

**FORUM ON CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL SPACE COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND AFRICA**

SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF STATE

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Your Excellencies and Dear Brothers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to take the floor before you this morning to discuss an issue which I believe is crucial for the future of our continent and, above all, its development. I am addressing the issue bearing in mind that right now as we speak, African and other youths worldwide are able to watch our discussions and get a gist of what is being said and done thousands of kilometres away.

Such is one of the benefits of using outer space for civil and commercial purposes, the theme of our meeting. Communication on the African continent, and between the African continent and the other continents has developed and improved over the years thanks to optimum use of space opportunities through satellite coverage.

We are happy that our countries are able to leverage such outstanding advances which usher in unprecedented economic and social opportunities.

Indeed, I have noted that Africa is particularly open to the deployment and use of new information and communication technologies which currently depend on the orbiting of communication satellites. Such advances are exploited in various fundamental areas of our economic development.

Yet, Africa remains plagued by multiple and pressing space sector development-related needs. The current capacity of countries on the continent with a satellite is inadequate for optimum coverage of the needs of all our communities, and even our Governments.

Accordingly, I believe conquering space constitutes an opportunity and an imperative. In this light, it is essential to cooperate with partner countries which have a clear lead in this area. Therefore, I am pleased that the issue is being addressed here today, given that the United States is a pioneer in space exploration and a major player in launching satellites that are so crucial to us.

I find it fundamental for technology to be transferred to African countries for an equitable access to space and its opportunities. Indeed, the stakes surrounding this issue are common:

- How could we effectively combat climate change if we, on the continent, cannot observe from the sky, and by our own means, its impact on our forests?
- How would it be possible to carry out proper and sustainable urban planning if the appropriate technological tools are not available to us?
- How can we envisage effectively fighting terrorist groups, which operate over large swathes of territory, if we lack adequate means to monitor their movements?

Cooperation in space is thus a crucial imperative for us.

I avail myself of this opportunity to appeal for international solidarity to support the continent to meet the challenge of its connection to space. To achieve this, I find it imperative to avoid this becoming a sphere of military competition.

My country believes that outer space should serve noble objectives, for the benefit of all and sundry. Cameroon thus welcomes its use for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of present and future generations.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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