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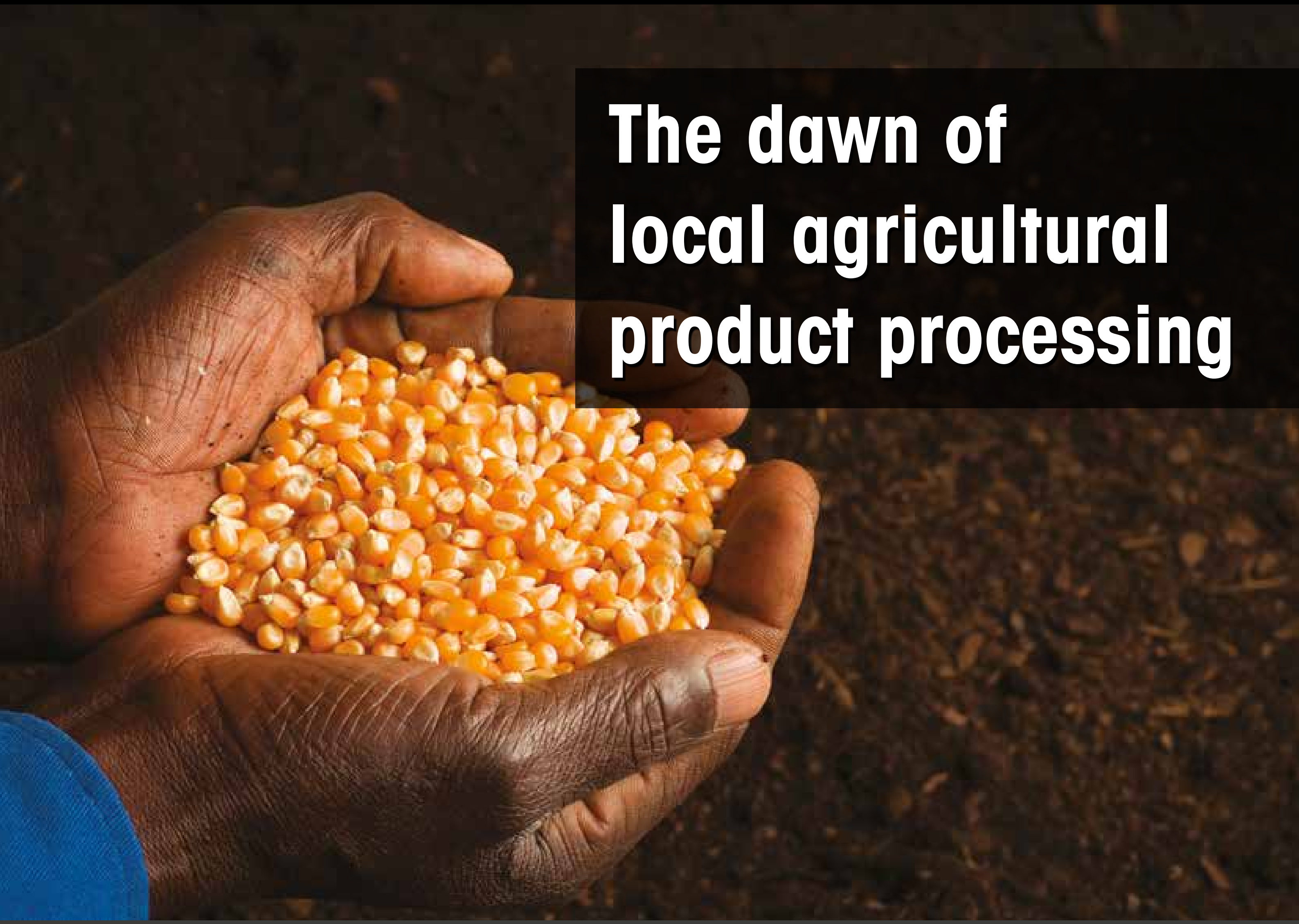
BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

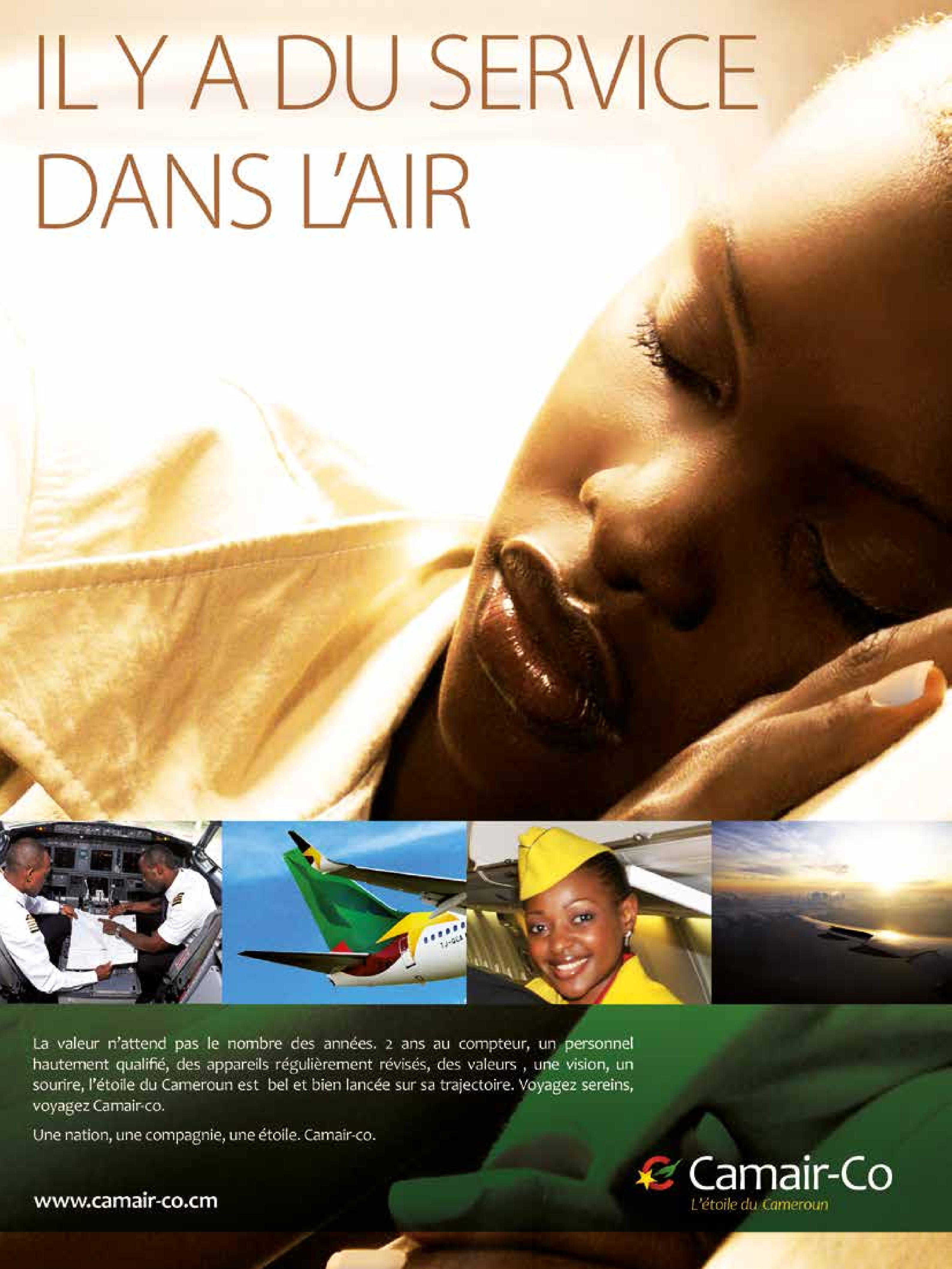
MAJOR PROJECTS
AGRICULTURE
ENERGY
MINING
INDUSTRY
SERVICES
FINANCE



The dawn of local agricultural product processing

Promote 2014:
1200 exhibitors
31 countries
150,000 visitors

Florent Etoundi Ayissi:
"Well negotiated EPAs will be a stimulus for Cameroon's economy"


IL Y A DU SERVICE
DANS L'AIR
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.
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Yasmine Bahri-Domon

2015: The year of Economic Challenges in Cameroon

The final page of the 2014 calendar is about to be turned at a unique time for Cameroon. The country celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Reunification at the foot of Mount Cameroon in Buea with the commitment to remain a strong, unified, sovereign State.

On the economic front, in 2014, Cameroon was a preferred destination for foreign investors who continue to have confidence in this nation rich in fertile, fallow soil, qualified human resources, a dynamic and engaged business leadership and proactive, open-minded businesses. Cameroon offered a plethora of investment opportunities throughout the year that is now coming to a close. But could one have expected otherwise? The current, simplified business climate is ideal for investment. The country is undergoing construction from North to South and East to West. Everywhere, cranes are lifting, tractors are digging, and cement mixers are grinding stone and churning cement. Meanwhile, buildings are gradually rising from the earth in Lom Pangar, Memeve'ele and Mekin for the simultaneous construction of hydro-electric dams. Douala is also undergoing construction with the building of the second Wouri River bridge. Mballam is moving too with the start of the iron project and the Kribi deep water port is virtually operational. Everywhere, Cameroon is on the go – an obvious sign of its vitality in the implementation of construction projects. 2014 enabled Cameroon to come out of its 4.8% 2013 hibernation from economic growth to project 6% growth by 2015.

2015 will be the year of accelerated growth if the country plans to achieve emergence by 2035. This was the substance behind the Cabinet meeting on December 9, 2014 chaired by the Head of State. Its goal was to put in place an emergency plan to boost growth. But when one calls for growth one must also mobilise the private sector and keep foreign investors in sight to participate in the economic renewal of Cameroon – this haven of peace and stability. 2015 will be a crucial year for the country's economic success. The emergency plan for growth will incorporate resources from the 150 billion FCFA bond loan that the government has just launched and will strengthen the 2015 budget which balances out at 3.746 trillion FCFA, compared to 3.312 trillion in 2014. This is the emergency economic restart for which investors have been waiting. *Bienvenue au Cameroon!* Until we meet in February 2015, we wish you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

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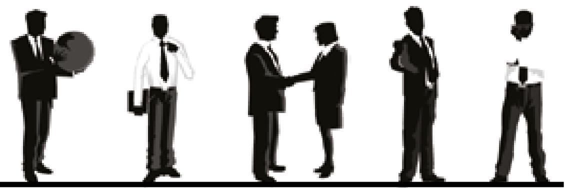
CASTING

TONY SMITH

CEO of Limitless Corporation, a company specialising in software, smartphone and tablet design, Tony Smith, who was recently named among the "*African leaders of tomorrow*", is growing wings. This is apparent in the former Microsoft head's plans to create 20,000 jobs in several industries in 2015.
In light of his being named in Choiseul 2014, his plans are hardly strange. Indeed, he revealed that "*after the report was published, […] several companies and investors interested in Africa's development contacted me to discuss technological development possibilities in Africa.*" This year, Tony Smith was among the 10 Cameroonians, 40 years and older, to have been mentioned among the top 100 "*African leaders of tomorrow*" by Choiseul 2014.

ABDOU NAMBA

The flagship of the agro-industry in northern Cameroon plans to launch, Société de développement du coton (Sodecoton), will be starting the second phase of research to introduce genetically modified cotton to Cameroon next year. This second phase will last three years and could make GMOs commonplace in Cameroon.
Unlike the first phase, when research was done behind closed doors from 2012, this time, the agro-industrial cotton company will be experimenting with GMOs in an open area. This was the main information revealed at a workshop held by Sodecoton from 23rd to 24th October 2014 in garoua to assess the results of the first phase of research on the introduction of GMOs in Cameroon's cotton cultivation.



HENRI-CLAUDE OYIMA

BGFI's CEO is more than proud of his Cameroonian subsidiary. At the budget conference for the bank group's ten subsidiaries on November 4-8, 2014 in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital, Henri Claude Oyima revealed that the CEMAC's top banking group's Cameroonian subsidiary, with a total of 3.023 trillion FCFA in 2013, "*is among the most dynamic in our group.*"
This dynamism is apparent in BGFI Cameroon's results for 2013 which grew by 50% relative to the previous year. "*We are quite pleased with our Cameroonian subsidiary's results,*" stated BGFI's CEO. He went on to add that the choice of Douala for the group's budget conference is a gesture of "*recognition and encouragement*" for the team stationed in Cameroon.

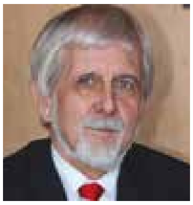
ZACHARIE PÉREVET

Speaking on October 21, 2014 in Douala before Cameroonian business leader associations within the framework of the National Employment and Professional Training Observatory (Onefop), the Minister of Employment, Zacharie Pérevet, revealed that 130,000 temporary or permanent jobs had been "*identified*" as being created in the country up to June 30, 2014.
Based on this figure, he still has at least 120,000 more jobs to create before the end of 2014 in order to reach the 250,000 jobs promised by the Cameroonian Head of State, Paul Biya, during his speech to Cameroonian youth on Februar 11, 2014. Placed under the theme of contributing to leadership organisations in pursuit of employment, this first Onefop meeting "*was a part of the collaborative efforts of Minefop, via Onefop, for the quarterly results of job inquiries.*"

EMMANUEL MBIAM

Although Cameroon has world class mining deposits such as the Mbalam and Nkout's iron, Lomié's nickel and cobalt or Mobilong's diamonds, this immense potential remains unexploited due to the absence of a real mining industry. In addition, mining activity in the country is largely dominated by small-scale agents (which contributes only 1% to the nation's GDP), providing little income relative to its potential.
According to the Cameroon Mining Federation, a recently formed association of local operators, the transition from small-scale to industrial mining could be achieved if the government created an "*Industrial Mining development Fund*". The federation submitted its proposal to the Minister of Mining, Emmanuel Bondé, at a meeting with the government official on November 11, 2014 in Yaoundé.

KLAUS-LUDWIG KEFERSTEIN



On November 18, 2014, the Cameroonian Defence Minister, Edgar Alain Mebe Ngo'o, received a donation of military equipment to fight Boko Haram from Klaus-Ludwig Keferstein, the German Ambassador to Cameroon, in the form of 120 all-terrain vehicles which "*have proven themselves in past military operations in areas such as Afghanistan.*"
In speaking about the donation, which included 60 Mercedes WOLF jeeps and 60 UNIMOG trucks, Minister Mebe Ngo'o noted that "*this large donation is for the fight against Boko Haram and will support the participation of Cameroonian forces in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).*"

Economic Partnership Agreements: Still a divisive issue

Following Cameroon's signing of the interim agreement, economic operators, intellectuals and trade professionals speak out.

Since October 2003, the countries of Central Africa and the European Union (EU) have been negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement to institute a new trade regime to replace the non-reciprocal preferential trade system in place as a part of the Cotonou1 preferential integration agreement.
After several years of negotiations, the EU and countries of Central Africa still have not come to any consensus on the technical issues involved in the drafting of the agreement. In Cameroon, where an interim agreement was signed then ratified by the parliament, the debate is still out. To date, much that has been said concerned the negative impact of the EPAs and the destabilisation that could result from the implementation of an EPA that does not sufficiently take into account the development concerns.
The third edition of the GICAM university initiative, which was completely devoted to the topic, recently enabled various leaders of the Cameroonian economy to share their point of view on this decisive issue for Central Africa, in general and Cameroon in particular. A few points of view grabbed our attention and incited prolonged discussions as a part of the meeting with social partners. In the end, ideas had notably evolved. The question of tariff barriers, that previously attracted so much attention, fell by the way side, leaving room for much more complex arguments.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SEIZE, BUT ALSO MORE RISK TO DREAD

The Cameroonian government, which has been seeking a regional agreement, has defended the signing of the interim EPAs. Dieudonné Bondoma, Director General of Economy at the Ministry of Economy, explained that in the event of ratification, the EPAs should lead to more opportunities and trade with the EU by creating new markets and increasing production through improved specialisation, bringing in more revenue by expanding export in the zone and increasing exports to the rest of the world.
Some speakers at the GICAM university event, such as Felix Zogning of the University of Quebec in Canada, without explicitly speaking about EPAs defended the benefits of opening-up markets. The geographic expansion of a company's economic activity beyond its national borders allows it to be more competitive and pursue its expansion while it has been shown at the global level that the greatest creator of net jobs and wealth are the order of the day for strong growth," explained Mr. Zognig.
But he also admitted that the opportunities that these agreements offer cannot counteract the threats of a loss in Customs revenue, the risk of weakening the integration process and increased competition from EU products. "*The short term vision, which focuses on the losses in Customs duties, fails to take into account the positive effects this could have on Cameroon over the long term if companies were to approach competitiveness and upgrading resolutely,*" stated the government.

The question of tariff barriers, that previously attracted so much attention, fell by the way side, leaving room for much more complex arguments.

In the end, it was agreed that the EPA issue needed to be approached with prudence because such agreements are unlikely to be a panacea. Deep thought led to the conclusion that, once signed, the most important thing for Cameroon would be the reforms to adapt to the changing demands of the global economic environment.

Idriss Linge

They said

Dieudonné Essomba: "*Competitiveness isn't the problem*"

The statistical engineer believes that one cannot speak of the Cameroonian economy's competitiveness as long as its production has to compete with junk.

According to the statistical engineer employed to the Ministry of Economy in Cameroon, laying the core of the negotiation with the EU on competitiveness issues is a fragmented approach to the problem. Mr. Essomba believes that the current move to strengthen our private sector's capacity before the EPAs only addresses a part of the problem. "*In light of some factors germane to Cameroon (poor infrastructure, bad governance, narrow market), the success of such an upgrade programme could only involve a few, very marginal sectors in which Cameroon would be advantageously placed to act. But this over specialisation would prevent the widening of the productive base and would further our dependency,*" he explained.

This would be a major blow for the main negotiators of the agreement for Cameroon who did not forget to present the EU's granting of 6 billion FCFA to upgrade Cameroonian companies as a victory. In his analysis, Dieudonné Essomba explains that a production system's competitiveness only matters when the product in question is competing with countries of a very specific market, and based on qualitative and quantitative indicators.

"The lack of locally produced goods on the market is not due solely to our poor competitiveness, but also due to competition with unconventional supply chains."

He believes that the major danger with the EPAs is that European products could flood Cameroon's market. "*The lack of locally produced goods on the market is not due solely to our poor competitiveness, but also due to competition with unconventional supply chains. We can all agree that the junk on the market isn't from a foreign company competing with local ones, but another reality that obeys totally different mechanisms and require technical, theoretical and therapeutic handling,*" he explained.

They said

Babissakana: "*The signing of the EPA between Cameroon and the EU isn't viable*"

From his point of view as a financial engineer, Cameroon's failure to sign the EPA would certainly have some impact, but this can be managed over the long term

"*The sectors that would be affected represent only around 200 billion FCFA in revenue (including 42 billion for bananas), which was less than 2% of GDP in 2013*"

According to Babissakana, standard economic engineering guidelines indicate four criteria used to analyse the viability of signing EPAs must be taken into account. Already, one should ensure that economic development levels of the partners are comparable, that partners in talks have competitive economies with equivalent specialisations, the trade volumes between the partners are substantial and diversified and lastly, that the negotiations take place while taking into account the current and previous situation of the global economic context.

In his demonstration, Mr. Babissakana suggests that none of these criteria has been met in the on-going discussions. In his analysis, he shows that in terms of sheer weight, Cameroon, which signed the interim agreement on its own, remains weak compared to the collective of European Community countries. This situation will not be resolved by an agreement negotiated within CEMAC.

He then goes on to note that Cameroon's production system does have enough specialised goods to impact European markets. Similarly, Babissakana also points out that trade volume between the EU and Africa is already low and is even worse when one compares with Cameroon. Lastly, backed up by OECD data, the financial engineer explains that global trends do not suggest significant growth in the indicators of Asian emerging countries, particularly China, while Europe could be on the decline. This does not make for meaningful negotiations with a partner like this.

The financial engineer also stated that, contrary to public opinion, the consequences of failing to sign the EPAs should be limited. "*The sectors that would be affected represent only around 200 billion FCFA in revenue (including 42 billion for bananas), which was less than 2% of GDP in 2013,*" he noted.

Florent Etoundi Ayissi: "*Well negotiated EPAs will be a stimulus for Cameroon's economy*"

A politician who now heads a trading company, he counters the points of view expressed by the financial engineering statisticians with the perspective of an economic actor with experience in trade.

Managed by Mr. Ayissi, Tradimco is the very first anti-fraud document security company in Cameroon and has been in existence there for close to 25 years. It currently employs forty people and is involved in local processing, foreign trade, information and communication technologies and agro-foods. From this diverse background, its promoter, Mr. Etoundi Ayissi, is fighting for resolute action in favour of free trade.
"Despite the legitimate concerns that have been raised about our trade, due primarily to our industry's weakness, we are convinced that well negotiated EPAs will be a stimulus for the materialisation and shaping of our economies and will enable significant improvement of its mechanisms," affirmed Florent Etoundi Ayissi.

Ayissi went on to argue that Cameroon's strategy for these agreements cannot be to try to conquer all markets and segments. Instead, it should respect rules shaped by experience, market stratification

"We are convinced that well negotiated EPAs will be a stimulus for the materialisation and shaping of our economies and will enable significant improvement of its mechanisms"

"Market stratification is irreversible and obeys not only the tangible rule of supply and qualitative or quantitative demand, but also and especially the necessary taking into consideration of consumers' buying power"

and production. *"Around the world, market stratification is irreversible and obeys not only the tangible rule of supply and qualitative or quantitative demand, but also and especially the necessary taking into consideration of consumers' buying power,"* he stated.
He concludes his thoughts by adding that *"leaving our economy's future hanging with this indecision, which delays the ratification of the economic partnership agreements does not help to improve its clarity in the short, medium and long term even if we can understand current negotiations with our CEMAC partners."*

Cameroon: C&K Mining sells assets in Mobilong diamond mining to Chinese-American investor

Weakened by the scandal that surrounded its controversial estimate of the potential of its mine located in eastern Cameroon, Korean C & K Mining has almost removed itself from the diamond project Mobilong, keeping only symbolic shares.

In April 2014, a little over a year after receiving the Kimberly Process certificate issued by the Cameroonian government, the South Korean company C & K Mining had already officially sold 3,500 carats of rough diamonds.

The permit holder for the Mobilong diamond mines in East Cameroon since 2010, C&K Mining sold the majority of its assets in the mining project to Mr. Yang, a Chinese billionaire residing in Hong Kong who is allegedly the holder of an American passport.

According to our sources, a C&K Mining was held on November 19, 2014 in Yaoundé, after a board meeting held in Seoul on November 2, it was revealed that Mr. Yang is the mining company's *"new majority shareholder"* following a joint venture between Koreans and Cameroonians. Korean partners who were previously majority *"with over 50%"* in C&K Mining, now only control *"less than 10%"*. The transaction, for which the value has not been revealed, discretely took place since *"late 2013"*.

The assets were sold after the scandal caused by the Mobilong diamond mine in South Korea in December 2010. That year, C&K Mining, which explored the deposit in 2006, was accused of over-evaluating its potential (736 million carats or 5 times global production followed by a readjustment which brought the figure down to 420 million carats) in order to speculate on the Seoul stock market.

SPECULATION ON SEOUL STOCK MARKET

Indeed, after receiving the mining permit in December 2010, and following the initial projection being declared inaccurate, C&K Mining's stock rose on the Seoul stock exchange, multiplying its going selling price *"by 4.6 in only 16 days"*, stated Frederic Ojardias, an RFI correspondent in Korea. Many leading Korean public figures and the heads of C&K International, the parent company of C&K Mining, took advantage of the opportunity, selling at the higher price before it later tumbled downhill.

Legal action was taken against the heads of the young Korean mining company whose chairman was arrested and jailed in Korea in February 2013. Deuk Gyun Oh was later freed in September 2014. This occurred following a long hearing (9:00 am to 7:00 pm) in the Seoul Court of Justice on September 15, 2014 with Cameroonian national Paul Ntep Gwet, former Coordinator of the Small-scale Mining Support Framework (CAPAM), a governmental programme governing small-scale mining in production zones.

According to our sources, the Cameroonian veteran miner who has worked on virtually all mining projects in his country was invited as witness on behalf of C&K Mining to reassure Korean justice on the real existence of a world class diamond deposit in Mobilong in East Cameroon. CAPAM has a 10% stake in

C&K Mining, a company he helped to create with Korean partners and other national operators.

QUESTIONED, BUT NEVER DENIED

Although the Mobilong diamond deposit's potential is questionable, no credible contradiction has so far been made against C&K Mining's 420 million carats. Everyone is in agreement, however, that it is a world class deposit, especially thanks to its conglomeratic section which remains unevaluated. C&K was invited to conduct evaluation and certification operations for three years according to the specifications attached by the Cameroonian government, at the time of issuance of the operating license in December 2010.

The potential of the Mobilong diamond conglomeratic deposit's is believed to be greater than the alluvial section which has a total estimated potential of only 230,000 carats in diamonds i.e. much less that the annual production the Central African Republic which can reach often 400,000 carats. It was approved for « immediate » mining after granting of the permit in 2010.

After obtaining the green light from the Kimberley process in August 2012, Cameroon wanted to begin exploitation immediately. Emmanuel Bonde, Minister of Mines and Industrial Development, has presided over the activities to launch this phase in Yaoundé on January 16, 2013. During the ceremony, the Minister symbolically hand the national Kimberley certificate to C & K Mining.

Although the Mobilong diamond deposit's potential is questionable, no credible contradiction has so far been made against C&K Mining's 420 million carats.

Receiving this certificate, Choung Sung Hee, the representative of the chairman of C & K Mining, confided that "*today, we are ready to export 617 carats of diamonds. But we have the ability to export 6,000 carats per month.*"

In April 2014, a little over a year after receiving the Kimberly Process certificate issued by the Cameroonian government, the South Korean company C & K Mining had already officially sold 3,500 carats of rough diamonds. The information was revealed during a sub-regional consultation on the traceability of CAR diamonds held in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital.

Brice R. Mbodiam

David Koechlin: "*Customs management found our offer extremely interesting*"

Vice-President of Cotecna Inspection SA present in Cameroon from 24th to 27th September 2014 offers solutions to Cameroon to improve security and customs organisation at the port of Douala.

"What we provide allows for the efficient monitoring of merchandise that arrives in Cameroon and also ensure that the containers do not have weapons, ammunition, dangerous products, drugs etc." explains David Koechlin

Business in Cameroon : How do you feel about your recent visit to Cameroon with a delegation of Swiss investors accompanied by the EMA Invest Foundation?
David Koechlin : Our visit to Cameroon was very interesting. It was well organised and I met a lot of persons who were interested in our project. Unfortunately, a few were absent. It isn't always easy to foresee these things, but we met interesting interlocutors. This trip was decisive in the sense that it helped us to move our project forward.

BC : What is the project you submitted to the Cameroonian government about?
DK : We presented our project to the Minister of Finance. It's a project to secure and improve commercial trade flow at the ports. The added-value that we bring primarily concerns security. What we provide allows for the efficient monitoring of merchandise that arrives in Cameroon and also ensure that the containers do not have weapons, ammunition, dangerous products, drugs etc. The project we are proposing covers all goods. This also helps to improve the port's organisation. In general, our proposal has a security element, a customs' element and an operational aspect with the hi-tech equipment.

BC : Do you currently have competition in Cameroon?
DK : It isn't exactly competition. There's a system involving verification before loading for export. This

is mainly to verify the value. This would not be affected by what we are offering. Not at all. That system is about quality verification – that bags have the right weight and so on. We're taking care of other issues.

"We were congratulated by the government of Nigeria for the quality of our work."

BC : In Nigeria, you are close to Cameroon. What are you offering there?
DK : In Nigeria, we are in the transfer phase. You know, we buy, we operate and at the end of the contract, we transfer it to the government. This went well in Nigeria. We were congratulated by the government of Nigeria for the quality of our work.

BC : You are also in Gabon…
DK : Yes. We have a project there, but it's new. We are currently setting things up. It will launch in a few months in Libreville.

BC : Do you plan to return to Cameroon?
DK : Of course, I plan to come back to Cameroon. We hope that our proposals will be approved and find favour with the government and that we will soon partner with the government to launch the project. The head of the Customs management team was really interested in our proposal.

BC : Is she in favour of the project being implemented?
DK : Yes. Very much.

Promote 2014 business fair opens on December 6 in Yaoundé with over 1,000 exhibitors

It was on December 8, 2014, that the business, SME and partnership fair, named Promote 2014, was held. But on December 6, 2014, the booths of over 1,000 exhibitors from 31 countries gathered for the 5th "Central African economic gathering" were open to the public.

Until December 14, 2014, major corporations from all sectors were in attendance from Cameroon and elsewhere, SMEs, craftsmen had the opportunity to exhibit their know-how and were able to benefit from the opportunities provided by this type of platform to meet the rest of the business community to create fruitful partnerships.

At the event, Fondation Interprogress, the organisers of Promote, with the Cameroonian government's support, announced that they had prepared, before the opening of the Fair, over 600 business meetings between participants. The event was held under the patronage of Cameroon's Head of State, Paul Biya. At the 2011 event, for example, 5,000 meetings were arranged.

Apart from the exhibits and coordinated business meetings by the Interprogress Foundation and the Investments Promotion Agency (IPA), Promote 2014 also arranged themed day during which various sectors were examined. This year, agriculture, agro-foods, energy and water, construction, woods, computer science and telecommunications, and mining and processing industries which were looked at during the Promote *"cocktails"*.

SMEs showcased thanks to the support of large corporations and specialised institutions

Three years after its launch in 2011, the Cameroon Private Sector Development Support Programme, co-financed by the government and implemented by the Corporate Development Centre (CDE), a joint entity of the EU and ACP countries, will be presenting its first round of results at the 5th Business, SME and Partnership Fair.

A total of 15 Cameroonian SMEs and microenterprises received technical, financial and logistical support for their participation in this major business event held in Yaoundé every three years. The 15 companies brought by the CDE operate in agro-foods, industrial maintenance and wood/leather processing.

While most are unknown, there is also Cameroon Tea Estates (CTE), an agro-foods company that currently produces between 5,000-7,000 tonnes of tea on its plantations in the North-West, and plans to quadruple its production in the next two years to concquer the Central African market.

Through the support provided to SMEs at Promote, the CDE is joining the 81 Cameroonian corporations that have sponsored the majority of the 350 SMEs that participated in what the event's promoter, Pierre Zumbach, describes as the *"first Central African economic gathering."*

Apart from the above-mentioned Cameroonian SMEs and microenterprises, the CDE also supported the participation of 15 companies from the Republic of the Congo that work in fishing, agriculture, agro-foods, courier services, animal husbandry, mining, construction and tourism, stated the CEEAC representative at the opening of the fair.

FESTICACAO 2014 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF PROMOTE

This year, Promote delighted the star cocoa production zone where the International Festival of Cameroonian Cocoa (Festicaco) is held. Indeed, it is only at the booth of the Inter-professional Cocoa and Coffee Board (CICC) at the Promote Fair that the 2014 Festicaco will be held under the theme "*the bean and beyond*".

The CICC chose to take advantage of the flow of visitors (around 150,000 were expected this year) that come to the business event, to show, over the nine-day period, the Cameroon cocoa sector's know-how.

FOREIGN PARTICIPATION: 30 COUNTRIES IN 9 DAYS

"*Promote is a meeting opportunity that allows us to build our business relationship. The CEEAC congratulates Cameroon for its initiative which, though national at the start, can, through its success, become regional or even international.*" This statement made by the CEEAC representative at the opening of the Promote Fair is all the more significant because, with each year, foreign participation will increase.

For the 2014 event, apart from Cameroon, at least 30 countries from Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas, sent their respective corporate delegations to the Palais des Congrès in Yaoundé, where Promote was being held. As is customary, the foreign participation was most visible in the gigantic tents where business delegates representing several companies from the same country would all gather.

Along with the usual delegations such as France, the United States, Great Britain and Canada, the 150,000 visitors at Promote 2014 were able to also see booths from Turkey, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Germany, Brazil and Switzerland. In short, out of the 1,000 exhibitors at the fair, half were from abroad. This confirms the international nature of this triennial business event in Yaoundé.

Though some foreign visitors come on their own to Promote to show their know-how, others come in droves, usually under the auspices of public or private institutions that promote foreign investment. One such participant was UBI France, the French agency for the international development of businesses, which attended this year with the French delegation or SwissCHAM Africa which travelled with the Swiss companies.

During their trip to Promote 2014, twenty Belgian companies in attendance at the event were also supported by AWEX, an export and foreign investment agency "*from the French-speaking region of Belgium in charge of promoting foreign trade and foreign investment*"; and by Brussels Invest & Export, which "*promotes the economic development of the Brussels-Capital region*".

Several foreign delegations took advantage of their presence at the business fair to meet the Cameroon authorities to find out, not only about investment opportunities in the country, but also various measures implemented to attract investors. This task was assumed by the Investments Promotion Agency (IPA) of Cameroon, which organised several B to B meetings between local and foreign investors.

Complete list of countries at Promote 2014

- Angola
- Austria
- Belgium
- Brasil
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Canada
- China
- Congo Brazza
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Czech Republic
- Equatorial Guinea
- France
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Germany
- Italia
- Nigeria
- Portugal
- RDC
- Russia
- Sao Tomé and Principe
- Senegal
- South africa
- Switzerland
- Chad
- The Netherlands
- Turkey
- Tunisia
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

PROMOTE NO. 6 TO BE HELD IN FEBRUARY 2017

Generally held in the month of December, the next Promote Fair will break from this tradition. According to Pierre Zumbach, President of the Interprogress Foundation, "*after an extensive investigation*", the organising committee for the fair decided to hold the next event in February 2017. The same will be done in subsequent years for this "*meeting which aims to boost business, partnerships and everything that can enhance the Cameroonian economy's development.*" *A* "*half of the exhibits*" are Cameroonian, stated Mr. Zumbach.

Christophe Eken, President of the Chamber of Commerce

"Promote has become a regional and international reference"

The business, SME and partnership event, Promote, has become a regional and international reference. This year's event has come at a time of political measures that will influence our economy. This took the form of the passing and promulgation of a bill to encourage private investment with five to ten-year exemptions for investors.

There is also a 5% reduction in corporate taxes and the removal of the VAT on plane tickets issued by travel agencies. Then, this year, Cameroon ratified the EPAs, opening a new era of cooperation with the EU. They represent a real challenge for Cameroonian companies.

Alain Blaise Batongué, Executive Secretary of GICAM

"Promote: a wonderful opportunity to showcase business"

The Promote Fair has significant implications for our economy as well as Central Africa's, as a whole. The Central African Union of Business Heads (presided over by André Fotso, President of GICAM) has praised the efforts that have been made to promote business. Indeed, Promote is a wonderful opportunity to showcase business.

Jean-Paul Bacquet : "*Our priority is infrastructure*"

In the margins of a press conference held at the International Business, SME and Partnership Fair in Yaoundé, the President of UBI France reveals France's strategy for development in Cameroon in the years to come.

Business in Cameroon : Your first stay in Cameroon coincides with the largest International Business Fair in Cameroon. Is this really a coincidence or was this deliberate to nudge the French companies here?
Jean-Paul Bacquet : It's quite simple. Firstly, UBI France's strategy is to be everywhere. The French Foreign Affairs Minister, who has added the concept of economic diplomacy to his mission, decided to make Sub-Saharan Africa a priority. We have opened a number of agencies in Sub-Saharan Africa and we have missions in a number of countries. Our attendance at the fair isn't a stroke of chance.
We are stronger at the fair. This was the case at previous fairs. When you think about the fact that a hundred French companies are here, it's immense. Today, we are looking for partnership. We want to find new partnerships. We want this country to develop.

"The French Foreign Affairs Minister, who has added the concept of economic diplomacy to his mission, decided to make Sub-Saharan Africa a priority", assures Jean-Paul Bacquet.

BC : The President of the Republic of Cameroon has embarked on a major project that will involve large public works. How do you intend to support Cameroon with these projects?
JPB : As I said earlier, infrastructure is our priority. You are familiar with the problems arising at the Port of Douala. Let us build the infrastructure needed to address these needs and facilitate trade in this country.
But when you talk about infrastructure, you have to talk about roads and, further along, railway. You have to talk about telecommunications and, naturally, water, sanitation etc. Basically, we're talking about infrastructure that will modernise the country and ensure the country has what it needs to develop more easily.

BC : With the arrival of China, Turkey and some other countries like Brazil, what plan will France adopt to maintain its position as a priority partner for Cameroon's development?
JPB : We are in globalisation with an open global economy. France can't be protectionist with its markets. France stands to even lose one if its markets. Therefore, France has to be competitive, perhaps more aggressive on some markets. It especially has to be more in contact with the countries where it goes.

BC : What do you mean by more in contact?
JPB : Let me explain. By being more familiar with market potential, it will better placed to respond to calls for tenders. In these conditions, it isn't always the one who says the least who wins. It can also be the one who says it the best. France's goal is to be the best at saying it.

Interview by Frégist Bertrand

Bowleven closes the year with solid cash-flow, but still needs to reassure stakeholders

"Receiving the Etinde permit was a decisive step […] We have made a lot of progress in our resources to reserves conversion process. With the drilling to be done in Bomono (Cameroonian coastal area), we will be active in four mining and exploration wells," stated Kevin Hart, Managing Director of Bowleven. © Bowleven

The fledgling mining company, Bowleven, which received its mining permit for the Etinde oil wells off the coast of Cameroon in July 2014, has suffered more of a fright than actual folly. In its results published on November 12, 2014, the company announced that its fiscal year, which closed in June 2014, was promising for investors, especially in light of developments after that date.

One new development was the official approval granted by the Cameroonian government at the end of October 2014 for the sale of two thirds of Bowleven's assets to the Russian company Lukoil and the NewAge consortium, which is the parent company of Camop. This sale guarantees Bowleven that it will soon bank the initial 170 million dollars (around 85 billion FCFA) stipulated in the sale contract. Eighty million dollars (40 billion FCFA) will be paid later, half of which will be in cash and the other half in hydrocarbon production. *"Receiving the Etinde permit was a decisive step […] We have made a lot of progress in our resources to reserves conversion process. With the drilling to be done in Bomono (Cameroonian coastal area), we will be active in four mining and exploration wells,"* stated Kevin Hart, Managing Director of the new oil company listed on the London stock exchange's alternative market.

The company announced that its fiscal year was promising for investors, especially in light of upcoming developments.

LACKLUSTRE RESULTS ON THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE

Mr. Hart also indicated that the new projects are in the works and will be financed, not only with the sale of a third of Bowleven's assets to Lukoil and NewAge, but also thanks to the company's comfortable cash-flow which still has 14 million dollars (7 billion FCFA) and 30 million dollar bridge financing facility (15 billion FCFA) which has not yet been used. The operator will have to work harder to reassure its investors, among whom the minority partners are becoming impatient. There is a level of caution that is apparent in the company's performance on the stock market, remaining fixed at 30 pennies per share, far behind the 115 penny target set by some investment firms operating on the London Stock Exchange.

Furthermore, Barclays, which has constantly adjusted its forecasts for the value of Bowleven securities, stated on November 13, 2014, that it was overvalued, leading the company to adjust its forecasts for Bowleven securities to 50 pennies. It remains to be seen if others will follow as, on November 12, 2014, Westhouse Securities was recommending the security for sale with the same target price of 115 pennies.

Bowleven's close-out for the year reveals two things: the company could no longer face its investment needs to make the oil wells more profitable alone. Secondly, if it waits too long to announce better news, it runs the risk of losing some of its investors' support. © Bowleven

A POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL BANKS

Bowleven's close-out for the year reveals two things: the company could no longer face its investment needs to make the oil wells more profitable alone, which is why there are new actors. Secondly, if it waits too long to announce better news, it runs the risk of losing some of its investors' support.

In Cameroon, these shareholder debates seem far away. However, based on the company's several statements and using the production sharing contract, the government, through Société nationale des hydrocarbures (SNH), should claim 20% of production, even though one cannot say if it will be total production or the tax-exempt portion of production.

In any event, if investors prove to be disinterested in the financing issue, this would be challenging not only for Bowleven, but also the Cameroonian government which is counting on a medium term production increase to support public finance. This challenge would be an opportunity for some investment banks and firms operating in Cameroon which are increasingly interested in the energy sector, particularly the final stages. An example of the banks' interest in this sector is the facility granted by BGFI Cameroun to Gaz du Cameroun.

The dawn of local agricultural product processing

Operations Head at the Inter-professional Cocoa and Coffee Board (CICC), Jean Marie Léma was a bit choked-up when he spoke with producers attending a workshop in September 2014 in Yokadouma in the East region, over 500 km from the Cameroonian capital. "*The cocoa pod husk can be used to produce fertiliser for your plantations and the juice can be used to produce liqueur.*"

But unfortunately, in Cameroon, with the exception of a few cocoa farmers who use small-scale means to convert the cocoa bean into cocoa butter, producers only use the cocoa bean which represents only 40% of the pod. They do not know that the remaining 60% is actually more lucrative than the famous cocoa bean. Fortunately, local industry officials who themselves were previously focused on exporting unprocessed cocoa beans, seem to have fully understood the stakes involved in local cocoa processing.

For some time now, processing plants have been springing up everywhere to the extent that Cameroon is now planning to process 70,000 tonnes of cocoa (compared to 25,000 to 30,000 tonnes now) out of an annual harvest of 230,000 tonnes of unprocessed cocoa beans.

VARIOUS SECTORS TARGETED

This dawn of agro-food processing in Cameroon is, however, not limited to the cocoa sector. It is also apparent in other sectors such as cassava, corn, soya, palm oil, cotton and sorghum. Various projects

are being pushed by both local economic operators as well as multinationals so that more and more will be processed locally.

In future, significant added value will be generated in the national economic breadbasket, along with the creation of many jobs. This will help to considerably loosen the noose of unemployment around the necks of young people who are increasingly better trained, but struggle with professional insertion.

In short, the surge of agro-foods processing projects in Cameroon will be beneficial to quite a few. Firstly, these projects are a sizable boost to the country's industrialisation. Secondly, beyond the tax revenue which will improve, the birth of new processing plants will provide the government with some relief, removing the splinter of unemployment from its feet. Lastly, for local people, these factories will be manna for the 70% of Cameroonian workers who are trapped in under-employment.

Cameroon seeks private investor for the 60,000 tonnes capacity Batouri sugar complex

Although the hope embodied by the former Indo-Cameroonian consortium Justin Sugar Mills remains, the arrival on the national sugar market of the first real competitor to Sugar Corporation of Cameroon (Sosucam) does not seem to be imminent.

Following a press release battle between Cameroon's Industry Minister Emmanuel Bondé (photo) and heads of the Indo-Cameroonian company, Justin Sugar Mills, which was leading a design project for the Batouri sugar complex in East Cameroon, the break-up seems final between the two parties.

The end of the partnership came in the form of a call for expressions of interest released on November 20, 2014 by the Minister of Industry for the "*selection of a private investor to create and run the agro-industrial sugar complex in the Bertoua-Batouri mid-zone in the East region*" of Cameroon. Interested investors have 10 weeks, counting from November 20, 2014, to submit their bids.

According to the government call for tenders, the Batouri sugar project consists of developing 32,000 hectares for sugar cane production. This commodity will be processed thanks to a factory to be built on

site in order to correct the deficit in domestic production which varies between 60,000 and 90,000 tonnes and take advantage of the opportunities available on the sub-regional market.

The call for expressions of interest just launched by the Cameroonian government was announced by the Industry Minister in a release dated June 26, 2014 in which Emmanuel Bondé revealed the termination of the agreement protocol established on April 13, 2012 with Justin Sugar Mills, for the implementation of a sugar complex in Batouri which is located in the East region of Cameroon.

Emmanuel Bondé announced that the government's decision follows "*dysfunction (raised by the international auditing firm, Ernst & Young) in the application of the said agreement protocol, as well as in the carrying out of the project.*" The government official had also specified that the site designated for the project was "*immediately*" reclaimed by the government, with Justin Sugar Mills being barred from accessing it.

A new budget "*to consolidate companies activities in 2014 in order to stimulate and accelerate growth so as to accompany our country on its path towards emergence by 2035*"

TUG OF WAR

On August 6, 2014, Justin Sugar Mills brushed aside the Industry Minister's release by way of its Director of Finance and Investments, J. C. Geut. "J*ustin Sugar Mills Cameroon SA was never informed about any such decision by the State of Cameroon to stop such a major, socially oriented, developmental instrument in the East region and the hopes of the young people of a whole nation. Justin Sugar Mills finds that opinions expressed in the media, other than those of the company or the State, are being used to manipulate, discourage or sabotage the community development and anti-poverty project. A personal interest lobby has been trying for years to do this, without success*," wrote J. C. Geut.

In a defiant stance, to the extent that Mr Geut assured that throughout a meeting held on the same day when the Industry Minister announced the termination of the agreement with Justin Sugar Mills, "*the Prime Minister expressed the need for competition in Cameroon's sugar industry and affirmed, as usual, the government's total support for our project, in accordance with the agreement protocol signed on April 13, 2012, which grants exclusive rights to Justin Sugar Mills Cameroon SA, to build the sugar complex in the Bertoua-Batouri, to guarantee 17,500 jobs to Cameroonians.*" These remarks weakened the call for expressions of interest launched by the Cameroonian government on November 20.

COMPETITION ON THE HORIZON FOR SOSUCAM

Worth an investment of 60 billion FCFA, the Batouri sugar complex was to be operational from January 2014, but allegedly had a variety of difficulties which continue to compromise the project's execution. The project is to give birth to real competition from sugar production in Cameroon.

Its local subsidiary, Sosucam, is the only company to produce sugar and its base ingredient, sugar cane. Because of this, it has contracts to supply sugar (in powdered form) to local agglomerates (companies that convert powdered sugar into squares) who, unfortunately, complain generally about not being able to buy from this provider and often being obliged to import and this increases production costs.

Like Sosucam, Justin Sugar Mills, which is already present in Nigeria, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo, is planning to establish sugar cane plantations on 15,000 hectares out of a total of 155,000 hectares belonging to the company on sites in Tikondi and Bodongoué, in the Batouri district. With its initial capacity to produce 60,000 tonnes per annum, the Batouri sugar complex plans to also produce energy for its operation and rural electrification using sugar cane waste.

With its initial capacity to produce 60,000 tonnes per annum, the Batouri sugar complex plans to also produce energy for its operation and rural electrification using sugar cane waste.

Fifty billion FCFA from the World Bank to produce raw materials for agro-foods companies

The land of production deficits, Cameroon must now increase its agricultural production if it hopes to advance its transformation to industrialisation after ensuring the nutritional self-sufficiency of its people.

It is this two-fold challenge that led the Cameroonian government to launch the Agricultural Markets Investment and Development Programme (PIDMA) financed by the World Bank. Over a five-year period (2014-2019), the international financial institution will inject 50 billion FCFA to drive the Ministry of Agriculture-led programme.

According to the programme's coordinator, Thomas Ngwé Bissa, this financing will be invested essentially

in corn, sorghum and cassava cultivation, the main raw materials used in agro-foods plants in Cameroon. Created in Sangmélima, Sotramas is one such company. It plans to produce starch with 120 tonnes of cassava per day, but the optimal functioning of the plant has been mortgaged away by the deficit in this staple's production.

The same goes for three of the country's breweries which are obliged to import large quantities of corn, each year, because of the production deficit that has been occurring for years with this produce. Indeed, according to official statistics, the annual demand of agro-industrial companies is officially estimated at 200,000 tonnes of corn, 30,000 tonnes of sorghum and 1.4 million tonnes of cassava.

According to the programme's coordinator, Thomas Ngwé Bissa, this financing will be invested essentially in corn, sorghum and cassava cultivation.

CORRECTING THIS DEFICIT

In order to correct this deficit and ensure local supply to agro-foods plants, PIDMA has added the services of Cameroon-based banks to guarantee loans granted to producers eligible to join the programme. This led to Afriland First Bank and the BICEC signing conventions. Negotiations with the local subsidiary of Ecobank are on-going.

According to the terms of these conventions, the banks commit to granting loans to 300 eligible agricultural cooperatives, which will bring assistance to 120,000 persons, 50% of whom are youth and women. Within the PIDMA framework, the projects are 50% financed by the programme (in the form of a grant). Recipient cooperatives, which are required to provide 10% of the total amount of the investment, will seek the remaining 40% through local banks. "*Financing will be secured by the payments. Buyers will make payments directly to the bank which will then pay the cooperatives. This will reduce the risk of any misappropriation. The bank will have a guarantee provided by the final buyers,*" explains the PIDMA coordinator.

Apart from PIDMA, the hope of increasing Cameroon's agricultural production could also come from GICAM's "*one boss, one plantation*" project. Through this project which West-Africans hope to replicate, the boss of bosses, André Fotso, invites his colleagues to return to the soil by investing in the agricultural sector which can also be a source of wealth.

Nestlé Cameroun plans to reduce its importation of raw materials by 70%

The Cameroonian subsidiary of Nestlé is offering, in the medium term, to buy an additional 75% of raw materials, according to internal sources at the company. Mathematically, the project would correspond to a reduction in imports by around 70%. Currently, 84% of raw materials used in the Douala Nestlé factory as well as 59% of packaging used for processing Nestlé Cameroon products are imported.

Imports are primarily cassava starch (1,500 to 1,800 tonnes per year for expenditure reaching 300 million FCfa) and cooking salt, ingredients used in the production of Maggi soup bases. According to our source, this product represents 90% of Douala Nestlé factory's total production.

In addition to the contacts already made with two salt production companies based in Douala, with which Nestlé Cameroon plans to source up to 100% of its cooking salt needs, the Cameroonian subsidiary of the Swiss agro-foods Swiss giant is eyeing starch production by Société de transformation de manioc de Sangmélima or the Sangelima Cassava-Processing Company (Sotramas), currently being put in place in the South. Sotramas plans to process 120 tonnes of cassava starch daily.

After taking samples of cassava varieties that can be used by the company across Cameroon, the Nestlé Research Centre in Abidjan chose four varieties that met the company's quality criteria. These varieties will be cultivated by Sotramas providers which will then provide Nestlé Cameroon with the finished product if the price is competitive.

In this effort to reduce cassava importation, Nestlé is also counting on PIDMA, a Cameroonian government programme financed to the tune of 50 billion FCfa by the World Bank which aims to boost the production of cassava, corn and sorghum in order to facilitate supply to agro-foods companies.

Nescafé using locally produced coffee

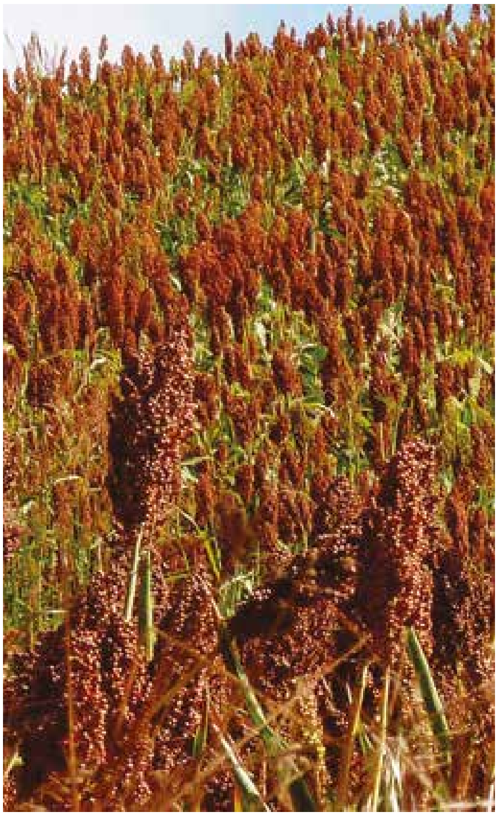
As of August, Nestlé Cameroon, a subsidiary of the Swiss agro-foods giant, should be producing Nescafé using Cameroon-grown coffee. This was revealed by Richard Dongué, Nestlé's Public Relations and Institutional Communications Director to Central Africa on May 23, 2014 in Douala at a press conference. At that time according to the Nestlé head, the coffee shipments needed to achieve this goal have already been purchased.

Nestlé Cameroon plans to take advantage of its addition to the Cameroonian government's "*indirect refinement initiative*" provided for in the Cameroonian Customs code which mandates a reduction in the Customs royalties. Indeed, Mr Dongué explains that the Nescafé sold in Cameroon and in throughout the CEMAC zone is imported from Côte d'Ivoire.

According to current practices within the group, the Ivorian subsidiary which produces all Nescafé product sold in Africa (9,000 tonnes) and exported to Poland and Greece (3,000 tonnes), sells the product to all other subsidiaries for the same price. However, while Cameroon pays Customs duties amounting to 30% of imported Nescafé, a country like Nigeria, which shares its highly permeable border with Cameroon, imports its Nescafé duty-free thanks to the free trade zone created by the UEMOA Treaty – a zone to which Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire belong.

Nestlé Cameroon will buy coffee locally and will send it to Côte d'Ivoire for its first round of processing. This coffee will then be sent back to Cameroon in its semi-refined form, which will enable it to be exempted from some fees as a part of the "indirect refinement initiative".

Guinness Cameroon injects 3 billion FCFA in a sorghum production project



Guinness Cameroon, subsidiary of the British brewery, Diageo, injected a total of 3 billion FCFA in an investment programme that it has been conducting since 2009 in northern Cameroon to boost sorghum production. This was announced at a site visit organised by the brewery on November 4, 2014 in Douala.

With this investment, Cameroon's number 2 brewing company, which is runner-up to the Castel group with Brasseries du Cameroun, plans to bring down its raw materials imports to 50% instead of the current estimate of 80%.

This basically involves the gradual substitution of imported cereals such as malt with local products, such as sorghum, which Guinness has been buying from North Cameroon farmers since 2009 in the range of 250 to 400 tonnes per annum according to Mariam Haman Adama, Coordinator of the Regional Council of Farmers' Organisations in Northern Cameroon (CROPSEC).

In December 2013, Guinness Cameroon signed a partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture to supply cassava corn and sorghum to the Investment Project for the Development of Agricultural Markets (PIDMA), implemented by the Cameroonian government and financed to the tune of 50 billion FCFA thanks to a financial competition held by the World Bank.

By focusing on local produce, the company aims not only to reduce its production costs but also to access the preferential Customs arrangement in effect in CEMAC (the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa) and CEEAC (Economic Community of Central African States), two communities in which Cameroon is a member.

The two sub-regional organisations have special approvals allowing companies having at least 40% of locally produced raw goods in their products to export them duty-free to the six countries of CEMAC and the ten countries of the CEEAC.

Government projects afoot to supply Guinness Cameroon with corn, sorghum and cassava

On December 17, 2013, Cameroon Minister of Agriculture, Essimi Menyé, and Baker Magunda, General Manager of Guinness Cameroon, the local subsidiary of Agriculture Diageo, penned a delivery agreement with the brewing company to supply raw goods such as corn, sorghum and cassava.

Delivery will be ensured thanks to the Agricultural Development and Investment Project (PIDMA), implemented by the Cameroonian government and financed up to 50 billion FCfa thanks to the World Bank's financial competition.

Essentially, government project beneficiaries will be able to negotiate delivery contracts beforehand with Guinness Cameroon (which imports 80% of raw goods and wishes to reduce these imports by 50% by 2015) or other potential buyers before starting production. This guarantees not only the production flow, but also a certain level of income.

Scheduled to begin in June 2014, PIDMA plans to meet annual agro-industrial demand for corn (200,000 tonnes), sorghum (30,000 tonnes) and cassava (1.5 million tonnes).

Four new factories to increase palm oil production by 20,000 tonnes in Cameroon

By the end of this year, an additional 20,000 tonnes of palm oil will be produced in Sombo (Centre), Bakingili et Mamfé (South-West) and Teze (North-West). This was revealed during a recent visit to the 5,000 tonne capacity per unit industrial oil factories built in the production zone.
These industrial plants were put in place within the framework of the Palm Oil Competitiveness and Productivity Improvement Plan, implemented by the Cameroonian government with the technical support of the FAO and the UNIDO. The programme, which ends at the end of 2014, highlights Coordinator Mbi Oruh Michaël, will be taken up by the Cameroonian government which will provide full financing.
This has been done with the aim of continuing to boost the palm oil sector in the country, whose national production is officially estimated at 270,000 tonnes for a demand that generally reaches 385,000 tonnes. The 20,000 tonnes which will come from the above-mentioned four new factories will gradually help to reduce the deficit which major local producers such as Socapalm have been addressing by way of imports.

A soya processing plant of 18,000 tons capacity inaugurated

At a cost of four billion CFA francs, Cameroon has just inaugurated a soya bean factory that has a production capacity of 18,000 tons per year.
According to its Cameroonian private investors, this factory has created 154 direct jobs and about 4,000 indirect jobs. Farmers will be mentored by the Agropole program created by the government to produce soya bean for the factory.
Cameroon is seeking to annually save 10 billion CFA francs due to soybean import, the equivalent to 20,000 tonnes. Furthermore, these investments bring added value to this increasingly popular cereal valued by people and manufacturers for its nutritive, cosmetic and pharmacological qualities.
Located in the suburb of Douala, the Yato factory plant, is an extension of Agropole soybean production launched in July 2013 in Mokolo, in the far north region of Cameroon. This region of the country is indeed more suitable to the cultivation of soya.

Sotramas to produce 120 tonnes of cassava per day

The Agropoles project, led by the Ministry of Economy, which aims to reduce food imports in Cameroon through the creation of production units in rural areas, plans to create a "cassava agropole" around the city of Sangmélima, to supply its cassava processing company (sotramas), which will start operations soon.
According to sources at the Cameroon Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mining and Craft (CCIMA), the consular entity that put in place this agro-industrial joint venture with the Sangmélima district in the south, the Sangmélima Industrial Cassava Processing Company (Sotramas) will start operations in the first quarter of 2014.
This announcement follows the recent testing of the company's production equipment. Sotramas aims to process 120 tonnes of cassava per day which is approximately 48,000 tonnes of this ground provision per annum.
A 1.2 billion FCfa investment, Sotramas, will create around 108 jobs initially and will produce starch for the local, sub-regional and international markets.

Sodecoton seeks to increase cooking oil production capacity by 50%

A public company and gem of the agro-industry in northern Cameroon, Société de développement du coton (Sodecoton) is planning to modernise and increase its production capacity by 50% in the medium term. This was announced by the company in a release.
Sodecoton hopes to move from cooking oil production, which is currently amounts to between 16 and 18,000 tonnes per annum, based on official figures, to around 24 to 27,000 tonnes of Diamaor oil, the brand the company sells.
The project to increase cooking oil production has already been approved by the company's management and will cost around 15 billion FCFA.

Sic-Cacos to increase processing capacity to 50,000 tonnes per annum

According to the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (ONCC) since the launch of the last cocoa season, only 32,803 tonnes were processed locally, and 11 tonnes of this total were processed in an artisanal manner. This amount of processing, representing only 20% of the national production estimated at 206,000 tonnes, is credited to the Cameroonian subsidiary of the Barry Callebaut firm, Sic-Cacaos.

The Inter-professional Organisation for Cocoa and Coffee (CICC) has indicated that the cocoa processing leader, Sic Cacaos, which improved its performance by 6.7% in the 2013-2014 season, plans to increase its activities in the near future by "*starting the investment programme which aims to increase the Douala factory's production capacity by 50,000 tonnes per annum*."

Third cocoa processing factory to open in Douala in 2015

Cocoa Processing Unit (CPU) will be the name of the third cocoa processing factory in Douala for which construction was launched on April 12, 2014 in Bonaberi, the suburb of Cameroon's economic capital. This was the news reported by Commodafrica, citing the Reuters news agency. The 16-tonne processing capacity plant will be operational in early 2015 and will cost its promoters 13 billion FCfa.

Besides cocoa powder (3,300 tonnes), CPU also plans to produce 6,904 tonnes of refined products per annum – 6,400 tonnes of cocoa liqueur and 3,000 tonnes of cocoa butter. With CPU on board, Cameroon will increase its processing capacity which is currently at 30,000 tonnes out of an annual estimated production of 230,000 tonnes.

In Cameroon's economic capital, CPU will enter a booming cocoa processing market. Sic-Cacaos, the Swiss local subsidiary of Barry Callebaut, and Chocolateries Confiseries du Cameroun (Chococam), a subsidiary of South African company, Tiger Brands.

4.6 billion FCfa industrial unit to process 5,000 tonnes of cocoa per annum

Fapam Sarl, an industrial unit based in Mbalmayo in the Centre region of Cameroon, process around 5,000 tonnes of cocoa butter beans and cocoa powder this year. This was announced by the initiators of the new project which has just started in Cameroon and will provide 300 direct jobs.

The fruit of the Cameroon government's hard labour through its Agropole project led by the Ministry of Economy and a local businessman, Anatole Nkodo Zé, this agro-industrial unit will boost the country's cocoa-processing capacity which currently barely surpasses 30,000 tonnes per annum out of a total production volume of 230,000 tonnes.

A 4.6 billion FCfa investment, Fapam Sarl received 1.4 billion FCfa in financial support from the Cameroon State.

Announced at the International Cocoa Festival (Festicacao) in November 2013, the Ministry of Trade, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, had revealed that Cameroon was planning to process around 50,000 tonnes of cocoa in 2014 thanks to new unit installations such as Fapam Sarl's which will join cocoa-processing forces with Sic cacaos and Chococam.

"The world is a dangerous place and that trouble can break out at any time"

Speech by H.E. Paul BIYA, during the opening ceremony of the 15th summit of the international organization of la Francophonie.

Mr Chairman of the Conference,
Heads of State, Government and Delegation,
The Secretary-General of the International Organization of La Francophonie,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
We have long known that the world is unfair. We also know that overcoming poverty and exclusion will require much time and effort.
We equally know that the world is a dangerous place and that trouble can break out at any time in the form of civil or foreign war, ethnic or religious rivalry, oppression of the population by factions, you name it.
Faced with these challenges, one may wonder what more our Organization can do.

« Le succès du plan d'urgence se mesurera à l'impact qu'il aura sur l'amélioration de notre croissance économique et celle des conditions de vie des Camerounais », affirme le président Paul Biya.

The answer will be that it is already greatly involved in the preservation of peace and the furtherance of democracy and human rights. Mention will also be made of its role in the defence of solidarity between nations and its support for education and training. That is true. And on that score, I wish to heartily congratulate my brother and friend, President Abdou DIOUF, for all the remarkable work he has done.
I simply wish to say that lately, we have been facing new challenges.
The first of these challenges concerns our security. Hitherto, we had to deal with local conflicts whose consequences rarely went beyond the sub-region. Today, we are threatened by a multifaceted global destabilization campaign. From the offensive in Iraq and Syria, it has spread its tentacles right to Mali and to the entire Sahel zone in recent years. It is also threatening the whole world through terrorism.
For instance, I would like to draw your attention to the situation in my country which is currently facing attacks from the Boko Haram sect. I will mention in passing that all of Nigeria's immediate neighbours are OIF members and just like Cameroon, are concerned.
Faced with a common "enemy" who rebuffs every value we hold dear, solidarity must come fully into play. Recent history teaches us that there can be no compromise with such an opponent.
I need not say that we remain determined advocates of peace. We will not give up the "dialogue of cultures" so dear to President SENGHOR, champion of universal brotherhood.
Secondly, I believe that the spirit of solidarity existing between us must be kept up in the area of de-

velopment. We are aware that the Millennium Development Goals scheduled to end next year will not be achieved. The Post-2015 Agenda will take over. Making up for lost time is an imperative. There is no other way to roll back poverty which is a breeding ground for extremism and revolt.
To that end, OIF's new strategic framework will be a precious asset. By advocating for more active solidarity towards least developed countries, our Organization will contribute towards reducing inequalities between the North and the South.
I would like to add that if women and youth, who make up three quarters of the population of most of our countries, have equal access to health, education and training as OIF is striving to ensure, we would have made great strides towards progress in our societies. Therefore, the theme chosen for our 15th Summit, namely "Women and Youth in La Francophonie: vectors of peace, actors of development" is apt. In this regard, we will focus on the aspirations of women and youth through concrete programmes and projects. By so doing, we will be providing women and youth with the wherewithal to combat poverty, hunger and disease. "This new frontier" is fully in line with our Organization's humanist tradition.
Besides these fundamental tasks, many other issues require our input, not least among which is environmental protection.
The countries of the Central African sub-region feel that by preserving the great Congo basin forest, they contribute significantly towards reducing greenhouse gases. Hence, they are pleased that China and the United States of America seem to have embarked on that. This augurs well for next year's Paris Conference on Climate. The situation of Lake Chad is another cause for concern to us. We are almost helplessly watching its tragic progressive disappearance. In addition, there are security and socio-political challenges. The Paris Conference should work towards establishing a Lake Chad rescue plan. It is a suggestion.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe that our Organization has what it takes to be in the vanguard of the international community. To continue to be a veritable think tank, it should remain true to its values and be bold enough to adapt to an ever-changing world.
In these threat-filled times when barbarism is once again raising its ugly head, OIF must show that the destiny of humankind lies in a future of brotherhood and tolerance, and not one of hatred and violence.
I would now like to thank the Senegalese authorities and people for their warm welcome and brotherly hospitality on the occasion of the 15th Summit of the International Organization of La Francophonie.
Thank you for your attention.

EMERGENCY PLAN FOR THE ACCELERATION OF GROWTH IN CAMEROON

The President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya, chaired an important Council of Ministers meeting, Tuesday, 9 December 2014 at Unity Palace. The meeting was devoted to the Emergency Plan for the Acceleration of Growth in Cameroon.

Besides the Head of State's closest aides, the meeting was attended by the Prime Minister, Head of Govemment, the Vice-Prime Minister, Ministers of State, Ministers, Ministers Delegate and Secretaries of State.
Two items featured on the agenda of the meeting, namely:

-The presentation by the Prime Minister, Head of Govemment, of the "Emergency Plan for the Acceleration of Growth"; and
-The Special Statement by the President of the Republic.

In his presentation, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, set out the broad outline of the Emergency Plan which comprises a Three-Year Investment Programme in sectors such as urban development, health, agriculture and livestock, road infrastructure, water, energy and security.
This special programme, evaluated at CFAF 925 billion, is financed through the mobilization of the required resources from local and international financial institutions at sustainable rates.
The Emergency Plan will be implemented in partnership with the private sector through a rigorous process for the award of contracts to enterprises with the technical and financial capability to implement the corresponding projects with the required professionalism.
ln his Special Statement, the Head of State stressed that the primary aim of the Emergency Plan is to step up national economic performance and "improve the living conditions of the Cameroonian people so as to achieve the objective of becoming an emerging country by 2035".
In this regard, the Head of State urged the Government to take up the major challenge of implementing the Emergency Plan in a prompt and responsible manner. The Emergency Plan supplements Ministerial roadmaps which must continue to be implemented diligently and methodically.

The substantial resources secured to finance the Emergency Plan must be used judiciously and within prescribed timeframes to ensure project profitability and optimum positive spinoffs for the nation's economy. On this point, the Head of State called on the relevant Government services and bodies to be vigilant in supervising public contracts to ensure their seamless execution.
On a general note, the Head of State reiterated to the Government his instructions regarding the improvement of government spending, in an international context marked by scarce financial resources.
To that end, he directed the Government to take urgent measures to cut public spending by substantially reducing non-essential expenditure and allocating the resources so derived to finance major projects in the general interest and improve the well-being of the population.
Lastly, the Head of State urged the Members of Government to cultivate the «spirit of reform» which must remain a constant in government action.

Nicolas Crettenand: “*Today, we have opened offices and have launched two projects*”

Chargé de mission at Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Cameroon, he presents the activities conducted in collaboration with Ecole nationale supérieure polytechnique de Yaoundé, particularly the CURES shared laboratory.

Business in Cameroon : What is the latest in terms of EPFL's joint activities with Ecole Polytechnique de Yaoundé?
Nicolas Crettenand : In December 2012, an agreement was signed between Université de Yaoundé I, representing Yaoundé Ecole nationale supérieure polytechnique, and the Lausanne Ecole polytechnique fédérale (EPFL) to set-up a new shared laboratory that will handle energy concerns in relation to the health sector and electricity access for hospitals. Named the Centre universitaire de recherche sur l'énergie pour la santé (CURES), the shared laboratory's mission is to improve primary care health services with reliable, lasting electricity supply as well as adapted equipment. Today, we have offices and have launched projects with two doctoral students. We have also conducted two training sessions. The first was done two weeks ago and involved 26 participants from six African countries representing 11 universities.

“EPFL is the first French-speaking university to have put extensive lectures on-line”

“Named CURES, the shared laboratory's mission is to improve primary care health services with reliable, lasting electricity supply as well as adapted equipment”

BC : What is required to participate in the research project?
NC : We select final year engineering students. We then recruit students to do a Master's degree followed by a PhD.
The students we recruit are in the process of writing their thesis at Ecole Polytechnique de Yaoundé. We also open training sessions to doctoral students from Cameroonian universities. For the future, we are also planning training for the private sector.

What idea led to energy for the health sector being chosen?
NC : CURES is a part of Réseau d'excellence des sciences de l'Ingénieur de la Francophonie (RESCIF), a network initiated when Switzerland held the Presidency de la Francophonie en 2010. The network is active in three areas: water, energy and nutrition. And in each area, a shared laboratory is to be created. Therefore energy was chosen by the director of Polytechnique in Yaoundé and our EPFL president in Switzer-

land. Secondly, energy was such a broad area that we had to choose a specific sub-sector. This is why we decided that we could have the strongest impact in the near future in health. The solutions we develop for the health sector can be adopted by the private and public sectors.

"The students we recruit are in the process of writing their thesis at Ecole Polytechnique de Yaoundé. We also open training sessions to doctoral students from Cameroonian universities. For the future, we are also planning training for the private sector"

What are the two doctoral students working on?

NC : The first doctoral student worked on an electrical supply stabilisation system at a district hospital, mainly to remove the disturbance sources from the network to the hospital. We have a prototype that we are currently testing at the Polytech lab. The second doctoral student worked on energy audits. This was to start quantitative diagnostics on the problems as when there are outages or other electrical problems, medical equipment is destroyed, but there really isn't a technical diagnostic of electrical power outages. We have to start with a diagnostic and develop appropriate solutions.

How is EPFL investing in the shared laboratory?

NC : EPFL is involved via its EssentialTech team. I am here in Cameroon as a chargé de mission. There is also a colleague who is a project head in Lausanne. There is also initial financing for some projects. For specific projects, we can call on specific professors and researchers in Switzerland.

Some Cameroonians would like to have some idea about the information disseminated on-line by EPFL. How can they find out more?

NC : EPFL is the first French-speaking university to have put extensive lectures on-line: Massive Open Online Courses. EPFL provides classes for its own students and these are then put in the Internet for everyone. The on-line classes replace on-campus lectures. On the other hand, with financing from Swiss cooperation, EPFL is developing classes on specific African themes. There are already Polytechnique lecturers who have gone to Switzerland to record lectures. For more information, please visit: http://moocs.epfl.ch/, www.energie-cures.org or http://essentialtech.epfl.ch/.

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

CEEAC opens its market of 140 million of consumers to thirteen Cameroonian companies

On November 7, 2014 in Yaoundé, the Minister of Trade, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana (photo), officially granted 13 companies in Cameroon preferential status with the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), which enables 81 of their products to be exported duty free to the ten CEEAC countries.
Among these companies are the industrial entities such as Aluminium du Cameroun (Alucam), the agro-industrial company, Nestlé, the match stick manufacturer Unalor and especially Société camerounaise de verreries (Socaver), the best placed company among the 13 selected by the CEEAC.
The Brasseries du Cameroun, which specialises in the manufacturing of bottles, cylinders and glass flasks, on its own, has been approved to export to the CEEAC, 28 of the 81 products selected among the 13 companies. The products have been chosen based on criteria such as having at least 40% of its raw products sourced locally and incorporated in the manufacturing process and at least 30% added value at the community level.
One hundred and forty million consumers strong, the CEEAC comprises Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea; the DRC, RDC, Sao Tomé & Principe and Chad. On October 27, 2014, Ruanda announced its plan to join the organisation after having left in 2010.
In April 2014, 19 Cameroonian companies and 145 products were granted access to CEMAC, the organisation made up of six of the 10 countries in the CEEAC. Eleven of the 19 companies are on the list of 13 countries officially admitted to the CEEAC on November 7.

Former broadcast personality, Gervais Mendo Zé, behind bars in Kondengui

On November 12, 2014, university lecturer Gervais Mendo Zé, former Managing Director of Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV), Cameroon's national public radio and television broadcasting company, had his hearing at the Special Criminal Court, an exceptional jurisdiction created by the Head of State for crimes involving the embezzlement of public funds. He was later thrown in jail at the Kondengui penitentiary in Yaoundé.

Now 70 years old, Gervais Mendo Zé was made head of the CRTV in 2005 after managing the public broadcasting giant for 16 years. He now stands accused of embezzling public funds. For the time being, no official information has been revealed about the basis behind the allegations against the former CRTC managing director. However, reliable sources suggest that over 2 billion FCFA have been embezzled in the management of broadcasting royalties deducted from Cameroonian salaries.

This amount was already raised in a report by the State Auditor revealed in 2009 which implicated Mr. Mendo Zé and some of his partners of that time in 15 managerial breaches which led to CRTV to lose 2.6 billion FCFA. Removed from his role in public management by the State Auditor, the former CRTV managing director had already been jailed several times by rumours. This was more so as his name was involved in the CRTV satellite scandal that had gobbled up several billion FCFA.

On November 12, 2014, therefore, Gervais Mendo Zé, who describes himself as a "devout secularist", known to be

a close associate of Cameroon's first lady to whom he has dedicated many religious musical works, has joined the club of some 30 ministers and State-owned company managing directors as a part of the "Hawk Operation" – a clean-up initiative launched by the President of Cameroon to track public fund embezzlers.

FDA doles out 11.8 billion FCFA for agriculture, health and education in Cameroon

On November 1, 2014 in Yaoundé, the French Development Agency (FDA) and the Cameroonian government signed a financing agreement for a total of 11.8 billion FCFA to be used for the development of agriculture, health and education sectors.
A part of the 2nd generation deleveraging and pro-development contract (C2D) to supply the country with anti-retrovirals, the settling of back-payments owed to Centrale nationale d'approvisionnement en médicaments essentiels (Cename) – the National Centre for the Supply of Essential Medication, the completion of preparatory work to boosting agriculture, the provision of agricultural inputs and the payment of teachers' salaries within the faith-based private school system.
With a total of 214 billion FCFA, the second C2D (2011-2016), the French government's initiative to complement the IMF's HIPC initiative was devoted to agriculture and rural development.

Cameroon gets FCfa 185 billion from European Development Fund

The meeting of Wednesday, 28th October 2014 was a forum for the 11th European Development Fund(EDF) agreed by Brussels in favour of Cameroon, will be effectively executed between 2014 and 2020.
As a fall out of the meeting, it was revealed that the previous EDF in Cameroon complements the bilateral corporation between Cameroon and the EU leading to an 11 per cent increase in development as compared to the previous years.
On behalf of Cameroon, Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, Minister of economy, planning and the development and Ambassador Françoise Collet on behalf of the European Union (EU) signed on Tuesday in Yaoundé, the indicative framework that spells out how the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) should run from 2014 to 2020.
The 185 billion FCFA of this funding program agreed by Brussels in favour of Yaoundé has increased by 11% compared to the previous year. It is registered in the wake of what has already been the EDF in Cameroon, complements the national and bilateral cooperation, while considering similar actions of the EU in Central Africa.
Mr. Nganou Djoumessi and Françoise Collet said, that the fundamental points of this 11th EDF are governance and rural development. It focuses on measures to be taken. For example, publicize the achievements and the deployment of the work of European cooperation in Cameroon.

They will have an impact on the development of Cameroon as they fit together in the strategy for growth and employment (OCSG), Ms. Collet hoped. This FED, indeed, is the offspring of the general policy of EU cooperation which is organized around main pillars like good governance, respect for human rights and promotion of democracy, inclusive growth... as the OCSG seeks to make Cameroon an emerging, stable, democratic country and United although as soon as 2035.

Cameroon speaks out against the illegal hiring of foreign workers in breach of the law

According to a release by the Cameroonian government's cabinet meeting held on October 30, 2014 in Yaoundé, the country's capital, "*with the implementation of major infrastructural projects and the launch of a third mobile telephone service, the job market has witnessed an influx of foreign workers, often employed in violation of applicable laws and regulations.*"

Here, there is a clear allusion to the massive importation of Chinese companies which is currently carrying out the majority of the major infrastructural projects in Cameroon as well as Viettel Cameroon which has had the 3rd mobile phone licence since September 2014. The Vietnamese mobile service provider, which operates under the Nexttel brand, has always been accused by Cameroonian managers of bringing in Vietnamese labour despite promises made to the government to create 6,300 local jobs.

To address this, the Minister of Employment, Zacharie Pérevet, during his presentation on "*the regulation of foreign labour in companies operating in Cameroon*" noted that "*the government has taken steps to inform employers about this activity which goes against the employment of Cameroonian workers.*" He added that this effort is to be accompanied by "*systematic monitoring measures.*"

On December 31, Minister Pérevet revealed that only 1,410 foreign workers have legitimate contracts with a work visa as required under the law. This figure is far below the actual number of Chinese workers flooding the nation's major public works projects.

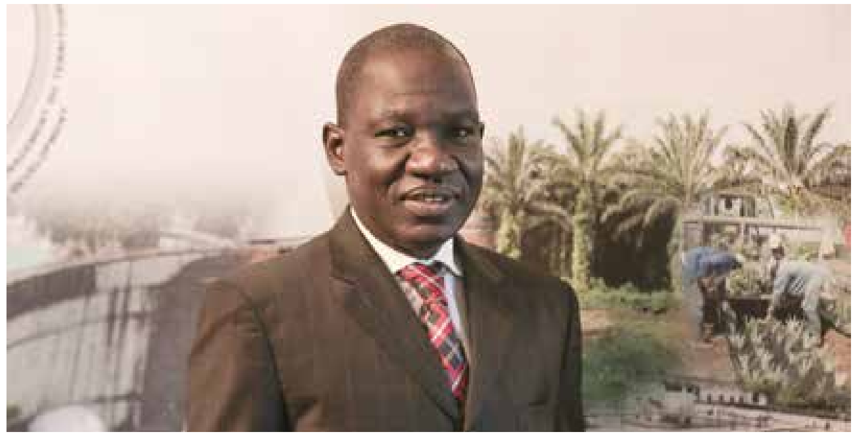
Standard & Poor's confirms Cameroon's "B/B" rating with a stable outlook

In a press release published on October 31, 2014, the ratings agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) confirmed Cameroon's B/B rating for long and short maturity loans. This assessment concluded that the outlook is stable.

S&P specifies that its findings can be explained by the weakness of Cameroon's institutions, the low per capita income, the considerable need for external financing and the risks associated with changes in government. The agency notes, however, that Cameroon, which is a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), has strong points such as low public debt, low inflation and low exchange rates.

"*According to our predictions, growth in real GDP will be approximately 5.6% or 5.7% per annum between 2014 and 2017. This forecast is based on increasing oil production […], improving energy supply for industrial sectors with the start of production at the Kribi gas plant in the second half of 2013,*" highlights S&P.

Cameroon's townships create 1,200 jobs in 3 years with HIMO method



The sum provided by the Ministry of Economy to Cameroon's townships to promote the implementation of "*High Labour Intensity*" development projects has continuously climbed since 2012. From 500 million FCFA that year, it has risen to 600 million FCFA in 2014. It later soared to over a billion FCFA on November 12 for the signing of the 3rd phase of the agreement between the Cameroonian government and five districts.

At the root of this growing push by the Cameroonian government for townships to do more HLI projects are the encouraging results from this programme which is aiming to have 20% of the country's investment projects be based on the HLI model. According to the Ministry of Economy, selected communities have already trained 350 young people in various fields and created 1,200 jobs between 2012 and 2014, of which 300 were reserved for women.

Presented by the government as the model to emulate among the 14 townships that have already benefited from this programme, Sagmélima in the South of the country successfully reduced the incidence of a number of societal ills such as idle youth and gang activity by undertaking the maintenance work for rural roads and classroom construction under the HLI model. The outcome? For the 3rd phase of the partnership between the State and the districts, Sangmélima has come out with 575 million FCFA out of an overall amount of over one billion FCFA.

Ecobank Group names Cameroonian national, Alain Nkontchou, as non-executive administrator

On December 3, 2014, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI), parent company of the Ecobank pan-African banking group, announced the appointment of four non-executive administrators to its board. Among them is 51 year-old Cameroonian national, Alain Nkontchou (photo), the current Managing Director of Enko Capital Management LLP, a London-based asset management company that focuses on investment opportunities in Africa. The company was founded by his brother, Cyrille Kamdem Nkontchou.

Former Managing Director of Macro Global Trading Group with Crédit Suisse in London, Alain Nkontchou did tertiary studies in electrical engineering (Université de Paris VI, Supélec and Ecole supérieure de commerce de Paris), finance and accounting. He was also Managing Director of JP Morgan Chase & Co in London at 30. Ecobank notes, therefore, that he has "*an impressive amount of experience in generating tens of millions of dollars in revenue for the companies with which he worked.*"

Alain Nkontchou, who will represent the interests of the major client Enko Capital Management on the Ecobank group's board, will officially take his place on the board in June 2015, once the bank's shareholders approve the appointment of the four non-executive administrators. This will be done at ETI's first annual general assembly.

The eldest of a brotherhood (with only one sister, Mireille Nkontchou) of four top finance experts in Africa, Europe and the USA, Alain Nkontchou was

one of the first Africans to arrive on the London capitals market in the 80s. Alain Nkontchou is the 2nd Cameroonian to sit on the ETI board after André Siaka, who acted as Ecobank's interim president after the resignation of Nigerian Kolapo Lawson.

BRM

Eximbank China lends 41 billion FCfa in Cameroon to lay fibre optics

On December 3, 2014, Cameroonian Head of State, Paul Biya, published a decree authorising Economy Minister, Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, to sign a 41 billion FCFA loan agreement with export-import company out of China (Eximbank China) to finance the national fibre-optic expansion project.

According to reliable sources, this financing should facilitate building the urban fibre-optic networks of several Cameroonian towns and cities, thus expanding the national fibre-optic network which is currently estimated to cover 6,000 km. Cameroon's "digital improvement" plans *"require laying 10,000 or even 20,000 km of fibre-optic cables to cover the entire country,"* the Postal Services and Telecom Minister, Jean-Pierre Biyiti bi Essam, back in May 2013 in Maroua when inaugurating the fibre-optic initiative.

Eximbank's new financing will allow the Cameroonian government to carry-out plans to lay 10,000 km of fibre-optics by 2015. Indeed, In May 2013 in Maroua, the Postal Services and Telecom Minister had announced that *"the government has just signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Chinese company to lay approximately 4,000 km of additional fibre-optics in the near future. Talks are on-going to finalise this loan agreement with the aim being to provide full service to all government offices across Cameroon."*

Cotco pays back 22 billion FCFA to the government for the adaptation of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline to the Lom Pangar dam

In November 13, 2014, the Managing Director of Cameroon Oil Transportation Company (Cotco), Christian Lenoble, handed over a cheque for 28 billion FCFA to the Cameroonian Finance Minister, Alamine Oumane Mey. This sum represents the Chad-Cameroon pipelinecompany's share of the adaptation work carried out on the pipeline at the Lom Pangar dam in the East region of the country. Construction work was pre-financed to the tune of 49.4 billion FCFA by the Cameroonian government.

According to the "*transactional agreement for the sharing of the final cost associated with the Chad-Cameroon pipeline's adaptation to the Lom Pangar dam,*" signed on 1st November 2013 between the government of Cameroon and Cotco, the oil company is to reimburse its share "*no later than (2) two months as of the administrative and financial completion of the construction and, in any event, at the latest six (6) months following the signing of the confirmation of work completion or 30th November 2014.*"

The construction project involved the strengthening of two 13 km sections of the pipeline and buried on the Lom Pangar dam construction site. Cotco's Managing Director explained that the work will enable the pipeline to "*withstand the over 20-metre columns that will be there once the dam has been completed.*" The construction was completed in 18 months by the SICIM company which employed 400 persons on the site, 90% of whom were Cameroonian.

Implementation of anti-trafficking units in Cameroon airpots

Anti-trafficking Cells (CAAT) have been created by decree in international airports in Cameroon by the Head of State, Paul Biya on October 22, 2014. These units will strengthen controls to prevent trafficking of drugs, weapons, explosives and counterfeit medicines in the country. They will also monitor persons, baggage, cargo and mails in transit, on arrival and departure.

These units are composed of officials from police, gendarmerie and customs of Cameroon.

The CAAT has no vocation to conduct deep investigation, but it helps to increase the numbers of the seizures and also of improve their quality in order to dismantling of networks by the specialized services. The project promotes an intelligence based approach to fight drug trafficking and reduce illicit flows by reinforcing sub regional, regional and international capacities and promote operational co-operation.

ONUDC estimates the quantity of cocaine transiting through West Africa in 2009 between 30 to 100 tons. Moreover, the frequency of the important seizures seems to accelerate with the recent seizure of 2,3 tons cocaine in Gambia and the failure of a plan intended to make several tons of cocaine pass through Liberia. Cocaine mainly transits through West Africa by air and sea.

Austrian company, Plasser & Theurer delivers 2.3 billion FCFA rail control auto rail to Camrail

Specialising in rail maintenance vehicle manufacturing, Austrian company, Plasser & Theurer, delivered a *"geometric parameter control autorail,"* for 2.31 billion FCFA. This was announced on December 3, 2014 in Yaoundé at the official service launch of the new equipment.

This specialised railcar with a barrage of electronic equipment, will allow the rail concessionaire *"to gather information on the geometric quality of the railway, data on rail profiles, the wear on the tracks, inclination and surface flaws."* According to Camrail officials, the monitoring autorail "will help to improve the annual maintenance" of the national railway as well as *"quickly check all work done on the track."*

The launch of this maintenance equipment comes only days after the Cameroonian rail service was declared to be good and able to transport the bauxite mined by Canyon Resources on the Birsok project in Adamaoua.

Indeed, on November 26, 2014, the above-mentioned mining company announced that it was certain about the quality of the Cameroonian railway network after data provided by Camrail were examined. This second opinion was provided by Clarendon Irving Ltd and Andrew Neal & Associates.

CEMAC zone has excess liquidity, but not enough financing

Excepting the Central African Republic (CAR), all the countries of the Central African Monetary and Economic Community (CEMAC) are currently oil producers, but have very little liquidity. This is hurting their monetary policy.

"Excess liquidity should be reduced to strengthen monetary policy transmission channels," stated Mario de Zamaroczy, IMF Head of Mission to CEMAC and Cameroon. This was on November 7, 2014 in Yaoundé, during a working session with the Governor of the Central African States Bank (BEAC).

According to the IMF, CEMAC commercial banks and micro-financial establishments have excess liquidity, while economic activity in the zone remains under-financed. For Mr. Zamaroczy, *"banks are not lending enough because they do not have an adequately efficient guarantor system to grant loans."* He also believes is necessary *"to reform the current regional budgetary monitoring framework to ensure the long-term viability of oil-rich countries."* The mission head goes on to suggest the stricter application of prudential standards and accelerate the restructuring of non-viable banks. CEMAC comprises Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and the CAR.

AGRIBUSINESS

Cameroon Tea Estate to quadruple production by 2016-2017

According to Dagobert Boumal, Managing Director of Cameroon Tea Estate (CTE), the agro-industrial company that operates tea plantations in North-West Cameroon plans to quadruple its tea production in two to three years (by 2016 or 2017). He indicated that current production currently varies between 5,000 and 7,000 tonnes per annum.

CTE, which took over the tea division of Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) while the latter kept only its banana, rubber and palm oil ventures, hopes to take advantage of the preferential Customs arrangements that it has just received from CEMAC and CEEAC heads. The two regional entities represent a market of 140 million Central African consumers.

Since May 2, 2014 and November 7, 2014, the CTE has been granted preferential access to CEMAC and CEEAC respectively, enabling it to export products duty-free to the Central African countries that are members of these regional organisations.

Virtual manna for the agro-industrial company which has been in a sector in which *"the local market has been facing unscrupulous competition,"* according to the Cameroonian Trade Minister, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana. Indeed, facing the invasion of foreign teas, particularly from China, local producers have been selling *"mainly to the Central African region,"* confessed Minister Mbarga Atangana.

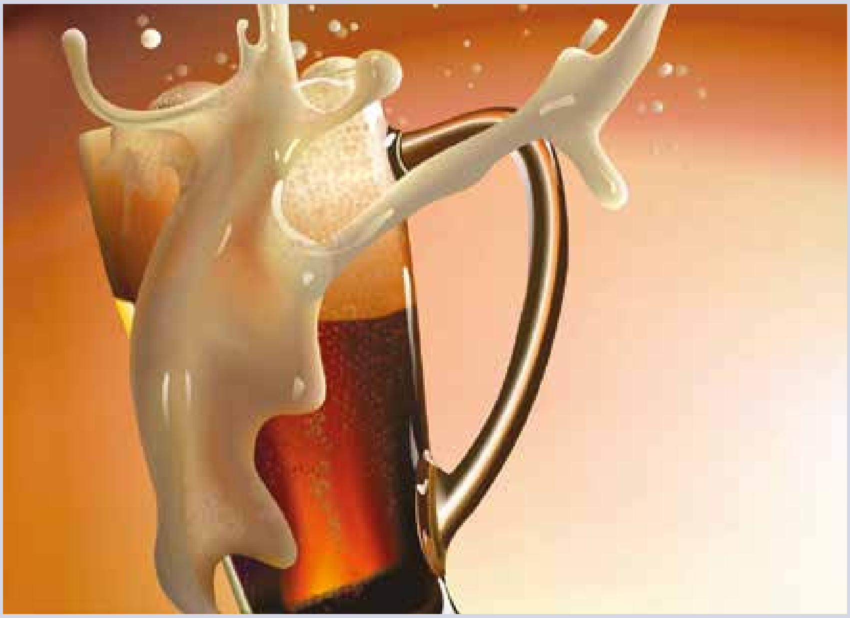
Cameroon exported 206,391 tonnes of bananas up to October 31, 2014

The Banana Association of Cameroon (Assobacam) has revealed that banana dessert producers in Cameroon already exported 206,391 tonnes from January to October 2014. The leader in domestic production with peaks reaching 120,000 tonnes per annum, Société des plantations du Haut Penja (PHP), a subsidiary of the Marseille-based fruit company, is holding its position with 84,950 tonnes exported up to October 31, 2014.

The public agro-foods company, Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), comes in second with 67 689 tonnes in exports. Partnered with America's Del Monte for its bananas, it also produces rubber and palm oil. The 2nd largest employer after the State, the CDC out-exported Société des bananeraies de la Mbome (44,076 tonnes) for the first ten months of 2014.

Based on Assobacam's exports, May 2014 was very successful for Cameroonian producers, the PHP having exported 10,431 tonnes compared to the CDC's 10,520.

Cameroonian breweries fear "market collapse"



In a November 27, 2014 correspondence addressed to the Minister of Finance and the President's Office, in copy, three Cameroonian breweries operating in Cameroon lament the *"unrealistic"* rate increase in excise duty on alcoholic drinks (this tax is intended to discourage the consumption of products not deemed to be essential), in the 2015 Finance Bill currently being tabled in parliament. This was revealed in an edition of the *La Lettre du continent* publication. Indeed, with this tax increase hitting importers of such products as cigarettes, spirits and other luxury items, breweries' fees could increase by 40%. Brasseries du Cameroun (SABC) of the France-based Castel Group, the Diageo Group's Guinness and the Cameroon Breweries Union led by billionaire Kadji de Fosso fear *"a market collapse"* in the alcoholic beverage sector in 2015.

Indeed, Cameroon is a very profitable market for breweries. For example, although there has been some downturn relative to 2011 when sales reached 45.2 billion FCFA (around 68.7 million euros), Brasseries du Cameroun's sales were still 26.9 billion FCFA (41 million euros) in 2013. The brewery market leader's shareholders shared 25 billion FCFA in dividends last year.

Visiting Cameroon in August 2014, President of the Africa division of the UK company Diageo, Andy Fennel stated that Guinness is *"[their] 4th largest market in the world."* In Africa, Cameroon is also Diageo's 2nd largest market after Nigeria with its market of over 120 million consumers compared to 20 million only for Cameroon.

Nestlé Cameroun lowers salt in food products by 2.69%

In 2013, in Central and West Africa, the Swiss agro-foods company, Nestlé, lowered salt content in all its food products by 2.69% relative to 2012. Some of these products, particularly Maggi bouillon cubes, were also enriched with iron. Nestlé's Cameroonian subsidiary made this announcement on November 14, 2014 during the celebration of World Diabetes Day.

According to the company, *"last year, the company committed to reducing salt in all its brands to support the WHO's goal of a maximum daily allowance of sodium of 5g by 2025"*. In the spirit of this commitment, *"Nestlé has already improved over 20 of its brands such as Maggi to reduce salt content in its food products to make them healthier for consumers."* By 2016, salt, sugar and saturated fat content will be reduced by 10%.

In Cameroon, the supply hub for the Central African region, the Swiss agro-foods company produces and sells mostly Maggi bouillon cubes, which represent 90% of the Bonabéri factory's production. Maggi bouillon cubes officially generate 5 billion FCFA in sales across the six CEMAC countries.

Farm gate prices for cocoa up by a record 30% in Cameroon

A little over two months since the start of the 2014-2015 cocoa season, on August 1, Cameroonian cocoa already set its first record. According to Commodafrica, farm gate prices in the production areas are currently at unprecedented levels, reaching 1,330 FCFA compared to 1,265 FCFA in September 2014. The price per kilo of farm gate cocoa is now $30 higher than a year ago, according to the same source.
This rise in prices is the result of improvement in the product's quality as well as better organisation among farmers' associations which are turning more and more to group sales, a mechanism that helps them to increase producers' leverage when negotiating with buyers.
These are the first gains resulting from the meetings held during the previous season by the inter-professional organisation which not only encouraged farmers across the production area to combine the many GICs into cooperatives, at times at the regional level, but also trained producers in the techniques of group sales in better organised occasional markets.
This price hike is also intended to wipe-out illegal sellers who generally tend to take advantage of the producers. Indeed, the CICC intends to impose stiffer penalties and announced that, for the current season, fraud-proof magnetic cards will be issued to exporters and their intermediaries which will prevent illegal vendors from participating in markets.

Cameroon exported 44,085 tonnes of cocoa in three months

A the end of October 2014, that is to say 3 months into the 2014-2015 season started on August 1st, the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (ONCC) statistics reveal that 44,085 tonnes of cocoa were exported by Cameroon. The ONCC highlights that Cameroonian exports in this sector are down by 4,000 tonnes compared to the 2013-2014 season.
In terms of processing, 13,144 tonnes of cocoa were sold during the same period by industrial companies, down 500 tonnes compared to the 13,658 tonnes sold in October 2013, of which 6,333 tonnes went to the local subsidiary of Barry Callebaut, Sic Cacaos.
As of today, no sales of processed cocoa beans are accounted for the Tiger Brands Cameroonian subsidiary, Chococam the ONCC states.

Cameroon: moving towards a national basic foods-stocking system

On November 1, 2014, Director of Mission for the Regulation of Consumer Products Supply (MIRAP), Cyprien Bamzok Ntol led a delegation of public administration heads (from agriculture, fisheries, public works, economy and health…), to the Foumbot market, one of Cameroon's largest for fresh produce, situated in the West region of the country.
According to reliable sources, during this trip to Foumbot, Mr. Bamzok Ntol announced that the group he led was conducting a feasibility study for the packaging, stocking and supply of consumer products for the domestic market.
The project is to be completed in proximity to Cameroon's two farming zones, namely Belabo and Foumbot, which are respectively located in East and West Cameroon.
The MIRAP director explained that, with this project, local officials hope to *"improve the collection, quality and preservation of these products so as to ensure their permanent availability in order that all economic operators and consumers may be able to have them. We hope to make this dream a reality in 5 years."*
According to MIRAP, Cameroon loses 25% of its agricultural production due to a lack of preservation infrastructure. With these new facilities for collecting, storing, packaging and supplying, MIRAP should be able to significantly increase the volume of food products available to Cameroonian households using periodic markets. The volume was estimated to be 7,454 tonnes in 2012.

Cameroonian coffee production climbs slightly in 2013-2014 season

The National Cocoa and Coffee Board (ONCC) revealed that, in late September 2014, Cameroon's Robusta coffee exports amounted to 17,247 tonnes. This volume of exports already surpasses the 2012-2013 coffee season's 14,724 tonnes.
Logically, with this slight increase in Robusta production which accounts for 95% of the coffee produced in Cameroon, national coffee production, including Arabica, should reach somewhere around 20,000 tonnes in the current season. But this still remains below the 38,127 tonnes produced in 2011-2012 and remains leagues below the cocoa and coffee sector restoration objectives adopted by the Cameroonian government.
Requiring 600 billion FCFA in financing over a period of five years (2015-2020), the cocoa and coffee restoration project aims to raise Robusta production to 150,000 tonnes and Arabica's to 35,000 tonnes by 2020. This would bring total production to 185,000 tonnes.

Cameroon may take on genetically modified cotton in 3 years

The flagship of the agro-industry in northern Cameroon plans to launch, Société de développement du coton (Sodecoton), will be starting the second phase of research to introduce genetically modified cotton to Cameroon next year. This second phase will last three years and could make GMOs commonplace in Cameroon.

Unlike the first phase, when research was done behind closed doors from 2012, this time, the agro-industrial cotton company will be experimenting with GMOs in an open area. This was the main information revealed at a workshop held by Sodecton from 23rd to 24th October 2014 in garoua to assess the results of the first phase of research on the introduction of GMOs in Cameroon's cotton cultivation.

The research concluded that the GMO strain currently tested by Sodecton is more robust against herbicides and more resistant to diseases, enabling significantly higher yields. This was indicated by Célestin Klassou, a researcher on the Sodecton project.

Although initial results are encouraging, the Managing Director of Sodecton, Abdou namba, is cautious. "*We're far from the stage of widespread cultivation. The government, via legislation governing this area, has put restrictions in place to prevent breaches. Further experimentation will be necessary to ensure that it is safe for the environment and not a danger to the other varieties of cotton.*"

Currently, Sodecoton produces around 230,000 tonnes of cotton per annum and plans to increase this volume by introducing GMOs like in Burkina-Faso where the trials have been very successful for several years.

Cameroon: Sodecoton to create a price stabilisation fund for farmers

Facing fluctuation in cotton prices on the international market, a situation that generally harms farmers who are underpaid for their work, Société de développement du coton (Sodecoton) plans to create "*The Price Risk-Management Fund for the Cameroonian Cotton Sector (FGRPC-C)*".

A kind of price stabilisation fund, the FGRPC-C, which will be jointly managed by Sodecton and the Cameroon National Confederation of Cotton Producers (CNPC-C), is "*intended to guarantee a minimum price for cotton seeds in the event of a sharp decline in cotton fibre prices*" on the world market.

Although the public agro-industrial company has not revealed much about the implementation of this fund, which will be one of the "*priority projects*" of the company's management, FGRPC-C is good news for the 250,000 farmers who work with Sodecton in northern Cameroon.

Commodafrica recently revealed that global cotton prices "*have fallen by 30% since 2013.*" This situation is seriously depleting the revenue of cotton companies and farmers of this white gold.

Cameroonian cotton production projected at 235,000 tonnes in 2014-2015 – up by 7%

Société de développement du coton (Sodecoton) is expected to produce 235,000 tonnes of cotton in the 2014-2015 season. This is up 7% relative to the previous season when the agro-industrial flagship in northern Cameroon failed to achieve the 240,000 tonnes predicted at the start of that season. This was revealed by Commodafrica.

Although it is only a small one, this increase in Cameroonian cotton production has come about in a difficult international context characterised by a decline in global cotton prices (a 30% downturn since 2013) and a drastic reduction in imports by China – a country that makes-up 60% of the world cotton market and currently has 11 million tonnes of cotton in its reserves.

According to analysts, the combination of these two factors should result in low cotton prices or poor sales. This would generate significant losses for cotton companies like Sodecton.

The first international fair for agricultural machinery in Cameroon in June 2015

Under the theme "agricultural revolution: issues and challenges of second generation agriculture in Cameroon", the first international exhibition of agricultural machinery (SIMAC) intending to take place at the end of the first half of 2015 in the Cameroonian capital, has as main objectives to promote the modernization of agriculture in the Central African country.

Over a thousand participants from several countries and organizations are expected at this exhibition of agricultural machinery, according to leaders of the Chamber of agriculture, fisheries, livestock and forests of Cameroon, promoter of the event.

With more than 22 million people, Cameroon has made agriculture the mainstay of its economy, which takes up more than 60% of the active population. Practiced on only 20% of arable land, this source of wealth is characterized by low yields for family farms who still turned towards the use of work tools essentially rudimentary.

According to Elissar Mbang Ekoutou Boubakary, "*35% to 70% of production losses are the result of practices by the amateurs*".

The event is organized around five specialized pavilions dedicated to the administration and international cooperation, agricultural machinery, irrigation and innovation, agriculture, agri-food trades and local flavour then funding of rural projects by the rural World Bank.

The participation of international agricultural machinery manufacturers is also covered by the Organizing Committee. "*We will find quality machines, at a cost accessible to our producers. We invited Turkey, Tunisia-China - who will be there with a massive participation, India and France, who hesitates a bit*", explained Ms. Boubakary.

The United Nations food and agriculture Organization (FAO), the African Development Bank (ADB) and the German technical co-operation (GiZ) are cited among the international partners announced.

TELECOM

Cameroon: World Bank doubts Camtel's ability to turn a profit on mobile services and 3G

In a November 2014 report, from which some excerpts were revealed on December 3, 2014 by the weekly Cameroonian publication, Repères, the World Bank has expressed some doubt about Cameroon Telecommunications' (Camtel), ability to make the 3G technology it will be offering as of 2015 profitable.

"Camtel has been making minimal offers and poor service. It could not manage CDMA technology (with the CTphone) which is equivalent to 3G technology," writes the Bretton Woods institution in its report. With this finding, the World Bank goes on to say that, "*Done probably without any financial contribution due to the company's deteriorated finances, the granting of a 3G licence to Camtel seems entirely politically motivated, particularly in light of the fact that Camtel seems to lack the human competence required to implement a quality network.*"

The company's recent "BBB" rating from the Bloomfield Investment firm will hardly withstand the criticism levied by these organisations. Bloomfield itself noted that Camtel's finances are characterised by a *"fragile financial structure, inadequate liquidity" and, especially, a "chronic liquidity deficit resulting from an oversized working capital which accentuates* [the company's] *flexibility and financial dependency."*

3GS POPPING-UP IN CAMEROON

From this point of view, Camtel's financials up to December 31, 2013, reveals a cash-flow deficit of 4.9 billion FCFA, an abysmal debt estimated at 141.2 billion FCFA in late December 2013 (compared to 91.7 billion in 2012), despite a net result of a little over 3 billion FCFA recorded at the end of the year.

But, more generally, the World Bank finds that Cameroon, which is planning to have 4 3G permits active in 2015 (Nexttel, MTN, Orange and Camtel), could move from being *"one of the rare African countries not to have 3G permits to the country that has the most."* The situation does not reassure the World Bank which states,*"With 4 3G licences, it is highly probable that the 20 million consumer market won't be enough for the four operators to make a profit on the necessary investments necessary for the transition while providing quality 3G service."*

Furthermore, due to this kind of 3G excess on the Cameroon telecom market in 2015, the Bretton Woods institution notes that *"it is highly probable that these operators will focus their investments in high value areas and neglect the rest of the country, further widening the digital divide in Cameroon."*

After Camtel, Camwater, SCDP and PAD next in line to have credit risk assessment done by Bloomfield

Authorised sources have revealed that the nation's drinking water distribution management company, Camwater, the Autonomous Port of Douala (PAD) and Société camerounaise des dépôts pétroliers (SCDP), are to be rated by the pan-African financial rating agency, Bloomfield Investment, to assess their credit risk on the capitals market.

Upon the signing of agreements between the said companies and the Bloomfield agency, three months are all that will be needed to assign a financial rating to the Cameroonian public sector companies – a necessary first step before accessing the capitals market.

The three State-owned companies are thus following on the heels of Camtel after it recently received a local currency rating of BBB for its long term prospects from Bloomfield, becoming the first company in the history of Cameroon to undergo such an exercise.

According to our sources, the financial rating these companies have been requesting is the result of the Cameroonian government's decision that its companies should enter the capitals market in order to finance their projects themselves. This will allow the government to be relieved of its support role for these companies which have been achieving *"pitiful results"* based on a recent finding expressed by the IMF concerning the Cameroonian economy.

This all led to these first four companies being chosen to embark on the journey to the capitals market. Camtel, Camwater, the PAD and the SCDP were chosen due to their immense potential in their respective sectors.

MTN beats out Orange Cameroon in the first three quarters of 2014

At a time when a third mobile provider has just launched its services in September and a fourth permit has been granted to the subsidiary of the Mobile Télécommunications Network (MTN) has confirmed that it dominated the industry in Cameroon, beating out the French company Orange's subsidiary, particularly in the areas of customer base and generated revenue.

Looking at the interim results produced by the two companies on their key performance for the period ending on September 30, 2014, one can see that MTN-Cameroon's subscribership increased quickly, reaching 11.233 million consumers represent 9.7% growth from one year to the next. In the case of Orange, there was growth, but only 6.465 million customers.

Leading in the subscriber race, MTN Cameroon also beat its main competitor in overall earnings. Orange Cameroon's indicators suggest that gross cumulated earnings for the first three quarters were 213 million euros, which is 139.632 billion FCFA.

"*Nexttel already has 400,000 abonnés,*" says Ministry of Postal Services and Telecoms

The Minister of Postal Services and Telecom, Jean Pierre Biyiti bi Essam, stated that mobile service provider, Nexttel, until now the exclusive 3G permit holder, already has 400,000 subscribers since the start of its activities on September 18, 2014. The company which has billing rates of 54 FCFA within its network and 66 FCFA to other networks, has been offering promotions and bonuses to lower fees for intra network and extra network calls by 50 FCFA.

The Postal Services and Telecommunications Minister revealed this information on December 2, 2014 before the parliament. He was presenting to members of parliament what he has achieved with his 12.7 billion FCFA budget (close to 24 million dollars).

Before the Finance and Budget Commission, Jean Pierre Biyiti bi Essam also defended his budget proposal for 2015 which is 13.673 billion FCFA (25.6 million dollars). This is an increase of 914 million FCFA (1.7 million dollars) relative to 2014.

With his new budget, the Minister of Postal Services and Telecoms would like *"to consolidate the company's activity in 2014 in order to stimulate and accelerate growth so as to accompany our country on its path towards emergence by 2035,"* stated Jean Pierre Biyiti bi Essam.

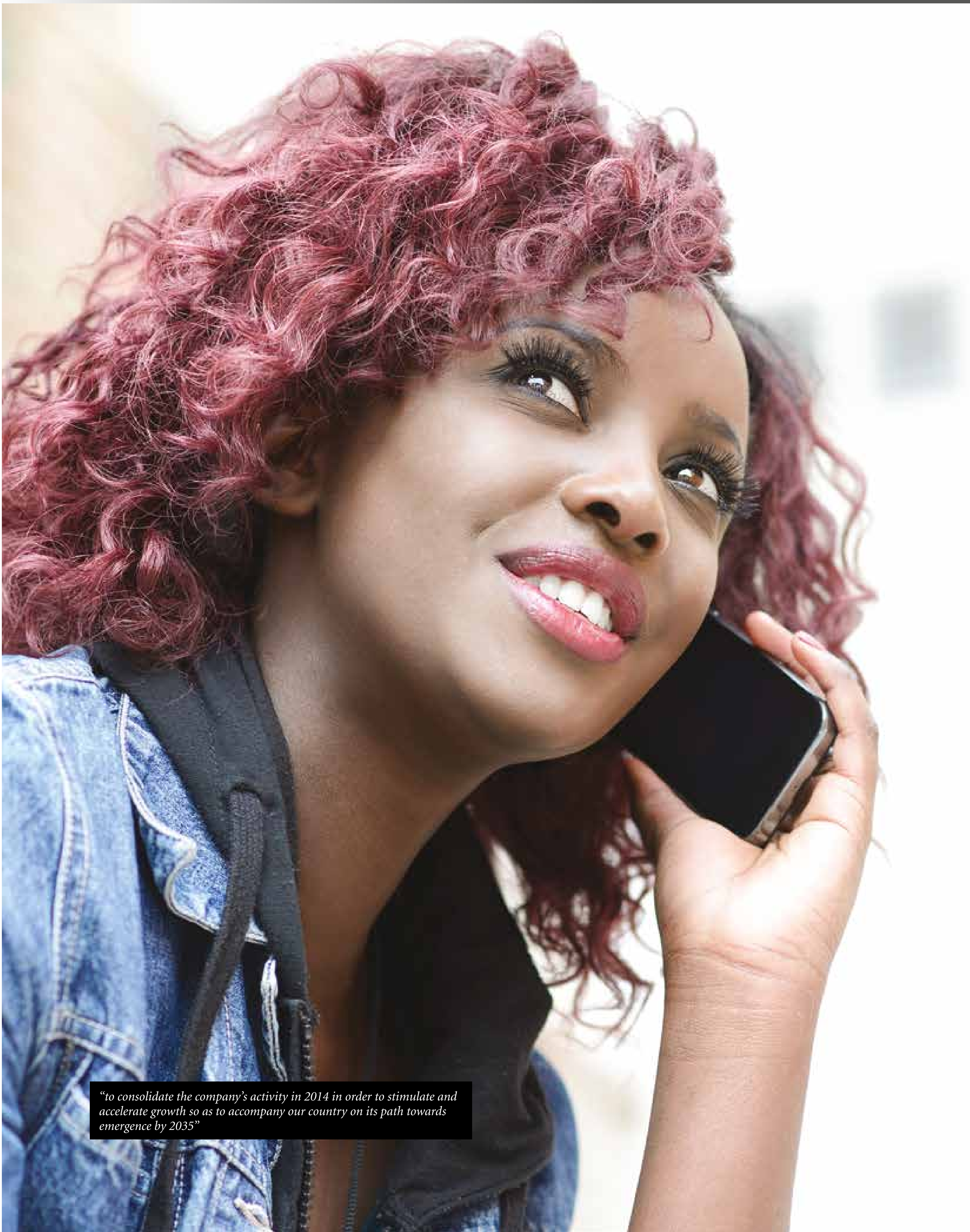
4,620 electronic school bags handed out to promote distance education

In the pilot phase of its Basic Education Improvement (PAQEB) in Cameroon, the government provided 51 primary schools in six regions with 4,620 electronic school bags to promote distance education.

On November 27, 2014, following a government seminar on the development of electronic administration (e-government) in Cameroon, government officials announced the experiment will be expanded to include several other primary schools.

To develop e-government, the Ministry of Postal Services and Telecoms (Minipostel) issued a call for expressions of interest to have a study conducted about "*the implementation of e-service platforms on-line within the framework of the e-post initiative.*"

Minipostel explained that, as a part of the e-post project, which involved digitising and connecting all 234 post offices nationwide, a datacentre was set-up "*to host e-commerce, e-banking, e-money, e-health, e-education and e-government platforms. […] The proper execution of this project could be a decisive step for Cameroon towards the current push to build an information inclusive company.*"



"to consolidate the company's activity in 2014 in order to stimulate and accelerate growth so as to accompany our country on its path towards emergence by 2035"

Olivier Dicoh: "*Camtel's main mission isn't seeking financial performance*"

Mission Director at Bloomfield Investment, Olivier Dicoh discusses the relevance of the financial rating given to Cameroon Telecommunications (Camtel), as well as its implications.

Business in Cameroon: **In light of the less than stellar state of its cash-flow, its high debt and a Cameroon mobile market in which two leaders (Orange and MTN) have a major head start, is the BBB rating Camtel received from Bloomfield likely to reassure investors whom the company hoped to attract?**

Olivier Dicoh: Camtel's short term and long term ratings are investment grades in the moderate risk category and should reassure investors. The long term rating establishes Camtel's fundamentals while the short term rating looks at its cash-flow within a period of less than a year. Of course, these ratings take into account the company's cash-flow as well as its debt.

It's important to understand that Camtel's main mission is to provide universal service (easing everyone's access to information and communication technologies), not to seek financial performance as its activities fall within the framework of the Strategic Document for Growth and Jobs (DSCE).

Ensuring the availability of universal service requires considerable investment (thus the high debt) which won't necessarily be influenced by the question of profitability (laying fibre optics in unprofitable areas where private companies would not invest). This effort is being pushed by the State as a part of its development vision for the telecom sector.

Therefore, the profitability of Camtel's investments won't be immediate. Camtel still has steady revenue and financial flexibility which counts on its importance to the State and this gives it access to liquidity.

With regards to mobile services, they will be provided by Camtel Mobile Telecommunications (a subsidiary of Camtel). This will not significantly impact, at least for now, Camtel's results if it decides to consolidate.

BIC: **Among the factors that you found to be negative in Camtel's rating, there is legal uncertainty since the company is listed for privatisation. Why would this be a negative when privatisation generally drives performance?**

OD: We considered this to be a negative factor because the uncertainty hovering over Camtel needs to be lifted if the company is to raise funds on the financial market. Potential bond subscribers need to know Camtel's legal standing.

One mustn't forget that the corporate status the State grants Camtel gives it responsibilities, including the implementation of the government's vision within the telecom sector, but it also gives it a certain "*cushion*" since it as the government's support in the event of financial difficulty.

BIC: **Can we expect to see Camtel enter the stock market (the DSX in particular), instead of privatisation as some experts hope?**

OD: We think Camtel's general management is best placed to answer that question and say whether or not talks are underway. But that said, we think that would be a good thing for the development of Cameroon's financial market.

BIC: **In your opinion, if Camtel were to enter the financial market, as seems likely, what would be the more prudent**

"Camtel's short term and long term ratings are investment grades in the moderate risk category and should reassure investors."

approach to take? A bond loan or the public sale of shares?
OD: From a balance sheet point of view, the opening up of capital to private investors would look better, financially speaking, but could lead Camtel to focus on performance to the detriment of universal service provision. With a bond loan, the State would maintain control of Camtel and could better pursue its goals.

***BIC*: Most of the rating's positive elements are contextual – the telecom environment (the sector's potential, the government's confidence), which are outlying factors relative to Camtel's performance as an entity (a lot of debt, dried up cash-flow, and results that are in a free-fall). Can these environmental considerations surrounding Camtel really counter the company's actual performance?**
OD: The assessment of Camtel's credit isn't based solely on the state of its finances, but also its strategic value to the State in its goals to develop the sector. Therefore, a company that doesn't have extraordinary financial results or "glowing financials" can still have good credit which can rely on its access to alternate sources of liquidity (financial flexibility) and the company's strategic value to the shareholder or even the country.
From 2009 to 2013, Camtel's performance, which we believe needs to be maintained and consolidated, improved. The "free-fall" apparent in 2013's results is due to the increase in amortisation because of the extensive investment that had been undertaken, and a revaluation of immobilisation.
One mustn't lose sight of the fact that Camtel must carry out its universal service mission (to facilitate ICT access for all Cameroonian people). This necessitates major investment unmotivated by immediate profitability. The company's performance can also be assessed by observing the growth in value added and the gross operating surplus in these two years.

Group Orange to launch Afrimarket in Cameroon and in Mali in 2015

According to the tech-watch site, Ticmag.net, the French group, Orange, announced in a release on October 2, 2014 that it will be launching its Afrimarket cash-to-cash money transfer service in Cameroon and Mali in 2015 via its Orange money service.
The service enables direct payments from Europe for everyday purchases (food, school supplies…) for loved ones and relatives living in Africa. After the transaction, the beneficiary is informed by text message about the payment of the product and its availability for pick-up or delivery.
The Afrimarket service will be implemented in Cameroon and Mali following encouraging experiences in West-Africa, particularly in Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Senegal and Benin - countries that all have large diasporas whose financial contributions are essential for the survival of family members and loved ones who have remained in Africa.

Orange Cameroon reveals communications costs

For several days now, Orange customers have automatically been receiving an alert after each phone call. The alert tells the customer the duration of each call and how much credit was used. This new feature allows consumers to better manage their package, ending consumer suspicions about the mobile provider overbilling calls made in its network.
So far, Orange Cameroon is the only company to provide this service on the Cameroonian market. MTN and Nexttel are still waiting to carry-out this recommendation made by the Minister of Postal Services and Telecommunications, Jean Pierre Biyiti bi Essam.
At the launch of the 9-digit dialling system on September 24, 2014, the government official called on telecom operators to be more transparent. He reiterated that consumers had a right to know the conditions of the services they accept, including charges and other fees.
MTN and Nexttel customers who wish to know how much a given call cost still have to resort to the same old method of dialling a code to check their balance.

E-commerce, e-banking, e-money, e-health, e-education… in the works

Cameroon's Ministry of Postal Services and Telecommunications has just issued a call for expressions of interest to have a study conducted on "the implementation of online service platforms for the e-post project". The study would be financed by the Telecommunications Development Fund.
The ministry explains that, within the framework of its e-post project, which involved the digitisation and interconnection of 234 post offices nationwide, a datacentre was set-up *"to host e-commerce, e-banking, e-money, e-health, e-education and e-government platforms. […] The proper execution of this project could be a decisive step for Cameroon towards the current push to build an information inclusive company,"* stated Postal Services and Telecommunications Minister, Jean-Pierre Biyiti bi Essam.

Dialling in Cameroun goes from 8 to 9 digits despite issues

Since midnight on November 21, 2014, Cameroon's telephone dialling officially shifted from 8 to 9 digits. Announced in September by the Minister of Postal Services and Telecommunications (Minipostel), Jean Pierre Biyiti bi Essam, the process will address the problem of 8-digit number options being exhausted, exacerbated by the increase in the number of subscribers with Orange and MTN and the arrival of the new provider, Nexttel.
This adjustment caused significant disruptions on the GSM and wireless networks, making telephone communications difficult and internet connectivity was virtually impossible in some places.
Before this disruption, the three mobile service providers and the longstanding phone company, Camtel, organised a campaign to raise awareness in the first two weeks of November. Using SMS messaging, the mobile phone service providers explained that customers would now need to add the prefix 6 in front of the number before making phone calls on their network. Camtel indicated that consumers needed to replace the 22 and 33 with 243 for all calls on its network.
November 14, 2014, the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ART) and the telecom companies ran tests across the country for four hours to ensure the move to 9 digits was feasible.
This will be the third time that Cameroon will be changing its dialling system. The first change to 7 digits took place in 2001, followed by the 2007 move to 8 digits. Today, Cameroon has 16 million mobile customers out of a national population estimate of 22 million.

FINANCE

UBA soon to offer MasterCard in Cameroon

United Bank for Africa (UBA) customers will now enjoy the benefits of MasterCard payment solutions. This is the outcome of an agreement that has just been concluded between the pan-African group and the American payment solutions provider, MasterCard.
According to the terms of this agreement, UBA is authorised to accept and issue MasterCard products in Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea (Conakry), Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
In Cameroon, UBA will join other banks such as Banque Atlantique and Afriland First Bank, which is already providing MasterCard, sometimes with Visa, MasterCard's international competitor.
A few weeks prior to the signing of the agreement, UBA and MasterCard launched MasterCard services in Nigeria. *"This collaboration is a reflection of our vision, which is to be a first-rate pan-African bank in products and innovative financial services. This partnership with a global entity like MasterCard is a part of making our vision for Africa a reality,"* stated the Managing Director of United Bank for Africa, Kennedy Uzoka.
"MasterCard's presence in Africa means that we are continuing to work with various partners in the financial services sector to continually develop products that help consumers to move from cash to electronic payment," indicated Daniel Monehin, President of MasterCard's Sub-Saharan Africa division.
President in 19 African countries, the UBA group provides financial services to some 7 million consumers via 700 branches.

Diaspora contribution has increased by 40 billion FCFA in just four years

Cash flow from diaspora and its contribution to the economy of Cameroon has been on the rise over the years. Cameroonian based in France came second with 27%, while the CEMAC zone in 2013 contributed 38% to the cash flow. Finally, the United States with 15% and 20% for the other countries.
Information from the Department of General Affairs of the Ministry of Finance, shows that their contribution has moved to FCFA 218.7 billion in 2013 from FCFA 181.1 billion in 2009 i.e. an increase of 40 billion FCFA over four years.
According to the Department of Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Finance, the money flows in, in two channels: One formal and the other informal. The formal circuit comprises transfers through Western Union, Moneygram and other international electronic money transfer structures. Meanwhile, the informal circuit involves people travelling with liquid cash into the country either to carry out charity works or pump into one investment project or the other.

Cameroonian government launches 2014-2019 loan of 150 billion FCFA on November 24

Subscriptions for the Cameroonian government's 2014-2019 period started on November 24, 2014 and will continue until December 23, 2014. This was revealed in an ad on the said day in the Cameroonian press.

Ten financial institutions have been retained in the group for the loan to be used to finance major projects in the energy sector, as well as road and port infrastructure development. The companies are SCB Cameroon, Société générale, Afriland First Bank, EDC Invesment Corporation, UBA, BICEC, Cenainvest, Financia Capital, CBC and Banque atlantique.

The 150 billion FCFA loan, Cameroon's third after those of 2010 (200 billion FCFA) and 2013 (80 billion FCFA), was arranged by SCB Cameroon, the local subsidiary of the Moroccan banking group, Attijariwafa.

The 2014-2019 loan will be remunerated at 5.5% net per annum differed by one year. One will note that this is the lowest interest rate since the 2010 loan, paid back at 5.6% and 2013's paid back at 5.9%. This lowered interest rate is the result of the investors' predilection for the Cameroonian government's Treasury bonds.

Cameroon to repay 55.6 billion FCFA in December for 2010-2015 bond loan

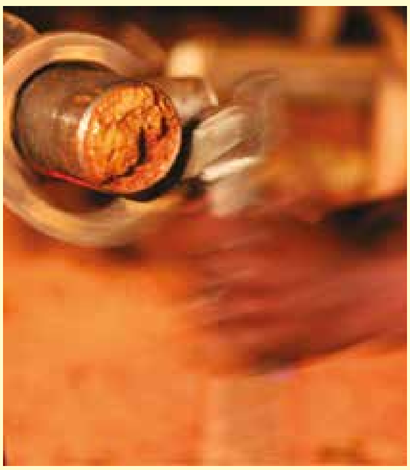
Representatives of the bond holders' association (an association of 2010-2015 bond subscribers) are now at ease. They are slated to receive their loan reimbursement for the sum of 55.6 billion FCFA on December 29, 2014 as planned.

Indeed, in a press release published by the heads of the bond group "*the sums corresponding to the payment of this 4th exercise (3rd tranche of capital plus interest)*" for the 200 billion FCFA loan "*Ecmr 5.60% net 2010-2015*", "*regularly wired*" to the Central Bank account opened for this purpose.

The release goes on to add that, in late September 2014, the Cameroonian government had already wired 41.7 billion FCFA to the BEAC account. This amounts to a monthly payment of 4.633 billion FCFA. It is now up to the Treasury Department to complete the available amount with the payments for the 3rd quarter.

MINING

Cameroon: operators suggest creation of Industrial Mining Development Fund



Although Cameroon has world class mining deposits such as the Mbalam and Nkout's iron, Lomié's nickel and cobalt or Mobilong's diamonds, this immense potential remains unexploited due to the absence of a real mining industry. In addition, mining activity in the country is largely dominated by small-scale agents (which contributes only 1% to the nation's GDP), providing little income relative to its potential.
According to the Cameroon Mining Federation, a recently formed association of local operators, the transition from small-scale to industrial mining could be achieved if the government created an *"Industrial Mining development Fund"*. The federation submitted its proposal to the Minister of Mining, Emmanuel Bondé, at a meeting with the government official on November 11, 2014 in Yaoundé.
In addition, the federation's members expressed their desire to see the mining code revamped (the government has already been working on a bill which could be tabled in parliament in November 2014 or March 2015, according to reliable sources), in order *"to facilitate the granting of mining permits"*, authorisations which *"enable negotiation with international partners,"* stated Emmanuel Mbiam, the federation's president.
Since May 14, 2014, the Cameroonian government has had to suspend the issuance of small-scale mining permits due to the general disorder that prevails in that sector. In particular, a senior Ministry of Mining official explains that *"several operators with prospecting permits immediately moved on to the mining phase and this has been done with little regard for environmental standards"* that are applicable in Cameroon.

Aliko Dangote promises to set up cement factory in Cameroon before the close of 2014

On November 1, 2014, Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote paid a short site inspection visit to his cement factory currently being built on the banks of the Wouri River in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital. According to reliable sources, at the event, the Nigerian manufacturer promised that the first bags of cement will hit the Cameroonian market before year's end.
The Nigerial mogul allegedly stated that the delays encountered at the factory, leading to the postponement of its launch from January 2014, to August, then to October 2014, are due to technical issues. For example, the congestion at Doula Port has slowed down the import and export of equipment needed for the factory's completion.
However, the construction team has reported that the Dangote cement factory is "*90% complete*". In response to this announcement made during his November 1 site visit, the Nigerian billionaire praised the team as well as the government for "*working hand in hand to complete the project.*"
Contrary to initial forecasts, Cameroon's third cement factory (after Cimencam and Lafarge and Cimaf of the Moroccan groupm Addoha) will no longer produce one million tonnes per annum, but 1.5 million tonnes of 42.5 cement when launched. At the start of its operations, the 50 billion FCFA Dangote factory will provide full-time, indefinite employ-

ment for 77 Cameroonians, 11 expatriates and temporary employment for approximately 250 workers each month.

Cameroon: Geovic Mining Corp abandons the Nkamouna nickel and cobalt project

Eleven years after receiving the first mining permit in Cameroon on April 11, 2003, Geovic Cameroon, the subsidiary of the new American and Canadian company, Geovic Mining Corp, abandoned plans to mine bauxite, cobalt and manganese at the Nkamouna site in the Lomié district of East Cameroon.

According to our sources, the offices of the company's general management in the Bastos district in Yaoundé were emptied and all furniture sold. On the ground in Nkamouna, an employee of Geovic Cameroon contacted by our agency indicated that *"Geovic has been on standby for around a year now. They even started selling vehicles parked at the Kongo base (where the mine is supposed to be built)."*

This information was confirmed by the former mayor of Lomié, Célestin Assama Mbongo, who provided more detail: *"Everything has been at a standstill for a year. Only the company's caretakers are still visible on the property. The remainder of the staff (around 200 employees) have been on leave. We're totally disappointed because we had put a lot of hope in this project. We were reassured several times that the project would be launched. Now all we're seeing are vehicles leaving.*

"*PEOPLE DON'T BELIEVE IN IT ANYMORE*"

According to the former municipal executive of Lomié district, Geovic Cameroon had reached an agreement with Chinese investors to which its 60.5% share of the project would be sold. *"Between February and April 2014, the Chinese came here several times. Accompanied by Geovic teams, they made site visits and took samples. Since then, nothing. In any event, no one here listens to them anymore. People don't believe in it anymore."*

Indeed, on July 23, 2013, Geovic Mining Corp had announced the signing of a *"final agreement"* with the Chinese group Jiangxi Rare Metals Tungsten Group Holdings Company Ltd (JXTC), to which the young company American and Canadian company had decided to sell its assets in the cobalt, nickel and manganese mining and development project in Nkamouna in Cameroon.

The Nkamouna mining project was valued at 615 million USD, or approximately 306 billion FCFA. Reserves are around 121 million tonnes of mineral resources with an average of 0.23% cobalt, 0.65% nickel and 1.35% manganese.

"This final agreement represents significant progress for the Nkamouna mining project. The project's development should start once financing is available and will help create jobs and diversify the Cameroonian economy," Geovic Mining Corp CEO, Michael Mason, had stated.

"*GEOVIC: A HOUSE OF CARDS*"

According to our sources, what was presented as "a final agreement" in July 2013, was not respected by the parties as Société nationale des investissements (SNI), the State agency with a 39.5% stake in the mining code, felt that the Chinese party had not respected the terms and conditions of the said agreement.

Indeed, the latest episode is but one of a long series of unfulfilled promises and appetising announcements which, in eleven years, have maintained the ever-fleeting dream of seeing the Nkamouna project finally become a reality. Hesitation has not prevented the company from climbing on the Toronto stock exchange because of repeated promises about its potential without the Nkamouna deposit being revaluated.

But all this hesitation came with the benefit of creating doubt about Geovic Mining's real objectives, characterised by the Les Afriques publication as *"a house of cards"* whose *"other subsidiaries are either inactive or recently created. Most of the group's assets are made up of its Cameroonian concessions."*

The Nkamouna mining project was valued at 615 million USD, or approximately 306 billion FCFA. Reserves are around 121 million tonnes of mineral resources with an average of 0.23% cobalt, 0.65% nickel and 1.35% manganese. Based on a feasibility study completed in 2011, the project should create 800 direct jobs and 400 indirect jobs.

Brice R. Mbodiam

ENERGY

Niger allegedly second-guessing Chad-Cameroon pipeline

Niger may abandon its plan to build a pipeline that would connect to the Chad-Cameroon pipeline to pipe crude oil to the Kribi deep water port. This was revealed in the "La Lettre du continent" publication. Behind Niger's doubts are *"the growing insecurity at its borders and the permanent threat of the fundamentalist sect, Boko Haram, in the Lake Chad region."*

Niger authorities are allegedly considering a new option – building the pipeline to Benin instead – *"a less exposed country"*. This new option has the advantage of *"fitting into the vast West-African rail project"* but would be more costly. If the Chad-Cameroon prospect is abandoned, the new budget would double as, in addition to the pipeline in Niger, the Beninese pipeline would also have to be built.

However, for the time being, the Niger government has not yet decided, but the case is being examined by the *"oil sector officials in Niger, starting with Minister Energy and Oil, Foumagoye Gado"*. It was he who signed the bilateral agreement on October 30, 2013 which fixes the conditions surrounding the Chad-Cameroon pipeline transit on Cameroonian soil.

"Niger's production is not significant. It is currently 60,000 barrels per day and so, to make it worthwhile, we needed to choose the shortest route possible to make it less costly. With the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, we only need to build 600 km pipeline to do the connection," explained the Niger Minister of Energy and Oil. If Niger abandons the first option, it will be a sizeable financial loss for Cameroon as the transit of Niger oil is brings in revenue to Cameroon's Treasury in the form of transit royalties.

The transit royalty was set at October 29, 2013, moving from 195 FCFA (0.41 USD) per barrel to 618 FCFA (1.30 USD) per barrel. This enabled Cameroon's Treasury to rake in 6.5 billion FCFA for the first four months of 2014, which is the equivalent generated by the same transit fee over a period of 11 months in 2013.

Chad-Cameroon pipeline rakes in 17.5 billion FCFA in late October 2014

According to the Steering and Monitoring Committee (CPSP) chaired by Adolphe Moudiki, the ADG of Société nationale des hydrocarbures (SNH), Chadian oil transit royalties generated a total of 17.5 billion FCFA for the Treasury Department of Cameroon.
This sum is the amount paid to the Treasury Department for the 27.5 million barrels of Chadian oil that traverse the pipeline. In late October 2013, this same transit fee had brought in only 5.8 billion FCFA for the 24.6 million barrels of crude oil from Chad's oil fields.
The explosion of the transit fees is the result of its revaluation on October 29, 2013. It rose from 195 FCFA (0.41 USD) per barrel to 618 FCFA (1.30 USD) per barrel after intense negotiations between the Cameroonian government and COTCO, the company that managed the Cameroonian side of the pipeline.

Chinese company, TBAE Co., to build two electrical supply lines in Cameroon

On December 1, Cameroonian Energy and Water Minister, Basile Atangana Kouna, signed an agreement with China based company, TBAE Co. to conduct feasibility studies and build two electricity distribution lines in that country.
The project involves building a 225 Kv line between Ebolowa and Kribi in the South region and a 90 Kv line that will run from Mbalmayo and Mekin, which are respectively located in Cameroon's Centre and South regions.
The project, for which the total cost has not been disclosed, should last 18 months, according to the agreement, and will be entirely financed by the Chinese company, as the Cameroonian party will only be granting favourable tax and customs arrangements to complete the project.

Sanaga South increases gas production by 124% up to late October

Société nationale des hydrocarbures (SNH), the State-owned oil and gas company, has announced a significant increase in gas production, attaining 9.16 billion cubic feet in late October 2014, up by 124% relative to the same period last year.
This increase in natural gas production, highlights the SNH, is essentially due to activity in the Sanaga South field, off the coastal city of Kribi. Indeed, according to SNH statistics, the field produced 8.13 billion cubic feet up to late October 2014, which is 90% of overall production compared to the 1.03 billion cubic feet produced by the Logbaba field in the suburbs of Douala.
Out of this production, 8.22 billion cubic feet were delivered to the company managing the Kribi gas plant. *"Although slightly below the minimum required removal amount, this level of consumption is nevertheless higher compared to 2013,"* stated the SNH.

Hysacam launches 2nd biogas catchment and treatment plant in Cameroon

On November 20, 2014, Hygiène et salubrité du Cameroun (Hysacam), which handles ten household waste disposal contracts in Cameroonian towns and cities, opened its second biogas catchment and treatment plant.
Financed with a loan by Ecobank, the new facility will help to avoid putting the methane produced by the household waste entering the atmosphere in order to reduce greenhouse gases considerably. The company plans to convert gas into electricity.
Hysacam had already launched the country's first biogas catchment and treatment plant on June 29, 2011 in the Cameroonian capital's suburbs where there is a massive landfill. This investment cost 3 billion FCFA obtained thanks to a bank loan.

Chinese contractors accused to turns Mekin dam construction site into rubbish dump

The Ministry of the environment, Protection of nature and the Sustainable development has discovered many shortfalls in the implementation of the plan for the environmental and social management of the project last Thursday. "There's a big gap between what was planned on paper and what is done on the ground."
The Minister of the environment, Protection of nature and the sustainable development, Hele Pierre, pointed out to the managers of the company in charge of the execution of the hydroelectric dam of Mekin, last Thursday on the work site, in the southern region that indeed, "*the site we visited has piles of unsorted waste. There is no traceability in their management and therefore measures should be taken to prevent the pollution of the water as bags of cement whose chemical composition is unknown are dumped in these waters and are ingested by fish; and we eat these fish*".
On the social front, it was noted "*that there are problems of sanitation in the camps of the workers. Hygiene is unreliable. In case of any outbreak, the camp will be highly affected because of the prevailing situation here.*"
The company, China National Electric Engineering Corporation (CNEEC) in charge of the execution of the project have therefore been called to answer with respect to the environment and the working conditions of the workers.

Reduction by 50% of the subscription fees proposed by ENEO

ENEO, energy operator in Cameroon has just launched a democratization operation for access to energy through a reduction of 50 % of its subscription fees.
Called "a house, a meter", this operation will bring the connection cost from 19,565 to 9,290 FCFA in urban zone, and from 9,000 to 5,300 FCFA in rural zone, price excluding VAT.
The local subsidiary of the British investment fund ACTIS plans to mobilize 15,000 new subscribers by next January in Douala and Yaounde, where needs are said to be for 50,000 lines.
At the same time, ENEO just launched a concept called Easy-Connection that according to its competent services "*proposes to inhabitants looking for a social connection and a subscription, a commercial offer up from 40,000 payable FCFA in several monthly payments*".
In this operation of seduction, the operator plans to lean on young people and districts leaders associations to reach a preliminary critical mass for at least 100 demands of connection.
In order to maximize chances of success for the operation, it also created a Facebook page and as well as a phone number dedicated for its commercial centre intended to register customers' expectations.

Oil and gas giant, Sinopec, might soon produce bitumen and lubricants in Cameroon

Already present in exploration and oil and gas mining in Cameroon through Addax Petroleum, China's largest oil and gas group, Sinopec, created Sinopec International Petroleum Service Corporation Cameroon or Sinopec Service Cameroon Ltd for short on October 2, 2014. According to the legal announcement, the new entity significantly broadens Sinopec's product range in Cameroon.

Apart from exploration and oil and gas mining, Sinopec Service Cameroon Ltd plans to be involved in some or all of the following: oil product trading, bitumen production, oil product quality control, lubricant production and sale as well as oil refinement. In the latter area, Sinopec is first in Asia and number three worldwide.

Directed by Huang Xialong, its first Managing Director, the new subsidiary of the Chinese oil and gas group, which has increased its overall oil production by 40% in Cameroon, is based in the country's economic capital, Douala.

Gaz du Cameroun to supply Bonabéri industrial zone

Gaz du Cameroun (GDC), subsidiary of the fledgling British oil and gas company, Victoria Oil and Gas, stated on October 29 that it has finished building a pipeline under the Wouri River which runs through the economic capital, Douala. Thanks to this achievement, the company can now supply the Bonabéri industrial zone where there is a high concentration of factories. At the same time, GDC also indicated that it had built 1.2 kilometres of pipeline in the Bonabéri zone, connecting three companies which already made investments to make the move from electricity to natural gas.

The company, which is developing the Logbaba natural gas project, seems to be on the right track. Among its clients, are the Dangote group's factory and also Guiness Cameroon of the Diageo group which is a major player in Africa's beverage market. The company also stated that it is in talks with the national public electricity provider, Eneo. The company indicated in its annual report that it had negotiated with Customs to obtain an annual exemption on adapted generator group imports.

But these gains do not seem to impress Victoria Oil and Gas' investors on the London financial market. After climbing on October 29, 2014 the day after the announcement about the pipeline's completion, the company's stock opened on October 31 3.3% lower.

On the London Stock Exchange investor forum, uncertainty about the exact number of clients the company has as well as its profitability left investors feeling jittery.

Addax Petroleum increases net production in Cameroon by 40%

On November 7, 2014, subsidiary of the largest oil and gas group in China, Sinopec, Addax Petroleum, proven to be the most active company in upstream in Cameroon, indicated that it has increased its net production by 40% since acquiring, on October 31, 2011, an 80% stake in Pecten Cameroon Company LCC which became Addax Petroleum Cameroon Company LLC.

It has stated that it implemented an active drilling method to better exploit Mokoko Abana oil field's value, improving production by increasing averaging yield from 15,000 to 18,500 bopd.

The subsidiary of Asia's largest refinery, the number three in the world, has stat-

ed that it has optimised its oil recovery in fields that have reached their maturity where production was at a freefall in 2011. In the Mokoko Abana oil field, Addax helped to reverse this trend, increasing production by 20%.

The oil and gas company notes that Mokoko Abana is over 30 years old and has over 130 drilled wells, 90 of which are still in production while the other 20 are either closed or abandoned.

According to Addax Petroleum, old oil fields like Mokoko Abana have to be exploited with innovative techniques. The oil company explains that, using in-house expertise, it was able to reduce operational costs and increase production by using solutions adapted for this kind of context. Sinopec's subsidiary plans to replicate the Mokoko Abana experiment elsewhere in Camroon as well as in other fields worldwide.

Leader of the month

Cameroonian Célestin Monga appointed as Deputy Managing Director of the ONUDI

On November 4, 2014, the United Nations Organisation for Industrial Development announced the appointment of Célestin Monga to the position of Deputy Managing Director of the UN organisation.

It is the first time that an African is promoted in such an important position within the UNIDO.

It is the first time that an African is promoted in such an important position within the UNIDO. The economist, native of Cameroon, who will assist from now on the Chinese Li Yong, the current Managing director, will mainly be in charge of "administration" management, as specified by this body of the UN.

Before his appointment, the economist worked at the World Bank for 13 years. Economic Advisor to the Vice-President of the World Bank for the last few years of his tenure there, Célestin Monga worked in Cameroon's banking sector at the BICIC, once returned to his country after studies in Europe.

Known by his fellow countrymen for his eloquence, even qualified as dissident by some, Célestin Monga was introduced to the wider community in a letter to the Cameroonian authorities in 1990.

Known by his fellow countrymen for his eloquence, even qualified as dissident by some, Célestin Monga was introduced to the wider community in a letter to the Cameroonian authorities in 1990. This correspondence was published in the (at the time) weekly journal *Le Messager*, with the famous journalist, now deceased, Puis Najwé at the helm, and it left both of them embroiled in legal woes that year.
Exiled to the United States, Célestin Monga followed his previous education in France with further studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University and later joined the World Bank.

Author of works of reflection, among which his famous "*Un Bantou à Washington*", several articles published in specialized magazines were also written under his acerbic pen. Philosopher and writer of the part dedicated to the Economy in new Encyclopedia of Africa (2007), Célestin Monga taught at Boston University in the United States and at Université de Bordeaux in France. From now on, in office in Vienna, Austria, at the headquarters of the UNIDO, Célestin Monga will put his extensive experience of economist at the service of developing countries. Countries which this institution of the UN has for mission to help to develop industrial policies, to create new industries or to improve those already existing. A mission which addresses firstly Africa, continent most lagging behind in the plan of the industrialization, and of which is native Célestin Monga.

BRM

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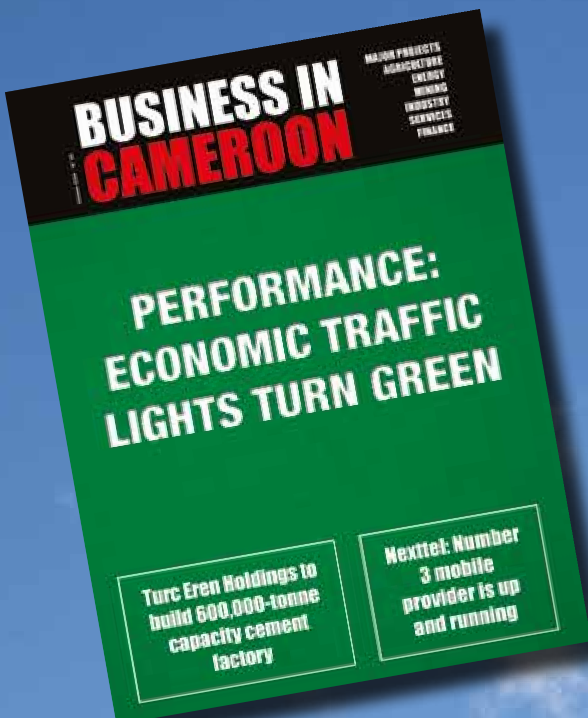

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