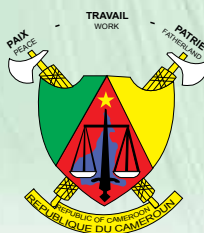


REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix - Travail - Patrie

CABINET CIVIL

CELLULE DE COMMUNICATION



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace - Work - Fatherland

CABINET CIVIL

COMMUNICATION UNIT

State Visit of H.E. Paul BIYA, President of the Republic of Cameroon, to Italy

20 - 22 March 2017



PRESS KIT

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THE CAMEROONIAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

- It is estimated at about 12,000 people including approximately 4,000 students.
- The Cameroonian students' community is the first African community and the fifth worldwide.
- Fields of study or of specialization are: medicine (about 2800); engineering (about 400); architecture (about 300); pharmacy (about 150) and economics (about 120).
- Some Cameroonian students receive training in hotel management, law, communication and international cooperation.
- Cameroonian workers in Italy are about 300 in number. They consist essentially of former students practicing as doctors, pharmacists, lawyers or business executives.
- Other Cameroonians with precarious or irregular status operate in small jobs: labourers, domestic workers, mechanics, etc. The number is estimated at about 1,500.



GENERAL PRESENTATION OF CAMEROON

Cameroon, officially the Republic of Cameroon is a country in the west Central Africa region. It is bordered by Nigeria to the west; Chad to the northeast; the Central African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the south. Cameroon's coastline lies on the Bight of Bonny, part of the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. The country is often referred to as "Africa in miniature" for its geological and cultural diversity. Natural features include beaches, deserts, mountains, rainforests, and savannas.

The highest point is Mount Cameroon in the Southwest, and the largest cities are Douala, Yaoundé and Garoua. Cameroon is home to over 200 different linguistic groups. The country is well known for its native styles of music, particularly makossa and bikutsi, and for its successful national football team. French and English are the official languages.

Early inhabitants of the territory included the Sao civilisation around Lake Chad and the Baka hunter-gatherers in the southeastern rainforest. Portuguese explorers reached the coast in the 15th century and named the area Rio dos Camarões (Shrimp River), which became Cameroon in English. Fulani soldiers founded the Adamawa Emirate in the north in the 19th century, and various ethnic groups of the west and northwest established powerful chiefdoms and fondoms. Cameroon became a German colony in 1884 known as 'Kamerun'.

Compared with other African countries, Cameroon enjoys relatively high political and social stability. This has permitted the development of agriculture, roads, railways, and large petroleum and timber industries. Nevertheless, large numbers of Cameroonians live in poverty as subsistence farmers.

History

The territory of present day Cameroon was first settled during the Neolithic Era. The longest continuous inhabitants are groups such as the Baka (Pygmies). From here, Bantu migrations into eastern, southern, and central Africa are believed to have originated about 2,000 years ago. The Sao culture arose around Lake Chad c. AD 500 and gave way to the Kanem and its successor state, the Bornu empire. Kingdoms, fondoms, and chiefdoms arose in the west.[9]

Portuguese sailors reached the coast in 1472. They noted an abundance of the ghost shrimp *Lepidophthalmus turneranus* in the Wouri River and named it Rio dos Camarões (Shrimp River), which became Cameroon in English. Over the following few centuries, European interests regularised trade with the coastal peoples, and Christian missionaries pushed inland. In the early 19th century, Modibo Adama led Fulani soldiers on a jihad in the north against non-Muslim and partially Muslim peoples and established the Adamawa Emirate. Settled peoples who fled the Fulani caused a major redistribution of population. The northern part of Cameroon was an important part of the Muslim slave trade network.

On 1 January 1960, French Cameroun gained independence from France under President AHMADOU AHIDJO. On 1 October 1961, the formerly British Southern Cameroons united with French Cameroun to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. AHIDJO used the ongoing war with the UPC to concentrate power in the presidency, continuing with this even after the suppression of the UPC in 1971.[19]

His political party, the Cameroon National Union (CNU), became the sole legal political party on 1 September 1966 and in 1972, the federal system of government was abolished in favour of a United Republic of Cameroon, headed from Yaoundé. AHIDJO pursued an economic

policy of planned liberalism, prioritising cash crops and petroleum exploitation. The government used oil money to create a national cash reserve, pay farmers, and finance major development projects.

AHIDJO stepped down on 4 November 1982 and left power to his constitutional successor, Paul BIYA.

President BIYA's Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) was the only legal political party until December 1990. Numerous regional political groups have since formed. The primary opposition is the Social Democratic Front (SDF), based largely in the Anglophone region of the country and headed by John FRU NDI. President BIYA and his party have maintained control of the presidency and the National Assembly in national elections.

Cameroon is a member of both the Commonwealth of Nations and La Francophonie

Administrative divisions

The constitution divides Cameroon into 10 semi-autonomous regions, each under the administration of an elected Regional Council. A presidential decree of 12 November 2008 officially instigated the change from provinces to regions. Each region is headed by a Governor. These leaders are charged with implementing the will of the president, reporting on the general mood and conditions of the regions, administering the civil service, keeping the peace, and overseeing the heads of the smaller administrative units.

The regions are subdivided into 58 Divisions and further subdivided into 360 Subdivisions.

The three northernmost regions are the Far North, North and Adamawa. Directly south of them are the Centre and East. The South region lies on the Gulf of Guinea and the southern border.: The Littoral and Southwest regions are on the coast, and the Northwest and West regions are in the western grassfields.

Geography

.At 475,442 square kilometres (183,569 sq miles), Cameroon is the world's 53rd-largest country. The country is located in Central and West Africa on the Bight of Bonny, part of the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. Cameroon lies between latitudes 1° and 13°N, and longitudes 8° and 17°E.

Tourist literature describes Cameroon as "Africa in miniature" because it exhibits all major climates and vegetation of the continent: coast, desert, mountains, rainforest, and savanna. The country's neighbours are Nigeria to the west; Chad to the northeast; the Central

African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo to the south.

Economy.

Cameroon's per-capita GDP (Purchasing power parity) was estimated as US\$2,300 in 2008,[1] one of the ten highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Major export markets include France, Italy, South Korea, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Cameroon is aiming to become an emerging country by 2035.

Cameroon has had a decade of strong economic performance, with GDP growing at an average of 4% per year. During the 2004–2008 period, public debt was reduced from over 60% of GDP to 10% and official reserves quadrupled to over USD 3 billion. Cameroon is part of the Bank of Central African States (of which it is the dominant economy), the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC) and the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). [77] Its currency is the CFA franc.

Cameroon's natural resources are very well suited to agriculture and arboriculture. An estimated 70% of the population farms, and agriculture comprised an estimated 19.8% of GDP in 2009.[1]Most agriculture is done at the subsistence scale by local farmers using simple tools. They sell their surplus produce, and some maintain separate fields for commercial use. Urban centres are particularly reliant on peasant agriculture for their foodstuffs. Soils and climate on the coast encourage extensive commercial cultivation of bananas, cocoa, oil palms, rubber, and tea. Inland on the South Cameroon Plateau, cash crops include coffee, sugar, and tobacco. Coffee is a major cash crop in the western highlands, and in the north, natural conditions favour crops such as cotton, groundnuts, and rice. Reliance on agricultural exports makes Cameroon vulnerable to shifts in their prices.

Livestock are raised throughout the country. Fishing employs 5,000 people and provides over 100,000 tons of seafood each year. Bushmeat, long a staple food for rural Cameroonians, is today a delicacy in the country's urban centres. The commercial bushmeat trade has now surpassed deforestation as the main threat to wildlife in Cameroon.

The southern rainforest has vast timber reserves, estimated to cover 37% of Cameroon's total land area. However, large areas of the forest are difficult to reach. Logging, largely handled by foreign-owned firms, provides the government US\$60 million a year as of 1998, and laws mandate the safe and sustainable exploitation of timber. Nevertheless, in practice, the industry is one of the least regulated in Cameroon.



MIGRATION ISSUES

The Position of President Paul BIYA

- (Address to the Diplomatic Corps, on the occasion of New Year Wishes 2008)

«... Population migration from the Third World, especially from Africa, driven by war or poverty, has become a serious concern for the countries of departure and destination. If nothing is done commensurate with the extent of the problem, it is likely that flows will continue to increase. The solution is obvious: we must promote the development of the countries of origin of migrants, which requires the implementation of a sort of Marshall Plan, more ambitious than the traditional models of official development assistance».

The Response of Italy and the European Union

- Italy is at the forefront of the illegal immigration problem in Europe.
- Each year, the country faces the massive influx of migrants from some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. trying to cross the Mediterranean from the Libyan coast to reach Europe (more than 140,000 migrants have arrived in Italy since January 1, 2015).
- The human casualties are important. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), since the beginning of 2015, 1,800 migrants have died trying to cross the Mediterranean.
- After yet another shipwreck in May 2015, Italy called on other members of the EU, urging them to finally seize the migration issue.
- Europe has taken a series of measures to try to stem the phenomenon.
- With the support of the Commission, relevant European agencies (European Support Office on asylum, Frontex and Europol), UNHCR, IOM and several NGOs (MSF, Save the Children), Italy started the implementation of the relocation mechanisms, from the hot spots on its territory (besides the Lampedusa, Trapani and Pozzallo centres, Italy shall open three more centres at Porto Empedocle, Augusta and Taranto).



BIOGRAPHY OF HIS EXCELLENCY PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

President Paul BIYA was born on 13 February 1933 at Mvomeka'a, Meyomesalla Sub-division, Dja-et-Lobo Division, South Region to the Late Etienne Mvondo Assam and Mvondo Anastasie Eyenga Elle. President Biya, who is the second Head of State of Cameroon assumed office on 6 November 1982 following the resignation of President Ahmadou Ahidjo.

- President BIYA has been married to Mrs. Chantal BIYA since 23 April 1994 and is a father of three: Frank BIYA, Paul BIYA Jr., and Anastasie Brenda Eyenga BIYA.

Education

- Primary Education: Nden, culminating in the First School Leaving Certificate (CEPE) in 1948.
- Secondary Education: St. Tharcissus pre-Seminary Edea (1948-50), Minor Seminary Akono (1951-54), culminating in a secondary school certificate, (BEPC) in June 1953.
- High School Education: Lycee General Leclerc High School (1954-55), culminating in a Baccalaureat Part 1 Certificate in June 1955, and the Lycee Louis le Grand in Paris culminating in the Baccalaureat certificate Part 2 in June 1956.
- University Education: Degree in Public Law, Graduate of the Institute of Political Science, Paris and the Institute of Advanced Overseas Studies (IHEOM), and holder of a post-graduate diploma in Public Law.

1. Professional Development and Career

- Senior Policy Adviser (Charge de Mission) in the Presidency of the Republic: October 1962;
- Director of Cabinet (Chief of Staff), Ministry of

National Education: January 1964;

- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Education: July 1965;
- Director of the Civil Cabinet (Chief of Staff), Presidency of the Republic: December 1967;
- Secretary General and Director of the Civil Cabinet: January 1968;
- Minister of State, Secretary General in the Presidency of the Republic: June 1970;
- Prime Minister: 30 June 1975;
- Prime Minister and Constitutional Successor: 29 June 1979;
- President of the Republic following the resignation of President Ahmadou Ahidjo : 6 November 1982.

2. Achievements as President of the Republic

- On taking the oath of office, President promised to democratize the political life, introduce social and economic liberalization, rigour in the management of public affairs, moralization of attitudes and reinforce international cooperation. In this connection, he was:
 - Elected President of the Cameroon National Union (CNU): 14 September 1983;
 - Elected President of the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Party (CPDM) on the transformation of the CNU in Bamenda: 24 March 1985 and re-elected in all the party's subsequent congresses;
 - Elected President of the Republic on 14 January 1984 and 24 April 1988 under the one-party democratic system;
 - Elected President of the Republic under the multi-party democratic system on 11 October 1992, 12 October 1997, 11 October 2004, and 9 October

2011;

- Elected Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) for 1996-97 and that of the CEMAC and ECCAS on many occasions.
- In 1990, President BIYA said he will like to be remembered as the one who brought democracy and prosperity in Cameroon. Today, Cameroon stands out as one of the most democratic countries in Africa with some 254 political parties, 308 foreign association and 47 religious associations. The country also has over 600 private newspapers, 98 private radio stations, and 19 private TV stations.
- A committed democrat, President BIYA believes in power-sharing and shared responsibility in governance, which explains his interest in forming governing coalitions with Opposition parties since 1992 in spite of his crushing majority in Parliament.
- President BIYA is highly respected as a “Wiseman of Africa” and for his international peace, security, development and humanitarian initiatives, which have

earned him a number of international recognitions and awards, the latest being that of the Pan-African Lawyer’s Union of 6 June 2014 for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

4- Publications of President Paul BIYA

- **Communal Liberalism**, Editions Marcel Fabre, Lausanne, 1987. Original text in French, translated to English, German and Hebrew.
- **Paul BIYA, a New Impetus. Interview with Charles NDONGO**, Editions Africa Multi Media, Yaoundé, 1997.
- **– The Emergence of Africa**. Propositions of Paul BIYA, Abdoulaye BIO TCHANE, Youssou N’Dour, Editions Le Cherche Midi, Paris, 2010.



SOME BIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT SERGIO MATTARELLA

- Born on the 23rd of July 1941 in Palermo.
- 1964, he graduated in law at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" with an honourable grade
- Since 1967, he entered on the roll of the Bar Association of the Bar of Palermo.
- Taught parliamentary law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Palermo until 1983, date of layoff for parliamentary mandate.

His political career began under the sign of Catholic social commitment and reformer. 1983, he was elected Member of Parliament for the Christian Democratic Party in the Sicily western constituency. He was re-elected several times and sat in the House of Members of Parliament until 2008.

- During the seventh legislature he was member of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs, Foreign Affairs Committee and the Committee for legislation, of which he is President.
- In addition, he is member of the Bicameral Committee for Institutional Reforms of the XIth legislature, where he became Vice President of the Bicameral Committee for Institutional Reforms of the XIIIth legislature of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on terrorism and terrorist attacks, of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on Mafia. He is President of the Judicial Committee of the Chamber of Members of Parliament and President of the Parliamentary Group of the Popular and Democratic party.
- He also had the function of Minister on four occasions.
- July 1987-July 1989, he was appointed Minister of Relations with the Parliament.
- July 1989 to July 1990 he was Minister of Public Education.

- October 1998, he was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

December 1999, he became Minister of Defence, a position he held until 2001. During this period, Italy had a significant presence in peacekeeping missions deployed by the United Nations and brought a major contribution to the operations of interposition and peacekeeping in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. At that same time, Italy supported with conviction, the launching of the European Security and Defence Policy and the creation among others, of the first European army corps.

- 2008, he left political life.
- In May 2009, Parliament appointed him member of the Council of the Presidency of administrative justice, organisation in which he became Vice-President.
- On the 5th of October 2011, he was elected constitutional judge by the Parliament; he sworn in on the 11th of October 2011.
- He was elected 12th President of the Italian Republic on the 31st of January 2015 and succeeded Giorgio Napolitano who resigned from his duties on the 15th of January 2015.
- He is father of three (03) children.



PRESENTATION OF ITALY

General data

- Official name: Italian Republic
- Government type: Parliamentary system
- President: Mr. Sergio Mattarella (elected on January 31, 2015), member of the Democratic Party (PD)

President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister, Head of Government): Mr Paolo GENTILONI (member of the Democratic Party).

Geographic data

Area : 310,226 km².

Capital: Rome (2,864,731 urban area): 4,340,474 inhabitants).

Main cities: Milan (1,345,851; urban area): 3,208,509 inhabitants), Turin (890,529), Naples (974,074), Palermo (674,435).

Official language: Italian.

Currency: Euro.

National holiday: 2 June (Republic Day, since 1946).

Demographic data

Population : 60,656,000 (January 2016).

Population growth : 0% (World Bank, 2015).

Life expectancy : 83 (World Bank, 2014) Men: 80.3;
Women: 85.

Literacy rate: 99% (UNICEF, 2012).

Religion(s) : Christians (80%, mostly Catholic), Muslims

(1.5%), Atheist and others (<20%).

Human Development Index: 27th in the world (2014).

Economic data

GDP (2015): €1,636 billion.

Growth rate (2015): 0.8 (second quarter of 2016: 0% and third quarter of 2016: 0.3%).

- Unemployment rate (according to the International Labour Organisation) – (December 2015): 11.6%, including 38.7% among 15-24 year-olds (2016 forecast: 11.4%).
- Inflation rate (2015): 0.1% (2016 forecast: 0.6%).
- Government deficit (percentage of GDP) – (2015): -2.6% (2016 forecast: -2.4%).
- Trade balance (2015): €45.2 billion.
- Trade partners (exports) – (2015): 1) Germany (12.3%); 2) France (10.2%); 3) United States (8.7%); 4) United Kingdom (5.4%); 5) Spain (4.8%); 6) Switzerland (4.6%).
- Trade partners (imports) – (2015): 1) Germany (15.4%); 2) France (8.7%); 3) China (7.6%); 4) Netherlands (5.6%); 5) Spain (5%); 6) Belgium (4.6%); 7) Russia (3.9%).
- Share of main sectors of activity in GDP:
 - Agriculture: 2.3%.
 - Construction: 5%.
 - Industry: 19%.
 - Services: 74.4%.

Domestic policy

Italy is a Republic with a parliamentary system of government. His Excellency Sergio MATTARELLA is the President of the Italian Republic (since 31

January 2015).

Mr. Paolo GENTILONI, 62, is the current Prime Minister. He was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Mr. Matteo RENZI's government. President Sergio MATTARELLA appointed him on 11 December 2016 to serve as the President of the Council of Ministers (Head of Government). This appointment was as a result of the resignation of Prime Minister Matteo RENZI on 7 December 2016, after 59.11% of Italians voted "No" to his proposed constitutional reform on the limitation of powers of the Senate, on 4 December 2016.

Mr. Paolo GENTILONI was instructed by President Sergio MATTARELLA to set up a new Government. He took office on December 12, 2016 and relied on the same majority as Mr. RENZI (essentially the centre-left Democratic Party and the new centre-right). He largely inscribed his actions, in continuity with that of his predecessor's Government. Mr. Paolo GENTILONI intends to continue the reforms and the reconstruction of the areas affected by the earthquakes of August and October 2016 (297 dead, 40,000 homeless persons, and €4 billion damage) giving priority to the development of the South, the Mezzogiorno, employment and youth.

The new Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic is H.E. Angelino ALFANO. H.E. Mario GIRO remains Italian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, in charge of International Cooperation.

The President of the Senate is Pietro GRASSO and Mrs Laura BOLDRINI is President of the Chamber of Deputies (since 2013).

The other key figures of the GENTILONI Government of 12 December 2016 are:

- Minister of Defence: Mrs. Roberta PINOTTI;
- Minister of Economy and Finance: Mr. Pier Paolo PADOAN;
- Minister of Economic Development: Mr. Carlo CALENDIA;

- Minister of the Interior, Secretary of State for Secret Services: Mr. Marco MINNITI;
- Minister of Sports: Mr. Luca LOTTI;
- Minister for the Environment, Territorial Protection and the Sea: Mr. Gian Luca GALLETTI;
- Minister of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies: Mr. Maurizio MARTINA;
- Minister of Justice: Ms. Andrea ORLANDO;
- Minister of Health: Mrs. Beatrice LORENZIN;
- Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism: Mr. Dario FRANCESCHINIE;
- Minister of Education, University and Research: Ms. Valeria FEDELI;
- Minister of Labour and Social Policies: Mr. Giuliano POLETTI;
- Minister for Relations with Parliament: Mrs. Anna FINOCCHIARO;
- Secretary of State at the Presidency of the Council, Head of Cabinet: Mrs. Maria-Elena BOSCHI.

It should be noted that a woman of African descent (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Mrs. Cécile KASHETU KYENGE, was Minister for International Cooperation and Integration from April 2013 to February 2014.

Italy celebrates its national holiday on 2 June.

Economic situation

Italy is the 8th largest economy in the world and the 3rd largest in the euro zone. Italy has significant assets: low private debt ratio, no real estate bubble, strict management of public deficit (-3% in 2014, -2.6% in 2015). Its dense and dynamic industrial network, composed of a network of 4 million SMEs, is nevertheless struggling to adapt to the intensification of globalisation (lack of productivity gains, loss of competitiveness, R&D expenditure, inadequate innovation, and rigidity of the labour market).

Italy, after the 2007-2014 recession, witnessed a renewed growth between January 2015 and June 2016 (+0.8%). Indeed, with a view to reducing the unemployment rate in Italy, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, through strong legislative measures, contributed to a significant reduction in the unemployment rate in Italy. These included the reform of the labour market (through the adoption of the “Job Act”) and the fierce promotion of good governance within the ruling class. From June 2015 to January 2016, these measures enabled the creation of 50,000 new jobs in Italy.

Italy is a major agricultural supplier to the European Union (largest rice producer and the second largest fruit producer after Spain). It is the world’s largest producer and exporter of wines. The agricultural sector accounts for 2.3% of Italy’s GDP and is heavily dependent on imports of raw materials used in agricultural production due to the limited natural resources of the country.

According to the IMF, Italy, in 2015, had an overall GDP of 18% compared to that of the EU (about 2,153 billion US dollars). The main productions in Italy are: vegetables, fruits, soya, rice, maize, beef, and more particularly, the vineyard (1st vineyard in the world).

The industrial sector relies on a variety of companies and many highly competitive SMEs provide high value-added export products (electronics, office automation, footwear, etc.).

Italy is very competitive in the steel, shipbuilding and automotive industries, as well as tourism (7% of national GDP).

It should be noted, however, that since the beginning of July 2016, Italian economic growth has abruptly slowed down. Economic activity is again showing signs of weakness. Italy recorded zero growth in the second quarter of 2016 and 0.3% in the third quarter. The unemployment rate remains high (12.7% in 2014, 11.9% in 2015), especially among young people (35.6%).

Italy’s GDP has not yet returned to its pre-crisis level. The debt burden is still very high (132.7% of GDP in 2015 – is the highest in the euro area after Greece), and the banking system is very fragile.

In terms of foreign trade, the state of the Italian economy improved in 2015 to €45.2 billion (compared to €43 billion the previous year). This performance is the result of the combined effect of higher exports (especially towards EU countries) and lower imports (sharp drop in imports of energy products and continued decline in domestic demand).

The main customers of Italy in 2015 were : Germany (12.5%); France (10.5%); United States (7.5%); United Kingdom (5.2%), Switzerland (4.8%); Spain (4.5%). The country’s main suppliers were: Germany (15.4%); France (8.6%); China (7.1%); Holland (5.5%); Spain (4.8%); Russia (4.6%); Belgium (4.2%).

Moreover, the share of the main sectors of activity in GDP stood at: agriculture (2.3%); industry (24.3%), and services (74.4%) in 2015.

Foreign policy

- The Italian foreign policy priorities are the European Union, essential dimension for its modernisation and its international influence, the Atlantic alliance and special relationship with Washington, guarantor of its security, the Balkans and the Mediterranean, preferred areas for economic and cultural exchanges. Italy focused its diplomatic and military means in this regional environment.
- A founding member of the European Union (in 1957), and a depositary of the Treaties of Rome, Italy played a leading role in the relaunch of Europe after Britain voted for an exit (Brexit) on 23 June 2016.
- Italy shares with France and Germany the will to build, on the basis of the Treaty of Lisbon, a more effective Europe at the service of the citizens, thanks to more reactive and more democratic institutions. Rome also sees the European Union as a tool for strengthening its territorial cohesion and enhancing its economic development.
- Italy will host, on 25 March 2017, the Rome Summit, which will mark the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties and will be a major event for the EU Member States.

- Antonio TAJANI, 63, was elected President of the European Parliament on 17 January 2017 (two and a half year mandate). He replaced Martin SCHULZ.
- The Italian diplomat; Federica MOGHERINI, 44, is the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Head of European Diplomacy) since 1 November 2014.
- Italy is a major player on the international scene and plays an important role in many international organisations, such as NATO, the G8, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- On 30 June, 2016, the UN General Assembly elected Italy as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for a two-year term, which started on 1 January 2017. Italy shall leave on 31 December 2017 and Holland will take its position. Cameroon supported Italy's candidacy during the elections.
- President Paul BIYA validated Cameroon's support to the Italian candidature for the Executive Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in August 2016. The election was held during the ICAO's 39th session scheduled from 27 September to 7 October 2016 in Montreal, Canada.
- Member of the Group of Eight, Italy considers the Balkans as an intense economic cooperation area. Italy is thus the most fervent promoter of the European perspective of the Western Balkans. This applies particularly to Serbia and Albania. Sharing a border with Slovenia, it welcomed the settlement in 2009 of the Croatian-Slovenian maritime dispute, which paved the way for the continuation of the accession process of Croatia. Italy has strongly promoted the liberalisation of the EU visa regime for these countries. Rome recognised Kosovo on February 21, 2008.
- Wishing to support democratic transitions in countries of the southern Mediterranean, Rome sought to rebuild a strong relationship with Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, by increasing high-level contacts and negotiating new partnership agreements (security, immigration, energy, economy). Italy is very concerned about the very poor situation of Libya now, which it considers a humanitarian priority. Moreover, Italy is facing an exceptional influx of migrants (more than 140,000 migrants have arrived in Italy since January 1, 2015) and obtained an enhanced European cooperation in migration management in the Mediterranean.
- With the support of the Commission, relevant European agencies (European Support Office on asylum, Frontex and Europol), UNHCR, IOM and several NGOs (MSF, Save the Children), Italy started the implementation of the relocation mechanisms, from the hot spots on its territory (besides the Lampedusa, Trapani and Pozzallo centres, Italy shall open three more centres at Porto Empedocle, Augusta and Taranto).



PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN ITALY AND CAMEROON

Due to the absence of Cameroon among Italy's priority countries of cooperation in recent years, the Italian-Cameroon cooperation in the development assistance area is experiencing a relative dynamism, particularly in the context of economic and financial crisis faced by European countries.

However, the major news of this cooperation concerns the recent updating of financing mechanism on development such as debt cancellation to Italy.

Indeed, the 2006 Agreement relating to the cancellation of an envelope of FCFA 99.3 billion included a 33% allocation (\$ 32.7 billion) in projects to be agreed with the Italians. These are commitments which have underpinned the mobilisation by Cameroon, amounting to FCFA three billion for the implementation of the first 2009-2011 program. Regarding the second program that will cover the period 2016-2018, nine billion will be mobilised (three billion a year) to finance projects in the areas of: basic education, health, and rural development on agreed terms.

Revitalisation efforts and the strengthening of cooperation have been developing both institutionally and in terms of economic partnerships with Italian operators.

Institutionally we note :

- The cooperation in agricultural research. Satisfactory results were made in the context of work on cassava processing conducted between MINADER and the University of Florence in Italy. The joint exploitation of these results is envisaged to promote the food industry.
- The prospect of opening an office of the Italian Cooperation Agency in Cameroon. This option strongly considered by the Italian authorities augur a renewed interest in our country, and that would lead to the reinstatement of Cameroon among the priority countries for Italian cooperation policy in 2017.
- In terms of economic partnerships, it is necessary to address the ongoing discussions on the mobilisation of Italian expertise in infrastructural matters, for example:
 - The construction of a football stadium in Yaounde as part of the preparation for the AFCON 2019. On the request of the company PICCINI, the Italian reaction remains pending.
 - The construction of the Twin Towers to host the headquarters of the Cameroon Telecommunications company (CAMTEL).
 - The project to build 10,000 social housing with PIZZAROTTI society.
- The first session of the Ad Hoc Steering Committee and the follow up of Cameroon-Italy Bilateral Agreements on the cancellation of the debt of Cameroon, co-chaired by Minister Louis Paul Motaze and Ambassador Samuela Isopi, held on January 29, 2016 at the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT). It has validated the following programming:



GOVERNMENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN 2015-2018

1. Decided by the Head of State on the 9th of December 2014, the three-year emergency plan (2015-2018) of the Government is a special programme of measures taken and projects targeting the immediate needs of the Cameroonian populations.

2. Its main objectives include: to accelerate the growth rate that currently stands at about 5.5% and improve the living conditions of the populations in the whole territory.

3. Amount of the emergency plan: 925 billion FCFA mobilised through the national and international private banking sectors (Cameroon: BGFI Bank, Atlantic Bank of Cameroon, Cameroon Standard Chartered Bank, Ecobank) and (international: Deutsche Bank, Madrid).

4. The emergency plan is different from government's strategy of growth and employment which is Cameroon's development charter. This charter is known as the "Growth and Employment Strategic Paper" (GESP) whose objective is, like the policy of the Major Accomplishments of the Head of State inaugurated at the beginning of this seven-year term that began in 2011, to make Cameroon an emerging country by 2035.

5. The seven sectors of the emergency plan include:

a) Town Planning

Firstly, town planning concerns the rehabilitation and public lighting of secondary roads in Yaoundé and Douala, with immediate intervention especially in residential areas, neighbourhood quarters, areas of social and community facilities. It also includes the construction of one thousand (1000) social houses, with 100 in each of the ten regional capitals of the country.

b) Health

This also includes two components: the construction of reference hospitals in regional capitals which have no

general hospitals; the rehabilitation and upgrading of technical facilities of the general hospitals of Yaoundé and Douala, as well as of the University Teaching Hospital Centre in Yaoundé.

c) Agriculture and Livestock

This includes a special programme of the distribution of seeds, fertilizers, farm, pastoral and fisheries equipment. Also programmed is the construction of large food markets in the ten regional capitals of the country. The objective is to facilitate the flow of agricultural products towards urban centres.

In addition to these two components, the construction of slaughterhouses and refrigerated warehouses for agricultural products in certain cities is also planned.

d) Roads

Over the next three years, we predicted the construction, of two major roads in each region to open up areas of production.

e) Energy

Regarding energy, the main objective is the stabilization of power lines to improve the supply of big cities with electrical energy. These include the Edea-Yaoundé line and the Edea-Logbessou-Bekoko by Douala line.

f) Water

The water component of the plan involves the construction of potable water systems in thirty secondary towns and the drilling of 100 wells per region.

g) Security

We predict the construction of additional gendarmerie and police posts in the two major cities of the country that are Yaoundé and Douala.



MAJOR PROJECTS PENDING FUNDING

In pursuit of the objectives set out in the vision of a country's development emerging at horizon 2035, Cameroon spares no effort to modernize its productive base through the development of sea ports, roads, energy infrastructures, etc.

The implementation of these major projects requires substantial funding. To meet this constraint, the Government intends to gradually increase in the state budget, the share devoted to investment expenditure and lead a prudent debt policy. It is in this sense that Cameroon intends to strengthen its cooperation with national and international technical and financial partners.

Some priority projects awaiting funding

Port infrastructures :

- Draft deep-water port Limbe
- Dredging of the Port of Douala
- The second phase of the construction project of the industrial port complex of Kribi.

➤ Airport infrastructures:

- Renovation of Douala International Airport.
- Construction of new airports

➤ Energy infrastructures:

- Construction project of a hydroelectric dam at Natchigal
- Hydroelectric development Projects of Njock and Song Dong
- Construction project of the hydroelectric dam of Birnin at Warrack
- Construction project of the hydroelectric dam of

Menchum

- Cameroon-Nigeria Power Interconnection Project (Garoua-Yola);
- Project for the Rehabilitation, building of electrical infrastructures and rural electrification;
- Construction project of mini-hydroelectric centers for rural electrification;
- Project of development of solar energy for the electrification of 150 villages;

➤ Road infrastructures :

- Construction of the highway Yaoundé-Douala;
- Construction of the highway Yaoundé-Nsimalen
- Construction of a bridge over river Sanaga at Nachtigal
- Construction of the road Bertoua-Batouri-Kenzou-Central African Republic border
- Tarring of the road Maltam-Fotokol and of the slip road Bodo - Makary-Hile-Alifa-Karena Katekime;
- Construction of the Olama-Kribi road;
- Construction of the Maroua-Bogo road;
- Construction of the Ring Road in the North West region;
- Construction of the Ebolowa-Lolodorf-Kribi road;
- Construction of the Ebolowa-Akom II-Kribi road;
- Construction of the Olama-Lolodorf road;
- Construction of the Kribi-Campo road;
- Rehabilitation of the Yaoundé-Bafoussam-Bafia highway;
- Tarring of the Kumba-Mamfe road.

➤ Railway infrastructures :

- National Railway Master Plan;
- Construction of the Ngaoundere-N'Djamena railway line.

➤ **Socio-economic infrastructures**

- Construction project of social housing facilities
- Project of Construction and Equipment of the Mbalmayo Regional Hospital, specialized in the treatment of severe burns;
- Project of rivers Logone and Chari bank Protection.
- SAWA Beach project in Douala.

➤ **Mining and industries :**

- Iron mining project at Mbalam including the construction of 500 km of railway up to the deep water port of Kribi;
- Iron mining project at Djoum;
- Bauxite Exploitation project of Minimartap and of Fongo-Tongo;
- Project of cobalt and nickel exploitation at Lomié

Other anti-corruption entities include the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) established in 2006; the Financial Investigation Agency established in 2005 which combats money laundering and the fraudulent movement of funds; the Audit Bench of the Supreme; the Supreme State Audit whose role has been strengthened; the Public Contracts Regulatory Agency; and the Ministry of Public Contracts.

Public administrative reform which has resulted in decentralization, the simplification of administrative procedures and the streamlining of public finance (expenditure quality, streamlining of the public payroll, etc.), the digitization of government services and the systematic institution of dialogue between public authorities and the private sector, demonstrates the State's resolve to combat corruption in sectors where it persists.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Reunification of Cameroon in February 2014, the Head of State, driven by a surge of humanism, exercised the right of pardon provided for by the Constitution in favour of many prisoners, including persons convicted for the misappropriation of public funds. In all, 24 000 prisoners in 77 prisons all over the country may be eligible for this presidential measure.

In a nutshell, the anti-corruption crusade is a major development challenge for Cameroon. It is being pursued relentlessly. Cameroon counts on the usual support of its partners, including the United States of America.



DECLARATION OF YAOUNDE

BY MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND SECURITY OF CENTRAL AFRICA (COPAX) ON THE FIGHT AGAINST THE TERRORIST GROUP BOKO HARAM

We, Heads of State of the Member States of the Council for Peace and Security of Central Africa (COPAX), meeting in Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon, on the occasion of the Extraordinary Conference of Heads of State of COPAX, devoted to the fight against Boko Haram;

1. Considering the Treaty establishing the Economic Community of Central African States, signed in Libreville (Republic of Gabon) on 18 October 1983;

2. Referring to the relevant provisions of the COPAX Protocol and the Mutual Assistance Pact between ECCAS Member States, signed in Malabo on 24 February 2000;

3. Concerned by the repeated and growing attacks of the terrorist group Boko Haram against the Republic of Cameroon, and the Republic of Chad;

4. Taking into consideration the negative security, economic, social and humanitarian consequences the actions of this terrorist group have on the Republic of Cameroon and the Republic of Chad;

5. Taking into consideration also the fact that the countries concerned are compelled to divert substantial resources that were previously earmarked for their economic and social development to the fight against this terrorist group;

6. Considering the risk posed by this terrorist group Boko Haram to destabilize the entire Central African Sub-region;

7. Aware of the need to rid Africa of the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism that cannot be justified under any circumstance;

8. Noting that terrorism cannot, and should not, be associated with any specific religion, nationality, civilization or group;

9. Referring to the various United Nations Resolutions on terrorism and violent extremism, notably Resolution 2178 of 24 September 2014, adopted at the meeting of the United Nations Security Council devoted to threats against international peace and security caused by acts of terrorism;

10. Referring to Resolutions 2195 of 19 December 2014 and 2199 of 12 February 2015 of the United Nations Security Council, devoted respectively to terrorism and organized trans-border crime, as well as to the condemnation of any form of financing of terrorism;

11. Referring to the Communiqué of the 455th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at the level of Heads of State and Government on the phenomenon of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, held on 2 September 2014 in Nairobi;

12. Referring equally to the Declaration of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Matters in Central Africa, during their 39th Session held on 5 December 2014 in Bujumbura, in support of Cameroon and Chad in the fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram;

13. Taking into to consideration the Conclusions of the Meeting of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers of Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and of Benin of 20 January 2015 in Niamey;

14. Considering the Communiqué of the 484th Meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council of 29th January 2015 in Addis Ababa on the terrorist group Boko Haram;

15. Building on the Conclusions of the Consultation of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS on the terrorist group Boko Haram, held on 31 January 2015, on the sidelines of the 24th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union:

16. Strongly condemn the terrorist actions of Boko Haram in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger;

17. Equally condemn the financing and any form of support to the terrorist group Boko Haram;

18. Equally condemn the unjustifiable ambitions of this terrorist group to establish an “Islamic Caliphate” in the Lake Chad area, thereby tending to challenge national boundaries in the area;

19. Support all initiatives taken by the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union and the International Community in seeking solutions to this problem, in particular, the establishment of the Multinational Joint Force (MJF);

20. Undertake to fully cooperate and at all levels with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in view of coordinating actions against the terrorist group Boko Haram;

21. Encourage in particular the Federal Republic of Nigeria to increase the synergies with the other countries of the Lake Chad Basin in the fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram;

22. Congratulate the Republic of Cameroon and the Republic of Chad on their exemplary cooperation to wipe out the terrorist group Boko Haram;

23. Undertake to provide as soon as possible an active and multifaceted support to Cameroon, Chad and any other Member State of the Community that will be affected by the actions of this terrorist group Boko Haram, in particular military, financial, logistic and humanitarian assistance;

24. Urge the International Community to maintain and

increase its multifaceted support for the fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram;

25. Appeal to the United Nations and all the stakeholders involved in the resolution of the crisis in Central Africa, to speed up the political and national reconstruction process so as to enable the Central African Republic to have defence and security forces to fully control its entire territory and prevent the country from being used as a fall-back and resupply area for the terrorist group Boko Haram;

26. Mandate the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to:

a) develop, by the end of March 2015, in collaboration with the States concerned, a plan for political-diplomatic actions, logistical support, b) set up, in this regard, within the Secretariat General, a Special Fund in view of carrying out activities in the Member States concerned;

c) maximise synergies with existing institutional partners and immediately start identifying partnership opportunities with international and local stakeholders that may come to support, technically and financially, the actions of ECCAS Member States;

d) sustain the link with the African Union in order to guarantee its multifaceted support and ensure that it is in line with the MJF;

e) ensure, the follow-up of the implementation of this Declaration and submit to us on a constant basis a Report on the evolution of the security situation in the Lake Chad Basin, as well as on all the measures undertaken in order to implement this Declaration.

Done at Yaounde, 16 February 2015



PRESIDENT PAUL BIYA'S CALL FOR A GLOBAL RESPONSE AGAINST BOKO HARAM BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In a speech to the diplomatic corps on January 8, 2015, H.E Paul Biya requested for an international mobilisation to stop the barbaric acts of the Boko Haram terrorist group in Cameroon and Nigeria.

The Head of State emphasised on the need for a collective response by the international community, especially the African Union and regional organisations, in order to tackle Boko Haram threats. He therefore made this famous declaration: "Global threat, global riposte."

President Paul Biya's appeal was immediately considered as it kick-started condemnations from the AU. Heads of State and Government, meeting in Addis Ababa during the 24th AU Summit, unanimously classified as horrible, terrorist attacks by Boko Haram.

On her part, the AU Chairperson, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma noted that Boko Haram constituted an enormous threat on security and development to Nigeria, the region and the entire continent.

Consequently, Africa has an obligation to provide the necessary support to Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, in conformity to the principles of African solidarity and unanimity for peace and security in the continent.

Madam Dlamini-Zuma pleaded for a "collective response" against Boko Haram.

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon welcomed the AU's drive to create a regional force to fight against the Nigeria-based Islamist sect – Boko Haram.

He denounced the "baseless brutality" of the Boko Haram insurgents. Mr Ban KI-MOON suggested that there should be "an international and regional cooperation" to repress the activities of this group.

The Peace and Security Council of the AU recommended the creation of a 7,500-man regional military force to combat the Islamist sect.

Military experts moved into action with the holding of a meeting on February 5-7, 2015 in Yaounde. The main agenda was the putting in place of the Rules of Engagement to guide the operations of the multinational joint task force against Boko Haram.

Mindful of the resolutions taken at the 5th Meeting of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers' of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, which took place in Niamey, Niger, on January 20, 2015, member countries decided to increase the number of troops to 8,700. The capital of Chad, Ndjamen, was chosen as headquarters of the aforementioned military taskforce.

On January 31, 2015, Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in prelude to the 24th Summit of the AU and castigated the barbaric acts of Boko Haram on member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

The ECCAS leaders acknowledged the fraternal support from H.E Idriss DERBY ITNO, President of the Republic of Chad, who sent an important contingent Chadian troops to join Cameroon fight the Boko Haram insurgents.

They also took a decision to activate the appropriate mechanisms of the regional bloc such as the Mutual Assistance Pact of ECCAS member countries. The provisions of the Central African Peace and Security Council (COPAX) Protocol were also used to establish a sub-regional strategy to assist Cameroon and Chad, which are witnessing Boko

Haram raids.

Accordingly, Heads of State and Government of ECCAS adopted a proposition to hold an extraordinary session of COPAX in Yaounde on February 16, 2015. This Summit took place after a meeting of the COPAX Defence and Security Commission on February 11-12, 2014 and the COPAX Council of Defence Ministers on February 14, 2015.



RELATIONS BETWEEN CAMEROON AND ITALY

I. Legal Framework

Cooperation between Cameroon and Italy is guided by the following legal instruments:

- Agreement on technical, economic and financial cooperation, 17 January 1989.
- Agreement on the protection and reciprocal promotion of investments, 29 June 1999.
- Agreement on the debt cancellation (in force since 30 November 2006).
- Agreement on the reciprocal exemption from the obligation of short-stay visas for holders of diplomatic or service passports, signed on 17 March 2016 by H.E. MBELLA MBELLA, Cameroon's Minister of External Relations, and Mr. Mario GIRO, Italian Deputy Minister in charge of International Cooperation, during President Sergio MATTARELLA's state visit to Cameroon. President Paul BIYA ratified this Agreement on 12 July 2016. Italy notified that the process of ratification of this Agreement started in mid-October 2016.
- Agreement on cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between Cameroon and Italy, signed on 17 March 2016, by Professor Jacques FAME NDONGO, Minister of Higher Education, on the Cameroon side and Mr. Mario GIRO on the Italian side. The signing of this agreement led to the establishment of a Joint Commission between both countries.
- Framework Agreement between Cameroon and Italy on the use of resources resulting from the cancellation of Cameroon's debt by Italy, signed on 17 March 2016 by H.E. Samuela ISOPI, Italian Ambassador to Cameroon, and Mr. Louis Paul MOTAZE, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT), for an amount of about FCFA 25 billion, for the implementation of projects in education, health and rural development.
- Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Padua (Italy), and the National Advanced School of

Public Works of Cameroon, signed on March 17, 2016, by Professor Rosario RIZZUTO, Rector of the University of Padua, and Mr. Emmanuel NGANOU DJOUMESSI, Minister of Public Works.

– Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the University of Padua, Italy, for the promotion of sustainable urban planning in Cameroon, signed on 17 March 2016 by Professor Rosario RIZZUTO, and Mr. Jean Claude MBWENTCHOU, Minister of Housing and Urban Development.

– Trade Agreement between the Government of Cameroon and the Italian company; PIZZAROTTI, signed on 17 March 2016, during the Economic Forum organised during President Sergio MATTARELLA's state visit to Cameroon, by Mr. Jean Claude MBWENTCHOU, Mrs. Jacqueline KOUNG A BISSIKE, Minister of State Property and Land Tenure, and Mr. Célestin NDONGA, strategic partner of PIZZAROTTI, for the construction of 10,000 social housing units in Mbankomo, for a total of FCFA 359 billion. This project made considerable progress with the signing, on 1 March 2017 in Yaounde, of two loan agreements with a cumulative amount of FCFA 115 billion between the State of Cameroon, represented by MINEPAT, and the Italian bank INTESA SANPAOLO, to finance the first phase of the project to build 10,000 social housing units in Yaounde, its surrounding area, and an industrial base in Mbankomo.

– Partnership agreement between the Cameroonian Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Development and Higher Education, and the Italian company GIANCASPRO-DEFINO Srl, on 30 June 2016. The Italian company wants to bring its expertise in the processing of agricultural products and contribute to the production of equipment intended for the mechanisation of the agricultural sector in Cameroon.

– Revised partnership agreement between the Government of Cameroon and the Italian Association for Assistance to Persons with Disabilities (AIAS d'Afragola) for the

construction and equipment of the Maroua Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities (CRPH) on 29 August 2016.

– Memorandum of Understanding between Cameroon's Institute of International Relations (IRIC) and the University of Padua, to train students for a Masters in international cooperation, humanitarian actions and sustainable development. It was signed on 15 February 2016 under the Framework Agreement on cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between Cameroon and Italy.

– Protocol of Agreement between the University of Douala and the University of Padua for courses related to obtaining a license at the Institute of Fine Arts and the Faculty of Arts, signed on 15 February 2016 during the Cameroon-Italy Economic Forum.

– Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport and IVECO, for the modernisation of urban transport in the city of Douala, signed on 15 February 2016 at the end of the Cameroon-Italy Economic Forum.

– Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Public Works and SEAS for the construction of Road Infrastructures in Cameroon signed on 15 February 2016 during the Cameroon-Italy Economic Forum.

II. Diplomatic Relations

- Diplomatic relations between Cameroon and Italy were established in the aftermath of Cameroon's accession to sovereignty in 1960.

- 28th of February 1962: presentation of credentials of the first Ambassador of the Italian Republic to Cameroon with residence in Yaoundé.

- July 1964: Opening of the Cameroonian Embassy in Rome and appointment of an interim chargé d'Affaires. This mission closed in 1965 and reopened in 1974.

- 1984: appointment of the first Cameroonian Ambassador in Rome, two years after the accession of President Paul BIYA to power.

Since then, the political and diplomatic cooperation between the two countries has been growing continuously.

- The Ambassador of the Republic of Cameroon to Italy is Mr. Dominique AWONO ESSAMA, appointed on the 9th of June 2008. He presented his credentials to the President of the Italian Republic on the 21st of January 2009.

- Cameroon is also represented in Italy, since 2 December 2016, by an Honorary Consul in Milan, which covers the geographical areas of Florence and Lombardy. It is under the control of Mrs. Esther Edwige NKOLO LEKOUA (a

Cameroonian and naturalized Italian).

- Mrs. Samuela ISOPI is the Ambassador of the Italian Republic to Cameroon. She presented her credentials to the President of the Republic, Paul BIYA, on the 19th of September 2014.

Exchange of Visits

Exchange of visits between the leading figures of both countries are regular.

- 1990, visit of the Head of State, H.E. Paul BIYA to Italy on the occasion of the football World Cup: he witnessed the opening match Cameroon-Argentina (1-0).

- The Head of State, although invited by the Vatican authorities, stepped on the Italian ground twice in the last two years: in 2013 on the occasion of the official visit to Vatican and in 2014 on the occasion of the canonization of Pope John Paul II and John XXIII. We notice each time the presence of a representative of the Italian government in the host protocol.

- November 2012, the Minister of Foreign Affairs makes an official visit to Italy marked by numerous discussions with the authorities of this country, among which the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

1 May-31 October 2015 : The Universal Exhibition in Milan was organised under the theme: "Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life". Two memoranda of understanding were signed: - between the Chamber of Commerce of Cameroon and the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, to promote trade and market prospecting; and between the Chamber of Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock and Forestry and an Italian company "Nove Engineers Consulting", to train and accompany operators.

From 17 to 20 March 2016, President Sergio MATTARELLA, President of the Italian Republic, paid a State visit to Cameroon, at the invitation of President Paul BIYA. This visit had the following highlights:

- a meeting between the two Heads of State, and a State Dinner at the Unity Palace;

- a meeting between Italian and Cameroonian economic operators at the Hilton Hotel;

- H.E. Sergio MATTARELLA's symposium the academics and students of the University of Yaounde I, where he was made "Honorary Professor of Yaounde University";

- H.E. Sergio MATTARELLA's visit at the Reunification Monument;

- a visit at the Italian company; Ferrero, based in Yaounde;

- a meeting with the Italian Community at the Italian Ambassador's Residence;

- a visit at the Centre for Educational Orientation (COE), and the Saint Luc Hospital of Mbalmayo;

- a meeting with the representatives of the Sant'Egidio Community of at the Hilton Hotel;

- the inauguration by the Italian President of the new

Chancellery of the Italian Embassy in Cameroon.

Ms. Laura MATTARELLA, daughter of the Italian President, visited the Chantal BIYA International Reference Centre (CIRCB) and the PROMHANDICAM Centre, which welcomes children with disabilities.

During their exchanges, Presidents Sergio MATTARELLA and Paul BIYA lauded the excellent and friendly cooperation between Italy and Cameroon.

They agreed to strengthen relations. The Italian President praised the role of Cameroon in regional stability and its commitment to welcome refugees. President Sergio MATTARELLA expressed his support for Cameroon's efforts in the fight against Boko Haram. He announced a contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to handle humanitarian emergencies in the Far North region of Cameroon. The two Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism (for more details, see the Joint Communiqué, issued after the State visit).

The State visit of the President of the Italian Republic to Cameroon was also marked by the strengthening of the legal framework for cooperation between the two countries, through the signing of three new agreements.

These include: the short stay Visa Waiver Agreement for holders of diplomatic and service passports, the Agreement on Cultural, Technical and Scientific Cooperation and the Framework Document for the Use of Resources Resulting from the Cancellation of Cameroon's Debt to Italy. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Advanced National School of Public Works and the University of Padua, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Civil Engineering, Architectural and Environmental Engineering of the same university, for the promotion of the sustainable urbanisation of Cameroon.

21 September 2016: The Minister of Water and Energy received a delegation of Italian businessmen who came to prospect for investment opportunities in the water and energy sector in Cameroon (they are interested in water supply projects, hydro-electric projects, pipeline construction, renewable energies; in particular solar energy).

20 to 28 November 2016: Press visit to Cameroon by journalist Joshua MASSARENTI, of the Italian editorial group; "Vita", in the framework of a project financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. To draw the attention of the international community on the fight against terrorism in Cameroon, and in particular to the actions of the Cameroonian authorities in the fight against terrorism.

11 to 14 December 2016 : visit to Cameroon by officials of the Italian firm IVECO. Led by the Ambassador of Italy to Cameroon, the six-man delegation (including Mr. Sylvain Blaise, Director of IVECO Bus), met with the Prime Minister, Head of Government, MINEPAT, the Minister of Transport and the Minister Housing and Urban Development.

12 to 16 February 2017 : An Italian economic mission, led by the Italian Deputy Minister in charge of International Cooperation, H.E. Mario GIRO, visited Cameroon. The objective of this mission was to fulfil the mutual commitments made in March 2016 during President Sergio MATTARELLA's State visit to Cameroon.

During his stay in Cameroon, **H.E. Mario GIRO**, accompanied by the Italian Ambassador, was received in audience by: the Minister of Secondary Education, the Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, the Minister of External Relations, and the Prime Minister, Head of Government on behalf of the Head of State.

At the same time, Mario Gino organised the inauguration of the Italian pavilion "Casa Italia" at the 6th International Exhibition of Enterprises, SMEs and Partnership in Yaounde ("PROMOTE") – [almost 70 Italian companies were present at PROMOTE, one of the most important delegations].

A Cameroon-Italy Economic Forum was held on 15 February 2017 during PROMOTE 2017 in Yaounde. Its objective was to facilitate business contracts and increase Italian investments in Cameroon. It mobilised nearly 150 heads of Italian companies and institutions in various sectors (renewable energies, civil engineering, food processing, wood and leather processing, transport, industrial mechanics, marble, furniture, etc.).

This forum ended with the signing of four new instruments, namely; the Memorandum of Understanding between Cameroon's Institute of International Relations (IRIC) and the University of Padua; the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Douala and the University of Padua; a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport and IVECO; and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Public Works and SEAS (see Legal Framework above).

III. ECONOMIC TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION

On the financial and technical point of view

- Marked support from Italy to Cameroon since the early 1990s: signature of two (02) rescheduling agreements

of Cameroon's debt (1991 and 1995).

- Funding of several infrastructure projects (roads, airports and hospitals).

Bilateral Agreements:

- **November 24**, signing in Rome of Cameroon's debt rescheduling agreement vis-à-vis Italy: 40, 4 billion FCFA rescheduled over a period of 23 years for commercial loans and 12 years for loans under public development aid.

- **October 2002**, Cameroon benefits from a debt cancellation of 39.2 billion FCFA in favour of an agreement on the debt consolidation negotiated within the Paris Club.

- Agreement on debt cancellation: in force since the 30th of November 2006, provides the deletion in favour of Cameroon of 134.8 million Euros (88.4 billion FCFA) of which 44.2 million Euros (29 billion FCFA) for aid loans and 90.5 million Euros (59.4 billion FCFA) for trade finance.

- Agreement on the Promotion and the Reciprocal Protection of Investments signed on the 29th of June 1999, in force since 2004.

- Agreement on Economic, Technical and Financial Development cooperation signed on the 17th of January 1989.

Trade Cooperation

There has been an intensification of relations between the two countries since 2009 with the participation of Cameroon in fairs and economic forums organised in Italy and vis-versa. Cameroon mainly imports from Italy, machinery and equipment, plastics, ceramics, cast iron, iron and steel, paper and paperboard, cars and tractors, furniture and medical furniture.

Italy is Cameroon's 9th largest supplier after France, Nigeria, China, Belgium, the United States, Thailand, Germany and India, with a market share of 3.3%. Italian imports are traditionally linked to raw materials : oil, wood, aluminium, followed by agricultural products (coffee, rubber, fruit, and leather). Oil continues to be the main source of Italian imports and the cause of the trade deficit, followed by wood (with substantially stable acquisition volumes in the past three years), aluminium (decreasing) and the agricultural sector (with a constant increase of 16.2 million Euro in 2010, 23.5 million Euro in 2011 and 19.2 million Euro in the first seven months of 2012). With such levels of imports, Italy is the fourth largest customer to Cameroon, after Spain, China and the Netherlands.

Source : Ministry of Commerce (2015)

Although positive in 2011 and 2012, trade balance

with Italy dropped and became a deficit in 2013. This deficit, which amounts to FCFA 12.1 billion, was based on the absence of exports of crude oil from petroleum products, which generally account for almost 50% of exports to this partner.

Products exported to Italy in 2013 were mainly primary or low value-added products. These included: raw aluminium (27%), sawn wood (25%), veneer sheets (16%), crude rubber (7%) and fresh banana (7%).

Imports from Italy are more diversified. Machinery and mechanical appliances (29%), hydrocarbons (11%), electrical machinery and equipment (10%), vehicles and tractors (6%), ironworks (6%) and pharmaceuticals (3%).

In 2015, Italy was Cameroon's 8th largest customer behind Holland, India, China, Portugal, Spain, France and Belgium with 4.6% in exports against 9.3% in 2014.

Italian companies in Cameroon (about 50) are mainly concentrated in the forestry, wood processing and agro-industrial sectors, where they employ more than 2,000 Cameroonian workers. Pirelli operates in the sector of pneumatic and spare parts in Douala. Ferrero runs a factory for the production and distribution of chocolate. It is one of the most competitive foreign companies in this field, which employs about 200 workers.

In addition, the Italian company IVECO (Industrial Vehicles Corporation), a company specialised in the industrial assembly of vehicles and automotive mechanics, has also been present in Cameroon for several years. On 15 February 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between IVECO and the Ministry of Transport for the Development of Urban Transportation in Douala.

Technical Cooperation

There are many areas of interest between Cameroon and Italy.

I) Forestry sector

- Two declarations of intent in the steel and bio-energy sectors, and a Memorandum of Understanding between MINFOF and the Italian Research and Development Centre and Test Laboratory in the Wood/furniture Sector (CATAS), aimed at developing the wood processing sector in Cameroon.

- In addition, Italy is collaborating with Cameroon in the forestry sector, where a major initiative has been developed in order to meet the Cameroonian demand; to increase the local processing capacity of wood. Italy

has put at the disposal of Cameroon the competences of CATAS, a training centre in the timber sector, considered to be one of the best in Italy and in Europe.

II) Agricultural sector

The Cameroonian government and the ORIZ-Cameroon company, a company with Cameroonian and Italian capital, signed on 03 August 2010 a framework agreement on large-scale rice cultivation covering an area of 2,000 hectares in Maga (Far North region). The first plantings were carried out in March 2011 and

the first harvest in July 2011. This project is expected to increase rice production in Cameroon to 400,000 tonnes in the next five years.

A framework for cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) and the University of Florence was launched in March 2015. The agreement approved the processing of the agricultural raw materials such as cassava; targeted by the Investment and Development Project of Agricultural Markets (PIDMA).

Trade between Cameroon and Italy (in millions of FCFA).

YEAR FLOW	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Exportations (in millions)	141,163	185,590	158,786	113,874	62,250	232,709
Importations	54,353	61,891	93,954	106,071	74,437	66,108
Trade Balance	86,810	123,699	64,832	7,803	-12,187	166,601

The Agricultural Research Institute for Development (IRAD) and the University of Udine will collaborate in coffee research. This partnership is a spin-off from the economic mission of the Cameroon coffee sector operators in Italy, during the 2015 World Expo in Milan.

The Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, Dr TAIGA, has received instructions from the Head of State to sign the Aid Agreement for the Aquaculture Entrepreneurship Promotion Project on 28 January 2016 in Rome.

A partnership agreement was signed on 30 June 2016 in Yaounde between MINADER, the National Advance Polytechnic School and the Italian company GIANCASPRO-DEFINO Sarl for the transfer of expertise in the field of manufacturing equipment for processing cassava into flour and starch.

III) Sports

Cameroon and Italy have intensified and revitalised ties in this domain. Thus, a draft agreement on sports cooperation is being examined by both countries. In addition, the Italian group; PICCINI shall construct the FCFA 163 billion Yaounde-Olembe stadium, for the 2019 African Cup of Nations (AFCON).

Work at the site of this 60,000-capacity complex has started. Furthermore, a presidential decree on 27 December 2016 authorised the Minister of Finance to sign a financing agreement for the said project with an Italian bank; INTESA SANPAOLO.

IV) Socio-cultural activities

Many Italian NGOs are very active in Cameroon. Most of them provide support in areas such as public health and local development. In this context, many projects are being implemented or negotiated.

V) Public health :

Cooperation in this domain is also highly developed between the two countries. Some examples:

-11 May 2006 : Cooperation agreement signed between the Italian Government and the Chantal BIYA International Reference Centre (CIRCB), to finance a research programme on HIV/AIDS prevention and care (FCFA 1.441 billion). The total amount of these projects amounts to approximately 8 million Euros (FCFA 5.2 billion).

- Italy is continuing its support to the Chantal BIYA International Reference Centre. The agreements between the two Governments have made it possible to combine the resources resulting from the cancellation of the Italian debt and the new grants made by the Italian Government to the Higher Institute of Health, which have been spent on the activities of the Centre. At the end of the second phase, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed in principle to finance the third phase, based on a project to be developed by Cameroonian and Italian experts.

- The first centre of cardio-surgery of Central Africa, the work of Italian cooperation, was inaugurated on 19 November 2009, in Shisong, North West region of Cameroon. It is the result of a project by the staff of the San Donato Hospital in Milan and members of an Italian association, Cuore Fratello.

- The construction of the hospitals of Bertoua and Yagoua and the sponsoring of the "Primary Health Care" Project in these hospitals.

- The construction of a centre for the handicapped in Maroua by an Italian NGO (AIAS d'Afragola), a project under negotiation.

- Project to build health centres in Nguessa and other villages in Evoudoula.

- Opening of a hospital in Kumba, in December 2005. "Hope Clinic Parma – Kumba", is funded by the Italian Volunteers Association "Parma per la Vita".

Local development :

- The INADES training project in Maroua;
- Centre Women and Youth Animation in Dzeng;
- The Integrated Rural Development Initiatives in Karhay;
- The Integrated Rural Development project in Guidiguis;
- Support to the Youth Employment Training Centres in Mbalmayo, Yaounde, and Ebolowa;
- Italian assistance project to the parliaments of eight African countries, including Cameroon, for a total amount of €3,750,000, to finance the computerisation of structures and staff training;
- A dozen projects funded by the Directorate General of Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the Republic of Italy. Projects executed by Italian NGOs in partnership with local institutions.

- Emergency interventions: Contribution of 500,000 euros (approximately FCFA 325 million) granted by the Italian Government to the World Food Program (WFP) to assist drought victims in the Logone and Chari divisions.

- The Partnership Agreement signed between the Government of Cameroon and the Italian Association for Vulnerable Assistance (AIAS DI AFRAGOLA), to construct the Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Persons in Maroua on 29 August 2016. This agreement will equally support the construction, equipping, training of personnel, and the running of the Centre.

- Furthermore, Italy launched on 28 November 2016, in the North Region of Cameroon, a programme to support disadvantaged populations and host local communities. The different infrastructures, which have densified the achievements of Cameroon-Italy cooperation include :

- The inauguration of the Pomla Manga integrated health centre in Gaschiga, Demsa sub-division;
- Construction of a block of two classrooms at the Government Primary School of Badjouma (Pitoa);
- The renovation of infrastructures in the nursery schools of Mbilga and Djamboutou, as well as the bilingual public school of Djamboutou.

- In the humanitarian field, the Italian Government, in partnership with the Italian NGO "INTEROS", responded to the humanitarian emergency caused by Boko Haram. It offered a donation to Cameroon – a cargo worth 150,000 Euros; comprised of non-food items (NFI), intended for the households of displaced Cameroonians in the Mayo Tsanaga division. In addition, the Italian Government, during the visit of the Italian President to Cameroon, made a donation of 1 million euros in Cameroon. The contribution will be directed to the displaced and the Nigerian refugees in the Minawao Camp in the Far North region. The donation will be managed by an Italian NGO; INTEROS, a UNHCR partner, for displaced persons. The rest will be handled by a Cameroonian NGO at the Minawao Camp.

In the field of university cooperation, various fellowships for training and advanced training courses are regularly granted to Cameroonians, whose behaviour is largely appreciated by the Italian authorities. The Cameroonian community in Italy poses no problem. Italy grants each year a quota of about 400 visas for long-term university studies to Cameroonian students.

An effective partnership has been established since the 1990s with the University of Dschang, which has an Italian Language Centre with 3-year degree courses (about 130 students registered each year). The University of Dschang also has a network of cooperation with various Italian universities (Udine, Camerino, Roma Tor Vergata,

La Sapienza, Perugia, Siena, and Ferrara) in the fields of agriculture, medicine and pharmacy, and linguistics.

An agreement was signed on 29 March 2012 between the University of Dschang and the Universities of Camerino and Urbino to start joint courses in order to obtain the Italian degree in pharmacy (three semesters of teaching in Dschang with two Italian lecturers, and three semesters in Italy). The courses started on 19 November 2012 in Dschang for 20 Cameroonian students who will receive a scholarship for this academic programme.

In addition, a lesson on the Italian language and culture are organised at the University of Yaounde I. It is supported by an Italian language lecturer (Ms. Mottola) sent expressly by the Italian Ministry of Education.

The Italian language also flourished in the Far North, where the Universities of Venezia (Venice) and Padova (Padua) supported the development of the Italian Department at the Higher Teachers' Training College (ENS) of the University of Maroua.

In 2011, the Cameroonian Ministry of Secondary Education selected six pioneer schools (two in Yaounde, two in Douala, one in Dschang, and one in Maroua) to teach the Italian language.

The University of Padova (Padova) and the National Advanced School of Public Works (ENSTP) in Yaounde were given the opportunity to start civil engineering courses in 2012, with four Italian lecturers from Padua Yaounde, throughout the academic year.

The Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICPT) in Trieste (The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical

Physics). It was established in 1964, in partnership with the Italian Government and UNESCO. ICPT has hosted 13,000 students and researchers, with scholarships from Africa. Cameroon is the 9th beneficiary country with 449 students.

VI- Security

Cameroon and Italy continue to cooperate in the training of Gendarmes of the National Gendarmerie in peacekeeping activities, with the support of the Italian Centre of Excellence for the Stability of Police Units (COESPU). Many Cameroonian officers and non-commissioned officers have been trained and continue to be trained at the Italian Carabinieri. The Italian Institute for Top Military Staff has equally trained superior officers from Cameroon.

In addition, since 2014, the Italian Government has begun a collaboration with Cameroon in the training of police officers at the Italian International Police Academy – La Caserta. It is in this capacity that a dozen Cameroonian security officers will participate in capacity-building courses such as cyber-criminality, prevention and contrast to organised crime, and the fight against human trafficking. This will take place throughout the first half of 2017.

Italy is supporting the functioning of the International School of Security Forces (EIFORCES), through a multilateral cooperation with the African Union. For example, in April 2010, Italy provided financial support for the “Training of Trainers” in Abuja, Nigeria within the framework of the African Union Peace Facility.



DEMOCRACY IN CAMEROON: A SOLID FOUNDATION

Cameroon under President Paul Biya has undergone a number of democratic reforms, which have affected its electoral system, level of human rights and freedoms, press freedom, and judicial system.

ELECTIONS

Since 1982, when Paul BIYA came to power, Cameroonians have been governed by the choices that they have made and not by the dictates of an individual. At the level of presidential elections, there have been popular consultations in January 1984 and April 1988 under the CNU and CPDM one-party democracy. With the advent of multiparty politics in 1990, other presidential elections have been organized regularly in October 1992, October 1997, October 2004, and October 2011.

In the same vein, multi-candidate legislative elections were held under the New Deal in 1988, and since 1990, multiparty legislative elections have taken place in Cameroon in 1992, 1997, 2004, 2007, and 2012. On the other hand, multiple-list municipal elections have taken place in Cameroon under the CPDM in 1987, and followed by multiparty elections in 1996, 2002, 2007, and 2012.

Cameroon's electoral experience marked a major progress with the putting place of the 100-seat Senate on 27 February 2013 whose elections were conducted 14 April 2014 for 70 seats by a college of 10,636 members from the 360 municipal councils.

ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT BODIES

Prior to the advent of multiparty politics, the management of elections was in the hands of the Ministry of Territorial

Administration, which was highly criticized during the 1992 multiparty legislative and presidential elections. This led to the creation of the National Elections Observatory, ONEL on 19 December 2000, whose litmus test also came with the management of the 2002 elections, leading to amendments on 22 Dec. 2003. The desire of the government to provide Cameroon with a truly independent body led to the creation of Elections Cameroon ELECAM on 29 December 2006, whose on baptism of fire came with the 2007 and 2011 elections.

To ensure a level playing ground for all the actors, the Parliament enacted a law on 15 December 2000 on the funding of the political parties during elections. In the same vein, the voting of Cameroonians abroad became effective with the law of July 2011 and its Decree of application of August 2011.

Consequently, during the October 2011 presidential elections, some 26,000 Cameroonians the world over voted out of the 7.5 million voters, making 3.1% of the entire electorate. In the USA for instance, there were 123 voters in Washington DC and 57 in the New York polling stations in which President Biya won by a 83.3% and 78% respectively.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Human rights are commonly understood as «inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being». Human rights are thus conceived as universal (applicable everywhere) and egalitarian (the same for everyone). These rights may exist as natural rights or as legal rights, in both national and international law. In Cameroon, the constitution of the Re-

public enshrines the rights and freedoms of every citizen. The National Commission of Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon was set up to ensure the protection and regularity of the rights of Cameroonians, their social, cultural and political leanings notwithstanding. This, together with the desire of the government to ensure the rights of citizens accounts for the freedom that Cameroonians enjoy today. In Cameroon, gone are the days of police harassments, of political imprisonments, of arbitrary arrests and other human rights violations.

PRESS FREEDOM

Freedom of the press or freedom of the media is the freedom of communication and expression through mediums including various electronic media and published materials. While such freedom mostly implies the absence of interference from an overreaching state, its preservation is sought through constitutional or other legal protections. Cameroon is one rare country in continental Africa to boast of a very vibrant and multifaceted press with no taboo subjects discussed. Cameroon today has over 600 private newspaper and cyber titles including 6 dailies, 98 private broadcast channels and 19 private broadcast

televisions, functioning alongside official media like the daily Cameroon Tribune and the Cameroon Radio Television, CRTV. The ethical aspects of this press freedom are ensured by a regulatory body, the National Communications Council.

Power-Sharing and Appeased Democracy

An important feature of Cameroon's democracy today is the principle of power-sharing. Although the country has 254 political parties, less than five have seats in Parliament or control councils. Moreover, President Biya's CPDM party has the muscle to govern the country alone considering its excessive majority in the Parliament. However, for purposes of shared responsibility and power-sharing,, the president has opted for collective governance through coalitions of parliamentary and non-parliamentary Opposition.

More importantly, since December 2010, Cameroon has entered into a phase of appeased democracy with constant dialogue between the leaders of the ruling party and the leading Opposition Party, the SDF.



TOAST BY HIS EXCELLENCY PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Yaounde, 17 March 2016

Mr President of the Italian Republic,

My wife and I are very pleased to welcome you, as well as your daughter Laura MATTARELLA and the delegation accompanying you, to Cameroon. We wish you a warm welcome and a pleasant stay among us.

We are honoured by your choice of Cameroon as one of the laps of your maiden visit to Africa. That choice bears testimony to the solid friendship ties existing between our two countries, and also reflects their excellent relationship. The talks we have held today and the discussions between our business leaders augur well for the future of our relations.

Cameroon is grateful to you for this mark of interest and offers you its legendary hospitality in this Palace, which symbolizes of the unity of our people.

Cameroon is a young nation. It is resolutely pursuing its goal, which is to build a modern, democratic and prosperous State.

Despite numerous challenges, we are making significant and tangible progress each day, in areas such as promotion of the rule of law, freedoms and protection of human rights.

Similarly, we are each day striving to lay a solid foundation for real economic development through ambitious projects designed to make Cameroon an emerging country by 2035.

In this regard, following an arduous structural adjustment period, Cameroon has, for some years now, returned to growth, which stood at 6% in 2015 thanks to the sacrifices

made by its sons and daughters, and with the assistance of its partners, among which, Italy.

I would like to thank your country here and now for its direct and indirect support.

Mr President,

As you are aware, terrorism is today a major global concern. Cameroon is not spared by it. For over two years now, peace has been under threat in the northern part of our country. We are engaged in a war started by BOKO HARAM, a Nigerian-based horde of terrorists claiming to belong to the Islamic State. Nationals of friendly countries, including Italians, have been victims of this war. Fathers GIANPAOLO MARTA and GIANTONIO ALLEGRINI were abducted sometime ago by these unscrupulous men. We freed them.

We are responding strongly to the terrorist atrocities. We are tracking down these assassins and inflicting heavy and multiple losses on them daily with the backing of the Multinational Task Force and that of many friendly countries, including Italy.

BOKO HARAM terrorists are causing a massive influx of refugees on our territory. Faced with so many distressed people, we are duty bound by human solidarity not to turn away those seeking refuge, and to welcome and share with them the little we have.

Europe and in particular Italy are, mutatis mutandis, currently experiencing a similar situation, having to grapple with an unprecedented migrant crisis.

I have always believed that any lasting solution to this thorny issue should be based on social morality and human values which I know Italy holds dear.

Indeed, more than ever before, our world needs greater solidarity.

On the economic front, such solidarity, as I have often said, means the need for shared global prosperity. It is not about some begging for charity and others doling it out sparingly.

It is about progressing together under a solidarity pact, as good partners, willing at all times to conclude mutually beneficial agreements.

Mr President,

Cameroon is endowed with huge and varied natural resources. Its excellent ecological conditions and vast expanses of fertile land are conducive to agriculture. Its subsoil abounds in diverse mineral resources.

Such huge potential requires more judicious exploitation and increased local processing. Also, there is a need for accelerated development of multiple economic and social infrastructures.

Accordingly, I call on Italian enterprises, which are known to be competent and serious to take an interest in the various programmes. By so doing, they will be contributing, alongside us and within the framework of the solidarity pact I mentioned earlier on, towards creating in

our country and providing much better living conditions for our youths. This will dissuade them from risking their lives in quest of an imaginary El Dorado.

I am aware, Mr President, that many of your enterprises have already established partnerships in the areas of raw materials processing and public works. I am also aware that other partnerships are being negotiated in the infrastructure development and housing sector.

Mr President of the Italian Republic, your country has been lending invaluable support to the Chantal BIYA International Reference Centre (CBIRC) for research on HIV since its inception ten years ago. Before I conclude, I would like to thank you most sincerely for that.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,

My wife and I now invite you to raise your glasses in honour of the President of the Italian Republic, His Excellency Sergio MATTARELLA, his daughter Laura MATTARELLA and the delegation accompanying him, and to friendship between Italy and Cameroon.

Thank you.



STATE VISIT TO CAMEROUN OF H.E SERGIO MATTARELLA,
PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC
17 - 20 MARCH 2016

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

1. At the invitation of H.E. Paul BIYA, President of the Republic of Cameroon, the President of the Italian Republic, H.E. Sergio MATTARELLA, paid a State Visit to Cameroon from 17 to 20 March 2016.
2. During their discussions, both Heads of State commended the excellent friendship and cooperation ties existing between the two countries, and agreed to explore avenues for raising the level of this relationship. Furthermore, they made an overview of regional and international issues facing the International Community.
3. The Italian President hailed the understanding and unity prevailing among the various communities and religions in Cameroon. He urged the Cameroonian people to defend and promote such model of coexistence, harmony and valuing of diversity.
4. The Italian President further commended Cameroon's contribution to regional stability and its commitment to providing shelter for refugees. The two Heads of State also expressed their satisfaction with bilateral cooperation in the peacekeeping training being provided Cameroonian officers at the CoESPU in Vicenza, as well as the training of Cameroonian Police and Gendarmerie officers in the fight against terrorism by the Arma dei Carabinieri.
5. The Italian President expressed his support for Cameroon's efforts in the fight against Boko Haram. He extended the condolences of the Italian people for the numerous Cameroonians killed by Boko Haram and expressed his solidarity with the populations affected by the crisis. In that connection, President MATARRELLA announced a further contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to enable it to manage the humanitarian emergencies in Cameroon's Far North. Both Heads of State underscored the importance of full operationalization of the Ndjamenabased Multinational Joint Task Force and cooperation between the participating countries.
6. The two Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to combating terrorism and violent extremism which pose a threat to global stability and security. They agreed on the importance of cooperation between countries fighting terrorism on its different fronts.
7. Both Heads of State reviewed the socio-political situation prevailing in Africa and reaffirmed their commitment to contributing towards fostering peace and good governance, and enhancing democracy in Africa.
8. On the bilateral level, the two Heads of State expressed satisfaction with the exemplary cooperation between the two countries evidenced by constructive political dialogue and multifaceted Italian support to Cameroon.
9. The two Heads of State agreed on the need to strengthen economic and trade relations between the two countries.
10. They commended the technical discussions held on the sidelines of this visit between Italian companies and their Cameroonian partners. They agreed to encourage initiatives aimed at promoting cooperation in the area of investments.
11. Both Heads of State lauded the humanitarian action undertaken by Italian social services and civil society organizations operating in the areas of health, assistance to the underprivileged and education. In the regard, they hailed the dynamism of cooperation between Italian and Cameroonian universities in joint training projects as evidenced by the large number of Cameroonians studying in Italian universities, which opens prospects for the development of Italy-Cameroon relations. The Italian President thanked the Cameroonian party for the increased learning of the Italian language in Cameroon.
12. Both Heads of State commended the strengthening of the legal framework of their cooperation to which was

added the signing of three new agreements, namely the Agreement to Exempt Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports from Short-stay Visas; the Cultural, Technical and Scientific Cooperation Agreement, and the Framework Document on the Use of Resources Derived from the Cancelling of Cameroon's Debt to Italy.

13. Both Heads of State were also satisfied with the signing of the following instruments: the Protocols Agreement between the National Advanced School of Public Works and the University of Padua, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering of the University of Padua for the promotion of sustainable town planning in Cameroon.

14. Both Heads of State welcomed the inter-ministerial conference billed for 18 May 2016 in Rome, within the framework of the Italy-Africa Initiative.

15. The two Heads of State discussed migration issues and their impact on regional and international stability. They reaffirmed the importance of greater international cooperation and solidarity, and productive dialogue between countries of origin, destination and transit by recalling the conclusions of the Europe-Africa Summit in Valetta.

16. Both Heads of State also underscored the need to create international social, economic and political conditions meeting the deep aspirations of peoples.

17. Both Heads of State expressed satisfaction with the successful organization of the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and agreed on the need for greater international cooperation in order to achieve its conclusions.

18. The two Heads of State commended the convergence of views between Cameroon and Italy on the need for a reform of the UN Security Council.

19. The President of the Italian Republic, H.E. Sergio MATTARELLA, invited the President of the Republic of Cameroon, H.E. Paul BIYA, to pay an Official Visit to Italy. The invitation was accepted with pleasure. Details of the visit will be arranged through diplomatic channels.

20. The President of the Italian Republic, on behalf of the Italian Government and people, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the President of the Republic of Cameroon and the Government and people of Cameroon for the very warm welcome and exceptional solicitude accorded him and his delegation throughout this important Visit.

Done in Yaounde, on 20 March 2016



BRIEF INTERVIEW GRANTED BY PRESIDENTS PAUL BIYA AND SERGIO MATTARELLA – (MAY 2016)

President Paul BIYA

Mr. President, what is your appraisal of the Italian President's visit to Cameroon?

President Paul BIYA : First of all, I would like to say that the visit of the President of the Italian Republic to Cameroon was a great honour to Cameroon. Italy and Cameroon have long-standing ties, and this visit, through the talks and agreements reached, will certainly help to further strengthen this friendship.

Cameroon will be present at the Rome Conference on Italy and Africa, to extend cooperation between our African countries and Italy.

Mr President, what is your prediction for Cameroon in the next ten years?

President Paul BIYA : I am not a prophet, but it will certainly be a more developed country. One that will be even more engaged with the European Union and Italy in particular.

President Sergio MATTARELLA

Mr President, you focused more on the importance to dialogue on the refugee situation during discussions. President Sergio MATTARELLA: Africa and Italy are inextricably linked and cooperation is always more essential. Italy acknowledges this, and on 18 May, an inter-ministerial conference will be held in Rome. I hope that the refugee situation will become a priority on the European Union's agenda.

The ongoing collaboration is promising. Cameroon and Italy share a common interest on various issues and on various fronts. For example, refugees and migration; the fight against terrorism; economic and commercial collaboration; and culture.

I hope that this partnership will be intensified between Italy and Cameroon; Italy and the entire African continent, and between the European Union and Africa.

Mr President, on the fight against terrorism, you congratulated Cameroon for its efforts to suppress the barbaric acts of Boko Haram. Is it possible to unite forces to build a barrier against ISIS and Boko Haram in sub-Saharan Africa?

President Sergio MATTARELLA : Terrorism of this nature is the same phenomenon, even if it has different nomenclatures in specific regions.

We continually congratulated Cameroon for the results achieved with the respect of human rights. These results are encouraging. But it is imperative to provide help; especially from the International Community.

Italy is helping through the training of law enforcement and defence forces.

Mr President, may we return to the problem of migrants, because it is important to find an agreement in this area today in Europe. You said it is often the poorest countries that lead by example. Did you witness this tradition to host displaced persons and refugees here in Africa, either in Ethiopia or Cameroon?

President Sergio MATTARELLA : I have noted here in Cameroon and Ethiopia, a very high sense of value for people in difficulty. I want this value to, henceforth, become a common heritage of the entire International Community.



BIOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

The first Pope of the Americas Jorge Mario Bergoglio hails from Argentina. The 80-year-old Jesuit Archbishop of Buenos Aires is a prominent figure throughout the continent, yet remains a simple pastor who is deeply loved by his diocese, throughout which he has travelled extensively on the underground and by bus during the 15 years of his episcopal ministry.

“My people are poor and I am one of them”, he has said more than once, explaining his decision to live in an apartment and cook his own supper. He has always advised his priests to show mercy and apostolic courage and to keep their doors open to everyone.

The worst thing that could happen to the Church, he has said on various occasions, “is what de Lubac called spiritual worldliness”, which means, “being self-centred”. And when he speaks of social justice, he calls people first of all to pick up the Catechism, to rediscover the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. His project is simple: if you follow Christ, you understand that “trampling upon a person’s dignity is a serious sin”.

Despite his reserved character - his official biography consists of only a few lines, at least until his appointment as Archbishop of Buenos Aires - he became a reference point because of the strong stances he took during the dramatic financial crisis that overwhelmed the country in 2001.

He was born in Buenos Aires on 17 December 1936, the son of Italian immigrants. His father Mario was an accountant employed by the railways and his mother Regina Sivori was a committed wife dedicated to raising their five children. He graduated as a chemical technician and then chose the path of the priesthood,

entering the Diocesan Seminary of Villa Devoto. On 11 March 1958 he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus. He completed his studies of the humanities in Chile and returned to Argentina in 1963 to graduate with a degree in philosophy from the Colegio de San José in San Miguel. From 1964 to 1965 he taught literature and psychology at Immaculate Conception College in Santa Fé and in 1966 he taught the same subject at the Colegio del Salvatore in Buenos Aires. From 1967-70 he studied theology and obtained a degree from the Colegio of San José.

On 13 December 1969 he was ordained a priest by Archbishop Ramón José Castellano. He continued his training between 1970 and 1971 at the University of Alcalá de Henares, Spain, and on 22 April 1973 made his final profession with the Jesuits. Back in Argentina, he was novice master at Villa Barilari, San Miguel; professor at the Faculty of Theology of San Miguel; consultor to the Province of the Society of Jesus and also Rector of the Colegio Máximo of the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology.

On 31 July 1973 he was appointed Provincial of the Jesuits in Argentina, an office he held for six years. He then resumed his work in the university sector and from 1980 to 1986 served once again as Rector of the Colegio de San José, as well as parish priest, again in San Miguel. In March 1986 he went to Germany to finish his doctoral thesis; his superiors then sent him to the Colegio del Salvador in Buenos Aires and next to the Jesuit Church in the city of Córdoba as spiritual director and confessor.

It was Cardinal Antonio Quarracino, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, who wanted him as a close collaborator. So, on 20 May 1992 Pope John Paul II appointed him titular Bishop of Auca and Auxiliary of Buenos

Aires. On 27 May he received episcopal ordination from the Cardinal in the cathedral. He chose as his episcopal motto, *miserando at que eligendo*, and on his coat of arms inserted the *ihs*, the symbol of the Society of Jesus.

He gave his first interview as a bishop to a parish newsletter, *Estrellita de Belém*. He was immediately appointed Episcopal Vicar of the Flores district and on 21 December 1993 was also entrusted with the office of Vicar General of the Archdiocese. Thus it came as no surprise when, on 3 June 1997, he was raised to the dignity of Coadjutor Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Not even nine months had passed when, upon the death of Cardinal Quarracino, he succeeded him on 28 February 1998, as Archbishop, Primate of Argentina and Ordinary for Eastern-rite faithful in Argentina who have no Ordinary of their own rite.

Three years later at the Consistory of 21 February 2001, John Paul ii created him Cardinal, assigning him the title of San Roberto Bellarmino. He asked the faithful not to come to Rome to celebrate his creation as Cardinal but rather to donate to the poor what they would have spent on the journey. As Grand Chancellor of the Catholic University of Argentina, he is the author of the books: *Meditaciones para religiosos* (1982), *Reflexiones sobre la vida apostólica* (1992) and *Reflexiones de esperanza* (1992).

In October 2001 he was appointed General Relator to the 10th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the Episcopal Ministry. This task was entrusted to him at the last minute to replace Cardinal Edward Michael Egan, Archbishop of New York, who was obliged to stay in his homeland because of the terrorist attacks on September 11th. At the Synod he placed particular emphasis on “the prophetic mission of the bishop”, his being a “prophet of justice”, his duty to “preach ceaselessly” the social doctrine of the

Church and also “to express an authentic judgment in matters of faith and morals”.

All the while Cardinal Bergoglio was becoming ever more popular in Latin America. Despite this, he never relaxed his sober approach or his strict lifestyle, which some have defined as almost “ascetic”. In this spirit of poverty, he declined to be appointed as President of the Argentine Bishops’ Conference in 2002, but three years later he was elected and then, in 2008, reconfirmed for a further three-year mandate. Meanwhile in April 2005 he took part in the Conclave in which Pope Benedict XVI was elected.

As Archbishop of Buenos Aires - a diocese with more than three million inhabitants - he conceived of a missionary project based on communion and evangelization. He had four main goals: open and brotherly communities, an informed laity playing a lead role, evangelization efforts addressed to every inhabitant of the city, and assistance to the poor and the sick. He aimed to reevangelize Buenos Aires, “taking into account those who live there, its structure and its history”. He asked priests and lay people to work together. In September 2009 he launched the solidarity campaign for the bicentenary of the Independence of the country. Two hundred charitable agencies are to be set up by 2016. And on a continental scale, he expected much from the impact of the message of the Aparecida Conference in 2007, to the point of describing it as the “*Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Latin America”.

Until the beginning of the recent *sede vacante*, he was a member of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Congregation for the Clergy, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Pontifical Council for the Family and the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

He was elected Supreme Pontiff on 13 March 2013



VATICAN CITY STATE

The Vatican is an independent state, located inside the city of Rome, the capital of Italy. Covering an area of 0.44 km² (44 hectares), it is considered to be the smallest state in the world, with more than a thousand inhabitants. Nearly all the citizens of the Vatican live inside the walls of the city. The citizens of the Vatican consist mainly of the clergy. Nearly 3,000 foreign workers make up the state's labour force, but live outside the city.

The official language is Italian (Latin is the language of the Roman Catholic Church). The Vatican is independent since 11 February 1929, the date of the signing of the Lateran Pacts with the government of Benito Mussolini. The Vatican is the remainder of the Pontifical States called States of the Papacy or of the Church.

In 1870, after the evacuation of the French troops, Rome was attached to the kingdom of Italy. Pope Pius IX refused to lose his last possession and entered into conflict with the Italian state until the Lateran Pacts in 1929. The history of the Italian state is somehow inseparable from that of the Roman Catholic Church. Although the Church forms a "virtual continent", according to Thierry Breton, the author of Vatican III, the presence of the Pope in the immediate vicinity of

Rome symbolises a certain continuity of the institution from the 17th to the 19th century.

The Pope has absolute power (executive, legislative and judicial). Executive power is delegated to the Governorate of the State of the Vatican City and is exercised by the President of the Pontifical Commission, Secretary of State, at present Cardinal Pietro PAROLIN, since 15 October 2013. The Secretary for Relations with States, in other words the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is Monsignor Dominique MAMBERTI. The Roman Curia assists the Pope in the exercise of his power.

There is no Vatican nationality, but citizenship may be granted temporarily by the Pope.

The Holy See, which represents the world government of the Roman Catholic Church, is an entity with a well-defined political and diplomatic role and influence. Indeed, because of its function and its positions on major international issues, the Pope is an undeniable moral authority. The Holy See has a permanent observer state status at the United Nations. As a result, Catholicism is the only religion officially represented at the UN.



THE POPE

As the traditional successor of Saint Peter, the Pope is the Head of the College of Bishops and the Supreme Head of the Catholic Church.

The Pope is the bishop of Rome and, consequently, the successor of Peter the Apostle. According to the Gospels, Peter enjoyed a primacy within the apostolic group constituted by Jesus. The Pope inherits this primacy. Thus, he is the head of the college of bishops and supreme head of the Catholic Church. The Gospels report that Jesus Christ associated a small group of close followers while preaching the good news. He gave them the name “apostles”, a Greek word which means “messenger”.

After his resurrection, Jesus Christ manifested himself to the group of apostles. He communicated to them the Holy Spirit and entrusted them with the mission of being together, and witnesses of the resurrection and teachings. The Catholic Church is apostolic and the bishops are the successors of the apostles.

Since the beginning of the Church, the Bishop of Rome is considered to be the successor of the Apostle Peter, by virtue of the fact that Rome is the place of the martyrdom of the chief of the apostles. The Pope ascends the office of the Apostle Peter as soon as he

accepts his election, by the cardinals.

Just as the apostles formed a group which a pre-eminence belonged to Peter, so the bishops form the college in which the Pope exercises a primacy. The bishop’s triple mission is to teach authentic faith, to guarantee the conditions of worship to God and to serve the unity of the Church. The bishop’s solicitude is expressed in his diocese. But the episcopal body is collectively charged with the conduct of the universal Church.

This collective responsibility is expressed within the framework of the councils. The Pope, the first of the bishops, returns to confirm the work of a council. Outside the conciliar periods which remain exceptional, Vatican II (1962 to 1965) was the 21st Council of the history of the Catholic Church.

The ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the Church is concentrated on the person of the Pope. The Pope must express his solicitude as a bishop vis-à-vis his diocese of Rome and the whole Church. The Cardinal Vicar assists the Pope in his office as Bishop of Rome, and the Roman Curia collaborates with the Pope in his position as pastor of the Universal Church.

266 popes have reigned over the Catholic Church since the Apostle Peter.



RELATIONS BETWEEN CAMEROON AND THE HOLY SEE

Cameroon's accession to international sovereignty in 1960 coincided with the preparation and celebration of the Second Vatican Council in Rome (1962-1965). Pope John XXIII, the initiator of this Council, sent invitations to a number of African leaders from these freshly independent countries. President AHMADOU AHIDJO of Cameroon was represented by Mr. Philemon BEB A DON, Minister Plenipotentiary, who offered a present to Pope XXIII during the event. Thus, the State of Cameroon was represented at the opening of the Second Vatican Council in Rome on 11 October 1962.

In 1966, following the Second Vatican Council, President AHMADOU AHIDJO went to Rome with Bishop Yves Plumey of Garoua, in response to an invitation from Pope Paul VI (who succeeded Pope John XXIII). He was accorded the treatment reserved for Heads of State. It is at the end of this visit that diplomatic relations were established between the State of Cameroon and the Holy See on 31 October 1966.

Cameroon opened a chancellery in Rome, while the Holy See opened an Apostolic Nunciature in Yaounde, which covers Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon. The Apostolic Nuncio is the permanent diplomatic representative of the Holy See. The following Apostolic Nuncios have served in Yaounde since 1966:

- Monsignor Luigi Poggi 1966-1969;
- Monsignor Ernesto Gallina 1969-1971;
- Monsignor Jean Jadot 1971-1976;
- Monsignor Joseph Uhac 1976-1981;
- Monsignor Donato Squicciarini (Nuncio) 1981-1989;
- Monsignor Santos Abril Y Castello

(Nuncio) 1989- 1996;

- Monsignor Félix Del Blanco Prieto (Nuncio) 1996- 2003 ;
- Monsignor Eliseo Antonio Ariotti (Nuncio) 2003-2009;
- Monsignor Piero PIOPO (Nuncio) since 2010.
- Cameroon has always paid close attention to its relations with the Holy See, by instructing its ambassador in the Federal Republic of Germany to cover the Vatican with special care.

In his policy of effective diplomacy with proximity, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA broke with this practice. In 2002, the Head of State appointed Mr. Philippe MATAGA as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Cameroon to the Holy See with residence in Rome. Unfortunately, the representative of Cameroon died before taking service. On 25 January 2008, Mr. Antoine ZANGA was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See, still with residence in Rome. He presented his credentials to Pope Benedict XVI on 16 June 2008. In his address, the Holy Father praised this important turning point in relations between Cameroon and the Holy See.

As regards the exchange of visits between the highest authorities of Cameroon and the Vatican, it should be noted that President Paul BIYA paid a maiden visit to the Vatican in November 1986. The Head of State personally attended Pope John Paul II's funeral in Rome on 8 April 2005. In 2011, the President of the Republic, accompanied by his wife, Mrs Chantal BIYA, attended the ceremony of the beatification of John Paul II in Rome. This Pope, who visited Cameroon twice from 9 to 14 August 1985 and from

14 to 16 September 1995, received an immeasurable hospitality from both President Paul BIYA and Cameroonians. In 1995, John Paul II proclaimed, “the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Ecclesia in Africa”, in Yaounde.

For his first apostolic visit to Africa, Pope Benedict XVI visited Cameroon, the first stage of the journey, from 17 to 20 March 2009, when he promulgated the “instrumentum laboris” (working document) of the Second Special Synod of Bishops consecrated to Africa. On this occasion, Benedict XVI received a memorable welcome from the Head of State and his wife, Mrs. Chantal BIYA, as well as from all Cameroonians in their ethnic and religious diversity. The Pope celebrated a Pontifical Mass at the AHMADOU AHIDJO stadium in Yaounde, in front of 60,000 people (including Muslim dignitaries and Christians from other churches). On 20 March 2009, Benedict XVI said: “Several scenes I lived here will remain deeply engraved in my memory. May God bless this wonderful country that is Africa in miniature, a land of promise and a land of radiant beauty.”

At the invitation of His Holiness Pope Francis, President Paul BIYA, accompanied by First Lady Chantal BIYA, paid an official visit to the Vatican City State on 18 October 2013. This was a few months after his election at the Apostolic See on 13 March 2013.

An accord to establish the legal framework for relations between the Catholic Church and the Republic of Cameroon, with the aim of clarifying the functioning of the Catholic Church in our country, was signed on 13 January 2014 in Yaounde between the Minister of External Relations of Cameroon, Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo and the Apostolic Nuncio in Cameroon, H.E. Piero Pioppo. As announced during H.E. Paul BIYA’s official visit to the Vatican City on 18 October 2013, this treaty regulates Church-State relations, within their respective autonomous powers. It also handles the moral, spiritual and material well-being of individuals and the national community.

The Catholic Church in Cameroon has more than 50% of the Christian population. It is against the Holy See’s policy to publish its achievements. However,

the Catholic Church is engaged in Cameroon through Bishops and local churches. Cameroon has five Archdioceses (Yaounde, Douala, Bamenda, Garoua, and Bertoua) and 20 dioceses, including the Diocese of Bafang, created in July 2012.

With regard to the social action of the Church in Cameroon, it is based on two main pillars: education and health.

1. Education

The Catholic Church significantly accompanies the Cameroonian Government in the field of education, through the creation of nursery, primary and secondary schools even in the most remote areas of the country. At the level of higher education, there are seven Catholic Universities in Cameroon. However, the flagship of Catholic higher education in the country remains the Catholic University of Central Africa (UCAC) in Yaounde. Created in 1989, UCAC is open to all Christian and non-Christian people. It offers bachelor’s degree courses in social sciences and management, social sciences and law, management of companies. UCAC also grants Master’s Degrees in Management, Economics, Finance and Information Systems, and Human Rights. The diplomas awarded by UCAC are recognised by the State of Cameroon.

2. Health

There are several health facilities belonging to the Catholic Church in Cameroon. For example, the Garoua, Poli and Tokombere hospitals in the northern part of the country, the Salapoumbe hospital in the east, and above all the Saint Elisabeth Reference Hospital in Shisong, North West region. This hospital, established in 2002, harbours the lone cardiology centre in Central and Western Africa. The technical platform is of high quality.

Apart from education and health, the Catholic Church also intervenes in human development, peace and justice. The action of the Church is also felt via social communication.



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CAMEROON

In Cameroon, it was a native who went to Germany to shake up the missionary consciousness, unlike other Black African countries where the evangelisation project was conceived from the metropolis.

Comparing Cameroon with Israel; land of God, Bishop François Xavier Vogt, one of the founding fathers of the Church in Cameroon, said it was “a people that He trusted”. This apostolic vicar of Cameroon (1922-1943) thought then that Cameroon in black Africa is the new chosen country of God.

Indeed, the conditions in which the country was evangelised and the rapidity with which the Catholic Mission gained ground, prompted observers to speak of the “Cameroonian miracle”. This “miracle”, so to speak, is due primarily to the original character of the evangelisation of our country.

Whereas in the other countries of sub-Saharan Africa, it was the missionaries who, from the Western metropolises, conceived the project for the conversion of the so-called “pagan” people. In Cameroon, it is a Cameroonian, Andreas KWA MBANGE, who went in search of the Good News to upset the German missionary consciousness.

On his return to Douala, he put himself at the service of the Catholic Mission. Andreas KWA MBANGE went to Germany in 1888, to learn the trade of a baker. Against all expectations, he asked to be baptised. This baptism took place on 6 January 1889, in full solemnity of the Epiphany. Its sponsor, the famous orator of the German political party known as ZENTRUM, Dr. Ludwig Windthorst, propagated to the problem of the evangelisation of Cameroon, where the Protestant missionaries had preceded the

Catholics by nearly half a century. The Protestants were in fact working in the coastal region as early as 1841.

Thanks to the intervention of Dr. Ludwig Windthorst, the apostolic district of Cameroon was created on 18 March 1890 and was entrusted to the Pallottine missionaries of German origin or nationality. The apostolic head of Cameroon was appointed on 20 July 1890, in the person of Father Heinrich Vieter.

He was the apostolic vicar and Bishop of Limburg on 22 January 1905. It is this priest who, on 8 December 1890, consecrated the budding Church to Mary, Queen of the Apostles, in Marienberg (located in the Sanaga Maritime division, Littoral region), placing Cameroon under the protection of the Virgin Mary.

During this German colonial period, another religious congregation, the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was authorised in 1912 to send missionaries to Cameroon. They championed the Mission to Adamaoua, and created the apostolic district of Adamaoua on 28 April 1914.

The First World War, which broke out in Europe in 1914, spread very rapidly in Africa, especially in the German colonies. The Cameroonian campaign for this war lasted two years (1 August 1914 to 20 February 1916). The French and the English became the new masters of the Cameroonian territory, which they shared, and all the Germans, including the missionaries were expelled from the country.

The Holy Ghost Fathers replaced the Pallottins in the Missions founded in South Cameroon, an important fringe of the territory entrusted by the League of Nations to France through the mandate. The Priests of

the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who began the evangelisation of Cameroon by Kumbo (Northwest Region) and the western highland region, could continue to exercise their apostolate, on condition that the Germans would be replaced by the French, the Belgians or the Luxembourgers of the same congregation. In 1921, they will be asked to release the Missions founded in French Cameroon. The Missionaries of St. Joseph of Mill-Hill (Anglo-Saxon), settled in British Cameroon in 1921. In 1946, the Oblates of Immaculate Mary arrived for the evangelisation of the Far North regions.

Today, 123 years after, one can remember as major events: the ordination of the first Cameroonian priests on 8 December 1935; the coronation of the first Cameroonian Bishop (Monsignor Paul Etoga) on 30 November 1955; the construction of the Archdiocese of Yaounde and the dioceses of Garoua, Doume, Nkongsamba and Douala on 14 September 1955; the appointment of the first Cameroonian Archbishop (Monsignor Jean Zoa) on 20 November 1961; and the elevation of Bishop Christian Tumi to a Cardinal on 28 June 1986.



ECUMENISM AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN CAMEROON

Religious diversity in Cameroon reflects its ethnic and cultural diversity (more than 200 ethnic groups live in this country). Thanks to the wisdom of President Paul BIYA, all religions live and develop in good understanding.

Cameroon is not only a land of ethnic diversity, but also a crossroads of religions. The country is deeply marked by diversity. It offers to the face of the world, a unique example of peaceful coexistence of religions; Thanks to legislation that guarantees freedom of conscience in so far as it does not conflict with republican institutions and good morals. We should also note the spirit of dialogue and peace that inhabits the leaders of faith communities and their faithful.

Whenever it is requested to authorize an interfaith worship, the Government has always been favorable, especially in the case of important events and national interests.

Institutions of a religious nature for ecumenism and interreligious dialogue operate in Cameroon. These include the Ecumenical Service for Peace and the Cameroon Association for Interreligious Dialogue (ACADIR). The latter, founded in 2006, includes the Catholic Church (40%), the Protestant Churches (20%), the Orthodox Church (5%) and the Muslims (25%).

The structure remains open to other faith communities, provided that they commit themselves to work for peace and social progress in Cameroon, with respect for the other members. ACADIR supports the right to difference and encourages schools and faith-based health centers to welcome pupils or patients regardless of religious or ethnic background.

It is therefore to be welcomed that in Cameroon, thanks to the wisdom of President Paul Biya, all religions live and develop in good understanding.