

**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!