



MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION

DIPLOMATIC VICTORIES OF CAMEROON AND THE COMMITMENT OF THE HEAD OF STATE FOR AN EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

PRESS CONFERENCE

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF
H.E. ISSA TCHIROMA BAKARY
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION**

Yaoundé, 12 June 2015

**Distinguished Journalists,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have invited you here today to exchange with you on a number of major interested issues concerning the life of our nation.

Allow me, before getting into the core of the matter, to wish you a warm welcome on this occasion, and to express my gratitude for the spontaneity with which you have responded to my invitation.

I therefore thank you for heavily taking part in this press conference as usual.

Distinguished Journalists,

As you may have noticed, our country has, in recent weeks, been at the forefront of the diplomatic scene and the international media, owing to the recording of a set of victories, beginning with the bravery of some of our compatriots, who have been brought to occupy top positions in major institutions, which has worked to establish the reputation of our country worldwide, and secondly, through the recognition of the actions taken and implemented by the Cameroonian Government, under the leadership of the **Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, to the benefit of the well-being of the populations and the development of our country as a whole.

Among the victories that I have just mentioned, allow me to cite among others, the brilliant election of the Honourable Member of Parliament, NKODO DANG Roger, at the helm of the Pan African Parliament; the historic election of Mr. CHUNGONG Martin, former senior official of the National Assembly, at the Secretariat-General of the Inter-parliamentary Union; and the recent election of Mr. Parfait ETOUNG ABENA at the head of the Secretariat-General of the Parliament of the Economic Community of States of Central Africa - CEMAC.

Meanwhile, allow me, before buttressing on these important current events involving our country, to please announce to you that our country has once again been honoured by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation - FAO.

It is in this vein that, on Monday June 8, 2015, on the sidelines of the 39th Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organisation - FAO, which recently took place in Rome, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, H.E Essimi MENYE, on behalf of Cameroon, received from the hands of the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, a more ambitious distinction in recognition of the efforts of our country towards attaining the target set at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, that of reducing by half the number of people facing malnutrition.

In Cameroon, this number has moved from 4 million 700 thousand persons within the period 1990 to 1992, to 2 million 300 thousand persons within the period 2012-2014, representing a reduction by half of the number of people concerned by undernourishment in two decades.

A few months earlier, at the 151st Session of the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organisation - FAO, Cameroon first received, still from the hands of the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation - FAO, a diploma of honour for achieving the target of the first Millennium Development Goal, which required at least reducing by half the proportion of the country's population suffering from undernourishment by 2015, and secondly, for achieving the most ambitious target at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, which I earlier mentioned above.

Laying emphasis on the reduction of at least by half of the proportion of the population suffering from undernourishment by 2015, it is appropriate to indicate that in Cameroon, it has moved from 37.8% for the period 1990-1992, to 10.5% for the period 2012-2014, representing a reduction of more than two thirds of the number of people involved in two decades.

It should be highlighted that these remarkable performance were carried out before the 2015 deadline set by the Food and Agriculture Organisation - FAO.

The two distinctions awarded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation - FAO to Cameroun, are a strong acknowledgment of the commitment of the **Head of State**, to overcome hunger and malnutrition, and to eradicate the food insecurity spectrum.

Allow me now to come back to the diplomatic victories recorded by some of our compatriots.

With regard to the election of Honourable Roger NKODO DANG at the helm of the Pan African Parliament, whose headquarters is in Johannesburg in South Africa, allow me to begin by giving you a brief presentation of the institution which our compatriot is henceforth called to head as well as the process which led to his election.

The Pan African Parliament, which is the consultative Assembly of the African Union, exists since March 2004. It includes, among its members, representatives of the parliaments of 54 member countries of the African Union. The main mission of this body is to promote good governance and transparency, to raise awareness of the peoples of Africa with regard to the objectives and policies to facilitate their integration into the system of the African Union, and to

harmonize existing laws in the different member countries on key issues such as human rights and peoples, or democracy.

With regard to its President, he is the first political and administrative head of this August institution. The President is assisted by four Deputy Presidents in the discharge of his duties. The President represents the Pan African Parliament in its relations with foreign organizations and participates in the work of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, to present the annual activity report and budget of the Parliament.

Distinguished Journalists,

Here are henceforth some of the specific missions of the new President of the Pan African Parliament, Honourable Roger NKODO DANG, whose election, it should be recalled, was not guaranteed from the onset.

It should be recalled that, from the time the launching of the campaign was announced, our compatriot went on to visit 37 out of the 54 countries members of the Pan African Parliament to present his candidacy and his programme.

In some of the countries visited, the candidacy of Honourable NKODO DANG was welcomed at the highest institutional level. This was made easier when other Heads of State heard that his

candidacy was supported and nominated by their Cameroonian counterpart, **His Excellency Paul BIYA.**

During the voting, in the hotly contested election, held in the afternoon of May 27, 2015, Honourable Roger NKODO DANG confronted two heavy weight challengers, such as the Mozambican, Eduardo Joaquin Mulembwe, candidate of the Economic Community of Southern Africa, and the Tunisian Rahoui MONGI.

After this hotly contested election, our compatriot handily won the election, with 86 votes out of 165 voters, more than the absolute majority, 70 votes for the Mozambican and 09 votes for the Tunisian.

The new President, who is henceforth Cameroon's flag-bearer in this prestigious institution, the Pan-African Parliament, will take office in October for a term of three years.

This is what I have to say in terms of the brilliant election of Honourable Roger DANG NKODO to head the Pan African Parliament.

Let me now dwell on other diplomatic victories that our country has showcased in both regional and international levels.

Allow me to first discuss the election of Mr. CHUNGONG Martin to the post of Secretary-General at the Inter-parliamentary Union,

another compatriot of great value that has held senior positions in our Parliament.

In fact, the peculiarity of this victory is that, it establishes a double historical precedent, as Mr. CHUNGONG is both the first African and the first non-European to be elected to the post of Secretary-General of the Inter-parliamentary Union since its creation some 126 years ago.

I would like to indicate, furthermore, that before being appointed as the eighth Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr CHUNGONG had occupied the functions of Deputy Secretary-General and Director of Programmes within this institution, which represents, for all parliaments of the world, what the United Nations Organisation represents for Governments and States.

The election of Mr CHUNGONG Martin therefore illustrates how honoured Cameroon is by this mark of thrust manifested by all the one hundred and seventy-six parliaments' members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Another compatriot, who is honouring Cameroon within these parliamentary bodies, at the regional level, is Mr ETOUNG ABENA Parfait, who was appointed on May 06, 2015, as the Secretary-General at the Parliament of the Economic and Monetary Community

of Central Africa – know in French acronym as CEMAC – at the end of the 12th Ordinary Session of the Sub-Regional Conference of Head of States.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Journalists

The Parliament of CEMAC, whose executive coordination will, from now on, be led by our compatriot for the next four years, is the body in charge of ensuring the implementation of democratic principles within CEMAC institutions and organs taking part in the CEMAC decision-making process.

It is therefore evident, that Mr ETOUNG ABENA will carry out duties that are of paramount importance.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Beyond the personal merits of these brilliant compatriots, who are honouring our country, I would like to welcome the fresh impetus, efficiency and the vigour of our diplomacy under the magnificent and dexterity leadership of the **President of the Republic**.

It is worth mentioning that all these success stories, added to many others harvested since the beginning of this year, could not have come true without the High personal involvement of the **Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, who relentlessly committed

himself for the ascension and promotion of his compatriots at the international level.

It is indeed thanks to the personal and multifaceted support of the **President of the Republic**, that the candidacies of Mr NKODO DANG Roger, Mr CHUNGONG Martin and Mr ETOUNG ABENA Parfait were nominated, and later on voted within these high parliamentary institutions.

This is the evidence, if need be, of the unwavering commitment of the **Head of our nation** to the promotion of democratic values and ideals of the well-being of the population, good governance and development.

To sum up, Cameroon is the real winner in all these achievements, starting with its diplomacy which is proving particularly efficient, not leaving aside the respect and credibility enjoyed by the **Head of State** among his counterparts which has once again prevailed, to guarantee full success and strengthen the will of our compatriots to hold in high esteem the colours of our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Journalists, now that we are celebrating our victories, allow me to seize this opportunity to laud the brilliant performance of our female Indomitable Lionesses, who, once again, have demonstrated their commitment in the

« fighting spirit » campaigned for by the **Head of State**, through their brilliant six goals to nil victory during their first outing against Ecuador in the 7th FIFA Female's World Cup Finals in Canada.

This landslide victory of our football ambassadors highlights, once again, the brand image of our country within the highly competitive football milieu, and generally, at the international level. To express his recognition and encouragements to these lionesses, the **President of the Republic**, has just commissioned a high level delegation led by the Minister of Sports and Physical Educations, Mr ADOUM GAROUA.

To reassure our heroes and secure a climate of serenity among them, the **Head of State**, had previously instructed the disbursement and payment of a participation bonus of fifteen millions CFA Francs to each of our female football player, added to the supplementary bonus paid by the Cameroonian Football Federation – FECAFOOT – to each Indomitable Lioness.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Journalists,
Distinguished Guests**

In a time when our diplomacy is increasingly harvesting victories at the international level, Cameroon is, these last days, being

ostracized by some denigrators, who are of the opinion that the **Head of State**, lacks legitimacy to govern our nation, or that the powers that be are maintaining an alleged disparity in the treatment reserved to the different regions of our country.

Moreover, since last June 09, 2015, after the confirmation of the sentence of Mrs YEN EYOUM Lydienne LOYSE by the Supreme Court in the case opposing her to the Public Prosecutor and the State of Cameroon, our country is caught by some international organisations that are in their opinion accusing our judicial system of arbitrarily detaining Mrs. YEN EYOUM.

These allegations, simply ill-fated, are solely intended to create distraction, at a time when our populations, facing attacks of the Boko Haram terrorist sect, are mobilised as one-man in a solidarity drive to bring their support to our valiant defence and security forces firmly committed at the war front and determined to eradicate the Boko Haram threat.

Given that all these allegations are ungrounded, the Government has deemed it necessary to present the following clarifications to enlighten national and international public opinion:

Regarding the alleged illegitimacy of President Paul BIYA,

Allow me first of all, to state that the **President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, came to power through a democratic mechanism, the only valid mechanism in a Rule-Of-Law State, in other words, through a free and fair voting process expressed by the people, holder of national sovereignty.

The Constitution of Cameroon, which represents the fundamental law and which is therefore supreme, rules on all issues regarding eligibility to this function. Given that **President BIYA** has been candidate to the presidential election, and that he has been elected President of the Republic, it therefore means that he fulfilled each and all of these conditions.

It is therefore a perfectly legitimate President, who also has the support and adhesion of his compatriots to his political project, as well as to the vision he has for Cameroon.

Each and everyone should therefore understand that **President Paul BIYA** will remain the **President of the Republic and the Head of State of Cameroon**, so long as Cameroonians would like it to be so, since Cameroon is and remains a democratic, and a Rule-of Law State.

It is undoubtedly worth recalling here that with the inception and implementation of Elections Cameroon, as independent organ to

manage and supervise the electoral and referendum process, the electoral system in Cameroon has witnessed a satisfactory improvement, at least in terms of the transparency of the electoral processes and reliability of the vote.

This tendency has been strengthened these last years, notably with the recompilation of the voters' registers and the introduction of biometrics, bringing the International Community to express their satisfaction to Cameroon, after each major vote.

Regarding allegations from our denigrators about the disparity wilfully practised in the development process of the different regions, and which reveals the setting aside of the northern regions of our country, **allow me to strongly condemn such nonsense and clearly affirm that these allegations are ungrounded.**

Cameroon and its **Highest Authority** are perfectly aware of the need to balance infrastructural development policy and the fight against all forms of marginalization of the Cameroonian people.

The emergency plan decided by the **Head of State** and funded to the tune of CFAF one thousand billion is one of the responses to these concerns, as well as the set of special measures taken by **the President of the Republic** in favour of northern regions.

Other measures coming to complement the global investment and regional development programme include:

- The emergency intervention for the construction of educational infrastructure and water points in some localities of the Far-North Region;
- The URBAN SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (USEP) for the creation of jobs through labour-intensive projects, in partnership with the National Employment Fund;
- The Three-yearly Emergency Plan to speed-up growth, especially the Regional development component;
- The Emergency Project for Fighting Floods (PULCI) through the building of storage dams and the dike road;
- The "Social nets" project which aims to support some households by means of cash transfers, in order to minimise the incidence of poverty and bridge the gaps in living standards and income levels recorded among the populations of the target zone.

In parallel to these specific interventions in northern regions, the State has dedicated for the development of these regions, a budget of CFAF 163 billion 474 million 651 thousand over the past three financial years, with a significant increase between 2013 and 2015,

from CFAF 35 billion 794 million 764 thousand to CFAF 63 billion 963 million 13 thousand.

Moreover, to ensure rebalancing and better account for grassroots-level needs of populations in the northern regions, the State has put in place since 2014 and until 2016, several Priority Investment Programmes for a total of CFAF 13 billion 947 million out of the CFAF 34 billion 100 million envisaged for the whole national territory.

Dear Journalists,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you can see, the **Head of State** is in command and keeps a close watch on the affairs of the State to avoid that any Cameroonian should have feeling of being aggrieved, marginalised or excluded from our country's development process which he plans and instructs the Government to execute.

Regarding the alleged arbitrary detention of Mrs. YEN EYOUM Lydienne LOYSE, which since few days, is fuelling accusations against Cameroon

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention submitted to the Government of the Republic of Cameroon a letter of allegations with regard to the situation of Barrister YEN EYOUM Lydienne. The said

letter contained information on the illegal nature of her arrest and detention and denounced the violation of the right to a fair trial.

The primary issue makes allusion to the fact that this lady, without any order from competent authorities, was arrested on January 08, 2010, and since then, arbitrary detained, whereas the legal deadline for her judicial interim custody had expired since three years ago.

On April 27, 2015, the Working Group issued its opinion. On the basis of the alleged information, the Government of the Republic of Cameroon hereby presents the following information to the national and international opinion, first on the nature of the Working Group on the Arbitrary Detention and its decisions, and secondly, on the validity of the detention of YEN EYOUM Lydienne.

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is a thematic Mechanism of the UN Council on Human Rights bringing together Experts who investigate on cases of arrests and arbitrary detention with regard to Human Rights International Law. It was established in 1991 under the auspices of the former UN Commission on Human Rights as was replaced by the Human Rights Council.

After crosschecking the information from various sources, including non- governmental organisations, inter-governmental bodies and families of victims, the *Working Group* issues urgent calls towards Governments to enlighten the fate and condition of those who may have been arrested. It can equally lead investigative missions in the countries where they have been invited.

The *Working Group* is therefore not a Jurisdiction above national courts. It issues opinions rather than court orders. It assesses the quality of procedures and not the justification of the procedure. In other words, the Opinion of the *Working Group* cannot establish the non-guilt of an accused. Consequently, its Opinion cannot be construed as an acquittal decision.

In the **YEN EYOUM Lydienne** case, when the Government was seized by the Working Group about the letter of allegations, it asked for a deadline extension in order to submit its observations. The Opinion of the *Working Group* was given while the State was still expecting the response on the requested extension.

The said extension was not granted. Moreover, the opinion of the Working Group was given on the sole merits of the information submitted on behalf of Mrs. YEN EYOUM. Allow me to precise that the debate on this case is going on at the level of the Human Right Council of the United Nations where Cameroon would have the opportunity to bring its evidences.

Allow me to recall that Barrister YEN EYOUM was sentenced for embezzling public funds within the framework of a legal suit filed against her and which ended in a sentence rendered by the Supreme Court.

In fact, Barrister YEN EYOUM was mandated by the State of Cameroon to recover back debts which she was supposed to pay directly into the public treasury. But after recovering the sum of 2 billion 155 million 971 thousands 808 CFA francs, the barrister decided to, in the first place, deposit the money into her private account.

Later on, she transferred a sum of money representing half of the sum initially recovered into the bank account of a said company based in Douala and into which she had the right to sign, while in the mean time decided to transfer the other half into the public treasury.

It should be pointed that, the special power granted to Barrister YEN EYOUM to recover these debts, clearly indicated that the total sum had to be reversed into the public treasury. That was not the case.

However, it is established that, following the law (Article 37 of Law N°90/059 of December 19, 1990 to organise the barrister profession), funds received by a Barrister in his capacity as trustee of a client, is not the barrister's property, and have to be paid back into a special account labelled «client-account», and not into any personal account.

It is therefore on this ground that the Yaoundé Special Criminal Court established the guilt of the accused and sentenced her to a 25 years

prison term, and a fine of 1 billion 153 million 444 thousands 981 CFA Francs to be paid, together with her co-accused, to the State of Cameroon, as well as the seizure of all their wealth.

It is therefore this decision that the Supreme Court confirmed on June 09, 2015.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Journalists,
Distinguished Guests,**

I once more seize this opportunity to call on all Cameroonians to be extremely vigilant against the diversion, distraction and sedition manoeuvres of which we are the target, at a time when it is more than ever necessary to focus all our energy and mobilise our resources in order to give the ultimate blow to the Boko Haram terrorist and criminal sect in its evil and tyrannical aim to destabilise our nation, on the one hand, and work towards developing our country and achieving the emergence objective by 2035, on the other hand.

I therefore invite, on behalf of the Government, all Cameroonian populations to keep giving unfailing support to the **Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA, Head of our Diplomacy**, so that

Cameroon could pursue its diplomatic offensive in all serenity and reap more laurels at the international level.

As far as you are concerned, **Dear Journalists**, I invite you to withstand the various forms of manipulation manoeuvres to which you could be exposed from some enemies aiming at destroying our country, and to keep informing the national and international public opinion in keeping with the values of peace, unity, solidarity and citizenship that characterise our nation. As a matter of fact, the good image of our country at global level also depends on your professionalism.

That was, **Dear Journalists**, the substance of the communication for which I invited your here.

Thank you for your kind attention.