghana**

Accra. April 29, GNA - Global Country for World Peace, a Netherlands investment group, on Wednesday paid a courtesy call on Mr. Mahama Ayariga, Deputy Minister of Trade and industry, in Accra.

The group was at the Ministry with officials of the Offinso North District Assembly and Offinso Traditional Council. The group that was introduced as the Assembly's investor friends, made its investment intention known to the Ministry. Mr. Raja Mariano, leader of the delegation, said the group had planned to undertake projects which would include the cultivation of 15,000 hectares of farmlands, in line with Ghana government's vision of modernizing agriculture through mechanized farming.

He said the group had also planned to establish an agricultural university in the country and provide health facilities, to improve the living standards of the people.

Mr. Mariano called on government to support the group to realize its investment goal that included harnessing the agricultural potentials of the district through investments to create employment for the youth and increase income levels of farmers.

Mr. Ayariga said Ghana would need to expand its oil palm plantations to meet the needs of both local and international markets. He said such projects could be located anywhere in the country so far as beneficiaries would be Ghanaians who would be expected to engage in the agro-business sector.

Mr. Ayariga appealed to the group to ensure that the beneficiary communities are provided with accessible road networks, water, electricity, schools and hospitals to enhance the livelihood of the people. He assured government was committed to bettering the lives of the people and said members of the group would be supported to make their stay in Ghana successful.

## **Ghana oil output at 250,000 bpd by 2013 – VP To deliver oil by December 2010**

Ghana is on track to deliver oil from the Jubilee field from December this year, with initial output doubling to 250,000 barrels per day by 2013, the country's vice president told Reuters.

"The first oil will be delivered in December this year," Vice President John Dramani Mahama said in an interview late on Tuesday. "The development of the second phase phase, we anticipate, will raise the production from 125,000 barrels to approximately 250,000 barrels. It's some time between 2011 and 2012 to bring it into production, but certainly by 2013, Ghana should be producing 250,000 barrels a day," he said.

Mahama also defended Ghana's refusal to approve what sources close to the deal say was

a \$4 billion accord for private U.S. group Kosmos to sell its stake in Jubilee to U.S. major ExxonMobil, saying Kosmos' desire to exit was a chance for Ghana to secure a greater stake in the project.

## **LIBERIA**

### **China's Investment Reaches U.S \$9.9 Billion**

The Government of the People's Republic of China has revealed that its investment in Liberia has reached a total of US\$9.9 billion dollars.

The Vice Minister of Commerce of China, Mr. FU Ziyang, made the disclosure during the signing ceremonies of six agreements between the Government of Liberia and China, which took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the weekend.

The agreements are intended to boost trade between both countries and peoples.

The six agreements are; Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Governments of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Liberia; exchange of letter-zero tariff treatment with import of 60% of commodities originated from Liberia to China shall be totally exempted; exchange of letters-Technical; Cooperation Project with the Liberia Broadcasting System.

Other agreement entered into include exchange of letters-for the provision of 10 million RMB(Yuan) by the Chinese Government for additional medical materials to the Tappita Hospital to support the operation of the hospital; exchange of letter for the provision of 3 Million RMB medical equipment to the China-Liberia Malaria Prevention and Treatment Center by the Chinese Government and exchange of letter-for the provision of three (3) Million Yuan malaria medicines to the Liberian Government by the Chinese Government.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Olubanke King-Akerele signed for the Government of Liberia while the Vice Minister of Commerce of China, Mr. FU Ziyang signed on behalf of his country.

Madam Akerele welcomed the delegation and said their visit to Liberia shows that China has lot of interests Liberia. She added that the agreements will promote Liberia's development programs and build the country's economy.

The Vice Minister of Commerce of China thanked the Liberian Government and people for the warm welcome received, adding, "we will do all we can to help the people of Liberia. To date, through the smooth cooperation between the people of Liberia and china, my country has invested 9.9 billion dollars in your economy." Fu Ziyang noted.

Additionally, the stalled China-Union Bong Mines Project was also launched. The project is expected to provide job investment opportunities in Liberia and boost the country's economy.

The head of the 42 member delegation which comprises of government officials, business executives as well as journalists said the signing of the agreements symbolizes the long standing bilateral relations between the two countries.

Mr. Fiying said, it is hoped that upon the completion of the projects undertaken by his government, Liberians will make good use of the facilities because the Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of Liberia.

The University of Liberia Fendell new campus, the Tappita Hospital in Nimba County is among projects he said his government has undertaken in Liberia. He also pledged his government support to health care, agriculture, tourism and noted that China is committed to working with Liberia in its development drive.

Following the unveiling of the nameplate of the China Union Investment (Liberia) Bong Mines Co. Ltd, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf praised all those who have worked in ensuring that the Bong Mines project becomes a reality. She also praised the effort of Chinese President, Hu Jintao.

President Sirleaf called on all partners and the business community to support the investment and help transform the country. She also wants Liberian businesses to take advantage of the project and begin to identify areas of possible investment.

The 2.5 billion dollar China Union Bong Mines Project is seen as the biggest project in Liberia.

## **US\$2.6 Billion China Union Project Unveiled -As Liberia, China Sign Six Agreements**

The Deputy Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Honorable Fu Ziying, at the head of a high-powered delegation arrived in the country Thursday morning for a four-day official visit from April 22 to 25, 2010.

According to a foreign Ministry release, the Chinese delegation comprises 14 government officials, 23 business executives and five journalists.

The Chinese Deputy Minister of Commerce and delegation, which include senior officials of government and business executives as well as professional journalists, are in Liberia to promote Bilateral Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Republic of Liberia and the People's Republic of China

Vice Minister Fu Ziyang and delegation received a rousing welcome upon their arrival by a special flight at Roberts International Airport on Thursday morning, April 22, 2010. They were greeted by officials of the Liberia Government, including Ambassador Sylvester Grigsby, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Economic Cooperation and Integration; Honorable Frederick B. Norkeh, Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry; Her Excellency Mrs. Neh Dukuly Tolbert, Liberian Ambassador to the People's Republic of China and His Excellency Zhou Yuxiao, Chinese Ambassador to Liberia as well as other senior diplomats from the Chinese Embassy near Monrovia and the Deputy Chief of Protocol of the Republic of Liberia.

The Honorable Vice Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and members of his delegation proceeded to the Kendeja Resort and Villa in Paynesville where brief conversations took place between officials of the Liberian Government and some senior members of Honorable Ziyang's delegation.

During Bilateral discussions at the Foreign Ministry, Vice Minister Ziyang and the delegation held extensive talks with members of the Liberian Cabinet, including H.E. Mrs. Olubanke King-Akerele, Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Ministers of Commerce and Industry, Lands, Mines and Energy, Information, Culture and Tourism, Justice, and the Deputy Ministers of Finance, Planning, Agriculture, Education and Public Works respectively.

Others include Hon. Bernice Dahn, Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Hon. Richard Tolbert, Chairman, National Investment Commission and Hon. Samuel W. Thompson, Acting Executive Governor, Central Bank of Liberia.

Representing the Chinese Government are: Hon. Fu Ziyang, Vice Minister of Commerce; H.E. Zhou Yuxiao, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China accredited to Liberia; Mrs. Zhong Manying, Director General, Department of Western Asia and African Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce; Mr. Yao Shenhong, Director General, China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges; Mr. Shen Danyang, Deputy Director General, General Office of MOFCOM and Mr. Li Jingling, Deputy Director General, Department of Human Resources of MOFCOM.

Others are Mr. Wang Kuili, Deputy Director General, Department of Aid to Foreign Countries of MOFCOM; Mr. Guan Yanbin, International Business Daily; Mr. Dong Peng, Director, Department of Western Asia and African Affairs of MOFCOM; Mr. Wang Dong, Third Secretary, Department of Western Asia and African Affairs of MOFCOM; Mr. Li Ping, Vice-Governor, China Development Bank Corporation and Mrs. Shi Chengjie, Staff, Department of Foreign Affairs of MOFCOM.

The Bilateral Discussions were followed by a signing ceremony of Six Agreements between the Governments of the Republic of Liberia and the People's Republic of China. Her Excellency Madam Olubanke King-Akerele, Minister of Foreign Affairs signed for the Republic of Liberia while Honorable Fu Ziyang, Deputy Minister of Commerce of China signed on behalf of his government.

### **Agreements signed include:**

Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Liberia (Chinese Government shall provide 60 million RMB Yuan gratuitous assistance to the Liberian Government)

Exchange of letters-Zero tariff treatment (Import duties of sixty percent (60%) of commodities originated from Liberia to China shall be totally exempted)

Exchange of letters-Technical Cooperation Project with the Liberia Broadcasting System (Chinese Government shall dispatch five experts to LBS and provide maintenance of the facilities and training for LBS technicians)

Exchange of letter for the provision of 10 million RMB Yuan by the Chinese Government for the additional medical materials to support the operation of Tappita hospital.

Exchange of letter-Provision of 1.5 Million RMB Yuan medical equipments to the China-Liberia Malaria Prevention and Treatment Center by the Chinese Government.

Exchange of letter-Provision of 3 Million Yuan malaria medicines to the Liberian Government by the Chinese Government.

After signing ceremony, Foreign Minister King-Akerele and Honorable Fu Ziying, Deputy Minister of Commerce of China exchanged the agreements.

During the visit, the delegation paid a courtesy call on Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia. The President held extended meeting with Vice Minister Ziying and 15 members of his delegation at the Cabinet Room.

After the extended meeting, the President escorted her guests to the C. Cecil Dennis Auditorium to greet business executives of the Chinese delegation.

The start-up Ceremony of China-Union (Liberia) Bong Mines Project commenced at the C. Cecil Dennis Auditorium. Honorable Eugene Shannon, Minister of Lands, Mines and Energy gave welcome remarks, while other officials also made remarks, including Mr. Chi Jianxin, Mr. Li Jiping, Vice Governor of China Development Bank; Mr. Peng Chen, Vice President of Wuhan Iron and Steel (Group) Corp.

During the ceremony, Video introduction to CADfund, Wuhan Iron and Steel (Group) Corp was screened for five minutes. The President performed the Unveiling of the nameplate of China Union Investment (Liberia) Bong Mines Co., Ltd., followed by remarks by President Johnson Sirleaf.

On Friday, April 23, 2010, the delegation visited the China-aided Bamboo and Rattan Weaving and Vegetable Demonstration Technology Projects; the Fendall Campus of the University of Liberia and greet Chinese aid workers. The delegation will also visit the Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Officer of the Chinese Embassy in the I.T.C. Compound.

On the same day, Business discussions between Chinese and Liberian business Executives took place at the Chinese Embassy in Congo Town, while a Round-table discussions with diplomats and journalists will be held. The Chinese delegation held a forum on China-Liberia Economic and Trade Cooperation at the Chinese Embassy near Monrovia.

On Saturday, 24 April, 2010 Vice Minister Ziyang and his delegation visited the Bong Mines Project, where they will be greeted by traditional leaders and local officials, while on the same day, Vice Minister Ziyang and his delegation held meeting with the Chinese Embassy staff.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Honorable Fu Ziyang, and his delegation on Sunday, April 25, 2010 took off at the RIA for Chad.

## **Liberian Logs Enter France**

Following the lifting of the UN ban on the forestry sector of the country, the EJ&J, a logging company in Liberia has shipped the first major consignment of logs to France.

The one Thousand nine hundred and seventeen (1917) pieces of logs taken from the Southern Rivercess County of Liberia Sunday left the port city of Buchanan on board ship called Magdalena Valletta.

Speaking to a team of reporters in Buchanan, the CEO of the EJ&J Company, Madam Eliza D.J. Kronyanh said she is very grateful to the Government of Liberia and her partners who have assisted her during the parking and shipping of the logs to Europe.

She added that her company followed all the laws and reforms setup by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and its partners and has cordial working relations with local communities in the areas.

Madam Kronyanh said the company is working along with the County Social Development Council (CDSC) to develop local communities in its area of operation. She added that 30% of the taxes paid to government under the Forestry Management Contract (FMC) and \$1.5 after shipment fees are paid to communities for development purpose.

Commenting the issue as to whether the people of Rivercess County are feeling the impact of the logs being cut from their forest and shipped to Europe, Madam Kronyanh said "the people suppose to be feeling the impact because they know how to go about it, they know about it."

For his part, the Deputy Managing Director of FDA, Mr. Kedrick Johnson said the shipment of the logs indicates that Liberia is complying with all the reforms in the forestry sector. He said the shipment represents the first major and legal shipment since the lifting of sanctions on Liberia's forestry products.

According to Mr. Kedrick, FDA along with its partners is satisfied with all the processes leading to the exportation of the logs from the Port of Buchanan. He noted that the EJ&J completed the payment of all government revenue before the shipment.

The ship which left the Buchanan Port on Sunday, April 25, 2010 is expected to take eight days to reach final destination in France.

The International community in 2003 imposed sanctions on Liberia's timbers following widespread violations in the sector. Some of the issue raised by the international community ranged from illegal cutting of trees and using the revenue to fuel conflicts.

## ENERGY

## GHANA

### **Generation of electricity from waste is a reality - Expert**

Accra, April 28, GNA - A German investor in waste management on Wednesday expressed optimism that Ghana has the trump card to generate electricity from waste.

Mr Karl-Heinz Pasch, President and Chief Executive Officer of EnDIAG Company, made the observation during a visit to the Oblogo land filled site in Weija Municipality in the Greater Accra Region on Tuesday. "I believe Ghana's long awaited dream of generating electricity from waste could be a reality," he said.

Mr. Pasch suggested the need for a feasibility study, to capture the rainfall and sunshine pattern in the area, measurements and map of the site, geological details and total tonnage of waste.

Mr Victor Quartey, Environmental Waste Management Officer of Accra Metropolitan Assembly, told the Ghana News Agency that the Oblogo site said was acquired and designated as the official waste dumping site on January 5, 2002 after a quarry company had completed its operations in the area. He noted that dumping of refuse at the site

officially stopped on July 31, 2007, after dumping about 2,208,250 tonnes of waste.

"This waste comprise of 65 per cent organic, three per cent paper, 3.5 per cent plastic, 3.6 per cent glass, 2.5 per cent metal, 1.7 per cent textile, 17.1 per cent of inert metals and 1.2 per cent of other waste," he said.

Mr Quartey explained that the site had an average depth of 30 metres, density of 8.21 tonnes and an area of 3.21 acres. The project is a joint venture between Ghana and EnDIAG Company as an alternative source of power. Available statistics indicates that Accra Metropolis generates about 2,000 tonnes of waste daily out of which between 1,600 and 1,800 are collected. 28 April 10

## **Govt. and TICO sign deal on thermal power expansion**

Government and the Takoradi International Company (TICO), a power generation firm, on Thursday signed an agreement for the expansion by 110 mega watts, the thermal generating plant capacity to 330 mega watts. Currently, TICO has 220 mega watts generating capacity and the additional 110 MW steam plant to be added would transform the plant to combine the cycle in line with the original plan to enable it meet annual increase in the system demand pegged at six percent. Dr Emmanuel Buah, the Deputy Minister of Energy, and Mr. Carl Sheldon, the General Manager of Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), operators of TICO, signed the deal.

TICO is a joint venture between the Volta River Authority and TAQA with the former owning 10 percent shares and the latter 90 percent. Dr Buah said the expansion programme was in line with the government's power sector programme to increase electricity supply and reliability to ensure accelerated economic development.

He lauded the commitment of TICO to the project, to expand from single cycle to combine cycle, which is critical to improve generation. He said the prospects of gas offered in commercial quantities through the West African Gas Pipeline and the discovery and imminent exploitation of gas off Ghana's shores could help reduce the cost of electricity and enhance reliability of supply.

Mr. Sheldon said the company had operated a reliable power generation in the past 10 years, achieving nearly 96 percent availability of power. He said the company was enthusiastic about Ghana's oil prospects and said he hoped the benefits would inure to all. Both Takoradi I and II are fuelled by Light Crude Oil until natural gas becomes available.

The West Africa Gas Pipeline, currently under development, will supply gas to both Takoradi I and II. The project will include the conversion of Takoradi II to gas-fired plant. 29 April 10

## **Govt. is tackling energy sector challenges**

Accra, April 27, GNA - Energy Minister Dr Joe Oteng-Adjei on Tuesday said the on-going projects on power generation, transmission and distribution were demonstrations of government's resolve to tackle the challenges in the energy sector.

In a speech read on his behalf at the launch of the Ghana Grid Company (GRIDCo) Limited Electricity Supply Plan and the Annual Reliability Assessment Report for 2010, the Minister described the challenges confronting the power sector as stark but added that the opportunities were greater given government's policies and actions. The 77-page Electricity Supply Plan document and the 91-sheet Annual Reliability Assessment Report are expected to widen the base of information and discussions with key policy makers and industry experts of the challenges of the sector.

They are also to mobilize broad consensus in making strategic choices and decisions for keeping the power industry at its optimal performance. Dr Oteng-Adjei said both documents complemented each other and needed to be read for a better appreciation of the state of the power utilities and situation for 2010.

It added: "I will recommend that you take a critical look at the supply and reliability plans to appreciate the energy situation from the generation point of view and how the availability or otherwise of power impacts on GRIDCo and other utilities in the energy supply chain and consumer." He called on the public to exercise patience when their pressing demands were not immediately met by developing projects stressing that investment decisions made were best realized a few years later. Mr Charles Darku, Chief Executive Officer of GRIDCo, said the launch of the documents was in harmony with the legislative instruments of the company and in recognition of the plurality of discourse on a wide range of developmental matters.

"The 2010 Supply Plan addresses the demand outlook anticipated for this year and estimates the corresponding energy to be consumed to meet this demand.

"It also analyses the corresponding generation scenarios and their cost impacts and the available transmission network infrastructure to support the transfer of power from power plants to bulk supply points across the network," Mr Darku said.

The Annual Reliability Assessment Report, he said, presented the outlook for Ghana's bulk power supply system for stakeholders and the public and assessed whether the system met minimum reliability standards for the delivery of power to the anticipated demand in the 2010 operating year. Mr Darku disclosed that the reports were the first of a series of annual assessments bordering on the reliability of Ghana's wholesale power supply system designed for stakeholders and the public adding that the corporate entity would publish the reports by November of the preceding year.

Mr Norbert Anku, Director of Engineering at GRIDCo, in a presentation, said the cost of

unreliable wholesale electricity to the economy was estimated between 320 million and 924 million dollars a year. The figure, he said, represented a two to six per cent of Gross Domestic Product, adding that the cost was in excess of the investment needed to attain reliability and to avoid failures.

Mr Anku called for sustained levels of investments in generation and transmission of power adding that well-informed stakeholders and stakeholder support were critical solutions to the current challenges facing the sector. Emphasis on operational efficiency and excellence in view of increasing presence of thermal generation and sustainable tariffs as well as managing supply and demand balance to ensure reliability were other suggested solutions.

## **Govt. throws weight behind innovations to boost electricity supply**

Government on Tuesday threw its weight behind small scale technologies and inventions meant to facilitate the development and improvement of electricity and other energy supply.

President John Evans Atta Mills has therefore directed the Ministry of Energy to contact two young inventors- David Dagba, 22 and Gideon Agyare, 28, who have come out with new inventions on electricity, and offer them the necessary assistance to pilot their findings. President Mills gave the directive when the two, accompanied by ace comedian Kweku Sintim-Misa, paid a courtesy call on him at the Osu Castle in Accra on Tuesday. The call was at the invitation of the President who registered his fascination at the new technologies of the two young men who appeared on a show by Mr Sintim-Misa, affectionately called KSM, on television.

David has come out with salt powered batteries while Gideon has successfully converted outboard motors using pre-mix fuel into battery operated engines. President Mills congratulated the two young men on their findings, and described them as trailblazers, who are not ordinary to find. He commended their desire to pilot their findings, which he said would lead to job creation and assured them of Government assistance. President Mills stressed that Government would not look down on such findings, but would provide the necessary encouragement and assistance so that such talents would be put to the advantage of the nation. He recalled that solar powered panels were used for some street lights at Legon, some time ago, and indicated that Government was looking for somebody to put up a factory to provide solar voltage panels.

President Mills commended Mr Sintim-Misa for not only creating comedies on politics on his shows but also bringing out such talent to the public's eye. Mr Sintim-Misa expressed joy that at least the show had caught the attention of the public. Both Mr

Dagba and Mr Agyare appealed for assistance to pilot their findings.

Mr Dagba told journalists later that he was a former Arts Student of Dofor Secondary School, at Juapong, near Akosombo in the Eastern Region and Ho Secondary School, but was forced to drop out of school, for financial reasons, when he lost his father during the second year. He said though he moved to Accra to do odd jobs, he followed his fascination, and carried out research into the phenomenon that made salt sparkle when fire was applied and came out with the new technology. He said he presently had a number of bags of salt that he was working on and could employ about 200 people for the pilot project. Last week Government announced that it had secured a \$520 million loan- \$350 million from the Exim Bank of the US and \$170 million grant from the China Exim Bank- to expedite the extension of electricity to 2,200 communities across the country. 27 April 10

## IMMIGRATION/ REFUGEE/ IDPs

### GHANA

#### **Calgary criminal deported to Ghana**

A man with a history of criminal violence in Calgary has been deported, federal officials confirmed Friday.

Frank Fayke Dwomoh, 29, was removed from the country by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) on Wednesday, according to a release.

Dwomoh's most recent conviction was in 2005 for discharging a firearm. He finished serving a prison sentence in September 2009, but was then transferred into the custody of border services before his deportation this week to Ghana.

At his Immigration and Refugee Board detention review hearing in October 2009, a government lawyer said Dwomoh was put into segregation several times while in prison and pre-trial custody because of his violent behaviour and failed drug tests.

"We were able to keep him in detention on the grounds that he was a danger to the public until his deportation this week," said CBSA spokeswoman Lisa White.

Dwomoh had a previous deportation order against him but it was successfully appealed, she added.

"I welcome the news that the CBSA has successfully removed this violent criminal from Canada," said Minister of Public Safety Vic Toews. "Removing dangerous criminals from our country is integral to protecting Canadians and making our communities safe."

## Marked for Deportation, Ghanaian Scholar Cries

Lagos — Malam Issah Hassan Tikumah, a former Social Studies lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria has alleged that he is being hounded by security men and some "reactionary forces" because of a book he wrote on the niqab (face veil worn by Muslim women). He said he now lives in fear.

In a letter to THISDAY editor, Tikumah, who is a Ghanaian, revealed that his troubles started early this year when he published a book titled, *Niqab (Face-veil): An Exemplary Sunnah or a Repugnant Innovation?* He said some people, who opposed the contents of the book, threatened violence. To pacify them, the management of the university stopped the publication of the book and sacked him with immediate effect.

But his problems did not go away after the sack. He was detained by the police and some people wrote a petition to the state government.

"It is a book I have published with all the necessary facts and yet I'm being treated like a hardened criminal just because some reactionary elements within the society are against that book. More than a month after my release or bail, I still have to report to the security everyday like a criminal whose run-away from prosecution is not unexpected - all these trouble for merely publishing a book some people are not happy with!"

Though some of his students have protested his sack and shabby treatment, he noted that security agencies have continued to harass him, threatening him with deportation in spite of the fact that he has "lived in Nigeria for the last 12 years, received my higher education in Nigeria and three of my children are Nigerians by birth."

He said the most worrying aspect of the security treatment is the insistence of some policemen that they are watching him and would deal with him anytime they are ready, stressing that they now call him a "CIA agent disguising as a Muslim" so that they can easily hang him.

Tikumah rued the fact that he is being treated so badly despite the fact that he has "been struggling for the cause of Islam for the past 31 years." He said, "And how could anyone accuse me of threatening peace and security in Nigeria when I have spent a great deal of my time, energy and money over the years working to foster peace and security in Nigeria?"

## HEALTH

## GHANA

### **NGOs to validate efficacy of 300 herbal plants**

Have, April 28, GNA - The Environmental and Development Youth Movement (EDYM), an eco-restoration and preservation NGO in the Volta Region and USAID supported Agri-Business and Sustainable African Plants Products, an Accra based NGO, are to validate the efficacy of 300 medicinal plants. Mr Paul Kpai, the Executive Director of EDYM's Weto Range Forest Conservation Project, said at an end-of-project evaluation meeting at Have in the Hohoe Municipal Area.

He said the plants were thought to have curative and control properties against high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis among others. Mr Kpai said EDYM was also in collaboration with some groups in Togo to track medicinal plants extinct in Ghana but available in Togo for cultivation in Ghana.

He said the objective of the UNDP supported project was to "mobilize the youth in rural development to conserve natural resources through sustainable agricultural practices and reforestation programmes". The three-year project covered seven communities inhabiting the mountain ranges around Have, including Liati and the Afadjato areas. Mr Kpai said over the period the project worked at weaning the people off old ways of relating with the forest resulting in the fast degeneration of forest resources.

He said the project's well designed anti-bush fire messages resulted in the area not experiencing any bush fire since 2006. Mr Kpai said the people no longer farm on hill sides and with a collective will to respect local hunting conventions, the greenery of the area was returning to normal.

He mentioned the intransigence of chainsaw operators who resorted to cutting trees in the night as a big challenge that was contained. Mr Kpai said the people were exposed to alternative livelihood activities such as honey making, fruit farming and grass-cutter rearing. Colonel Cyril Necku (RTD), the Deputy Volta Regional Minister, expressed regret about the deterioration of the Range that had been home to economic trees and rare species of animals. He urged the group to sustain the gains made so far by making the people own the initiative. 28 April 10

## **CAMEROON**

### **Cameroon to Construct Medical Emergency Centre with aid from Korea**

This was the focus of an audience granted the Korean Ambassador to Cameroon by the Minister of Public Health yesterday in Yaounde.

The final stitches that will pave the way for the construction of an ultra modern Medical Emergency Centre were placed yesterday in Yaounde during an audience granted the Korean Ambassador to Cameroon, Lee Ho-sung, by the Minister of Public Health, André Mama Fouda. For about an-hour, both personalities and their close collaborators discussed on the stakes at hand to kick-start the construction of a Medical Emergency Centre in which the government of Korea is ready to offer some 3 million US Dollars for the construction and equipping of the centre. André Mama Fouda expressed worries over the enormous sum needed for the project whose initial cost is over F CFA 4 billion. The Minister sought to know if the project could be segmented into different phases or if it could be a joint project carried out by the Korea and Cameroon governments or if it is possible to have a loan from the Korean government to execute the Medical Emergency Centre project. Experts from both parties are expected to meet and discuss how the Medical Emergency Centre project will unfold.

The Korean diplomat said he was at the Ministry of Public Health to inform the Minister on the current development of projects Korea is helping to contribute in Cameroon, particularly the construction of the Emergency Centre at the Yaounde Centre Hospital. The Ambassador noted that their interest is to help in improving the medical care given to patients in Cameroon, especially as Cameroon does not have a Medical Emergency Centre. When the centre will be completed, Lee Ho-sung said, Korean doctors will be sent on voluntary basis to assist Cameroonian medical personnel who will be working at the centre.

## **SIERRA LEONE**

### **Health Fees Scrapped but Gaps Remain**

Dakar — Donors and NGOs welcomed the Sierra Leone government's launch on 27 April of free health care for some 1.5 million women and children, but health experts say it is just one step in a long, complex process as critical gaps in the health system remain.

Under the new directive government health facilities are to provide free care to under-five children and pregnant and lactating women.

"Having worked in our health system for years, I can say this is the biggest change [the system] has ever undergone," S.A.S. Kargbo, health ministry director of reproductive and child health, said in a statement released by Save the Children, which has worked closely with the government on the initiative.

"And its impact on saving the lives of women and children will be truly significant."

In Sierra Leone one in five children die before age five and one in eight women die from pregnancy-related complications, according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

### **Ready?**

But health fees are not the only thing standing in the way of decent public health services. President Ernest Bai Koroma and top health officials recently toured hospitals around the country to check their readiness, and found a lack of running water and electricity, insufficient generators, facilities "acutely short of personnel" and inadequate beds and medical equipment, according to a government press statement.

Cuban and Nigerian doctors work in Sierra Leone to fill part of the personnel gap. Sierra Leone has about three doctors per 100,000 people; the World Health Organization recommends at least 228.

The government says it is on track - with the financial backing of several donors and NGOs - to get health facilities up to speed, but this will take months, even years.

A 10-day strike by health workers was called off on 28 March after President Koroma announced a pay hike for health workers, but many of their grievances are still far from resolved.

"The main concerns for health workers are compensation, working conditions, lack of career advancement and study opportunities and a lack of equipment," Frederic Coker, head of a coalition of striking doctors, told IRIN days after the salary announcement. "But we agree that not all of our demands can be met at once."

### **Broader process**

Vidhya Ganesh, deputy UNICEF representative in Sierra Leone, said it was important to see free health care as one step in a broader process.

"A great deal of preparation has taken place [for the launch], including getting medicines in place and communicating the policy," she told IRIN. "But by no means will all challenges to the health sector be resolved in one move; this is an ongoing process."

But there is concern that public hospitals will be under immediate pressure with a flood of people seeking free care.

"We know from experience in other countries that have implemented free care that the first months are critical," Laurence Saily, interim head of mission for Médecins Sans Frontières-Belgium, told IRIN.

The government must have a strategy in place to equip and staff health centres as needed, she added.

The health ministry plans to increase the number of midwives trained each year from 30 to 150, according to reproductive health director Kargbo.

Many health care workers have been using revenue from user fees to cover their wages, says Save the Children, which endorses a government strategy to increase medical staff salaries to reflect the new workload.

### **Quality care**

But many patients go to clinics even when health care costs; their concern is quality care. Hadja Kadiatu Jalloh, community health officer in Makeni, 200km northeast of the capital Freetown, told IRIN: "[Free care] is a nice idea...but medicines have to be available. If you tell people to come and a diagnosis is made but the drugs are not available that's a problem."

A woman sitting nearby with her child said for her cost was not an issue. "I am interested in the life of my child, so I was not thinking about the money when the child fell ill; I decided immediately to come to hospital."

The woman, who did not give her name, is a fish trader; she said her maximum daily profit was about 10,000 Leones (US\$2.50). The Makeni hospital currently charges 11,500 Leones (\$2.95) for admission to the paediatric ward; an ordinary delivery can cost about \$10

## **UN-Backed Maternal and Child Health Drive Kicks Off**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Sierra Leonean Government have embarked today on a new initiative to provide free health care for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under five across the West African nation.

Sierra Leone, which ranked 180 out of 182 countries in the 2009 Human Development Index (HDI), has been facing serious challenges in the delivery of and access to health-care services, UNICEF's Christiane Berthiaume told reporters in Geneva.

In 2008, the under-five mortality rate was 140 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality ratio was 857 per 100,000 live births.

The lifetime risk of a woman dying from complications of pregnancy and childbirth was one in eight, Ms. Berthiaume added.

The Free Health Care Initiative seeks to redress this situation by boosting access to services and ensuring that mothers and young children receive the care they need.

In addition, the agency plans to reach 250,000 pregnant women and lactating mothers, as well as 1 million children under five, with essential medicines to enhance maternal and child health at all Government facilities, with the help of an \$8.8 million contribution.

## HUMAN RIGHTS/ GENDER/ SOCIAL ISSUES

### **GHANA**

#### **State attorney meets with UF student protesters over Adu-Brempong's case**

State Attorney Bill Cervone told a group of University of Florida students Wednesday it will probably be at least 30 days before he makes any decisions on how to proceed with the case of UF graduate student Kofi Adu-Brempong, who was shot by UF police in March.

Cervone said a Florida Department of Law Enforcement report on the incident is several inches thick and he added that Adu-Brempong's attorney has information to share. Cervone said it will take time to thoroughly review all of the materials.

"I can already tell you there are some obvious areas of follow-up from the law enforcement side," Cervone told the students. "I know there are areas of follow-up from Kofi's lawyer's side."

Cervone said that 30 days "is nothing more than a guess, but I would hope in another 30 days we would have a pretty good picture as to where we are going."

Adu-Brempong, a 35-year-old grad student from Ghana, drew attention when he began behaving in what was described by a professor as a delusional manner.

On March 1, authorities talked to him and opted against taking him to a facility for an involuntary mental evaluation, according to a police report. On March 2, a neighbor called 911 to report hearing screams from Adu-Brempong's Corry Village apartment.

Police spent about 1 1/2 hours trying unsuccessfully to get him to come out. Several officers entered his home and found him sitting on the floor with a knife and metal rod, the report states. Adu-Brempong stood up and approached police with the rod. Attempts to stop Adu-Brempong with Taser and beanbag shots were unsuccessful so an officer fired his gun, hitting Adu-Brempong in the face.

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The case has created concern among some UF students and staff, who believe police acted inappropriately in shooting Adu-Brempong and in charging him with aggravated assault. Some also contend the shooting could have been avoided had UF Baker-acted Adu-Brempong on March 1.

Cervone met with more than a dozen students around a picnic table under an oak tree on campus in what resembled a hour-long civics lesson on various laws, the grand jury process, Cervone's obligations, the number of officers who have been prosecuted by Cervone and other factors.

Cervone said he could not legally or ethically discuss details of the case but did answer questions about the process he will follow.

He was pressed by student Sharon Burney on whether race could play a role in the case -- Adu-Brempong is black and the officers were white.

"There is no law for a police officer who has demonstrated cultural insensitivity in the past in interacting with people of different ethnicities?" she asked.

"Cultural insensitivity is not a crime," replied Cervone.

Students said afterward they believed the meeting with Cervone was helpful in clearing up some misconceptions and in giving them a forum to get their points across.

## **LIBERIA**

### **Even the Dead Earn Salaries at Health Ministry - Over \$1.2 Million to Ghosts**

One of the stunning discoveries of the HIPC audit on the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) is that the dead are on payroll and earning salaries along with even those who were long dismissed or retired by the Ministry.

During the period under audit, Auditor General John Morlu requested for the listing of deceased, retired, abandoned, and dismissed employees. And out of a listing of 71 employees submitted by the Personnel Director, it was discovered that 32 deceased staff, 20 retired staff and 7 staff who have abandoned their jobs were still maintained on the Ministry's payroll for the Audit Period July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008.

The summary of the aggregate amount paid to the deceased and retired staff amounted to L\$1,231,490.75.

The failure of the former Personnel Director, Ms. Jane Collins, former Paymaster, Mr. Amex Johnson and the Pay Team at EDP Section of the Ministry of Finance to submit all the returned checks placed on hold belonging to the affected personnel for audit examination makes the total amount of L\$1,231,490.75 unaccounted for.

The GAC opines that delays in removing retired, deceased, abandoned or people who resigned from the payroll could lead to payroll padding and loss of public money through irregular payments such as payments to ghost workers, as difficulty in determining the actual number of employees on the payroll could lead to the inclusion of ghost workers on the payroll.

The Auditor General has therefore recommended that the Personnel Department of the Ministry of Health & Social Welfare closely monitor and delete alien names from the payroll, but not without recommending that the former Personnel Director, Ms. Jane Collins, former Paymaster Amex Johnson, be made to produce the returned checks placed on hold for audit verification or the total amount of L\$1,231,490.75 is recovered from them through the appropriate legal means employed by the Minister of Justice.

## **Unverified Payroll Employees Leaves L\$10.5m in Limbo**

In a related development a test of two months of the Daily Attendance Records for Central Administration of the Ministry of Health for the months of July 2007 and June 2008 with the EDP (MOH) payrolls revealed that the 452 Unverified Employees with total annual gross salaries of L\$10,520,195.00 as stated on the EDP (MOH) payroll were not signing in to work. During the course of audit, the GAC noticed that the Personnel Department of the MOH&SW conducted a verification exercise to eradicate delinquent personnel from the MOH&SW payrolls. The exercise revealed that 452 employees were classified as Unverified Employees. Auditors obtained information from the Unverified Employees List posted on the MOH&SW bulletin.

The auditors also compared the List with the Daily Attendance Records for the period under audit to establish whether these employees were signing in to work and receiving pay. The implication is that Payroll padding existed, thus denying qualified employees of being recruited into the Ministry.

Meanwhile the Auditor General has recommended that the Personnel Department of the MOH&SW should request for the monthly payroll from the Ministry of Finance between the 1st and 15th of every month to review and make the necessary adjustment and the payroll should be sent to the Deputy Minister for Administration for approval. The approved Payroll Copy should be forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for salary checks disbursement. He also recommended that the Personnel Department places hold on salary checks disbursement to the employees classified as Unverified Employees and listed on the attached sheet, pending a joint verification exercise by the GAC, MOH&SW and MOF on their employment status.

## **Non-validated MOH&SW Payroll Questions L\$57,288,549 Disbursement**

Auditors found out that MOH&SW did not present a complete 12 months copy of the payroll summary for FY-2007/2008 except for 7 months payroll summary from the Ministry of Finance EDP Section. Auditors conducted an analytical review of the monthly payroll which showed a variance in the number of employees and the monthly payroll totals, which indicate that there were deletions and additions of employees on the EDP payroll in subsequent months. However, auditors were not given the remaining five (5) months payroll for the months of July, August, September, November and December, 2007 which made it impossible to validate the actual changes that occurred on these payrolls.

In the absence of the complete 12 months payrolls, GAC was unable to validate the total amount of US\$3,605,207.00 allotted for Personnel Expenditure in the FY-2007/2008 Budget, thus prompting the Auditor General to advise that the Ministry should provide the remaining five (5) months copies of the approved EDP (MOF) payroll to assist in verifying the actual amount of US\$3,605,207.00 allotted in the FY-2007/2008 Budget. Also the Personnel Director, Mr. James Beyan, should produce the listing as per the

schedule in the detailed report for the names of staff that were added and deleted from the MOHSW payroll during the period under audit.

### **No PAN for 2,454 Employees**

Out of 2,636 employees on the MOHSW payroll, the Ministry's Personnel Department presented only 182 Personnel Action Notices (PAN). As a result, 2,454 employees did not have Personnel Action Notice (PAN), which is a requirement before being placed on the payroll.

The failure to maintain PANs for employees could make it difficult to keep accurate records on personnel data needed to determine date of employment, professional competency, salary and date of retirement, etc. It also undermines the employment in the civil service and increases the risk of ghost names being placed on EDP Payroll, as people are placed on Government payroll without meeting the basic conditions of service.

Consequently, Auditor General John S. Morlu, II has recommended that the Personnel Department of MOH&SW should adhere to the CSA employment regulations by ensuring that the total number of 2,454 employees who had not met Civil Service requirements and on Government Payroll complete all the CSA procedures for employment and their files be updated and all future employment be channeled through CSA, including obtaining PANs for all employees placed on EDP Payroll.

### **Payment to Serving Employees under Professional Service Costs Taxpayers US\$3,000**

Contrary to Government Financial Rule 26 which indicates that payments shall not be made to serving Government employees under 'Professional Services', MOH&SW paid in total US\$8,000 to five Liberian Doctors for professional services, two of whom are employees of the Ministry of Health. Dr. Eugene Dolopei and Dr. S. Benson Barh, both employees of MOH were paid US\$1,500.00 each in violation of RULE 26.

It has therefore been recommended to the authority of the Ministry that the monies paid to the two doctors be restituted and also the Minister and Comptroller of MOH&SW should ensure due adherence to the Government Financial Rule # 26.

## **Liberia: Citizens in U.S. Question Pres. Son's Caretaker Incarceration**

A group of concerned Liberian citizens residing in the US are protesting the arrest and protracted detention of Winston Dennis at the central prison on the alleged instructions of James Sirleaf, son of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, over allegations that Mr. Dennis stole US\$10,000 from Mr. Sirleaf's bedroom.

Mr. Sirleaf accused Mr. Dennis, who worked as caretaker at Sirleaf's residence, of stealing the money while he (Sirleaf) was at work.

But Mr. Patrick Flomo, a member of the concerned Liberians in the US said they are seriously questioning the legality of the arrest of Mr. Dennis, who has languished in jail at the Monrovia Central Prison for 5 months without indictment or trial.

Mr. Flomo told this paper via mobile phone that the concerned Liberians "are working toward securing the release of Mr. Dennis through legal means".

Mr. Flomo: "We protest the jailing of Winston Dennis by Mr. Sirleaf without investigation or any due process of law; so we are working along with other concerned Liberians to file a bond for his temporary release from South Beach."

"Keeping someone behind bars for 5 months without trial I believe such is unconstitutional. That is exactly what the President's son is exhibiting".

Dennis' spouse, Lucy Mulbah told reporters that Mr. Sirleaf arrested Winston Dennis at 3 a.m. on 14 December 2010 and jailed him at the Monrovia central prison where he has since been without investigation into the alleged theft of US\$10,000.

But the County Attorney for Montserrado, Cllr. Darkue Mulbah, told this paper that the action of the president's son was 'legal', saying the grand jury of Montserrado has indicted Winston Dennis, charging him with "theft".

He said the case has been included on the docket of criminal court "C" during its May 2010 term.

But Matthew Wreh, chief clerk at criminal court "C" told this paper: "I can't recall receiving a document or instruction relating to this case."

## **NPFL Commanders Formed Black Ghadafa to Fight against Charles Taylor, Witness Says**

Some commanders in Charles Taylor's Liberian rebel movement formed a renegade group to undermine the revolution and overthrow Mr. Taylor, a defense witness told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today.

This testimony sits in tension with prosecution allegations that the Black Ghadafa group was set up by the former Liberian president, who then sent it across the border to help out Sierra Leone's rebel forces.

Karnah Edward Mineh, a former commander in Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group, told the court about his training at the Libyan revolutionary camp, Tajura, in the late 1980s and his subsequent deployment to fight in Liberia.

His testimony covered an issue which has been a source of much disagreement between Mr. Taylor and prosecutors — the establishment of the renegade group: Black Ghadafa.

Prosecutors have claimed that it was Mr. Taylor who created the Black Ghadafa group and that he sent them to provide support to Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. Mr. Taylor has told the court that Black Ghadafa was established by commanders in his rebel group who were bent on overthrowing him as NPFL leader. The former president added that members of Black Ghadafa were arrested and investigated and after they confessed that they had established the group to overthrow Mr. Taylor, they were subsequently executed. These NPFL commanders included Oliver Varnie, General Dibong, Anthony Menkunagbe, Timothy Moriba and One-Man One. Prosecutors say that Mr. Taylor executed these men because he did not want to entertain any opposition to his reign as NPFL leader.

Today in court, Mr. Mineh corroborated the former Liberian president's evidence. According to Mr. Mineh, Mr. Taylor deployed him to the Cape Mount region during the war in Liberia. There, he said he joined Mr. Varnie, General Dibong and others to fight against United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) rebels, who were attacking the NPFL from Sierra Leone. The witness explained that while he was the commander at Cape Mount, Mr. Varnie and others started conniving against him and supporting ULIMO rebels to fight against the NPFL.

"Oliver Varnie, Dibong and One-Man-One conspired against me," Mr. Mineh said.

"All supplies sent to me were given to the enemy. Dibong will send all supplies to the enemy ULIMO and ULIMO began to attack us," he added.

Asked by defense counsel for Mr. Taylor, Mr. Silas Chikera, to explain why the NPFL commanders had given NPFL supplies to ULIMO, the witness explained that "they joined ULIMO and they formed a unit to fight against us."

"They called the unit Black Ghadafa," he said.

Explaining that Black Ghadafa and ULIMO were united, Mr. Mineh said that "these people turned against us. They conspired to fight against Mr. Taylor."

"They were arrested. When they investigated them, they confessed" that they were planning to overthrow Mr. Taylor, according to Mr. Mineh.

Mr. Mineh also told the court that the men who formed Black Ghadafa had asked him to join them and when he refused, they threatened to kill him.

Witnesses have given different accounts about the group called the Black Ghadafa. While some have said that they saw members of the group in the RUF headquarter town of Buedu (Kailahun District, eastern Sierra Leone), other witnesses have said that the group joined the Sierra Leone army and helped fight against the RUF. During Mr. Taylor's testimony, Mr. Taylor's lead defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, read a portion of the statement made by former Sierra Leonean president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, before the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Mr. Kabbah's statement, he said that the Black Ghadafa was a group formed in Liberia which provided support to the Sierra Leonean army and that many of the group's members found their way in the country's security forces.

Also today, Mr. Mineh tried to dispel allegations that the NPFL did not punish its members when they committed crimes against civilians. The witness said that he had no knowledge of the NPFL providing support to the RUF in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Mineh's testimony continues Monday as the Special Court will not sit tomorrow.

## **Charles Taylor Refuses To Go To Court in Protest against Treatment by Dutch Security Personnel**

Charles Taylor today refused to attend his trial in protest of security measures by Dutch security personnel responsible for taking him from his detention facility to the courtroom in The Hague.

When the Special Court for Sierra Leone resumed this morning, Mr. Taylor was conspicuously absent. The former Liberian president's defense counsel, Morris Anyah, explained to the judges that Dutch security personnel had handcuffed Mr. Taylor and kept him waiting in a vehicle for 15 minutes. This irritated Mr. Taylor and he refused to go to court today. Mr. Anyah called this action by the Dutch security personnel unnecessary and disrespectful.

Explaining to the judges what transpired between Mr. Taylor and the Dutch security personnel, Mr. Anyah said that "he was handcuffed, he was placed in a vehicle, and this is where the problem arose. He was left in that vehicle, for in his estimation, 10 to 15 minutes while the detention center personnel went to transport or bring another detainee from upstairs to another waiting vehicle to be transported to the same court house."

"What we submit, objectively speaking, is unnecessary and is disrespectful, is to have the accused sit in a van waiting for several minutes while he is handcuffed," Mr. Anyah added.

When the court adjourned and resumed in the afternoon, the judges informed the parties that they had done some investigation into what transpired between Mr. Taylor and the Dutch security personnel.

Presiding judge, Justice Julia Sebutinde, said that the actions of the Dutch security personnel were not disrespectful to Mr. Taylor as he was represented by his defense counsel. The learned judge said that Mr. Taylor had only been made to wait for those minutes because the Dutch security personnel wanted to transport him to the court alongside the other detainees.

“Now in our view, unanimously, we do not think that what happened this morning — whereby the authorities requested Mr. Taylor to wait for some 15 minutes, and I don’t know whether he actually waited for 15 minutes or less — that that was necessarily an unreasonable request, given the circumstance that there was that one team ready to bring a number of accused persons,” Justice Sebutinde said.

“Secondly, it is common knowledge that Mr. Taylor is not the only accused person standing trial in the past few months. And that these various accused persons have been transported in similar manner from the same detention center together, perhaps in convoy in the same way. Of course I — we — would expect Mr. Taylor to respect the conditions of the detention center and the transportation regimes,” the presiding judge added.

As the judges ordered that the trial would continue in Mr. Taylor’s absence, the ninth defense witness, Liberian national and former Brigade Commander for Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group, Martin Flomo George, concluded his testimony. He reiterated that Mr. Taylor did not provide support for RUF rebels in Sierra Leone as alleged by prosecutors.

Before court adjourned today, Mr. Taylor’s tenth defense witness, a Liberian national and former member of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) during Mr. Taylor’s presidency, Karnah Mineh, took the witness’s stand.

Mr. Mineh’s direct-examination will continue tomorrow

## **CAMEROON**

### **UNESCO Head Calls for Investigation into Death of Detained Journalist**

The head of the United Nations agency tasked with upholding press freedom today called for a full investigation into the "tragic" death in jail of a newspaper editor in Cameroon.

Detained in Kondengui jail in the capital, Yaoundé, for nearly two months, Ngota Ngota Germain, editor of the weekly Cameroon Express, suffered from asthma and high blood pressure, according to Reporters Without Borders, a non-governmental organization.

According to media reports, the West African nation's Government said last week that it will conduct an inquiry into the death of the editor, who was charged with fraud.

Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), expressed her grave concern over his death.

"The detention and death of journalists represents a loss for any society; the loss of a pair of eyes and of a voice that can inform the public about issues that concern us all," she said. "I trust that the authorities will do all they can to shed light on this tragic death and on the conditions of Ngota Ngota Germain's detention."

In a related development, Ms. Bokova has also spoken out against the murder of Jorge Alberto Orellana, a TV producer and presenter who was shot dead in the northern Honduran city of San Pedro Sula on 20 April.

His murder brings the total number of Honduran journalists killed in the Central American nation to seven in the past six weeks.

"I am alarmed by the high toll the media of Honduras have been paying in recent weeks and trust that the authorities will spare no effort in investigating each and every one of these cases," the UNESCO chief said. "This is essential to enable the media to play their role, which is indispensable for democracy and rule of law."

## GEO-STRATEGIC ISSUES

### **GHANA**

#### **Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire begin negotiations on Maritime Boundary Demarcation**

Tuesday began a two-day meeting on demarcation of the maritime border boundary between them to draw up a road map on the negotiating process.

The meeting attended by members of the Boundary Commission from both countries would deal with the delimitation of maritime spaces.

Addressing the opening session, Alhaji Collins Dauda, Minister of Lands and Natural

Resources said it was important to determine the maritime boundaries to prevent disputes with neighbouring countries over natural resources and facilitate the exploration, exploitation and conservation of trans-boundary resources. He said it was a requirement for Ghana and her coastal neighbours to

negotiate their maritime boundaries in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Maritime boundaries, Alhaji Dauda said established the limits within

which neighbouring countries might operate, exercise their jurisdiction and have the right of ownership.

"Boundaries create certainty and this certainty is vital to their national interests," Alhaji Dauda said.

He said Ghana and her neighbours had agreed that issues on adjacent or opposite boundaries should continue to be discussed in a spirit of cooperation to arrive at definite maritime boundaries delimitation after their respective submissions. Alhaji Dauda expressed the hope that both countries would endeavour to arrive at a maritime boundary based on the provisions of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Mr Desire Tagro, Ivorian Minister of the Interior, said the negotiations were not about the oil fields and warned the media to stop stirring unnecessary tension between the two countries. He said while demarcation of the maritime borders would naturally involve natural resources, the call for delimitation is not about the oilfields.

"Let me state here that although the demarcation concerns natural resources, the delimitation are not about the oil fields," he said. Mr Tagro expressed the hope that the two countries would work in the

same spirit that they demonstrated in resolving the land boundaries issue.

## **COTE D'IVOIRE**

### **Cote d'Ivoire Seeks Closer Ties with Nigeria**

Abuja — SPECIAL Envoy of President Laurent Gbagbo of Cote d'Ivoire, Bahi Seri, has called for closer ties between his country and Nigeria.

He made the call during a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Odein Ajumogobia, in Abuja on Friday.

Seri expressed the desire of President Gbagbo not only to strengthen and deepen bilateral cooperation with Nigeria, but also to seek ways for both countries to partner in forging closer collaboration and cooperation among member states of the ECOWAS.

Seri is visiting because Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria each will be celebrating its 50th Independence anniversary in August and October, respectively.

It is expected that both Presidents would extend formal invitations to each other to their respective national anniversary celebrations.

Ajumogobia, in his response, stated that Nigeria valued its friendship with Cote d'Ivoire and stands ready to partner with it in forging closer cooperation within member states of ECOWAS, especially in the consolidation of democracy and good governance as well as other aspects of the ECOWAS protocol.

The minister stressed that the presence of more than two million Nigerians in Cote d'Ivoire was indicative of the strong ties between the two countries.

He commended the government of Cote d'Ivoire for the cordial treatment being given to Nigerian citizens and urged that this warm and friendly treatment be sustained to deepen and strengthen bilateral ties between the two nations