



MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION

STATE VISIT TO CAMEROON OF HIS EXCELLENCY FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE, PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

PRESS CONFERENCE

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF
HIS EXCELLENCY ISSA TCHIROMA BAKARY
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION**

Yaoundé, July 02, 2015

Distinguished Journalists,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to wish you a warm welcome to this exchange to which I have kindly invited you all. Thank you very much for your prompt response.

Allow me to announce you what you have got to know for a few days now, and which became official yesterday afternoon, after the publication of the release signed by the Minister, Director of the Civil Cabinet to confirm the State visit to Cameroon of **His Excellency François Hollande, President of the French Republic**, tomorrow Friday July 03, 2015, at the invitation of his Cameroonian counterpart, the **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya**.

As you are also all aware, this is the ever first visit of Mister François Hollande to Cameroon since his accession to helm of his country in May 2012.

We are therefore getting ready to witness a landmark event in the already very old history of cooperation ties between Cameroon and France.

President Hollande will come to Cameroon for the ever first time tomorrow Friday July 03, 2015. But this will not be the first time for both Statemen to meet.

In fact, since 2012, the Cameroonian and French Heads of State have met seven times on different occasions during which they discussed intensively on various issues.

The State visit of the French President to Cameroon will be the eighth time both Statemen are meeting.

Beyond the political career of both Presidents, Cameroon and France share old, rich and diversified relations.

In fact, Cameroon and France have established diplomatic ties since 1960, and since then, the cooperation between both countries have kept intensifying.

It is within the framework of this cooperation that France has played a key role in the efforts of Cameroon to emerge from the crisis of the early 2000s, within the framework of reaching the HIPC completion point.

Since then, the Debt-reduction and Development Contract (in French C2D) has proven to be a strategic cooperation tool between France and Cameroon through which many development projects, among which the most structuring ones were incepted.

In fact, within the framework of the C2D, France committed itself to put at the disposal of Cameroon a sum of seven hundred and ten billion CFA F within a twelve-year period, in the areas of infrastructure, education and health.

A first C2D, covering the period from 2006 to 2011, for a sum of three hundred fifty-two billion and seven hundred million CFA F had been signed to this effect by both parties. It was enshrined in the government's global strategy to alleviate poverty and fell within the framework of the Cameroon-French cooperation described in the Partnership Framework Paper ratified between the Cameroonian and French authorities.

To redirect this cooperation instrument in comparison with the goals of the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper, France and Cameroon signed in July 01, 2011, a second generation C2D for a sum of three hundred and twenty-six million Euros, corresponding to almost two hundred and fourteen billion CFA F with infrastructure, basic education, health, as well as agriculture and environment as priority sectors.

In the area of trade, the exchanges between Cameroon and France have witnessed a significant growth over the past years, reaching an improvement rate of 4.8% in 2013.

The French presence in the Cameroonian economy is perfectly visible, with over a hundred of branches of French enterprises and some two hundred French companies employing more than thirty thousand Cameroonians.

Another area of economic cooperation between France and Cameroon relates to sovereign and non-sovereign loans put in place between Cameroon and the French Development Agency (AFD). Some of these loans are combined with the C2D subsidies.

To sum it up, be it the C2D, the sovereign and non sovereign loans, over twenty funding agreements have been signed between 2011 and 2014 to finance a number of structuring projects which include: the improvement of the Douala Eastern entrance, the construction of the second bridge over the Wouri River, the participation in the construction of the Lom Pangar Hydro Electric Project, the Fluvial drainage of the Douala town, Drinking water supply in Yaoundé, Bertoua and Ngaoundéré, the Fluvial cleaning programme of the Yaoundé town (in French PADY), to which should be added the C2D programme for the Bertoua, Bafoussam and Garoua regional capitals.

In addition, there are a number of projects which are still in negotiation, to be financed by France by the end of 2015. They include: the construction of the Eastern bypass road of the Yaoundé town, the funds to finance the feasibility study for the construction and development of the Limbe Deep Sea Port, the construction of the Batchenga-Ntui-Yoko-Tibati-Ngaoundéré road, the continuation of the Regional capitals Project for Bafoussam, Bertoua and Garoua, the additional improvements of the second bridge over the Wouri River.

In terms of perspectives, the mobilisation, by the French Development Agency, of a financial support of France in favour of Cameroon is planned for a sum of six hundred million Euros, corresponding to some three hundred ninety-four billion CFA F, over a period spanning from 2015 to 2020, within the framework of the sovereign loans and the Third-generation C2D being currently finalised.

With regard to the cooperation in the defence and security domains, France traditionally assists Cameroon in three areas: staff, training and material.

In this vein, one could state that Cameroon is the first partner of France as far as defence and security cooperation in Africa is concerned.

In May 2009, Cameroon and France signed a renewed Defense Partnership Agreement which entered into force on August 01, 2012. This partnership aims at supporting, on the Cameroonian soil, African mechanisms of collective security at the regional and continental levels. It focuses on training through national training schools with a regional character (in French ENVR), the Garoua National Aeronautical hub with a regional character (in French PANVR), the Inter-Army Defense Higher Training, the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES) or the Centre to Develop Law Enforcement Techniques (in French CPTMO).

With the holding, in Yaoundé, of the first session of the works of the committee to follow-up the renewed Defense Partnership Agreement in April 27, 2014, training schools like the International War College of Yaoundé (in French ESIG), EIFORCES and the Staff Officers School (in French EEM) have also benefited from a logistical support of France.

On the diplomatic field, the cooperation between Paris and Yaoundé is exemplary. Both capitals share views on major strategic and international topics, be it the fight against terrorism in general and especially over the sahel-Saharan line, the fight against maritime insecurity, or, closer, the concerted strategies to completely eradicate the criminal acts of the Boko Haram organisation.

It is also worth mentioning that both countries have always mutually supported each other on major international topics and have merged their diplomatic positions in the interest of either parties.

Cameroon has notably benefited from the help of France in the implementation of the ruling of the International Court of Justice for the sovereignty of our country over the Bakassi Peninsula, as well as its diplomatic happy end through the signing of the Greentree Agreement.

At consular level, some thirty thousand Cameroonians are currently living in France and more than twelve thousand French nationals in Cameroun.

At cultural level, a Financing Agreement of nine hundred million CFA Francs has been signed in 1998 in Yaounde to develop the activities of non institutional cultural associations from regional hubs made up of the Franco-Cameroonian Alliances.

More than seven thousand Cameroonians are currently studying in France and the French Government regularly grants scholarships to Cameroonian students.

In the area of research, since 2012, Cameroon benefits from a C2D funding to the tune of over eight million Euros, corresponding to some five billion two hundred and forty million CFA Francs.

Distinguished Journalists,

It is therefore evident that the ties between France and Cameroon are excellent and their perspectives are more than promising.

The State visit of the French President to Cameroon is therefore highly motivated by the will of the **Cameroonian and French Presidents, Paul BIYA and Francois HOLLANDE**, to magnify these fruits and pave the way for perfect and better ones.

All Cameroonians should therefore rejoice, and support **President Paul BIYA**, who kindly invited his counterpart to visit our country and celebrate with the Cameroonian People the excellent friendship and cooperation ties between our two countries.

To conclude, I would like to invite you, Dear Journalists of Cameroonian media, to wholeheartedly join your voices to this republican celebration.

Thank you very much for your kind attention