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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
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PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC

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## PRESS KIT

### 2<sup>ND</sup> RUSSIA-AFRICA SUMMIT



Saint Petersburg, 27 to 28 July 2023



Participation of the President of the Republic of Cameroon

**H.E. Paul BIYA**

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## Sheet 1



### **CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> RUSSIA-AFRICA SUMMIT**

On the initiative of the President of the Russian Federation, H.E. Vladimir Putin, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Russia-Africa Summit will be held in Saint Petersburg from 27 to 28 July 2023, following the recommendations of the 1<sup>st</sup> Summit held in Sochi on 23 and 24 October 2019. The participants, led by the Heads of State and Government, will continue to reflect on a new approach to Russian-African cooperation, using a variety of formats and current themes. These include the new world economy, security, sovereign development, scientific, technical and technological cooperation, humanitarian and social action, and culture.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Russia-Africa Summit is taking place against a backdrop of concern for the international community: the war between Russia and Ukraine, which broke out on 24 February 2022, has led to the interplay of law and power, the formation of blocs and alliances, the decline of developing economies, inflation caused by rising food and oil prices, and the worsening of social inequalities and poverty in Africa.

Faithful to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and above all to the principle of non-alignment, Cameroon hopes not only that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine will be resolved through dialogue, but also that this conflict will be resolved quickly in order to resolve the food crisis that is undermining the entire planet, and to alleviate the suffering of the populations of the two countries at war.

Under Western sanctions linked to the conflict in Ukraine, Russia is working to consolidate its relations in Asia and Africa. This is why this Summit is seen as a considerable challenge.

The opportunities offered by this 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit through the Economic and Humanitarian Forum will give African experts and specialists the chance to develop a frank and constructive dialogue with Russia with a view to building an equitable and mutually beneficial partnership.



Humanitarian aid is a key issue in Russian-African relations, given the number of joint projects to be implemented in the fields of public health, food security, green transition, climate change and natural disaster prevention and management.

Cameroon intends to take advantage of this international meeting to find new outlets for the implementation of the National Development Strategy for the period 2020-2030 (SND-30) in order to achieve its emergence.

## Sheet 2



### THE EXCEPTIONALITY OF THE SUMMIT THEMES

Many Heads of State and Government are planning to attend the second Russia-Africa Summit in St Petersburg, which will be held under the slogan *"For peace, security and development"*. The main themes selected by the organisers include civil nuclear energy, space technologies, new logistics routes and food sovereignty. All these issues should help to place the African continent at the centre of the debate on the evolution of humanity, so that it can participate as a privileged partner.

The question of civil nuclear power in Africa is essential, because in a continent that has 20% of the world's uranium reserves, civil nuclear power accounts for only 2% of its energy production, even though the demand for access to electrical energy is enormous.

With regard to food sovereignty, the Black Sea Grain Initiative that expired on 17 July 2023 is a reminder of the urgent need to set up an agricultural sector that will enable Africa to avoid a food crisis and effectively meet the current and future needs of its people. Africa needs to chart a course for its agriculture so that it becomes the bedrock of its development. The continent should no longer depend on the outside world to feed its people. This implies, among other factors, taking into consideration the African farmer as an economic agent in his/her own right, a vector of the paradigm shift, through his or her professional integration and the valorisation of his/her work. Farmers will be called upon to adapt to change, using more industrialised and innovative techniques, such as those used in Russia.

The new logistics routes for Africa will enable it to bypass the international blockades against its trading partners, especially since the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine.

As President Paul BIYA said at the US-Africa Civil and Commercial Space Cooperation Forum in Washington on 13 December 2022, *"conquering space constitutes an opportunity and an imperative"*. Russia, which has a well-established tradition in this field, could be a partner of choice for Africa to bridge the gap in new information and communication technologies.

## Sheet 3



### **COOPERATION BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND AFRICA**

Russia maintains diplomatic relations with all African countries (the most recent to establish ties with Russia in 2011 was South Sudan). It has opened 40 diplomatic representations on the continent, while Moscow hosts 35 chancelleries in African countries. It also has representatives within the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which brings together seven East African countries, and the East African Community (EAC). Since 2006, Russia has observer status with the AU and as such regularly participates in ministerial meetings and Summits of Heads of State and Government.

Cameroon and the former USSR established diplomatic relations on 20 February 1964 and the Russian Federation was recognised in July 1992 by Cameroon as the heir to the former Soviet Union. Since then, 11 Russian ambassadors have succeeded one another in Yaounde, with the current plenipotentiary, H.E. Bashkine Anatoliy Gennadievitch, presenting his credentials to the Head of State on 26 December 2017. On Cameroon's side, 11 ambassadors have also been accredited to Moscow, including the current diplomat, H.E. Mahamat Paba Sale.

On the economic front, Africa, under the impetus of the African Union, aspires to continental emergence. This vision, enshrined in Agenda 2063, has made the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) one of the flagship projects of the first 10-Year Implementation Plan. To achieve this, Africa needs technology transfer, and human and institutional capacity building.

Africa depends on Russia for 30% of its cereal supplies. Almost all of this (95%) is wheat (11.9 million tonnes), worth \$3.3 billion. 80% of Russian exports to Africa go to North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia), as well as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Africa.

Politically, Russia and Africa are both committed to a fair, multipolar world order based on genuine equality and the rule of international law. It excludes all forms of discrimination and diktat, and frees itself from the pressure of international sanctions.



In terms of security, Africa is counting on Russia's support to dispel the many threats it faces. This is why Russia participates in all UN peacekeeping operations and contributes to the AU peace fund.

#### Russia's strategic objectives in Africa

- Acquire influence over territories along the southern Mediterranean and the Red Sea;
- Counter Western influence, as we have seen in recent years in the Central African Republic and Mali;
- Reshaping the international order based on the principles of the United Nations Charter.

#### **Priority areas for cooperation between Russia and Africa**

These include energy, particularly renewable energy sources, infrastructure development, especially the construction of railways and social housing, high-tech mining, local mineral processing, agriculture, digital technologies, geological exploration, medicine, science and education. Russia is also offering its African partners expertise in defence, security, armaments, mining research and nuclear energy. In return, it wants access to natural resources, particularly mining. At present, almost two-thirds of Russian investment in Africa is in the energy and mining sectors.

#### **Limits to Russian commitments in Africa**

Russia faces many obstacles. Its GDP of 1,400 billion dollars is equivalent to that of Brazil or Spain. It is expected to contract by 5.5% until 2023 and may return to its pre-war value by 2030. This is holding back Russian investment in Africa, which accounts for less than 1% of foreign direct investment (FDI) destined for the continent.





## **Prospects for cooperation between Africa and Russia**

A number of challenges need to be resolved in order to achieve the mutually beneficial partnership desired by both parties. These include: monitoring the implementation of decisions taken at summits and economic forums; honouring the commitments entered into by the parties; defining an internal strategy; improving governance; adopting a common African position; building human and institutional capacity; and freezing pressure from other



## Sheet 4



# THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN EUROPE TRIGGERED BY THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, in addition to damaging the prospects for post-Covid-19 recovery, has plunged Europe into a multidimensional crisis, the humanitarian consequences of which can be seen at several levels. Faced with this situation, initiatives have been taken at both European and UN levels.

### **Overview of the humanitarian situation**

In human terms, the UN estimates that since the start of the war, more than 7,000 civilians have been killed and more than 17.6 million Ukrainians (almost 40% of the population) are in need of humanitarian aid. Against a backdrop where the European continent is already facing a massive influx of foreign migrants, it is estimated that nearly 8 million Ukrainians have fled to neighbouring countries, including more than 4 million to European Union member states. Similarly, the number of internally displaced people is estimated at nearly 5 million, while thousands of Ukrainians are hiding in shelters to protect themselves from the bombardments.

In material terms, the toll is hard to take. The scale of the damage, in terms of the destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and other essential civilian infrastructure, is estimated by some European media at around 700 billion dollars. In the immediate term, it is estimated that more than 11 million people, most of them women and children, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

### **International initiatives**

While the fighting continues in Ukraine, more than 600 organisations are operating in the country to help those in need. In addition, numerous initiatives have been launched by both countries and international organisations to raise international awareness of the seriousness of this crisis.

The European Union is showing active political, humanitarian, financial and material solidarity with Ukraine and its people. Billions of euros have been mobilised for this purpose. Particular attention is being paid to the plight of refugees, who are benefiting from temporary protection, humanitarian aid and technical and financial support for the Member States hosting them.



The UN has announced the creation of a US\$3.9 billion Humanitarian Response Plan for Ukraine in 2023.

Numerous international conferences were organised in London and Paris to mobilise the international community behind the Ukrainian cause.

A delegation of African Heads of State visited Russian and Ukrainian leaders to propose an African way out of the crisis.

In conclusion, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict entered its second year on 24 February this year, and there is no sign of a way out of the crisis, given the positions defended by the protagonists. In the midst of this armed and geopolitical battle, Cameroon, like most African countries, has adopted a position of neutrality. Cameroon remains convinced that dialogue is the only effective means of resolving conflicts.

## Sheet 5



### **CAMEROON-RUSSIA: EXEMPLARY COOPERATION**

Cameroon and Russia enjoy cordial relations which have always been marked by a broad convergence of views on issues of common interest.

Russia provides constant assistance to Cameroon, both in terms of civil protection (natural disasters) and in terms of preserving peace, stability and security. Cameroon is grateful to Russia for its valuable contribution in the fight against terrorist attacks and threats of destabilisation and disruption of social peace.

The Russian government has great admiration for President Paul BIYA, whose obsession with preserving peace and stability in Africa in general and in Cameroon in particular is remarkable. Moscow has never doubted that thanks to the foresight of the President Paul BIYA, Cameroon is capable of meeting the security and humanitarian challenges it faces without foreign interference.

For Russia, Cameroon, which is a major player in preserving peace in Africa, must remain a stable country, given its strategic position in the Gulf of Guinea. Thus, in response to the manoeuvres of certain outside forces that have sought to exacerbate tensions in the North-West and South-West regions, Moscow's position has been unequivocal: the situation in these two regions is an internal problem for Cameroon. It in no way constitutes a threat to regional or international security. This cause, which is also shared by China, is totally respectful of Cameroon's sovereignty.

In the aftermath of the Arria formula meeting (meeting to exchange views) on the humanitarian situation in Cameroon initiated by certain members of the UN Security Council in New York on 13 May 2019, the Minister of External Relations successively received in audience the Russian and Chinese ambassadors in Yaounde to thank them for their respective countries' support for the Cameroonian government's efforts to resolve the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions.

It goes without saying that President Paul BIYA will take the opportunity of his meeting with his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir Putin on the fringes of the St Petersburg Summit to express his thanks. The two Heads of State are also expected to explore new avenues for strengthening bilateral cooperation between Cameroon and Russia in all areas (political and diplomatic, economic and commercial, technical and scientific, cultural, humanitarian, military, etc.).

On the military front, an agreement between Cameroon and Russia was signed in Moscow on 12 April 2022. Russia also provides various forms of assistance to Cameroon's defence and security forces (training and equipment, etc.).

## Sheet 6



### **RUSSIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING CIVIL PROTECTION IN CAMEROON**

Russia has made a significant contribution to strengthening civil protection in Cameroon, both technically and materially.

Since 1995, more than 200 staff from the Civil Protection Department of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, and above all from the National Fire-fighters Brigade, have benefited from training in various areas of civil protection, thanks to Russian support.

In 2004, Cameroon received a donation of 500 complete outfits for civil protection personnel.

In February 2015, Cameroon received another donation consisting of two fire-fighting trucks, three Ford Transit minibuses, four BRP Outlander quadricycles, four large 5KVA generators, a simulator for learning how to drive emergency vehicles, and two air compressors.

In May 2015, 100 containers carrying 1,500 tonnes of wheat flour and 370 tonnes of vegetable oil from Russia were offloaded at the Douala port.

In July 2015, Russia donated two water purification units (each the size of a container), three containers of life-saving equipment, two containers carrying five small generators, around 20 kitchen utensil kits and 100 tents.

In 2019, 22 Dell all-in-one computers and two interactive whiteboards for online meetings were added to this Russian support.

In July 2022, a workshop was held in Yaounde to identify needs with a view to strengthening Cameroon's civil protection capabilities. In addition to drawing up a statement of requirements for intervention equipment, it was agreed that Cameroon would host the National Civil Protection Training Centre, as well as the Regional Civil Protection Coordination and Monitoring Centre.

Finally, it should be noted that in October 2020, Cameroonian Mrs Mariatou Yap, former Director of Civil Protection at MINAT, was elected Secretary General of the International Civil Protection Organisation (ICPO), for which Russia is the main donor. So cooperation between Russia and Cameroon has a bright future.

## Sheet 7



### **ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION BETWEEN CAMEROON AND RUSSIA**

Cooperation relations between Cameroon and Russia are mainly in the military, trade and humanitarian assistance fields. Despite the existence of economic and technical cooperation agreements signed with the former USSR in the 1960s and 1970s, the economic aspect is still underdeveloped. In fact, only two infrastructure projects have been carried out in Cameroon thanks to the support of this partner. These are the construction of the National School of Water and Forestry in Mbalmayo and the construction of a School of Agriculture in Dschang.

With a view to revitalising this cooperation, summit meetings have been held between officials from the two countries. The main meetings included:

- The audience granted on 29 May 2015 by the President of the Republic, Paul BIYA to the Russian Ambassador to Cameroon. At the end of this audience, it was agreed that our country could benefit from Russian expertise in the fields of industry and energy, with the participation of Russian banks and major companies;
- The audience granted on 7 September 2018 by the Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development to a delegation from the Russian Business Promotion Agency "Russian Business Centre". The purpose of this meeting was to present the Russian government's investment offer in Cameroon and to inform the Russian side about the administrative procedures prior to the conclusion of a bilateral cooperation agreement.

The participation of a Cameroonian delegation at this 2<sup>nd</sup> Russia-Africa Summit in Saint Petersburg is an opportunity to finalise the steps taken to attract Russian investment to Cameroon and increase the volume of trade with this partner.



## **Opportunities**

In a global context marked by difficulties in mobilising financing from certain traditional partners, the Russian route could be usefully exploited for the implementation of major structuring projects. As the world's 8th economic power, Russia has undeniable know-how in areas likely to boost our country's development, such as the production of wheat, fertilisers and mining.

To this end, the actions to be undertaken with Russian partners could be based on a strategy aimed at mobilising development aid; promoting foreign direct investment (FDI); strengthening commercial capacities and developing partnerships; and increasing the possibilities for mobilising resources through decentralised cooperation.

Cameroon's assets can serve as a plea to attract investment from Russia, namely: its strategic geographical position, the existence of a skilled workforce, a diversified and resilient economy, the availability of raw materials, an attractive investment code, political stability, etc.

In conclusion, Russians and Cameroonians should forge closer ties to foster mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

## Sheet 8



### COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Cooperation in higher education between Cameroon and Russia is based on the Cultural and Scientific Agreement signed on 22 March 1963. On 15 April 1966, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on the construction of a water and forestry school in Mbalmayo and a school of agriculture in Dschang.

Two other agreements, one signed on 14 April 1989 on the equivalence of school, university and scientific diplomas, degrees and titles, and the other signed on 7 October 1999 on executive training, post-graduate training and the granting of scholarships to Cameroonian students in scientific and technical fields remain in force.

#### **Major actions**

These include:

- The participation of a Cameroonian delegation in talks to relaunch cultural and scientific cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, held in Moscow on 8 to 9 December 2014;
- Active mobility between the two countries through:

the participation of a Cameroonian delegation made up of students from the major state schools and universities in the World Festival of Youth and Students organised in Sochi, from 14 to 22 October 2017;

the participation of a Cameroonian delegation in the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow, from 1 to 10 February 2019, as well as in exchanges with the said University leading to the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the University of Ngaoundere;





granting of academic scholarships to Cameroonian students. The aim is to mobilise Russian expertise to meet Cameroon's needs in terms of training high-quality human resources. However, Cameroon would like the selection of scholarship holders to take into account the gender criteria, priority fields of study and the country's overall balance.

Finally, Cameroon would like the agreement on higher education to be finalised. The signing of this agreement should open up a wide range of cooperation between the two countries.

## Sheet 9



### **COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH AND CIVIC EDUCATION**

Although there is no formal framework for cooperation, there is regular contact between the authorities and young people in Cameroon and Russia, particularly at artistic, scientific and sporting events.

These include Cameroon's participation in the ministerial meeting held in Moscow from 14 to 17 October 2017 and the World Festival of Youth and Students held in Sochi from 14 to 22 October 2017.

In return, the Minister of Youth and Civic Education has granted audiences to Russian authorities visiting Cameroon or stationed in Yaounde. Their talks very often focus on youth issues in a multipolar economic and social context. The search for optimal conditions for the development of Cameroon's youth and their participation in the country's development, a major concern for the Head of State, remain at the centre of exchanges between the two parties.

This is why the Government of Cameroon would like to strengthen cooperation with Russia, in particular by awarding training grants to young Cameroonians in the field of innovative technologies and youth mentoring; supporting the voluntary return and settlement of young Cameroonians living in Russia by financing their projects; providing technical support and assistance to the National Volunteer Programme, etc.

Last but not least, the Cameroon government would like to see the bilateral cooperation agreement on youth and civic education finalised.

## Sheet 10



### **BIOGRAPHY OF H.E. MR VLADIMIR PUTIN, PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Vladimir Vladimirovitch Putin was born on 7 October 1952 in Leningrad (now St Petersburg). He married Lyudmila Shkrebnova in 1983 and divorced her in 2014. The couple had two daughters, Katerina and Mariya.

President Putin studied law at Leningrad University (St Petersburg State University). He graduated in 1975, after defending a dissertation entitled "The Most Favoured Nation Trading Principle in International Law".

In 1975, Vladimir Putin joined the KGB's foreign intelligence service. He worked for the KGB in East Germany from 1985 to 1990 and resigned on 20 August 1991. He moved to Moscow in 1996 and in 1999 joined the government of President Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first Head of State after the break-up of the USSR. Before being appointed Prime Minister under Boris Yeltsin in August 1999, he temporarily held the post of Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor to the KGB, from July 1990 to August 1999.

Vladimir Putin was Prime Minister of Russia from 9 August 1999 to 7 May 2000 under President Boris Yeltsin, and from 8 May 2008 to 7 May 2012 under President Dmitry Medvedev.

Vladimir Putin is serving his 4<sup>th</sup> term as President of Russia. When President Yeltsin suddenly announced his political retirement on 31 December 1999, Vladimir Putin was appointed Acting President. He served his first term from 2000 to 2004. He won the presidential election that followed; 2004-2008 (2<sup>nd</sup> term); - 2012-2018 (3<sup>rd</sup> term); in 2018, he began his 4<sup>th</sup> term.



## Sheet 11

### PRESENTATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

- **Official name:** Russian Federation
- **President of the Republic:** H.E. Vladimir Vladimirovitch Putin
- **Prime Minister:** Mikhail Michoustine (since 22 January 2020)
- **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** Sergueï Lavrov
- **Deputy Foreign Minister for Africa and the Middle East:** Mikhail Bogdanov
- **Form of state:** Federal Republic comprising 85 entities or "subjects", including republics, territories, regions, federal cities, an autonomous region and autonomous districts. The governors and presidents of all these entities are elected.
- **Surface area:** 17 million km<sup>2</sup> spanning 11 time zones. The largest country in the world, it forms a link between Europe to the west and Asia to the east.
- **Total population:** approximately 146 million (2023)
- **Capital:** Moscow (population approx. 12.4 million)
- **Main cities:** Moscow, St Petersburg (2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in the country, population approx. 6 million), Yekaterinburg, Kazan.
- **Official language:** Russian
- **Currency:** Russian