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General News

Work in solidarity to combat terrorism, climate change - Speaker Bagbin charges African legislators

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Speaker of Ghana's Parliament, Rt. Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, has urged African legislators to unite under the principles of Pan-Africanism to address pressing issues such as terrorism, conflicts, and climate change.

Speaking at the First Ordinary Session of Côte d'Ivoire's National Assembly on Monday, Speaker Bagbin emphasized the urgent need for collective action to tackle challenges that undermine stability and development across West Africa. He called on lawmakers to leverage parliamentary diplomacy as a tool to foster peace and drive sustainable growth.

The event, hosted by H.E. Adama Bictogo, President of Côte d'Ivoire's National Assembly, brought together parliamentary leaders from Senegal, Benin, Togo, Nigeria, and the ECOWAS Parliament. Speaker Bagbin was accompanied by his spouse, Madam

Linda Ofosuah Oboh, as well as Members of Parliament Hon. Habib Iddrisu, Hon. Dorcas Toffey, Hon. Dr. Sebastian Sandaare, and other parliamentary staff.

Highlighting the critical role of legislators in solving regional problems, Speaker Bagbin called for solidarity among African lawmakers. "African legislators must stand united to combat terrorism, resolve conflicts, and confront climate change," he stated, stressing that collaboration is key to overcoming these challenges.

Adding his voice, President of Nigeria's Senate, Godswill Akpabio, addressed the assembly, emphasizing the importance of partnership between African nations. He noted that countries like Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire share a collective responsibility for the continent's progress.

"The future of West Africa rests upon us. Therefore, let us not be complacent. The challenges before

us are vast – youth unemployment, human trafficking, and security threats. Yet, so too are the opportunities," Akpabio remarked. He further called for unity across national boundaries, urging lawmakers to lead efforts toward deeper integration. "The colonialists may have divided Africa into geopolitical chunks, but we must unite and repair the torn fabrics of our heritage. Let us envision a region where borders

serve as bridges of unity, not walls of division, where trade flourishes, cultures blend, and progress becomes a right for every citizen," Akpabio concluded.

The session underscored the importance of parliamentary collaboration in fostering unity and advancing a shared vision of prosperity and stability for Africa. Leaders at the gathering reaffirmed their commitment to addressing the continent's challenges through coordinated legislative action.



Rt. Honorable Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament

1st-year tertiary students who have already paid their admission fees will get a refund – Haruna Iddrisu

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Minister-designate for Education, Haruna Iddrisu has indicated that first-year students in public tertiary institutions who have already funded their admission fees will be reimbursed by the government.

In an interaction with Parliament's Appointments Committee on Monday, the minister-designate who doubles as the Tamale South Member of Parliament (MP) noted that the government will collaborate with the Finance Ministry to ensure that the refund process is seamless and that the necessary funds are allocated to support the initiative.

"On the authority of President Mahama and with the endorsement of the Finance Minister-designate, Hon. Ato Forson, this funding will be included in the Reset Budget. It will ensure that fees for general academic courses are refunded.

According to him, this compliments president John Mahama's plans to make higher education more accessible and affordable for all

Ghanaians.

"President Mahama sees this as a pilot program to evaluate its viability. If successful, it could be expanded in the future. That said, those willing and able to pay their fees can still do so," he explained.

During the launch of the Youth Manifesto ahead of the 2024 elections, President Mahama vowed to introduce a tuition-free scheme for first-year students in public universities.

Also, the minister-designate disclosed that the government has set aside GH¢345 million to fund this initiative, covering general academic programs.

However, MP for Builsa South, Dr. Clement Apaak, has indicated that the National Democratic Congress' (NDC) government's commitment to providing free first-year university tuition will not be mandatory for all students.

Speaking to the media, he explained that the initiative is designed such that parents and guardians who wish to cater for the fees of their

wards will not be prevented from doing so.

"That is an opinion. In any case, it is not going to be by compulsion. If there are persons who feel that they don't need it and would not want to be beneficiaries of this

arrangement, they are free to opt out. But as far as this is a manifesto promise made by John Mahama and the NDC to the people of Ghana, based on which we are now in government, we intend to carry it through," he added.



Haruna Iddrisu, Minister-designate for Education

General News

BOST gets new MD; Provencal hands over to Awoonor

By Amanda Cartey

Mr. Afetsi Awoonor has assumed the role of Managing Director of the Bulk Oil Storage and Transportation Company Limited (BOST), effective January 20, 2025. His appointment, made by President John Dramani Mahama, marks a new chapter for one of West Africa's most pivotal oil companies.

The leadership transition took place smoothly at BOST's Head Office in Accra, where the outgoing Managing Director, Dr. Edwin Provencal, officially handed over the reins to Mr. Awoonor. Reflecting on his tenure, Dr. Provencal shared a farewell message via Facebook: "My last official assignment. I wish Mr. Afetsi Awoonor and the BOST team tons of success in the future. To God Be The Glory."

During the handover ceremony, Mr. Awoonor expressed profound gratitude to his predecessor and pledged to build upon his achievements.

"I want to express my deepest

gratitude to Dr. Provencal for his exceptional leadership. Under his guidance, BOST has reached new heights, and I am honoured to carry the torch forward," Mr. Awoonor stated.

He outlined his priorities for the company, emphasizing operational excellence, teamwork, and innovation. "My focus will be on strengthening the company and fostering an environment of collaboration, innovation, and excellence as we move forward," he added.

The appointment has garnered widespread support from stakeholders, including the BOST Senior Staff Union, which expressed its readiness to work with Mr. Awoonor to achieve the company's objectives. The union also commended President Mahama for demonstrating confidence in appointing highly skilled individuals to key positions.

With nearly a decade of experience in the African oil and gas industry, Mr. Awoonor brings extensive

expertise to his new role. He previously served as Senior Partner at DOC Africa and Regional Head of Sales and Marketing at Convenio Energy. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked at BOST as Manager of Government Relations.

Mr. Awoonor's academic credentials include an Executive Master's in International Oil & Gas Leadership from the Geneva Graduate Institute and a Master's in Oil and Gas Management from IFP School.

His specialization in hydrocarbon trading and business development positions him to lead BOST effectively, ensuring Ghana's energy security.

Beyond his professional career, Mr. Awoonor is deeply committed to social development through the Afetsi Awoonor Foundation, which empowers youth and women through mentorship and entrepreneurship initiatives.



Mr Afetsi Awoonor, Newly appointed MD of BOST on the left, Dr Edwin Provencal, Outgoing MD, on the right

Parliament approves 6 appointees of Mahama as ministers

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Parliament has given its approval to six ministerial nominees appointed by President John Dramani Mahama, paving the way for their official swearing-in as substantive ministers. The approvals followed rigorous vetting by the Appointments Committee and subsequent debates in the House.

The latest set of appointees, including Kwame Govers Agbodza as Minister for Roads and Highways, Eric Opoku as Minister for Food and Agriculture, and Haruna Iddrisu as Minister for Education, were endorsed on Tuesday, January 21, during a sitting chaired by Second Deputy Speaker Andrew Asiamah Amoako.

Earlier on January 13, Parliament had also approved the nominations of Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson as Minister of Finance, John Abdulai Jinapor as Minister of Energy, and Dr. Dominic Akuritinga Ayine as Minister of Justice and Attorney General. These approvals underscore President Mahama's commitment to assembling a team to address key national priorities.

The nominees received endorsements from legislators

across the aisle, who commended their qualifications and commitment to national service. Speaking on the floor, Minority Leader Alexander Afenyo-Markin expressed optimism about the appointees' ability to deliver on their mandates.

"They should not disappoint us. We wish them all the best," other members of Parliament echoed.

With the approval of these six appointees, President Mahama's administration takes another step toward fulfilling its governance agenda and addressing critical national challenges.

During his vetting, Haruna Iddrisu outlined plans to address Ghana's educational infrastructure deficit by prioritizing the uncapping of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) to improve the sector's development.

Kwame Govers Agbodza emphasized reintroducing road tolls through advanced technological platforms to enhance revenue collection and reduce traffic congestion. Eric Opoku proposed establishing agricultural farms in

Senior High Schools nationwide to leverage the country's land resources and support the agricultural sector.

Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson committed to improving Ghana's tax compliance to increase tax revenue without raising taxes, targeting a rise to 16% of GDP. John Abdulai Jinapor outlined a strategy to involve the

private sector in the operations of the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) to boost efficiency and ensure reliable power distribution. Dr. Dominic Akuritinga Ayine, meanwhile, revealed plans to reintroduce a revamped public tribunal system to enhance access to justice and protect citizens' rights.



Parliament of Ghana

General News

NPP govt left GH¢100bn in commitments for road construction; GH¢20bn unpaid certificates - Agbodza

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

Roads and Highways Minister-designate, **Governs Kwame Agbodza**, has raised concerns about the substantial financial obligations tied to road infrastructure projects, which continue to place a significant strain on Ghana's economy.

Speaking during his vetting by Parliament's Appointments Committee on Monday, January 20, Mr. Agbodza disclosed that the previous government left behind commitments amounting to at least GH¢113 billion. This figure includes GH¢20 billion in unpaid certificates owed to contractors and GH¢15 billion tied to the Road Fund.

"The NPP government is leaving a minimum of GH¢113 billion in commitments. What is particularly concerning is that certificates unpaid as of today from the

Government of Ghana amount to about GH¢20 billion. Additionally, the Road Fund owes approximately GH¢15 billion," he revealed.

Mr. Agbodza further highlighted that the financial strain is exacerbated by accumulated interest payments. "The interest on this GH¢113 billion is about GH¢665 million, due to the nature of contracts signed under the previous administration," he added.

These unpaid obligations have far-reaching consequences. Contractors face significant delays in receiving payments, stifling local businesses and disrupting economic activities. Moreover, the GH¢665 million in interest payments diverts critical funds that could be allocated to other essential sectors such as education, healthcare, and social welfare.

The minister-designate emphasized the urgent need for measures to

address these financial burdens, which account for a significant portion of Ghana's national debt. "These commitments place immense pressure on public finances, and we must explore innovative solutions to ensure that infrastructure development does

not come at such a heavy cost," he stated.

The revelations have sparked discussions on the sustainability of road infrastructure financing and the need for prudent contract management to prevent similar challenges in the future.



Governs Kwame Agbodza, Minister - designate, Roads and Highways

Stan Dogbe, Oye Bampoe listed in 10 new appointments to the Presidency

By **Phoebe Martekie Doku**

President John Dramani Mahama has announced a series of new appointments to the Office of the President, adding 10 individuals to his administration. The appointments, detailed in a statement from the Presidency on Tuesday, aim to enhance governance and streamline administrative operations.

Mrs. Joyce Bawah Mogtari has been appointed as a Presidential Adviser and Special Assistant to the President, while Stanislav Xoesse Dogbe will take on the role of Deputy Chief of Staff, focusing on operational oversight.

Former Finance Minister Seth Emmanuel Terkper has been named Presidential Adviser on Economic Affairs, leveraging his expertise to guide economic policies. Additionally, Professor Francis Doodoo will lead the National Anti-Corruption Programme.

Nana Yaa Jantuah and Beatrice Annangfio join the team as Presidential Staffers, further strengthening the administrative machinery. Shamima Muslim has been appointed Deputy Presidential Spokesperson, a role critical to

communicating the government's agenda.

Larry Gbevlo-Lartey has been named Special Envoy to the Alliance of Sahelian States and will also serve as a Presidential Staffer. Professor Kwaku Danso-Boafo assumes the role of Cabinet Secretary, a position central to coordinating cabinet activities.

The statement highlighted the President's commitment to progressive leadership and effective administration, emphasizing that the new appointees were carefully selected to support national development and foster economic transformation.

President Mahama earlier reappointed Julius Debrah as Chief of Staff. Dr. Callistus Mahama, who previously served as Secretary to the NDC Transition Team, will continue as Executive Secretary to the President.

Former Attorney General Marietta Agyeiwaa Brew has been appointed Legal Counsel to the President, while Prosper Douglas Bani will lead the Interim Security Taskforce to address pressing security concerns.

Dr. Valerie Sawyerr has been

designated Senior Presidential Advisor for Governmental Affairs, ensuring continuity in policy implementation. Augustus Goosie Tanoh has been appointed Presidential Advisor for the 24-hour Economy and Accelerated Export Development, a strategic role in boosting economic productivity.

President Mahama has expressed confidence in the appointees' abilities to drive national development and economic transformation. He stressed the importance of leveraging their skills and dedication to achieve the administration's vision of sustainable progress.



Stan Dogbe, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations on the left & Oye Bampoe, Deputy Chief of Staff for Administration on the right

General News

DRIP lacks management contract due to procurement of machines by the Presidency - Ahmed Ibrahim

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The Minister-designate for Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs, Ahmed Ibrahim, has raised concerns over the management and implementation of the Direct Roads Improvement Programme (DRIP), citing the absence of a management contract.

This situation arose because the procurement of machines for the programme was handled directly by the Office of the President during the Akufo-Addo administration.

Speaking during his vetting before Parliament's Appointments Committee on Tuesday, Mr. Ibrahim disclosed that the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation, and Rural Development, which was tasked with spearheading the initiative, was sidelined during the procurement process.

"Workers in the Ministry of Local Government watching me would testify that they have no records

of any agreement related to the DRIP project," he stated. "There is no programme or inventory of the DRIP machines. This is a challenge because it was procured through the Office of the President, which has created problems."

The DRIP initiative, launched by former President Nana Akufo-Addo at Independence Square on July 31, 2024, was intended to address deteriorating road conditions across all 275 constituencies. This initiative was in response to a report from the National Security Ministry identifying poor road infrastructure as a potential threat to national stability.

Despite its ambitious goals, Mr. Ibrahim pointed out several shortcomings in the programme's implementation framework. "There is no management contract, no provisions for spare parts, and no committees established to oversee the machines," he explained, adding that these deficiencies

have hindered the programme's effectiveness.

However, the minister-designate expressed his resolve to address these challenges and ensure the programme's success. "We are committed to ensuring that the DRIP programme materialises and delivers on its promise of enhanced road infrastructure in all districts," he affirmed.

Mr. Ibrahim also underscored the need for accountability and efficient utilisation of resources

to achieve the programme's objectives. "It is crucial that the equipment and resources allocated to this programme are used for their intended purpose. We will closely monitor its execution to ensure that roads are built to the highest standards," he assured.

As he prepares to take on his ministerial role, Ahmed Ibrahim faces the daunting task of rectifying the structural issues in the DRIP initiative to fulfil its potential and improve Ghana's road infrastructure.



Ahmed Ibrahim, Minister-designate, Local Government Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs

Schools to reopen in Obuasi once peace, safety are guaranteed - Ashanti Regional Minister-designate

By **Amanda Cartey**

The Ashanti Regional Minister-designate, Frank Amoakohene, has expressed confidence that life in the Obuasi community will soon return to normal, with work and schools resuming, provided peace and safety are ensured.

Speaking to the media, Mr. Amoakohene revealed that the decision to resume activities was reached after extensive engagements with the affected communities and key stakeholders. "Once we are certain that the stakeholders—especially the communities—are at peace and have confidence in the processes initiated by the President, we believe work can resume. Schools can reopen because they cannot remain closed indefinitely while investigations are ongoing," he stated.

Mr. Amoakohene expressed optimism that ongoing discussions with stakeholders, including AngloGold Ashanti (AGA), would facilitate a smooth return to regular activities.

"After engaging with them, we realized that they were feeling more

at ease. With continuous dialogue, we should be able to get the company back to work and everyone back to their respective duties, pending the final determination of the matter," he said.

He clarified that the incident in question occurred in a part of the mine that is not actively used for mining operations, which allows work in other areas to proceed without interference.

"AngloGold Ashanti has a northern camp and a southern area where active mining processes take place. The incident occurred within the northern side, which is not an active mining site. As far as the Attorney General is concerned, they can commence work without affecting or tampering with the evidence," he explained.

Addressing concerns about injured security personnel, Mr. Amoakohene shared that he had personally visited one of the injured soldiers to check on his recovery and conveyed the President's goodwill message.

"We visited him and delivered the President's compliments. Our men in uniform, who serve the country diligently, are a major concern to the President. Adequate provisions

have been made to cover his medical expenses and ensure his full recovery," he affirmed.

The minister-designate assured the public of the government's commitment to transparency and inclusivity in addressing the issue.

"It is our responsibility to ensure that all parties, including those directly and indirectly affected, feel reassured and confident in the

measures being put in place. We are committed to seeing this process through to its logical conclusion," he stated.

Mr. Amoakohene concluded by calling for calm and cooperation as investigations continue. He emphasized that the authorities are working diligently to restore stability and ensure the community's return to normalcy.



Frank Amoakohene, Ashanti Regional Minister-designate

General News

Ablakwa named Foreign Affairs Minister, Sam George to Communication Ministry in third ministerial appointment

By Amanda Carthey

President John Dramani Mahama has announced the third batch of ministerial appointments, highlighting key nominations designed to advance his administration's development priorities.

Among the notable appointees, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa has been nominated as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, tasked with managing Ghana's international relations and promoting its global image.

Samuel Nartey George has been named Minister for Communication, Digital Technology, and Innovations, reflecting the administration's emphasis on leveraging technology for national development.

The nominations have been submitted to Parliament through the Speaker for prior approval.

A statement signed by Felix Kwakye Ofori, Acting Spokesperson to the President, emphasized that these appointments align with President Mahama's commitment

to assembling a skilled and effective team to realize his vision for national development.

In response to his nomination, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa expressed profound gratitude to the President for the opportunity to serve. "I am enormously thankful to His Excellency John Dramani Mahama for nominating me to serve as Ghana's Foreign Minister. My solemn pledge is to diligently assist President Mahama in championing Ghana's best interests at all times, with unquestionable patriotism, innovation, and integrity. Immense gratitude to my family, North Tongu, NDC, and all amazing Ghanaians for the incredible support throughout the years," he stated.

The latest list of appointees includes several high-profile nominations. Dr. Edward Kofi Omani Boamah has been appointed as Minister of Defence. Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah will take on the role of Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, while Muntaka Mohammed-Mubarak has been

named Minister of Interior.

In a move to demonstrate the government's commitment to environmental sustainability, Issifu Seidu, MP, has been nominated as Minister of State for Climate Change and Sustainability. Emmanuel Kwadwo Agyekum will oversee Special Initiatives, and Felix Kwakye Ofori has been named Minister of State for Government Communications.

The appointments come as President Mahama seeks to strengthen

governance and ensure efficient service delivery for Ghanaians. To date, he has appointed 42 ministers, pledging to keep the total number at 60.

The Appointments Committee of Parliament is currently vetting the nominees. Among those vetted so far are Kwame Gwagbada Agbodza, Minister-Designate for Roads and Highways, Eric Opoku, Minister-Designate for Food and Agriculture, and Haruna Iddrisu, Minister-Designate for Education.



Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Minister of Foreign Affairs-designate on the left, Samuel Nartey George, Minister for Communication, Digital Technology & Innovations-designate on the right

NPP suspends 58 members in Tatale for failing to support parliamentary candidate

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the Tatale-Sanguli constituency of the Northern Region has suspended 58 members for allegedly refusing to support the party's parliamentary candidate in the recent elections.

A letter addressed to the national and regional executives, signed by the constituency chairman, cited breaches of the party's constitution as the basis for the decision.

Article (3) clause (9) (1) states, "A Member of the Party who stands as an independent Candidate against the officially elected member of the party or joining or declaring his or her support for another political party, or for an independent candidate when the party has sponsored a candidate in a general or by election automatically forfeits his or her membership of the party.

"According to article (3) Clause (7) (1)," A Member may be suspended from membership of the party, or holding any office in the party,

pending an enquiry into his or her conduct by a Disciplinary Committee."

According to the chairman, the affected members actively worked

against the party's candidate during the campaign, undermining the collective effort to secure victory.

One of the suspended members, Napare Prosper, a former

constituency communication officer, has rejected the allegations and demanded evidence to support the claims. He also criticized the manner in which the decision was communicated.



NPP Flag



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Business

BoG adjusts gold coin rates following global gold price rise

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Ghana's Central Bank has revealed a modest increase in the price of its gold coins, in line with the recent surge in global gold prices.

The gold coins, available in 0.25oz, 0.50oz, and 1oz denominations, are now listed at GHS 11,248, GHS 21,623, and GHS 42,435, respectively.

As of November 2024, the coins were priced as follows: the 1.00 oz coin at GH¢45,020.48, the 0.50 oz at GH¢22,409.74, and the 0.25 oz at GH¢11,188.12.

This price adjustment coincides with gold prices on the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) reaching \$2,715 per ounce on January 20, 2025, driven by strong demand amid ongoing global economic volatility.

The Bank of Ghana's (BoG) Ghana Gold Coin (GGC) initiative, launched as part of its national gold

policy, offers a viable investment alternative for Ghanaians, addressing both personal financial goals and larger economic concerns. The initiative is designed to absorb surplus liquidity in the financial system, thereby fortifying the

Ghanaian Cedi and promoting overall economic stability. The central bank urges investors to closely monitor fluctuations in the value of gold and exchange rates, as these factors can significantly impact the worth of the coins.

Through the GGC initiative, individuals can diversify their investment portfolios, participate in the international gold market, and contribute to both their financial security and the country's economic resilience.



File Photo

Bank stocks to perform better in 2025 due to strong earnings, dividend upturn - Databank research

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Banks stocks are expected to do well according to the latest projections from Databank Research in its Ghana Market Outlook 2025 report, released in January.

This is as a result of increased profits hence investors have begun earning higher dividends.

These predictions come on the back of renewed interest by investors following the introduction of the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP) by the government in December 2022 which caused a decrease in investor confidence and stock prices.

Banks holding government bonds suffered substantial impairment losses due to the exchange of old bonds for new ones with lower coupon rates. This led to a decrease in the value of their bond holdings and negatively affected their balance sheets.

However, investors began showing renewed interest in banking stocks around mid-2024 due to improved

economic conditions and regulatory reforms that bolstered investor confidence. The Financial Stock Index saw 15% gains by the end of Q3 2024.

Consequently, banks stocks are anticipated to continue to perform well " ...supported by a strong earnings outlook and the return of dividend payouts", parts of the research said.

It continued that "these factors are likely to attract income-focused investors, further boosting the sector's appeal".

Also, the research suggests that local banks are set to see a significant boost in profitability. With the introduction of a new cash reserve ratio requirement by the regulator, banks are expected to experience growth in their loan portfolios and a marked improvement in asset quality

"We expect banks' profitability to benefit significantly from loan book expansion and improved asset quality following the regulator's new cash reserve ratio

requirement" it added.

Meanwhile, the Domestic Debt Exchange Program (DDEP), announced on December 5, 2022, involved swapping old domestic bonds valued at GHC 137.3 billion (US\$14.3 billion) for new bonds with longer repayment terms and lower interest rates.

This exchange caused significant losses for banks, with local banks losing GHC 19.9 billion and foreign-owned banks losing GHC 17.8

billion. Some local banks became technically insolvent and needed to raise additional capital to recover. The program initially damaged investor confidence, as it challenged the idea that government bonds were completely safe investments. The losses suffered by bondholders and the lower interest rates on the new bonds led investors to become more cautious.



Databank Research

International

Reconsider intent to withdraw from organisation - WHO to US

Source: White House and WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) has appealed to the United States to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the global health body.

This comes after an executive order was issued under the directive of President Donald Trump, signaling the United States' intent to sever ties with the organization.

In the order, Trump cited the WHO's alleged mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, its resistance to reform, and its dependency on politically influenced decision-making by certain member states.

Additionally, the disproportionate financial burden placed on the US was highlighted as a critical issue. "China, with a population of 1.4 billion, contributes nearly 90 percent less than the United States," the order emphasized.

The directive revoked earlier actions that reversed the 2020

withdrawal notice and called for immediate measures, including pausing funding, recalling personnel, and ceasing negotiations on international agreements related to the WHO.

The WHO, however, expressed regret over the decision, emphasizing its vital role in protecting global health. "WHO plays a crucial role in protecting the health and security of the world's people, including Americans, by addressing the root causes of disease, building stronger health systems, and detecting, preventing, and responding to health emergencies," the organization noted in a statement. The WHO underscored the historic partnership between the United States and the organization, which dates back to 1948, pointing out significant achievements such as eradicating smallpox and nearly eliminating polio.

"Together, we have saved countless lives and protected Americans and all people from health threats," the statement added.

The global health body also highlighted its ongoing reforms to improve accountability, cost-effectiveness, and impact, while expressing hope for a constructive dialogue to restore the partnership. "We hope the United States will reconsider and we look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue to maintain the partnership

between the USA and WHO, for the benefit of the health and well-being of millions of people around the globe."

As the withdrawal process unfolds, the WHO remains committed to its mission of safeguarding global health and fostering international cooperation in addressing pressing health challenges.



WHO building

Gabon approves new electoral law seen as win for junta leader

Source: Africanews

Gabon's transitional parliament on Monday approved a new electoral code seen by opponents as favourable to junta leader Brice Oligui Nguema.

The bill which was passed after days of deliberations allows members of the security forces and magistrates to contest elections as candidates.

Nguema has promised to return power to civilians but speculation that he desires to run as a presidential candidate is rife.

For its part, the opposition is demanding a formal ban on any military member of the transition committee standing as a presidential candidate.

But members of the junta have recently embarked on a propaganda drive seen by observers as a plan to soften the ground for a potential Nguema candidacy.

The bill also introduces two parliament seats reserved for

diaspora Gabonese. It allows dual nationals to stand as candidates in all elections except

the presidential vote without having to renounce their other nationality. The text also moves the

responsibility to organize elections to the interior ministry from that of local government.



Brice Oligui Nguema, President of Gabon

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