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Rt. Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin,  
Speaker of Parliament of Ghana



Executive Director of the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica), Sammy Obeng (L), outlining the three key recommendations to Parliament of Ghana

# PMOs in Ghana Present Findings of OPI Report to Ghana's Parliament

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● **And Make Three Key Recommendations**



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## Environment, Lands and Forestry

# AFRICA'S VAST GAS RESERVES AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONVERSATION AT COP27

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The Conversation

The question of whether Africa should be allowed to exploit its gas reserves, estimated at more than 17.56 trillion cubic meters (620 trillion cubic feet) in 2021, has been much discussed at the latest UN climate change summit, COP27, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Former US vice president Al Gore used his speech at the opening session to urge an end to all fossil fuel investment globally, including in Africa. But Macky Sall, the president of Senegal and chairperson of the African Union, argued at the same event that Africa needs space in Earth's dwindling carbon budget to use its resources for development.

The gas debate centres on

two arguments, either for gas or against it. This is too narrow and fails to consider what development might look like for Africa and other regions that are struggling to grow their economies and address widespread poverty while also taking ambitious climate action. It also neglects the question of what kind of international cooperation might be necessary to make climate-compatible devel-

A study published in 2021 found that a lack of finance, or the high cost of accessing it, imposes a huge gap between the theoretical and actual cost of generating renewable energy in Africa. And, if African countries are able to diversify their energy portfolio with gas it will, it is argued, increase energy resilience and strengthen the right of African countries to make their own decisions on

can build self-reliant, prosperous economies.

Neither gas nor renewable energy on their own can do much to help Africa when so many countries depend on foreign technology and investment to grow their economies. The crucial question for Africa at COP27 should be: what is the right package of assistance needed to expand modern and affordable energy, develop a competitive advantage in manufacturing renewable technologies and better manage resources in a climate-constrained world?

Many African countries such as Ghana and the Gambia already have ambitious climate targets, but these are conditional on the receipt of international support which is not forthcoming. Despite being an oil-dependent economy, Nigeria has a pledge to be carbon neutral by 2060. The cost of implementing this strategy is valued at US\$1.9 trillion (£1.59 trillion). In

spite of high-level diplomacy by the vice president, Yemi Osinbajo, Nigeria has only managed to receive a promise of a one-off payment of US\$3 billion from the World Bank – but when this is supposed to be delivered has not been confirmed.

The US thinktank Climate Policy Initiative has suggested that Africa needs an inflow of about US\$277 billion annually to implement the plans contained in each country's emissions reduction pledge. But the continent currently only receives something in the region of about US\$30 billion a year.

Africa could be world-leading in renewable energy generation if provided with the right technology and financial assistance. The continent has big advantages when it comes to renewable energy generation – ranging from solar, hydroelectricity, wind and geothermal energy. The International Energy Agency says Africa has 1% of the world's total installed solar power capacity, despite the fact that, it has 60% of the world's most promising areas to generate solar energy.

Calls to cease all gas exploration in Africa that fail to account for where historical responsibility for climate change lies and the need to close the current finance gap are the most audacious kind of climate imperialism. COP27 must unlock trillions of dollars in large-scale renewable energy investments and generate new economic opportunities for Africa – or it will have failed.



opment possible.

Those who argue against expanding fossil gas extraction say that exploiting Africa's reserves is incompatible with keeping average global temperature rise below 1.5°C, the "safe" limit agreed in Paris in 2015. Renewable energy is now the cheapest way to connect millions of people to power networks in countries where energy poverty is rife, they say.

It has also been suggested that widespread poverty in oil-rich countries such as Nigeria demonstrates how decades of oil and gas exploration have only benefited multinational corporations such as Shell and left few gains for most Africans. Investing in oil and gas now, it's argued, will leave African countries holding stranded assets as Europe and North America pivot to wind, solar and other renewables.

Those in favour of exploiting Africa's gas argue that industrialisation – for example, the building of modern transportation systems, hospitals and schools which developed countries enjoy – has relied on burning fossil fuels. Industrialised countries still consume a lot of gas. Germany, for instance, uses the fossil fuel to generate up to 30% of its power.

Natural gas, it is held, could provide enough energy for industrial processes such as steel, cement, paper and pulp manufacturing which renewables such as solar and wind have yet to provide.

energy generation, distribution and consumption in a way that they deem appropriate.

Proponents of gas point out that, historically, Africa has contributed the least to climate change, accounting for less than 4% of the total stock of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. If the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa tripled its electricity consumption from gas it would only add 1% to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In comparison, the US has released more than 509 gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> since 1850 and is responsible for 25% of the global total.

On this basis, it is argued that developed countries are enacting a renewed form of colonialism – what some might call climate colonialism. This is because countries that developed using fossil fuels and continue to appropriate a disproportionate amount of the remaining carbon space in the atmosphere are seeking to stop Africans from using their abundant reserves of gas to address energy poverty challenges and fast track their development. Striking a balance

The narrow view of either "no to gas" or "yes to gas" in Africa is largely unhelpful in framing the continent's climate, energy and development challenges. What Africa urgently needs is a credible plan for oil-dependent economies to avoid the need to transition to gas in the long run. That must include technical and financial support to scale up renewables in all countries, so they



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# Transparency and Parliamentary Openness

## Speaker Bagbin Receives Findings of OPI Report which Adjudged Parliament of Ghana Most Open in West Africa



Rt. Hon. Speaker of Ghana's Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin

### By Parliament of Ghana

**R**t. Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin has called on Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to actively participate in the legislative processes of the country, as part of efforts to improve parliamentary democracy. He made this statement when the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) and the Ghana Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations Network (GPMON)

presented the results of the maiden Africa Open Parliament Index to Parliament in Accra on Thursday.

The report showed Ghana leading in a survey conducted in parliamentary openness in the West African sub-region.

The Africa Open Parliament Index (OPI), is a tool that seeks to periodically measure the level of openness of legislative assemblies on the continent. The OPI uses the three criteria of Open Parliament: Transparency, Civic Participation and Public Accountability, to assess Parliaments

across Africa.

The Executive Director of PNAfrica Mr. Sammy Obeng, who made the presentation to Parliament, said the purpose of the OPI is to strengthen Parliaments through CSO-Parliament collaborations. "It makes recommendations, which when pursued diligently over time, can show real progress and improvements in the level of openness in the assessed Parliaments", he said.

Mr. Obeng said the OPI is developed with three specific objectives which are: to strengthen parliamentary institutions towards the advancement of parliamentary openness across national, sub-national and regional parliaments; to identify, compare and exchange knowledge and best practices among parliaments, and among CSOs that work with parliaments; and to foster collaboration between civil society and parliaments towards achieving the principles of open parliament, providing a platform for amplifying open parliament initiatives.

He said, the combined indicators used for the Index are from global best practices on openness, and minimum standards in parliamentary transparency, civic participation and public accountability, to objectively and independently rank the parliaments of the selected countries in a way that identifies the success stories and the Open Parliament gaps.

The Africa OPI is a joint effort of the



**The Africa Open Parliament Index (OPI), is a tool that seeks to periodically measure the level of openness of legislative assemblies on the continent.**

Africa Parliamentary Monitoring Organisations (APMON) Working Group, which is made up of renowned parliamentary monitoring organizations in Africa namely, Mzalendo Trust (Kenya), Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), Parliamentary Monitoring Group (South Africa), Africa Parliamentary Press Network (APPN), the Pan African Parliament Civil Society Forum which is coordinated by the Center for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria, and Parliamentary Network Africa.

## PAP DELEGATION TO COP27 MAKE ADDRESS ON PARTICIPATION AND EXPECTATIONS

### PAP Comms

**T**he outcomes of participation and expectations of the Pan-African Parliament delegation to the UN Climate Summit in Sham-el-Sheik (COP27), has been expressed at a press conference by H. E Hon. Chief Fortune Charumbira.

The key objective of the participation of the Pan-African Parliament in COP27 was to carry the hopes, aspirations and concerns of the African people to this gathering.

Throughout the gathering, the Pan-African Parliament sought to ensure that the continent's interests as well as the expectations of Africans, especially women and the youth, are better represented in climate negotiations.

Key quotes from the leader of the Pan-African Parliament on behalf of the delegation:

"We express disappointment at the lack of implementation of commitments made during Annual Conferences of the Parties to the U.N Framework Convention on Climate Change (COPs), as Africans bear the brunt of a worsening climate crisis.

"It is time to put parliamentary action at the centre of climate change engagements to deliver on the promises of the Paris Agreement signed in 2015."

"We have resolved to take over the fight against climate change. In this regard, the Continental Parliament is convening national and regional Parliaments, civil society, governments, partners and experts to a global platform to answer why the implementation has failed. The gathering is slated to take place in two phases. The

Pan-African Parliament will hold consultations in March and May 2023 aimed at identifying bottlenecks to implementation. This will also serve to outline a roadmap and set the agenda for COP28 in the Emirates Arab Republic (UAE)."

"We recognise the efforts of the African Union, through the Committee of African Heads of State

and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), for the political leadership in ensuring that Africa speaks with one voice during COPs processes by establishing adequate structures to convey the African common position."

"It is also important to acknowledge all the efforts deployed by civil society organizations, in

particular the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, towards advocating for a fair and transparent deal for Africa during COPs processes."

"Finally, we express gratitude to the Government and people of Egypt for the courtesy accorded to the Pan-African Parliament delegation, and for hosting a successful African COP."



## Civil Society Relations

# PAP and Civil Society Join Forces to Call for Climate Justice at COP27

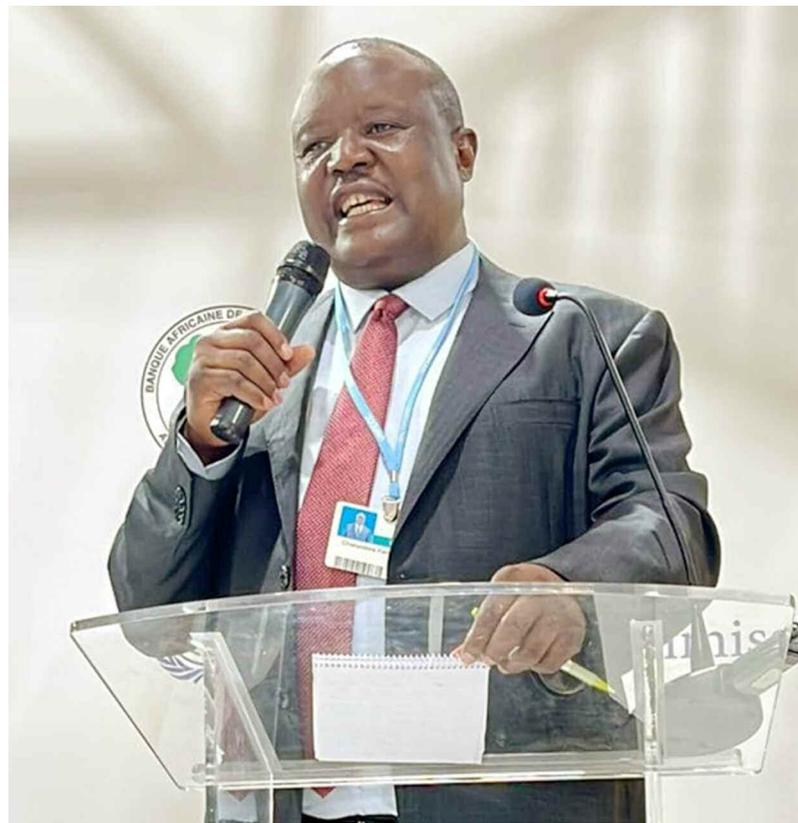
### PAP Comms

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) has reiterated its commitment to work with civil society organizations to promote the continent's climate change agenda and call for climate Justice for the citizens of Africa.

This was the message delivered by H.E Hon. Chief Fortune Charumbira, President of the

PAP, during the Civil Society Event organized under the auspices of the Africa Pavilion at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The principal aim of the gathering was to emphasize the need for COP27 to be an African-people centered process.

The President of the PAP reminded participants that the Continental Parliament is intended as a platform for people from all African states to be involved in discussions and decision making on the problems and challenges facing the continent. Ac-



President of the PAP, His Excellency Chief Fortune Charumbira

drawn from Grassroots, Community-based organizations, Faith-based Organizations, Non-Governmental organizations, Trusts, Foundations, Indigenous Communities, Farmers and Pastoralist Groups.

The PAP has been working with PACJA to integrate climate change into the legislative processes of African countries,

the Nationally Determined Contributions of the Paris Agreement (NDCs).

The Civil Society Event held at COP27 also afforded an opportunity for an engagement between the PAP leadership and PACJA to explore an international conference on the margins of the March Sitzings of the Permanent Committees of the PAP. The con-

cording to the Head of the legislative Organ of the African Union, the issue of climate change has become an emergency and requires a strong coalition between African Parliamentarians and civil society to ensure that the plight of Africans in this global crisis is heard.

“Let’s work together and unite on this issue of climate change, whose devastating and catastrophic effects are now common cause to every one of you. I wish to reiterate the firm commitment of the Pan-African Parliament to working hand in hand with civil society organizations and all relevant partners towards achieving fair and just climate resilience for Africa,” said H.E Hon. Charumbira.

The African civil society at COP27 is led by the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), a consortium of more than 1000 organizations from 48 African countries that brings together a diverse membership



as it remains the missing link in policy formulation and implementation. A legal framework that transforms policies into legal instruments to facilitate action at national and sub-national levels is regarded as an essential component to the implementation of

ference, which will draw all key stakeholders including parliamentary institutions, civil society and government representatives, will review the implementation of commitments made at COP27 while setting the agenda for COP28.



**“Let’s work together and unite on this issue of climate change, whose devastating and catastrophic effects are now common cause to every one of you. I wish to reiterate the firm commitment of the Pan-African Parliament to working hand in hand with civil society organizations and all relevant partners towards achieving fair and just climate resilience for Africa,” said H.E Hon. Charumbira.**

## Trade and Industry

# Industrialization from the Ground up: Transforming Rural Spaces Through Agro-Industry

By Dr Angela Lusigi, UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana on Africa Industrialization Day

**W**e have three years left in Africa's Third Industrial decade (2016-2025) that reaffirms the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrialization. Evidence shows that the world's wealthiest countries are also among the most industrialized. Yet, Africa remains the world's least industrialized region, with only one country

useful to reflect on the challenges and opportunities to accelerate progress. Africa is home to 60 percent of the world's arable land and many countries within the continent boast suitable agro-climatic conditions. This means that Africa has the potential to meet not only its own food needs, but also those of the rest of the world. However, despite huge agro-industry and agribusiness potential in Africa, agricultural productivity is low and inefficient. Coupled with huge post-harvest losses whose levels are higher than the global average and growing demand mainly met by imports, it's no wonder that food security remains a challenge on the continent.

By advancing actions to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 9, African countries can adopt sustainable industrialization, innovation and infrastructure to generate employment and income, promote new technologies, facilitate international trade and enable efficient use of resources. Specifically, agro-based industrialization can support the continent's poverty reduction efforts by helping African countries grow jobs along the food value chain, raise incomes and close rural-urban inequality gaps, ensuring that 'no one is left behind' by 2030. Doing so calls for embracing advances in digitalization, skills training, and infrastructure development to leapfrog the continent's industrialization agenda.

**Digitalization** – enable access to cutting edge and appropriate technology through partnership and South-to-South collaboration. By using digital technologies in manufacturing, African countries can create more productive jobs, boost manufacturing and leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with its approximately 1.2 billion consumers. An excellent

on the entire continent, South Africa, currently categorized as industrialized. The continent has low shares in global trade and industrial output with the bulk of its exports made up of raw products and imports comprising of large amounts of higher-value finished goods.

On Africa Industrialization Day as the African Union meets in Niamey to deliberate on Industrialization and Economic Diversification, it is



Angela Lusigi, UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana on Africa Industrialization Day

example is the One District One Factory model in Ghana that seeks to promote value-addition industrial activities in the country.

**Skills for the future** – modern farming and processing needs a skill (and mindset) revolution. Agro-ecological technologies in particular, are necessary for ensuring the agricultural growth remains eco-conscious and climate resilient. Increasing training and skill upgrading in organic farming and agro-forestry for smallholders, especially women and young people, on sustainable production and resource management is key. To this end, UNDP in Ghana has supported various projects across the country that promote organic farming, agroforestry and processing. For instance, through the ESP Project, more than 9,600 cocoa farmers have been incentivized to adopt sound farming practices that reduce climate change and improve environmental quality. Further, 3,000 women in the shea value chain have been provided with machinery and training to help them automate the hitherto labor-intensive processes.

**Infrastructure development** – invest in logistics to connect locations within countries and across Africa. At 15 percent, the level of intra-regional trade in agricultural products is lower in Africa than in other regions of the world. Bringing AfCFTA

to life means connecting the unconnected and aggregating to lower unit costs. It also means reducing post-harvest losses and getting the right quality of products to the market by creating adequate post-harvest infrastructure and adopting suitable post-harvest technologies.

## Conclusion

Time is running out. Today, more than ever, it is imperative that African countries reduce their dependence on export of raw commodities and import of finished goods. As noted by Brookings Institute, the successful implementation of AfCFTA could result in a doubling in size of Africa's manufacturing sector, an increase of annual output to \$1 trillion by 2025 and the creation of over 14 million jobs. These opportunities are already unfolding particularly in areas identified by UNDP's Futures Report 2021 such as Automotives; Leather and Leather Products, Cocoa; Soya; Textiles and Apparel; Pharmaceuticals; Vaccine Manufacturing; Lithium – Ion Batteries; Mobile Financial Services; and Cultural and Creative Industries. It is important to continue to support industrialization, with strong linkages to domestic economies, to help African countries achieve high growth rates, diversify their economies, reduce food insecurity and reduce their exposure to external shocks.



**Africa is home to 60 percent of the world's arable land and many countries within the continent boast suitable agro-climatic conditions. This means that Africa has the potential to meet not only its own food needs, but also those of the rest of the world.**

## General News

# Sierra Leone Parliament Approves Five Presidential Nominees

By Parliament of Sierra Leone

The Fifth Report of the Committee on Appointments and Public Service, chaired by the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma has on Friday 18/11/2022 approved five Presidential Nominees for the development of Sierra Leone.

The following Presidential Nominees were approved by Parliament:

1. Mr. Sheikh Siddy Sowa- Commissioner General, National Land Commission

2. Dr. Philip Maada Pessima Mornya, Chairman, Board of Directors-National Land Commission

3. Mr. Lunyaga Ngagba Kaiwa-Chairman Board of Directors-Audit Service Board

4. Mr. Dehunge Shiaka- Executive Director, National Task Force on Human Trafficking Secretariat and

5. Mr. Prince Fomba Goba- Chairman Anti-Corruption Commission Advisory Board.

Reporting the activity of the Committee to the Plenary, Leader of Government Business told the House that, the nominees went through vetting, interview and other related set criteria.

Seconding the nomination, the Deputy Leader of the Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie vehemently urged the nominees to work diligently, in light of delivering positive national service.

He admonished the nominees to respond swiftly to matters that are of State importance, adding that they are the main players that would determine the government scorecards for the forthcoming election.

Speaking about the nominees, the MP used the opportunity to call on compatriots to support President Bio agenda for development.

The Deputy Leader commended some of the nominees for outstanding characters, and also advised them to replicate same in designated offices. He encouraged the nominees to focus on team work and diligent national service to develop Sierra Leone.

Hon. PC. Matilda Y.Minah described the day as remarkable and zoomed out one of the nominees who happened to be an illustrious son of Pujehun district, Mr. Sowa. She expressed hope that Mr. Sowa would do well and admonished him to tender national service. She used the opportunity to call on Pujehum District Descendants to unite. She stood on the same platform to inform the House that as a democrat, she is going to step down for another Paramount chief in the upcoming election.

Independent Member of Parliament from Kailahun, Hon. Quintin Salia Konneh informed colleague MPs that some Creole people were celebrating one of the nominees, Mr.Sowa. He outlined all the positive aspects of most of the nominees and

advised them to deliver.

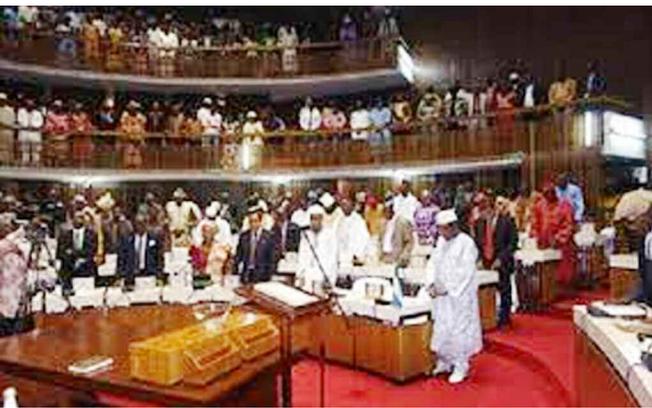
Hon. Joseph William-Lamin recalled the diligent service of Mr. Sowa and advised all the nominees to promote interpersonal skills. He expressed hope for the protection of land data and encouraged the nominees to swiftly respond to all State matters. Hon. Emelia Lolloh Tongi thanked President Bio for appointing such nominees. The MP recalled based on experience and used the opportunity to ask the nominees designated to land institution to educate Paramount Chiefs on their related positions. He also advised the nominee for ACC to perform.

Rounding up the debate, Acting Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Hassan Sesay informed the House about the good character and expertise of Mr. Sowa, describing as a man with a passion for land issues. "I have known him and family", he stated and went on to say he has no reason to doubt his capacity in that area.

"I believe that he would deliver" he revealed.

The Acting Opposition Leader spoke well of the other nominees and urged them to work in team spirit and with the intention of serving national duty. He expressed hope that, they would deliver, in light of sanity.

Concluding, Leader of Government Business thanked all those who made various contributions and concluded as saying the nominees are all qualified.



## UNDP & AfCFTA

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement is a development instrument that provides an opportunity for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to export to other African countries, thus boosting intra-African trade. Yet, MSMEs lack relevant information on product entry requirements, and on processes and procedures to access the single African market.

To bridge the gap, the Ghana National AfCFTA Coordinating Office (NCO) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is training selected MSMEs on how to trade under the AfCFTA. The training falls within UNDP's integrated support for women and youth-led MSMEs in Ghana to support Government COVID-19 recovery efforts.

The UNDP Integrated MSMEs Support programme includes business development services including access to finance, capacity for good corporate governance and awareness creation to prevent radicalization, as well as energy and resource efficiency support. This AfCFTA training, which falls within the business development services for the MSMEs, also forms

## Positioning MSMEs to Trade Under AfCFTA

part of the NCO's Market Expansion Project aimed at equipping businesses to harness the full benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Speaking at the AfCFTA sensitization workshop in Kumasi, Head of Inclusive Growth & Accountable Governance at UNDP, Edward Ampratwum, underscored the importance of the business development services as critical for MSMEs.

"An integrated approach to business ecosystem support to enable MSMEs take full advantage of the available opportunities of the AfCFTA is critical. Our business development services seek to provide platforms that support national priorities to unlock the enormous transformative potential of MSMEs to power Africa's long-term prosperity," noted Dr Ampratwum.

Head of the National AfCFTA Coordination Office, Dr. Fareed Arthur encouraged MSMEs to focus on improving their internal mechanisms to make the most of the agreement.

"Ghana's dream to become a manufacturing hub of Africa can only be achieved with your active participation. Together, let us contribute to Ghana's National Export

Development Strategy which is to help transform Ghana's economy from raw commodity export to a manufacturing industrial export-driven economy," Dr. Fareed stated.

The AfCFTA sensitization workshop for Women and Youth-led MSMEs is training about 600 participants from six selected districts including Ketu South Municipal Assembly, Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly, Jomoro Municipal Assembly, Sagnarigu District Assembly, Kassena-Nankana West District Assembly and the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. Representatives

of the Business Advisory Centers (BACs) and Business Resource Centers (BRCs) of the six district assemblies were also trained to serve as focal persons to inform and sensitize MSMEs on AfCFTA opportunities and processes.

The participants commended UNDP and NCO for initiating this training and described the knowledge acquired as one that will help grab the opportunities of the single African market.

"Initially, I didn't know how important it was for me to obtain the necessary certification for my prod-

ucts and business. I have a better understanding of the measures and right channels to go through to have my business and products registered in a less cumbersome process as this is a prerequisite for trading under the AfCFTA," noted Elizabeth Agyapong, Founder of Letivia Services, producers of organic skincare products in the Ashanti Region.

With MSMEs accounting for a substantial amount of economic activity in the country, the AfCFTA provides an opportunity for them to expand their economic footprints and contribute to the general growth of Ghana's economy.

"I am into the production of herbal medicines. I have been practicing for some years now, but I never knew it was possible to export my products out of Ghana but thanks to this training, I am aware of the steps I need to take to re-brand my business to take full advantage of the AfCFTA," noted David Ahiale Rutherford, CEO of Saint David Alternative Natural Clinic at Sefwi Wiawso.

The training was supported by the Ghana Revenue Authority, Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana Standard Authority, Ghana Enterprise Agency, and Ghana Export Promotion Authority.



Dr. Fareed, National AfCFTA Coordinator

General News

# Renowned Niger Former Footballer Appointed PAP Sports Ambassador

## As the African Union legislative arm prioritize sporting activities across the continent



The former Niger national football team player Dennis Issoufou Idrissa was officially sworn in as a sports ambassador in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP). The new Ambassador to occupy the inaugural role took up his role on 10 November, the same day legislative newcomers were sworn in as Members of Parliament.

The 45-year-old Dennis retired from football in 2009, and according to an interview with Forbes Africa, his passion for the sport has remained evident in his work as a player agent, recruiter, a club manager of Niger's premier league giant Al Sahel Sporting Club.

He launched 54 Foot magazine in 2021, a sporwhich aims to positively promote the image of African football and the influence of CAF.

Mr. Idrissa serves as the advisor to the President of the Council of Southern Africa Football Associations

(COSAFA) Artur de Almeida e Silva and works closely with the President of the Confederation of African Football (CAF), South African tycoon Patrice Motsepe. He has a track record of assisting sports leaders in their career development, within the institutions of FIFA and CAF.

Appointed by the Bureau of the Pan African Parliament led by Chief Fortune Charumbira of Zimbabwe, Idrissa joins the list of the influential Africans working with the continental legislative body. Other ambassadors include South African mining magnet Brigdette Motsepe, sister to the First Lady of South Africa Tshepo Motsepe.

“We firmly believe that sport plays a pivotal unifying role not only within the Member States but also across the continent. We thus throw down the gauntlet to you as our Ambassador to assist the Pan African Parliament to advance continental solidarity, unity, and integration through sport,” read the appointment letter.



Dennis Issoufou Idrissa at the CAF Region 5 school football championship held in Malawi. Image from Twitter/@DennisIdrissa

South African mining magnet Brigdette Motsepe, Ambassador of the African Union to Pan-African Parliament. Image courtesy of PAP Media

# Transparency and Parliamentary Openness

## PMOs in Ghana Present Findings of OPI Report to Ghana's Parliament and make Three Key Recommendations



Executive Director of the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica), Sammy Obeng (R), making the three key recommendations to Parliament of Ghana



Rt. Hon. Speaker of Ghana's Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin

By Clement Akoloh



**...the recommendations are to encourage the Ghanaian Parliament to continue to take the initiatives which will help it to maintain the top position in 2024, when the next assessment for the Index will be due.**

The Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMO) Network in Ghana, led by the Executive Director of the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica), Sammy Obeng, has made three key recommendations to the Parliament of Ghana to help it improve on areas it fell short of in the assessment for the maiden Africa Open Parliament Index (OPI).

The group urged the Parliament to:

1. Ensure that Members of Parliament are brought up to speed on the Open Parliament and Open Government Agenda by intensifying education on the subject.

2. Take a lead role in the implementation of the Open Parliament Action Plan developed by Ghana as Part of the Open Government model.

3. Reinforce the Parliament and CSO partnership platform to co-create Open Parliament initiatives.

The recommendations followed the presentation of a report of the findings of the maiden Africa OPI to the Rt. Hon. Speaker Alban Sumana Bagbin, the Leadership of Parliament and key staff of the Parliamentary Service on Thursday, November 17, 2022 at the Speaker's conference hall in the Parliament House.

Though the Parliament of Ghana topped the chart in the maiden edition of the index as the most open Parliament in the West African sub-region, it was revealed that there were some shortcomings in the assessed areas which suggested that there was more room for improvement.

According to Sammy Obeng, the recommendations are to encourage the Ghanaian Parliament to continue to take the initiatives which will help it to maintain the top position in 2024, when the next assessment for the Index will be due.

"The next index will be published in 2024, within which period you will still be Speaker of Ghana's Parliament. It would be problematic, if the results of the next index are not as positive as this. Because the idea behind every two years is to be able to measure whether there has been progress. So, if progress is not recorded, that would be a very big blow. And Mr. Speaker, I

can tell you that your other peer parliaments have started some hard work to unseat the Ghana's Parliament," Mr. Obeng said.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker Bagbin who commended the Network for initiating the index, indicated that the high assessment which saw the Parliament of Ghana occupying the top position, is just a tip of the iceberg.

According to him, "a lot is being done and I think that by the time you come back in 2024 you would have seen that we would be above the 75% we are talking about. I can be sure that we will above that.

"We need to educate more of our members but the attrition rate is also high. I am happy that Civil Society is partnering us because you will have to come and you will get to know what happens in Parliament and this process you are putting in place will educate people more before they even become elected as Members of Parliament.

The Speaker admitted that, the antidote to solving the bottlenecks facing Parliament is to run an open Parliament and in furtherance of that idea, he indicated that the Parliament is already in the process of establishing a radio and a TV station and plans were far advanced for that among other initiatives.



# Gender, Children and Social Welfare

## African Women Entrepreneurs Celebrated on Global Women's Entrepreneurship Day by Lionesses of Africa

By African Development Bank Group (AfDB)

**W**omen entrepreneurs in Africa are expressing widespread optimism and continuing resilience despite the prevailing economic climate, according to the 2022 Lionesses Business Confidence Report and Index launched on Global Women's Entrepreneurship Day.

The report, prepared by Lionesses of Africa Public Benefit Corporation and New York University finds that ninety three percent of women entrepreneurs anticipate their companies will be better off a year from now, with only 2% anticipating that their companies will be worse off. The report is funded by the African Development Bank Group, through the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA) Initiative.

The second edition of the 2022 Lionesses Business Confidence Report and Index, comes at a critical moment, benchmarking last year's data and evaluating African women-owned business performance, access to finance, and digital transformation. Furthermore, it allows stakeholders to learn how 100 of Africa's top women business leaders surveyed, assess the



state of their businesses and their opportunities for the upcoming year.

"The Bank, through the AFAWA Initiative, is pleased to collaborate with Lionesses of Africa on the latest Lionesses Business Confidence Report and Index. We hope women entrepreneurs, financial institutions, and governments use the rich data provided to make strong business and policy decisions to unlock the potential of women-owned businesses across the continent," Malado Kaba, African Development Bank Group Director of the Gender, Women and Civil Society department noted.

The report also assesses women entrepreneurs' external financing plans and their confidence levels in the willingness of financial institutions to fund their ventures, as 66% of women

anticipate looking for external funding in the future (up from 61% in 2021). More than 50% of women anticipate that financial institutions will be willing to provide loans or credit to their business in the next six months, with women in East Africa reporting the greatest confidence.

"Even before the pandemic, women-led businesses faced significant challenges accessing financing, often lacking the financial track record and collateral required to secure business loans, causing financial institutions to perceive them as risky," said Esther Dassanou, AFAWA coordinator at the African Development Bank Group.

"The Bank is committed to accelerating women entrepreneurs' ability to access finance by unlocking up to \$5 billion

preneurs," she added.

Lionesses of Africa Founder and CEO, Melanie Hawken confirmed that access to finance remains a dominant concern. Lionesses financed their companies' activities through 2021 and into 2022 largely by tapping internal sources of financing, mostly retained earnings and personal capital. There was a sizable drop off in access to Covid-19 business support programs and other government grants compared with the previous year. Another positive trend is the strong signs of re-



**"The Bank is committed to accelerating women entrepreneurs' ability to access finance by unlocking up to \$5 billion by 2026. The Bank is also committed to working with African governments to ensure that inclusive policies are in place to benefit women entrepreneurs,"**

by 2026. The Bank is also committed to working with African governments to ensure that inclusive policies are in place to benefit women entre-

covery from the impacts of the pandemic, with two-thirds having either returned or expecting to return to pre-COVID-19 business levels by the end of 2022.

"Two-thirds of the Lionesses anticipate looking for external financing soon but only half perceive financial institutions willing to provide the loans or credit they will need. However, this represents a larger percentage than in 2021, suggesting modest but growing confidence in securing funds from financial institutions, and that is a trend in the right direction," Hawken said



  
**AMBASSADE DE FRANCE AU GHANA**  
*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

## Elections

# Libya: Some Leaders 'Actively Hindering Progress Towards Elections', Security Council Hears

By UNOG

Libya has been divided between two rival administrations in the aftermath of the overthrow and killing of former President, Muammar Gaddafi, over a decade ago.

Efforts continue to get political leaders in Libya to overcome their differences so that long-awaited presidential and parliamentary elections can finally take place, the Security Council heard on Tuesday.

UN Special Representative Abdoulaye Bathily briefed ambassadors on the ongoing impasse and

fair elections," said the envoy.

Engagement with relevant segments of the general population also will be stepped up as they will be paramount to exiting the crisis.

"The accompanying support, and pressure, from this Council in particular, and the international community at large, speaking with a united voice, under the coordination of the United Nations, is likely to reap positive results," he added.

## Blocking progress

Mr. Bathily has been holding consultations with stakeholders from all regions across the oil-rich nation, to encourage dialogue.

"The popular aspiration for peace, stability and legitimate institutions is clear from my interaction with



holding of elections as soon as possible," he said.

"I urge this Council to send an unequivocal message to obstructionists that their actions will not remain without consequences."

## Improve women's rights

Libyan women also remain concerned about their ability to actively engage in the long-awaited elections, both as voters and candidates, the UN envoy reported.

In the face of rising online violence against women, UNSMIL is supporting women's groups which are leading a unified campaign to counter attacks.

"I call for continued and consistent efforts to improve women's rights and to incorporate such measures in the laws of the land. I am glad to note the active and positive participation of women and young people in my interactions with Libyans

at the grassroots levels," he said.

## Ceasefire still holding

Meanwhile, a ceasefire is still holding, despite continued escalatory rhetoric and the build-up of forces on both sides.

However, little progress has been made in implementing a plan on the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters, and foreign forces from the country.

Turning to economic developments, Mr. Bathily spoke of how lack of accountability, transparency, and equity in the allocation of resources remains a key cause of tensions.

He welcomed the Council's emphasis on the importance of creating a Libyan-led mechanism to ensure oil and gas revenues are managed in a transparent and equitable manner, and with effective oversight, as outlined in a recent resolution.



other obstacles to the vote, which was postponed last December.

Libya has been divided between two rival administrations in the aftermath of the overthrow and killing of former President, Muammar Gaddafi, over a decade ago.

Mr. Bathily last addressed the Council in October, shortly after arriving in the North African country to head the UN Mission there, UNSMIL.

## Dialogue towards elections

He has been holding talks with key leaders, reminding them of their moral and political responsibility to work to bring the nation back to peace and stability.

"In the next weeks and months, UNSMIL will endeavor to facilitate a conversation between the key institutional players in Libya as a step towards overcoming their differences and moving forward towards the organization of free and

Libyans. However, there is an increasing recognition that some institutional players are actively hindering progress towards elections," he said.

"The genuine political will of these actors needs to be tested against reality," he added, noting that nearly a year has passed since the polls were postponed.

December also marks seven years since the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement, a UN-brokered deal on forming a unity government.

## Risk of further turmoil

Mr. Bathily warned against prolonging the interim period as Libya could become even more vulnerable to political, economic and security instability, as well as risk of partition.

"We must therefore join hands in encouraging Libyan leaders to work with resolve towards the



**"In the next weeks and months, UNSMIL will endeavor to facilitate a conversation between the key institutional players in Libya as a step towards overcoming their differences and moving forward towards the organization of free and fair elections," said the envoy**

## Education

# South Africa: Basic Education Portfolio Committee Hears More Oral Submissions on Basic Education Laws Bill



**The Bill proposes to amend the South African Schools Act of 1996, and the Employment of Educators Act of 1998, to align them with developments in the education landscape and to ensure that systems of learning are put in place in a manner that gives effect to the right to basic education, as enshrined in section 29(1) of the Constitution.**

**By The Parliament:  
Republic of South Africa**

**T**he Bill proposes to amend the South African Schools Act of 1996, and the Employment of Educators Act of 1998.

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education has continued to listen to oral submissions on the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill.

The committee has heard from nine organizations and stakeholders wanting to contribute to the drafting of the legislation. Some of the presenters included the Pestalozzi Trust, the Federation of Associations of Governing Bodies of South African Schools (FEDSAS), the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), Section 27, Cause for Justice, AfriForum and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Committee Chairperson Ms Bongive Mbinqo-Gigaba said the second round of oral submissions was very informative, continuing the trend established in round one last week.

“We are grateful for the input and contributions made by all organizations, which I believe will enhance and enrich our deliberations.”

The Bill proposes to amend the South African Schools Act of 1996, and the Employment of Educators Act of 1998, to align them with developments in the education landscape and to ensure that systems of learning are put in place in a manner that gives effect to the right to basic education, as enshrined in section 29(1) of the Constitution.

Amongst other things, the Bill seeks to amend certain definitions, to provide that attendance in Grade R is compulsory and to provide for system improvements in terms of admission of learners to public schools. It also provides for financial and public accountability frameworks for governing bodies and provincial departments. In addition, the Bill gives the Minister additional regulatory powers and enhances the decision-making and oversight powers of heads of departments and members of executive councils.

The Bill further proposes technical and substantive adjustments, clarifies certain existing provisions, inserts provisions not provided for in existing legislation, and strengthens enforcement mechanisms for offences and penalties.

The committee heard from FEDSAS that about 80 per cent of school governing bodies (SGBs) are dysfunctional. FEDSAS also said that functional and successful SGBs should be allowed to continue as they are, without the interference

of the state. FEDSAS also mentioned its concerns regarding the proposed requirement for SGB members to declare their financial interests.

Section 27 said while it welcomes measures related to ensuring accountability and good governance, its notes that obstacles facing SGBs at historically disadvantaged schools can only be addressed through putting in place measures to improve SGBs’ skills capacity and by addressing the power dynamics between school staff and SGBs. This includes providing comprehensive training after every election to all SGB members.

Section 27 also raised the question of corporal punishment and welcomed to move to define corporal punishment. However, the current definition only extends to physical forms of punishment, excluding non-physical forms of punishment. This is a concerning omission as cruel and degrading forms of non-physical punishment have been shown to have severe adverse impacts on learners.

SADTU recommended that clear provisions regulating language policy be inserted in the Bill to facilitate access and uniformity across the system. The teachers’ union felt that provision should be made to unlock stalemates between the heads of department and the SGB relating to schools’ language policy. SADTU recommended that a clause be inserted that will ensure that SGBs do not apply the school’s language policy directly in the admission of entry-phase learners. Regarding the clause about protest action, SADTU

said it must be brought in line with the relevant provisions of the Labour Relations Act (LRA), in particular Section 4 of the LRA which protects union members’ rights to engage in the union’s lawful activities.

The committee heard from AfriForum that despite the promise of 1994 that language and culture would be protected in the new dispensation, very little has been done to do so. It is AfriForum’s opinion that the amendments contained in the Bill, specifically those pertaining to admission and language policies, amount to a calculated attack on Afrikaans education, while offering no relief to the speakers of other indigenous languages.

COSATU is concerned that the Bill does not extend compulsory schooling from Grade 9, where it is currently, to Grade 12. Many learners drop out of school in Grade 9 or when they turn 15, which condemns them to low-paying jobs with few career prospects. It further said that the Bill must recognise education workers’ constitutional and labour rights to picket.

There were mixed reactions regarding the consumption and/or sale of alcohol on school premises outside school hours. Many felt additional provisions setting the conditions for liquor sales are not enough to prevent learners accessing liquor in such events.

Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba said the committee will consider this during its deliberations. The committee will resume next week on Tuesday for more oral submissions.



Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

## Energy and Extractives

# COP27: Exploring the Realities of Africa's Energy Transition and the Risks and Opportunities Ahead

By S-RM - a global risk and intelligence consultancy

Described as the 'African COP', the recently concluded COP27 held in Egypt's Sharm el Sheikh region (6 - 18 November) was set to shine a spotlight on Africa's role in the energy transition. Africa finds itself in a unique position when it comes to the climate crisis. Despite being responsible for only three to seven percent (<http://bit.ly/3V4bhiO>) of global greenhouse gas emissions (estimates vary), Africa is likely to be at the forefront of the extreme weather consequences. Africa's susceptibility to the impacts of climate change will herald significant challenges in the coming years, in both human and economic terms. With agriculture accounting for some 23 percent of total GDP in sub-Saharan Africa, both increasing water scarcity and unpredictable flooding, for instance, will destabilize agricultural markets, and negatively affect economic growth.

At the same time, the continent's energy needs are growing. Sub-Saharan Africa's population is expected to reach 2.2 billion by 2050 (<http://bit.ly/3VgJn2W>) and with only 67 percent of the population (<http://bit.ly/3ENYrjr>) with access to electricity currently – or rather 600 million people without (<http://bit.ly/3hWXvQH>), governments will need to produce more energy more quickly. With this top of mind, the governments of Dem-

ocratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and others under the Kigali Communique (<http://bit.ly/3US0jgI>) and Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) are eager to bring gas under the umbrella of transition fuels, committing to replacing this with renewables in the longer term. African countries sitting on major oil and gas reserves



(<http://bit.ly/3Vcdg4v>), including Nigeria (206.53 tfc), Senegal (120 tfc), Mozambique (100 tcf), Tanzania (57.54 tfc) and others, are seeking to leverage the price boom and lure investors. Yet, with institutions such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) cautioning investors against funding new oil, gas and coal supply projects in the weeks leading up to the conference, and climate activists hopeful that conference stakeholders would take a hard stance on the continent's gas ambitions, the conference was going to offer little in the way of concrete solutions. Furthermore, the developed world's renewed commitments to the USD 100 billion earmarked to help the developing world in its transition and to adapt to the impact of extreme climates did little to reduce growing mistrust that developed countries will pay their fair share, having failed to meet these targets thus far.

But beyond the challenges in securing the financing to support the transition, how feasible is an energy transition in Africa, really?

Despite the urgency to address both the impacts and drivers of climate change on the continent, most African countries are positioned differently to those in the global north to shift to renewable or transition energy production. There are various challenges that relate to energy production, distribution, and access, which will only be exacerbated by the dual impact of a grow-

ing population and increased industrialisation. And crucially, the percentage of the population in sub-Saharan Africa currently with access to electricity is the lowest of any developing region.

### Opportunities green(er)

The continent has several options available to steer away from heav-

ily polluting coal or oil, but much like investments into the traditional energy sector, there are limitations, not least concerns over adequate infrastructure, political will, and the upfront investment required to get the transition right.

**Solar.** In many parts of the continent, sunlight is in ample supply. A recent report (<http://bit.ly/3tJNDfO>) estimates that Africa has 60 percent of the best solar resources globally, yet only a tiny proportion of this capacity is currently being tapped: the entire continent's installed solar capacity is estimated to be half that of the UK (<http://bit.ly/3ENRwqe>). Compared to other renewables, solar is relatively easy to install even in remote locations, and small-scale solutions can provide off-grid power both at the individual household or community levels.

While pay-as-you-go or power purchase agreement models for solar are being introduced across the continent to get around the relatively high upfront costs of installation, solar cannot offer a complete solution. For one, photovoltaic panels rely on sunshine to operate, meaning they have a much smaller capacity factor (<http://bit.ly/3Asz8k7>) than other power generation methods that offer more consistent output. And second, while the technology is constantly developing and getting more efficient, solar requires large

areas for installation, capital investment and remains reliant on increasingly in-demand battery minerals.

**Gas.** Ghana's deputy minister of oil, Mohammed Amin Adam, recently spoke (<http://bit.ly/3AwBA9m>) about the need for gas to be part of Africa's transition from more carbon intensive fuels such as coal, lest it risk falling victim to "the transition curse" of revenue losses. He further warned of a more cautious investment approach to hydrocarbon exploitation. The International Energy Agency's Africa Energy Outlook 2022 (<https://bit.ly/3tJNDfO>) report estimates there are some 5,000 billion cubic meters of discovered but untapped natural gas resources on the continent. The emissions impact of using these reserves would be minimal to the global greenhouse gas total, but there is some debate (<http://bit.ly/3V0RyKA>) as to whether gas presents a more attractive long-term investment than renewables, particularly given the infrastructural challenges inherent in expanding the user base of gas in more rural areas.

**Nuclear.** Currently only one African country, South Africa, produces nuclear power commercially. There is no shortage of uranium on the continent, with Namibia and Niger among the top six global uranium producers (<http://bit.ly/3UUeUYW>). Several African countries, including Algeria, Ghana, Morocco and Nigeria, host operational research reactors, and are planning the commissioning of commercial plants over the coming decade. But while nuclear plants offer a cleaner alternative to hydrocarbon power production, they are expensive, and particularly in politically less stable economies the investment risks for projects are high. Once brought online, nuclear power requires steady maintenance from skilled technicians over long lifespans, which again increases the costs of delivering nuclear power safely. Here, small modular reactors (SMRs) (<http://bit.ly/3AvJOPb>), at about a third of the size of the typical plants currently in use in most places may offer a viable alternative. SMRs are safer to operate and use substantially less water – a particularly attractive feature in arid climates.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the energy sector worldwide are involved in over 50 percent of global existing and planned fossil-fired power generation. Often holding a monopoly over a country's power generation

**Despite the urgency to address both the impacts and drivers of climate change on the continent, most African countries are positioned differently to those in the global north to shift to renewable or transition energy production.**

# Sierra Leone: Parliament Passes the Public Health Bill 2022 and the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy Act 2022



**The bill seeks to repeal and replace the Public Health Act, of 1960, to provide for the promotion, protection, on and improvement of public health and well-being in Sierra Leone...**



**By Parliament of Sierra Leone**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Friday 18/11/2022 debated and passed into law with some amendments the Bill entitled "The Public Health Bill 2022", which seeks to address issues relating to public health and safety in Sierra Leone.

The bill seeks to repeal and replace the Public Health Act, of 1960, to provide for the promotion, protection, on and improvement of public health and well-being in Sierra Leone, to provide for the protection of individuals and communities from public health risks, to provide for the prevention and control of the spread of infectious diseases, to provide for local government and community

participation in protecting public health, to provide for early detection of and prompt response to diseases and public health threats and to provide for other related matters.

Earlier, the said bill had been debated by MPs bringing out its significance towards the development and improvement of the health sector.

The Legislative Committee Chairman, Hon. Sulaiman Marry Conteh presented the Legislative Committee Report to the House on the Bill for consideration. The Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Austin Demby piloted the enactment of the Bill.

The Parliament of Sierra Leone also debated and passed into law with some amendments, the bill entitled, "The National Council for Civic Education and Democracy Act 2022", for development of Sierra Leone.

The bill seeks to provide for the es-

tablishment of the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy for continuous nationwide civic education on the roles and responsibilities of citizens, the duty of patriotism and nationalism, to provide development communication for government and partner programs to the people of Sierra Leone and to provide for other related matters.

Making his submission to the debate, the Chairman for Planning and Economic Development Committee in Parliament, Hon. Musa fofanah said the bill is vital for the development of Civic Education in the country. He said there are lot of disconnect between the main agenda of civic education and that of politics. He went on to welcome the initiative of the government for the introduction of Civic Education. He further added that, supporting Civic Education would enhance the development of the State.

Rounding up the debate, Leader of Opposition Hon. Cherner R. M. Bah said the bill is timely and necessary and went on to note that, Civic Education must take its right footing in society. He said Parliament would ensure that the Minister works with MDAs to actualize the objectives of Civic Education.

Concluding the debate, Leader of Government Business, Hon Mathew Sahr Nyuma said citizens have a role to play in society.

He thanked the Minister and his team for bringing the bill to the Parliament for enactment. He also said that Civic Education is in line with the SLPP manifesto and promised to support the process.

The Minister of Planning and Economic Development Dr. Francis M. Kai-Kai piloted the enactment of the Bill into law.

# COP27: Exploring the Realities of Africa's Energy Transition and the Risks and Opportunities Ahead

and transmission, these entities are critical in leading Africa's transition. Yet, public utility companies including South Africa's Eskom, the DRC's Société Nationale d'Électricité, as well as the Tanzania Electric Supply Company to name a few, have become severely hampered by aging infrastructure, mismanagement, corruption, and debt. And despite government promises of change, private investors in the renewable sector have been hesitant to embed with power SOEs. This caution is warranted, as overestimating the political will and avenues for change could prove foul in a political context where the regulatory landscape is complex, private-public partnerships (PPPs)

are challenging and community expectations for power delivery are high. Local partners play a key part in navigating this space making getting into bed with the wrong stakeholders a key risk, particularly amid weak governance.

These challenges are likely to be only aggravated by the more severe climate consequences for Africa.

In addition to the direct consequences of a warming planet and more unpredictable weather patterns, climate change also acts as a "conflict threat multiplier". Competition over increasingly scarce resources such as water or arable land, both

of which are potentially threatened by climate change, is already contributing to (http://bit.ly/3AxuXnd) a range of conflicts on the continent. The war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, the proliferation of terrorist groups in countries around Lake Chad, and conflict across Sahel have all been linked (http://bit.ly/3TRAtb5) to changes in their respective environments driven by climate change. Studies have shown (http://bit.ly/3TSw3kr) that conflict risk increases by 10 to 20 percent with each 0.5°C of global warming. The consequences of climate change on communities are exacerbated where governance, poor infrastructure and services and

socio-economic challenges already exist. While the effect is not universal, Africa's disproportionate vulnerability to the effects of climate change means there is an acute need for sustainable and unique remedies to its energy needs.

Navigating Africa's energy transition, be it for those directly involved or operators keen to build the resilience of their businesses that plug into the energy picture, will now more than ever require an innate understanding of the interplay between the commercial, the political and the social. But, with the needs great, the opportunities for investing in an inevitable transition are ample.

## General News

# Keeping Information on Status of Development Projects Away from Beneficiaries is Worrying - Kwadaso MP

By Clement Akoloh

The Member of Parliament for the Kwadaso Constituency, Dr. Kingsley Nyarko, has expressed concern about the dearth of information on the status of the Astro Turf which is supposed to have been constructed by the Middle Belt Development Authority for the people of the Kwadaso constituency in the Ashan-

ti region. The family of two hoarded food for the season.

He is behind several clandestine schemes and deliberate machinations to use his position as the Deputy C.E.O. of the Middle Belt Authority to undermine the Member of Parliament and to sabotage developmental projects assigned to the constituency for fear that it would be deemed as projects initiated and completed under the tenure of the current MP.

A Parliamentary question filed by the Member of Parliament for the area to know about the status of the Astro Turf in the Beposo Cluster of Schools in the Kwadaso constituency, hit a snag as the Minister in Charge of Youth and Sports, Mustafa Yusif, could not provide any useful information on the project.

Answering the question on the Floor of Parliament on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, the Youth and Sports Minister confirmed that, "Indeed, the facility is being constructed by the Middle Belt Development Authority.

Even though he admitted that his Ministry has keen interest in the construction of the Astro Turf because it is consistent with their mandate, he could not help but refer the MP to the authorities of the Middle Belt for answers.

Meanwhile, the Member of Parliament had already written letters to the Authority since January of this year and has also followed to their offices without getting access to any useful information about the status of the project which has been claimed to have been awarded for contract in 2019 and rewarded in 2021 for lack of performance.

Dr. Kingsley Nyarko had only wanted to know the status of the project; the contractor; the contract amount; the scope of the project; and the timelines so that he could use his good office as the MP of the constituency to monitor the project and to offer the needed assistance for its successful completion since it will help discover the talents of the youth and boost sporting activities in the constituency.

Rather, the MP's efforts have met serious opposition from the Deputy CEO, Mr. Vincent Frimpong Owusu who is bent on using clandestine moves to concoct stories about the MP to create bad blood between

him and the constituents.

He has recently Mastermind an article published under the title: KINGSLEY NYARKO - THE MP WHO FIGHTS AGAINST DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN HIS OWN CONSTITUENCY, which attacked Dr. Kingsley Nyarko for seeking to leverage on his oversight role as a Member of Parliament to file a question to get information on the project for his constituents.

For its dubious propaganda value and desperation, the said published article erroneously referred to the Astro Turf Project by the Middle Belt Development Authority as an initiative by the Deputy CEO, Vincent Frimpong Manu who is claiming ownership of the project for political expediency.

The article further claimed that the Deputy CEO was the one who created the concept for the project and that he has all the information on the project would provide it to

the Minister for Youth and Sports to be delivered in Parliament for the MP to be ashamed. Yet, the information never got to the Minister for him to inform the good people of Kwadaso about the status of that project.

Aside the Astro Turf being provided by the Middle Belt Authority for the people of Kwadaso, Dr. Kingsley Nyarko has been pursuing some initiatives on his own to provide an Astro turf in the constituency in addition to the many developmental projects he has already delivered for his people. He has written to some companies on this project who have given positive feedback for support.

However, the Member of Parliament will not relent on getting the information on the status of the Middle Belt Development Authority's Astro Turf designated for the people of Kwadaso until it is constructed for the benefit of the teeming youth in the constituency.

**A Parliamentary question filed by the Member of Parliament for the area to know about the status of the Astro Turf in the Beposo Cluster of Schools in the Kwadaso constituency, hit a snag as the Minister in Charge of Youth and Sports, Mustafa Yusif, could not provide any useful information on the project**



Member of Parliament for the Kwadaso Constituency, Dr. Kingsley Nyarko

Though the Member of Parliament has made several attempts to get information on the said project which was captured as part of the deliverables for the year 2021, his efforts has been met with stiff opposition from some elements within the Middle Belt Authority who are scheming to appropriate projects of the Authority as personally initiated projects in order to gain political advantage in the constituency.

One of these persons who is believed to be behind this grand scheme is the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Middle Belt Authority, Mr. Vincent Frimpong Manu, who has been eyeing the Parliamentary seat in the area for some time now. It is an open secret that Mr. Manu has been contesting

Feature

# Vote of Censure Committee: Judicialization of what is Fundamentally a Political, not a Legal, Sanction

By Prof H. Kwasi Prempeh

I am told the committee of Parliament investigating certain allegations against a Minister pursuant to a censure motion says it has no "legal jurisdiction" to investigate conflict of interest claims concerning the Minister who is the subject of the investigation. I hear they say only CHRAJ has such jurisdiction in Ghana. Is that so? So, suppose a citizen petitioned the Appointments Committee of Parliament concerning a nominee for ministerial or other public office, alleging conflict of interests on the part of the nominee, would the Appointments Committee rule itself incompetent to investigate or consider those allegations! Or perhaps, it might stay consideration of the nominee and refer the matter to CHRAJ to investigate and give its ruling before Parliament proceeds with the nomination! By the time these lawyers who dominate our Parliament's business, in weight if not in numbers, are done with us, they will have succeeded in turning our Parliament and parliamentary proceedings into a caricature of a court of law.

As the Fourth Republic has progressed, we have witnessed a growing judicialization of the work of Parliament and its committees. I have actually heard, more than once, different Speakers of Parliament entertain and grant an objection from the floor of the House that a statement by an MP who had the floor was "hearsay" and thus inadmissible during deliberations



in the House. Hearsay rule in Parliament?

The name Parliament comes from the French word "parler", meaning "to talk". Being able to speak one's mind freely in the House is indeed definitional to what it means for one to be a member of Parliament. Because MPs are representatives of their constituents and of We the People, they must be free to speak and vent on our behalf, including conveying our concerns and feelings about all manner of public affairs. To do so effectively, MPs cannot be constrained by courtroom-style rules of evidence or procedural burdens of proof. That is why MPs enjoy a wider scope of free speech privileges when they participate in deliberations of the House than the standard free speech rights ordinary citizens are entitled to. Thus, speech on the floor of Parliament, including in committee, cannot be subject to suit for defamation or on any other ground in a court of law or any other forum outside Parliament. Only Parliament itself, through its standing orders, can regulate speech on the floor of the House as being unparliamentary or in breach of Parliamentary privileges.

Coming to this business of the motion of censure, we have just witnessed the lawyerization or judicialization of what is fundamentally a political, not a legal, sanction. A vote of censure is purely a political matter; it carries no legal consequence or liability, whether civil or criminal. It is used to register the collective disapproval or displeasure of the House about the conduct or performance of a Minister. The fact that the Minister who is the target of a censure motion is entitled to be heard in his defense does not convert the censure proceeding into a judicial matter; it is merely to accord the Minister a fair opportunity to address the legislative body on the matter.

At all times, whether the proceeding takes place before a committee

or the House as a whole, it remains a political one. That is also why there are no specific stated grounds required to trigger, consider or pass a vote of censure. MPs can choose, individually or collectively, to vote to censure a Minister for reasons that appear sufficient to each of them. As their vote is, like all votes cast in Parliament, a political one, the reason for voting one way or the other on a censure motion cannot be questioned.

In fact, it is not clear to me what the committee is supposed to do after these hearings. Is it going to issue a report to say that the Minister is "guilty" or "not guilty"; that the "burden of proof" has been or not been met; that a motion of censure can or cannot proceed on the basis of the "evidence"? What exactly is the committee supposed to report to the House about after undertaking this exercise?

The principal safeguard against reckless use of Parliament's censure power is that it must secure the support of at least two-thirds of all MPs in order to pass. But even if it were to pass that appropriately high supermajority threshold, a vote to censure a Minister is not a verdict of legal guilt or liability on the part of the censured Minister. In fact, the President may choose to keep a censured Minister in his or her position, although, having been censured by no fewer than two-thirds of MPs, a decision by the President to keep a censured Minister at post is likely to be politically untenable. In any case, no legal disability or disqualification attaches to a censured Minister; he or she may be nominated or appointed to ministerial office in the future, if a subsequent Parliament approves of the nomination. This further underscores the fact that a censure vote is a political verdict, not a legal one.

Parliament is a quintessentially political body. It is not a judicial or quasi-judicial body; not even when it sits in committee to investigate a matter.

Yes, a committee of Parliament is clothed with the powers of a High Court, but to have the powers of a court is not the same as being a court or the equivalent of a court. A committee is given the powers of a High Court so as to assist and enable it carry out its investigative mandate effectively--such as by summoning witnesses to appear before it or to produce documents it needs to see. It does not change from a political body to a judicial or quasi-judicial body merely by assuming the powers of a High Court that are necessary for the effective discharge of its legislative or other parliamentary work.

The lawyerization and judicialization of the business of Parliament is bad for our democracy.

Not only does it improperly narrow the purview or scope of Parliament's remit, it also shifts power in Parliament unduly in favour of lawyer-MPs and forces certain important issues of public interest and consequence from being fully and properly aired and considered by members of the House. In fact, successive Speakers of Parliament, all of whom have been lawyers, as if that was a required or necessary qualification for the job, have used spurious legalistic rulings from the Speaker's chair to prevent certain public matters from being aired on the floor and the House from exercising its investigative mandate to look into certain matters concerning the Executive.

I recall, for example, that when an attempt was made to get Parliament to investigate an allegation of bribery of a Ghanaian president by Nigeria's General Abacha, the process was blocked by the then Speaker of Parliament on some legalistic grounds. Other Speakers have followed this bad precedent to shield the Executive from appropriate parliamentary scrutiny. In short, importing ill-fitting judicial or legalistic rules of procedure and evidence as well as doctrines of preemption or ouster of jurisdiction into the conduct of Parliamentary business totally distorts Parliament's essentially political function and undercuts and weakens its role in the constitutional scheme of checks and balances. The limits to Parliament's powers are defined in and by the Constitution.

Unfortunately, we are using legalism in Parliament (in the service of partisanship and self-interest) to shrink the scope of Parliament's remit and thereby subvert the prospect of implanting constitutionalism in our infant but stunted democracy.



**A vote of censure is purely a political matter; it carries no legal consequence or liability, whether civil or criminal. It is used to register the collective disapproval or displeasure of the House about the conduct or performance of a Minister.**

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