

May, 2020 Newsletter

Dear Members

The spread of the coronavirus from China to Europe and the rest of the world is engulfing like a tidal wave the lives of people around the world. We have been busy keeping ourselves safe and trying to live in this time of constraint. Business now has to be done in a shorter time in the city and travel time to go from one side of town to the other, is challenging and sometimes not even doable. Let alone the time you now have to spend at the banks to simply obtain your needed cash.

Many initiatives that are on-going have ceased, making them inconsequential. However we expect most to restart after the world has come with a solution to this pandemic. The closure of Firestone is a significant blow to the Liberian economy. Not only to the direct workers in the field. Luckily AML is still in production and imports/exports of goods through the Freeport carries on. We have even experienced that DHL makes it possible to receive goods.

Our Facebook page is still active and we are starting a discussion group on what's app coming week. The object is to exchange experiences and topics as we cannot meet.

Kind regards and stay safe

Stanley Slagmolen

Extra opportunity to take the CBI Corporate Responsibility course



Due to COVID-19, CBI has noticed an increased demand for distance learning. There is also a need for the expansion of our online services for exporting SMEs and Business Support Organisations (BSOs). Because of this, CBI is offering you an extra opportunity to take the e-learning course 'Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)'. This course is now available on the ITC SME Academy website and will start on May 11, 2020. Participation is free of charge. The course takes 4 hours. You can plan these 4 hours according to your schedule. You must complete the course within the two-week period that it is open.

The course will introduce you to the definition of CSR, and allow you to determine the importance of CSR in your company/organisation. You will identify relevant topics and instruments that will help you to develop and include a CSR strategy in your business strategy.

Register now

CSR is an important topic. It is part of everyone's daily business globally, and it continues to grow in importance. The importers that we work with strongly encourage you to sign up. Make sure you register for the online CSR course before May 11th to be able to participate and benefit from this extra opportunity to take the course.

Click [here](#) for more information

CBL Concludes Competitive Procurement Process for Printing of Liberian Dollar Banknotes



The Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) says it has completed a competitive bidding process for the printing of additional Liberian dollar banknotes aimed at providing the public increased access to Liberian Dollars.

Using enhanced procedures consistent with international best practices, the CBL reviewed the proposals submitted in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP), and selected the most competitive bid (Crane AB), based on cost and delivery time. As a result, the CBL intends to enter into a contract with Crane AB (“Crane”) for the printing and delivery of 4 billion Liberian Dollars banknotes (in L\$500 denomination). Under the terms of the contract, Crane will print and deliver the approved amount of banknotes to the CBL in Monrovia in a reasonable timeframe.

On March 12, 2020, the CBL issued an RFP, soliciting proposals for the printing of additional banknotes, with a deadline for responses on or before April 8, 2020. The CBL received proposals from potential currency printing firms in advance of the deadline. Five internationally reputable currency printing companies were invited to participate in the bidding process. Subsequently, a specially dedicated Procurement Committee for printing of the additional banknotes conducted a rigorous evaluation process of the proposals, focused on both financial and technical aspects against a set of detailed evaluation criteria. As a result of this process, Crane was recommended by the CBL Procurement Committee as the preferred supplier to print the additional banknotes with the technical advice of Kroll Associates Inc. (“Kroll”).

Source

Landslide At illegal Goldmine Traps Over 60 People In Grand Cape Mount County



The latest tragedy in Grand Cape Mounty is the second since 1982 when 55 people lost their lives at a gold mine.

Report reaching FrontPage Africa says that a landslide in Grand Cape Mount County has trapped several artisanal miners, with more than 60 people feared dead. According to reports, the incident took place at an illegal goldmine in in Tewor District early Monday morning, killing and trapping dozens of people.

The report claimed that only two bodies has been found and residents of surrounding towns are being assisted by a nearby Chinese mining company with excavators to rescue people from the rubbles.

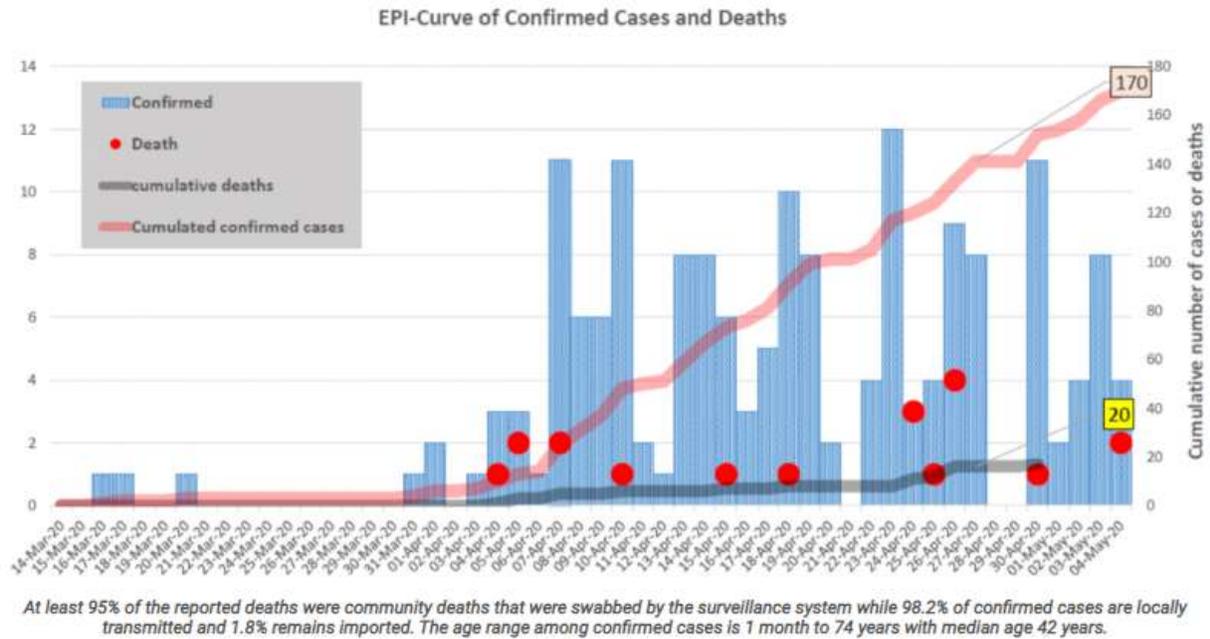
In recent days residents of Tewor Distirct have complained about illegal mining activities in the area. Illegal mining activities are common in Liberia as they have become a source income for thousands of unskilled and unemployed Liberians, mostly young people.

The Irresponsible mining practices by illegal miners do not only cause irreparable harm to the environment and the ecology, but put their health at grave risk.

Early 2019, more than 60 illegal miners including women died at the Gboanipea Gold mine near Tappita, Nimba County when the soil collapsed while they were deep underground.

Report say, the latest tragedy in Grand Cape Mounty is the second since 1982 when 55 people lost their lives at a gold mine. Source:

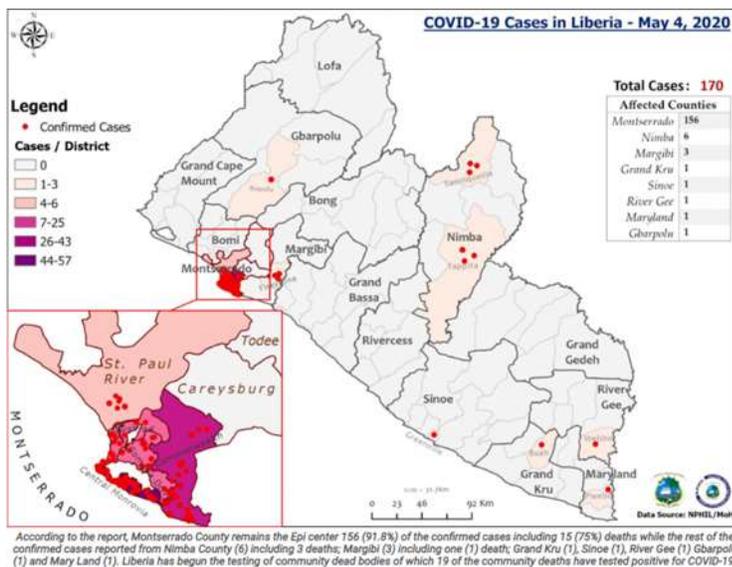
COVID-19 Deaths Hit 20; 170 Confirmed Cases Recorded



Liberia’s death total from the deadly COVID-19 disease has reached 20, according to the latest Sitrep report from the National Public Health Institute (NPHIL).

Of that number, 14 of those deceased are men while six are women.

The report recorded four new confirmed cases on May 4, 2020 from 25 samples tested. Three of the new confirmed cases were reported from Montserrado County and one from Gbarpolu county.



At least Five case patients were discharged from the 14 Military Hospital on 4 May 2020 and a cumulatively, 64 case patients have been discharged and reintegrated into their communities.

Liberia: World Bank Report Sees ‘Serious Weaknesses’ in ‘Unprepared’ COVID19 Response



A project document obtained by FrontPageAfrica, prepared by the World Bank on Liberia’s response to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic has concluded that despite efforts to contain the virus, serious weaknesses remain, and Liberia is not prepared to respond to COVID-19.

“Respiratory diseases, like SARs, MERS, and COVID-19, are not part of Liberia’s active surveillance. Therefore, early identification in communities and health facilities, compliance with infection prevention and control measures, contact tracing, and good hygiene practices remain major challenges,” the report noted.

The report dated and prepared on March 26, 2020 when Liberia had reported as of March 17, 2020, three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Montserrado County, the capital city, where more than 45 percent of the population live. “Health authorities continue to trace all primary and secondary contacts of index cases, and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) has activated its preparedness plan. Considering the contextual and health system challenges in Liberia, in the absence of a rapid, effective, and sustained response, a COVID-19 outbreak would have a devastating impact on the health system, health outcomes, and the broader Liberian economy.”

[Source](#)

South Africa starts trial using TB vaccine against COVID-19



Health workers are at the center of a COVID-19 vaccine trial in South Africa. The process is testing the efficacy of BCG – Bacille Calmette-Guerin, a tuberculosis vaccine, against COVID-19. 500 health workers are involved in a process undertaken by Task, a clinical research organization funding the study. The trial is to be extended to some 3000 participants in Cape Town who will be monitored for a year, the organization noted.

250 participants have so far been given the injection, and another 250 given a placebo. A placebo is an innocuous or inert medication; given as a pacifier or to the control group in experiments on the efficacy of a drug.

Prof Andreas Diacon of Task, told the AFP news agency that children immunized with BCG tended to suffer less from respiratory illness like asthma.

“South Africa does vaccinate all newborns with BCG. Re-vaccinating adults could help reduce the consequences of this pandemic,” Task said in a statement.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness which is the subject of a global search for vaccine and treatment. In Africa, anti-malarial drug chloroquine has been okay for treatment by a number of countries – especially in dire cases.

The WHO will have to evaluate the outcome of such trials for more work to continue on their efficacy. The global health body has also expressed worry about the potential impact of shortages of BCG which are used to vaccinate children against TB.

Source

VADEMCO: Agro-development Group buttressing COVID-19 fight in Bong County

As the global novel Coronavirus continue to spread across Liberia, many local and international non-governmental organizations have joined government to help curb the virus especially in rural parts of the country.

Many of these local and international NGOs who have some ongoing projects in their respective



areas of operations but have now swayed their attention to the fighting the virus that has infected more than 170 people across the country. The Vaingo Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy (VADEMCO), a local Liberian agro- development group is one such that has joined the fight against Coronavirus in Bong County. The organization which is also helping farmers to rehabilitate existing cocoa farms in Yelliquilleh District in Bong County entitled” Old folks Farm Rehabilitation”, has presented several sanitary materials to residents of that area. Speaking on May 2, 2020 when he presented the materials to the residents in Yelliquilleh, VADEMCO senior trainer Luciny Fofanah said the items were his organization initial contribution towards fighting COVID-19 from the community.

Source

Sustainable Farming Method Brings New Hope for the Conservation of Gola Forest National Park

In Liberia, upland rice farming and shifting cultivation are practised by many rural farmers.

The people of lower Sokpo Clan in Grand Cape Mount County near the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) are known for practising this unsustainable farming method, which is a major



threat to the park because the farmers move from one spot to another in the upland forest in search of fertile land to start new farms. However, thanks to training for farmers on lowland swamp rice farming, their work has become easier, they are getting more yield, and the threat to the GFNP has been reduced.

The training was led by Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy (VADEMCO), a 20-year-old firm specializing in agriculture. Funded by the Society for the Conservation of Nature, Liberia (SCNL), a WA BiCC grantee, VADEMCO established Farmer Field Schools to teach farmers a new strategy for growing rice.

Source:

The impact of COVID-19 on remittances for development in Africa



04-05-2020

*Amanda Bisong, Pamella Eunice
Ahairwe and Esther Njoroge, ECDPM
paper, May 2020*

Remittance flows, which are an integral part of development finance, proved relatively resilient during the 2008 financial crisis and the 2014 Ebola epidemic. However, they are currently under threat by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdown measures implemented in host countries have caused many migrants to lose their jobs, consequently reducing remittance flows to developing countries. In 2020, the World Bank estimates a historical decline in global remittances of US\$110 billion, with sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) expected to experience a decline of about 23.1%.

Individuals, households, businesses and nations that are highly dependent on remittance flows are already suffering a huge financial blow. The estimated sharp fall in remittances will undermine developing countries' ability to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, let alone their ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This paper stresses the importance of filling the development financing gaps that have been widened by shrinking remittances and suggests adaptations and increases in official development assistance (ODA) as an immediate solution to cushion some of the short-run effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Click [here](#) to read the full article

The new EU visa code and what it means for African countries



06-04-2020 Amanda Bisong, ECDPM blog, 6 April 2020

With global restrictions on mobility being imposed by governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Union (EU) also banned non-essential travel from third countries into the EU area. However, prior to these restrictions, the EU introduced a new visa code which will continue to regulate the short-stay entry of third-country nationals – if and when the current restrictions are removed.

On 2 February 2020, the new visa code, adopted by member states in June 2019, came into effect. The most notable change is the introduction of restrictive processes for countries who fail to cooperate on readmissions. But beyond that, it is unclear to African policymakers and governments how these changes will exactly take shape and what the practical implications are when it comes to migration cooperation with the EU and its member states.

What is new?

The new code introduces several changes, including increased visa fees, harmonised multi-entry visa procedures and simplified visa application procedures with the aim of facilitating the entry of legal applicants. Visa applications can now be filed six months ahead of the trip, as opposed to the previous practice of three months. This provides more flexibility for travelers to plan their trips in advance and appeal negative decisions where necessary.

The code also ends the practice of travelling to neighbouring countries to lodge visa applications by allowing EU representations to outsource visa processing to other EU member states within the country. For example, persons in the Republic of Benin wishing to travel to Spain will no longer have to lodge visa applications at the Spanish Embassy in Nigeria.

The code also introduces a mechanism for visa facilitation based on cooperation of third countries on return and readmission of their nationals. The European Commission explains that the visa policy is a “powerful element in the discussions with third countries on migration cooperation”. According to the Commission, relevant policies including the visa policy should be used to incentivise partner countries to cooperate on readmission.

This is the first time that a visa policy instrument is used to promote this approach. Yet, it is still too early to determine to what extent the EU will make use of the possibility, whether it will lead to a reduction of the number of positive visa applications, and whether it will indeed have an effect on cooperation on return and readmission.

EU delegations have indicated that that third countries who will not cooperate on readmission may see restrictive visa implementation rules that might be felt by all potential travellers to the EU. These may include short-term visitors like students, business persons and government officials or academics participating in conferences. However, other channels, like family reunification measures, remain unaffected by the changes in the code, as they are governed by national regulations of EU member states.

[Read the whole article](#)

Newsletter by:



Tracy Kollie
Project officer
Tracylnbcc2018@gmail.com
+231886975388
+231777975388



Stanley Slagmolen
Business consultant
stanley.lnbcc@gmail.com
+231880728725
+31654306851