



**MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION**

**FRIENDLY AND WORKING VISIT TO CAMEROON  
OF HIS EXCELLENCY MUHAMMADU BUHARI,  
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

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

*Yaoundé, July 2015*

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

The information has already been making news for some time now and some of you have even announced it. As it is, the **President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari**, will, in the days ahead, and at the invitation of the **President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, be paying a high-level friendly and working visit to our country.

I have therefore decided to invite you here today for us to exchange on this important event, the first of its kind, which comes two months after the accession of **President BUHARI** to the highest office in his country.

But, before going into the core of the matter, allow me to wish you a warm welcome to this press conference and to thank you for quickly responding to my invitation.

**Distinguished Journalists,**

You will agree with me, a visit of this magnitude, that of the President of the largest economy in Africa and which, moreover, is involved in a security context as tense as that of the armed conflict against the Boko Haram terrorist group, cannot leave anyone indifferent, be it in Cameroon, Nigeria, Africa or the world as a whole.

The event therefore has to be giving a special attention, and you journalists, as informants and public opinion makers, should be sufficiently edified on this event.

Let me first of all underline the fact that the visit of the **President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** on our land is for sure an honor and privilege to our country, and which should be acknowledged with pride and satisfaction. This visit is also an opportunity to buttress on the excellent relations that has been binding our two nations for many years.

Relations between Cameroon and Nigeria are in fact marked by geographic, historic, economic, and cultural factors, which over time have brought our peoples and our respective institutions to build strong relationships, friendship, cordiality and fraternity.

You are already aware that geographically, Cameroun and Nigeria share a border of about 1 600 km, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the borders of Lake Chad. This border which is a real migratory corridor, paves the way for considerable cultural and commercial trade between the people of both countries.

To date, statistics show that over 4 million Nigerians are living permanently in Cameroon, and a strong community of Cameroonians is as well established in Nigeria.

Whether in Cameroon or Nigeria, the two communities are fully integrated with each other and are living in harmony, in a spirit of peace, solidarity and mutual tolerance.

Historically, one can note that a good part of the political and intellectual elites of our country, from former West Cameroon, a good part of the intellectual elites of this part of our country, were partly or fully trained in Nigeria. In return, many Nigerians have held high level management positions in various institutions of former West Cameroon.

This reciprocity observed in our common history has been made possible because at one time, the western part of our country initially placed under the mandate of the League of Nations and then under the trusteeship of the United Nations, was administered by Great- Britain from Nigeria.

In fact, even beyond these historical-political vicissitudes, millions of Cameroonians and Nigerians actually come from the same sociological and even anthropological roots.

With regard to global economic cooperation, it should be underscored that Nigeria is today one of the leading trade partners of our country.

In fact, in 2013 only, for example, Nigeria was classified as the second largest suppliers of Cameroon, and ranked fourteenth among our customers.

Still in that same year, Nigeria's exports towards Cameroon amounted to 452 billion 18 million francs, while exports from Cameroon to Nigeria amounted to 39 billion 531 million francs.

The structure of trade between the two countries shows that Cameroon mainly buys from Nigeria, products such as, petroleum products, lubricants, building materials, cosmetics, fertilizers, oranges, appliances, household articles and loin cloths.

The Nigerian presence in the Cameroonian economy is also significant. In fact, 4% of the companies that were sampled in Cameroon in 2010 belong to Nigerian nationals, that is to say, 3 127 companies engaged in retail and wholesale trade, while others are operating in the sectors of heavy industry such as metals and construction.

In return, Nigeria buys from Cameroon products such as, food, livestock, vegetable oils, industry products, aluminum and detergents.

To strengthen the flow of trade, the two countries signed an agreement on April 11, 2014, to expand the range of marketable products, and to create favorable conditions for the improvement of cross-border trade.

Recognizing the importance of the Nigerian market with nearly 190 million consumers, the Government of Cameroon has since 2009 decided to carry out economic and commercial prospection in the Nigerian market, which is already beginning to bear fruits, as evidenced by the upward trend of volume of our exports to that country.

Moreover, Cameroon and Nigeria have set up a statutory diplomatic body, referred to as the Joint Cooperation Commission to enhance the coordination of our relations in various sectors such as security, economy, trade, consular affairs, justice, scientific research and culture.

It is in this context that were inscribed on the one hand, the organization of Economic and Business Days of Cameroon in Nigeria which took place in Calabar in 2009, Kano and Port Harcourt in 2010 and Lagos in 2011, and on the other hand, the annual participation of Cameroon in trade fairs in Nigeria, such as the "Lagos International Trade Fair" or better still the "African Arts and Crafts Expo," to name a few.

In the same vein, the Economic and Business Days of Nigeria in Cameroon were held in February 2009 in Douala.

In addition, Nigeria has participated to date in every edition of the Cameroon International Trade-Fair on Crafts, SIARC, held since the inception of this event.

Right now, a business forum between the two countries is under preparation.

The sectors of infrastructure and energy are not left out in this vast field of economic cooperation between Cameroon and Nigeria. This is evidenced by a set of development projects that the two countries have committed to achieve.

Allow me to cite inter alia: the project to build the Kousséri-Maltam-Fotokol highway, the project to construct the cross-border road linking Bamenda in Cameroon to Enugu in Nigeria, and whose works started on June 21, 2010; the electricity interconnection project for the transfer of energy from Cameroon to Nigeria, which was finalized during the Fifth session of the Joint Cooperation Commission held in Abuja in 2010, and whose Agreement was signed on February 18, 2011 in Yaoundé; the project to construct a bridge over the Cross River and the project to construct a bridge over the river Mayo-Tiel in the North Region of Cameroon which borders the Federal State of Adamawa in Nigeria and whose Memorandum of Understanding and terms of reference thereto are under negotiation.

**Distinguished Journalists,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The spirit of dialogue and cordiality between Cameroon and Nigeria is a constant data of the relationships between both countries, and each time it is necessary, Cameroonians and Nigerians have met round a table in a spirit of tolerance and mutual

understanding, for the preservation of their friendship and fraternity ties beyond the particular interests of one and the other country.

To illustrate this, one could cite the frequent meetings between both Head of States, as well as the signing of many agreements between both states.

Regarding the meetings, both Presidents have always met with each other to discuss on subjects as crucial and varied.

In this vein, since 1999, the State visit of **His Excellency MUHAMMADU BUHARI** will be the 6<sup>th</sup> of a Nigerian Head of State to Cameroon.

On his part, **the Cameroonian Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, visited Nigeria in 1983 and 1991.

In 2003, he took part in the Commonwealth summit in Abuja, and in that same year, he went to the oath taking ceremony of **President OLUSEGUN OBASANJO**.

In 2007, **the Cameroonian President** took part in the oath taking ceremony of **His Excellency late UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA**. **President Paul BIYA** was also part to the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the independence of Nigeria on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 in Abuja.

Regarding cooperation agreements, Cameroon and Nigeria have also signed some 15 agreements between 1963 and 2014, in different domains such as security, justice, free movement of goods and people, transportation, sport, culture and the development of young people. Allow me to cite, among others: the memorandum of understanding on the control of people and goods signed in February 06, 1963; the cultural, social and technical agreement of March 22, 1972; the commercial agreement of February 06, 1963 revised in

January 13, 1982 and in April 11, 2014; the cooperation agreement on affairs policy of March 22, 1972; the judicial cooperation agreement of March 27, 1972; the agreement on air transportation of May 19, 1978; the Green-tree agreement of June 12, 2006; the cooperation agreement in the domains of sports and physical education, signed in February 18, 2011; the cooperation agreement in the sectors of sciences and technologies, signed on April 11, 2014 in Yaoundé.

Regarding diplomatic representations, Cameroon has a High Commission in Abuja, a General Consulate in Lagos and a Consulate in Calabar.

Nigeria, on its part, has a High Commission in Yaoundé and two General Consulates in Douala and Buéa. Nigeria plans to open a third General Consulate in Garoua.

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

In a context largely dominated by transborder insecurity, caused by the exactions of the Boko Haram terrorist and criminal sect, Cameroon and Nigeria are working hand in hand and sharing their resources, to eradicate this horde of barbarians.

It is in this vein that both countries signed in February 28, 2012 in Abuja, an agreement to create a Trans-border Security Committee, the TSC.

The TSC held its First session from 06 to 08 November 2013 in Yaoundé. The Second session of this committee was held from 08 to 11 July 2014 in Abuja. Yaoundé hosted its Third session from 18



to 20 February 2015. During that session, recommendations have been made to harmonise a strategy to jointly and efficiently fight against insecurity in general. In the same vein, a workshop on trans-border cooperation was organised from 16 to 19 January 2015 in Uyo, in the Akwa-Ibom State.

The workshop helped identifying many sector of common interest, which requires franc cooperation between both countries, to develop the border zones and reduce precariousness to which the populations are exposed to.

The second session of the workshop will be held in 2016 in Cameroon.

Needless to say that the coordination and intensification of the fight against Boko Haram and terrorism in general, will constitute one of the key topic of the meeting both Heads of State are about to hold here in Yaoundé, as previously indicated by the official release published by the Presidency of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, after the audience granted by **President BUHARI** in late June, to the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, M. René Emmanuel SADI, in his capacity as special envoy of **Cameroonian Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA**.

In that same occasion, the **Nigerian President** stated that he will visit Cameroon soon after the end of the feast of the Ramadan.

In essence, **President BUHARI** then had this to say to the Cameroonian special envoy, and I quote: « **I am happy that the President has sent you. As you must have observed, I was in Niger and Chad over this issue. I planned to be in Cameroon afterwards, but I received an invitation to attend the group of**

seven (G7) meeting in Germany. I had to attend the meeting because Boko Haram has been internationalized and it was part of the discussions there. » End of quote.

### **Distinguished Journalists,**

**The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** in coming to Cameroon at a time when the Boko Haram terrorist group, which is seemingly defeated on the military front, appears to have changed its criminal bulimia methods, this time, multiplying suicide attacks against innocent civilians to install an atmosphere of fear and terror among the population, as evidenced by the three recent bomb attacks which occurred in the locality of Fotokol and in the city of Maroua in Cameroon.

Allow me in such a moment to extend on behalf of the **Head of State** and his Government, the most heartfelt condolences to the deeply afflicted families, as well as wishing a speedy recovery to the injured.

Allow me, in homage to the victims of these heinous crimes, to the injured and their families, to say that their sacrifices are not in vain as it constitutes a key element for the final eradication of Boko Haram.

Let me on behalf of the **Head of State**, call on all Cameroonians in general and the people of the Far North region in particular, to be vigilant, to make every effort in giving their full, genuine and sincere collaboration to administrative authorities and defense and security forces, in communicating any information which would flush out Boko Haram and its accomplices wherever they may be on our territory.

Let me still on behalf of the **Head of State**, urge them never to panic, and to oppose a steadfast resistance to this campaign of trauma and

fear which the criminal and barbaric sect of Boko Haram is attempting to inflict on our people.

### **Distinguished Journalists,**

This high level visit is an opportunity for both Heads of State of Cameroon and Nigeria to discuss and agree on best ways to address this other form of unprecedented cowardice and barbaric belligerency, and to above all come out with common strategies to boot out the destructive Boko Haram sect.

### **Distinguished Journalists,**

In responding to the invitation of **President Paul BIYA**, and truly visiting Cameroon soon after the end of the feast of the Ramadan, the **President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** has by so doing kept to his words.

It is as a brother and friend of Cameroon that this great man of the Nigerian political scene is coming to meet the **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, and the entire Cameroonian People.

In a nut shell, it is crystal clear that the relationships between Nigeria and Cameroon are very good, if not excellent, with promising prospects.

All Cameroonians have to rejoice and accompany, as one-man, the will of **President Paul BIYA** of Cameroon, and **President MUHAMMADU BUHARI** of Nigeria, to strengthen the age-old ties between our two peoples and bring together all the energy of their respective countries to defeat the Boko Haram threat forever.

I then call on you, **Distinguished Journalists** of the Cameroonian press, to join your voices in accompanying and supporting the will of our two States' men.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.