

A portrait of H.E.M. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, wearing a dark blue suit and a red patterned tie. He is smiling and gesturing with his hands. The background is a solid blue gradient.

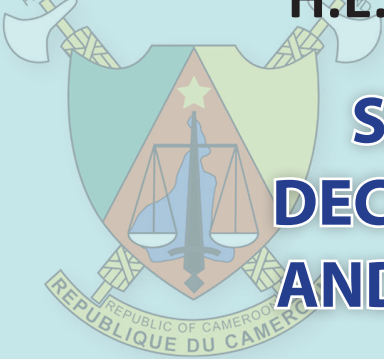
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President of the Republic of Cameroon

H.E.M. PAUL BIYA

PAIX
PEACE



**SPEECHES,
DECLARATIONS,
AND MESSAGES**

Volume 10/2020



H.E.M. PAUL BIYA

SPEECHES, DECLARATIONS AND MESSAGES

Volume 10/2020

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New Year's Greetings 2020

Speech by the Head of State in response to the presentation of New Year Wishes by the Diplomatic Corps

Yaounde, 9 January 2020



The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,

I would, first of all, like to thank you for the kind and encouraging words you have just spoken about my country.

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

The decade that has just ended, like the past year, was marked by serious threats to international peace and security. Faced with the huge challenges posed to humanity as a whole, namely terrorism, climate change, migratory movements, the rise of populism, etc., the international community made multiple efforts to find solutions. However, much remains to be done.

Even though the fight against terrorism is recording some success in Syria and Iraq, there is concern that without genuine and sincere solidarity among States, this scourge could spread to other parts of the world and intensify. I am thinking particularly of Africa, especially the Sahel region where Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad are already affected.

Cameroon has not been spared.

This affords me the opportunity to commend the G5 Sahel Member States which are making considerable efforts to neutralize terrorists. I also pay tribute to France whose troops are participating courageously in the fight against jihadists, under Operation Barkhane.

Cameroon, for its part, is working together with all the neighbouring countries of the Lake Chad basin and international partners of goodwill to neutralize the Boko Haram sect's capacity to wreak havoc.

Such solidarity is all the more necessary as our developing States need increased financial resources to build road, rail, port, energy and industrial infrastructure for their development. Such facilities foster the creation of many jobs that can dissuade our youths from venturing into other continents, thus sparing us the unfortunate incidents that have turned the Mediterranean Sea into a vast, hideous cemetery at the dawn of the 21st century.

***The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,***

The international community is also duty-bound to seek solutions to the trade tensions existing between major powers, which do not only limit global trade, but also undermine the development opportunities of our States.

Similarly, special attention must be paid to the increasingly obvious risk of challenging multilateralism which has so far spared the human community another global conflict.

This challenge is unfortunately accompanied by the advent, in some countries, of “populist governments” that favour national solutions to global and common problems.

It is hoped that there will be a collective awareness that environmental, climate, development and migration issues sufficiently demonstrate the interdependence of States and the need to act in a spirit of solidarity to find appropriate solutions to them.

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

During the year just ended, Cameroon redoubled its efforts to maintain peace and security across its territory.

Thus, in the Far-North Region, we beefed up the presence of our Defence and Security Forces in order to curb or even prevent incursions by terrorists of the Boko Haram sect who, unfortunately, continue to cause human and material losses.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to make a fraternal appeal to all the affected countries of the Lake Chad basin to remobilize and redouble their efforts in order to permanently neutralize these terrorists.

Regarding the problems in our North-West and South-West Regions, various measures have been taken to objectively anticipate a return to lasting peace in the short term.

The Major National Dialogue afforded an opportunity to make recommendations, some of which are being implemented, with laws recently passed by Parliament. Thus, our two regions of the North-West and South-West have been granted, within the framework of our Republic, a special status which largely meets the aspirations of our fellow citizens living there.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to friendly countries and international organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the African Union for their understanding, assistance and support in the management of this sensitive problem.

Regarding the economy, Cameroon intends to resolutely continue its march towards emergence, despite difficulties and pitfalls. Its National Development Strategy for the period 2020-2030 aims to achieve that goal.

Our country also welcomes the coming into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area which, it hopes, will offer new prospects for intra-African trade.

On the diplomatic front, Cameroon played host to many high-ranking foreign dignitaries and heads of international organizations in 2019. With all these guests, I shared the viewpoint of our country which needs peace and security, conditions conducive to sustainable development to which all our compatriots legitimately aspire.

This is the reason why I participated in the Peace Forum held last November in Paris.

Because of my country's firm resolve to eradicate the pandemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, I attended the Sixth Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund devoted to the fight against these diseases.

At that conference, Cameroon made a substantial contribution commensurate with its level of resources and development. Once more, I would like to commend the efforts made by France which mobilized the international community to ensure that the Global Fund to fight these pandemics receives the requisite resources for its work.

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

In my opinion, the international community still has to answer the following question: can the world continue to evolve in a context of “trade war”, mistrust between States and misunderstanding between the citizens and those who govern them?

If, as one would imagine, the answer is negative, I believe that only an international conference at the highest level could lay the groundwork for “Act II of globalization”, to borrow from an eminent political scientist[1], that is, globalization that places man and his environment at the centre of any economic activity.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,***Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,***

I would now like to request you to kindly convey my best wishes for the New Year to the high authorities you represent.

I also extend to you and your families my most sincere wishes for happiness, health and success in 2020

Long live international cooperation!

Long live international solidarity!

Thank you for your attention.



Graduation ceremony of the 37th batch of the Combined Services Military Academy (EMIA) christened " Major General Kodji Jacob"

**Speech by His Excellency Paul BIYA,
President of the Republic,
Commander-in-Chief of the armed
forces**

Yaounde, 24 January 2020



***The Prime Minister, Head of Government,
The President of the Economic and Social Council,
The First President and the Procureur General of the Supreme Court,
The First Vice-President of the Senate
The First Vice-President of the National Assembly,
Distinguished Ministers,
Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Representatives of
International Organizations,
The Lieutenant-General, Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff,
General Officers,
Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

In recent years, the security of our country has been put to severe test. Three of our regions in particular have been or are affected by insecurity.

In the Far-North, sporadic raids by the Boko Haram terrorist organization continue to wreak death and desolation among our citizens.

On our border in the East Region, various atrocities are being perpetrated by highway robbers.

In the North-West and South-West, secessionists, who have morphed into numerous armed gangs, continue to commit

atrocities and to destroy the property of some of our fellow citizens whose sole aspiration is to live in peace.

Yet, multiple and urgent appeals for peace have been made. Several measures have been taken to persuade those who have risen against their fatherland to lay down their weapons and return to the path of reason through their peaceful reintegration into society.

Unfortunately, a few groups continue to fuel insecurity in some places in the two regions.

However, thanks to the determination of our defence and security forces to protect our fellow citizens in the North-West and South-West, the situation has significantly improved. It is hoped that the new measures taken following the Major National Dialogue will contribute towards restoring lasting peace and calm.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to recall the crucial role of our defence and security forces. They are required not only to protect the Nation from any external aggression, but also to counter any threat against our national unity.

They have been carrying out this dual task with admirable courage and efficiency and, it must be said, making huge sacrifices. That is why, today, I wish to reassure them of the support of our entire Nation and my personal esteem.

Turning now to the cadet officers of the “Major General Kodji Jacob» batch, whose graduation we celebrate this day, I urge you to draw inspiration from the example set by this brilliant senior officer after whom your batch has been christened.

Major General Kodji Jacob fell in the line of duty on 22 January 2017, when his helicopter crashed as he was returning from a reconnaissance mission in the Far North, in the context of the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist sect. He was then the «Emergence 4» Operation Commander.

Throughout his career, he distinguished himself through his bravery, intelligence and closeness to his troops.

Dear young officers of the «Major General Kodji Jacob» batch,

For three years, you underwent gruelling training at the Combined Military Services Academy. As you are now equipped with the basic requisite knowledge for discharging the duties that you will be assigned, and trained on republican values, you must adapt to our country’s overall context.

This context is characterized by the existence of new forms of threat. You may have to face so-called asymmetric conflicts. You may also have to combat cybercrime which can, at the same time, undermine national security and destabilize the national economy.

You are now members of a republican Army. Accordingly, in performing your duties, you must respect human rights and be defenders of the well-being of your compatriots.

I also urge you to always work in synergy with them and to provide them assistance whenever necessary. Such is one of the conditions for the success of your missions.

Similarly, I recommend that you establish close collaboration with local authorities. Also make sure you remain close to your subordinates, of course, with due observance of discipline which is the strength of the armed forces.

At this juncture, I wish to congratulate the senior civil and military staff, at various levels of the chain of command, for their hard work and dedication during your training.

I also hail the success of your fellow cadet officers from brotherly countries, namely the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Gabonese Republic and the Republic of Guinea. Their presence in your midst bears eloquent testimony to the recognition your Academy enjoys, the vitality of sub-regional and regional cooperation, as well as the excellent ties existing between Cameroon and their respective countries.

Young officers of the «Major General Kodji Jacob» batch,

Lastly, I wish to congratulate you for choosing the arms profession. It is one that demands extraordinary skills. It is also and above all a special calling as it entails the eventuality of the supreme sacrifice. This is what one 19th century poet referred to as «military servitude and grandeur».

As you prepare to return to your various units, I recommend that you follow in the footsteps of your predecessors,

whose services have remained in keeping with the motto of our Army, «Honour and Fidelity».

Long live the Cameroon Defence and Security Forces!

Long live Cameroon!





Statement by the Head of State after his vote in legislative and municipal elections

Yaounde, 09 february 2020



It is a feeling of joy and satisfaction. I have accomplished my civic duty and I am happy about it. I seize this opportunity to call on all my compatriots to do same, contrary to calls for boycott by some small political parties. In any case, democracy works in Cameroon and it is advancing satisfactorily. Thus, I congratulate all Cameroonians.

Like I said, democracy is making giant strides in Cameroon. There was the Major National Dialogue, there are the laws on decentralisation, the special status, and bilingualism and soon, we shall also elect the regional councillors after the municipal elections. This is the big step towards a more developed democracy. I am satisfied and I thank Cameroonians for their dynamism and support for the institution of this great democracy.

Thank you.



Head of State's Message to the Youth on the 54th Edition of the National Youth Day

Yaounde, 10 February 2020

My dear young compatriots,

Very recently, in my message to the Nation, I told you that the current seven-year term would be decisive. Of course, I was thinking about our achieving emerging economy status by 2035, which would validate the strides we have made in terms of democracy and economic and social progress. Well, I believe that the situation is proving me right.

There was a need to address, as a priority, the long-pending issue of implementation of decentralization. The Major National Dialogue paved the way for adoption, by Parliament, of the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities and a law which guarantees the use of English and French on an equal footing. Without delay, I promulgated these instruments into law.

Therefore, nothing stands in the way of their application any more. This is indeed a peaceful revolution that meets the aspirations of our fellow citizens to greater participation in the management of local affairs. Besides, the North-West and South-West Regions have been granted a special status with provisions reflecting their social and cultural specificities.

You may wonder why I dwell on an issue that does not specifically concern you. I do so for two reasons:

- Firstly, yours will be the maiden generation of youths to take advantage of the opportunities that will open up for those wishing to engage in the local governance sphere. I urge you to do so.

- Secondly, the new process of decentralization serves as an example. It proves that the problems related to development of our society can be resolved through consultation without resorting to violence.

My dear young compatriots,

I wish to underscore this point because there are far too many places worldwide - particularly in Africa - where violence wreaks suffering on the people. We do not want this to happen in Cameroon. Our goal remains to build a peaceful, democratic, just and prosperous society.

Accordingly, we will keep up efforts to achieve that goal by focusing on the development of our educational system.

Although its quality has attained an acceptable level, it will continue to be accorded special attention by the Government. For instance, in 2020, the budget allocations for all types of education combined, represent around one-seventh of public spending.

Young people with sound training and education will naturally be more likely to emerge as responsible citizens and find employment.

Finding employment, particularly for the youth, remains a cause for concern, because for the time being, there is mismatch between employment demand and supply. The Government and the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training are making

every effort to provide solutions to this problem. The former through its recruitment into the public service and the army, and the latter through the implementation of various employment assistance programmes.

However, it must be acknowledged that though laudable, such efforts are unlikely to resolve a problem stemming from the fact that our economy does not generate enough jobs. This difficulty notwithstanding, it is gratifying to know that, according to statistics, slightly over 500 000 jobs were created last year in the modern sector of our economy.

The said sector's current situation is attributable to the different crises witnessed over the last two decades. I mentioned this issue recently in my end-of-year message to the Nation.

In substance, I stated that our economic recovery was relatively satisfactory and that our growth was once again on the uptrend. However, I also stated that the global context remained uncertain and that we had to redouble our efforts to stay on the path of emergence. Earlier, I had the opportunity to deplore our heavy dependence on the outside world and to suggest that we should reduce it.

Such is the meaning of our development policy which aims to modernize our agriculture, stimulate our industrialization, particularly by processing our agricultural and mineral commodities, and develop digital technology. This will enable us to reduce our imports, increase our exports and create new

employment areas. It behoves you, my dear young compatriots, to take on this challenging task in the coming decades.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education will continue its activities to the benefit of youths in the areas of civic education and national integration, economic integration and implementation of the Three-Year Special Youth Plan. Such is the case with the Youth Connekt Cameroon initiative that was launched recently in Yaounde.

These various programmes concern several hundreds of thousands of young people.

Regarding our reasons for legitimate satisfaction, I will mention the victories scored by our young sportsmen and sportswomen on the world stage, which include:

- the 2nd Africa Cup of Nations trophy lifted by our Under-17 Men's Football Team in April 2019;
- the 2nd African Women's Volleyball Championship trophy won by our Women's National Volleyball Team in July 2019; and
- the designation, in January 2020, of our Women's National Football Team as the best women's football team on the continent.

I believe that we can take pride in our young sportsmen and sportswomen through whom Cameroon's flag is flying very high.

My dear young compatriots,

Not too long ago, during a Council of Ministers meeting, I requested the Government to consider designing a national drug and alcohol abuse control plan. Such abuse had reached an alarming level among the Cameroonian youth. Once more, I am calling on the Government today to redouble its efforts to combat this scourge.

I also avail myself of the opportunity of this Youth Day celebration to, again, appeal to our young compatriots in the North-West and South-West Regions. Those who have allowed themselves to be lured into armed gangs and who continue to maintain a climate of insecurity in these two regions should lay down their weapons, like many who have already done so and who are living peacefully in our communities. Once again, I urge them to come out of the bush and rejoin their other fellow young citizens who are leading normal lives in our society.

My dear young compatriots,

I cannot conclude without mentioning a recent incident that has shocked our consciences: the murder, in Yaounde, of a young mathematics teacher by one of his students. This incredible act speaks volumes about the excesses of our modern societies.

I call on parents, the clergy and teachers to prevent, through their teachings, such acts from happening again. I also urge you to reflect on what has happened, to ponder its gravity and to resolve to never again commit such acts.

I take this opportunity to once more extend my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved parents.

My dear young compatriots,

Sixty years ago – when I was your age, Cameroon gained its independence. That had been the dream of the youth in those days and that dream came true.

The task ahead was huge. We were aware of this. It took a lot of effort, but also blood and tears, to get to where we are today. Generations of youth like you devoted their lives for us to get here. We have no reason to be ashamed of what they achieved.

Today, a large majority of Cameroonians can eat their fill, receive health care, enrol in primary and secondary schools and university, and have the right to express themselves and to vote freely.

Of course, much remains to be accomplished. We will do so together. Together, we will build the just and prosperous society to which we aspire.

My dear young compatriots,
For the good of our country, I need you.

Happy Youth Day!

Long live Cameroonian Youth! And

Long Live Cameroon!





11th Edition of Central African
Economic and Monetary
Community (CEMAC) day
**Speech by H.E. Paul BIYA, President
of the Republic of Cameroon
current President of the Conference of
CEMAC Heads of State**

Yaounde, 15 march 2020

Your Excellencies, Heads of State of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, Dear Brothers, Dear Peoples of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad,

As you are aware, 16 March marks the commemoration of the transition from the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) to the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) in N'Djamena in 1994. This year, we are celebrating the 11th edition of the CEMAC Day, instituted by the Additional Act of 25 June 2008.

This commemoration is also an opportunity for us to congratulate each other on belonging to one of the sub-regions of our continent with a promising economy. Its young and dynamic population is an asset for the development of Africa in general and that of our sub-region in particular.

CEMAC Day is a historic moment. It avails CEMAC founding countries of the opportunity to assess the ground covered so far.

It also provides an opportunity to consider prospects for their joint action, which is the inclusive economic and social development of our Member States through the intensification of intra-Community trade.

This implies that beyond its commemorative dimension, the CEMAC Day is one of the platforms for reflection on all the challenges facing the Central African sub-region, particularly the free movement of people and goods.

***Dear Peoples of Cameroon, Central African Republic,
Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad,***

While the gradual implementation of the free movement of people and goods is to be lauded, it is clear that this cannot be fully achieved without sufficient and quality infrastructure. In other words, the problem of infrastructure remains one of the major constraints on the development of our Community space.

The aptly worded central theme of this year's CEMAC Day is «Improving physical infrastructure to promote trade between the peoples of CEMAC». It invites us to reflect on possible solutions that could enable us to meet the sub-region's infrastructure challenge, in a context characterized by the advent of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

This theme is therefore in line with Thrust 3 of our Regional Economic Programme, which is devoted in particular to economic infrastructures and the development of our Community space.

In this connection, the objectives sought reflect our common desire to open up to greater and more fluid trade. They are beneficial to each of our States and to our sub-region as a whole.

I am thinking particularly of the construction of transport, electricity and telecommunication infrastructures. Genuine economic development is inconceivable without such infrastructures.

Moreover, I am convinced that the intensification of our infrastructure will be an effective lever for the diversification of our economies. The development of the growth sectors that determine access to the emergence of these economies depends thereon.

Your Excellencies, Heads of State of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, Dear Brothers,

In this light, bridging the digital divide and accelerating the development of the circular economy within our sub-region are among the challenges that we absolutely must meet. We need to build a community space that is more capable of anticipating the challenges of a constantly changing world and making use of the opportunities available to improve the well-being of our populations.

Although commendable efforts have already been made to build a significant amount of physical infrastructure, connectivity between our States and with the other sub-regions of the continent remains the main objective towards which we must strive.

It is true that the difficult economic context that our community has been going through in recent years calls for rigorous management of our public finances. However, the initial outcomes of our efforts give us reason to envisage the continuation of our development and, consequently, our progress towards the emergence of a new economy with greater serenity.

We must continue these efforts to address the challenges facing us. In this regard, we must express gratitude to our external partners for their constant concern. I wish to thank them for their continued support for the reforms undertaken within CEMAC.

***Dear Peoples of Cameroon, Central African Republic,
Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad,***

While thanking you for your attention, I would like to assure you, in my capacity as current President of our Conference of CEMAC Heads of State, of my determination to contribute as much as possible to strengthening the integration process in our sub-region with a view to achieving the goals of our Organization by 2025.

I wish every success to the celebrations marking the commemoration of the 11th edition of the CEMAC Day.

Long live sub-regional integration!

Long live CEMAC!



Head of State's Message to the Nation on the eve of the National Day, 20 May 2020

Yaounde, 19 May 2020



« The wearing of face masks in public places will be mandatory until further notice ».

***Fellow Cameroonians,
My dear compatriots,***

I usually do not address you on the eve of our National Day. Traditionally, this is an occasion to celebrate, with joy, our national unity as well as our republican and democratic values.

Today, the context is different. Cameroon, like most countries in the world, has been affected by COVID-19. Our health system is mobilized to combat this terrible disease. Various measures have been taken to stem the spread of the disease as announced by the Prime Minister. It is necessary to scrupulously follow all the instructions that have been issued (wearing of face masks, social distancing, frequent hand washing). This is crucial for the health of everyone.

Under these circumstances, it was not possible to maintain the festivities marking the celebration of our National Day due to the gatherings it entails. Of course, it was with some reluctance that I took this decision. However, since my main concern is to preserve the health of my fellow compatriots, there was no room for hesitation.

Most of you have understood that it is necessary to put aside political squabbles and adopt a common front in the face of the insidious danger posed by COVID-19. Some political leaders who do not belong to the ruling majority shared this view. I thank them for that.

We have also had the pleasure of receiving assistance and encouragement from friendly countries, international organizations, national and foreign business leaders, as well as various personalities such as Mr Jack MA of the Alibaba Foundation. I wish to thank them here and now on your behalf.

My dear compatriots,

The first thing I would like to tell you today is not to panic and not to believe in fake news conveyed especially by social media. Admittedly, this is a daunting challenge. However, we can meet it together as we did in many other circumstances.

I also want you to know that the Government, at my behest, is doing its utmost to bail us out of this serious health crisis.

As I have said, protective measures have already been taken to counter the spread of COVID-19 in our territory.

Despite these efforts, the number of infected persons keeps increasing daily, thus indicating that the fight against this pandemic is complex and difficult. I therefore call on each and every one of you to get involved. Each of us must comply with the measures that have been taken. This is one of the conditions for us to achieve the desired victory against the virus.

I strongly urge all political, religious and opinion leaders, all officials of associations, all traditional rulers and all dignitaries to fully participate in the fight against COVID-19. Of course, this should be done within the framework defined by the Government and in compliance with the laws and regulations of the Republic.

My dear compatriots,

I would now avail myself of this opportunity to extend my sympathy to the families that have lost loved ones to this terrible disease. I extend my heartfelt encouragement to patients admitted to our hospitals and wish them a speedy

recovery. I also call on those who have tested positive to strictly adhere to the rules of confinement.

I also wish to hail the courage of Cameroonian health professionals and those assisting them. With the resources available to us, they are doing the utmost to treat those infected with the disease. Indeed, they are not giving up in the face of the gravity of COVID-19 infection. The Nation, through me, congratulates and urges them to keep it up.

As you are aware, following the outbreak of the pandemic in our country, a Special National Solidarity Fund to Fight the Coronavirus has been set up, in addition to the protective measures I have already mentioned. I have taken measures, within the limits of existing resources, to ensure its initial replenishment with the sum of one billion CFA francs. Additional resources could be provided depending on changing needs on the ground.

I take this opportunity to congratulate our fellow citizens who have already made contributions. I call on those who can, to do same. National solidarity so requires.

In our current struggle, the Government will go to great lengths to combat any manipulation or exploitation of this tragedy for political, economic or social ends.

My dear compatriots,

I would now like to draw your attention to the economic consequences of this health crisis.

Today, we are facing new challenges resulting from the collapse of stock markets, falling commodity prices and an

unexpected sharp decline in trade. The coronavirus pandemic will therefore have a negative impact on the global economy as well as our economy.

Of course, we will have to return subsequently to the path of growth, while ensuring that jobs are preserved as much as possible during this period of uncertainty and difficulty.

I urge the Government to continue to be mobilized as it has been doing since the outbreak of this health crisis. In an unprecedented social context, it should, in particular, be resourceful and inventive to maintain our financial balances, contain the rate of inflation, ensure the continuity of public service, especially in the education sector, and regulate economic activity so as to safeguard social stability and peace.

On the health front, despite the increase in the number of people tested positive for the coronavirus, the situation can be brought under control. We will therefore spare no effort to check the spread of the virus and reduce the mortality rate resulting from the pandemic.

The global health crisis triggered by COVID-19 will undoubtedly mark a turning point in the functioning of our society. It requires that we continue to strengthen our health facilities, scale up our healthcare services and, above all, update some of our development projects and programmes.

On another note, in the face of this ordeal, our health system must be more efficient. The other diseases affecting Cameroonians just as much must not be neglected. The same should apply to the routine immunization programme. That is why specialized COVID-19 treatment centres have been set up

in Yaounde and Douala. Others are being established in regional and divisional headquarters.

My dear compatriots,

Before concluding, I think it is necessary to briefly review the protective measures put in place to stem the spread of the coronavirus. Most have already been implemented and are certainly contributing to slowing down the spread of the pandemic.

However, in view of developments in the health situation and the effects of COVID-19 on our economic and social life, it was necessary to make some readjustments. I therefore instructed the Prime Minister, who had already made two statements on the issue, to announce new measures and adapt others already being implemented. This was done on 30 April with all the necessary clarity.

I would like to specify the spirit of the 19 measures taken late last month without revisiting the details. The aim was basically to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the national economy and the life of the most fragile households. The encouraging lessons learnt from our COVID-19 response strategy enabled us to take relief and support measures for the economic sectors and persons most affected by the pandemic.

These measures seek, among other things, to:

- ease social life and the movement of persons;
- suspend the payment of some taxes, dues and contributions;
- support ailing businesses; and
- increase the amount of family allowances and some

retirement benefits.

It goes without saying that these relief measures do not exempt us from complying with “barrier gestures”, particularly the wearing of face masks in public places as well as the ban on public gatherings, aimed at checking the spread of the pandemic.

I therefore call on Cameroonians to have trust in public authorities. The Government is fully aware of the gravity of the situation and is prepared to take all necessary measures. I can already state that:

- as soon as a treatment is found, steps will be taken to put it at the disposal of our fellow citizens; before that,
- the wearing of face masks in public places will be mandatory until further notice.

To that end, the local industry should continue to engage in the manufacture of face masks and alcohol-based solutions in strict compliance with Government and WHO prescribed standards.

I know I can once again count on your patriotic spirit, your sense of responsibility and your courage to enable us to collectively overcome this scourge that is affecting the entire planet. In this connection, we should avoid stigmatizing those suffering from the disease. Everyone must feel concerned and contribute their quota to the fight against the spread of the virus. We should bear in mind that negligence by a single individual can seriously harm the entire community. We should therefore not be complacent.

Fellow Cameroonians,

My dear compatriots,

You have certainly understood that we need to make a lot of efforts to fight COVID-19 that may pose a threat to the stability of our states.

During this difficult period, we must remain a united, supportive and disciplined people.

I therefore appeal for a kind of “united front” of all the vital forces of the Nation against the coronavirus pandemic. In that connection, I commend, once again, the attitude of virtually all political leaders and religious authorities who have accepted to join in this national struggle. I also encourage all efforts geared towards developing an endogenous cure for COVID-19. Let us channel all our energies towards fighting this common enemy.

Long live the Republic!

Long live Cameroon!



Higher Judicial Council

Opening Statement by the HEAD OF STATE

Yaounde, 10 august 2020



***The Minister of State, Minister of Justice and
Keeper of the Seals, Vice-Chairperson of the
Higher Judicial Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Higher
Judicial Council,***

Welcome to the conference room of Unity Palace on the occasion of the holding, today, of the Higher Judicial Council session for the year 2020.

This session is taking place in the wake of the in-depth renewal of this institution, which saw the coming on board of new Substantive and Alternate Members, as well as a new Secretary.

This session is also marked by the absorption, into the Judiciary, of Legal Probationers who graduated from the recently created Common Law Section of the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM). They are the products of the special recruitment of Englishspeaking legal and judicial personnel to apply this legal innovation in the jurisdictions of the Courts of Appeal of the North-West and South-West Regions.

I extend my hearty congratulations to each and every one.

***Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Higher
Judicial Council,***

You are required, through your opinions and proposals, to assist the President of the Republic, Chairperson of the

Higher Judicial Council, in the performance of his constitutional duty as guarantor of the independence of the judiciary and the proper functioning of this State institution. That is a crucial role.

I urge you to discharge your duty with tact, objectivity and discernment. The wordings of the oath some of you are going to take should be a source of inspiration for you and commitment to the service of a credible justice system, that is attached to its principles, endowed with competent personnel, and appreciated by our fellow citizens.

While wishing our deliberations every success, I declare open the Higher Judicial Council session of 10 August 2020.

Thank you.



HEAD OF STATE'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE TO THE NATION

Yaounde, le 31 decembre 2021



Fellow Cameroonians,

My dear compatriots,

I am convinced that you understand why I am beginning this traditional message by talking about the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic on our planet. In this regard, 2020 will undoubtedly be remembered as a dark year marked by hundreds of thousands of deaths worldwide.

Like almost all countries, Cameroon was affected, perhaps less severely than other States. Despite our efforts, COVID-19 plunged many families into mourning and seriously hampered the functioning of our economy and society.

I take this opportunity to hail once more the dedication of our physicians, nurses and health personnel as a whole, thanks to whom many lives have been and continue to be saved.

It is perhaps too early to try to draw lessons from this painful episode which, moreover, is continuing. Needless to recall that this pandemic is not the first and history has it that epidemics wiped out entire populations, the most recent occurring in the wake of the First World War.

Should man take the blame because of his wanton exploitation of the planet's natural resources and his constant engagement in conflicts leading to massacres and diseases, as well as experiments to develop new weapons? I believe the question needs to be asked. Whatever the answer, our era should take credit for clearly posing the problem of the relationship between man and his natural environment. This was, I believe, the objective of the Paris Conference on Global Warming, whose recommendations are still relevant today.

In any case, we should not rest on our laurels. I have personally observed that most of our fellow citizens no longer comply with the protective measures prescribed by the Government.

At a time when, everywhere else, there is a second wave of the epidemic, coupled with the appearance of a new and more contagious strain of the virus, I urge you once again to put on your face masks, to wash your hands regularly and to consult a physician or any other health personnel if you notice any symptoms. This is the only way to save lives and to curb the spread of the virus.

My dear compatriots,

Our focus on the health situation did not prevent us from devoting ourselves to other essential tasks related to the management of our country, namely:

- maintaining security and peace throughout our national territory;
- strengthening our democratic process; and
- pursuing our economic, social and cultural development programme.

In recent years, our country has been facing external threats, particularly on our eastern border and in the northern part of our country.

In the first case, the threat comes from highway robbers lured by easy prey, namely peaceful stockbreeders and their herds.

In the second, the threat now takes the form of isolated raids by Boko Haram or suicide bomb attempts by teenagers. The effective vigilance and action of our Defence and Security Forces have significantly reduced the activities of these criminals.

The situation is different in the North-West and South-West Regions where armed groups maintain an atmosphere of terror and insecurity. They attack isolated communities and educational institutions from time to time to discourage parents from sending their children to school. The list of atrocities and crimes committed by these groups is already long. One of the most heinous of them is that which took place in Kumba recently, resulting in the death of seven school children with several others injured.

This crime, which is a shock to the human conscience, will not go unpunished. All the perpetrators will be hunted down relentlessly and brought to justice. Already, public opinion, particularly in the two regions concerned, can realize, if that is not yet the case, that these so-called “secessionists” are actually nothing more than murderers, and what is more, murderers of innocent children. To say that the Kumba carnage caused widespread outrage is an understatement.

I would now like to appeal, once more, to the sense of responsibility of the friendly countries hosting the sponsors and of the organizations financing and running the armed gangs in the North-West and South-West Regions, through various channels. All those who would be identified at the end of investigations as initiators or accomplices of these odious crimes will answer for their actions.

Yet our Government has continued to demonstrate its commitment to openness and dialogue by, for example, releasing many former secessionists and facilitating their reintegration into society.

Furthermore, after the Major National Dialogue, the Government fast-tracked the implementation of an ambitious decentralization policy which includes a special status for our North-West and South-West Regions, which takes into account their specificities and aspirations.

I once more urge the youths who have been enlisted in armed gangs to come out of the bush and sign up with the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) centres in order to return to a normal life, like their other young compatriots.

The prevailing insecurity in the North-West and South-West Regions has caused untold damage to our country. Our democracy allows for the peaceful expression of all opinions, in compliance with the laws and regulations in force. Otherwise, peace and stability would be jeopardized.

I hail the patriotic spirit of those of our fellow citizens in the North-West and South-West Regions who are not only increasingly cooperating with the Defence and Security Forces, but are also courageously fighting these armed gangs. They have realized that these gangs are not acting in the interest of the people.

I would also like to commend here the bravery of our Defence and Security Forces that have not failed in their duty to protect the integrity of the national territory, the people

and property. They deserve the respect and consideration of everyone. I encourage them to keep it up and to remain a republican force that respects human rights.

It is equally regrettable that some of our compatriots, who rallied around a personality who failed to achieve his ambitions during the last presidential election, took advantage of security and health difficulties to try to stir up a revolt falsely referred to as “peaceful marches”. Fortunately, very few people took part in these marches, thanks to the maturity of Cameroonians.

Needless to recall that in a democracy, access to political office is secured through the ballot box and not through the street, certain media organs or social media networks.

This is precisely the case in Cameroon where the democratic process is being conducted in accordance with the provisions of our Constitution and the rules laid down by our laws, as amply illustrated by the following recent happenings:

- In March 2018, the term of office of Senators was renewed.
- In October 2018, the Head of State was elected with an overwhelming majority.
- In February 2020, legislative elections were held, with the Government securing a comfortable majority in the National Assembly.

On the same date, municipal elections put an end to the system of government delegates in major towns, which are now managed by elected mayors.

In December 2020, regional elections completed the implementation of the provisions of the decentralization process.

Thus, with each passing day, our political will to implement the democratic agenda that is in line with the genuine aspirations of the Cameroonian people is further strengthened, an agenda initiated upon my accession to the helm of State and which led, a few years later, to the institution of the multiparty system.

To those who are criticizing the imperfections of our democracy, I would like to say that it took us just a few decades to put it in place. The major democratic countries, for their part, did so only after several centuries marked by revolutions, civil wars and even episodes of dictatorship.

For my part, I am well aware of all that is still to be done. I am, however, convinced that we are on the right track and that soon we will all be proud of our democratic progress.

My dear compatriots,

It must be acknowledged that the international context - in particular the coronavirus pandemic and the decline in global growth – took a toll on the performance of our public finance and our economy during the year that is drawing to an end.

While maintaining our growth targets, we had to take fiscal consolidation and economic support measures in order to weather these difficult times and enable the implementation of a recovery policy in 2021.

Thus, a decision was taken to finalize African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2021 and Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2022 projects, and to continue to implement plans for the reconstruction and development of the North-West, South-West and Far-North Regions.

Despite these efforts, it is expected that our growth rate, which had stabilized at around 4% in recent years, will witness a sharp decline in 2020 and that inflation will inch up. This is undoubtedly due to the impact of the global economic downturn and our domestic economic trends, especially the increase in security spending.

Nonetheless, Cameroon's economy has maintained a certain capacity to rebound despite the difficulties. Thanks to support from our international partners and, in the event of a decline in the pandemic, there is reason to hope for recovery in the coming months.

In the same vein, I would now like to draw your attention to the recent launch of our National Development Strategy (NDS) which replaces the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) that has come to an end.

The National Development Strategy defines the main thrusts of our planning up to 2030. The document draws lessons from past experiences and sets new goals for the next decade, notably the structural transformation of our economy and inclusive development.

It will therefore be necessary to step up the fight against poverty, unemployment and the lingering informal sector. It will also be necessary to strive to achieve an 8% growth rate

by embarking on the structural transformation of our economy and enhancing the effectiveness of public spending. In so doing, we will put all the odds of achieving emergence by 2035 on our side.

Naturally, we will also continue to implement our social development policy which was defined at the start of the current seven-year term concerning youth employment, education, health and family.

These, my dear compatriots, are the outlines of the action that the Government has, despite the difficulties, strove to implement in recent months and that it will continue to implement in the coming years, which will be crucial for our progress towards emergence.

I am convinced that we will be able to achieve our objectives, provided that we agree to make the required efforts and to embark on the needed reforms.

Fellow Cameroonians,

My dear compatriots,

The year that is ending has not been an easy one. We had to meet many major challenges. We must remain united and determined, like in the past. The Cameroonian people have always risen to the challenges facing them. We should be proud of this.

Happy and Prosperous New Year to you all.

Long live the Republic! Long live Cameroon!

BIOGRAPHY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC



His Excellency Paul Biya was born on 13 February 1933 at Mvoméka'a, Meyomessala Subdivision, Dja et Lobo Division, South Province. President Paul Biya is the second President of the State of Cameroon. He assumed office on 6 November 1982 following the resignation of President Ahmadou Ahidjo. President Paul Biya is married and has three children.

Born on the 13th February 1933 at Mvoméka'a (Meyomessala) of the late Etienne Mvondo Assam and Mrs MVONDO (born Anastasie Eyenga Elle).

EDUCATION

- **1948: First School Leaving Certificate (CEPE) (Nden);**
- **1948/1950: St. Tharcissius Pre-seminary, Edea;**
- **1950/1954: Akono Minor Seminary;**
- **June 1953: BEPC**
- **1954/1956: Lycee General Leclerc**
- **June 1955: Baccalaureat 1^{ère} partie**
- **June 1956: Baccalaureat 2^e partie Lycee Louis le Grand (Paris).**

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Degree in Public Law, Diploma of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Diploma from the Institut des Hautes Etudes d'Outre-Mer.

Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures in Public law.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

- Charge de mission (assistant) in the Presidency of the Republic: October 1962;
- Director of Cabinet, Ministry of National education: January 1964;
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Education, July 1965;
- Director of Civil Cabinet (Chief of State), Presidency of the Republic, December 1967;
- Secretary General and Director of Civil Cabinet : January 1968;
- Minister of State, Secretary General in the Presidency of the Republic June 1970;
- Prime Minister; 30th June 1975;
- As Constitutional successor, he becomes President of the Republic after the resignation of Ahmadou Ahidjo on the 6th November 1982; this according to the constitutional amendment instituted by law n° 79/02 of 29th June 1979. On taking the oath of office, he undertook to democratise political life, to bring about social and economic liberalisation, to introduce rigour in management and moralise attitudes, and to reinforce international cooperation.
- Elected President of the Cameroon National Union (CNU): 14 September 1983.

- Elected President of the Republic on January 14, 1984, re-elected on April 24, 1988, October 11, 1992 (First President elected by direct universal suffrage with multiple applications, in Cameroon), October 11, 1997, October 11, 2004, October 09, 2011 and October 07, 2018.
- Elected President of the CPDM, Cameroon Peoples Democratic Party after the CNU was transformed to the CPDM; 24th March 1985 in Bamenda.
- When on the 19th December 1990, Mr Paul BIYA promulgated the law on associations and Political parties. He was in effect restoring multiparty politics in Cameroon (since September 1966, when Cameroon was under the one party system).

As of today, over two hundred parties have been legalised. The CPDM obtained an absolute majority during the March 1997 legislative elections and its candidate won the Presidential election of October, 1997.

The President however choose to form a government that included other political parties. Five political parties are represented in the government of January 04, 2019 ; the CPDM, the NUDP, the NADP, the NFCS and PADDEC. 7 political parties are present in the National Assembly: The CPDM, SDF, NUDP, UDC, MDR, NFCS and NADP.

7 political parties are also present in Senat : CPDM, the NUDP, the NADP, the NFCS and PADDEC.

His Excellency Paul Biya married Mrs Chantal BIYA on 23rd April, 1994. He is a father of three children: Frank BIYA, Paul BIYA Junior and Anastasia Brenda BIYA EYENGA .

HONORARY DISTINCTIONS

Mr BIYA is a holder of many decorations and honorary distinctions:

- Grand Master of the National Orders (Republic of Cameroon);
- Grand-Croix of the Legion of Honour (Republic of France);
- Great Commander of the Medal of St-George (United Kingdom and North Ireland);
- Grand-Croix de classe exceptionnelle (Federal Republic of Germany);
- Grand Collier de l'Ordre du Ouissam Mohammadi (Kingdom of Morocco);
- Great Commander of the Order of Niger (Federal Republic of Nigeria);
- Grand-Croix de l'Ordre National du Mérite (Republic of Senegal);
- Commander of the National Ordre (Republic of Tunisia);
- Doctoris Honoris Causa (University of Maryland, USA);
- Professor emeritus (University of Beijing, Republic of China).

PUBLICATIONS

Mr BIYA is the author of a political essay entitled «Communal Liberalism».

This work has been translated into English, German and Hebrew.

In it the Head of State announces the advent of multi-party politics (which became effective in 1990) after the temporary period of the one party State. He explains his choice for economic liberalism and private initiative while at the same advocating national solidarity, equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth, social justice, the development based on inventiveness and peaceful co-existence of various cultures and peoples who make up the nation.

Finally, he reaffirms the need for modernisation of the State and the desire to maintain close cooperation with other countries of the world.

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