



CAMEROON



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SESSION 3: Preventing Violent Conflict, Building Peaceful Societies

STATEMENT BY CAMEROON DELEGATION

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**Your Excellencies Heads of States and Governments
Ministers
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

On the outset allow me to congratulate the United Nations and in particular UNDP for organizing this 50th Anniversary ministerial meeting and this thematic session.

Preventing Violent Conflict, Building Peaceful Societies, violent conflicts have been the order of the day in recent times due to the rise in extremist ideologies. Most countries in the world are suffering from the undermath of conflicts.

For a better understanding of the experience of Cameroon, I wish to first indicate that against the background of causes of conflicts such as social injustice, absence of good democracy, poor governance, unemployment, religious extremism, insecurity just to name a few, Cameroon has had a longstanding reputation of being in the forefront in the preservation of peace and stability in the Central African sub-region. It has also served as a safe heaven of peace for the persecuted and refugees fleeing from other countries.

My country has always longed to preserve peace and this has been witnessed in its peaceful resolution of the Bakassi matter which led to the signing of the Greentree Agreement on June 12, 2006. The UN Security Council in August 13, 2013, recognized the peaceful end of the special transitional regime in the Bakassi peninsula. The Nigerian population who have always lived and are still living in the area after the handing over of the Peninsular to Cameroon, are currently benefitting from all the infrastructure put in place to improve the livelihood of those living there.

In addition, the multicultural nature of Cameroon has been an added value in preventing conflicts. This aspect takes into consideration our regional balance especially when it comes to the election and appointment of decision makers. This has given the feeling of belonging to all.

Moreover, we cannot under-rate the celebrations of cultural festivals celebrated in all the regions of Cameroon such as the Nguon of the Bamoun, the Ngondo of the Doualas, the Leila of the Balis and the Cock dance by the Toupouris in the North as well as the fulbe fantasia. This permits the various

tribes to highlight their identity, while at the same time showcasing their integrity and oneness in co-existing with others.

Mister President,

Concerning the political values, notably democracy in the country, we have a strong electoral body, ELECAM, in charge of running elections. It is very active in the field to make sure that the maximum number of citizens get registered to choose those who will govern and take decisions for them. The UNDP is giving the Government a support in producing code of good conduct and implicating women in the electoral process. The appeased democracy practiced by the Head of State His Excellency Paul Biya, has been an effective tool to prevent violent conflicts. There is also the presence of more than two hundred political parties in the country. Freedom of the press and worship has become a Cameroonian brand.

Looking at good governance, the Government through its Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) elaborated in 2010 has laid emphasis on the development of the production sector thus promoting a high sustainable growth rate thereby ameliorating the living standards of the population. The Government has been active in the fight against corruption. The National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) has effectively tracked down corrupt individuals and is fighting against corrupt practices. The Judicial system has effectively sent embezzlers of public funds (including high ranking personalities) to prison through "Operation sparrow-hawk".

Concerning unemployment, one of the major causes of violent conflicts, the Head of State, has created a special three year youth plan with the objective of facilitating the economic integration of the youth in the system, therefore giving an impetus towards youth entrepreneurship. There is a National Youth Council which transmits the aspirations of the youth to the Government; there is also the Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development which is active in propagating good citizenship programmes and also inculcating the values of patriotism to the Cameroonian youth. All efforts of these institutions are geared towards facilitating national integration through efforts of sharing values and inspiring the feeling of oneness in the youths.

The Government has implemented projects such as the Integrated Support Programme, to Actors of the Informal Sector, Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship in the Agro Pastoral sector. The aim of these programmes is

to give to the youth and women tools that will permit them make money and also ensure their food security through profitable enterprises integrated in the agro-pastoral industry while offering viable job opportunities in the rural milieu; High Intensity of Labour another project implemented, is geared towards facilitating the maximum use of labour by creating employment for the youth in the rural milieu while at the same time helping them to contribute in the execution of public investment projects. There also exist the project on the social safety net, in order to contribute to the socio economic development and the humanisation of the underprivileged population.

Social inclusion is regarded as one of the binding forces in the preservation of peace. The Government with the help of UNDP, has reinforced social cohesion in the Far North region of the country, which is facing serious hardship caused by the extremist sect Boko Haram, through the implementation of many projects. This is being done through the holding of dialogues with all social groups in order to reinforce social cohesion, thereby preventing conflicts. The project has been helpful in opening interreligious dialogues thus acting as an instrument for social cohesion and the integration of women.

In addition, the government has initiated a sub programme on the reduction of poverty at the base. The goal of this project is to ameliorate the revenue and allow access of the sahelian population to basic socio-economic services. This actually helps to bring all on board, thus preventing conflicts.

Other projects exist in the Northern regions of the country, aiming at taking into account the needs and concerns of vulnerable groups in policies and strategies; and in the improvement of the participation rate of the vulnerable groups in decision making.

Despite the above, the Government, has encouraged freedom of worship in its passing of the 1990 freedom laws on the Freedom of Association. This has permitted the co-existence of various religious denominations in the country. This has played a role in preventing conflict in the country.

Mister President,

However, the efforts of preventing conflicts has been challenged with the terrorist attacks propagated by the Boko Haram sect witnessed in the Northern region of the country, which has caused so many Nigerian refugees to seek refuge in Cameroon and also the displacement of the local population. Also the

refugees from the Central African Republic, forced out by the rebels in that country has been hosted by Cameroon for a while now. These external shocks have led to a relative increase in insecurity in those regions.

The problem of co-existence between the receiving population and the refugees is present. This is partly due to the pressure on the limited natural resources like water, pasture for animals in that limited geographical space.

For example, about 70 000 Nigerian refugees are present in the Far North region and more than 250 000 in the Eastern region of Cameroon coming from the Central African Republic.

**Mister President,
Your Excellencies,**

In spite of the above, the Government of Cameroon relentlessly put in efforts towards assuring early recovery to the affected population and the rebuilding of peace.

Concerning food security in the affected zone, an interministerial committee was created. This committee has to make sure that food commodities are supplied to the refugee camps.

Besides, there has been great mobilization of funds and foodstuff by the Government with its development partners for the affected population and the military contingents.

The solidarity of the Cameroonians towards the plight of those affected cannot be underestimated.

Concerning health, periodic vaccination campaigns are done in the zone and also basic health services offered on the site. The government has been supplying water to the refugees and has been working to supply water through Mokolo to the Minawao camp. Education of the refugees has also been taken into consideration. Classrooms have been built in the refugee camp of Minawao, teachers posted to teach and the minimum package for teachers distributed. An emergency infrastructural programme has been put in place.

With all these measures put together, Cameroon still remains the safe heaven in the Central African sub region.

**Mister President,
Your Excellencies,**

I wish to conclude by saluting the efforts of the UNDP in seeing that projects are implemented in the country while taking into consideration the values which foster peace. Given that there is no development without peace.

I will also plead that the efforts of our developmental partners should be harmonised. However, with the implementation of the "Delivering as One Approach", the efforts of the United Nations will be widely felt through their various interventions in our various countries.

I thank you all for your kind attention.