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**The President of the Republic, H.E. Paul BIYA
at the 38th Session of the General Conference
and the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO**

Paris, 16 – 18 November 2015

CAMEROON - UNESCO

A Full and Friendly Cooperation



STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT PAUL BIYA AT THE 34TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

Paris, 23 October 2007

**The President of the General
Conference of UNESCO,
The Chair of the Executive Council,
Mr. Director-General,
Mr Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and
the Grenadines,
Heads of Delegation,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like first of all to say how pleased I am to be with you in this prestigious hall, in response to the kind invitation of Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura.

I am moved by your very warm welcome, the kind remarks made about my country and me by the President of the Conference and the honour given me to address, for the first time, your eminent assembly on the occasion of the 34th General Conference of our organization.

Cameroon and UNESCO maintain fruitful and exemplary cooperation ties. My presence here is an expression of such cooperation as well as a testimony to the interest we have in an organization whose goals, actions and achievements are entirely in line with the deep aspirations of all our peoples.

In the wake of the Second World War, the founding countries of UNESCO assigned it the exalting mission of casting out war from people's minds and averting it between nations. To that end, it was mandated to promote science which fosters better understanding of the world, education which gives access to knowledge and, lastly, culture which is a source of fulfilment and communion.

Since its inception, UNESCO, thanks to the determination of its successive leaders and in spite of the difficult economic climate, has performed the missions assigned to it in a generally satisfactory manner.

At this juncture, I would like to pay tribute to all those who, at one time or another, played a crucial role in the promotion and accomplishment of these lofty tasks. I am referring in particular to Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura for his efforts to champion UNESCO's universal cause and for his role in the successful conduct of the reforms of our organization.

In a changing world of globalization, UNESCO, which celebrates its 61st

anniversary this year, has maintained its full authority over its fundamental responsibilities. It remains the guarantor of the principles and values of universality, justice, respect for human rights and tolerance which constitute the best possible context for dialogue among cultures.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Summit of 2005 had rightly underscored this fact; today, our world faces many challenges that threaten its stability and even its very existence. The exhibition UNESCO is organizing on this theme is a reminder of this gruesome reality. In fact, natural disasters, global warming, major pandemics, poverty, and, of course, war and terrorism are among the most serious threats facing humanity. Our duty is to tackle these scourges resolutely in order to protect our common heritage from disaster, because we must at all cost safeguard our planet for present and future generations.

Developing countries in general, and island and coastal states, notably in Africa, are particularly exposed to these threats. Accordingly, they deserve special attention from our Organization, which must show its solidarity with them because the inequality of terms of trade and the debt burden are obstacles to their development.

Such solidarity must be manifested on all fronts notably, political, economic, social and cultural. It should not be restricted to the expression of good intentions, to catalogues of individual and collective resolutions or to commitments whose implementation

is constantly differed. It must be effective, it must translate into significant acts and achievements that truly respond to the needs and expectations of countries of the South which, we all know, are still enormous.

Many of us believe that it is much less an issue of means than that of political will in an increasingly globalized world. For, we are all aware of our common destiny, through the wonders of science and technology as well as the various threats currently facing us, namely the ecological threat. Therefore, if we face common challenges and if we run the same risks, then we must seek collective solutions which call for increased international solidarity. That is why, at the Millennium Summit, held under the auspices of the United Nations Organization, during which we took stock of the 20th century and also paved the way for a new Millennium of peace and progress for all, I had proposed that a forum for discussion and action on a globalization ethic be opened. Faced with this irreversible process, it seemed urgent to me, in fact, that the international community should reflect on the ways and means of bringing all countries on board, especially those of the South which ran the risk of being marginalized and weakened, and therefore of growing even poorer.

In short, it appeared urgent to me that every step be taken to ensure that countries of the South assume their rightful place in this changing world of globalization and be able to derive the utmost benefit, in order to contain, if not narrow, the ever widening gap between rich and poor countries. For, strictly speaking, many of the

so-called poor countries are basically not poor, they may even be considered potentially rich. All they need is multifarious and substantial support to their own efforts, such as fair remuneration for their products, transfer of relevant technologies, increase in development assistance, capital flows for productive investment with a view to creating and strengthening the bases and conditions that enable them to achieve progress and development.

In the face of globalization and its multiple challenges, we have therefore to invent and promote a shared ethic of solidarity, which is no less than a lesson in history, a requirement in today's world and a duty towards the future.

Cameroon, for its part, has always underscored that only a firm political will can help break the vicious circle of underdevelopment and extreme poverty. It seems to me, therefore, that in this regard, developed countries have a special responsibility which they have undertaken to assume within various international bodies like the G8, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO and others.

I am pleased, of course, that most of the major commitments have been honoured, thus enabling many countries, including mine, to obtain considerable assistance necessary for financing socio-educational and health programmes geared towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Allow me to take the opportunity afforded me by this forum to

restate the sincere gratitude of my government to our various bilateral and multilateral partners for their support and assistance during these difficult times.

However, it should be acknowledged that much remains to be done to achieve the objectives set in 2000 by the United Nations to eradicate poverty, ignorance and pandemics that seriously hinder the improvement of the living conditions of many people in several regions of the world.

As the custodian of the values of justice and equity, UNESCO must continue to assert itself as the conscience of the international community at the service of North-South solidarity. I am pleased to note that the agenda of the 34th Session of the General Conference is consistent with these concerns.

**Mr. Chairman of the Executive Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I know the seriousness with which your Council, of which Cameroon was a Vice-Chair for Africa, has, for four years now, been working to formulate the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008 – 2013 and the budget of the 2008 - 2009 biennium.

I note with satisfaction that this strategy and budget continue to give priority to Africa. I thus have an opportunity to thank all Member States for their constant concern for our continent which has benefited from the steadfast support of UNESCO, notably through its contribution to the struggle for sustainable development. Moreover, the programme "Priority: Africa"

is a good illustration of the attention our organization pays to the African continent.

Although many of the actions contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals have been undertaken, it should be acknowledged that the resources allocated to "Priority: Africa" have proven to be inadequate. To remedy this situation, it would certainly be necessary to seek extra-budgetary funds to enable UNESCO to successfully pursue this programme adopted at the 25th Session of our Conference in 1989 and which will soon celebrate its twentieth anniversary. This is perhaps the time to carry out an evaluation of the programme.

In this spirit, it seems to me that cooperation between UNESCO and the African Union is more than ever indispensable to address the specific needs of the continent. Cooperation agreements signed with African regional organizations such as CEMAC, of which Cameroon is a member, WAEMU, COMESA and SADC also afford an appropriate framework for the determination of UNESCO and Africa to work in close collaboration.

Thus, a resolution on the implementation of the decisions of the Assembly of the African Union held in Khartoum in January 2007 on science, technology and sustainable development will be tabled for adoption at this assembly. I hope that all Member States will support it.

Permit me to seize this opportunity to express my appreciation to the African Group for the effective role it played in

the recognition of the special situation of the continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cameroon, my country, at the dawn of its independence, became a member of UNESCO and thereby adhered to its ideals. It remains profoundly attached to the cooperation it maintains with our organization in its areas of competence, namely education, science, culture and communication.

Cameroon's educational system on the whole bears the imprint of UNESCO. One of its actions, which was a milestone in Cameroon, is the support it provided towards the establishment of the Advanced Teachers Training College of Yaounde in 1961.

Since then, cooperation between my country and UNESCO has been growing from strength to strength.

With the support of the UNESCO Office in Yaounde, whose competence I should acknowledge here, various national and sub-regional projects have been implemented.

In the area of education, for example, I will like to mention capacity building for steering the educational system and education for HIV/AIDS prevention in schools.

In the area of science, UNESCO, through the "Families First Africa" project helped to set up the Chantal Biya International Centre for Research on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. I am pleased to express here my gratitude to the Director-General of UNESCO and to our partners who,

through extra-budgetary funds, have enabled the centre to develop.

I must also mention the contribution of UNESCO to the preservation of the Dja Wildlife Reserve which was classified as a world heritage site and which is at the fore of our cooperation programmes.

Concerning the digital divide between developing and developed countries, I feel it is indispensable to make great efforts to remedy the situation, if possible with the assistance of our foreign partners. In Cameroon, a lot has been done in that domain, but much remains to be done, particularly with regard to the construction of appropriate infrastructure.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cameroonians, as a whole, by dint of trials and sacrifices, have developed a keen sense of responsibility. They have understood that the progress to which they aspire would be vain without a harmonious functioning of their institutions to guarantee stability and without their relations with neighbouring countries being founded on mutual understanding and interests.

Over the last decades, the government of my country has been working for this purpose. Today, I can safely say that Cameroon has proven that it is possible, with diverse peoples brought together by the accidents of history, to form a Nation which is conscious of its unity and of its identity.

It was not a foregone conclusion that peoples divided by colonisation and

forced into different cultural moulds, could be reunited and be able to build a common future. Anglophones, on the one hand, and Francophones, on the other, are forging an exemplary blend. What would have been an obstacle, they turned into an asset; what could have been a difference, they turned into a source of wealth.

A peace-loving country, Cameroon is equally proud of its cultural diversity which it enshrined in its 1996 Constitution. In August 2006, we therefore enthusiastically acceded to the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. For my country, composed of over 200 ethnic groups with a mosaic of languages and cultural expressions, this convention is undeniably a great stride in the conservation and development of our rich heritage. Thanks to tolerance which characterizes relations between individuals and groups, diversity is today a part of Cameroon's cultural identity. From this point of view, my country takes pride in being in the vanguard of the dialogue between cultures.

In fact, we have always felt that culture, in the widest meaning of the term, is the best antidote to disunity and violence. The cultures we have inherited are all or almost all the result of a blending of multiple influences. The major civilizations of the Far East, South-East Asia, the Middle-East and the Mediterranean well illustrate this. Even Africa which, for a long time, was torn apart and compartmentalized was the scene of fruitful contacts between diverse cultures. For these reasons, I do not believe

in a clash of civilisations but rather in a dialogue of cultures, an indispensable condition for the advent of a new, just and unified international order. For, it is our conviction that all cultures have and offer positive values that should be explored and promoted for the benefit of all of humanity. Ignoring these specific values means laying the bed for prejudice, misunderstanding and intolerance which generate divisions and conflicts. On the other hand, promoting them and making them accessible to all, means creating affinities and building bridges between peoples and between nations, which foster understanding, respect and mutual coexistence and, hence, peace in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Member States have entrusted to UNESCO crucial responsibilities and missions for the future of humanity. Our organization has always performed them very competently. Today, UNESCO is at the crossroads owing to growing expectations of our peoples and the stagnation of its resources.

It deserves that, together, we give it increased support to enable it to effectively carry out its mission.

Thank you for your attention.



**TOAST BY THE HEAD OF STATE AT THE LUNCHEON
OFFERED IN HONOUR OF MADAM IRINA BOKOVA,
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO**

Yaounde, 16 September 2014

Madam Director-General of UNESCO,

Permit me to tell you how delighted my wife and I are to welcome you on the occasion of your visit to Cameroon.

I need not remind you that you are very much at home in Cameroon. By some happy coincidence, you bear the same name as a well-known locality in the south-west of Cameroon. By the way, you are an illustrious dignitary of Bokova. The custodians of tradition have granted you the attributes of that status.

This once again shows how pleased we are to welcome you here today, Madam Director-General.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, our relationship with UNESCO is longstanding, coming on the heels of our accession to international sovereignty over half a century ago. Our belonging to this body was driven by our desire to draw closer to all peoples of the world. As a protector and promoter of the equality of cultures, UNESCO was the most appropriate interlocutor.

We stand proud of the ground covered together. To refresh your memory, I would like to recall the leading role played by your Organization in the creation, running and functioning of the Yaounde Higher Teachers Training College (ENS) which recently commemorated its 50th anniversary. Your support in the preservation, promotion, expression and influence of our culture is equally immeasurable. We proudly remember the brochure containing the findings of the survey conducted under your supervision on all the dances of Cameroon. We do remember your assistance in preparations for Cameroon's participation at the first-ever Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar and the first Pan-African Cultural Festival in Algiers. Lastly, I would like to mention UNESCO's contribution towards restoring historical monuments such as the Foumban Palace and preserving our wildlife, especially the Dja Reserve which features on your Organization's list of World Natural and Cultural Heritage since 1987.

**Madam Director-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

With increasing ideological conflicts and trouble spots, UNESCO's role in the quest for peace, highly commendable as it is, needs to be stepped up. For, we must bear in mind that victory through the force of arms cannot alone ensure peace, that is, lasting peace.

Lasting peace cannot be imposed, it is built and lived daily by mutual acceptance and tolerance which lead to and promote dialogue. All these virtues indeed constitute the *raison d'être* of UNESCO.

The Preamble of UNESCO's constitution clearly states and I quote: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". Unquote.

Madam Director-General,

The preservation of peace also entails the fight against inequality and poverty.

You know this very well because in 2009 you placed your first tenure under the banner of promoting a "new humanism"; humanism based on solidarity and focused on the full development of the individual and all mankind.

You gave priority to the development programmes of African countries. The geographical and operational reorganization of UNESCO's services is also credited to you. By establishing five Regional Offices in Africa, you

have brought your Organization closer to the people, making them more aware of UNESCO's work.

Cameroon highly appreciates your support in your various areas of competence and we are sure that your visit will further enhance our multidimensional cooperation.

In this regard, I wish to commend the opening in Cameroon of a major UNESCO office for Central Africa. Pursuant to my instructions, the Government has taken all necessary measures to facilitate its establishment and ensure its proper functioning.

Madam Director-General,

Allow me to conclude where I should have started. I wish to heartily congratulate you on your re-election at the helm of UNESCO. I wish to commend the mastery and skill with which you devote yourself to the service of humanity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My wife and I now invite you to raise your glasses in honour of Madam Irina BOKOVA, Director-General of UNESCO, to the success of her mission at the service of peace and to the sustainability of Cameroon-UNESCO relations.

Thank you.



CAMEROON IN UNESCO

Cameroon's presence is highly visible within UNESCO. This is partly attributed to the position held by the country at the African Group of this organisation.

Cameroon demonstrated its commitment through financial contributions for the renovation of the Executive Council's hall. It equally recorded a remarkable performance on the occasion of UNESCO's Africa Week in May 2015.

2015 nominations in UNESCO bodies and committees

Cameroon has repeatedly earned the confidence of Member States in almost all positions since it joined UNESCO.

In 1968, Cameroon chaired the 15th session of the General Conference through Mr Aurelien Eteki Mboumoua. In 2013, Cameroon's Youssouf Adjidja Alim, Minister of Basic Education and Chairperson of the National Commission of UNESCO, presided over the Audit Committee of the 37th session of the General Conference.

Cameroon has served at UNESCO's Executive Board for 20 years. It was

represented by Mr Aurélien Eteki Mboumoua (1962-1968); Mr Jean Felix Loung (1980-1985); Mr Adamou Ndam Njoya (1985-1989); Mr Ebenezer Njoh Mouelle (1995-1999); and Mr Joseph Mboui (2003-2007).

Cameroon has ceaselessly participated in UNESCO's activities this year, notably through the personal involvement of the Head of State, and the actions of the First Lady, Mrs Chantal BIYA, as the Goodwill Ambassador for Education and Social Inclusion.

► Candidacy into the Executive Council

On the instructions of the Head of State, Professor Ebenezer Njoh Mouelle's candidacy into UNESCO's Executive Board shall be presented during the 38th General Conference. This is in accordance to an agreement finalised in 2011 within the African group. Consequently, Cameroon withdrew its application to host the headquarters of the sub-regional office for Central Africa in favour of Gabon and the sub-region pledged to support Cameroon's candidature in 2015.

➤ **Presidency of the Humanities and Social Sciences Commission**

Cameroon will chair the Commission of Human and Social Sciences of the 38th session of the General Conference. It is also an achievement.

➤ **Other Applications**

Cameroonian applications were submitted to the subsidiary committees as follows:

- Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB);
- Programme for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST);
- International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC);
- Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS).

Presidency of the African Group

Cameroon has been chairing the affairs of the African Group at UNESCO since January 2015. Our country has gained a privileged position that enhances its visibility within the organisation. This is an enviable post which could play in favour of Cameroonian candidates.

Cameroonians at UNESCO

Cameroon has enjoyed a good representation at top ranking positions within UNESCO. However, only one Cameroonian currently serves as a director because others have gone on retirement. Mr. Lazare Eloundou, is a Director at the UNESCO Office in Bamako, Mali.

Fifteen other Cameroonians are working at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.



FORUM OF LEADERS OF THE 38TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

The Forum of Leaders is an international platform for reflection and debate created in 2011 within the UNESCO General Conference to raise, at the highest level, inspiration and guidance for future actions of the Organization. It will be this year at its third edition after 2011 and 2013.

The Forum generally brings together, Heads of State and Government around a theme of strategic and interdisciplinary interest in order to propose innovative or even revolutionary solutions and new methods to address the problems encountered in the implementation of programmes in UNESCO's fields of competence.

Context of the 2015 Forum

The Forum of leaders of the 38th General Conference is of particular interest because it occurs when UNESCO celebrates with splendor, the 70th anniversary of its establishment on the 16th of November 1945 in London.

UNESCO wanted to make this anniversary an event of high importance, to enable leaders of the member states take a retrospective and prospective view of the Organization's activities. The Heads of State and Government will be able to give their point of view on the currency and relevance of the provisions of UNESCO's Constitution against the rise of extremism and violence, the multiplication of conflicts and natural

disasters.

In general, the Forum is held in a context marked by the persistence of violence around the world because of the dissatisfaction of basic needs of the majority of the population.

While the thrust of globalization especially by ICT has enabled an unprecedented reconciliation of peoples and cultures, as well as a remarkable development of States through shared progress of science and technology, it is nevertheless true that we are witnessing the rise of violence, intolerance, exclusion, etc. To these perverse effects of globalization, are added the climate change problem and the proliferation of natural disasters. The Forum of leaders which comes a few weeks after the adoption by the United Nations of the post-2015 development programme is one of the very first meetings of world leaders.

Furthermore, the proximity of the 21st UN Conference on Climate Change (COP 21), programmed in Paris from the 30th of November to the 1st of December 2015, is an opportunity for UNESCO to seek ways to effectively project themselves in the fight against climatic disturbances.

Date and theme of the Forum

The Forum of leaders of the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO will be held from the 16th to the 18th of November 2015. The choice of these dates is motivated by the will of

the Director General, Irina Bokova, to coincide the beginning of the forum with the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitutive Act of UNESCO.

Unlike the forums of 2011 and 2013, no topic has been adopted. Organizers are expecting Decision Makers to express their vision concerning the place of UNESCO in the international arena, 70 years after its creation and on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

The discussions at the Forum will be moderated by Mr. Stanley Mutumba Simataa, Namibian Vice Minister of Information and Communication Technologies, in his capacity of the President of 38th General Conference of UNESCO. He will be accompanied by the Director General of UNESCO, Madam Irina Bokova, and the President of the Executive Council of UNESCO, Mr. Mohamed Amir Amir.

Participants at the Forum

According to information provided by UNESCO, 24 Heads of State and Delegation had confirmed, by 30 October 2015, their participation at the Forum of leaders, that is:

- 05 African heads of State (Cameroon, Equatorial guinea, Gabon, Mali and Niger);
- 03 Latin America and Caribbean Heads of State;
- 10 Heads of State and Government of North America and Europe;
- 05 Asian and Pacific heads of State and Government.

Also participating in the Forum will be Madam Sheika Moza, mother of the Emir of Qatar, President of several Foundations including the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

Stakes of the Head of State's participation in the Forum of Leaders

The Forum of Leaders is a high profile event that will ensure the message of the President of the Republic, H.E. Paul BIYA, to have a global reach.

The Head of State's participation in this forum will be an ideal opportunity to share Cameroon's experience in the promotion and preservation of peace, the fight against insecurity maintained in the Far North region by the Boko Haram terrorist group and in the Adamawa and East regions by other foreign armed gangs.

This forum is also an opportunity for the President of the Republic to propose innovative ideas and demonstrate his commitment in the framework of the implementation of the provisions of the Constitutive Act, the decisions and programs of UNESCO.

The forum will also be the crowning of an intense activity marked particularly by the visit to Cameroon of the Director General of UNESCO, Mrs. Irina Bokova, on the 15th and 16th of September 2014. In conclusion, the participation of the Head of State of Cameroon, strongly awaited by UNESCO, is highly symbolic because President Paul BIYA is considered a Wise Man of Africa. UNESCO will see a significant support from a foreground continental Personality, capable of causing greater adherence of the other African Heads of State to the cause of the Organization. Such support is particularly significant as UNESCO still faces an acute financial crisis.



VISIT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO TO CAMEROON

(15-16 September 2014)

At the invitation of the President of the Republic, H.E. Paul BIYA, Irina BOKOVA, Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), paid an official visit to Cameroon on the 15th and 16th of September 2014. This visit enabled the Director General of UNESCO, who came to Cameroon for the first time, to revisit with the authorities, the rich and multidimensional cooperation that our country has had with the organization since 1960, date of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The highlight of the stay in Cameroon of the Director General of UNESCO was the audience granted by the Head of State, followed by a luncheon hosted in her honor by the Presidential Couple at Unity Palace, on the 16th of September. In the speech he delivered at the luncheon, President Paul BIYA hailed the support of UNESCO in its fields of competence. The Head of State further called for strengthening the role of UNESCO in the search for peace over the increasing ideological conflicts and hotbeds of tension. On her part, the Director General of UNESCO said her visit to Cameroon is «the choice of friendship» and of history that unites UNESCO to Cameroon.

Since her election at the head of UNESCO in 2009, Mrs. Irina Bokova has had favorable bias for Cameroon, which is justified particularly by the farsighted policy of peace and stability led by Cameroon's Head of State and which makes Cameroon a model of

development in Africa.

The Director General of UNESCO also appreciates the humanitarian work of the First Lady, Madam Chantal BIYA, in favor of the young girl and the vulnerable social strata. This social commitment earned Chantal BIYA a recognition from UNESCO, which appointed her in 2008 as Good Will Ambassador of UNESCO for Education and Social Inclusion. Mrs. Bokova kept on materializing her esteem for the Head of State and the First Lady, as well as her commitment to Cameroon through a strong decision: the opening in Yaounde of the seat of UNESCO's Multi-sectoral Regional Office for Central Africa, bringing together ten countries (Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad) and which she officially proceeded to inaugurate during the official visit. Another important moment of the official visit of the Director General of UNESCO to Cameroon took place at the University of Yaounde I campus where Irina Bokova received the title of Doctor Honoris Causa in Educational Sciences in front of more than a thousand enthusiastic and appreciative lecturers and students. In her acceptance speech of this doctorate, Mrs. Bokova stated: «Cameroon can emerge by 2035. It has the ability.» In conclusion, Cameroon is honored to have received the visit of a great friend on its soil.



CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES OF THE 38TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

The year 2015 is for UNESCO a good year, despite the acute financial crisis that it is facing, as reflected in the multitude of special events organized around the world. This renewed vitality of the Organization is due to two main factors: the celebration of the 70th anniversary of its establishment on the 16th of November 1945 in London, and the maturity of three important decades that mobilized the efforts of this organization since 2004. This refers to the decade of Education for Sustainable Development; the decade of Education for All (EFA); and the decade of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In short, it is balance sheets time at UNESCO: assessment of the 70 years of existence; assessment of the decades under its responsibility.

The mixed results of the above-mentioned three decades, as well as the increasing number of natural disasters, the persistence of conflicts and violence, cultural and humanitarian emergencies, led the United Nations in general and UNESCO in particular to table a new approach to development which should ensure the longevity of peace and sustainable development.

The reflection within UNESCO in collaboration with Member States contributed to the definition of the post-2015 development agenda, adopted last September at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Regarding the celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, it began on the 31st of October 2014 by a grand ceremony in memory of Nelson Mandela. It continued with special events organized by UNESCO as well as by Member States. Thus, UNESCO hosted in Paris, on the 28th of April 2015, under the aegis of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, the heads of all UN system agencies, who came to celebrate this 70th anniversary with the Director General, Irina Bokova. The holding of this 38th session of the General Conference will be coupled on the 16th of November 2015, to the celebration of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. An important historical moment that will enable member state leaders to assess the work of UNESCO and to present their vision of the organization.



ACTION OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO

Mrs. Irina Bokova, elected in 2009 and re-elected in 2013 as the Director General of UNESCO, placed her activities under the banner of promoting a new humanism and implementing structural reforms to increase tenfold the effectiveness and visibility of the Organization.

The positive results of her action and her remarkable commitment earned her brilliant re-election in 2013.

However, the ongoing financial crisis, as well as the permanent violations of peace, the assassinations of a growing number of journalists, natural disasters or the destruction of irreplaceable historical high value cultural works often classified as World Heritage, are some of the challenges faced by the Director General of UNESCO.

In 2015, Mrs. Bokova worked tirelessly for the deployment of the last efforts in achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA) and was strongly involved in the integration process of UNESCO's concerns in the post-2015 development agenda.

Given the persistence of the financial crisis, the Director General has been heavily involved in the search for extra-budgetary funding by a constant plea for support to UNESCO from partners and Member States, of which she met with authorities at the highest level during her official visits.

This strong activity of the Director General of UNESCO, however, earned her some criticism from some members of the Executive Council for whom, in times of crisis, the number of trips must significantly be reduced.

Moreover, observers see in her debauchery of energy, a pre-campaign for the post of Secretary General of the United Nations. She would therefore become, if she is elected, the first female Secretary General of the UN, after being the first female Director General of UNESCO.



CAMEROON-UNESCO: STATE OF COOPERATION

Cameroon adhered to the ideals of UNESCO on November 11, 1960. It has established a fruitful cooperation; politically, institutionally and in the different fields of competence under UNESCO (education, culture, communication and information).

Major political and institutional moments

All successive Director-Generals of UNESCO have made official visits to Cameroon. Mr Amadou Mathar M'bow, (23-29 July 1980) Mr Federico Mayor Zaragoza (30-31 January - 1st February 1991), Mr Koïchiro Matsuura (15-17 January 2004 and 9-10 January 2009), and Mrs Irina Bokova (September 15-16 September 2014).

The President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA paid the first official visit by a Head of State of Cameroon at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on October 23, 2007 to attend the 34th session of the General Conference. The visit helped in strengthening relations between Cameroon and UNESCO.

While on a working visit to France in February 2013, the Head of State granted an audience to Mrs. Irina Bokova, current Director-General of UNESCO. This led to the announcement of an agreement for Yaounde to host the UNESCO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa. The office is now operational.

The cooperation between Cameroon and UNESCO is also supported by the action of the First Lady, Mrs Chantal Biya. On November 14, 2008, she was named as the Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO for Education and Social Inclusion, in recognition for her commitment to women, vulnerable people and minorities, and her contribution to promoting the ideals of this organisation.

Cameroon's financial contributions to UNESCO

Cameroon honours its financial obligations to UNESCO through; a contribution to the regular budget of the organisation and often participates in voluntary donations.

In 2011, the Head of State made a special contribution of more than 300,000 US dollars, about FCFA 150 million to the Special Emergency Fund created by the Director-General following the suspension of US and Israeli contributions. Cameroon also provided funds for the refurbishment of the hall of the UNESCO Executive Council.

UNESCO Structures in Cameroon

➤ The Multi-Sectoral Sub-regional Office for Central Africa

Cameroon hosted the Multi-Country Office that covered the Central African Republic and Chad for a long time.

Thus Cameroon benefited from the transformation of this structure into Multi-sectoral Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa, which has been extended to ten countries. This include: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, DRC, Sao Tome and Principe, Central African Republic, and Chad.

➤ UNESCO Chairs

There are three in Cameroon: the UNESCO Chair in Education at the University of Buea (2008); the UNESCO Chair in Intellectual Property in Legal Studies at the University of Yaounde II (2004); and the UNESCO-NATUA Chair in Agronomy and Public Policy at the University of Dschang (1992).

UNESCO programmes in Cameroon

The cooperation between Cameroon and UNESCO unfolds in every domain run by the organisation. This highlights the vitality of the relationship as underlined by Mrs Bokova during her visit to Cameroon in September 2014. In addition to participation in international meetings, our country is testing this cooperation across multiple projects.

a) Education

Cooperation in this area is old and rich. Cameroon benefits from UNESCO's technical assistance to projects such as Education for All (EFA), with priority to basic education, literacy, teacher training as well as primary education to marginalised groups such as the pygmies. UNESCO's assistance to research in higher education is provided through the granting of scholarships, infrastructural development, and the organisation of seminars.

Projects carried out by UNESCO

- The UNESCO flagship project in Cameroon, produced in association with other partners, is the creation of the Advanced Teachers' Training School, ENS Yaounde in 1961. Mrs Bokova was a special guest to the institution during her official visit in September 2014.

- Supplying computers in schools, training of trainers, supporting Government's contracting policy for temporary teachers, and supporting environmental policies to fight against desertification in northern Cameroon.

- Increasing national and sub-regional vocational training through virtual universities and the construction of some structures at ENS Maroua;

- Assisting several programs and projects in the field of education.

b) Natural Sciences

UNESCO helped in the «Scientific Policy» project in Cameroon, which was aimed at formulating research priorities related to an economic and social development plan.

Numerous scientific projects have received assistance from UNESCO. For example, the virtual laboratory at the University of Yaounde I to track drying lakes, the development of a plan to conserve the Dja Reserve, promotion of solar energy in collaboration with the Chantal Biya Foundation, etc.

c) Social and Human Sciences

Cameroon received particular support from UNESCO for the 2007 publication of the «Manual on gender extension approaches».

Financial aid has been allocated to three projects under the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sports. Other projects developed within the framework

of social sciences are open to funding from UNESCO.

d) Culture

UNESCO facilitates the development of our natural and cultural heritage. The most outstanding projects are:

The inscription in the World Heritage List of the Dja Wildlife Reserve on December 11, 1987 and the Tri-Sangha Reserve, a site shared with Congo and CAR in 2012.

The inscription of a site as a World Heritage entails many obligations and requires regular monitoring. This is to avoid it being registered as a World Heritage in Danger. The Tri-Sangha Reserve is currently experiencing some difficulties because of the instability in CAR.

The situation of the Dja Reserve

Created in 1950, the Dja Wildlife Reserve is part of the tropical rainforests that form the Congo Basin. This reserve, surrounded by the Dja River, is especially noted for its biodiversity and a wide variety of primates that live there. Covering an area of about 526,000 hectares, the Dja Reserve is the natural habitat of many animal and plant species, many of which are threatened.

Cameroon received financing of about 300,000 US dollars (about 150 million FCFA) in January 2013 from the Franz Weber Foundation, to help in the implementation of the World Heritage Committee recommendations for the conservation of biodiversity in the area.

The last session of this Committee held in Bonn (Germany) in July 2015. It welcomed the efforts of the Cameroonian Government to secure the Dja Reserve and the guarantees made to progressively implement the

recommendations. However, the Dja Reserve is still likely to be listed as a World Heritage in Danger. Cameroon has received an additional one-year moratorium to prevent this.

The World Heritage Committee calls particularly on the basis of the recommendations of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), for the cancellation of exploration and mining permits around the reserve. It also accelerates the fight against poaching. A request was made for the provision of information on the environmental and social management plans around the Mekin Hydro Dam and Hevea Plantation in southern Cameroon. Cameroon shall submit a report on the conservation of this reserve in December 2016.

Creation or funding of 29 Community Radio in Cameroon.

It is in the early 1980s, with the start of UNESCO's International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC), that community radio stations were opened in Cameroon in collaboration with Mr Claude Ondobo Ndzana. 15 of such community radios exist in the country.

Current breakdown of UNESCO's Community Radio by Region: Adamawa = 1 radio; Centre = 7 radio stations; East = 2 radio stations; Far North = 3 radio stations; Littoral = 2 radio stations; North = 1 radio; North West = 3 radio stations; West = 4 radio stations; South = 4 radio stations; South West = 2 radios stations.



THE FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF UNESCO

The financial situation of UNESCO has not improved much since the decision by the United States to stop paying their assessed contributions which represented about 30% of the Organization's budget. In trying to balance its budget, UNESCO, among others, created a special emergency fund open to multiple contributions, and proceeded to the elimination of positions and certain benefits. Despite these developments, the crisis continues.

This situation which justifies the recurring call of the Director General to the generosity of Member States, is very harmful to the achievement of UNESCO's programmes, some of which are threatened to be shutdown. This is the case for a flagship programme like 'The General History of Africa' «Though the contributions generated by the Emergency Fund greatly assisted in the implementation of programmes, the fact remains

that it was a temporary fund whose operation, strictly regulated, expired. Today it comes to redeploy its balance in the implementation of programmes through a new fund named «Invest for the effective implementation of the Programme». This raises the question of what new mechanism will UNESCO use to replenish its budget after exhaustion of the remaining Emergency Fund.

Anyway, the discussions are tough in UNESCO regarding the next budget. In this respect, two theories oppose themselves within the Executive Board between, on the one side, the majority of European capitalist states who vote for the adoption of a reduced budget to which programmes will be adapted, on the other side, the majority of developing countries who prefer a budget increase to enable UNESCO implement its programmes and preserve the sovereign powers of the Organization, increasingly eroded



CHANTAL BIYA: AN AMBASSADOR AT THE SERVICE OF UNESCO PRINCIPLES

The First Lady of Cameroon, Mrs Chantal BIYA has created several youth projects in favour of her country and Burundi since her appointment as UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador for education and social inclusion in November 14, 2008.

This distinction was awarded to Mrs Chantal BIYA by the former Director General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura. It appears without prejudices as the crowning of her social commitment and integral development of individuals in Cameroon and Africa.

The first action of the First Lady of Cameroon began in 2008 with the creation of the UNESCO Chair at the University of Buea in the South West region. This chair will know its actual start thanks to her donations.

In 2009, Mrs Chantal BIYA sponsored the publication of a book entitled «**Dirty Kid**», on the fight against child abuse in the world. The UNESCO headquarters in Paris played host to a photo exhibition on the subject by photographer François Perri. This coincided with the celebration of the 20th anniversary to commemorate the Convention on Children's Rights.

Mrs Chantal Biya published an educational book entitled «**The Long Road**» in 2010. This book provides the Cameroonian youth with a learning grid on the milestones, often ignored, in the history of our country. This was the contribution of the First Lady during the celebration of the golden jubilees of the independence and reunification of Cameroon.

The First Lady also produced 10,000 boxes of a card game called «**All Citizens**». Topics covered were on the history of Cameroon, values and symbols of the Republic, the organisation of social life, respect for others and their differences, environmental protection, etc. This is a game that allows young people to learn while having fun. The peak of this citizenship campaign was at the occasion of the 49th edition of the National Youth Day, parallel to a competition organised in Yaounde from February 1-8, 2015, under the patronage of the First Lady. This competition, which brought together 20 young contenders from the best schools in the ten regions of Cameroon, was intended to promote excellence in schools and improve the knowledge of the Cameroonian youth.

Mrs Chantal BIYA is also the national sponsor of «**Operation MIJEF 2035**». Executed with the support of the country representation of the African Institute of Computer Science (IAI), the project aims to train a million youth, women and children in the use of computers and the Internet by 2035. This is in synchronization with the ideals defended by UNESCO.

The action of the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador extends beyond national borders. In 2012, Mrs Chantal BIYA assisted in the training programme for girls in Burundi. The objective is to strengthen the crucial role of education in human development.

UNESCO AND THE CHANTAL BIYA INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CENTRE (CIRCB)

The Chantal BIYA International Reference Centre (CIRCB) for research on the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS is a landmark realisation within Cameroon's cooperation with UNESCO. It was created on February 23, 2006, under the initiative of the First Lady of Cameroon. UNESCO is among the major organisations that worked towards the creation of CIRCB through the "**Families First Africa**" project, whose purpose is the development of a therapeutic vaccine against HIV/AIDS.

The Documentation and Communication Centre (CDC) of CIRCB has benefited from UNESCO's office in Cameroon. This was during the initial stages of the digital space and library in February 2008. In 2013, UNESCO strengthened the CDC

infrastructure with a donation of computers.

UNESCO is also a partner of CIRCB alongside the Ministry of Basic Education and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications. All four institutions have combined their efforts in the national educational community outreach project on the fight against STDs and HIV/AIDS in schools called «social vaccine». The project was initiated in 2009 under the patronage of the First Lady of Cameroon, Mrs Chantal BIYA. It aims to develop the skills passed to students by Cameroonian teachers for the adoption of behaviours that can prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

In the context of strengthening this successful cooperation, CIRCB postulated to become a UNESCO category two centre, which will allow it to pursue its action at the sub-regional level.

During her official visit to Cameroon in September 2014, Mrs Irina Bokova, focused on the «vitality» existing between UNESCO and Cameroon, and emphasised that: «*Our relationship is also embodied in the work of the Chantal BIYA International Reference Centre, which is very active in the fight against AIDS, and with which we have close ties ...*»

Visiting CIRCB, the Director General of UNESCO was able to appreciate the true value of the work that is done and the commitment of its promoter, Mrs Chantal BIYA: «*I am very proud of the involvement of UNESCO in the wonderful projects of the CIRCB.*

I am also proud of our Goodwill Ambassador for education and social inclusion, Madam Chantal BIYA whom I have met several times. I know all about her action in the fields of education, the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS, and all her works in favour of the underprivileged. I am impressed by the fact that UNESCO is involved in projects that are implemented at CIRCB. We will continue to work together.»

CIRCB is the product of a mammoth advocacy initiated by the First Ladies of Africa. This was through a Non-Governmental Organisation called the **African Synergy**, which was created by Mrs Chantal Biya with the aid of a number of partners including the Cameroonian and Italian Governments, the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention, UNESCO, and the Human Virology Institute. The overall objective was to carry out research on the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS. Its

missions are research, public health, clinical trials, and training. The aim of these missions is not only to improve the services rendered to patients, but to also provide support to programmes initiated by the Ministry of Public Health in Cameroon.

The CIRCB is a multidisciplinary research institution with a regional and international vocation. It is located in Yaounde and attached to the Ministry for Public Health. It intends to participate in the overall momentum of the international community to accelerate the knowledge and the quality of services for people infected and affected by the pandemic. The CIRCB label is more rooted in its scientific council, which includes eminent professors from the world of medicine, science and research. The council is chaired by Professor Luc Montagnier (co-discoverer of the AIDS virus).