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PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC

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72nd Session of the UN General Assembly

Participation of the President of the Republic, H.E. Paul BIYA

New York, September 2017

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72nd SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Theme of the General Debate

Proceedings of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly open on 12 September 2017 in New York. The theme of the General Debate is: **“Focusing on People: Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for all on a Sustainable Planet”**

The General Debate with Heads of State, Government and Delegation will take place from 19 to 25 September 2017. The President of the Republic of Cameroon, H.E. Paul BIYA, is scheduled to state the views of his Government on 22 September.

Some topics for debate

- Increased economic growth and sustainable development;
- The maintenance of international peace and security;

- The development of Africa under Agenda 2063 of the African Union. This theme is strongly supported by the United Nations whose new Secretary General, Antonio GUTERRES, has made one of the priorities;
- Promotion and protection of human rights;
- Coordination of humanitarian assistance operations and the promotion of justice and international law;
- The issue of disarmament, particularly with the fight against the circulation of small arms and light weapons as well as measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons.
- Drug control: the prevention of crime and the fight against international terrorism in all its forms.



The Head of State's participation: Context and challenges

Context

The 72nd session of the General Assembly takes place in an international context marked by numerous threats to peace and international security. Top on the list of challenges is terrorism. This condemnable phenomenon spares no State. An example is the brutal attacks in Barcelona (Spain). Coupled to this is the growing presence of hotbeds of tension in Africa and the rest of the world, which has led to the rise of refugee crises. Other issues such as: the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement on climate change – after the withdrawal of the USA; and the economic crisis affecting many African countries, would equally be tackled during the upcoming UNGA deliberations.

Challenges

The participation of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, H.E Paul BIYA, at the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, as in the past, will contribute to the radiance and promotion of Cameroon's trade mark within the Organization. It will give the Head of State the opportunity to establish or strengthen contacts with the other leaders of the world, to pursue advocacy on certain major international, sub regional and national concerns among which are, peace and security, the fight against terrorism in particular the Boko Haram threat, refugee management, climate change, the economic crisis, the fight against poverty, etc.

As regards the terrorist sect Boko Haram, although it is considerably weakened, it still constitutes a threat to Cameroon in particular and to all countries in the Lake Chad region in general. Suicide bombings have become the new mode of operation for terrorists, to which must be added other crimes and abuses. International mobilization must therefore continue in order to completely eradicate this terrorist sect. Strengthening the United Nations support for the Multinational Joint Task Force is essential. The humanitarian challenge of the terrorist threat and instability in the neighbouring CAR remains a major concern. Cameroon, a peaceful and hospitable country, continues to host hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Boko Haram's crimes in Nigeria and insecurity in the Central African Republic. In addition, it must manage the case of its own populations displaced by this war. In this asymmetrical war, Cameroon remains respectful of its commitments to the respect for human rights.

During his visit to Cameroon in March 2015, the UN Secretary-General Antonio GUTERRES, then United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was able to realize the enormous load carried by Cameroon on behalf of humanity. **“Cameroon is at the forefront of the collective security of mankind,” he said very opportunely, adding that it is important that the international community understands this role and knows that “supporting Cameroon is a priority “.**

Cameroon thus welcomes the visit in March 2017 of a delegation of the ambassadors of the fifteen member countries of the Security Council on the assessment of the security and humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad area. The delegation had talks that were described as “positive and warm” with the President of the Republic, H.E Paul BIYA, on 3 March 2017 in Yaoundé.

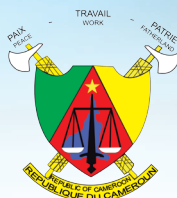
The members of the Security Council hailed Cameroon for its “exemplary commitment” in the fight against the Boko Haram sect, the reception of refugees and the efforts made in terms of resilience for sustainable development. The members of the Security Council also recognized that the Lake Chad region had not been given attention by the international community and that they had come to “correct this mistake”. Finally, they emphasized the security, humanitarian and development challenges that Cameroon and other countries in the Lake Chad region had to overcome with “the contribution of the international community”.

In February 2017, a few weeks before the visit of the Ambassadors of the Security Council, a humanitarian conference was organized in Oslo, Norway with the aim of assessing the humanitarian needs of Cameroon in particular and the Lake Chad region in general, victims

of the atrocities of Boko Haram and also collateral victim of the instability in CAR specifically concerning our country. It is hoped that this renewed interest on the part of the United Nations will enable Cameroon to meet the security and humanitarian challenges it faces in order to continue its peaceful march towards emergence.

The situation in the North-West and South-West regions: Resulting from the legitimate demands of teachers’ and lawyers’ unions, this situation has been exploited by extremists who wish to undermine the peace and unity of Cameroon acquired under the tutelage of the United Nations. This unity, so dearly acquired and which is non-negotiable. The Government has already provided many answers to the demands of teachers and lawyers. It will continue to do so in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of our country. To consolidate the living together of the Cameroonian people, a National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism was created at the beginning of this year and it is working.

On 30 August 2017, the President of the Republic ordered the discontinuance of judicial proceedings against some persons arrested in connection to the violence in the North West and South West Regions. A total of 55 detainees have been freed.



PARTICULARITY OF THE 72nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY: CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP AT THE UN AND IN SOME GREAT NATIONS

The 72nd session of the General Assembly will certainly have a special flavour because of the important changes of leaders within the United Nations and in certain great and friendly countries to Cameroon.

The new UN Secretary-General, Antonio GUTERRES (68), of Portuguese nationality, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from June 2005 to December 2015. In this capacity, Mr. GUTERRES visited Cameroon in the month of March 2015 and was received on behalf of the Head of State, H.E Paul BIYA, by the Minister SGPR. At the end of the meeting, Mr. GUTERRES welcomed the commitment of Cameroon in the fight against Boko Haram and the reception of refugees.

Elected ninth Secretary General of the Organization at the end of last year, Antonio GUTERRES officially took office on January 1, 2017, succeeding South Korean BAN KI-MOON. Prior to the UNHCR, Mr. GUTERRES was Prime Minister of Portugal between 1995 and 2002 and President of the European Council.

-The President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, Mr. Miroslav LAJCAK (54). Elected in May 2017, he replaces Mr Peter THOMPSON of Fiji, President of the

71st session of the General Assembly. From July 2007 to February 2009 Mr LAJCAK was High Representative of the United Nations and the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

-In the United States, President Donald TRUMP. Elected at the White House in November 2016, President TRUMP will participate for the first time in the deliberations of the UN General Assembly. His speech will be scrutinized in view of the place and role played by the USA in the world and the positions of the new Head of State on important issues of international concern. For example, President TRUMP has decided to withdraw the US from the bitterly negotiated Paris Climate Change Agreement in 2015. It forces the United Nations to reduce the operational budget for peacekeeping operations provided by the peacekeepers during the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. The amount of this decrease is \$ 600 million, or 7.2% of the previous budget (\$ 7.87 million).

The leaders of other friendly countries of Cameroon, like President Emmanuel MACRON of the French Republic will also be at their first participation in a General Assembly of the United Nations.



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;
- 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;
- 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.



BIOGRAPHY OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, MR. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

António GUTERRES (68), is the 9th Secretary General of the United Nations (UN). He officially took office on January 1, 2017, succeeding South Korean Ban Ki-Moon. As soon as he was elected at the end of 2016, the new Secretary General of the UN had promised to fight “populists” and “terrorists”.

Having witnessed the suffering of thousands of the most vulnerable people in refugee camps and in conflict zones around the world, the new Secretary General of the United Nations is determined to place human dignity at the center of his action, to be the agent of peace, to build bridges and to promote reform and innovation.

Prior to his appointment as UN Secretary General, **António GUTERRES** served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from June 2005 to December 2015. His mandate at UNHCR was marked by unprecedented waves of the displacement of persons in the past decades. The war in Syria, which resulted in the most serious humanitarian crisis since World War II and then in Iraq, the crises in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Yemen, led to a profound reform of the Office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees. This reform reduced the Geneva-based staff in Switzerland to one-third in order to better partition them on the field in case of emergency was felt given the ever-increasing number of refugees in the world.

They were estimated at more than 60 million in 2015.

Before the UNHCR, Antonio GUTERRES, a trained engineer, spent more than 20 years serving the State and in the civil service of his country, Portugal. He served as Prime Minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002. In 1999, he was one of the main contributors to the United Nations intervention in East Timor, a former Portuguese colony prey to pro-Indonesian militia after the victory of the proponents of self-determination in the referendum.

In early 2000, as President of the European Council, he led the procedure for the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment and co-chaired the first EU-Africa summit. Antonio GUTERRES is the first UN Secretary General to have headed a government.

In 1976, Mr. GUTERRES was elected to the Portuguese Parliament where he served for 17 years. During this period, he chaired the Parliamentary Committee on the Economy, Finance and Planning and then the Parliamentary Committee for Territorial Administration, Municipalities and the Environment. He was also leader of his party’s parliamentary group. From 1991 to 2002, he was a member of the Portuguese State Council.

From 1981 to 1983 **Mr GUTERRES** was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where he chaired the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography.

For many years, **Mr. GUTERRES** has been an active member of the Socialist International, a global alliance of socio-democratic political parties. He was Vice-President from 1992 to 1999, during which time he co-chaired the Africa Committee and later the Development Committee. From 1999 to mid-2005, he presided over the Socialist International. In addition, he founded the Portuguese Refugee Council and the Portuguese Consumer Defense Association (PDCA) and chaired an association in the early

1970s setting up social development projects in Lisbon's poor neighborhoods.

Antonio GUTERRES is a member of the Club de Madrid, a democratic alliance of former Heads of State and Government from around the world.

The new Secretary of the UN is fluent in Portuguese, English, French and Spanish. He is married to Catarina de Almeida Vaz Pinto, Deputy Mayor of Lisbon in charge of culture. He has two children, a son-in-law and three grandchildren.



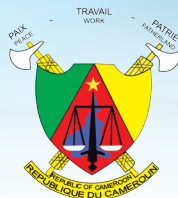
BIOGRAPHY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, MR. MIROSLAV LAJCAK

Miroslav LAJCAK (54) was born on 20 March 1963 in Poprad, Slovakia. He is a diplomat by training and began his career at the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry in 1988. He was Ambassador of Slovakia to Japan from 1994 to 1998, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1998 to 2001, Ambassador of Slovakia in the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Albania and Macedonia between 2001 and 2007.

On **July 2, 2007**, **Miroslav LAJCAK** was appointed High Representative of the international community and representative of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He held the position until February 2009.

In **January 2009**, he was again appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. He left office in July 2010. On April 4, 2012 he came back to government with the title of Vice-President of the Government. On March 23, 2016, he was confirmed as Foreign and European Minister of Foreign Affairs without the title of Vice-President of the Government.

On **May 31, 2017**, he was elected President of the 72nd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He took office at the opening of the General Meeting on September 12, 2017.



THE PRIORITIES OF THE MANDATE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 72nd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, was elected by acclamation by the 193 UN member states meeting at a General Assembly in New York on 31 May 2017.

In his inaugural speech, the President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly highlighted the priorities he wishes to defend during his term.

He immediately announced that he would call on the UN member states to focus on the people, as well as on prevention and mediation in favour of a lasting peace.

His third priority is migration and the ongoing process of the Global Pact for Migration.

Mr Miroslav Lajčák also explained that the issue of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate should be deepened, with particular emphasis on the needs of least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).

He said that his fifth priority would be the question of human rights because there could be no peace and development without respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of all.

The President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly assured that he would guarantee a gender balance and a geographical distribution

as equitable as possible within his Office. He emphasized the “quality” of the work of the United Nations, explaining that he would be interested in involving smaller countries more fully in all the work that would be mandated under his presidency.

Another objective of Miroslav Lajčák is to foster constructive, enlightened and inclusive interaction between the Member States and the Secretary General. He also expressed his willingness to consider the Secretary-General’s reform initiatives in the areas of peace and security, development and management.

He considered it more important to improve the effectiveness and the role of the General Assembly. “It is an ethical and political issue,” he said, noting that the reform mentioned is that of the Security Council, with the aim of making it an organ in line with the new global realities of the 21st century.

It was not an easy time to be at the head of the United Nations, he told Secretary-General António Guterres, present at his election, before committing himself to “representing each country fairly and open for everyone to feel that his place counts “.