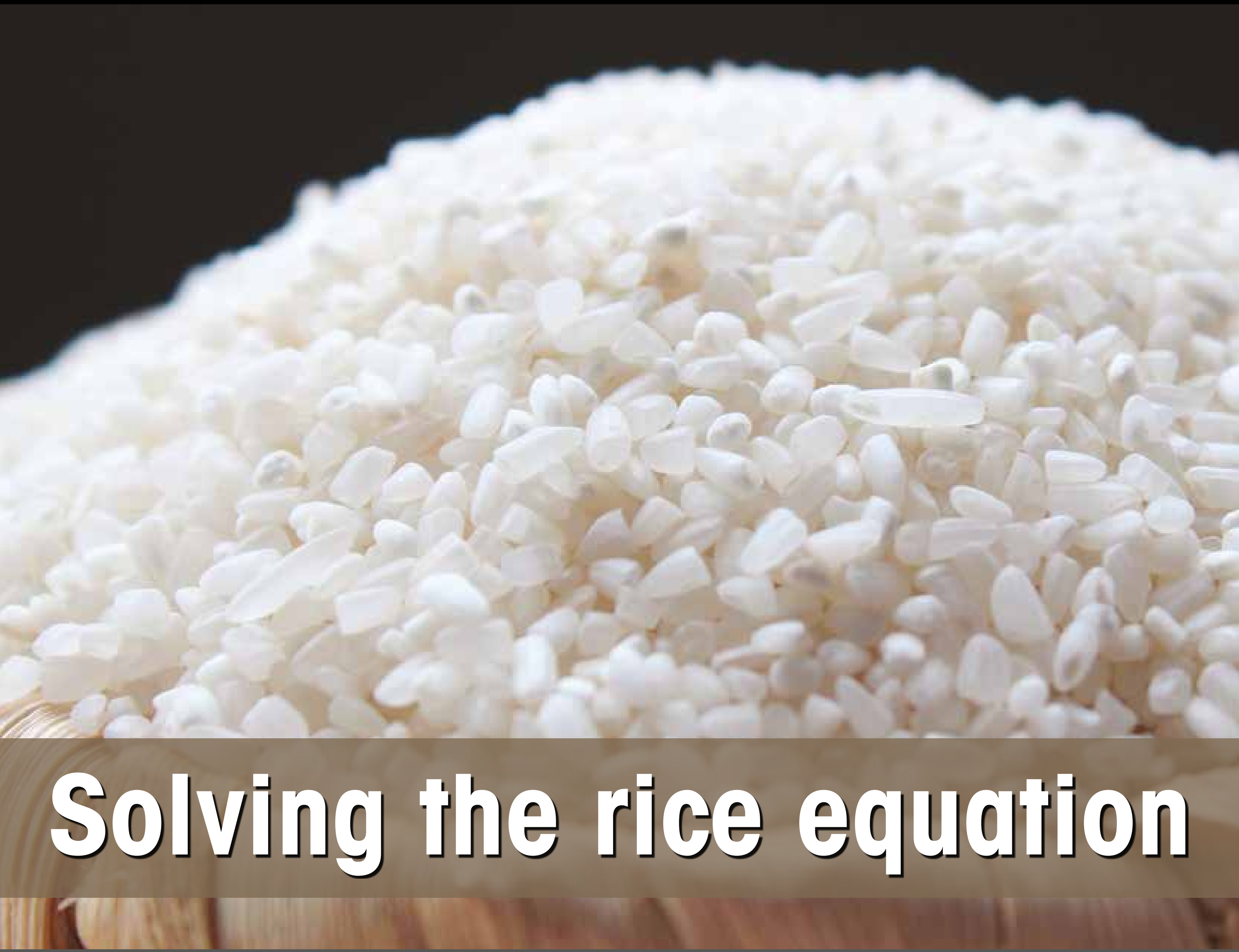
BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

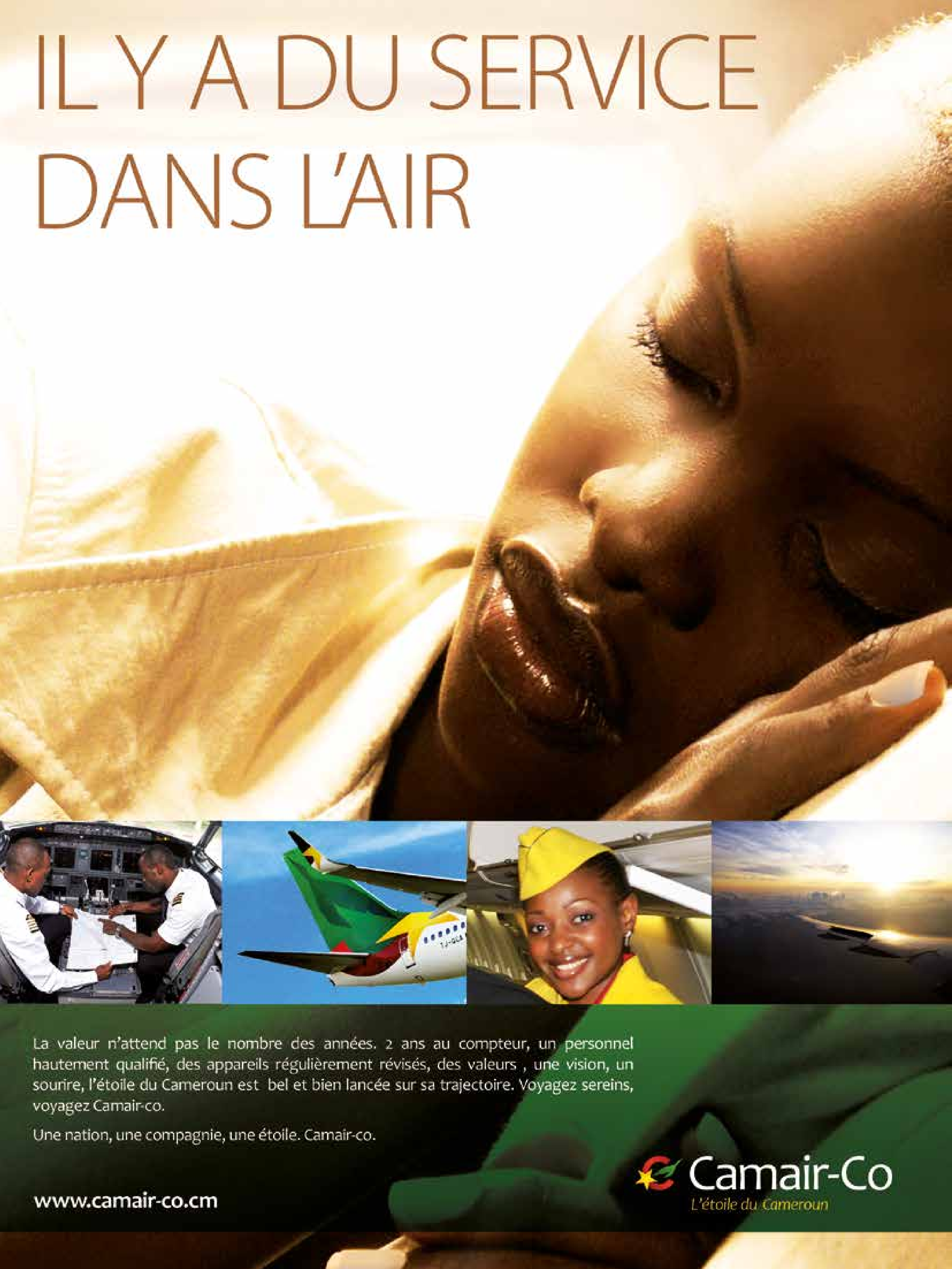
November 2013 · N° 10

MAJOR PROJECTS
AGRICULTURE
ENERGY
MINING
INDUSTRY
SERVICES
FINANCE



Solving the rice equation

The Present and the Future in Douala:
- Logbaba Gas Plant
- 2nd Bridge on the River Wouri


IL Y A DU SERVICE
DANS L'AIR
TJ-QLA
La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années. 2 ans au compteur, un personnel hautement qualifié, des appareils régulièrement révisés, des valeurs , une vision, un sourire, l'étoile du Cameroun est bel et bien lancée sur sa trajectoire. Voyagez sereins, voyagez Camair-co.
Une nation, une compagnie, une étoile. Camair-co.
Camair-Co
L'étoile du Cameroun
www.camair-co.cm

Godwill Nkwain

Rice: Yearning For Investors!

Local rice production in Cameroon is not at its best. Certainly, the country is blessed with immense potential in terms of natural resources. It has vast stretches of arable land, fertile soils, good rainfall... But what the country gets back from these natural assets is not good enough to feed its growing population most of whom have rice as their staple food.

Even with the wide stretches of land in Ndop in the North West,, Nanga-Eboko in the Centre, Santchou in the West, and the fields in the Northern Regions which are mainly occupied by SEMRY, rice produced in Cameroon is still scarce on the local market. The result of this is endless importation to meet growing demand estimated at over 650,000 metric tonnes per annum.

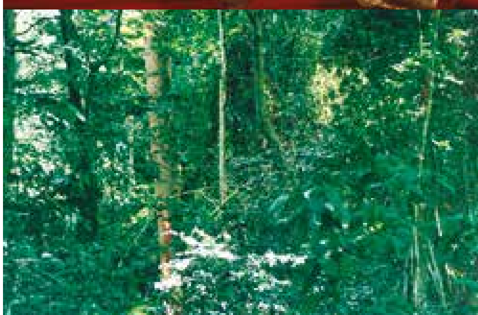
Expatriates are showing more and more interest in this sector. Chinese are in Nanga-Eboko while South Koreans are in Avangane. Both say that Cameroon's potential is considerable and, with proper development, could enable the African nation to easily journey out of the quagmire of excessive importation.. It is noteworthy that these countries have fully embraced the notion of second-generation agriculture in their respective areas of intervention.

The fact that the country spends over 100 billion CFA francs to import rice in a year says it all. Producing what the country imports is synonymous with grabbing the cash that incessant importation drains. Cameroon's stability, huge labour force requiring only additional training, its ideal location in Central Africa and role as the breadbasket of the sub-region make it an optimal environment for investment, particularly in a sector such as rice production.

Investors, the time is now!

BUSINESS IN CAMEROON
Publisher • Mediamania Sàrl • 6, rue du Léman • 1201 Genève • Suisse
Publication Director • Yasmine BAHRI-DOMON
Contributors • Agence ECOFIN, Jude VIBAN, Godwill NKWAIN • Bainkong GODLOVE • www.agenceecofin.com
Operator • Médiamania Sàrl • www.mediamania.pro • Design : Jérémie FLAUX, Web : Christian ZANARDI, Proofreader : Matt BROWN
Advertisement • Médiamania, Genève • Benjamin FLAUX • Tel +41 78 699 13 72 • bflaux@mediamania.pro
In Cameroon • Albert MASSIMB • almassimb@yahoo.fr • Tel : 00 237 94 66 94 59 / 00 237 77 75 13 98
Printing • Rotimpres, Aiguaviva, Espagne
Circulation • Albert MASSIMB • almassimb@yahoo.fr • Tel : 00 237 94 66 94 59 ou 00 237 77 75 13 98
Free – cannot be sold



CONTENTS

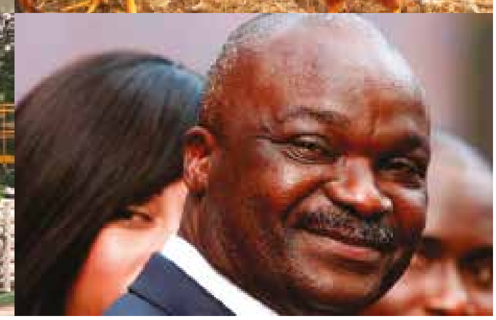












Rice: Solving Demand/Supply Inequality

Statistics show that national demand for rice is around 650,000 tons with local production at about 135,000 metric tons per year.

Rice is a staple food in Cameroon consumed by almost everybody, everywhere all the time. Most, if not all, Cameroonian households have rice on the menu at least twice every week. But what is produced at home is unable to meet growing national demand.

Statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development indicate that national production is in the neighbourhood of 135,000 metric tons per annum while demand is between 600,000 to 650,000 metric tons. Reports show that over the last eight years, the demand/supply equation has been difficult to balance, forcing the authorities to resort to undesirable imports to feed the growing population. Statistics indicate also that in the first half of 2012, the state spent well over 96.7 billion CFA to import 366,600 metric tons of rice. In 2011, the country shipped in 545,000 metric tons of rice at a total price estimated at 145 billion CFA, up from 350,000 metric tons brought in a year earlier.

Although there are rice production basins like the Ndop plain in the Northwest Region, coordinated by the Upper Noun Valley Development Authority (UNVDA), SEMRY in the Far North Region, Santchou in the West and others, what dominates the market is what comes from abroad. Ask a Cameroonian housewife and she would give you a better description of the taste of Pakistani rice, Thai rice or rice from Vietnam or China than she would do for locally-produced rice. In fact the rice that is commonly found in local markets has been imported, rather than produced locally.

Calls to step up local production to bridge this wide demand/supply gap has been the popular reaction. The state has launched the “second generation agriculture” ship and this situation could be overcome if all hands were put on deck. Already, development partners are showing interest. Projects have been initiated by countries experienced in rice production such as Japan, South Korea, and China.

These are good signs that other probable investors with innovative ideas could unblock opportunities – not only for the welfare of an increasingly rice-eating population but for their own returns as well.

Godwill Nkwain

Fruits of Rice Research in Cameroon

As African governments grapple with insufficient local rice production, obliging them to spend billions in imports to meet growing demand, researchers say they have inventions and innovations which, if embraced, could reverse the trend.

At the Research Institute for Agricultural Development, IRAD, all the talk is about the upland and lowland rice cultivar Nerica ("New Rice for Africa") that is attracting many producers and boosting production. According to Dorothy Malaa, coordinator of the Nerica project at IRAD, the new variety has since 2008, when it was introduced, produced about three tons per hectare for upland rice and six tons per hectare for lowland rice, up from about two tons per hectare for older varieties of rice, and as a result many regions, especially the Centre, South and East have become interested in rice production.

At the Research Institute for Agricultural Development, IRAD, all the talk is about the upland and lowland rice cultivar Nerica ("New Rice for Africa") that is attracting many producers and boosting production.

Talking to the *Cameroon Tribune*, she said, "Given that we need to process and sell what we produce, IRAD in partnership with Africa Rice, the Common Fund for Commodity and the Canadian International Development Agency, have put in place post-harvest processing technology to improve the quality of rice on the market".

Ms Malaa added that before 2008, Cameroon-produced rice constituted less than 15 per cent of the national market and today it is over 30 per cent, testifying to the progress that has been made. Research is ongoing into a new variety called "Arica" that may produce even more than Nerica.

"After the [Third Africa Rice Congress, Youande, 21-21 October 2013] and with what we have gathered as experience, we will identify where the new variety could be grown and then put it on the market," Ms Malaa said.

The Yaounde congress also served as an opportunity for other researchers to share their countries' experiences which could be copied to boost local production, processing and commercialisation. These included water-saving and drought-resistant varieties of rice, among other innovations. The greatest challenge for Cameroon however, remains the dissemination and popularisation of research results. There is therefore the need for frank collaboration between research institutes and agricultural extension services so that time, money and intelligence is not spent on research whose results rot in drawers while agricultural stakeholders import ill-adapted seeds and seedlings that at best result in subsistence-level yields.

Government: The Pillar of All Actions…

Cameroon has what it takes to be self-sufficient when it comes to rice production. And, the government of Cameroon is taking the problem seriously, by trying to reduce the import of rice and supporting actions to increase the output of this staple food in the country. The government focusses on: easing access to funds, revamping state corporations working in the rice sector such as UNVDA and SEMRY by offering subsidies to these structures and promoting research in the sector, and partnering with the Institute of Research and Agricultural Development (IRAD) Yaounde and the University of Dschang, in west Cameroon.

Cameroon imports more than 300,000 tons of clean rice per year, despite the enormous potential for the production of the crop in the country, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Trial results have shown that in many parts of the country, paddy yields can reach 8 to 10 tons/hectare, with the possibility of growing more than one crop per year in some areas.

At UNVDA Ndop there are new ambitions after the state of Cameroon decided to revamp the company in 2009. The company now processes and markets rice for smallholders. Ndop alone envisages the development of 20,000 hectares of paddy fields for some 70,000 smallhold farmers and 100,000 hectares for mechanized rice production as well as increasing its annual paddy production to about 500,000 tons in ten years. The company now has a sales point in Bonaberi, Douala, the economic capital of the country, and others are to follow, its general manager confirmed.

In the Far North Region, through SEMRY promoting rice cultivation in Yagoua and Maga, the government wants to step up output. In the future, the company will extend its actions to Kousseri, a town in the Far North Region.

Minister of Agriculture, Essimi Menye

The government helped SEMRY acquire 12 new pumps costing nearly 1 billion CFA, a real breath of fresh air for both the company and rice farmers: after 30 years of operation, the first pumps installed at the inception of SEMRY had become dilapidated and were breaking down regularly. Sources within the company said that by 2015, SEMRY would produce 200,000 tons of paddy rice in Yagoua, Maga, and Kousseri.

Besides supporting these agro-industrial companies, the government is also concerned about research. Thanks to the state's efforts, rice is now being grown in the forest regions of the country, the Minister of Agriculture, Essimi Menye noted in September when he was guest at the UPF club, the Cameroonian arm of the francophone press association.

As well as the activities of IRAD, there is an adapted variety of rice available called Nerica that takes only three months to be ready for harvest, among other advantages. Now the government is tasked with the dissemination and popularisation of these findings.

Under this sponsorship, IRAD and the University of Dschang are working on the agricultural map of the country to develop all possible crops, not only rice.

"We want to have a repertoire of the different soils of Cameroon to know their potential. This map will also show the different characteristics of water," the Minister of Agriculture says. The government has also created the Cameroon Rural Financing Corporation (Carfic), an agricultural bank to help prospective farmers who own three to four hectares of land but who do not have the necessary funds to open the farm. Globally, the government wants to make the seeds available, to promote mechanized production and transformation, at the same time as creating the market. However, the overall poor condition of rural roads inhibits the transport of farm produce to the market. Moreover, Cameroon lacks qualified hands in agriculture, according to Mr Menye, and to combat this, the government is opening

"We want to have a repertoire of the different soils of Cameroon to know their potential. This map will also show the different characteristics of water"

new schools. The process has begun with the Cocoa Academy in Ebolowa, and the government has plans to open specialized schools for other cash crops, the minister noted.
The state of Cameroon is opening avenues for corporations from countries with a reputation in rice cultivation. In Ndanga Eboko, Centre Region, there is a trial farm where rice is being farmed using Chinese methods, although Bernard Ndjonga, president of Acdic, a civil society organization working on the protection of consumers' rights, , said the rice is shipped to China and other countries. In Monatele, paddy rice is grown using Korean methods.
It is worth noting that Cameroon imports tons of rice but it is not destined for national consumption. "Since the government decided to cut import duties on rice in 2008, callous businesspersons have decided to import rice through Cameroon and sell it to other countries in the sub-region," said Mr Menye.

Jude Viban

Huge Potential Beckons Investors

The country possesses 240,000 hectares of cultivable land but only 25,000 hectares have been developed.

Cameroon, it is said, is a land of varied opportunities. Nature's blessings to the country are abundant although most of these resources remain untapped.
The country is fed on mostly imported rice but there is the potential to produce plenty and even to export surpluses to neighbouring countries. Records show that the country possesses 240,000 hectares of cultivable land but barely 25,000 hectares have been developed. Of the 25,000 hectares already developed, 13,000 hectares have been developed by the Yagoua Rice Production agro-industrial company (SEMRY), 3,000 for the Upper Noun Valley Development Authority (UNVDA) Ndop, and the rest shared between Santchou, Nanga Eboko, and Kousserie, among others.
There are other individual initiatives but these are purely for subsistence. Information from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development indicates that most of the rice produced in the country is mostly sold to neighbouring countries in raw form, due to a lack of processing equipment or its inadequacy for the local market.
Without exaggeration, if just 50 per cent of the available rice land were put to use to produce acceptable-quality rice, the country could feed the rest of the countries in the Central African sub-region. Besides the land, the country is blessed with a good climate, good amounts of rainfall and sunshine, numerous swampy areas where the product could be grown without any worry and a youthful population that could be attracted to rice cultivation.
Looking at the potential of the country, it is, to say the least, paradoxical that it continually spends huge sums of scarce CFA francs every year to import rice, money which could have been channelled into other productive sectors of the economy.
That some development partners are already making headway in the sector may be an eye-opener for others yet to understand that there is much to reap in profits by investing in the sector. The more than 100 billion CFA, on average, that the state spends each year on imports could equal the return on investment for those who produce locally.

Godwill Nkwain

SUCCESS STORY

SEMRY: Goliath of the Sector

The state-owned company SEMRY was founded in 1971, and by 1985 yields had reached a peak production of 110,000 tons of paddy rice a year. This figure is currently around 70,000 tons. The state has benefited from the enormous potential of the Far North Region.

SEMRY was created with specific goals: Firstly, to ensure the ecological security of the people in the Far North region and by creating rice farms, SEMRY intended to stem the exodus of the rural population. Secondly, to develop a project for the people of the region, especially those of the Logone Valley, to provide a basic income. At the national level, SEMRY was intended to have produced enough rice for Cameroon and thus reduce the massive importation of rice.

In Yagoua, SEMRY has four pumping stations to irrigate paddy fields. These stations are along the Logone dam and the water is drawn from the Logone River to help the rice farmers. Meanwhile, in Maga, the company has built a large reservoir and an irrigation system based on gravity. It contains 620 million cubic meters of stored water and can be used to irrigate from 39,000 to 40,000 hectares.

For these services, farmers only pay about half the cost, according to General Manager Marc Samanata. “We live on state subsidies. SEMRY gets 102,000 CFA per hectare from the rice farmer. But the real cost is almost double. That is to say, the farmer pays 102,000 CFA per hectare, rather than 204,000” he said.

But there is hope. In 2014, a major overhaul of SEMRY will begin, according to its deputy general manager, who told a Chinese news agency last year that 10 billion CFA will be invested into the company upon recommendations from a study conducted by PACA, the improvement of the Agricultural Competitiveness Project. Irrigation canals, dams and mechanical tools will be renewed and refurbished.

Presently, processing units of the company are down, and abandoned (1987-1994).

Rice is currently grown on 10,000 hectares each year, on two fields in Yagoua and Maga.

“If you multiply the fee of 102,000 CFA per hectare paid by rice farmers, there is just one billion CFA to cover the budget of the farming season,” the deputy general manager said. “If this is expanded to 18,000 hectares, even if the price remains at 102,000 CFA per hectare, this will be amount to almost 1.8 billion CFA.”

In the north of the country, the possibility remains of growing two crops per year; a dry season crop and a rainy season crop.

If, the company is restored so that it can stand on its own two feet, it will regain its industrial and commercial clout, and become a much more competitive structure.

SEMRY used to employ 1,500 workers but with the collapse of its commercial and industrial arm, the company has shrunk to just 370 workers, managers and agents. Here, 20,000 families or 600,000 people live on rice production and processing, but SEMRY wants to go beyond rice farming.

“Our ambition is to make the Logone Valley a development centre for various activities,” the general manager said. These activities could be, for instance, fish farming, planting corn, or even the creation of orchards. “We also want to push farmers to exploit the by-products of rice, including producing cattle feed, he added.

Jude Viban

UNVDA Ndop Wakes from Slumber

The Upper Nun Valley Development Association, (UNVDA) was doing well until the economic crisis in the late 1980s. By 1988, the corporation was earmarked for liquidation, and was a shadow for twenty years due to lack of funding. But, the state of Cameroon has reconsidered its decision and included the No.1 agro-industrial entity

in the northwest of the country to be among state corporations earmarked for restructuring, a process that has been ongoing since 2009.

Each year, UNVDA produces and distributes tons of quality rice seed to its farmers. “We also train farmers in appropriate seed selection techniques and a good number of them are now producing good quality seeds for their own use and for distribution to other farmers,” a statement from the company says.

Before farmers grew rice using traditional methods and poor quality seeds, but since UNVDA was revamped, the company now assists the farmers in the use of improved farming techniques especially in the domain of rice cultivation.

UNVDA uses its equipment to develop and maintain about 2,532 hectares of paddy fields, and this equipment is now also being used by farmers for irrigating paddy rice production.

“We also assist the farmers in the maintenance of this land by rebuilding flattened contour bunds,” the general manager of UNVDA, Chin Richard Wirnkar said.

In order to facilitate access to rural infrastructure for farmers, UNVDA has constructed several irrigation structures that include 14 dams, 49 distributors and about 220 km of irrigation/drainage canals. All these structures are maintained by the company.

Since its creation, UNVDA has opened and regularly maintained about 150 km of access roads to the paddy fields in the area.

With the help of its hulling unit, which has a capacity of 3.5 tons/hectare, UNVDA assists the rice farmers by processing and marketing thousands of tons of their paddy rice every year. Between 1986 and 2003, the corporation processed over 30,000 tons of paddy rice for farmers, resulting in an average of about 1,500 tons per year.

According to the general manager of UNVDA, this agro-industry

Each year, UNVDA produces and distributes tons of quality rice seed to its farmers.

company is also concerned about the well-being of farmers.

“UNVDA is an agro-industrial development [entity] and the decision to open farm-to-market roads was made to help check post-harvest losses, reduce the cost of transporting crops from farms to markets, ensure that farmers are engaged in profitable activities and above all, develop the neighbourhoods,” he said.

UNVDA tractors have also prepared about 80 per cent of the farms for rice and maize production, and 2,532 hectares of farmland have been developed. However, 3,000 hectares remain without standard irrigation structures.

Jude Viban

"Cooperative Facilities and Equipment Will Help Farmers"

We spoke to Professor Seonggu Hong from Hankyong National University, South Korea, who is currently the coordinator of a South Korean-sponsored Mechanised Complex Development for Rice Cultivation project in Avangane.

How far have you gone with the Mechanised Complex Development for Rice Cultivation in the Centre Region of Cameroon?
The project continues until the 10 December, 2013. It is a two-year project. The preparation of paddy fields is supposed to be completed around the end of October. But the field work is slower than planned. The first experimental cultivation of rice which started at the beginning of this year and that was harvested in May was not looking too bad. Storage and office buildings were completed last year.

What has been produced or will be produced in Avangane thanks to the project?
The main objectives were to create paddy fields, to provide farm equipment, buildings for the management of this equipment, and to train technical staff to use the farming equipment. For instance by bringing [South] Korean technical staff, we trained village people so that they can cultivate rice and operate farm equipment. Through this project, we hope they can grow rice in the fields and show improvements in incomes and living standards through successful and continuous rice production. Even further, we hope they play an important role in delivering their skills and can-do spirit to surrounding areas.

Seonggu Hong, Hankyong National University, South Korea and Coordinator of Mechanised Complex Development for Rice Cultivation project in Avangane.

What happened to the rice produced in Avangane. Was it sold?
We just distributed rice after the experimental cultivation. Our hope is that they continue to cultivate rice for improving their incomes and expand rice production area in the region. We will prepare some guidelines for them to explain how they can manage the fields and the equipment after our mission. They have to save some money to buy fertilizer and fuel to continue rice cultivation.

Avangane was a pilot project. Where next do you intend to take the project?
We are planning a follow-up project which may extend this project, including a kind of training or extension centre. We will prepare an official agreement for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Korean PMC team, and the people from the village so that this project will operate continuously.

What other discoveries have you made in the country through the implementation of the project that other investors could use to step up local rice production?
This is just a beginning. The people in the village have a lot of potential. It is the people that make this kind of project successful. The policies and planning of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development are very important in mobilizing the people. Any project or business should provide motivation and incentives to the people living in the area.

How much potential for rice does Cameroon have?
Enormous! Cameroon has excellent natural conditions such as water, soil, and sunlight. I expect that Cameroon will make a surplus in many agricultural products and will export them in the future.

What policy do you think government can adopt vis-à-vis the rice sector in its second-generation agriculture drive?
The government should think about how to attract more people to participate in agriculture. It should support the people who want to cultivate rice by providing chemicals, transportation for selling the products, and more. Cooperative facilities and equipment will help them. A showcase model should be made to disseminate its experience to motivate further cultivation, and that requires strong leadership and long-term planning from the government.

Interviewed by Godwill Nkwain

Africa Spends 5 Billion US Dollars to Import Rice

Statistics show that Africa in 2012 produced about 27 million metric tons of paddy rice, which when processed resulted in about 17 to 18 million metric tons against a demand of about 30 million metric tons. The rest is imported to make up for the demand/supply shortfall, and these imports cost about 4 to 5 billion US dollars per annum.
Information on the website of Africa Rice showed that in 2009, the continent imported 10 million metric tons of processed rice, at a cost of 5 billion US dollars.
Participants at the Third Africa Rice Congress that began in Yaounde on 21 October, 2013, said production has slightly improved over the years in some countries, thanks to research, but fears remained that, with high food and fuel prices predicted to last well into the current decade, relying on imports would no longer be a sustainable strategy.
They maintained that the development of the rice and related sectors would have considerable impact on the competitiveness of the continent's economies and reduce the diversion of huge amounts of foreign currency to imports.
Participants at the Yaounde congress advocated enhanced local production, processing and marketing. "Rice production can create employment along the value chain and in related sectors, and lead to the improved nutritional status of the agricultural poor," Marie-Noelle Ndjiondiop, a researcher with Africa Rice Benin, said.


Nerica: an Asian-African rice hybrid

River Wouri Gets Second Bridge in 36 Months

Comprising a five-lane roadway, the edifice will ease access to the economic capital from the south west, west and north west.

In three years, the River Wouri in Douala will be spanned by a second state-of-the-art bridge that is expected to greatly improve the movement of people and goods going in and out of Cameroon's commercial capital.

The second bridge, whose foundation stone was laid by the head of state, President Paul Biya on 14 November, comprises a bridge with a five-lane roadway, two from Douala toward Bonaberi and three from Bonaberi toward Douala, as well as a two-lane railway deck. The roadways and railway decks will be 24-meters long and 10.10-meters long respectively thus the total length of the bridge will be of 34.10 meters.

The Deido district of the city will be connected by a roundabout on the port boulevard. The Bonaberi connection will be made on the western entrances at the right of the junction between the new and old roads. The two lanes of the existing bridge will be reserved for traffic from Deido toward Bonaberi. This means that four lanes shall be opened to users crossing from Deido to Bonaberi while those crossing from Bonaberi to Deido will use three lanes, making a total of seven lanes instead of the present two lanes used for both directions.

The contract to carry out studies and design the bridge was awarded to a joint-venture between the Satom, Eiffel, Soletanche-Bachy, and Lavigne-Cheron-Greisch companies.

According to the project's factsheet, investment in the project is esti-

The foundation stone was laid by the head of state, President Paul Biya on 14 November 2013

mated to cost about 109.16 billion CFA, inclusive of taxes, with 108.87 billion CFA allocated for design/ execution, 1.79 billion CFA for the displacement of networks and expropriations and 6.5 billion CFA for assistance to the project's managers. It being financed by 66 billion CFA by the French Development Agency (AFD), 20 billion CFA in the second phase from French debt-relief development contracts (C2D), with the balance made up by funds from the government of Cameroon.

Godwin Nkwain

A BRIDGE TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS!

That goods and persons will flow into and out of Douala without the headaches of the long queues that plague the old bridge, with all the loss that these incur, will certainly signal a new dawn for economic activity in Cameroon's economic capital.

Shey Jones Yembe, Board Chairman of the Douala Ports Authority, said: "Even when we succeeded in shortening the delay in removing goods from the Douala Port, we faced difficulties in transporting them either to the west side or eastern part of Douala. On the west side, the problem was usually at the level of the bridge. But with the advent of a second bridge, I think these problems will be solved."

The bridge will also offer a great opportunity for people seeking to invest in Douala because it will allow them to transport their products to seven regions in Cameroon and two foreign countries, namely Chad and the Central African Republic.

Equally, the bridge will usher competitiveness into Cameroon's economy. Given that it is a World Bank indicator of how competitive, productive and effective a country is, the bridge will be of utmost importance to the business community in Cameroon.

Logbaba Gas Plant Supplies 18 Companies

President Paul Biya inaugurated the gas plant on 15 November 2013

The 3.5 million cubic feet daily production is used for heating purposes all around Douala.

The Logbaba natural gas field, in the Ndogpassi neigbourhood of the Douala III Subdivision in the Wouri Division of the Littoral Region – Cameroon's first-ever onshore gas production facility – already supplies some 18 large companies around Cameroon's economic capital with clean, cost-effective, available and environment-friendly gas.

Company facilities such as UCB, SABC (two sites), CICAM (two sites), Guinness, Prometal, Chococam, Plasticam, CCC, Camlait (two sites) HACC, and Cimencam, are among those that use the gas for heating purposes. Meanwhile, the plant provides stabilized condensate to the National Oil Refinery, SONARA, to increase its productivity and enable it to supply and quality petroleum products to the country.

President Paul Biya inaugurated the gas plant, which was constructed thanks to a partnership between the National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH) and a British firm, Victoria Oil & Gas, through its subsidiary, Rodeo Development Limited (now Gas du Cameroun) on 15 November.

Victoria Oil & Gas chairman Kevin Foo said: "Production now is about 3.5 million standard cubic feet per day and by this time next year we expect production to be 12 to 15 million standard cubic feet per day."

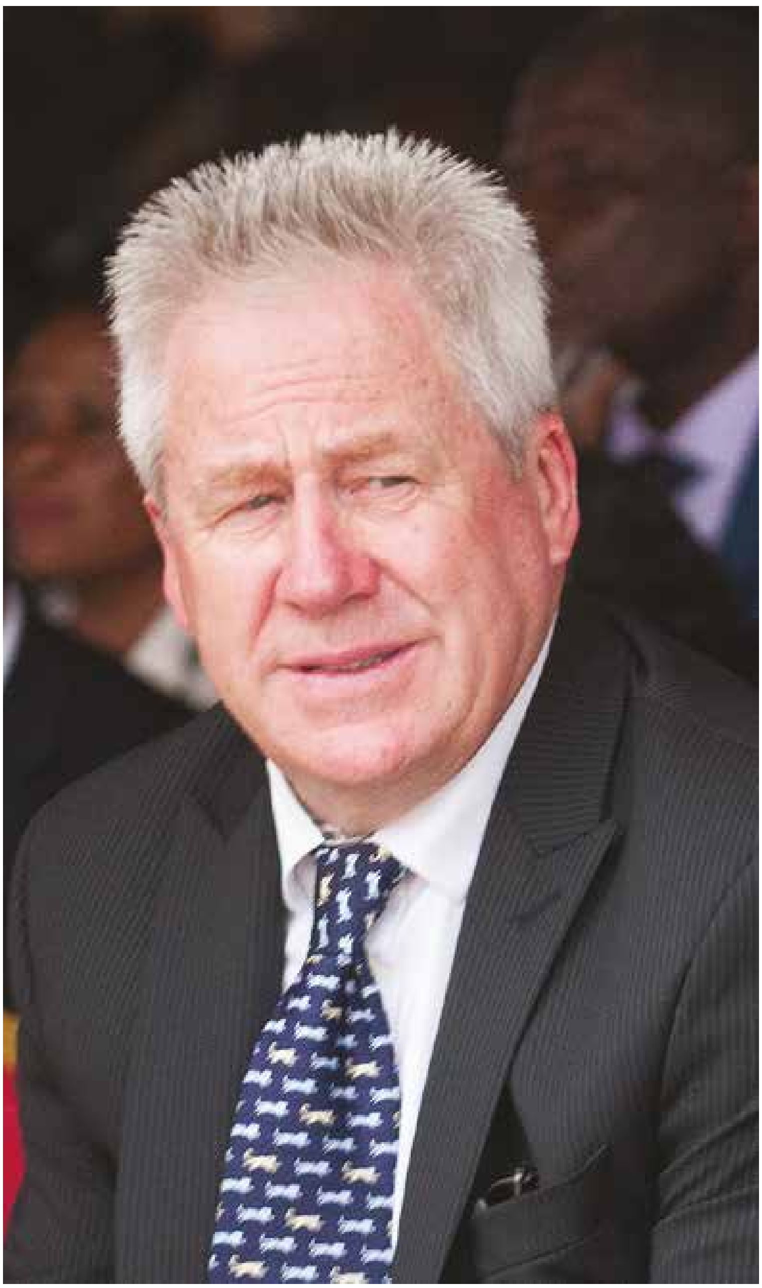
In the next three years the plan is to drill additional wells at Logbaba to supply new customers, develop the market for the production of electricity and increase gas sales approaching 50 million standard cubic feet per day.

Besides the thermal use of the gas, Gas du Cameroun is also preparing to provide gas for independent electricity generation at customers' sites. This is expected to eliminate some of the power outages experienced mostly in the dry season and will make way for continuous industrial production.

The project cost more than 100 million US dollars (about 50 billion CFA).

Godwin Nkwain

"We Can Produce Ten Times More than This"



Kevin Foo, Chairman, Victoria Oil & Gas, London Office: "By the same time next year we expect to produce 12 to 15 million standard cubic feet per day."

Business in Cameroon: What are the prospects for the Logbaba gas project?
Kevin Foo: The prospects are very high. The Logbaba gas project is just in its infancy. We are just demonstrating the feasibility of each stage of the project. We can be ten times larger in size than what we are doing now and we can supply gas to as many industries as possible, gas to generate power, gas for automobiles and households. We are just at the beginning of a long journey that will last for over 35 years.

BC: What is the quantity of gas being produced by the plant at the moment?
KF: Now, production now is at about 3.5 million standard cubic feet per day and by the same time next year we expect to produce 12 to 15 million standard cubic feet per day.

BC: What are the characteristics of the gas produced at Logbaba?
KF: The gas produced here is of very high quality, it's very clean and it doesn't take too much trouble to reduce its pressure and we've been very careful about the environmental safety aspects over the last three years of development of the project. I am glad to say that we have never had an incident; we have never had an accident.

BC: What precisely do the 18 companies you are supplying do with the gas from Logbaba?
KF: The current use of the gas is what we call "thermal" where these companies such as UCB, SABC (2), Cicam (2), Guinness, Prometal, Chococam, Plasticam, C UCB, SABC (2), Cicam (2), Guinness, Prometal, Chococam, Plasticam, CCC, Camlait (2) HACC, Cimencam, and SONARA, among others, use it for heating purposes.

BC: How many people are working at this gas plant?
KF: We employ directly about 150 people and many more indirectly. Ninety-five per cent of those employed are Cameroonians.

More than 300 Jobs created at Logbaba

Progress in energy supply and employment opportunities offered by gas field development.

The development of the Logbaba gas field, which has created some 300 construction jobs and some 130 full-time positions, is also ensuring the growth of industrial development in Douala with reliable, cheaper and cleaner energy. The Logbaba gas field is reducing cleaning and maintenance costs for industries and is also contributing substantially to state's revenue generation through royalties and tax.

The project has also lived up to its social responsibilities by sponsoring breast and uterus examinations in cooperation with the Logbaba hospital, improving access paths along the pipeline's route as well as offer drinking water boreholes for the local population using solar energy.

Inaugurating the plant on 15 November, head of state President Paul Biya said that energy was at the heart of all development processes. "There is no modern development without energy [and that is the] reason why energy takes pride of place in our Greater Accomplishment programme. Together we will win the energy battle," President Biya said.

He added that nothing will be left to chance to ensure the safety of the population in the production of the gas.

ENERGY

400 Billion CFA Needed to Produce 420 MW Electricity in Natchtigal

Basile Atagouna Kouna

River Natchtigal

The government of Cameroon has signed an agreement with Electricité de France (EDF), the World Bank affiliated International Finance Cooperation, and Rio Tinto Alcan to provide 420 megawatts of electricity to the River Natchtigal area. The agreement was signed at the prime minister's office on 8 November between the Minister of Water Resources and Energy of Cameroon, Basile Atangana Kouna, and representatives of the institutions in the presence of Prime Minister Philemon Yang.

The Cameroon Tribune quotes Mr Atangana Kouna as saying that the estimated 400 billion CFA project is expected to boost industrialization.

"This is an important project that will provide close to 430 megawatts to the country's energy sector and it is on instruction of the head of state to develop the River Natchtigal in partnership with EDF," the energy minister said, noting that all possible efforts would be mobilized to enable the project to be executed on time.

A representative of EDF, Michel Roussin, signed for his company and said they are well known both regionally and internationally for respecting the terms of contracts, with the utmost emphasis on the respect for environmental concerns. The Natchtigal project, he noted, was original and complex, and it was EDF's duty to join hands with the Cameroonian government to carry out this government initiative.

EDF's regional representative, Edouard Dahome said the agreement represented an opportunity for the company to step up its contribution to Cameroon's growing energy sector.

"It is huge project and we think this is a brilliant opportunity for us to contribute for the future of the energy sector in Cameroon," Dahome said.

The installed capacity of the project stands at 360 megawatts with the possibility of extending it to 420 megawatts. Guaranteed capacity is estimated at 270 megawatts with a possible increase to 330 megawatts. The terms of the agreement spell out that the construction of the power plant would begin in six months after the signing of the contract.

"This is an important project that will provide close to 430 megawatts to the country's energy sector and it is on instruction of the head of state to develop the River Natchtigal in partnership with EDF"

AES Sonel Officially Leaves Cameroon

Jean-David Billé, General Manager of AES Sonel

AES Sonel has announced it is departing Cameroon by putting its electricity supply company up for sale. An official release published in the Cameroon Tribune, which came on the heels of persistent rumours of the group's departure, read, "AES to sell its businesses in Cameroon and India."

It states that the company has signed agreements to sell its electric generation and distribution business in Cameroon for 220 million US dollars of net equity proceeds to Actis, a global emerging market investor.

"AES is selling 100 per cent of its interest in Sonel, Dibamba and Kribi to Actis, a United Kingdom-based equity fund that has invested over 1.5 billion dollars in generation and distribution of electricity in emerging markets. We are confident that Actis, with their long-term and sustainable vision, will continue to invest in Cameroon's electricity infrastructure and will empower local management teams to further improve their business," the media announcement read.

Irrespective of accusing fingers pointed at AES for not doing better to improve energy production and distribution in Cameroon, the release states that AES remained "proud of what we have accomplished during AES's 12 years in Cameroon. The company's overall contribution to the advancement of the country's power sector has been driven by AES mission to improve lives and the relentless efforts of the AES Sonel team. This is a great example of a public-private partnership with the government of Cameroon". One of the greatest challenges that Actis needs to face is outmoded infrastructure, especially in energy transportation facilities. The 216 MW Kribi Gas Fired Plant, which was expected to greatly reduce the energy shortfall in the country, is still far from meeting that goal, and the obsolete equipment of AES Sonel is to blame for this failure.

Ok Clean Water Project Celebrates 10th Anniversary

The Ottawa-Canada-Kumbo Cameroon clean water project – popularly known as the Ok Clean Water Project – celebrated ten years of providing greater access to clean pipe-borne water to 37 villages on 9 November, 2013 in the Tobin Campus hall of the Catholic University in Kumbo, the capital of the Bui division in the North West Region.

At the celebration, some 13 villages with Ok Clean Water Projects came with donations raised for the management of their water projects which together with on-the-spot free-will donations on the day amounted to 900,000 CFA.

The Cameroon Tribune reports that of the 37 water projects that the Ok Clean Water Project has carried out, that in the Kumbo Sub division tops the chart with 13 projects executed at a cost of 109,124,660 CFA, Mbven Sub division follows with six projects worth 65,061,740 CFA, Nkum Sub division executed nine projects at a cost of 53,201,600 CFA, Jakiri Sub division came next with seven projects at a cost of 19,020,250 CFA, while Djottin in Noni Sub division has one project (5,456,000 CFA) and Njingaru in Ndu Sub division also has one project costing 5.459,000 CFA.

HYDROCARBON

Optimal Gas Supply at Kribi Thermal Plant

The production of natural gas by Perenco at the Sanaga platform some 17 km from Bipaga, and the treatment of gas at Bipaga for sale to the National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH) to supply the Kribi thermal plant, is progressing uninterrupted, stakeholders have said.

Perenco engineers working at the Bipaga gas treatment centre said they are working around the clock to supply natural gas to the Mpolongwe terminal, some 18 km from Bipaga. Meanwhile, SNH engineers at the Mpolongwe end also said they are working hand over fist to supply the needed quantity of gas for the production of electricity.

The project's target is to produce 216 megawatts of electricity to bridge the demand/supply gap in the country. This is extendible to 330 megawatts.

Members of the Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee visited the Bipaga centre and Mpolongwe on 2 November, and reported that all is well in terms of production, treatment and transmission. Furthermore, all security measures, the engineers said, have been put in place to deal with any eventuality.

According to Maurice Bibeh, Chief of the Perenco Bipaga gas treatment centre, who took members of the Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee and journalists around the centre, the gas produced in the Sanaga platform is treated there and conditioned at Bipaga before being piped to Mpolongwe.

"Perenco equipment is well adapted to produce and transmit the gas needed by SNH for the thermal plant," he said.

Rodrique Essama who spoke on behalf of the SNH Site Manager, said that the pipes are systematically cleaned at least every two months and safety is tested on the equipment at least every three months to greatly improve security. This ensures optimal production and treatment of gasses such as methane, ethane, propane, and butane, among others.

Asanga Franklin, Production Operator at the Mpolongwe-Bipaga sites, said that the centre that receives the treated gas from Perenco for onward transmission has been functioning at optimum levels. Here, there is a pick receiver with equipment that clears the pipe of impurities.

"We have a pipeline that is almost 18-km long and the picks clear off any impurities along the line. We are functioning normally and optimally and we make sure that we furnish the quantity of gas that is needed," he said.

The steering committee members were quoted by the Cameroon Tribune to have expressed satisfaction with the state-of-the-art equipment and its functioning. Although optimal production for the supply of gas had been achieved, members of the committee noted that intermittent power cuts interrupting domestic and industrial activities, remained a problem.

The project's target is to produce 216 megawatts of electricity to bridge the demand/supply gap in the country. This is extendible to 330 megawatts.

National Petroleum Professionals form Federation to Conquer the Market

National petroleum professionals in Cameroon have constituted themselves into a federation to ensure efficiency and effectively compete with multinationals that hitherto wholly controlled the market in the country. The Federation of National Petroleum Professionals, (FPNP), was created on 4 October, and presented to the press in Yaounde on 31 October.

Pioneer members said the objective of the federation is to form a common front through which they can improve their activities and benefit from the same advantages as multinationals. According to the first president of the federation, Jean Claude Bekolo Mbang, President and Director General of Socaepe S.A., unity is strength.

"I have been in the petroleum sector for a long time and I realized that multinationals had monopolized the sector and 'nationals' were operating in separate ranks. We came together so that our ideas could be well channelled to the hierarchy. We want to be united to benefit from the same advantages as multinationals do," he said.

It emerged from the presentations that domestic companies have moved from zero per cent when the sector was liberalized in 2000 to about 25 per cent of the sector today and that in unity, they constitute a force to be reckoned with.

The General Secretariat of the FPNP decided to appoint an independent person to run its day-to-day activities. Legal luminary, Charles Marie Tchoungang, who was appointed Secretary General, told the press that another innovation of the federation was the decision to put in place a centre for mediation, reconciliation and arbitration to manage conflicts among members.

Jean Claude Bekolo Mbang, President and Director General of Socaepe S.A.: "I have been in the petroleum sector for a long time and I realized that multinationals had monopolized the sector and 'nationals' were operating in separate ranks."

"At first, 'nationals' thought they could function independently of each other but insufficient means limited them from marching in step with competitors in the sector. We want to ensure respect for ethics and recruit Cameroonians who can supply the market with sufficient amounts of quality petroleum products," Mr Tchoungang said.

Representing the Minister of Water Resources and Energy, Martin Mesumbe, the Director of Petroleum Products and Gas, lauded the initiative of the 14 founding members of the federation.

"This is an initiative that the government encourages because the government decided to liberalize the sector in 2000 to allow 'nationals' to enter a sector that had long been the monopoly of multinationals. When we talk about energy independence we are also talking about getting 'nationals' into the sector. The government will always be behind initiatives like this and they merit government support as long as they are on the right track," he said.

Transit Fee Increases for Chad-Cameroon Pipeline

Transit fees paid to the government of Cameroon for forwarding Chadian crude oil through its territory have increased from 0.41 US dollars (194.91 CFA) per barrel to 1.30 dollars (about 618.02 CFA).

The Executive General Manager of the National Hydrocarbons Cooperation (SNH) and Chairman of the Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee, Adolphe Moudiki, and the General Manager of the Cameroon Oil Transportation Company (COTCO), Christian Lenoble, signed an amendment to the initial convention with COTCO on 29 October, 2013. The ceremony, which took place at the head office of SNH in Yaounde, was overseen by the Minister of Mines, Industries and Technological Development, Emmanuel Bonde.

The amendment institutes a new rate for the transit of oil from Chad and according to its terms, the fee will be updated every five years in accordance with the annual inflation rates published by the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) during the preceding five years.

"The rate is applicable, without discrimination, to all shippers of crude oil originating from other countries and transported through the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline," the Cameroon Tribune reported.

It emerged from the ceremony that negotiations between Cameroon and COTCO took place between February and August 2013 in the presence of the Chadian party. The negotiations were conducted for Cameroon by an ad hoc committee created by SNH comprising experts from SNH, the Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee and from the Ministries of Mines, Industries and Technological Development, Finance and Trade.

Records show that from 3 October, 2003 when the operation of the pipeline began to 31 October 31, 2011, 410.42 million barrels of Chadian crude oil were exported from the Komé-Kribi 1 terminal to international markets, generating a transit fee of an estimated at 168.29 million US dollars (about 84.62 billion CFA) for Cameroon.

The transit fee is calculated on the basis of the quantities of crude oil transported determined by a measuring system installed on the Komé-Kribi 1 terminal. The money is paid directly to the public treasury by COTCO.

The ceremony was overseen by the Minister of Mines, Industries and Technological Development, Emmanuel Bonde

Niger to Export Crude Oil through Cameroon

Cameroon's Minister of Mines, Industries and Technological Development, Emmanuel Bonde, and Niger's Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Foumakoye Gado

The Republic of Niger has reached an agreement with Cameroon to transport its crude oil across the country. Cameroon's Minister of Mines, Industries and Technological Development, Emmanuel Bonde, and Niger's Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Foumakoye Gado, signed a bilateral agreement to that effect at the head office of the National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH) on 30 October, 2013.

The signing ceremony took place in the presence of Cameroon's Minister of External Relations, Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo, the Executive General Manager of SNH and Chairman of the Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee, Adolphe Moudiki, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Niger to Cameroon with residence in Abuja, Mansour Maman Hadj Dado.

According to Cameroon's national bilingual daily, the Cameroon Tribune, the agreement lays down the conditions for the transit through Cameroon of hydrocarbons produced in Niger and their transportation down to the Atlantic coast of Cameroon through the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline. According to a news release signed by Adolphe Moudiki, the negotiations that led to the bilateral agreement were ordered by the head of state, Paul Biya, pursuant to Law No. 96/14 of 5 August, 1996 governing the transportation by pipeline of hydrocarbons from other countries.

The negotiations, the release specifies, were conducted for Cameroon by an ad hoc commission created by the Executive General Manager of SNH, comprising experts from SNH and Ministries in charge of External Relations, Mines, Industries and Technological Development, Water and Energy Resources, Finance, Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Trade and Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development. Meanwhile, Niger was represented by a delegation headed by the Minister of Energy and Petroleum and comprising experts from the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministries of Energy and Petroleum as well as that of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration.

In separate speeches, the two ministers are quoted to have lauded cooperation between Cameroon and Niger. They noted that the cordial bilateral ties will be further strengthened by the activity of oil transportation, the fruit of the agreement.

Mr Bonde said: "The bilateral agreement is coming at a time Cameroon is attracting diverse investors into its mining sector, through the development of giant projects notably in the gas sector within the framework of the head of state's Greater Accomplishment programme."

Mr Foumakoye Gado said the choice of Cameroon made was for economic reasons.

"Niger's hydrocarbon production is not very significant (about 60,000 barrels/day) and to valorise it, there was the need to choose a shorter course that would entail less investment. And with the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline, we would need to construct a pipeline of about 600 km to link with the existing Chad-Cameroon Pipeline. [This is the] reason why we took the option of the Niger-Chad-Cameroon [route]," he said.

MINING

Cameroon Attains EITI Compliance Status

The Board of Directors of the Extractive Industries for Transparency Initiative has declared Cameroon a "compliant country". The announcement was made on 17 October in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, during the 25th session of the board.

According to a press release from the Minister of Finance, Alamine Ousmane Mey, Chairperson of EITI Cameroon, the EITI Board of Directors also commended the government of Cameroon and the multiparty group for their sustained efforts within the framework of the implementation of EITI, efforts which have led to the publication of conciliation reports of appreciable quality for the years 2010 and 2011.

"The board encouraged the parties involved to maintain the course of the reinforcement of the sensitisation and communication of, as well as the regular improvement of, the quality of the conciliation reports, so as to maintain the respect for the principles, criteria and requirements of the EITI," the minister said.

On behalf of the government, Mr Mey thanked "the Board of Directors of EITI for this decision which greatly rewards the tireless efforts of Cameroon for the implementation of EITI, honours our country and its illustrious head, Paul Biya, president of the republic and head of state, whose clairvoyance brought Cameroon to adhere to EITI in 2005 and to redouble its efforts after the first validation for the success of today, reaffirmed the government's commitment to continue the implementation of the initiative, particularly in view of respecting the EITI norm, in accordance with transitional provisions prescribed by the Board of Directors."


Minister of Finance, Alamine Ousmane Mey

Congratulating all the parties involved in the implementation of EITI in Cameroon as well as concerned mining enterprises, civil society, and development partners, particularly the World Bank whose constant support has always been a valuable asset, the minister said "the different stakeholders to continue tirelessly with their efforts towards the respect of the principles, criteria, and requirements of the EITI, in compliance with EITI norm, in order to durably preserve the status of 'compliant country' and to make Cameroon one of the privileged destinations for foreign direct investments in the mining sector, with a view to the emergence in 2035, dear to the president of the republic, Paul Biya."

Sundance Raises 19 billion CFA on Capital Market

Sundance Resources Limited, an Australian firm that is partnering with Cam Iron to develop the multi-billion Mbalam-Nabeba Iron Ore Project in Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo has raised 40 million US dollars (about 19.450 billion CFA) on the stock exchange through the issuance of convertible notes, to meet the pre-development capital expenditure of the project.

According to a release published on its website on 5 November, 20 million US dollars will come from Noble Resources International Pte Ltd and the other 20 million US dollars from an investor consortium comprising Blackstone Alternative Solutions L.L.C., the D. E. Shaw Group and Senrigan Capital.

"The funds will be used for working capital and to meet the pre-development capital expenditure of the Mbalam-Nabeba Iron Ore Project," the release quotes Sundance Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Giulio Casello, as saying.

An annual general assembly meeting of Sundance taking place on 29 November, in Perth, Western Australia, was due to consider the balance sheet and prospects with the shareholders.

With the signing of the mining agreement in November 2012, Sundance was given 18 months to mobilise the project's finances before it would be served a mining permit. Some 8.7 billion US dollars (about 4,350 billion CFA) is needed for the project with 2,500 billion CFA for the first phase and 2,400 billion CFA for the second. The mine is projected to produce 35 million tons of iron ore per annum and generate royalties to the tune of 600 billion US dollars over 25 years.

Cam Iron will construct a 510 km rail line to transport the iron ore from the Mbarga Mine to the Cameroonian coast with a 70 km rail spur line to connect to the Nabeba Mine in the Republic of the Congo. It will also build a deep water iron ore export terminal in Lolabe-Kribi capable of taking bulk "China Max" iron ore carriers.

Iron ore samples

Gold Production Increases in the East Region

Reports from the East Region of Cameroon indicate that the production of gold has increased in the past month. The control brigade for transparency and traceability reports that in October, 200 kg of gold was harvested.

This represents a 20 kg increase on the previous month. In monetary terms, this equals about 420 million CFA.

The Cameroon Tribune reports that the production increase was recorded in such places as Bétaré-Oya, Kamblélé, Colomine, Bekéé, and Ngoura.

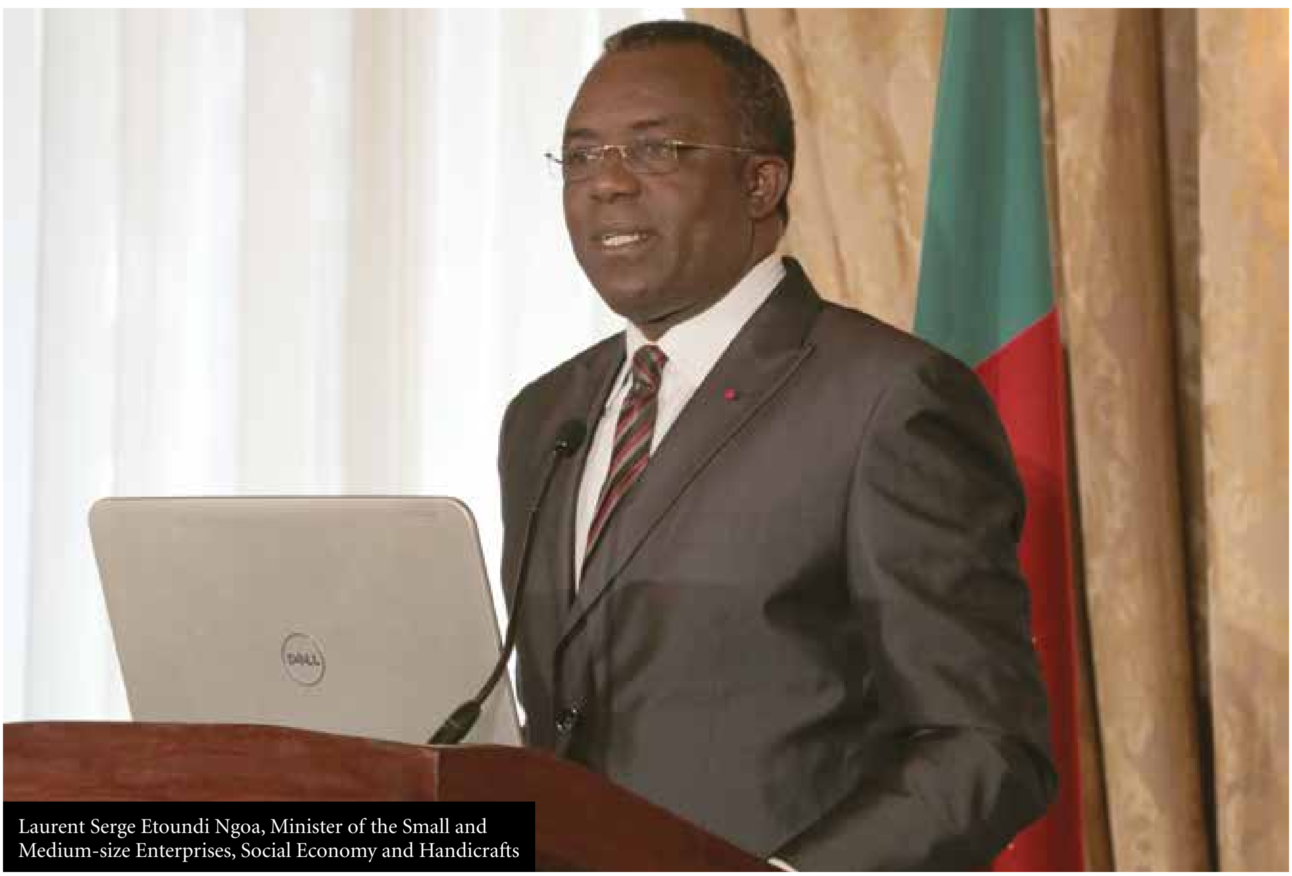
The East Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Mines, Industries and Technological Development, Joseph Mbida is quoted as saying that the improvement in production is thanks to increased surveillance by the control unit. Until now, most of the gold mined in the region disappeared into the hands of traffickers.

The regional delegate said the greatest challenge now is to tighten the control measures and consolidate the production so as to augment the channelling of gold to the formal economy.

Some 28 mining firms are reportedly operating on the field while about six had seen their activities halted to conform to the law.

FINANCE

Japan to Create SME Development Centres in Cameroon



Laurent Serge Etoundi Ngoa, Minister of the Small and Medium-size Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts

Cameroon's Minister of the Small and Medium-size Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts, Laurent Serge Etoundi Ngoa, has said that the government has asked Japan, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), to create development centres for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the country.

The Cameroon Tribune quotes the minister as saying that "the government has solicited Japan for the creation of a centre for the development of SMEs in the country's regions. Given that the head of state had already created the Agency for the Promotion of SMEs, the programme of the centre can work within the framework of the agency."

To ascertain that all was in place for the centres, JICA's Director for Africa, Inui Eiji, held discussions with Minister Etoundi Ngoa on 24 October 24, in the minister's office.

"The Director came to ascertain that the agency has been created, that a link is created between the functioning of agency and the bank for SMEs and above all, to be sure that the aid that Japan will give through JICA to the agency and the bank is judiciously used," the minister is quoted as saying.

Saluting what he said is the government's engagement, the JICA's Africa Director said: "There are a lot of possibilities for developing SMEs in Cameroon because there are good natural resources and high initiative by the government. Also, Cameroon has good human resources. We hope that we will have good results when we will begin the training of stakeholders of SMEs."

New Financing Window for Cameroon's SMEs

The African Guarantee Fund for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (AGF) has signed a protocol agreement worth 100 million US dollars with GICAM and a consortium of banks (SGBC, BICEC, Afriland First Bank, Ecobank, and BGFI) to set up a pilot project for financing and supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Cameroon.

According to a news release from AGF, lack of access to finance is a major obstacle to small business growth and development, with only 20 per cent of African SMEs receiving a credit line from a financial institution.

"The facilities received under this project will allow Cameroonian SMEs to position themselves competitively on the market of the Central African region and Nigeria," the release said.

GICAM's president, Andre Fotso, is quoted as saying, "This one-of-a-kind agreement reaffirms GICAM's commitment to support small and medium-sized businesses and will further enable the SME sector play a critical role in the socio-economic development of Cameroon."

The chief executive officer of AGF said: "This agreement is of great significance as it provides a platform through which Cameroonian SMEs will be assisted not only in getting increased access to financing, but also capacity development support to enhance their managerial capabilities. This partnership is another manifestation of AGF's role as the missing link to increasing the financing of African SMEs by banks and non-bank financial institutions."

AGF is a pan-African non-bank financial institution owned by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (aecid). AGF was officially launched on 1 June, 2012.

AGF's primary mandate is to assist financial institutions (banks, private equity funds, lease finance houses and development finance institutions) in Africa to scale up their SME financing through the provision of partial loan guarantees and SME financing Capacity Development Assistance.


Andre Fotso, President GICAM

Cameroon to Host 7th AfrEA Conference

Cameroon will play host to the 7th AfrEA Conference on the theme "Evaluation for development: From analysis to impact," from 3–7 March, 2014.

According to a release published in the Cameroon Tribune, the conference, organised by the Cameroon Development Evaluation Association (CaDEA), will seek relevant answers to how to place evaluative evidence at the heart of development policymaking, and format it in the manner that will make sense to policymakers.

"In this way the evaluation discipline will serve a purpose at all levels of development infrastructure: ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of development spending," the release states.

CaDEA has a vision of a prosperous Cameroon whose growth paths are environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable to the majority of its citizens. It pays attention to the rigorous evaluation of programs in the processes involved in the design, implementation and management of public and private development actions in the country, including economic and social policy measures.

The association promotes the efficiency and sustainability of development actions by the increased use of knowledge gained through assessment in public policy and private development in the country, advances the theory and practice of evaluation in a relevant context for the country and strengthens national capacities for the design, planning and conducting of evaluations in accordance with accepted and recognised professional standards. It also promotes professional ethics in the practice of evaluation, in particular the criteria of usefulness, competence, systematic investigation, accuracy, integrity, honesty, decency and respect for people as well as engages in initiatives and projects of any kind in the further promotion of the assessment and its use in decision-making processes relating to national development.

ECONOMY

China Loans 196.8 Billion CFA to Cameroon

MA60 planes manufactured by Xi'an Aircraft Industrial Corporation

The People's Republic of China has loaned 196.8 billion CFA to the government of Cameroon for the supply of potable water in nine towns in the country, carrying out an emergency project in the country's telecommunications sector and acquiring two airplanes.

Cameroon's Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, and China's Ambassador to Cameroon, Wo Ruidi, signed the three separate loan agreements in Yaounde on 11 November. The ceremony took place in the presence of the Minister of Transport, Robert Nkili, as well as representatives of the Ministries of Posts and Telecommunications and Energy and Water Resources.

Of the total amount, 84.720 billion CFA is destined for potable water supply. Nine towns will benefit from the project. First phase targets are Bafoussam, Bamenda, Sangmelima and Kribi. Dschang, Yabassi, Garoua, Maroua and Garoua-Boulai will benefit in the second phase.

Reports say the potable water supply project will be piloted by a Chinese firm, CGC Overseas Construction Group Co. Ltd. It will take 36 months to deliver including 12 months of feasibility studies. It will consist in rehabilitating existing infrastructure and extending supply to areas that do not yet have potable water.

Concerning the two airplanes, 430 million Yuan (about 34.4 billion CFA) will be used to buy two 48-seater MA60s, each to boost the activities of the country's national air carrier. The transport minister, Robert Nkili, who recently visited China within the framework of the acquisition of the airplanes reportedly said that the two planes will be delivered to Cameroon by the end of the year.

Meanwhile in telecommunications, 77.7 billion CFA will be used for the partial execution of an emergency project to beef up the national system for the prevention and management of catastrophes.

Cameroon Wants to Borrow 500 Billion CFA

Cameroon's head of state, President Paul Biya, has signed a decree authorizing the country's finance stakeholders to borrow 500 billion CFA.

The presidential decree, signed on 6 November, modifies some texts contained in the 2013 Finance Law. The Finance Law made provision for the state to borrow 200 billion CFA but the modification now increases that amount to 500 billion.

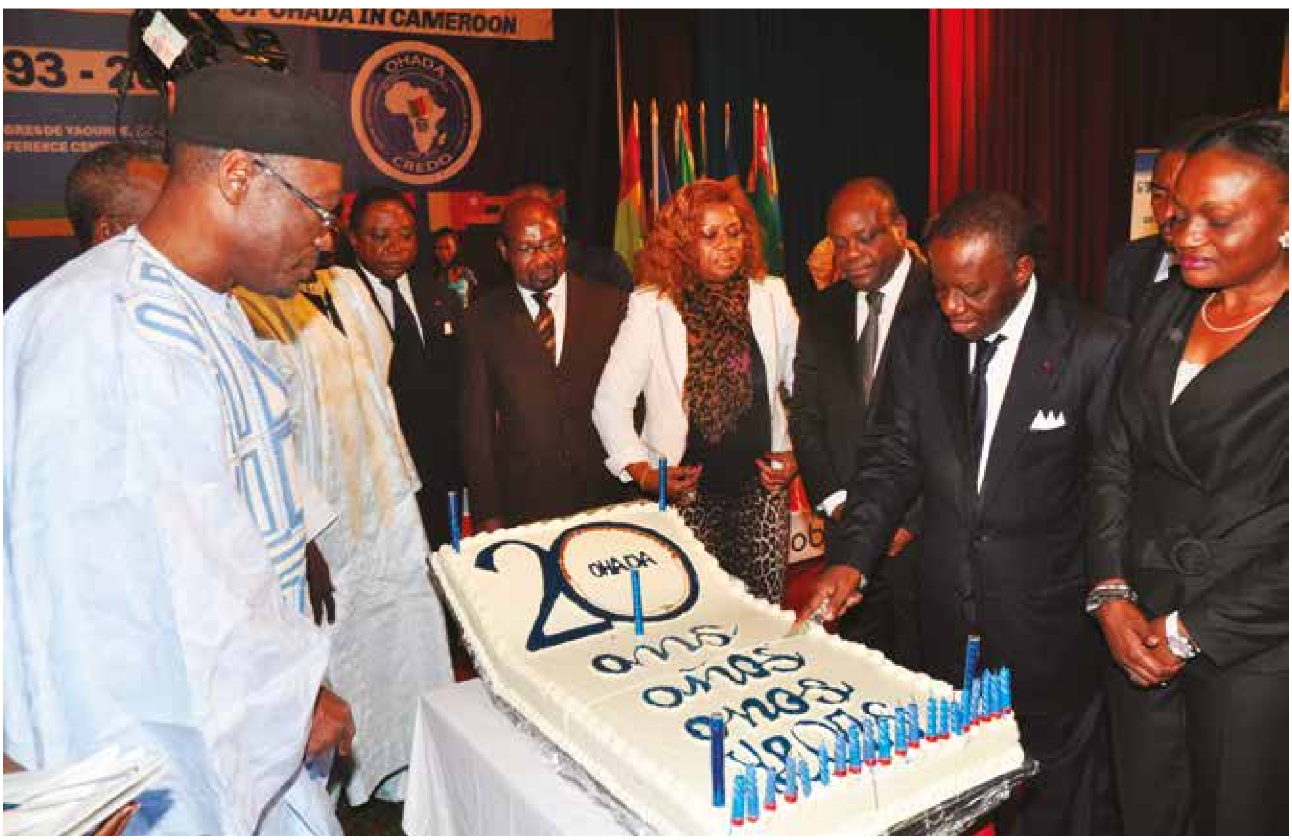
Although the decree does not specify how the money will be borrowed and what use will be made of it, it is widely believed that stakeholders could either go to the stock exchange or approach funding partners.

The socio-economic development of the country will certainly benefit from the additional funding given that the country has had difficulties mobilizing resources to make up the budget.

The customs department, for example, is having difficulty hitting its targets this year, despite having exceeded targets in previous years. Its performances in the first two quarters of the year have been anything but satisfactory.

OHADA Counts Achievements in Cameroon

As the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA), celebrates its 20th anniversary in 17 countries on the continent, stakeholders in Cameroon say much ground has been covered, especially on business law training, yet the effective application of business law with visible economic benefits remains a challenge.
On the occasion of anniversary celebrations in Yaounde, after a grand commemorative ceremony had already been held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso,



stakeholders said harmonising OHADA business laws was a good initiative.
"It has helped in developing cross-border trade and in facilitating loan acquisition, and this is what we call the extra-judicial reinforcement of security. It is a very important reform which if applied properly can boost the credit that banks give to the economy," Mathieu Mandeng, General Manager of Standard Chartered, said.
Like Mr Mandeng, others said financial institutions have been trained to understand the OHADA law and encourage their applicability, and the fruit of this work is already being seen, especially in the volume of loans that banks give to the economy. Speakers were unanimous that OHADA is the best answer today to threats of judicial insecurity in the business world.
"OHADA laws are legal instruments at the service of efficiency in the performance of enterprises and economic growth. And this explains the adaption of the OHADA Uniform Act on Security in 2010 which solves the problem of over liquidity in banks," Professor Justine Diffo Tchunkams, president of the organising committee, said.
For Professor Dorothé Cossi Sossa, Permanent Secretary of OHADA, Marthe Angeline Mindja, General Manager of the National Investment Promotion Agency and University don Professor Paul Gérald Pougoue, the implementation of OHADA laws is synonymous with improving the business climate, and this has had had visible effects in the country.
Professor Pougoue said he hoped that OHADA would move from being a concern of lawyers to that of everybody, especially business people.
"Let all sectors of our economy, be it private or public, be concerned with the OHADA process because each time we talk of law, we see jurists. Business managers need these laws also to take strategic decisions as well as government decision-makers to take certain decisions or re-orientate others," he said.
However, introducing the four languages inscribed in the OHADA principle (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese) remains a far-off dream.

INVESTMENT

Nearly 200 British Investors Expected in Cameroon in January

Some 193 investors from the United Kingdom will visit Cameroon on a trade mission in January 2014, the UK's new High Commissioner to Cameroon, Brian Olley, has said.
After meeting with the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, on 25 October 25, the British diplomat told the press that discussions focused on the modalities of the visit.
"We talked about how we can build on the excellent success of the Cameroon-UK joint commission that took place in London in September 2013 and what we can do together to make the business climate even better to attract British businesses which have expressed a deep interest in coming to develop projects in Cameroon in partnership with Cameroonian companies," he said. "And we spoke in particular about the 193 British companies that came into the business pattern of the joint commission and how we want to take this forward by inviting these companies to Cameroon in January for a trade mission."
He said the interest of British companies in Cameroon spans a wide range of sectors judging from those that are already operating in the country. These include the oil and gas sector, with Victoria Oil and Gas in Douala which already employs 300 people (with 295 Cameroonians), agriculture, banking, and brewing, among others.
"Through my discussion with the minister and the material he has given me, I will better understand what Cameroon would like to do in future and the strategy here so that we can best advise British companies to come and offer some services and to work in partnership in these areas," Mr Olley added.


Brian Olley, United Kingdom High Commissioner to Cameroon

SOJITZ Corporation Examines Investment Opportunities in Cameroon


Daisaku Kiyohara, managing director Sojitz Global Trading Nigeria Ltd and Cameroon Prime Minister Philemon Yang

Japan's SOJITZ Corporation, a specialist in the oil and gas sectors, is looking for investment opportunities in Cameroon.
Officials of the company, led by Daisaku Kiyohara, managing director of SOJITZ's Nigerian affiliate Sojitz Global Trading Nigeria Ltd, had discussions with Prime Minister Philemon Yang, on 17 October.
Mr Kiyohara told reporters after the audience with Mr Yang that the SOJITZ Corporation, with headquarters in Tokyo, is one of the largest trading houses in Japan. He said that in Africa, especially Nigeria, the company has invested mainly in the liquefied natural gas sector. It has established a joint venture with the Nigerian National Oil Company that enables it to develop energy in Nigeria and market it in Europe and Japan.
The Cameroon Tribune quoted the senior official of the Japanese gas and oil company as saying that the company was attracted by Cameroon's huge energy, crude oil, gas, and agriculture potential. The country, Mr Kiyohara said, is also peaceful, stable, with hospitable and welcoming people which favours investment. He said the prime minister had been supportive, understands the Japanese way, and appreciates their track record in Cameroon. The outcome of the trade mission, he said, would determine how soon they would make concrete investments.

1.5 Billion CFA to Produce 26,000 tons of Pineapple in Awae

A joint effort between the government and pineapple producers in Awae, Mefou and the Afamba Division of the Centre Region, has mobilized 1.5 billion CFA to be used by the farmers to produce 26,000 metric tons of pineapple on 325 hectares of land.

The minister delegate in the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Yaouba Abdoulaye, launched an Agropole programme in the locality on 14 October, with the objective of increasing production from 12,000 metric tons per farming season on 150 hectares of land to 26,000 metrics tons per farming season on 325 hectares of land. A farming season spans 14 months.

According to the Cameroon Tribune, the 1.5 billion CFA financing comprising 966.7 million CFA from promoters and 504.36 million CFA from the state, is also expected to enhance local processing of 14,000 metric tons of pineapple into juice for local and world markets. A plant, the foundation stone of which was also laid in the Messa neigbourhood at Awae within the side-lines of the programme's launch, will add to local pineapple processing capacity.

The main promoter of the programme, Jean Baptiste Kouam, is quoted to have said that the processing plant will help producers migrate from manual processing.

"Upon completion in 2014, the processing plant will have an average processing capacity of five metric tons per day and we promise to have the first pineapple juice from this plant in eight months," the promoter said.

It is worth noting that that pineapples produced in the area are already treated, packed in cartons, stored at 10 to 12 degrees Celsius with the trademark "Ananas du Cameroun", and exported within and out of Africa. Mr Kouam said that the programme currently employs about 150 young people in the locality and this number could increase when activities intensify.

In a public speech, Mr Abdoulaye said the government is unwavering in its support for the population and improving standards of living: indeed, the Agropole programme was created by a prime ministerial decree in August 2012 to boost national strategies in developing the agro-pastoral sector.

At the event, government representatives handed to the producers a tractor, engine saws to cut trees, generators, fertilizer, and insecticides, among other supplies and equipment, to boost the pineapple production.

Dangote Cement Expected on Cameroon Market in May 2014

Dangote Ibese Cement Plant in Nigeria

The General Manager of Dangote Cement Factory in Douala, Abdullali Baba, has said that everything is being done to bring its first cement to market by May 2014.

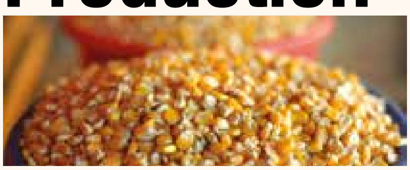
"Installation activities are ongoing. Engineering is almost 100 per cent done, procurement about 90 per cent, and construction about 60 per cent. We hope that by April or May 2014, we should be on the market," he said.

The Nigerian noted that the company is planning to recruit about 240 people of which at least 220 will be Cameroonians.

"Initially, the project was scheduled to cost 115 million US dollars but because of additional foundation design due to the poor condition of the soil and the associated engineering, the total cost is going to be about 140 million US dollars. By April 2014, we will start testing and by May, we should be able to hit the market," he added.

AGRICULTURE

50 Billion to Boost Maize, Cassava, and Sorghum Production



Maize, cassava, and sorghum production is expected to receive a significant boost in Cameroon in the coming years thanks to a 50 billion CFA package put at the disposal of stakeholders by the World Bank and the government of Cameroon.

The money has been made available within the framework of an investment and agricultural development project to which the World Bank is contributing 40 billion CFA and the government of Cameroon 10 billion CFA. The first phase of the programme runs from 2014 to 2019.

During this period, farmers are expected to be grouped into common initiative groups, federations and cooperatives to boost production and the competitiveness of the sectors. It is through these associations that projects will be financed.

Reports say a Chinese firm has been solicited to sharpen the skills of stakeholders and ensure technology transfer.

1.6 Billion CFA to Produce 528,000 Chickens

Thanks to government partnership with the private initiative of Mr and Mrs Ebong of Diwom, Nkam Division of the Littoral Region, some 661 million CFA has been put at the disposal of the latter to increase poultry production from 207,000 chickens per year to 528,000 per year.

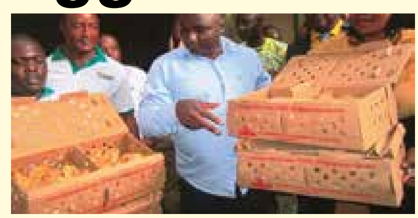
This is thanks to an Agropole programme launched in the locality on 4 November by the minister delegate in the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Yaouba Abdoulaye.

The promoter of the project will provide the remaining financing to meet the 1.6 billion CFA needed to hit the target.

The minister delegate also laid a foundation stone for the construction of a chicken production and processing unit on a 25-hectare site. The new acquisition will serve as a central market for local producers, chick suppliers and farmers of poultry products. Mr Abdoulaye also took a tour of two local poultry farms, which will be among those to supply the newly created factory.

The overall objective in the short and medium terms will centre on job creation, the modernisation of traditional production methods, combating food shortages given ever-increasing consumer demand, and ensuring quality goods, as well as maintaining an economic balance threatened by the huge import of foreign products.

3.6 Billion CFA to Produce 251 Million Eggs



The government of Cameroon, through the Agropole Programme, has put in place 3.6 billion CFA to increase the production of eggs in Baleng, West Region, from the current 142 million to 251 million eggs per year.

The programme was launched in the locality on 22 October by the National Coordinator of the Agropole programme in the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Jean Claude Medou. Promoters of the project are to contribute 2.4 billion CFA while the government is pumping in 1.2 billion CFA.

The mayor of Bafoussam II, Emmanuel Ngeko Tagne, said the project will create jobs, reduce poverty considerably and stabilize the price of eggs in the market.

The 18 enterprises in this network to benefit from the programme pledged their readiness to work hard to meet its objectives. The project's coordinator, Jules Claude Sonafouo, is quoted as saying that the government's aid has given a push to their efforts whose fruits will be seen in the community in the near future.

FOREST

Congo Basin Examines Forest Management Monitoring Systems


The Congo forest is an important biodiversity hotspot

Countries of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) have described the strides made half-way through an 18-month National Forestry Monitoring System (NFMS) project for the Congo Basin forest zone as "satisfactory".
National experts, focal points and other stakeholders in the project, which is part of a general Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) initiative, meeting in Yaounde on 7-11 October to evaluate in the project's first nine months, noted that most COMIFAC countries had taken effective measures and trained people to pilot the project to a successful end.
Presiding over the information-sharing forum that rounded off five-days of evaluation on October 11, Cameroon's Minister of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development, Pierre Hele, said that since launching the project, Cameroon has redoubled efforts to reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses, conserve and sustainably manage forests and enhance forest carbon stocks as part of international climate mitigation efforts, all of which are hallmarks of the project.
According to Achille B. Momo, a national expert with the MRV Project's UN-Redd Programme in Cameroon, a thematic group will work on tele-detection and geographic information systems as well as a national forest inventory has already put in place.
"The two groups are working to develop a plan of action. We still need to meet with this thematic group to fine-tune the plan of action that will give the detail activities and budget," Mr Momo said. After 18 months, he added, the plan of action will become an advocacy tool to be submitted to the African Development Bank and the Congo Basin Forest Fund for funding for the National Forestry Monitoring System.
"A good monitoring system will help the country to benefit from the Redd+ process which demands an amount of gas to be sequestrated within a year whose price will be negotiated on the carbon market and through which agriculture would be supported," the expert observed.
Like Mr Momo, the country representative of Food and Agricultural Organization, Mai Moussa Abari said the project can also help the country understand how the territory is being managed in terms of human activity on the land.
COMIFAC was established in 2005 at a summit of the Central Africa heads of state in Brazzaville, the Republic of the Congo, to act as a regional forum for the conservation and sustainable joint management of forest eco-systems in Central Africa. Member countries include Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Chad, Burundi, Sao Tomé, and Rwanda.

CIVIL SOCIETY WANTS TOUGHER ILLEGAL LOGGING MEASURES

A Yaounde-based civil society organization, the Centre for Environment and Development (CED), says measures need to be tightened to dissuade illegal logging, which is increasingly becoming a problem in the Cameroon. CED said that perpetrators should be thoroughly investigated, denounced, taken to court, and made to pay for illegal logging. There is the need to put continuous pressure on forest administrators to use information from forest dwellers to halt the unlawful activity.

TELECOM

Three Billion CFA to Extend Optical Fibre Network

Cameroon's Telecommunications operator (CAMTEL) is borrowing some 3 billion CFA from Standard Chartered Bank to extend optical fibre network in the country so as to boost telecommunications services.
CAMTEL's general manager, David Nkoto Emane, the general manager of the Standard Chartered Bank Cameroon, Mathieu Mandeng and the Minister of Finance, Alamine Ousmane Mey signed the loan agreement in Yaounde on 12 November.
The country currently has 6,000 km of optical fibre which are unable to meet the growing telecommunication needs of the population. There is the need for an additional 4,000 km to increase inter-urban connections, especially between Yaounde and Douala.
The loan will help CAMTEL to finalise civil engineering work in view of laying the cables as well as prepare the site for the National Broad Band Network project. The Cameroon Tribune reports that so far the National Broad Band Network has already benefitted from financing to the tune of 99 billion CFA from Eximbank, China.

Multimedia Centre for Vulnerable Children in Yaounde

Vulnerable children in Yaounde now have access to multimedia services thanks to the inauguration of a Multimedia Centre in the Emombo neighbourhood on 14 October. The project is the result of a partnership between the Roger Miller Coeur d'Afrique Foundation and the University of Wolverhampton in the United Kingdom.
Speaking at the occasion, the founder of Coeur d'Afrique, former international soccer player Roger Miller, said the centre is open to orphans and vulnerable children, and in future will be open to other youths in society.
"Every year two candidates will go and study in the University of Wolverhampton," Mr Miller told the *Cameroon Tribune*.
The dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering in the University of Wolverhampton, Ndy Ekere, hailed the humanitarian works of the Roger Miller Foundation in such different domains as health, social work, and education. He noted that the multimedia centre is the beginning of partnership with the university and promised to work tirelessly to support the works of the foundation.
The education adviser of the University of Wolverhampton, Ghislain Defo, said the goal of the institution is to assist Roger Miller in his mission to help and protect vulnerable people in the domain of education. The multimedia centre is free of charge.

MTN Rewarded for People Management Practices

MTN Cameroon has qualified as an employer of choice by the LiP Governing Board in the United Kingdom.
According to a news release from the company, MTN is the first company in Cameroon to receive the highest accolade in people management practices from an independent internationally-recognised body.
The LiP framework is the only people-oriented internationally recognized quality standards and business improvement framework .
The news release states that in order to offer its 8.2 million subscribers the unique experience of a digital world with its innovative services and an exceptional unforgettable customer service at every interaction, MTN invests heavily not just in state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure, but in the men and women who are its prime brand ambassadors.


Make the news
yourself
www.ecofinagency.com/com
F12
The News
FINANCIAL REPORT
ECOFIN
AGENCY
Google
news