


# BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

MAJOR PROJECTS  
AGRICULTURE  
ENERGY  
MINING  
INDUSTRY  
SERVICES  
FINANCE



**YOUNG,  
MANAGERS,  
INVENTIVE,  
AND COMPETENT,  
THEY ARE  
THE PRIDE OF  
CAMEROON**

**Cameroon set  
to produce  
34.6 million B0  
in 2016**

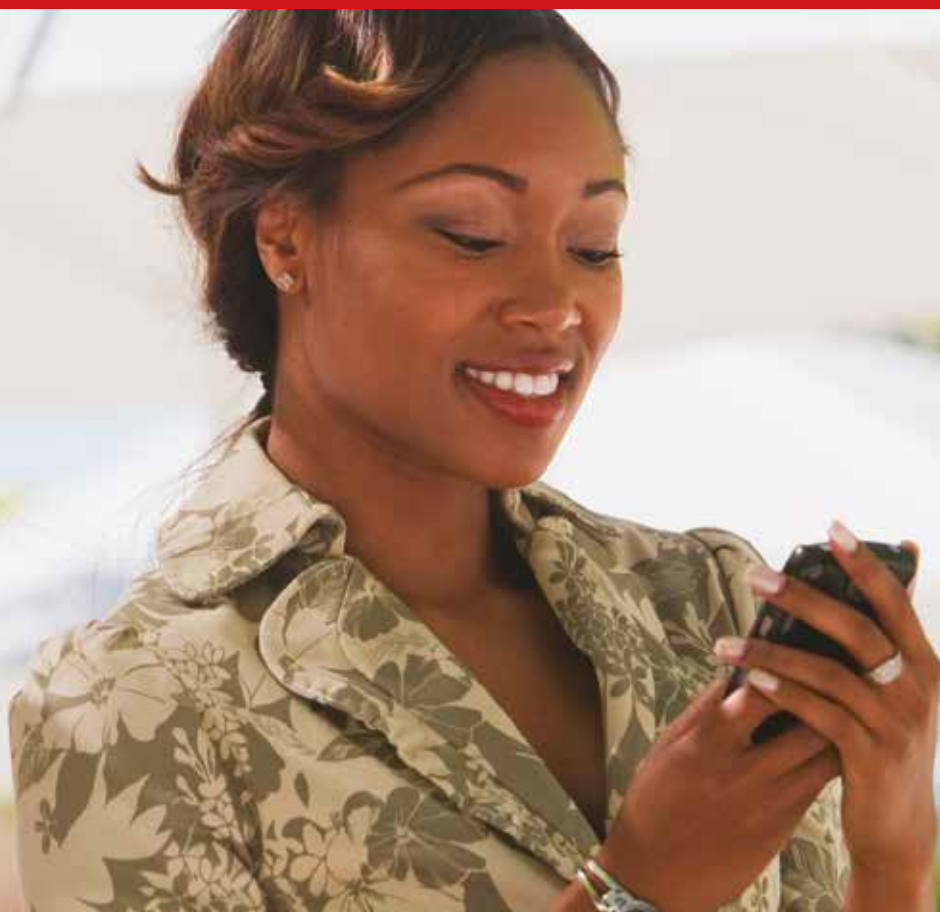
**Jalel Snoussi: “*Tunisian  
industrial presence  
in Cameroon would  
benefit if increased*”**

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**Daily  
business  
news from  
Cameroon**



**IPHONE, IPAD, AMAZON, AND ANDROID APPLICATIONS**



Yasmine Bahri-Domon



## Strong human potential

The dynamism of a country's youth is measured by its capacity to regenerate, create, empower itself and also lead the economy through all the structures and other initiatives of which it has charge. Cameroon has human resources envied by all. This is manifested by the presence of Cameroonians at every level. This strong potential is the pride of the green, red and yellow banner and is destined to play and plays a major role in the economic development of the continent and in companies and initiatives in place. This national pride gives Cameroon, through the image, reputation, path, skills, power and positions of its worthy sons scattered throughout the world, the potential and leadership that Cameroon represents.

The attested entrepreneurial vitality of this Cameroonian youth proves that the country is going through a generational turning point in the management of small and medium enterprises, within companies and that it is at the forefront of innovation of creativity. This generational change will become an important challenge and warrants closer attention, but also requires as much support as possible for these young entrepreneurs who wish to set up businesses or are taking over existing businesses to prosper. It is urgent to capitalise on this grey matter which is the pride of many globally recognised companies. The economic future of Cameroon depends on it.

To remain inactive, or be a passive observer would be the death knell for the dynamism of this growing and prosperous economy.

The Cameroonian government should diligently work at encouraging this human wealth, so it does not hamper economic growth. Because indeed, the economic freshness of this youth enables the creation and development of new markets but also boosts productivity. It is therefore mandatory to capitalise on this human resource, to transform and express this slumbering financial heritage which could result in a loss of income and dampen the creation of wealth and economic development.

# CONTENTS



## **BUSINESS IN CAMEROON**

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09 ▶ A source of talents and competencies

10 ▶ Acha Leke

10 ▶ Bony Dashaco

11 ▶ Arthur Zang

11 ▶ Vera Songwe

12 ▶ Freddy Tchala

12 ▶ Jean Paul Melanga

13 ▶ Cyrille Nkontchou

13 ▶ Ferdinand Mouko

14 ▶ Alain Nteff

14 ▶ Tony Smith

15 ▶ William Nkontchou

15 ▶ Patrick Mandengue

16 ▶ Mamadou Touré

16 ▶ Joseph Jean Aouda

17 ▶ Ismaël Nzoueton

17 ▶ Christian Ngan

18 ▶ Idriss Nguepnang

18 ▶ Alain Nkontchou

19 ▶ *“Off the record, Paul Biya told me ‘Mr. Chinje, you are free to ask me any question’”*

24 ▶ *Lawyer Akere T. Muna: In Cameroon, “we have corruption fighting techniques that I find audacious”*

28 ▶ *“In Cameroon, Tunisian companies plan to invest in the domain of health and medical care”*



## PUBLIC MANAGEMENT **P**<sup>32</sup><sub>38</sub>



## AGRIBUSINESS **P**<sup>39</sup><sub>42</sub>



## FINANCE **P**<sup>43</sup><sub>46</sub>



## TIC **P**<sup>47</sup><sub>49</sub>



## ENERGY **P**<sup>50</sup><sub>56</sub>



## TRANSPORTATION **P**<sup>57</sup><sub>58</sub>



## INDUSTRY **P**<sup>59</sup><sub>63</sub>



## CSR **P**<sup>64</sup>



## MINING **P**<sup>65</sup><sub>66</sub>



# THE CAST



## ROGER NTONGO ONGUÉNÉ



Approximately FCfa 2 billion. That is what Roger Ntongo Onguéné, ex-Managing Director of Aéroports du Cameroun (ADC), and his co-defendants have taken from the coffers of this public capitals company, between 2003 and 2007. For these acts of “embezzlement of public funds in co-action, forgery of business and bank documents, fabrication of evidence and direct participation”;

the ex-boss of ADC had been sentenced by the Special Criminal Court to 30 years in prison.

This is the third sentence given to the ex-managing director of ADC since his dismissal on 15 June 2009. With his three sentences, Roger Ntongo Onguéné is, for the moment, one of the main suspects of the Opération Épervier (Operation Hawk), a “clean hands” operation launched by the Cameroonian Head of State in 2006, in order to track down corrupt officials. Since then, former managing directors, ministers and even an ex-prime minister have been caught.

## CHARLES METOUCK



The Special Criminal Court (TCS), a special court of jurisdiction set up in Cameroon to try public funds embezzlers, sentenced Charles Metouck, who headed the Société nationale de raffinage (Sonara - National Refinery Company) for 11 years to 15 years in

prison. During the delivery of the verdict on 21 October 2015 in Yaoundé, Mr. Metouck was found guilty of misappropriation of public funds, to the tune of FCfa 500 million, when he was president of Cameroon's only refinery.

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence for Charles Metouck within 2 years. Indeed, since 23 April 2013, the ex-managing director of Sonara has been serving a 9-year prison sentence for destruction of evidence. A few months earlier, he had been caught in his office, three days after his dismissal, destroying documents. Accusations that Mr. Metouck continues to deny.

## MICHAËL NDOPING



On 13 October 2015, cocoa producers gathered in the Gics Enima and Ugicam unions, in Nkoétyé, a town located approximately 10 kilometres from the regional capital of Sud-Caméroun, sold 60 tons of cocoa at FCfa 90 million.

What has been presented as an great performance in this county was made possible during a bundled cocoa sales operation organised by the National Cocoa and Coffee Office (ONCC).

According to Michael Ndoping, Managing Director of ONCC, in addition to bolstering the bargaining power of producers against buyers, bundled sales “allow producers to respect best practices in terms of fermentation, drying and packaging of the product”; all things which lead to better prices during the marketing.

## LUC MAGLOIRE MBARGA ATANGANA



In order to forestall shortages and speculation during the end of year season, the minister of Trade, Magloire Mbarga Atanga, has organised a series of meetings with operators from various production sectors, in order to ensure that the market will be regularly

supplied during this period of increased consumption. Economic operators want to be reassuring, indicating that available stocks should be largely in excess of the demand. Thus, the oleaginous sector, announced vegetable oil stocks of approximately 40,000 tons for a monthly demand not reaching 12,000 tons. About 70,000 tons of frozen fish are also available, against a monthly demand of 20,000 tons. The Oil Professional Grouping (GPP) announced the upcoming distribution of 50,000 domestic gas cylinders, for housewives to avoid using oil stoves or wood fire during the end of year celebrations.

## ANDRÉ SIAKA



The Cameroonian subsidiary of the French oil group Total has just launch a competition “*Starter of the year*” 2016, which goal is to “identify, award and support the best company creation or development projects for companies of less than 2 years”. Candidates must be 35 years old

or less. In Cameroon, “*Starter of the year*” 2016 is sponsored by André Siaka. President of the employers association for 12 years, André Siaka, who has been Vice-President then Acting President of Ecobank group, headed Brasseries du Cameroon, subsidiary of the Castel group, for 25 years.

“The winning projects will receive from Total Cameroon the *Starter of the year* 2016 label, financial aid, support from professional partners and a customised marketing campaign to help promote their product or service”, Imrane Barry, the new Managing Director of Total Cameroun, declared during the press conference launch for this competition.

## OMER GATIEN MALÉDY



Impressed with New Generation, a programme from the Cocoa and Coffee Inter-professional Council (CICC) of Cameroon meant to attract young people to the cocoa production and farms in the country, the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) is considering

extending this action to other cocoa producing countries in Africa, Omer Gatien Malédy announced. Indeed, the Executive Secretary of CICC stressed, WCF requested and was granted authorisation to implement this programme in other cocoa producing African countries.

Presented by some experts as the most innovative project in the cocoa sector in the past few years, New Generation has also created followers within the EU commission. According to Mr. Malédy, the EU has expressed a lot of interest for this induction programme to cocoa culture for young people, which could be an excellent alternative to emigration to Europe of young Africans from cocoa and coffee producing countries.



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# A source of talents and competencies

Cameroonian universities generally do not figure in the different rankings of African universities. However, within the most globally known multinational companies or international institutions, Cameroonians, including those who studied in the training schools of the country, are performing as well as their brothers from South Africa, from English-speaking Africa or the Maghreb, entities of the African continent whose universities are often in the international rankings.

Yes! Despite an education system which no-one doubts needs to be improved, there are indeed several Cameroonians who are talented, competent, intelligent and inven-

tive. Many of them sometimes started their education in a small forgotten village, before finding themselves, generally through the support of State grants, in the best universities of the world, where their competencies have even sometimes led them to celebrity.

Through their varied experiences, their great ideas stemming from the desire to change the world, they became worthy ambassadors for Cameroon in various sectors in Europe, in Cameroon itself, in the United States, etc. Through their accomplishments, they contribute to raising high the tricolour flag of their countries at the global exchange meeting. These flag-bearers

for Cameroon are the hope of a country with potentialities to be yet exploited, but whose future could hide many surprises for the most sceptical.

In this feature, we will present a sample of Cameroon's pride, in the diaspora as well as in the country, as part of a casting which will surely be disputed. The goal of our initiative is more to pay homage, without exception, to these young managers, innovators, civil society leaders, etc., who, sometimes unknowingly, are building every day the image of a country still trying to find its way in the concert of nations.

**Brice R. Mbodiam**



## **Acha Leke: the indomitable lion of the American firm McKinsey**

*“Lions on the move”*. Do you know it? Well, this is a report from the famous American firm McKinsey, published in 2010, and which decodes the most dynamic economies of the African continent. Among the authors of this report, of which a new edition is currently being prepared, is Cameroonian Acha Leke, from Fontem, in the North-West region.

Having joined McKinsey’s sub-Saharan African headquarters in Johannesburg in 1998 for an internship, Acha Leke is now one of the 350 consultants of the firm on the African continent. With a degree in electrical engineering from Stanford University, USA, *“his corporate spirit and his bilingualism enabled him to surmount barriers which have stopped many others”*, his fellow countryman Cyrille Nkontchou confided.

At McKinsey, Acha Leke, 42 years, has mostly worked on the Nigerian economy. He even stayed there from 2010 to 2013, for projects which enabled the local tax administration to increase its revenues by approximately FCfa 420 billion. But, this Cameroonian financier is especially presented as one of *“the architects of the Development programmes of Togo, Senegal and Gabon for French speaking countries, and of Kenya Vision 2030 on the English speaking side”*.

In addition to finance and economy, Acha Leke is interested in education issues. Indeed, with his Ghanaian friend Fred Swaniker, he is one of the founders of the African Leadership Academy of Johannesburg, which prepares in two years about one hundred young people from 43 African countries to join the best international universities.

*“There have been three generations of African leaders before us: that of Nyerere and Nkrumah, who gained independence and built our States; that of General Abacha, who destroyed them; and that of Kagamé or Johnson Sirleaf, currently in power, who brought growth. This is now the turn of my generation. We must bring prosperity, particularly through intercontinental exchanges”*, he stressed.



## **Bony Dashaco: the communicator distributing his messages in 22 African countries**

Since 2002, Bony Dashaco is the CEO of the African Center for Marketing, Advertising and Research, or Acmar Media Group, which he fully owns. With a presence in 22 countries of Central and Western Africa, the Acmar Agency is one of the first independent agencies for media consultancy in French speaking Africa.

Based on this presence whose fame keeps on growing on the continent, this Cameroonian communicator is now dreaming of developing his communication company, in order, we learnt, to be able to rival world known agencies who are still dominating the African market.

Considering the performances in recent years, as well as the prospects available to his communication company, Bony Dashaco features, since 2014, in the Choiseul ranking of the 100 African leaders of tomorrow. Ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in Africa, the CEO of Acmar Media Group is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cameroonian of this list.



## Arthur Zang created the Cardiopad, the first African medical tablet

Arthur Zang was made, on 2 July 2015 in Yaoundé, a Knight of the National Order of Valour. He thus becomes, at 28 years, one of the youngest recipients of this award from the Cameroonian State. The medal came with a cheque of FCfa 20 million representing the special encouragement prize from the Head of State.

This money, we learned, will allow the young IT specialist to complete the production of the first 100 copies of his Cardiopad, the first African medical tablet for performing heart tests and remotely send the results, which was set up through the ingenuity of this alumnus of the Ecole Polytechnique de Yaoundé. Though sought by industrialists and bankers wishing to take part in the production and marketing of this device, Arthur Zang decided to give these first copies to the hospitals of his country, already basking in the aura of his invention. An invention which made him, on 24 June 2014 in London, one of the 5 recipients of the "Rolex Awards for Enterprise 2014". 1,800 candidates throughout the world took part in this competition. In 2015, the Cardiopad inventor, who appears in the Choiseul ranking of "African leaders of tomorrow" since 2014, was among the 10 nominees for the 2015 Innovation Prize for Africa, out of 925 entries from 41 African countries. This other competition was organised by the African Innovation Foundation (AIF). During the Africa-Development Forum, organised in February 2015 in Casablanca, Morocco, Himore Medical, the start-up through which Arthur Zang developed his Cardiopad, won the entrepreneurship trophy in the "Innovation" category. So many distinction which do not however deter this "polytechnicien", more than even focused in his goal: to remedy to the lack of cardiologists in Africa through technology.



## Vera Songwe on a pedestal at the World Bank

Director of Operations at the World Bank (WB) for Senegal, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Mauritania since 2011, Vera Songwe, from Cameroon, has become since 2015 the new Regional Director of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) for Western and Central Africa.

In these new functions, even though she will continue to work with the Senegalese authorities who seem to have a particularly limited appreciation for her rigorous methods as Operations Director for the World Bank, Vera Songwe will be more in contact with the private sector, the IFC being the subsidiary of the WB specialised in financing for the private sector.

Having joined the WB in 1998, this Cameroonian features in the 2014 Choiseul ranking of "African leaders of tomorrow", which, according to the Choiseul Institute, "identifies the women and men, 40 years old or less, who embarked upon the path to success and whose ambition is to bring Africa to the highest level of economic, social and cultural development".



## Freddy Tchala: a prominent tele-communicator at MTN

The jury of the African Telecom People (ATP) Awards, which rewards entities and personalities who distinguished themselves in the telecommunications sector, delivered its verdict on 8 October 2015 in Abidjan, on the sidelines of the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the ATP Forum. The Cameroonian Freddy Tchala, Managing Director of MTN Côte d'Ivoire, was named best African telecoms manager for 2015. However, it was his leadership at the head of the Congo Brazza subsidiary of MTN which was rewarded, the president of the jury explained.

Within the MTN group, Freddy is the main flagbearer for Cameroon. By heading the leading telecoms company in Côte d'Ivoire, he starts his 3<sup>rd</sup> rotation as Managing Director for the South African telecoms operator. He has also been Managing Director for MTN in Guinea, from 2008 to 2011. After his Guinean adventure, he was appointed to Congo Brazza and finally Côte d'Ivoire. But before starting this African journey, Freddy Tchala learned his trade at the MTN subsidiary in his country of origin, during 6 years and 4 months. He was there Marketing Director for 3 years, after being Trade Marketing Manager and Custom Segment Manager. A graduate of the Université Catholique d'Afrique Centrale (UCAC), Yaoundé, where he studied marketing, social sciences, finance and econometrics, Freddy Tchala first worked at British American Tobacco. He was at the strategic post of Brand Manager between 1999 and 2002. *"Freddy is an exemplary manager, who masters communication techniques and marketing without forgetting his leadership and very keen intellect"*, Sekou Mohamed, one of his colleagues at MTN Guinée, assures.



## Jean Paul Melanga managed a portfolio of FCfa 1,500 billion at Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi

Almost unknown in his country, Jean Paul Melanga, 39 years old, is however the first Cameroonian (and 19<sup>th</sup> at the continental level) in the 2014 and 2015 rankings of the 100 young African leaders of tomorrow, published every year by the Choiseul Institute. Currently Managing Director of Whitestone Finance, this young Cameroonian has been living in London for 15 years.

He was among others Manager of the African Desk of the Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi between 2002 and 2015. In this capacity, he managed a *"portfolio of USD 3 billion (approximately FCfa 1,500 billion) invested in Africa"*, he recently declared during the prestigious Crans Montana forum, during which he gave a speech. As a reminder, the criteria for the selection of participants to this forum are mainly the quality of their work experience and experience in terms of leadership.

In Cameroon, his country, he has built a school and invested in various other projects. According to Jean Paul Melanga, before creating companies in Africa, it is important to first invest in basic priority infrastructure such as water, electricity, internet, etc., which are sorely lacking on the continent.





## Cyrille Nkontchou puts Private Equity in the service of education in Africa

Headquartered in Johannesburg and London, the assets management company Enko Capital Management, founded by Cameroonian financier Cyrille Nkontchou, announced on 2 March 2015 that its special fund for Africa Enko Africa Private Equity Fund (EAPF) acquired a minority shareholding in the Zambian financial services group Madison Financial Services PLC.

Launched in June 2014, Enko African Private Equity Fund is specialised in investing in private companies which have reached a maturity level covering a large spectrum of economic sectors in Africa. A graduate of Sciences Po Paris and with a Masters obtained at Harvard in 1997, Cyrille Nkontchou and his brother, Alain Nkontchou, were among the first African to have worked in the financial market in London.

A former analyst at Andersen Consulting in France, then at Merrill Lynch in London, Cyrille Nkontchou launched in January 2014 Enko Education Investments, to improve the quality of education in Africa. *“Over 5 years, we want to invest between USD 30 million (FCfa 15 billion) and 40 million (FCfa 20 billion) in private schools to build a real group dedicated to the training of children of the African middle class”*, he confided.

In addition to Amazing Grace Private School, a South African school in which Enko Education Investments made its first investment, the education branch of Enko Capital also has in its portfolio the school group La Gaieté, well known in the Cameroonian capital. This school complex which is among the most prestigious of the country was founded by Justine Nkontchou, the mother of the founder of Enko Capital.



## Ferdinand Mouko in pole position at Danone

Ferdinand Mouko is since this year the Country Manager for Danone in Côte d'Ivoire. This man in his forties, thus leads the biggest subsidiary in sub-Saharan Africa of the Danone group, the global leader of dairy products. An appointment which instantly led to his entry in the 2015 Choiseul ranking of “100 African leaders of tomorrow”, in which he holds the 99<sup>th</sup> position. Before this, the graduate of Essec Douala, the first public Business school in Cameroon, was the Country Manager for Danone in Cameroon, his country, a post he had held since 2010. Before joining Danone, the Business, Management, Marketing and Related Support services MBA holder worked for Nestlé.

Indeed, for more than 3 years, Ferdinand Mouko was the Brand Manager for the Nescafé brand at the Central and Western Africa headquarters of the Swiss food industry group. Before that, between 2008 and 2010, he was Sales Director at Nestlé Cameroon.



## **Alain Nteff: an IT specialist in support of pregnant women**

Young Cameroonian of 23 years, Alain Nteff won the Young African Enterprise Prize awarded during the New York Forum Africa (NYFA), which took place in Libreville, the Gabonese capital, from 28 to 30 August 2015. Through this distinction, this young IT engineer pocketed a reward of €50,000, equivalent to approximately FCfa 32.7 million, to develop his GiftedMom project, which made him known to the world in 2014.

Indeed, that year, Alain Nteff was among the laureates of the Anzisha Award, an international competition at the end of which young African entrepreneurs of less than 22 years, who have developed and implemented innovative solutions to answer social challenges, or have initiated successful enterprises within their communities are rewarded.

Labelled GiftedMom, the discovery of young Alain Nteff is an application through which SMS are sent to pregnant women living in rural areas, in order to remind them the dates of their appointments for antenatal check-ups at the hospital. Thanks to this service, we learned, the number of death following delivery has been substantially lowered in areas where the project is implemented.

The victory at the Anzisha Award enabled the young promoter of the start-up GiftedMom to take part, in 2014, in the World Economic Forum (WEF), the great event for economic operators from around the world. During this meeting, he was able to create a partnership with the food firm Nestlé, who became the “first client” of his start-up, he explained.



## **Tony Smith dreams of creating 20,000 jobs through his tablets and software**

Occupying the 72<sup>nd</sup> position in the top 100 of the 2015 edition of “African leaders of tomorrow” edited by Choiseul Institute, Tony Smith is a young Cameroonian who dreams big. Through Limitless Corporation, the start-up specialised in the conception of tablets, software and smartphones he founded and of which he is the CEO since 2011, he dreams of conquering Africa.

Established in the USA, this ex-Project Manager for Microsoft (2009-2011), has the ambition of creating 20,000 jobs in Africa, in the medium term, thanks to his IT products. Among those, we can find “Limitless Mind Tab 3G”, which he describes himself as “*a mini-laptop launched in 2011, which is combined with a smartphone, all in a small format. It is a product designed and conceived in Cameroon. I hope to turn it into a Cameroonian brand and label*”.

During the 2011 Promote fair in Yaoundé, the Cameroonian capital, Tony Smith said he sold 600 tablets, which are also present on the Congo Brazza market. Sole shareholder of Limitless Corporation until now, Tony Smith, whose devices are being tested for the European market, has teams in Cameroon, China, Hong Kong and in the USA.



## William Nkontchou: a finance whizz at Emerging Capital Partners

Like his brothers Cyrille and Alain, William Nkontchou is also a high-flying financier. Since 2011 (he was then only 38 years old), he has been managing the Parisian office of Emerging Capital Partners (ECP), one of the leaders in the management of investment funds dedicated to Africa, with USD 1.8 billion in assets under management (approximately FCfa 1,000 billion).

The team led by this Cameroonian financier, who has taken an active part in the search for opportunities, structuring, implementation and monitoring of investments for ECP since 2008, *"cumulates a winning experience of more than 10 years in the capital-investment field, through more than 50 acquisitions of holdings in 45 African countries"*. A performance which William Nkontchou owes to an exceptional career in the European finance field.

Indeed, holding an MBA from the Harvard Business School and a graduate from both the Ecole Polytechnique and Ecole des Mines of Paris, this native of West-Cameroon started his career at General Electric. He then worked in succession for Merrill Lynch Investment Banking in London, which he joined in 2001, and Sindicatum, a London corporate bank which he left for ECP. *"The American pension funds, who do not know how to locate African countries on the map have already taken the decision to invest there. I hope to one day see institutional European investors, who for their part know the region, follow the same path"*, William Nkontchou confided to *Les Echos* in 2011, full of confidence for the future of the continent.



## Patrick Mandengué boosts sales at Unilever

At less than 40 years, Patrick Mandengué has already been through 4 multinationals. First, the Swiss food industry group Nestlé where his stay was very short. Then, the telecoms group MTN International, for whose Cameroonian subsidiary he worked for 9 years. Finally, he moved to British Diageo where he worked for 3 years before joining Unilever, a firm present in more than 100 countries worldwide, and where he is currently Director for Central Africa.

In this English-Dutch multinational, which is the fourth biggest food company worldwide in terms of volumes after Nestlé, PepsiCo and Mondelēz International, Patrick Mandengué is in charge of the distribution of mass consumer brands such as Signal, Lipton, Amora, Skip, Cajoline, Rexona, Fruit d'or, Omo, Axe, Knorr... A graduate of Cornell University (Johnson Graduate School of Management) and the University of Pennsylvania (the Wharton School), Patrick Mandengué, who also received a certificate from the famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), also attended the University of Douala (1997-2000). In 2015, he appeared on the subsidiary list of Future African leaders of the Choiseul Institute.



## Mamadou Touré dreams of an Africa built by Africans

A former Investment Manager for sub-Saharan Africa at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), Mamadou Touré left this subsidiary of the World Bank dedicated to financing for the private sector, to focus on Africa 2.0, which he founded and launched in 2010. This Pan African civil society organisation has the ambition of becoming a real coalition of African leaders, for the transformation of the African continent.

Thus, Mr. Touré has been diligently travelling around the world to push the cause of Africa. *"Only 2% of energy projects have failed in Africa, while this figure stands at 10% in the USA"*, Mr. Touré lamented on 26 October 2015 in Abuja during the *"World Pension Summit Africa"*. During this event on pension funds' investments, Mamadou Touré pleaded for a portion of the USD 500 billion available for African pension funds to be invested in the development of infrastructure on the continent.

In addition of his lobbying activities within the Pan African civil society, Mamadou Touré, who previously worked for KPMG France and was an expert in merger-acquisitions at Fortis in France, has appeared in the Choiseul ranking of *"100 African leaders of Tomorrow"* since 2014. He is also the CEO of Ubuntu Capital, a consultancy firm specialised in investments dedicated to Africa.

During the past 15 years, we learned during the *"World Pension Summit Africa"*, Mamadou Touré *"worked on advisory missions and various investment operations in over 26 Africa countries"*, for a total value of transactions exceeding USD 30 billion, equivalent to over FCfa 1,500 billion.

## Joseph Jean Aouda: the Cameroonian building the West African railroad loop

A Herculean task, massive costs. The construction of the West African railroad loop can only be described through superlatives. Not unusual for a project on which Bolloré group will invest approximately FCfa 1,650 billion over the next 10 years. At the centre of this 2,700 km-long railroad infrastructure linking 5 West African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger and Benin), is a Cameroonian civil engineer. His name: Joseph Jean Aouda.

Since June 2014, while Director of fixed installations at Bolloré Africa Logistics Cameroun (BAL), he was appointed *"Manager of rail works as part of the construction of the West African railroad"*. On the different sites of this railroad named *"Blue Line"*, this graduate of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Travaux Publics (ENSTP) and holding an MBA from the France Business School, is coordinating teams of over 1,000 people on a daily basis. Before joining the Cameroonian subsidiary of BAL, Joseph Jean Aouda first worked with the Cameroonian public service, which he then left for Camrail, another subsidiary of the Bolloré group which manages the railroad concession in Cameroon since 1999.





## Ismaël Nzoueton and “Sara” make life easier for companies through a simple clic of the mouse

He is only 33 years old. He is part of the first class graduating from the Institut Universitaire des Technologies (IUT) Fotso Victor of Bandjoun, Western Cameroon, where he received a DUT in Telecom and Network Engineering before continuing his studies at the Université de Paris XIII in France, from 2002. Today, he is the CEO of I-Dispo, a start-up launched in 2010, which offers concierge service and has a new generation of personal assistant called “Sara”.

This project was put in place after this Cameroonian telecommunication specialist did a 4-month internship at the Founder Institute, located in Silicon Valley in the USA. He had then just been designated winner of the Strategy National Award in France. In 2011, his start-up was chosen as offering “*the most innovative service of the year*”, during the “*Grand Prix de l’Innovation de Paris*” organised by the Paris town council.

A former Microsoft and British Telecom employee, Ismaël Nzoueton, who is on the subsidiary list of “African Leaders of tomorrow”, is nowadays devoting his time entirely to his start-up which has representations in Europe, Africa and the USA. Through its innovation and efficiency, I-Dispo today has in its portfolio clients such as Microsoft, Renault, SFR, Avril, Orange, MTN and Airtel. Since 2012, I-Dispo has opened a subsidiary in Cameroon.



## Christian Ngan: king of cosmetics made in Africa

Born in 1983, Christian Ngan is an industrialist and a financier. He is the CEO of the Madlyn Cazalis Group, a company designing and producing natural beauty products made from African raw materials. Madlyn Cazalis Group operates in Central Africa with over 50 distributors (pharmacies, beauty institutes and stores). He also owns Goldsky Partners, a subsidiary of Madlyn Cazalis specialised in strategic and financial support for African companies.

Before launching his own group which is also active in real estate, Christian Ngan first worked for Société Générale, then as Investment Director at Findercod, an Parisian investment bank which he joined after his studies at Panthéon Assa, then Panthéon Sorbonne.

In 2014 and 2015, this young Cameroonian businessman was chosen by the American magazine Forbes, as one of the 30 young most promising entrepreneurs in Africa. Since 2014, he has been featured in the subsidiary list of the Choiseul African Leaders of the future. Recently designated Young Business Leader of the Year in Western Africa, Christian Ngan is also among the top 35 young businessmen under 35 for 2014, a ranking established by Young People in International Affairs (YPIA).



## Idriss Nguenpnang dreams of his Tchop et Yamo as a Cameroonian Mc Donald's

*"I have been asked what I would say to Bill Gates if I met him. I replied that I will make him taste our 'bean doughnut' to know his opinion of it",* Idriss Nguenpnang confided to Le Monde Afrique. After working in France, Germany and Switzerland, this Cameroonian of 38 years went back to his country and decided to launch Tchop et Yamo (eat and enjoy in local slang, Editor's note) in June 2011.

This is a fast food chain with restaurants in Douala and Yaoundé, the two main cities in Cameroon. In these restaurants, the main menu is the beignets-haricots-bouillie (BHB – doughnut made from boiled beans), a very popular local recipe that the Tchop et Yamo shops have taken from the streets of the big cities and villages and transplanted to modern, well decorated settings with free Wi-Fi connection.

Since the opening of these restaurants, the idea has been very well received, to the point that the promoter is now dreaming of quick expansion. Indeed, Idriss Nguenpnang has the ambition of opening a new location every quarter, over a period of 8 years. Which would in total give him 32 restaurants, with each employing 20 people. A quick calculation and this means that, the expansion programme of Tchop et Yamo should generate over 500 jobs during the next decade, against 70 employees currently. To make this dream a reality, the promoter of the Cameroonian McDonald's is negotiating opening his capital to the Société Africaine de Participation (SAPA), a investment company owned by the Cameroonian banking group Afriland First Bank.



## Alain Nkontchou: the Pan African banker

The oldest of the Nkontchou siblings, which has 4 financiers including his sister Mireille, Alain Nkontchou was the one who passed the finance bug to his brothers William and Cyrille. With a strong experience gained over many years in the London financial world, Alain Nkontchou has been since June 2015 part of the Board of Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI), the parent company of the Pan African banking group Ecobank. At 51 years, Managing Director of Enko Capital Management LLP, an asset management company focusing on investment opportunities in Africa, headquartered in London and Johannesburg and co-founded with his Cyrille Nkontchou. Ex-Managing Director of Macro Global Trading Group at Crédit Suisse, in London, Alain Nkontchou is among the first African to have gone into the capital markets in London in the 80's. This financier who is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cameroonian to sit on the Board of ETI after the famous André Siaka, studied electronic engineering (Université de Paris VI, Supélec and Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris), finance and accounting. He was General Manager at JP Morgan and Chase & Co, still in London. He was at the time only 30 years old.

# ***“Off the record, Paul Biya told me ‘Mr. Chinje, you are free to ask me any question’ ”***

**Meeting with Eric Chinje, President of the African Media Initiative. The ex-Editor in Chief at CRTV was one of the few Cameroonians who periodically interviewed President Paul BIYA. He reveals what was behind the scenes of these interviews and reviews his rich career at CRTV as Editor in Chief, at the World Bank as the Bank's spokesperson on African issues, at the African Development Bank as Director of Foreign Affairs and Communication, and at the Mo Ibrahim Foundation as Strategic Communications Director.**

**Business in Cameroon:** Let us talk about your career as a journalist in Cameroon. In a recent interview, you said that back then, President Paul Biya knew how to use the television to communicate. Why does he not do the same these days?

**Eric Chinje:** When I was here in Cameroon, the only link with the population was CRTV. It was easy to go through one media only and reach the population. I am sure that the President is looking at the media landscape and wondering: who can help me reach the citizens?

**BIC:** Is CRTV not able to be this link between the President and his people?

**EC:** You will force me to say things I do not want to say. I do not believe that all the Cameroonian people still watch CRTV today like they did back in the day. Nowadays, there is a wide choice of television channels, even foreign channels. To reach the population, the President must gather all media. Before, it was much easier.

**BIC:** So, the president should do nothing because it is too complicated to work with many media outlets?

**EC:** No. There are press conferences for the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, etc. This is what must be done now, to reach

all citizens. It is not possible to only favour CRTV. The channel has its trusted viewership. You only need to gather CRTV, Canal 2, STV, Equinoxe and the others to reach almost all the population.

**BIC:** Why, in your opinion, is President Paul Biya not giving more interviews or press conferences?

**EC:** Maybe because it is more difficult to organise.

**BIC:** Is it because it is difficult that he should not do it?

**EC:** No, not at all. He must absolutely do it. Why does he not do it with CRTV anymore? I think because CRTV is not what it used to be when there was less competition.

**BIC:** Is it not because he is not the same man anymore? According to you, who has been very close to him, is it not because he has changed?

**EC:** The goal of the President was to reach the population.

**BIC:** Are the people still his priority?

**EC:** I have not met the president for about 20 years. I do not know what he thinks about this contact with the population.



**BIC:** Young journalists and young Cameroonians would like to know how the interviews with Paul Biya were prepared. Was it the president who requested for the interview?

**EC:** It was simple. There was nothing in particular. I was called when the President was available and I would go. I would check with some friends and colleagues to know what the main issues were at the time. And the President's entourage back then would tell me such and

such topic was off limits. As soon as I would see the President, I would say Mr. President, your advisers have asked me not to ask such and such question. He would reply: "No, no. Let's go! Mr. Chinje, you are free to ask me any question you have". That is how it went.

**BIC:** If you had to go through it again, would you feel more free?

**EC:** Absolutely! Even back then, before going to meet the President, I

would sometimes reflect. I would tell myself, I have a unique opportunity to bring the attention of the president to some things that are not going well. My colleagues Barbara Etoa, Alain Belibi and the others are still around! They can confirm it. I would ask them what question they thought I should ask the President.

**BIC:** If you had the opportunity to interview President Paul Biya



"As soon as I would see the president, I would say Mr. President, your advisers have asked me not to ask such and such question."

*ble of leading this country. After you, what will happen? Leave power and support the person who will replace you. Take the high road and do not let these phonies who want to protect their interests continue to deceive you by leading you in the wrong direction. Leave the seat for someone else".* That is a question I would like to put to the President.

**BIC:** Do you think he will hear you?  
**EC:** President Biya is a very intelligent person! I have had some experiences with this president and

Mendo Ze who purchased my plane ticket. So I left. I did 3 months at CNN. CNN wanted to recruit me. I said no! I could have stayed. I said a lot of things have happened in my country and I absolutely needed to go back. That was still in 1991. One week before my return to Cameroon, I got a call from Harvard University, offering me a scholarship. I was not particularly excited. First of all, I ask the gentleman *"I never applied for a scholarship. How can I be granted a scholarship when I did not apply for it?"* I tried in vain to come

***"I would say to him: 'Mr. President, if you love the country, prepare it for the time after you.'"***

these experiences comfort me in the thought that Biya, deep down, is a democrat. I could tell you these anecdotes, but it would take too much time. The President has done some things which reassure me.

**BIC:** What are these things?

**EC:** (Silence). Wait, you will read my book.

**BIC:** How often did you interview President Biya?

**EC:** I do not remember exactly, but I think we had on average 2 interviews per year. But, there were years when it was only one interview.

**BIC:** You left Cameroon in 1991. Was it an involuntary departure?

**EC:** Yes. Absolutely. I did everything not to leave the country. I can tell you about that very quickly. I left here to go to CNN. CNN invited me for 3 months. After an intensive year (1990 beginning 1991), I was very tired. I asked the Managing Director at the time Mr. Gervais Mendo Ze, if I could go out of the country to rest. He told me Yes that it was a good idea. And it was even

back. My departure from Cameroon was planned by God, because I did not do it.

**BIC:** How did the transition from the World Bank to AfDB come about?

**EC:** I must say, I was getting a bit tired with the methods of intervention of the World Bank in Africa. I thought the African Development BANK only has Africa as its scope. If I go there, I will only deal with Africa. Unfortunately, once I joined the AfDB, I realised that AfDB is a kind World Bank on its own and I was not performing as well as at the WB. For me, the development of Africa was not at the heart of AfDB's concerns.

**BIC:** How do you explain that?

**EC:** After a few months, I was convinced that the AfDB's president I met when I got there, Mr. Omar Kabbaj, was not interested at all in the development of Africa and more precisely sub-Saharan Africa. He is Moroccan. During the 10 years he led this institution, he managed to decrease the commit-

nowadays, and you were told tomorrow, you are interviewing him, what questions would you ask him?  
**EC:** I really hoped for it, but I did not get in touch with his advisers. I would say to him: *"Mr. President, if you love the country, prepare it for the time after you. Leave power and see how Cameroon runs. If you love this country, do it! Do you only want to leave when Cameroonians no longer love you? People come to tell you that you are the only one capa-*



ment of the managers in the institution. I was totally discouraged.

**BIC:** Based on what you are saying, you were at odds with the work methods of these international organisations. How is Africa seen in these different organisations?

**EC:** Africa is not respected. I would often say it to my colleagues. 75% of those who worked at the World Bank were bureaucrats who were looking for and found work. And every day, they are fighting to go higher up in the system. 10% are

the intellectually curious who want to see how development theories are applied throughout various countries. Those really interested in development amount to only 5%. Africa does not represent much for those guys at World Bank. The World Bank does not respect Africa. It is true that today some Africans have reached positions of responsibility and it is getting better. But, generally, the World Bank was coming to Africa to impose its laws.

The reason we were giving out was

*"Cameroonians will not eternally accept what the World Bank is saying. We must impose our policies on the WB. Not the opposite."*

that, in Latin America, development projects were good enough to be financed, whereas in Africa, we could never find anything and we had to do everything ourselves. Which was untrue. It was because the African managers would easily agree. The WB would come with little funding. Very quickly, they would only find ministers who were looking at this money and not at all interested in all the conditions the WB was asking for and they would sign.

**BIC:** Did this impression change with the African managers that are now at the WB?

**EC:** Absolutely, the perception is changing. Cameroonians will not eternally accept what the World Bank is saying. We must impose our policies on the WB. Not the opposite. They must not come and say, you will build a road in this place. Let us really prepare our projects well and go to the WB. This becomes our project.

***"75% of those who worked at the World Bank were bureaucrats who were looking for and found work. And every day, they are fighting to go higher up in the system."***

**BIC:** What motivated you to leave AfDB for the Mo Ibrahim Foundation?

**EC:** Mo Ibrahim and his people were contacting me for months. What really interested me was the Mo Ibrahim Governance Index. That document was of real interest to me. I thought that if we took this document and worked on it with African civil society, with the media and public authorities it was possible to improve governance. I developed a strategy on this document. But, when I joined the Foundation, Mo Ibrahim was no more interested by this work. After 3 months, I started to think it had been a mistake on my part. After one year, I left. But we kept a very good rapport. We parted on very good terms.

**BIC:** So how did you find yourself at AMI?

**EC:** The position at the African Media Initiative is one I accepted with a lot of difficulty. Because I knew that it would require a lot of from me. And this is what has been happening. 2 weeks ago, I had a problem of overexertion in Paris. Thankfully, I was immediately admitted. It is a position requiring 18 hours of work per day. I did not know that at my age, I would be working like that. But, I am passionate in what I do.

**BIC:** What is the MOST important advice you could give to young Cameroonians and young Africans?

**EC:** Two things maybe. First, stop complaining. Act. When I joined the company I am currently heading, it was at a non-existent level. Not a penny in the coffers of this institution. There were no investors. But, I transformed the company. Everybody was asking me, why are you staying here? Right now, we are taking off. Because I said, it is the idea before the financing. I worked on the idea. I had nothing. I have been working without salary for 15 months at AMI. It is a challenge I put to myself. I will bring

AMI to the level where AMI can pay me a salary and clear my arrears which amount to FCfa 100 million. And AMI will give me that one day thanks to my efforts. So, the idea comes first. Search for and work on your concept which will make a difference in your environment, the money will follow.

The second piece of advice is activism. You must remain committed, but conscious. Education in Came-

what of the young Cameroonian who is worth nothing?

**EC:** Absolutely! At his level, he can continue with smaller actions. I do not get discouraged. As we are speaking, those very friends I worked with have another project at the Office of the Prime Minister. We are fighting for the USA to give Cameroon a humanity monument. It is about the creation of A small town in Cameroon with hotels and

***“Unfortunately, once I joined the AfDB, I realised that AfDB is a kind World Bank on its own and I was not performing as well as at the WB. For me, the development of Africa was not at the heart of AfDB’s concerns.”***

roon is bad. Let us be honest about it. But let us say it while bringing up ideas and solutions. There is no point in saying it only because you want to find fault with a minister or a government.

**BIC:** What are your projects for Cameroon?

**EC:** I always have projects for Cameroon. We brought some Americans to Cameroon who did their DNA test and found out they had a Cameroonian origin. We had a whole programme. We must have had already close to 3,000 “Americans” who have already visited Cameroon.

**BIC:** What did not work?

**EC:** Some people prevented us from moving forward in the project, despite the support of the President of the Republic.

**BIC:** If you, Mr. Chinje, people prevent you from moving forward,

other infrastructure. We have already found the land with the help of the Prime Minister who supports the project. The Head of State also supports the project. We are not stopping. This is part of the actions we are promoting to support Cameroon.

**BIC:** For when the return to Cameroon?

**EC:** (Silence) I do not know. When the Board of AMI reached out for this position, I told them one year, because I want to go back home and invest myself in the life of my country. Once there, I found what I found and I had to tell them that I would stay another three years. I will be there until 2017.

**BIC:** After that, we will be waiting for you in Cameroon...

**EC:** I hope so.

Interview by Beaugas-Orain Djoyum  
et Assongmo Necdem

# Lawyer Akere T. Muna: In Cameroon, *“we have corruption fighting techniques that I find audacious”*

The famous cameroonian lawyer, ex-Vice President of Transparency International, and ex-President of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (Ecosoc) of the African Union (AU), maintains that Cameroon is and remains a country full of potential, despite occasional governance or corruption problems.

Business in Cameroon: Why a lawyer such like you, active in the Governance and justice fields, is involved in the ICT sector to the point of organising a forum on this topic on 19 November in Yaoundé?  
Akere T. Muna: I believe that ICT can play a role in governance. I got interested in ICT because of the eProcurement programme of the government implemented by the ministry of Public Procurement. This is in truth something I have been asking for a long time. The eProcurement system will abate all doubts connected to the national public contract awarding system. You have recently been made aware that some civil servants have four registration numbers. In my opinion, ICT could solve at least 60% of the governance issues. Including the associated corruption. That is why I am interested in this matter.

On the legal side, for example, I sometimes send a lawyer from Yaoundé to Maroua to get a court order. However, in the USA, most court orders are available online. From Cameroon, I can be in Yaoundé and get the court orders from the USA in minutes. Do I have to leave Yaoundé to file some documents in Maroua? Only to get a response after two weeks. However, I could easily do it all online. ICT are

BC: In your opinion, how should the government support young innovators in the ICT field?

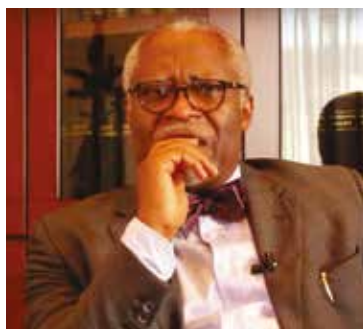
ATM: Every time the Indomitable Lions or Lionesses are playing, we hear about bonus payment problems. What is preventing us from rewarding excellence without problems? We should have a real system which values excellence in youth in various sectors of sports, artistry, etc. This is what pushes

***“We should have a real system which values excellence in youth in various sectors of sports, artistry, etc. This is what pushes people to improve.”***

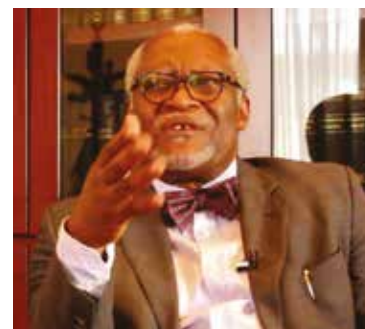
here to make like easier. How can ICT help us? How can ICT become a growth engine?  
Having ministries invest in a unique and common way in the ICT sector will improve the current situation. I am not an ICT expert, but we are not inventing anything. Through this forum, we hope to determine what we can do immediately to develop the Cameroonian potential in terms of ICT.

people to improve. When we see what people can do with ICT today throughout the world, one can wonder why we are not really supporting our innovators. What are the IT software we have created, the applications? We have streets still without names. How could ICT help us manage that? There are Cameroonians who know how to do that, who can find solutions to these issues. These are so many





Akere T. Muna: "ICT are here to make life easier. How can ICT help us? How can ICT become a growth engine?"



questions which should interest the public authorities.

**BC:** At the end of the forum on ICT you organised, you suggested harmonising the ministries policies in term of ICT. What could be the impact of such a measure?

**ATM:** Let us take an example! In the identification process for mobile telephone subscribers, if a Cameroonian registered with a fake identification card, how would the mobile operator know whether it is a fake ID? If there was a device enabling MTN or Orange to enter your name in the system for verification, it would be so much easier. What is preventing from having a system where the national ID card issued by the police, the car registration, the land title if you have one, the driving licence, your taxpayer ID, all issued by different ministries, will be available on a unique platform. If someone goes to the town hall to request for a death certificate to take the money from your salary, the database will notify that a salary is being paid to a dead person and the payment will be interrupted.

I just attended an event organised by the Medical Association of Cameroon and its president said that there are doctors who have signed death certificates to enable families to have access to life insurance premiums. There are people who falsify medical certificates stating that people were sick when they were not. When there is a system where ministries are interconnected, it is difficult for fraudsters to manage

through it and makes life very easy for people who comply normally.

Especially when the government has a ministry in charge of primary education, another in charge of secondary education, another in charge of tertiary education, etc. I am sure that there is a way to interconnect these ministries to facilitate the life of regular citizens who are being somehow penalised. I think that IT and ICT will really help us a lot.

**BC:** Should the populations be afraid of ICT because of personal data which are today available to the digital economy operators?

**ATM:** It is true that some of my generation are afraid of ICT. I remember when in 1973 I was coming back to Cameroon for holidays. I brought a small calculator from

Personally, I think if we do not catch up with ICT now, we will be left behind. It is not because people do not master ICT that they should think it is not important. It is dangerous to think like that. We must have a clear policy in terms of ICT and we have to put the experts in charge of it. It is true that there will always be corrupt people to be weary of. We just have to take the necessary measures in order to avoid the mess they create.

**BC:** You have been to many countries thanks to your various international positions. What are the best initiatives in terms of ICT which left an impression on you and which could be replicated in Cameroon?

**ATM:** I will the example of Rwanda, starting with a story. It was on a

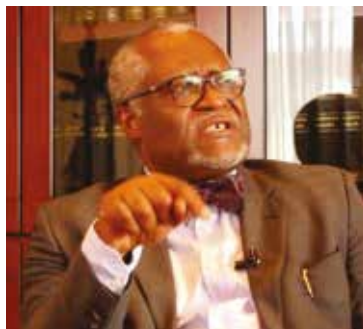
***"If you send me to the USA to talk to businessmen and encourage them to come invest in Cameroon, I will go."***

the USA for my father. He took 10 digits that he added and multiplied by working it out by hand, and then did the same operations with the calculator. Only after that did he tell me: "Wow! Your machine is really correct!" You see, this is a culture, a period, a reflex. I simply think that there is a learning process to go through. And we are lucky that people become confident when they see that others are getting with thanks to ICT.

Saturday and I had to urgently go to Rwanda on Monday for an important appointment with President Kagame. While I was wondering whom I should contact directly to quickly get a visa, I was simply told: "Go online and request for a visa". I then applied only and on Monday, once at the airport, paid USD 50 and that was it. It was extraordinary! In less than 10 minutes, all was done. We could implement this system in Cameroon. They already

have it in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and recently Gabon.

The other thing that impressed me in Rwanda, it is the declared intention of the public authorities to follow a certain path. This helps the populations understand that this is the way forward. And when a decision is taken, it is implemented. In Cameroon, we are constantly under the impression that when a policy is set up, at the beginning, it is optional. When people see that it is optional, they start complaining, when they complain, it is decided to suspend the policy for one or two years, and then we give it up. You know for example that in Rwanda



there are no plastic bags. When you get to the airport with a plastic bag, they take it away. You will not find a single plastic bag in Rwanda. Kigali is very clean!

**BC: In the current state of affairs, shouldn't the State allow other mobile operators to install optic fibre?**

**ATM:** In the age of competition, a player cannot be a referee. If Camtel is building the optic fibre infrastructure and at the same time marketing it to operators and subscribers and it has its preferred partners, it is not possible. The higher the cost of the optic fibre, the higher the price charged to the user. There is a need to open the market or even create as suggested by some experts, a structure to manage the infrastructure. There is a need for real referees.

**BC: Is the government policy in terms of ICT likely to encourage investments in this sector?**

**ATM:** No. The biggest issue I have is when I am talking with foreign investors. They always say they do not understand Cameroon. I had a client who wanted to quickly set up a company because he had a application to make. We were ready in 2-3 days. The statutes were ready, the notary worked fast. But, when it was time to get the registration certificate, we were told: "No. This is a foreign company, you need to get approval". We go back to the Trade Ministry to apply for the approval. We lost 2-3 weeks.

At the same time, the government is fighting to get a better ranking in the Doing Business. This year,



**Lawyer Akere T. Muna:**  
*"Personally, I think if we do not catch up with ICT now, we will be left behind."*

we went further down the ranking. I wonder how one can want one thing and its opposite at the same. There are countries such as Senegal and many more, where in 24 hours you can register your company. It is possible. What is a company really? It is just about being identified as practicing a certain type of trade. When it is time to pay taxes, they know who you are and what you do. You can know who the promoters are.

**BIC: You are known as the person who put Cameroon twice in a row as the most corrupt country in the world in 1998, while you were working with Transparency International, which even earned you some enemies. What is today your view on the progress of the fight against corruption in Cameroon?**

**ATM:** When we were first ranked as the world's most corrupt country, this ranking led me to create the

Cameroonian section of Transparency International. Then, we were certified, we went to the Board to be elected Vice-President of Transparency International. In the very first ranking, 99 countries were listed. We were the first, the most corrupt country. This happened 2 or 3 more times. It was at this time that I invited in Cameroon Dr Heigen who was then president of TI. When I was talking about corruption in Cameroon, I was labelled as an opponent to the regime. I lost clients who were here to deal with the State. But, I persisted and we created the corruption fighting ad hoc Committee.



I even asked why it was called a committee, I was told that "corruption is something that passes". Today, we have a structure specialised in the fight against corruption created by a law. It is a good thing. If there is assessment to make, I would say that we moved from a period where we putting our heads in the sand to a period where we acknowledge that it is a major problem, an obstacle to development. Even more, we have corruption fighting techniques which I find audacious. When I travel abroad, I always defy people to show me a country in the world with as many senior personalities in prison.

In prison in Cameroon, there is a prime minister, a General Secretary of the Office of the President, many ministers, managing directors of public companies, etc. I do not know any African country with as many senior officers in prison. This thus proves that there is a desire to

fight against this plague. But I think the system remains the same. We have a systemic problem and if the problem is not solved, we will remain in the same place. We are progressing on the sanction level, but if the level remains the same, we will still be dishing out sanctions. For example there is article 66 of the constitution on the disclosure of assets which is still not been applied after 20 years. I think we should concentrate more on prevention and prevention happens through a thorough cleaning of the system. We need to audit the system to be able to move forward. Otherwise, the same causes will generate the same effects.

**BIC:** What do you say to those who think that jailed senior officials are political prisoners and not corrupt people, or that they have misappropriated assets of the State?

**ATM:** My answer to this question is simple. If you think you are in a bad political situation, be careful, because when we start looking for corrupt people, this will be a good reason to catch you. I had a client about 25 years ago. I went to visit him in prison, I found him handcuffed and shaved. He was a respected senior official in prison. In fact, he was drinking too much and had reprimanded the prison guards. He was then treated as the violent prisoners. Before that, he was subjected to a body search. What was found in his pocket? A pack of Indian hemp. When I met, I told him: "according to you, you are here because of political reasons. But the guys here who are accusing you have a very good reason now with this pack of cannabis. They are forgetting the accusations and taking this to condemn you".

So, it is true, in this kind of environment, if you are in a bad position with the power, you will be caught. It is possible that some people are there for political reasons. I do not know. But, there are real cases of corruption and in such an environ-

ment, you have to be careful (...) I am not saying that it is too bad for those innocents who have been jailed. I am saying that it is impossible to not have such cases (...)

**BIC:** How does one move from being a lawyer abhorred by the State, because he denounces corruption, to being a lawyer the interests of the Cameroonian State in the USA?

**ATM:** I am a lawyer and if a client retains my services, I do my job. But, many Cameroonian prisoners have asked me to defend them, I refused. Because, in the current state of affairs, I am Cameroon's lawyer. So, I cannot be lawyer of Cameroon on the one hand and defend those who have accused of

eroon) to the Boulevard du 20 Mai. I see all these young job seekers. If you send me to the USA to talk to businessmen and encourage them to come invest in Cameroon, I will go. Our country is a country full of potential. And it is true! I will tell them. And if I am told, your country is corrupt, I will reply that is why I want you to come.

Because, the more you will invest in a country, the more people you will reach, the more the public authorities will think that if you leave, the losses that the Treasury will account for due to taxes will increase. So this will create a bigger lobby. If big companies like Google, Facebook and others get established in Cameroon, and 30% of taxes come

***"I do not know any African country with as many senior officers in prison. This thus proves that there is a desire to fight against this plague [of corruption]. But I think the system remains the same."***

misappropriation of public funds on the other hand. Moreover, I had similar problems in Nigeria. At the beginning of my work with Transparency International, I had problems with TI. Because, I was retained by the Abacha family in the trials against Mohamed Abacha. I had to drop the case three months later simply because of this conflict of interest.

So, as a legal defence for Cameroon, we are working without problems. I do not have any issues with the activities I partake in as a militant of the civil society and the practice of my profession of lawyer. A journalist once asked me: "How can you be part of delegation from the State of Cameroon going to the USA to convince investors to come to Cameroon?". I replied: "you have completely missed the point". I go out every 20 May (Labour day in Cam-

eroon) to the Boulevard du 20 Mai. I see all these young job seekers. If you send me to the USA to talk to businessmen and encourage them to come invest in Cameroon, I will go. Our country is a country full of potential. And it is true! I will tell them. And if I am told, your country is corrupt, I will reply that is why I want you to come.

Because, the more you will invest in a country, the more people you will reach, the more the public authorities will think that if you leave, the losses that the Treasury will account for due to taxes will increase. So this will create a bigger lobby. If big companies like Google, Facebook and others get established in Cameroon, and 30% of taxes come

Propos recueillis par  
Beaugas-OrainDjoyum

# ***“In Cameroon, Tunisian companies plan to invest in the domain of health and medical care”***

Interview with Jalel Snoussi, the new Tunisian Ambassador to Cameroon who explains why the Cameroonian health sector interests Tunisian companies so much. He takes the opportunity to describe the state of cooperation between the two countries.

**Business in Cameroon:** The Tunisian laboratories Teriak are re-launching production of the Cameroonian laboratory Cinpharm, of which they have taken control. What experience can Tunisia bring to Cameroon in this domain?

Jalel Snoussi: Teriak Laboratories, subsidiary of the “Kilani” group, a major player in the Tunisian pharmaceutical industry, has already come to Cameroon by investing in two big projects in Douala. The first is an industrial venture, buying the pharmaceutical production unit Cinpharm. And the second commercially oriented, by investing in a cosmetic products marketing unit. These two units will soon be inaugurated.

Thus, the industrial and commercial installation of Teriak in Cameroon is not a proposal, it is in fact a reality. And I believe that its officials are not intending to stop there. Other projects are being studied, in Cameroon or in the region, in the sectors of production and distribution of pharmaceutical products as well as at the level of medical marketing.



Jalel Snoussi, Tunisian Ambassador to Cameroon.

Already, the group plans to set up, in time, a second unit of cosmetic product marketing in Yaoundé.

The investments of the “Kilani” group have thus opened the way, which will incite other Tunisian companies to establish themselves in Cameroon and to invest in co-operation with Cameroonian partners. In the same or other sectors, the spread of sectors is wide.

**BIC:** What is the special feature of the Tunisian pharmaceutical industry?

JS: The pharmaceutical industry in Tunisia is developed and flourish-

ing. Its expertise and know-how in this domain are recognized worldwide, in the sense that the country exports throughout the world according to international norms which have stringent requirement levels. Tunisia has 40 production units in respect of human medicine and six units in the veterinary medicine sector. Local, public or private production covers 60% of national needs.

The reputation of medical care in Tunisia relies on three principle pillars: Medical know-how associated with quality service, the comparative competitive cost with the



guarantee of high level care and cutting edge hospital infrastructure. Indeed, in terms of infrastructure, Tunisia has 85 highly equipped and qualified clinics with 4,200 beds receiving more than 400,000 patients each year for different types of medical care, of which 80% are Africans and 20% Westerners, notably Europeans.

What's more to date, in view of all the aforementioned advantages, Tunisia is the foremost destination in Africa in matters of health care, world leader in heart surgery as well as one of the top places for plastic surgery.

**BIC:** One notes that Tunisian companies that are active in the health domain are more and more interested in Cameroon in the last two years. Your first official outing as ambassador to Cameroon was moreover during the health professional days organized in Cameroon. What explains this attraction of Tunisian health professionals for Cameroon, from your point of view?

**JS:** In organizing *the Tunisian professional days in the domain of health care in Cameroon*, in June 2015 respectively in Yaoundé and Douala, the objective was to identify cooperation opportunities, establish a partnership framework between Tunisian and Cameroonian health professionals and to conclude marketing agreements for services, equipment and products, in the mutual interest of both parties. It was also a question of exploring investment opportunities, of encouraging the exchange of experiences, of prospecting mutually advantageous new paths and examining the possibility of training, retraining and development for Cameroonian students and young doctors, and putting Tunisian expertise and know-how in matters of medical care at the disposition of Cameroon.

The principle objective being to establish, for the long term, a plat-

form of cooperation and partnership between professionals and Tunisian and Cameroonian establishments operating in the health sector. In any case, just the fact that the professionals of the two countries met is already a step forward. One cannot speak of cooperation without an initial contact. This has been done and well done. It is now up to the professionals to transform the test and achieve tangible results. Thus, the mission cleared the way, which is in itself a success.

**BIC:** Precisely, what is your assessment of Cameroon-Tunisia cooperation on the economic and political level?

**JS:** First of all, on the economic level, relations are progressing in commercial exchange matters, investment, and market development. On both sides, there is the will to progress, to develop relations and broaden the framework of cooperation. But, at this stage, the results are mixed. The potential above all commercially is under exploited and would gain in being better developed.

Then on the political level, although there is similarity in the positioning of the two countries on major international or regional issues, one can objectively observe that political consultation is not at the same level as bi-lateral economic cooperation. There are few high level visits.

One can therefore say, on the economic as well as the political level that a lot more needs to be done. There is still a long way to go to set up an optimal framework of cooperation, in conformity with the existing potential between the two countries.

**BIC:** To date, what are the main companies in your country (big and SME) which invest in Cameroon?

**JS:** Apart from the investments of the "Kilani" group, which I spoke of earlier, and the Tunisian consulting firms established in Cameroon, one

must admit that the range of Tunisian investors is not large, in fact it is below the opportunities the Cameroonian market offers.

Tunisian industrial presence in Cameroon would benefit if increased. One must keep in mind that for all investment, there is really no secret. It is all a question of the capacity of investment, of opportunity, of partnership and business environment. Perhaps potential Tunisian investors lacked means or missed opportunities or partnerships, truly ready to collaborate.

But, things are beginning to move. Aside from Teriak Laboratories, I know that certain Tunisian companies plan to invest in the domain of health and medical care, by constructing clinics, polyclinics and healthcare units, above all if Cameroonian partners are available and prepared to be associated. Also, other investors are currently studying partnership projects and joint-ventures in the sectors of agribusiness and tourism. All this is to say that things are moving.

**BIC:** What is your opinion on the business environment in Cameroon?

**JS:** In every country, the business environment is dependent on different factors on the political, economic, legislative, institutional, infrastructural, professional and technical sides. For Cameroon, the situation remains to be perfected. It is clear that the government is surely taking steps to improve national business environment indicators, but there is no getting away from the statistics that give an idea of the scale of the work.

I cite one single figure to place the Cameroonian business environment on the world scale. In the 2015 ranking of the World Bank and out of 189 countries identified, Cameroon has fallen back between 2014 and 2015 on two principle indicators: on the first criterion, that is business environment, Came-

room has lost 10 places, dropping from 148<sup>th</sup> position to 158<sup>th</sup>. On the second criterion, that is business creation, Cameroon has also fallen back 6 positions, over the same period, going from 127<sup>th</sup> position to 133<sup>rd</sup>. Moreover, all the members of the CEMAC are lagging behind in the ranking. Thus, for Cameroon, as for the region, much remains to be done to improve the business environment.

In spite of this observation, prospects for improvement are real. This in the measure that the government is well aware of its inadequacies and is working to redress the balance by trying to put into practice the recommendations resulting from the work of different sessions of the Cameroon Business Forum (CBF), a platform of public-private dialogue given the responsibility of identifying the bottlenecks and proposing solutions to allow the government to refine its strategy on cleaning up the business environment and to follow and appraise the reforms being undertaken in the domains concerned.

**BIC: Aside from the health sector, in which other sectors of activity would you encourage Tunisian companies to invest in Cameroon?**

JS: I would say notably in the sectors where Tunisia has a comparative advantage and a well-recognised expertise and where, at the same time, Cameroon offers opportunities in terms of investment and partnership such as pharmaceutical and cosmetic products, information technologies and communication, seaside tourism, thermal or medical, energy, higher education, professional training, electric and chemical industry, agribusiness, etc. For my part, I consider that there are some sectors where there should be greater emphasis without a doubt and where particular attention should be paid, keeping in mind their potential. But, I remain in service for any Tunisian project of cooperation, of partnership or



Jalel Snoussi:  
"One can therefore say, on the economic as well as the political level that a lot more needs to be done."

investment, whatever the nature and the scope.

**BIC: How many Tunisian nationals live in Cameroon and what are their occupations?**

JS: According to the embassy's registers, there are approximately 150 Tunisians living and working in Cameroon in the engineering, research, technical audit, trade sectors and hotel business.

I can say that the Tunisian community is, for the most part, made up of high level senior managers. A colony, rather small in number, but big in its involvement and expertise, well established, well liked and who brings its know-how and contribution to the development of Cameroon. I am pleased and proud that Tunisians in Cameroon enjoy a good reputation in terms of expertise, discipline and commitment. This is a professional and human investment from which both countries are invariably benefitting.

I absolutely do not want to overshadow another community, Tunisian by adoption, made of many Cameroonians who went to university in Tunisia and who, after returning to Cameroon, have kept a

very strong link with Tunisia and do not miss any opportunity to bring their help and support to Tunisia and to promote its image as an open, moderate and secular country. I see them as the surrogate children of Tunisia and its permanent ambassadors in Cameroon. I have met some of them and every time, their words of praise, gratefulness and love for Tunisia have moved me, sometimes to tears.

**BIC: How many visa applications from Cameroonians are registered every day in your embassy and how many visas are granted on a daily basis?**

JS: The number of granted visas is cyclical and the frequency depends on the period. For example, the peak is noted during the months of July to October, and this for an objective reason, being young Cameroonians travelling to Tunisia for their university studies. In fact, study permits represent approximately 60% of the total visas issued. The remainder is spread among medical care, business and tourism. On average, the Embassy grants, every year, between 1,500 and 2,000 visas.

So, between 900 and 1,200 Cameroonians students attend school every



year in Tunisian universities, including private ones. Moreover, since the 70's, the Tunisian State grants every year a number of scholarships for public universities and colleges to Cameroonian high school graduates, amongst other sub-Saharan francophone Africa nationalities. Tunisia also grants other types of scholarships in terms of professional training and Islamic civilisation.

**BIC:** To finish, the Nobel Peace Prize was recently awarded to the Quartet in Tunisia. As a Tunisian ambassador in Cameroon, what does this prize mean to you?

**JS:** As if often the case, the Nobel committee defied all expectations and took everybody by surprise. They paid homage to a structure from the Tunisian civil society who helped salvage a democratic transition showing signs of failure. Indeed, the Quartet, made up of the main dynamic forces of the country, being the association of trade unions,

*"The pharmaceutical industry in Tunisia is developed and flourishing. Its expertise and know-how in this domain are recognized worldwide".*

the employers' union, the Human Rights League and the bar association, led and brought to a successful conclusion the "National Dialogue", between the power and the opposition, at a moment where the country was on the brink of civil war.

The Nobel committee wanted to reward uniquely Tunisian concept of "National Dialogue" as an accomplished civil mechanism of dialogue and negotiation, and the Quartet for its decisive contribution to building a pluralist democracy in Tunisia and to have launched and successfully completed, in consensus and moderation, an alternative, pacific political process at a moment where the country was facing a serious political crisis, and this despite the economic and internal security instability and the hostility of the regional environment. For Tunisia, still confronted to socio-economic and security problems, the Nobel Peace Prize was a

breath of fresh air, a historical moment of pride, joy and also surprise. Nobody was expecting Tunisia in its whole to be rewarded. Indeed, the Nobel Committee chose the Tunisian Quartet out of 273 candidates (205 personalities and 68 organisations) to reinforce the triumph of the ideal of dialogue and the search for compromise and to show that the democratic model is still achievable in the Arab world, provided that the notions of dialogue, negotiation and consensus be put at the centre of the process and the objective of the conflicting parties and be the basis for the structure of any crisis resolution process.

**BIC:** You also perceive an economic impact. Which one exactly?

**JS:** We have to make the Nobel Prize profitable in economic terms, capitalise on this wave of sympathy and transform the international mediatisation into operational prospects to attract more investors, to mobilise even more resources and means and to better promote Tunisia as a destination on various levels, in particular tourism, a sector currently in disaster because of the cowardly terrorist attacks on tourist sites at Bardo and Sousse.

The Nobel Peace Prize is not only an honour or an award, but first and foremost a responsibility and a commitment, involving the entire Tunisian society, to support the progress of Tunisia towards the completion of its own democratic model and towards the optimisation of its socio-economic development framework. Through its message and symbolism, the Nobel Peace Prize is capable of uniting Tunisians and call the international community to better mobilise behind a young experience of democratisation, result of a painful independence process, which as exemplary and irreversible as it may be, is still vulnerable nonetheless.

Interview by Beaugas-Orain Djoyum

## PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

## Cameroon: Three new taxes to be implemented in the Telecom, Trade and gas industries

Cameroon's 2016 Budget bill which is to be presented to the parliament within the next days, will introduce three new taxes namely in the telecom, trade and industrial gas sectors, the Daily L'Economie reveals quoting official sources from the *Groupeement Interpatronal du Cameroun* (GICAM).

These taxes include a tax on electronic communications to which audiovisual communication firms will be subjected, mobile telephony companies, internet service providers...; a tax on cash-based transactions which should cover all finance institutions, and a tax on industrial gas retail in the country.

With these new implementations, Cam-

eroon aims to capitalize not only on the exponential development of some sectors of activities (industrial gas and mobile telephony) witnessed on the territory over the past years but also on some of its population's habits (excessive usage of cash), so as to attain its goals for the 2016 budget (4,249.8 billion FCFA), which has increased by more than 500 billion FCFA compared to the 2015 budget (3,746.6 billion FCFA).

As a reminder, in January 2014, during the annual conference on central, external and decentralized services of the Ministry of Finance, the director general of taxes, Modeste Mopa, estimating that Cameroon's 13% of fiscal pressure rate



was "low" in comparison to the average in Africa, recommended it to be raised to 18% on the "medium term".

## Cameroon: Bucrep to temporarily hire 30,000 during 4<sup>th</sup> global population census

Bernadette Mbarga, Director General of the Central Bureau for population survey and census, says her institution will temporarily hire 30,000 people in the framework of Cameroon's 4<sup>th</sup> population census for which preparations could begin in January 2016.

Bucrep's head expressed this need during a recent meeting with executives from the Minister of Economy. This meeting followed the signing, on 15 September 2015, of a presidential decree announcing the 4<sup>th</sup> global census of Cameroon's population.

## Cameroon: 3.1 billion FCFA already retrieved by SCC, the public fund misappropriation police

On 9 October 2015, while installing into function magistrate Justine Aimée Ngounou Tchokontchieu and newly appointed Attorney General of the Special Criminal Court (SCC), institution in charge of handling cases of public fund misappropriation in Cameroon, the Minister of Justice Laurent Esso drew up the review of this institution's activities over the past 3 years.

The review revealed that SCC, over the period concerned, was

able to retrieve a total of 3.1 billion FCFA as part of compensations for the various committed crimes. Truly, the law creating SCC involves a financial compensation for the committed crime in exchange for a stay of proceedings which can be decided by the Ministry of Justice.

Therefore, 115 cases in all have been or are being investigated, 223 charges, 40 dismissals and 41 stays of proceedings were pronounced.



## Senegal offers Cameroon its expertise in social housing



While meeting him, Vincent Badji, Senegal's Ambassador in Cameroon recently offered Cameroon's Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Jean Claude Mbwentchou, to share his country's experience in this sector considering the progress it recorded over the past few years.

According to statistics from the Senegal Housing Bank (BHS) who celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary last March, more than 200 billion FCFA has been invested by the 35-year old institution thus allowing Senegalese social housing operators to build about 100,000 housings. The main reason for this accomplishment is the constant reduction of interest rates on housing loans (from 14% reimbursable over 10 to 15 years to 6.5% reimbursable over 25 years) paired with the tax exemption for housing operators which is included in Senegal's taxes code.

While statistics in Cameroon show a 1.3 million deficit for social housing (against 125,000 in Senegal who now plans for 15,000 housing to be built yearly), the Crédit foncier (BHS homologue in Cameroon) has granted up to 261 billion FCFA in loans over 37 years, allowing for 69,500 housing to be constructed and for 15,700 of building plots to be leveled. It should be reminded that for years now, housing operators have been seeking tax arrangements to boost activities in this sector.

## Cameroon: EU grants 2.5 billion FCFA to improve rescue services in the Extreme North

The European Union delegation in Cameroon just launched a project *"to promote confidence-building between the State and citizens in the Extreme North"*. Backed by a sum of 2.5 billion FCFA, the project, in partnership with the national fire brigade and the General delegation for national security, aims to improve intervention capacities of firefig stations in Maroua and Kousseri as well as that of four border posts in the North of Cameroon's Extreme-North region. According to the EU, the project covers

18 months and includes among other realizations, the rehabilitation of rescue stations and border posts; the delivery of rolling stock, communication and detection materials, as well as training for policemen at the borders and for members of the national fire brigade.

*"This initiative is EU's response to the current security crisis which looms over the Extreme-North region. This project aims at helping inhabitants of this region feel safer, with the presence of efficient police agents and firefighters who are*

*there to protect them and respond to their needs,"* declares Françoise Collet, the head of EU's delegation to Cameroon.

The need for this project arises as a result of the numerous armed attacks in Cameroon's Extreme-North that killed many over the past months and left injured who needed immediate medical attention; the various suicides bombings orchestrated by the Nigerian sect Boko Haram during which more than a 100 perished and many were injured.

## Razel wins a 48 billion FCFA contract for the construction of Mfoundi canal

French firm Razel has joined Chinese Anhui Shuiian Constructions Group on the construction project for the canal of Mfoundi, a river which runs through Yaoundé and whose overflow causes flooding in the Cameroonian capital city.

After awarding a 10.8 billion FCFA contract to the above-mentioned Chinese firm for the first stage of construction,

the urban community of Yaoundé now gives another contract (worth 48 billion FCFA) to the French firm Razel which will undertake the larger part of the project.

The construction of the Mfoundi canal is part of the Yaoundé Urban Development Strategy (PADY in French) which is currently in its second stage. Government obtained for this stage, a funding

from the French Agency for Development (AFD in French) which amounts to 52.5 billion FCFA.

The first phase of this project, with a 22.3 billion FCFA funding from the African Development Bank (AfDB) resulted in the construction of 3.5 km of canal.

## Cameroon awards 5 billion in feasibility studies contracts for railway projects



The government of Cameroon just awarded three contracts for feasibility studies of various projects to two mixed groups of Technical Studies Bureau. Whilst the cumulated cost for these contracts totals about 5 billion FCFA, they are to be executed over respective periods of 18-20 months and concern the construction for three new railway lines in the country.

Among the two consortium previously mentioned, one comprises Tunisian Studi International, French Ingerop and Cameroonian TBS firm Ecta BTP, which landed a contract worth 3.5 billion FCFA for the feasibility studies for the construction of a railway line between Douala in the Coastal region, and Nougoundéré, Adamaoua's regional capital, located in the Northern part of the country.

In the meantime, the contracts for the construction of the Edéa-Kribi and Douala-Limbé railway lines were awarded to a consortium including, Spanish firm Ardanuy, Pakistani Umar Munshi Associated, British CGV Engineering and Cameroonian firm Bonus Consulting. Cost of contracts: 1.262 billion FCFA.

## WEF 2015: Cameroon jumps two places from its 2014 ranking



This year's World Economic Forum (WEF) ranked Cameroon as the World's 114<sup>th</sup> most competitive economy, out of the 140 countries evaluated. Though rising two places in the rankings as compared to last year, Cameroon still comes behind Gabon (104<sup>th</sup>), which is central Africa's leading nation according to the 2015-2016 report.

However, in this 2015-2016 ranking, Cameroon is 10 steps ahead of Nigeria (124<sup>th</sup>) which by the way is Africa's leading economy. In Africa, just like for the previous year, Mauritius came out as the most competitive with South Africa nipping at its heels.

## Cameroon: From 2,500 to 96,791 businesses listed on tax registry in 18 months

On March 12, 2014, as he was meeting economic operators at a diner-debate organized by the Groupement Inter-patronal du Cameroon (GICAM), the director general of taxes from Ministry of Finance, Modeste Mopa made an important announcement in relation to tax practices in Cameroon. A census conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INS) numbered close to 98,000 active businesses in Cameroon where only 2,500 individuals and companies were counted for in the tax registry, DGT said at the time.

Following a meeting for the coordina-

tion of Taxes held on 16 October 2015 in Ebolowa (Cameroon's South) by Directorate General (DGI in French), the Cameroonian tax authority disclosed a list revealing that 96,791 taxpayers registered by the end of September. This means that, between the announcement from March 2014 and September this year (18 months overall), DGI registered more than 95,000 new taxpayers. According to the DGI, this resulted from the various reforms initiated during that period. These include rearranging registry, securing revenues, establishing medium enterprises' tax centers (CIME)

for a better and more efficient follow-up of the country's medium enterprises (SMEs constitute 80% of businesses in Cameroon); simplifying tax payment by introducing practices such as tele-declaration or mobile payment for land taxes, etc.

Due to this boost in the number of taxpayers arising from these reforms, revenue collection was also improved. In fact, out of the 1,600 billion FCFA it planned to recover in 2015, the DGI already has 1,300 billion FCFA and there is still a quarter left before the end the fiscal year.

## Cameroon orders drones from American firm Insitu Inc for 5 billion FCFA

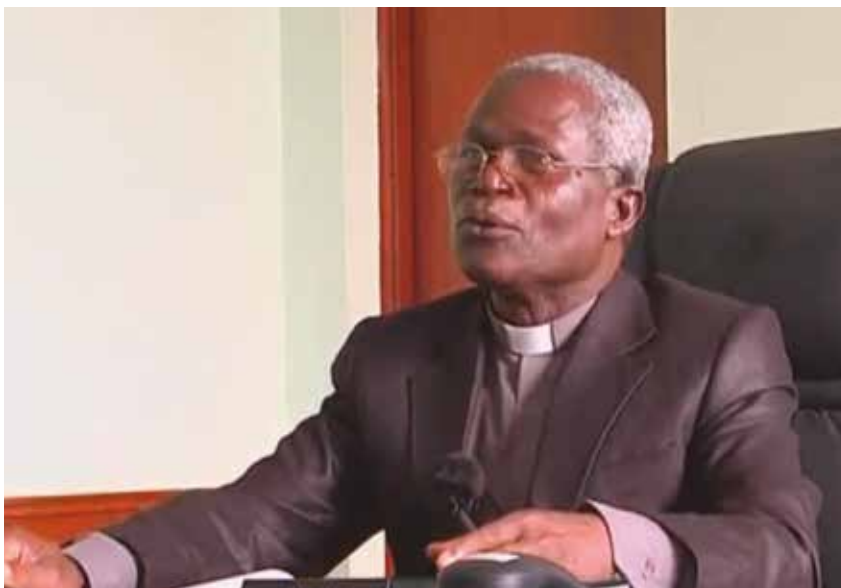
Cameroon's government recently ordered ScanEagle combat drones from the American firm Insitu Inc for a little more than 5 billion FCFA, specialized magazine Flightglobal revealed citing a release from US Defense Ministry dated 29 September 2015.

The agreement signed between the Cameroonian government and Insitu Inc also includes provision of spare parts, drone maintenance for a year as well as training Cameroonian experts to handle this equipment which is to be delivered starting September next year.

This information was disclosed a few days only after a decision by U.S government and by Cameroon in a confirmed in a presidential release dated 15 October 2015, to dispatch 300 American soldiers on Cameroonian ground to help in the fight against Islamist group Boko Haram which has been, for some months now, perpetrating various attacks in the country.



## **In Cameroon, “2013 was the year for the evolution and sophistication of corruption techniques”, according to CONAC**



The National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) of Cameroon has just publicly released its 2013 activities report. According to Dieudonné Massi Gams, the prelate in charge of this institution, 2013 was a good year for those involved in this phenomenon. “2013 saw the evolution and sophistication of corruption techniques through various forms of cheating which are increasing and poisoning the social and economic activity”, he declared.

Not one sector was spared, the president of CONAC stressed. He then proceeded to mention in no particular order: generating counterfeit account statements, payment against issuance of account statements, inflating civil servants’ salaries and pension funds, issuance of counterfeit driving licences, overcharging services, or the opaque operations of the Land Freight Management Bureau (BGFT), which has become, according

to CONAC’s president, “a State within the State”.

Many of these practices deprive the Cameroonian Public Treasury of important revenues. Thus the actions of some managers of the Internal Revenue Authority, who have mastered the “issuance of counterfeit licences, the production of counterfeit stickers and the issuance of counterfeit legal stamps through counterfeit stamp printers”, CONAC indicates in its report.

Based on the 2,758 denunciations CONAC received and the corruption acts listed in the 2013 activities report, this institution recommends to the State, among other measures, “the implementation of the national strategy to fight against corruption throughout the country, the adoption of an anti-corruption law and the implementation of the provisions of article 66 on the disclosure of property and assets”.

## **Public investment will increase to 36% in the 2016 budget of the Cameroonian State**



In 2016, the State of Cameroon will inject over FCfa 1,500 billion in the implementation of projects in the country. This is certainly what the 2016 budget currently under review by Parliament indicates. With this amount, the Public Investment Budget (BIP) will represent 36% of the global budget of the State, against 30% in 2015 and 2014.

Marginalised for a long time at the expense of the operating budget which could take up to 80% of the national budget, BIP has grown in importance in the State budget since 2014, to the benefit of big ongoing or future infrastructure projects.

Indeed, in addition to the dams and other ongoing road and highway projects, there will be in 2016 investments in sports infrastructure for the organisation of the 2019 AfCON, as well as projects belonging to the government’s three-year emergency plan, which will reach its second milestone in 2016.



## More than 200 companies at the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the CameroonInvest forum of API



The first edition of the CameroonInvest Forum (CIF) opened on 25 November 2015 in Douala, the Cameroonian economic capital, with over 200 local and foreign companies participating. The

goal of this event organised by the Investments Promotion Agency (API) is to promote the Cameroonian economy to all potential investors.

According to the Investments Promotion Agency, a total of ten foreign delegations are taking part in this economic event whose theme is “*development through investment*”. The first edition of CIF will end on 27 November 2015.

In addition to the big trade fair during which participants will compete on their know-how, CIF will be centred on round tables on different themes, as well as B2B meetings between investors, in order to create winning business partnerships.

## Market conditions led to the ruin of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cameroonian Eurobond, according to the Minister of Finance

It is now official. The first Eurobond in the Cameroonian public finance history only helped gather about FCfa 375 billion, out of the FCfa 750 billion expected, the minister of Finance, Alamine Ousmane Mey indicated, while defending on 2nd December 2015 the 2016 Finance bill of the State of Cameroon in front of the Finance Commission in Parliament.

However, Minister Ousmane Mey explained, the money garnered as part of this fundraising operation is not the consequence of a lack of interest from investors. According to him, even though funds were available to raise the full amount of requested resources, the government and its arrangers had to

operate a downward revision of their ambitions, “*discouraged*” as they were by extremely rigid and unfavourable conditions for the Cameroonian public Treasury.

This market rigidity, for example, led Angola to postpone in September the issuance of its USD 1.5 billion Eurobond which was finally issued in November and was subscribed at an interest rate of 9.5% over 10 years. Same case for Ghana, who, despite a guarantee from the World Bank, also hesitated in October 2015 before issuing its Eurobond of USD 1 billion. The Ghanaian public Treasury only succeeded by agreeing to serve an interest rate 10.75% to investors, but with a maturity of 15 years.

## Cameroon Trade and Economic Days announced in Russia in 2016



As part of its strategy to promote products made in Cameroon abroad, in order to help local economic operators find new markets, the Cameroonian government is considering organising the Cameroon Trade and Economic (JEC) in Moscow (Russia) in 2016.

The information was revealed by the Minister of Trade, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, aside his appearance in front of the members of the Finance Commission of Parliament, to defend the 2016 budget of his ministry.

*“We are going to particularly expand our efforts in Russia. Even though Russia is both in the group of countries considered as developed and emerging economies, the focus point will be the organisation of the Cameroon Trade and Economic in Moscow”,* he indicated.

Even though no figures were mentioned, Russians and Cameroonians agree that trade relations between the two countries “are very few”. In order to reverse this trend, the Russian Business Centre (RBC) officially launched its operations in Yaoundé in March 2014.

## Cameroon: Local companies get 70% of first construction contracts for CAN 2016



About 24 billion FCFA in contracts were just issued by Cameroonian government for the rehabilitation and renovation of sports infrastructures towards the upcoming 2016 Africa Women Cup of Nations. Cameroonian companies grabbed a major part of these contracts valued to

more than 17 billion FCFA and representing 70% of the contracts awarded. French firm Alcor Equipements obtained a contract worth 3 billion FCFA against 4.5 billion FCFA for two Chinese firms.

## ILO to lower proportions of informal economy in Cameroon

Over the next two years, the representative of the International Labor Office in Cameroon will encourage all initiatives aiming at moving operators of the informal sector to the formal sector, Cameroon's ILO new head Vera Lucia Paquete Perdigao told Cameroonian business officials during a meeting recently held in Douala.

*"One of our most significant actions constitutes working towards a quick migration of the actors currently operating on the informal level to the formal. What is involved here is the informal economy, whose actors are continuously growing in numbers. We even conducted some studies that reveal that most people enter this*

*world by ignorance while others do so to avoid paying taxes. But, what they must know is that it is more beneficial to work in the formal sector,"* Vera Lucia Paquete Perdigao told daily newspaper Economy.

According to a study by World Bank local representative dated January 2012 and conducted in Cameroon, the country's formal private sector and public sector respectively employ 4% and 6% of Cameroon's workers. The remaining 90% are thus concentrated in the informal sector with a preference to Agriculture, where 53% of the country's informal workers are found, against 37% for services and detailed commerce.

## Cameroon : AFD injects 622 million FCFA in Forest management



In Cameroon, 23 forest communities and 10 NGOs which are engaged in the protection and management of Forests just received 622 million FCFA from AFD in the framework of the Sectoral Program for Forest and Environment (PSFE in French).

This fund will be dedicated to the reforestation, the establishment of new forest units, projects for research and revalorization of forest resources, mainly in the Centre, East and Southern regions of Cameroon.

Launched in 2007 and restructured in 2012, the Sectoral Program for Forest and Environment benefits from a global budget of 10 million Euros (about 6.5 billion FCFA).

# AGRIBUSINESS

## Cameroon in the Top 10 of African countries awarding lands to Chinese investors

For its agricultural projects in Africa, China has acquired about 280,000 acres of land, reveals LandMatrix, global observatory on large-scale land acquisitions. A study conducted by Deborah Brautigam, Head of China Africa Research Initiative at the University of Johns Hopkins, however contradicted the statistic saying it was 240,000 acres. Nevertheless, it has been derived from both studies that Cameroon is among the top 10 African countries to award the greatest land portion to China for

its agricultural investments.

With the 10,120 acres of lands it awarded Chinese company Shaanxi Land Reclamation General Corporation (which operates as IKO) in the Central region (Nanga Eboko and Ndjoré) for rice and maize farming, *"Cameroon, Ethiopia and Mozambique record some of China's most significant agricultural investments in Africa,"* reports Commodafrica quoting Reuters.

At the continental level however, Cameroon is far behind Zimbabwe, from

whom Chinese firm CWE acquired 100,000 acres for maize farming, or even Mozambique and Nigeria with 25,000 acres of land they each awarded China for its agricultural projects; not to forget Mali and Ethiopia with 20,000 acres each. According to the Thomson Reuters Foundation, these large-scale land acquisitions allowed China in 2014, to import agricultural products from sub-Saharan Africa worth 1,600 billion FCFA (\$2.9 billion) against 1,265 billion FCFA (\$2.7 billion) in 2013.

## Telcar Cocoa to train 10,000 new producers of certified cocoa in 2016



After the South Western region in 2012 and 2014, it is the turn of Cameroon's central and Southern region to be the recipients of the Telcar Cocoa, local dealer of international firm Cargill, training program for producers of certified cocoa.

Telcar Cocoa's objective for extending its "Cocoa Sustainability Venture" to these regions is the training of 10,000 new producers of certified cocoa, through the implementation of 334 training sessions in the previously mentioned regions.

## Cameroon: BEAC forecasts a drop of 20,000 tons for 2015-2016 cocoa production

In its recent Q4 forecast on the evolution of economic activities in Cameroon, the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) predicts a drop of 20,000 tons in Cameroon's 2014-2015 cocoa production.

According to these previsions, Cameroon's national cocoa output for this season, which began in August 2015 and will end in mid-June next year, will reach 210,000 tons against a little more than 232,000 tons for the 2014-2015 season.

According to experts, the main explanation for this downward forecast similar to that of the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (ONCC) is that the current cocoa season falls in the period of vegetal dormancy which occurs every 5 years.



## **Cameroon: As a homecoming project, CCIC suggests cocoa farming to the diaspora**



The Cocoa and Coffee Interprofessional Council (CCIC) organized on 20 October 2015 in Milan, Italy, for the Universal Exposition, the “*New Generation Youth Forum*” to present the opportunities that Cameroon’s cocoa-coffee sector has to offer but also the objectives and benefits of its “*New Generation*” scheme.

“*Considered by international cocoa-coffee associations as one of the most innovative initiatives in these sectors over the recent decades*”, this programme was launched

3 years ago by the CCIC. It aims at rejuvenating producers and plantations so as to ensure the sustainability of these sectors that experience ageing of plantations and workforce.

During the Milan forum in which young producers trained by New Generation participated, CCIC’s executive secretary, Omer Gatien Malédy, gave a presentation on the homecoming programme. This session destined to the youth of the Cameroonian diaspora present at the forum, was organized to facilitate

the introduction of this youth to Cameroon’s cocoa-coffee sector.

This call addressing the Cameroonian youth in the diaspora falls in line with New Generation’s development goals that include the training of 3,000 youth yearly against the actual 1,000. The first beneficiaries of the New Generation programme already put in place 1,335 acres of cocoa farms, from which the first batches will start production in the ongoing season.



## Cameroon injects 612 million FCFA in palm oil production in Edéa

Increasing palm oil production per year from 6,300 tons to 21,000 tons. That is the goal set by the agro-pole for production, processing, and commercialization of palm oil recently launched by the minister delegated to Minister of economy, Yaouba Abdoulaye.

Through this project estimated at more than 1.5 billion FCFA initiated by private operators, Cameroon's government aims to generate jobs in rural areas by developing revenue-generating businesses. The government invested 612 million FCFA in the project.

Funds from government will be used to rehabilitate the roads serving plantations; purchase input and install one production unit and one for processing palm oil.

Despite the fact that numerous important palm oil exploitation units (60,000 ha overall) and private plantations (100,000 ha) are present in the country, Cameroon only produces between



235 to 270,000 tons of palm oil yearly. National demand however, is around 385,000 tons thus implying a yearly deficit of 100,000 tons.

To overcome this deficit, the Committee

regulating the oilseed sector has proposed this year that government authorizes the import of about 60,000 tons of palm oil with a custom tax of 5% while exempting them of VAT.

## Cameroon: A half-billion FCFA worth project to produce 813 tons of fish in Limbé

In the framework of its AGROPOLES project aiming at creating revenue-generating businesses in rural areas and reducing food products imports in Cameroon, the government just invested 522 million FCFA for fish production in Limbé, South-Western region.

With this funding, the project led by a cooperative of fish farmers with Johnson Njocke at its head, aims to boost fish production from the current 83 tons to about 813 tons yearly. The project includes the production of fry which are to be made available to surrounding farmers at a highly competitive price, so as to attain the expected output.

In addition to helping boost local fish production, the Limbé project most of all promotes aquaculture which accord-



ing to officials statistics is the weak point of fish production in Cameroon. For example, out of the 176,000 tons of fish

Cameroon produces yearly, only 1,000 tons or 0.1% of national output comes from aquaculture.

## Cameroon negotiating a 110 billion FCFA loan from ADB to develop agriculture

On 9 December 2015, at the occasion of its upcoming meeting, the board of director of the African Bank of Development (ADB) will examine the funding application that Cameroon submitted for its project for the development of agricultural value chains (PD-CVA). This emerged from an audience Cameroon's Minister of Agriculture just had with ADB's resident representative, Racine Kane.

*"With the minister, we established that all steps so far had been well carried out accordingly to schedule which is currently ongoing, and there is nothing as at present, opposing the submission of the pro-*

*ject to the appreciation of ADB's board of director", said Racine Kane at the end of the audience.*

Valued at 110 billion FCFA, this project will be implemented in the central, southern, eastern, coastal and south-western regions and according to ADB's short description, the PD-CVA targets *"three crop sectors (plantain, pineapple and palm oil) in sight of their maturity and integration levels, their markets and processing options, their economic (revenue and job generation) impact and that on food-security"*.

Concretely, the project will allow for the rehabilitation of 1,000 km of rural roads

in the involved production basins, the construction of a quality-control laboratory, the construction of community infrastructures and warehouses, and the construction of 30 km of electricity network.

PD-CVA also has a professional insertion component, especially for women (40% of the 1500 which are to work on this project) and young graduates. These will be trained in *"agribusinesses incubation centers which are help them establish their own businesses (600 new businesses are projected in the framework of the project)"*.

## Government to establish 369 acres of peer plantations to supply Mbouda's avocado oil factory



Cameroon's government in the framework of its AGROPOLES project which aims at creating income-generating activities in rural areas, launched in Foubot in the Western region, a peer-production agropole, credible sources reveal. Foubot will therefore supply the avocado oil factory which is under construction in Mbouda.

With this project which has been valued at 678 million FCFA (out of which 260 million FCFA coming from the AGROPOLES project), 34 producers from this community plan to establish, starting from 2016, about 369 acres of plantations of an improved variety of peer.

These new plantations, once production begins, should yield 5,000 tons of peer yearly against the 1,500 tons presently produced.

## Cameroon: IRAD develops 200 new varieties of cassava



Choices are most almost endless for cassava growers when it comes to variety selection. In fact, meeting with producers, the Institute for Agricultural and Research Development (IRAD) announced it has developed to date 200 local varieties of cassava among which six improved.

In addition to adapting to the various ecological zones, the improved varieties show quite satisfying results. These varieties on an acre can produce up to 25-40 tons of cassava, against 12 tons for traditional seeds, IRAD says.

## FINANCE

## Managing Directors of BPCE Madagascar and Cameroon switch seats

Cameroon's International Bank for savings and loans (BICEC), the local subsidiary of French group Banque Populaire (BPCE), has had for a few weeks now a new Managing Director at its head. Alain Ripert, transferred from Banque Malgache Océan Indien (BMOI), another of BPCE's subsidiary (in Madagascar), BICEC's new MD was officially introduced to his customers and other collaborators on the 5<sup>th</sup> of

November 2015 in Yaoundé.

Switching seats with his fellow countryman Pierre Mahe, the newly appointed MD headed BPCE's Malagasy subsidiary for four years. The switching initiated by Groupe BPCE could very well be the first step in a greater plan to develop BMOI which currently appears to be no more than a Tom Thumb compared to BICEC.

Truly, Pierre Mahé leaves the head of a

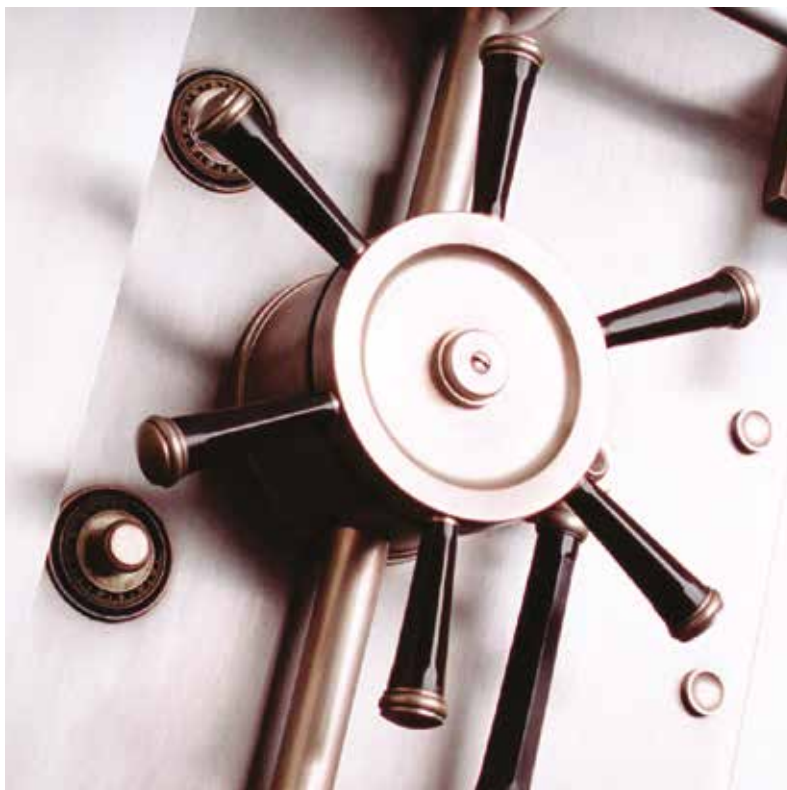
bank who is the leader of the Cameroonian banking market, with 37 agencies, 750 employees, 315,000 customers and an average of 25,000 bank accounts opened yearly. In 2014, the institution reported a net income of about 14 billion FCFA. In Madagascar, BICEC's former Managing Director is handed a bank with only 16 branches and 19,000 individual customers.

## Cameroon to subject all microfinance institutions to banking secrecy

Through a release published by the National Credit Council, the Cameroonian government revealed it was finalizing the draft of a legislation aiming to subject all microfinance institutions to banking secrecy. Literally, banking secrecy is a law under which banks are not to provide account information of their customers to any third party with the exception of financial investigations agencies, justice, etc.

Banking secrecy over the years has become controversial in the way that it allows some companies and individuals to anonymously detain assets. In most cases, these assets come from public fund misappropriation, corruption or from various kinds of illegal trafficking.

The reason for the extending banking secrecy to Cameroonian microfinance institutions is mainly the dynamism of the sector in the country which counts nearly 500 microfinance institutions out of the 800 identified in the CEMAC. In addition to this, some of these Cameroonian institutions are as big as some commercial banks. Such is the case of Camccul, first chain of microfinance institutions in the country from which emerged the Union Bank of Cameroon and whose volume of assets is equal to that of BGFI Bank's Cameroonian subsidiary.





## Mehita Fanny Sylla appointed resident representative of IFC in Cameroon

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), subsidiary of the World Bank specialised in funding for the private sector, has just appointed Mehita Fanny Sylla as Resident-Representative in Cameroon, we officially learned, on the fringes of the visit by Ms Vera Songwe (Cameroonian), the new IFC Regional Director for Central and Western Africa.

Mehita Fanny Sylla replaces Malagasy Henri Rabarijohn. In charge of investments at IFC, Mehita Fanny Sylla joined the IFC Consulting Department for public private partnerships in 2007, after spending 3 years in Douala, where she worked on financing infrastructure projects.

This role enabled the new Resident-Rep-

resentative to develop an important network and gain an extensive knowledge of business sectors in Central and Western Africa. With a Masters in Economy and a degree from ESSEC Business School in France, Mehita Fanny Sylla has a professional experience of 12 years in financial audit, company assessment and SMEs development.

## Cameroon's chamber of Agriculture launches procedures for the establishment of Microfinance venture

To help actors in the agro-pastoral and fishery sectors overcome the various challenges to funding their activities, Cameroon's Chamber of Agriculture, Fishery, Livestock and Forestry (CAPEF) launched on 19 October 2015 a fundraising operation to establish a microfinance venture.

The fundraising which ends on 10th of December 2015, involves rural organizations, farmers' cooperatives (fishery, stockbreeders, agriculture), as well as agro-industrial and forestry SMEs.

According to the CAPEF, the microfinance venture resulting from the fundraising will serve as a field relay for the agricultural bank being established, which has an initial capital of 10 billion FCFA. The creation of this specialized bank has been announced since 2011, but its implementation is being delayed due to numerous structural challenges such as the land legislation which still shows many limitations, well-informed sources indicated.





## Banque camerounaise des PME: the first loans will be granted in three months, according to Managing Director

After three months of operation, the Banque Camerounaise des PME (BCPME), whose official launch took place on 20 July 2015, had as at end October 2015, a total of 1,000 customer accounts and essentially demand deposit accounts, representing a total amount of FCfa 2 billion, against FCfa 1.3 billion in withdrawals, the Managing Director, Agnès Ndoumbé Mandeng revealed. With only FCfa 700 million currently available and a predominance of short term deposits, BCPME, whose ambition is to grant its first loans to SMEs in the coming weeks, will have difficulty meet-

ing the demand of its ever-increasing customer base; particularly for those seeking long term loans, which are better adapted and more efficient for the development of companies.

In order to reverse this trend, the Managing Director indicated, this public bank with a capital of FCfa 10 billion is counting on an intervention from the State to finance SMEs on the long term. *"Meetings are being held at the offices of the Prime Minister on this issue, and we are confident that instructions are being given in that direction. We are preparing the 2016 budget and we believe that there*

*will be something for Banque des PME",* the Managing Director of BCPME hopes.

For the record, promised by the Head of State in 2011 during the Ebolowa agriculture and livestock show, BCPME only has branches in Yaoundé and Douala, the two main cities of the country. This bank, fully owned by the State, has the ambition to reduce the difficulties in accessing financing of SMEs, which represent over 90% of the industries in Cameroon.

## Cameroon's Pari Mutuel Urbain joins hands with the Crédit Foncier to facilitate access to immovable property for its agents



Cameroon's Crédit Foncier (CFC), government housing bank, and Pari Mutuel Urbain (PMUC) just signed a partnership agreement to make access to housing and immovable property on preferential terms easier for the employees of the horse-betting company. According to this agreement, PMUC's agents-promoters of housing projects will have to provide 10% of the required investment for the project, in order to benefit from the Crédit Foncier's support. The housing bank will then grant them loans repayable over a maximum of 300 months with an annual interest rate of 5% tax-included (against 16% at standard banks).

CFC's Director General, Jean Paul Missi, said this convention with the PMUC is the eighteenth partnership agreement signed up-to-date with Cameroonian firms that aim to facilitate access to immovable property for their agents. Since the beginning of 2015, CFC has disbursed 2 billions FCFA to support the beneficiaries of these various agreements.

## Afriland First Bank and USAID join hands to boost agricultural credits in Liberia



Liberian subsidiary of Afriland First Bank (bank which mostly Cameroon assets), and USAID signed on October 13, 2015 in Liberia, a risk sharing agreement for the credits dedicated to the

agricultural sector, to boost them in the country.

In addition to agriculture which for Afriland First Bank Liberia Limited's Managing Director Hamadou Bayo

constitutes one of the key points towards the development of African economies, the partnership with USAID will also extends to SMEs of the construction sector. Truly, as Dr Chan, local representative of the USAID, said, though agriculture and construction are high-risks sectors, they still present great opportunities in terms of job creation.

The agreement with USAID is the fourth to have been concluded by Afriland First Bank in five months only. Indeed, in June 2015, Cameroon's leader of banking market landed a 26.2 billion FCFA funding from China Development Bank, to boost access to funding for Cameroon SMEs. In July 2015, it was Afreximbank that gave 9.8 billion FCFA to Afriland Côte d'Ivoire to support local SMEs and finance intra-African trade.

On July 30, 2015 in Douala, Afriland First Bank signed another contract worth 15 million dollars (8.2 billion FCFA) with International Finance Corporation; a subsidiary of the World Bank specialized in private investment. Through this funding, *"the IFC will make available to Afriland First Bank guarantees for all operations related to international trades, for a better coverage of import and export companies' fluxes by corresponding banks, thereby boosting competition at the International level,"* the World Bank said in an official release.

## Cameroonian Transimex gets direct funding of FCfa one billion from Fagace



The African Guarantee and Economic Cooperation Fund (Fagace) granted a direct funding to the company Transimex, which has been operating in Cameroon since 2011 in the stevedoring, consignment, warehousing, cargo handling, sea transport, etc., we officially learned. The loan agreement was signed during the 41st Board session of Fagace. These funds, according to the management of

Transimex, will be used to finance the project for the construction of a headquarters building of 6 floors with partial rental space in Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon.

With this new loan agreement for Transimex, Fagace's portfolio of investments in Cameroon is now at FCfa 30 billion, funding which helped support 14 projects in total.

## TELECOM

## CAMTEL to launch first Triple Play service in Cameroon

Cameroon Telecommunications (CAMTEL), Cameroon's national operator in the telecom industry, is currently preparing the launch of the country's first Triple Play offer (service where subscribers have access through a single contract to Internet, Telephony and Television), *Alwihdainfo.com* said reporting a conversation with CAMTEL's CEO, David Nkotto Emane.

This offer which should go online before "January 2016" will allow its subscribers to, through the optic fiber, access hundreds of international and local TV and radio channels, a fixed telephone line and high-speed Internet. *"For now, the offer is still at the experimental stage and the associated authorities are evaluating the rate it is to go for"*, CAMTEL's CEO says.

Triple Play is part of the National Broadband Network (NBN) project which consists in expanding the fiber optic network throughout Cameroon so as to make it available to households and companies through the various innovative services it offers (Triple Play, video-surveillance, e-learning, etc.)

## MTN Cameroon reports 58.7% increase in Data revenue at the end of September 2015

South African telecom group MTN International just released its results for Q3 2015. These show somehow mitigated performances for its Cameroonian subsidiary. Indeed, at the end of September 2015, despite the 6.2% increase in average user revenue (against 2.7% in Q1 2015), MTN Cameroon's number of subscribers fell by 4%, bringing it from 10.4 million in first semester to 9.9 million at the end of Q3 2015.

This means that around 500,000 subscribers were crossed off from MTN Cameroon's registry between the beginning of July and the end of September 2015. The mobile operator explains that this was due to the deactivation of some low-cost subscribers and the clean-up of the registry following the recent identification campaign which was initiated by Cameroon's government.

In spite of all these, MTN Cameroon has recorded a significant boost in data revenue which soared by 58.7% in Q3 2015 as compared to 45% in the first semester. As a result of this increase, data revenue now represents 13.7% of MTN Cameroon's global revenue against



11.7% at the end of June 2015. The telecom group thus continues gaining from its investment in 3G, for which 27 new sites were established during Q3. According to MTN International, its Cameroonian subsidiary still faces "a tough competition on prices" as commu-

nication rate per minute plunged 15.5% on annual-basis. On the bright side, the South African telecom group has had its number of mobile money users surge to 1.9 million which represents an 8% increase compared to the first semester.

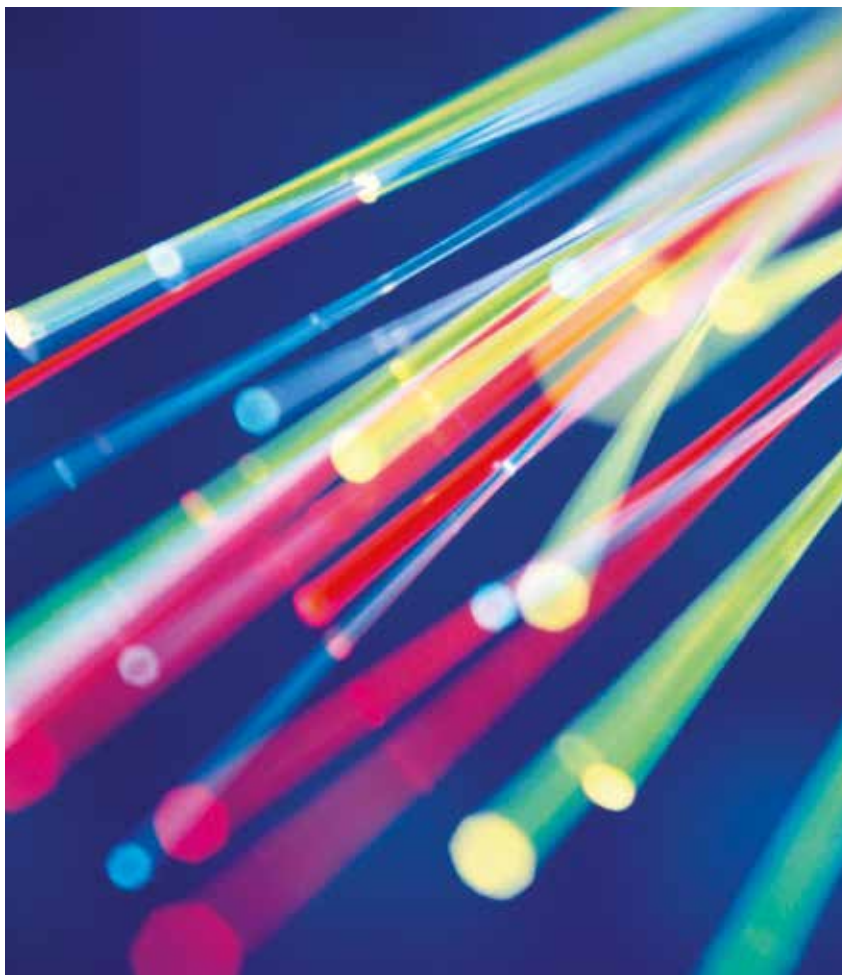


## Eximbank China lends 198.9 billion FCFA to Cameroon to deploy fiber optic

Eximbank of China, China's secular arm in foreign investment once again gets into business with Cameroon. Indeed, President Biya just published a decree enabling his minister of Economy Paul Motazé to sign with the Chinese investment bank, a "preferential loan" agreement worth 198.9 billion FCFA "to finance the second stage of the National Telecommunications Broadband Network project in Cameroon".

Cameroon, with this National Broadband Network (NBN), which will be implemented through the mobile operator Camtel, aims to take a great leap towards broadband. Indeed, this fiber optic-equipped infrastructure with its high-speed internet will allow Camtel to provide businesses and populations of Cameroon, services such as Triple Play (Television, Telephone, and Internet), high-definition television, video surveillance...

Significant advances are to result from this project in areas such as tele-medicine, e-government, e-commerce, e-learning... Construction works for the infrastructure are carried out by the Chinese firm Huawei Technologies. It covers 13 of Cameroon's towns and will help the country extend its fiber optic network by adding 3,000 km to the actual 7,000 km it has.



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## A Cameroonian start-up develops Central Africa's first application for taxi-booking

Bruno Soufo, head of the Cameroonian start-up Novazen, cooked up a new application he baptized CarDispo. This application allows its users to book geo-localized taxis from their mobile phones or any other device having access to the Internet. CarDispo is the first of its kind not only in Cameroon but in all Central Africa, the young head of Novazen says.

Taxis from the Novazen network charge almost the same fares as those imposed by Cameroon's government knowingly 3,000 FCFA and 5,000 FCFA depending on if it is a pick-as-it-goes or a pick-and-drop (or VIP). Bruno Soufo announced that CarDispo will be officially launched between November and December 2015 in Cameroon's two major cities: Douala and Yaoundé.

According to Novazen which plans on extending CarDispo to all of Cameroon and also eyes the whole of Central Africa, a new version of the application is currently being developed. This version will inform users in real-time of the traffic's condition in the country's various towns therefore allowing them to strategically avoid the zones where traffic is heavy.



## Cameroon: Government to adopt ICT for its next global census

On October 30, 2015, at the occasion of the ceremony for the establishment of teams which are to carry out Cameroon's 4th global census, it was announced that digital means such as tablets would be used to collect data throughout the operation.

As a matter of fact, Cameroon's author-

ities believe that this should facilitates the processing of the data collected on-field, thus accelerating the acquisition of results on one hand, and cut operation costs on the other.

It should be recalled that for Cameroon's previous global census in 2005, results were released only in 2009 as a

result of various malfunctions experienced throughout the process.

According to Bernadette Mbarga, Director General of the Central Bureau for population census and survey (BU-CREP in French), 30,000 temporary jobs should be created during Cameroon's 4th global census population.

## Cameroon launches a study to compare its electronic communications taxation system against Senegal, Kenya...



The government of Cameroon has just awarded a FCfa 46 million contract to company Resytal, in order to undertake a *"comparative study on the taxation system and tax levy imposed on operators in some African countries with the same level of development in the electronic communications sector, particularly in Kenya,*

*Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Ghana"*.

According to authorised sources, this study should enable Cameroon to get more significant revenues from the development of electronic communications than achieved over the past 10 years in the country. An experience which the countries targeted by Came-

roon as part of this study have already gone through.

However, even before starting this study, the Cameroonian government is planning, as part of the 2016 Finance bill currently under review at parliament, to create a tax on electronic communications.

## ENERGY

## Cameroonian Tradex launches activities in Equatorial Guinea

The petroleum firm Tradex, subsidiary of Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH) specialized in the trade, bunkering and retailing of petroleum end-products, is now present in four of CEMAC's member-states. Indeed, after Cameroon, Central African Republic and Chad, the company officially launched its activities in Equatorial Guinea on November 3, 2015, an official release reveals.

Tradex Equatorial Guinea operates as a result of the signing of a partnership agreement with Luba Oil Terminal Equatorial Guinea (LOTEG). Under the agreement, "Tradex is to store its products in LOTEG's buildings at the Luba Free Port and exclusively supply ships that get fuel at this port". With its Equatorial Guinean subsidiary, Tradex plans to "supply in hydrocarbons the various tanks, fishing trawlers and other ships deploying over the Gulf of Guinea". "Tradex wishes to actively contribute to

*the development of Equatorial Guinea. The company subscribes to a South-south partnership which is promoted by the President of Equatorial Guinea. It hopes to, on the long term, conclude partnerships with local promoters, so as to provide its full expertise, products and services, for the benefit of businesses and households in Equatorial Guinea",* Tradex's Director General Perrial Jean Nyodog said during the official launching of the Cameroonian firm's activities in Equatorial Guinea.



Founded in 1999 in Cameroon by SNH and some private investors, Tradex presently has 78 filling stations where Tradex gas and Tradex lubricants are sold. To strengthen its position on Cameroon's domestic gas market and capture Central Africa, the petroleum operator who is the light bearer of local firms in a petroleum industry dominated by multinationals, announced in May 2015, it had given out 26% of its capital to the Swiss firm Geogas.

## Cameroon: the SCDP-Blaze Energy consortium will build the hydrocarbons terminal in the Kribi Port

The Cameroonian government has just assigned the counterparty of the partnership contract, for the funding, construction and operation the hydrocarbons terminal of the deep waters port of Kribi, in the Southern region of Cameroon. This is a consortium gathering the Société Camerounaise des Dépôts Pétroliers (SCDP), the public hydrocarbons company, and Blaze Energy, a Canadian company.

The choice of the consortium is a new

step forward in the activation of the second phase of the construction of the deep water Kribi Port, which in addition to the hydrocarbons terminal, should host a second container terminal (to be built by the French-Chinese consortium Bolloré-CMA CGM-CHEC); as well as an ore terminal, for which the tendering process is still ongoing. It would be awarded to a Chinese company, we learned from a government memo announcing the setting up of a selection committee.

A Canadian company active in the upstream oil and gas sector as well as an intermediary, Blaze Energy is known in Cameroon, especially by SCDP, its partner on the Kribi hydrocarbon terminal. Indeed, in April 2015, this Canadian company won a market of almost FCfa 4 billion, for the construction of two reservoirs of 6500 metre cube each at the SCDP warehouse in Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon.

## Cameroon set to produce 34.6 million BO in 2016

According to the 2016 Budget bill which it is to present parliamentary within the next days, Cameroon plans to produce next year 34.6 million tons of crude oil. This output exceeds the 27 million bo and 24.4 million bo obtained in 2014 and 2013 respectively.

The estimates included in this bill, however, are far below the initial expectations of Société National des Hydrocarbures (SNH) and World Bank who forecast that output in 2016 would be twice that of 2013, reaching 57 million barrels at the end of the year.

The optimistic forecast was due to the fact that since 2013 various fields have started production. This as a matter of fact drove Cameroon's daily production to surpass 100,000 barrels at present with an average of 60,000 barrels; something which has not occurred since 2002, SNH highlights in its 2015 report. Cameroon will hence in 2016, produce far less crude oil than anticipated. About 23 million barrels less than the 57 million barrels initially projected. Could it be that the actual price for the commodity on the international market im-

paired the dynamism and enthusiasm of operators of Cameroon's upstream petroleum sector?

Though this cannot be clearly defined, the sure thing is that despite the anticipated increase announced, revenues for their part will be decreasing in 2016 due to the constant price fall at the international level. Indeed, the country gave an estimate of about 397.2 billion FCFA only, against 774 billion FCFA for this year.

## Chinese CPP to speed-up negotiations on Limbé-Edéa 355-km pipeline project



Zhao Yujian, the President of China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau (CPP), a firm which belongs to the 3PL consortium previously selected by Cameroon's government to finance and construct a 335km-long pipeline for distributing oil products, ended his three-day visit in Cameroon on 5 November 2015.

According to our sources, Zhao Yujian came not only to affirm CPP's commitment in this important project but also to speed-up the ongoing negotiations between 3PL consortium and the government of Cameroon.

Covering a distance of 355Km, the first section of this pipeline is to extend

from Limbé to Douala on 110Km; the second 70Km will go from Douala to Edéa whereas the last 175Km will link Yaoundé to Edéa.

Officially, the completion of this infrastructure should result in decreasing by more than 20% the price of oil products in Cameroon.

## Cameroon: Bowleven to drill two wells on the Etindé permit *“as soon as possible in 2016”*



This company also announced on 11 November 2015, that its Moambe well is in production, on the Bomono permit. AIM-listed British company Bowleven plans to drill *“two appraisal wells highlighting the significant upside potential identified on the intra Isongo reservoir”* on its Etindé permit, offshore Cameroon, a report on the company’s year ended on 30 June 2015 revealed. According to Bowleven’s CEO, Kevin Hart, these wells will be completed *“as soon as possible in 2016”*.

The British oil and gas firm is highly optimistic about this project considering that it already has a \$40 million (22 billion FCFA) available budget for the drilling and testing works.

Bowleven held 75% of the Etinde permit, a set of three offshore blocks covering 2,316 km<sup>2</sup> in Cameroon. However, the British group later inked a stake-sale agreement with Russian Lukoil and New-Age, transferring to them 50% of

its stakes. This operation was approved by a Presidential decree signed on February 6, 2015.

### **Conclusive flow tests**

Moreover, this oil and gas firm announced that the hydrocarbons already flowing from the Moambe well, one of two (with Zingana) drilled in 2015 on the Bomono licence, in the Cameroon onshore. *“The extension of the trials on the Moambe well aims at ascertaining the productivity and connectivity of the shallow reservoir units. These reservoir units are scheduled to become the source for the initial supply of gas for the production of electricity, based on a development plan set up with Actis and Eneo”*, the supplier of public electricity in Cameroon, Bowleven specified.

On 25 November 2015, the company announced that the flow tests on this well were positive. On Moambe, Bowleven was able to undertake a gas production

stabilised at *“7.3 million standard cubic feet, through 48/64 ring with a well head pressure of 664 psi”*, without any *“sign of depletion”* being noticed *“during the initial trial period”*.

Based on these positive results on the well, where the discovery of hydrocarbons was officially announced by Bowleven on 28 September 2015, the British oil and gas company announced in its report for the year ending 30 June 2015, that it will submit during November 2015 an application for a gas development licence on the Bomono permit.

The Bomono licence, which is wholly-owned by Bowleven covers two blocks of 2,328 km<sup>2</sup> in the Douala basin of Cameroon. This gas development licence expires on 12 December 2015, following an extension of year granted by the Cameroonian authorities in December 2014.



## In Cameroon, the start-up Kemit Ecology processes plant waste into ecologic coal

Since July 2014, date at which the activities of the start-up Kemit Ecology were launched by young Cameroonian entrepreneurs, households in Douala, the economic capital of the country, have access to ecologic coal resulting from the processing of vegetal waste collected from markets and households.

Indeed, by scouring the markets and some areas of the economic capital on a tricycle, the developers of Kemit Ecology collect various wastes, which are “first dried at 150°C, then reduced to ashes in an oven. The black ashes thus obtained are mixed with water and a material made from kaolin clay, in order to get some type of coal pieces, which will be packaged and sold in bags of 1 to 40 kg”, AFP described in a spot focusing on this green economy project.

Thanks to this process, the start-up produces up to one ton of ecologic coal per month. This production capacity, according to the promoters of Kemit Ecology, could however be scaled up to 20



tons per month, provided that the company finds funding which will enable it to increase its activity level.

Cheaper and two times less polluting than charcoal, the product from Kemit Ecology works well to preserve the environment, by avoiding the destruction of the Douala mangrove. Indeed, it is in this mangrove that charcoal producers procure the necessary raw material for the production of the 90 tons of char-

coal consumed every month by the inhabitants of Douala.

As a reminder, despite the breakthrough of domestic gas and to a lesser extent, electric ovens, charcoal remains the main source of energy for households in Cameroon because of its relatively affordable price. The use of this source of energy is even more important in the northern part of the country and the rural areas of Cameroon.

## Total Cameroon: More than 90,000 Awango solar lamps sold each year

Total Cameroon, Cameroonian subsidiary of the French Oil and Gas Company, upon reviewing its Awango solar lamps sales, said they were “a phenomenal success”. According to the firm, more than 90,000 of these lamps are sold yearly in Cameroon, through its fuel stations network.

First company to commercialize rechargeable solar lamps in Cameroon, Total is now in competition with various products, mainly Chinese. However, the statistics of the firm are quite satisfying considering that an Awango solar lamp goes for 7,000 FCFA whereas other brands vary from 10 to 15,000 CFA francs each.

The arrival of solar lamps in Cameroon



was truly a breath of fresh air for locals, especially those exposed to constant power outages. As a matter of facts, the use of solar lamps led to a significant de-

crease in that of candles and traditional lamps, which previously caused many fire-related damages in Cameroonian households.

## Partial flooding of the Lom Pangar dam in Cameroon: Good report from the investors



On 27 November 2015, a delegation of investors in the Lom Pangar dam project, currently under construction in the Eastern region of Cameroon, made a new visit to the construction site. The goal for this visit was to enable the investors to assess the progress of the works, two months after its partial flooding which took place on 26 September 2015. *“A lot of work has been done. Proof of this is the possibility of doing the partial flooding in September. This was a unanimous success. The work undertaken in June, July and August is phenomenal. But there is still a lot of work to do. However we are confident about the successful completion*

*of the remaining activities within the deadlines, because all stakeholders have demonstrated their ability to respect these deadlines”*, Stéphane Garnier, energy expert at the World Bank, confided.

Christine Robichon, French ambassador in Cameroon, who was supported by the in-country AFD director, declared herself suitably impressed by the sheer size of the project. *“This is the biggest site I have visited since my arrival in Cameroon”*, the French diplomat declared, before adding: *“this dam is not yet completed, but it already partially serves its purpose”*.

Indeed, the partial flooding of the Lom

Pangar dam in September has already the retention of 3 billion m<sup>3</sup> of water as at 24 November 2015. This water will be gradually released starting from December 2015, at the request of Eneo, the public electricity service agent for the country; in order to ensure flow adjustments on the Sanaga river.

According to Electricity Development Corporation (EDC), the developer of the Lom Pangar project, this adjustment will help in managing low water flows in 2016, while increasing by 70 MW, without any additional investment, the production of the Edéa and Songloulou plants, which capacities dwindle during the low water period, characterised by the drop in the water level in the dams of the country (Mape, Bamendjin and Mbakaou).

Built by the Chinese company CWE, the Lom Pangar dam, which be delivered in July 2016 with a final capacity of retention of 6 billion cubic meters, is financed by the State of Cameroon, the World Bank, AFD, BEI, AfDB, and BDE-AC. The construction of a production plant at the foot of the dam has been scheduled, with a capacity of 30 MW, in order to bring electricity to several villages in the Eastern region.

## Cameroon: Gazprom signs agreement to purchase gas from FLNG project off Kribi

In Cameroon, an eight-year agreement has been signed between Gazprom's affiliated company, Gazprom Marketing & Trading Singapore Pte Ltd (GM&TS), Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH), Perenco Cameroon S.A. (PERCAM), Golar Hilli and Golar Cameroon (GOLAR) for the floating liquefied natural gas (FLNG) project, off the coast of Kribi. According to Offshore Energy Today,

the project is an allocation of 500 bcf of natural gas reserves which will be supplied from the Sanaga Sud and Ebome field by SNH and Perenco. Gazprom, however, is to be the only off-taker from the FLNG terminal.

Golar will be the operator of the FLNG Terminal through its Hilli FLNG vessel which is at present under conversion at the Keppel shipyard in Singapore. In fact, first deliveries from the



terminal are expected to commence in Q2 of 2017.

## Cameroon: Cima International lands FCFA 7 billion contract for Menchum dam

Cameroon's government just awarded a consortium comprised of Canadian firm Cima International and American group ARQ Engineering, a contract for the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Menchum, Northern Cameroon, an official release from Minister of Public

Markets, Abba Sadou, reveals.

At a cost of 6.9 billion FCFA, this contract is to be carried out over 5 years. Cima International which is the head of the consortium recipient of this contract is actually well-known in Cameroon. The firm indeed, already manages

another construction project (ongoing) in the Southern part of Cameroon namely, that of the Mekin dam.

The Menchum dam will have a final production capacity of 72 MW.

## Cameroon: In 2016, EDC will collect 6 to 8 billion FCFA as royalty fee for dams water



Starting from 2016, in respect to the regulatory law on electricity in Cameroon, state-owned company Electricity Development Corporation (EDC) will perceive from Eneo, public power supplier, a royalty fee for the dam waters it uses in its activities related to the production and commercialization of electricity. For the first year of collection, this roy-

alty will range from 6 to 8 billion FCFA, EDC's Director General Théodore Nsangou told pan-African newspaper *Jeune Afrique*. *"Since our operating budget is between 5 to 6 billion FCFA, we could do without the state subsidy and even consider making some investments,"* Mr. Nsangou said.

Moreover, besides allowing investments

to be made, Théodore Nsangou revealed to Business in Cameroon, that a significant portion of this royalty would be used to pay back fund which have been loaned to the State of Cameroon and later retroceded to EDC for the construction of the Lom Pangar dam in the East.



## **After Minim Martap, Hyrdomine now reaches out for Cameroon's power sector**



Peter Lionel Briger on the 11th March 2015 established in Cameroon a subsidiary of the American firm Hydromine. Hydromine Cameroon Ltd, the head office of this subsidiary, has a capital of one million Cfa francs and is at Douala, Cameroon's economic city, a legal release published on November 3, 2015, stated.

This firm is socially dedicated to the establishment of energy projects and of *"any activity launched by business-*

*es in accordance to Cameroon's legislation"*. An objective which perfectly fits the reputation of this firm in the country.

It should be recalled that Hydromine somehow bluffed on a significant project involving bauxite exploitation in Minim Martap and Ngaoundal in the Northern part of Cameroon. In fact, Hydromine, who appeared, at the time, to be just a minor American start-up with no offices, financial resources or

even mining expertise, said it would invest around 5,000 billion FCFA in the bauxite project.

Finally, despite unyielding multiple announcements, the project will be taken back in 2009 by Cameroon Alumina (CAL) of which 45% is owned by emirati firm Dubal ; 45% by the Indian Hindalco and only 10% for Hydromine about whom not much has been heard for months now.

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## **Danish firm Maersk Drilling Services closes Cameroonian branch**

On 29 July 2015, executives of the Danish group Maersk decided to close the Cameroonian branch of their Maersk Drilling Services subsidiary specialized in supporting oil and gas firms world-

wide offering them highly efficient drilling services on their various projects.

Maersk Drilling Services' departure happens in a context where oil and gas

exploration is slowing down in Cameroon, as operators concentrate more on production at the deposits discovered during the 2010 exploitation.



# TRANSPORTATION

## Despite Kribi's arrival, Douala's port will remain a first-class logistics hub – Cyrille Bolloré



As he came to Douala on 19 October 2015 for the official commissioning of the nine new locomotives which were recently offered Camrail to boost its towing capacity, Cyrille Bolloré, President of Bolloré Transport Logistics, clearly stated the plans his firm has for their container terminal at Douala's port as Kribi's deep water port is soon to go online. The Bolloré group, partnering with Chinese CHEC and French shipping company CMA CGM, has in fact recently been awarded the terminal container for this new port. "Let me say that our group, co-share-

holder with APMT, the Port Autonome de Douala (PAD) and with local privates on DIT (Douala International Terminal which is the concessionaire of Douala's container terminal), will continue to invest in the port of Douala which will remain a first-class logistics hub," Mr Bolloré said. However, Cyrille Bolloré's statements sound like a response to the worries expressed by various experts and observers concerning the future of Douala's port as some already predicted its death after Kribi's deep water port goes online. Going against these predictions, the

president of Bolloré Transport Logistics said that the group was currently preparing, "in collaboration with port authorities, a plan for extending and modernizing the port of Douala"; plan they would present "before the end of the year". "I confirm that in collaboration with the Director General of the Douala port, we initiated procedures to acquire the third gantry crane; procedures that had been postponed in 2011 by the Managing Director of the port at the time," he added.

## South African firm Grindrod lands in Cameroon

The South African firm Grindrod who supplies locomotives to 43 countries in Africa, has installed last 2 September a subsidiary in Cameroon. The company is named Grindrod Rail Cameroon Ltd, a legal release released October 27, 2015, discloses. At the head of this subsidiary are Michaël

Christian Schoeman and Ferrar Patrick Michaël Southey. In Cameroon, the South African company plans on providing integrated railway services and logistics solutions. These services include "freight management, provision of specialized rolling stock materials, railway and railway sid-

ings maintenance, etc".

The arrival of Grindrod in Cameroon should bolster the country's partnership with Camrail, Cameroonian rail carrier, to which the South African firm delivered 13.5 billion worth of locomotives (nine in total) since the beginning of the year.

## **Bolloré to finance construction for Ngaoundéré-Ndjaména and Edéa-Kribi-Lolabé railways**

During his visit in Douala on 19 October 2015, Cyrille Bolloré, president of Bolloré Transport Logistics, announced that the Bolloré group intended to finance the feasibility studies and construction works for the railway that extends from Ngaoundéré in the Northern part of Cameroon to Ndjaména, Chad's capital city.

Previously selected as technical expert on this project by both governments, the Bolloré group until now was "providing support for the conducted studies ; helping in preparing project's file for its presentation to investors ; arranging meetings with investors ; participating in talks and in the setting-up of institutional and financial structures". Now however, the

French logistics specialist wants to be an active part in this railway construction project for sub-regional integration.

In addition to the railway extending to Chad and estimated at a cost of 1,160-1,400 billion FCFA, the leader in logistics for Sub-Saharan Africa also eyes the Edéa-Kribi-Lolabé railway project.

*"We have told Cameroonian authorities we desire to finance the construction for the Edéa-Kribi-Lolabé railway as part of our contribution in the project for Kribi's industrial-port complex,"* Cyrille Bolloré says.

It should be reminded that Cameroon's government, at the beginning of October 2015, designated a grouping of technical studies offices comprised

of Spanish firm Ardanuy, Pakistanese Umar Munshi Associates, British CVG Engineering and Cameroonian Bonus Consulting to conduct feasibility studies for the project to build the Edéa-Kribi (Lolabé excluded) railway.

The Edéa-Kribi-Lolabé railway will help boost the exploitation of Kribi's deep water port which should go on-line within the next months. During the phase 2 of its construction, the port of Kribi will host, among other new infrastructures, a hydrocarbon terminal and an iron ore terminal, in preparation of upcoming exploitation of gas liquefaction unit in Kribi, and that of iron ore mines in Eastern Cameroon.

## **Boeing Consulting to establish plan for Camair Co's re-launching**



The government of Cameroon has put Boeing Consulting in charge of the elaboration of the re-launching plan for Cameroon Airlines Corporation (Camair Co), a correspondence from the Secretary General at the Presidency, Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh, sent on October 9, 2015, to the chairman of Camair Co's board of directors (CBD), Edouard

Akame Mfoumou revealed.

Responding to Edouard Akame Mfoumou's request to get the president's approval to resort to the services of Boeing Consulting to re-launch Camair Co, the correspondence states that *"this option does not exclude the participation of other qualified firms in Camair Co's audit. The procedure for the selection of an au-*

*dit firm, as required by the ministry of Finance, is therefore going as planned"*.

Last September, the minister of Finance Alamine Ousmane Mey, launched *"a call to interest to recruit a consultant to audit and support Camair Co through the elaboration of a re-launch plan"*. The deadline for the submission of proposals was on 30 September 2015.

## INDUSTRY

## Cameroon: Sosucam plans a production of 124,000 of sugar in 2015-2016

The Société Sucrière du Cameroun (SOSUCAM – Sugar Company of Cameroon), subsidiary of the French group Vilgrain and leader on the Cameroonian sugar market, is expecting a production of 124,000 tons during the 2015-2016 season, which started on 26 October and should end in June 2016, we learned from official sources.

This production in decrease compared to the 150,000 tons planned for the previous season, is also not very far from the average of 130,000 tons produced by this food processor over the past five years. This, upon further analysis, reveals that the investments so far have not yet yielded results.

Indeed, we remember that Louis Yinda, CEO of SOSUCAM, had announced at the start of the 2013-2014 season that this company would invest FCfa 110 billion in succession starting from that season, in order to reach a production level of 170,000 tons from 2017. The money thus raised was meant to mainly enable the expansion of the 23,000 hectares of sugar cane crop currently operated by SOSUCAM in the areas of



Nkoteng and Mbandjock, in the Central region of the country.

In practical terms, Mr. Yinda then explained, this means that out of the new 10,000 hectares granted to the company in 2005 through an emphyteutic lease signed with the State of Cameroon, almost 3,500 were used for roads layout

and to install some basic infrastructure, while 3,500 hectares were already planted. The remaining 3,000 were to be planted, at the rate of 1,000 hectares on average per year beginning with the 2013-2014 campaign, in order to increase the production.

## Payment for Cameroon's cotton producers delayed by six months

The cotton producers operating in the northern regions of Cameroon have been waiting for payment for over six months, we learned from reliable sources. The treasury challenges currently experienced by the Société de Développement du Coton (SODECOTON – Cotton Development Company) are at the origin of these rather rare payment delays, following the delays in exporting the cotton fibre cargo, Bebnoné

Payouni, Vice-President of the National Confederation of Cotton Producers of Cameroon (CNPCC), explained.

Considering the unease in the cotton producers' union, Le Quotidien de l'Economie reveals, the Cameroonian State supposedly decided to make FCfa 30 billion available to SODECOTON, to enable this public company honour its commitments to the producers, while awaiting the proceeds

from the sale of the cotton.

As a reminder, SODECOTON manages approximately 250,000 producers. In order to cover its purchases from producers in due time, the company sometimes resorts to credits generally obtained from local banks. On 27 January 2015, FCfa 36.5 billion were raised from a pool of five local banks to purchase 266,400 tons of cotton in 2015.



## Céréalis, French grains dealer gets 20% of its revenue from Cameroon



Remi Depoix, president of French firm Céréalis which is specialized in the trading of grains, revealed that the firm exports around 200,000 tons of its wheat to Cameroon each year. This represents about 20% of Céréalis' sales revenue, he says in an interview to the daily l'Economie.

Clearly put, out of approximately 200 million euros (131 billion CFA Francs) it makes yearly in Central and West Af-

rica (exporting a million tons of grains), Céréalis exports to Cameroon amounts to nearly 26 billion FCFA each year.

Céréalis intends within the 10 next years to double this revenue in both markets with Cameroon as its first buyer, Remi Dupoix declared. *"The milling industry is quite significant in Cameroon with around twelve important actors. New mills will soon open and previously closed ones reopen. The activity is truly important*

*considering that the country has started exporting to countries such as Chad, Central Africa and Nigeria,"* he adds.

Let us be reminded that since the closure of Société de développement du blé (Sodéblé) back in the 90s, Cameroon has been importing all of its wheat. In 2012 for example, official statistics showed that more than 517,000 tons of the product were imported at a cost of 102 billion FCFA.

## Cameroonian Union of Breweries increases capital stock from 2.9 to 25 billion FCFA

The Union Camerounaise des Brasseries (UCB) founded and owed by the Cameroonian industrialist Joseph Kadji Defosso (ranked by *Forbes* magazine among the nine most wealthy in Cameroon and 24 biggest fortunes in francophone sub-Saharan Africa), just significantly increased its capital stock. It has surged to 25 billion FCFA from

2.9 billion FCFA, a legal release reveals. Though details and motivations to this increase in capital were not disclosed, it is most likely that the recapitalization precedes new investments, on a Cameroonian market where UCB is more of a Tom Thumb with less than 5% of the shares, against 80% for the leader, the anonymous company of Cameroon's

breweries, and about 15% for Guinness, the local subsidiary of Diageo group.

A fourth operator should soon be entering the market within the next months. It is Brasaf, a firm founded in August 2014 by Samuel Foyou who already owns Fermencam, a distillery he bought from billionaire Victor Fotso in 2006.

## Castel group invests FCfa 10.7 billion in a new production line in Cameroon



The Société Anonyme des Brasseries du Cameroun (SABC), local subsidiary of French group Castel, commissioned on 28 November 2015 in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, a new conditioning line of FCfa 10.7 billion.

With a bottling capacity of 28,000 bottles per hour, this "HST", as nicknamed by Francis Batista, Managing Director of SABC, is the second line of this range in Africa, after South Africa, the Managing Director of the leading company in the Cameroonian brewing industry stressed.

The new line, which commissioning coincides with the end of year, a period of high consumption, will generate 70 new direct jobs. These will come in addition to the 6,000 people already employed in the country by SABC and its subsidiaries, the Société Camerounaise de Verreries (SOCAVER) and So-

ciété des Eaux Minérales du Cameroun (SEMC).

With more than 80% shares of the beer and fizzy drinks market in Cameroon,

SABC had a net income of FCfa 24.7 billion in 2014, for a turnover of FCfa 351.7 billion, an increase of 6.9% compared to the previous year.

## Cameroon: Sébastien Roux appointed as Laborex's Director General

On September 1, 2015, French Sébastien Roux succeeded to Patrick Willemmin as Director General of Laborex Cameroon, the company announced in release published on 5 October 2015.

In other news, Eric Muris, a representative of the French firm Sevpharm which replaced Serom within Laborex's administration board, also joined Lab-

orex Cameroon.

Laborex Cameroun is part of Eurapharma, a network specialized in the distribution and provision of pharmaceutical products and services. Controlled by the CFAO group, this network covers Madagascar, French overseas territories as well as more than 20 African countries.



## Cameroon: Compagnie fruitière of Marseille to establish cocoa processing unit in Njombé

Plantations du Haut Penja (PHP), Cameroonian subsidiary of Marseille's Compagnie Fruitière and leader of Cameroon's dessert banana market, plans to establish in Njombé, Coastal

region, a cocoa processing unit. The project which aims to produce Made in Cameroon chocolate was presented to Cameroon's Minister of Agriculture, Henri Eyébé Ayissi, by the Vice-President



of Compagnie fruitière Africa, Jean Marc Gravellini, during an audience held on November 4, 2015, in Yaoundé.

Specific details concerning the agro-industrial project have not yet been disclosed. However, this project for the implementation of a cocoa processing unit announced by PHP will join other similar which are to be realized in the country and aim to process, on the medium term, 70% of locally produced cocoa beans against 25% only at present. Besides this new branching in its activities in Cameroon, PHP who also produces white pepper at Penja, recently launched a procedure to strengthen its leadership on the banana market, by expanding its banana plantations.

As a matter of fact, in addition to the 3,000 acres of plantations it exploits in Cameroon's coastal region (for a total output of 170,000 tons of banana in 2015), PHP *"is presently expanding its banana plantations in Dehane (in the South). This expansion will be done in various stages and will cover 800 acres. During the first stage, 52 acres are to be irrigated. To this end, we will need overhead materials so as to prepare the land,"* the company stated in a call to tenders dated July 2014.

## Cassava processing plant commissioned in Ngoulémakong, Southern Cameroon

Ultracom is the name of Ngoulémakong's unit for Cassava Processing and Commercialization. With a processing capacity of 7-8 tons per day, this unit which is located in the Southern part of Cameroon was just commissioned by Minister for SMEs, Laurent Serge Etoundi Ngoa. The commissioning happened in the framework of the upcoming cassava feast.

Through its program to support the establishment and development of SMEs

specialized in agricultural processing (PACD/SME) and led by Minister for SMEs, the government of Cameroon disbursed 36 million FCFA for the implementation of this industrial unit specialized in the production of Tapioca, and cassava flour which is highly consumed in Cameroon and neighboring countries such as Nigeria.

Ngoulémakong which is one of the main production basins of Cameroon (7,600 tons produced annually), is not

far from Sangmélima which also hosts another important industrial unit, the SOTRAMAS. This unit which processes 120 tons of cassava daily and is the product of a joint-venture between the local municipality and the Chamber for Commerce, is delaying in the launching of its activities due to the lack of raw materials but also to squabbles among leaders.



## Swedish Assa Abloy, Vachette locks manufacturer implants subsidiary in Cameroon

Vachette, the renowned lock brand previously present in Cameroon through a legal representative, will from now on be through its main dealer, knowingly Swedish firm Assa Abloy. Indeed, it was revealed during a recent commissioning ceremony in Douala for a showroom of this company that it had established a subsidiary in Cameroon six months ago.

William Bureau, manager Assa Abloy central Africa, says the Swedish firm's arrival in Cameroon aimed at restore the image of Vachette in the country, where many counterfeited versions of this brand circulate thus leading to confusion.

*"The fact is that Vachette is so counterfeited that people have started losing faith in*

*it. They believe Vachette is manufactured in China which is completely false. We are here to tell them where lies the original product, and get rid of all Vachette counterfeited products. This is why we are here. We reach out to retailers daily to fight against the counterfeited products,"* William Bureau declared.

## Cameroon: French group Le Duff to open four "Brioche Dorée" restaurants starting 2016



On November 4, 2015, the French newspapers Ouest-France disclosed that "Brioche Dorée", the restaurant brand owned by the French group *Le Duff*, in partnership with CFAO would land in Cameroon next year.

Four. That is the number of *Brioche Dorée* restaurants that *Le Duff* is about to open in Cameroon in the framework

of its plan for expansion in Africa. This plan includes the opening of 30 restaurants in seven African countries (Cameroon, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Ghana and DR Congo) over the next 10 years.

"*Brioche Dorée*" is the leader of the French-style fast-food industry with more than 500 restaurants worldwide

and more than 125,000 sandwiches sold daily. The brand was created in 1976 and operates in the following sectors: fast food, conventional catering, industrial-scale production of bread and pastries. As at present, the group counts more than 1,300 restaurants and bakeries in 80 countries worldwide.

## CSR

## Cameroon: The Western Union Foundation offers \$200,000 to help children from SOS Children's village

The Western Union Foundation, the charitable arm of the world's money transfer giant, just offered a 200,000 dollars check (around FCFA 100 million) to the heads of SOS Children's village, a non-profit organization which takes in and train abandoned and vulnerable children all around Africa.

The Western Union Foundation said this grant which is the result of contributions from Western Union agents worldwide would help support education of children from SOS Children's villages in 15 African countries including Cameroon. Patrick Gaston, President of the Western Union Foundation,



said, *"The Foundation is dedicated to creating a better world, where the ability to make dreams can come true through economy opportunities is not restricted to a few but is a right for all".*

*"This donation will directly impact more than 700 orphaned and other vulnerable African children by, increasing their edu-*

*cational access through scholarships and distribution of essential school supplies; improving the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels through the construction of new facilities and the provisioning of new activities; and the inclusion of new technology in the curriculum",* he adds.

## MTN Cameroon wins "21 Days of Y'ello Care" for the third time



MTN Cameroon, subsidiary of South African telecom group MTN International has once again won the "21 Days of Y'ello Care" contest. This contest *"awards the best among MTN's subsidiaries in terms of employees' social involvement"*.

It is the third time in four years that MTN Cameroon wins this contest beating the other 21 subsidiaries in the run. Just like in 2012 and 2013 where it previously won, MTN Cameroon will receive a check of 50 million FCFA which it will reinvest in social projects.

MTN Cameroon's employees using their past two prizes plan to build a Mother-Child pavilion at the Bonassama District Hospital, in the fourth municipality of Douala.

## Women from Orange Cameroon provide 250 kits to kids from disadvantaged areas

For this 2015 new school year, The Women Association of Orange Cameroon just launched the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of its *"Back-to-School Program"*. On this occasion, the structure announced in a release, that 250 school kits were offered to children and young people from disadvantaged areas.

Each kit contains *"one schoolbag, pens and pencils, books, and school fees for each kid"*, stated the release.

Comprised of 100 members, the Association of Women of Orange *"is the product of a desire to form a group concerned with solidarity and development"*. Moreover, the core mission of the institution is to assist in any possible manner the disadvantaged populations, through programs such as the Back-to-School program, the training of child mothers, establishing community libraries...

## MINING

## Cameroon's fourth cement plant Medcem Cameroon start commercializing its product

Hundreds of cement bags were recently brought to the Quifeurou hardware store in Biyem-Assi, Yaoundé. With the traditional blue and red colors usually associated with Dangote Cement Cameroon, these bags distinguish themselves with the inscription "Medcem Cameroon", name of the fourth cement producer to come in Cameroon and joining the three others namely Lafarge's Cimencam, Addoha's Cimaf and Aliko Dangote's Dangote Cement.

A plate laid on the side of this cargo served to dissipate all doubts about the

effective commercialization of the cement. Truly, it was announced that this cement factory would open since March 2015, but it was later postponed to June and finally it is in October that the first bags of cement of Medcem Cameroon, subsidiary of Turkish group Eren Holdings, have landed on the market. A most discrete landing one must say.

Credible sources revealed that the Quifeuron chain of hardware stores is the only selling the product for now. Talks of exclusivity are even circulating within the chain. *"This is cement which will*

*replace the Quifeurou cement"*, said an employee of the hardware store mentioning that the cement his employer imports, bags and stamps is soon to exit the market.

Unfortunately, just as it was the case with Cimaf and Dangote, the arrival of Medcem Cameroon on the market may not significantly impact on the price of this commodity in Cameroon. Indeed, Medcem's 50Kg-cement bag costs 4,750 FCFA, just a little below the 4,800 FCFA and 5,000 FCFA for the competing firms in Yaoundé.

## Young Cameroonian scientist develops laterite-based eco-cement

Patrick Lemougna Ninla, young Cameroonian scientist, has just been honoured in Yaoundé with the Kwame Nkrumah National Young Scientists Award which is under the helm of the African Union and the World Academy of Science for the advancement of sciences in developing countries (AU-TWAS).

Receiving the distinction directly from the Minister for scientific research and Innovation, Madeleine Tchuinté, the youth owes it to an invention which is about to stir a little revolution in the cement sector.

Indeed, the 30-year old scientist, chemistry graduate of the University of Yaoundé I, has developed a cement variety made of laterite, material which is available on 70% of Cameroon, but not really used. .

In addition to the availability of this material, the "cement made in Lemougna" presents diverse ecologic advantages one of which is that, its production emits substantially less CO<sub>2</sub> than the



Portland cement made from clinker and pozzolan heated at 1,400 degrees. With an available and cheap raw material, this laterite-based eco-cement

should contribute in the lowering of cement prices in Cameroon and Africa as dreams the young scientist.



## **IMIC to give out assets on Nkout Iron project in Southern Cameroon**

British mining company International Mining and Infrastructure Corporation (IMIC), who acquired the assets of Affero Mining in Caminex, the Cameroonian law firm developing the Nkout Iron project, in the Southern part of Cameroon; just announced the successful realization of a convertible bonds offering worth 22 million FCFA (13 billion FCFA). With a four-year maturity, this operation has an interest rate of 15%. In 2019 when it ends, all those that subscribed to this bond will be given the opportunity to get a full or partial re-

payment, or taking shares in Caminex, at 10 000 FCFA the share. In this scenario, IMIC is to agree to an indirect transfer of assets valued to about 49.5% of Caminex's capital.

This fundraising should draw the attention of Cameroon's tax authority, which recently had to jostle with IMIC for the payment of a sum exceeding one billion FCFA which represents the tax corresponding to Affero's takeover by IMIC in Caminex (100%), in 2013. The TAN issued on August 7, 2015, was contested by the mining company,

which argued that there was no provision backing this tax at the time of the transaction in 2013.

Cameroon's tax authority who however strongly affirms that the inclusion of this provision in the 2015 finance act was no more than a "clarification" of a provision that already existed at the time of the transaction between IMIC and Affero Mining in 2013, then ordered the mining firm's accounts seized. IMIC then paid the tax required by the Directorate General of Taxes, hence over obtaining the cancellation of seizure order.

## **Cameroon to increase gold production in the Adamaoua region**

With the partial set-up of the Lom Pangar dam last 24 September 2015, about 5,357 mining workers and 31 mining firms have been asked to leave various gold mining sites which are soon to be submerged by the waters of this dam in construction in Cameroon's East, rich in various ores.

However, new mining sites will soon be opened for exploitation in the Adamaoua region, Cameroon's Northern region, as an alternative to the stopping of mining on the previously mentioned sites where government had in 2007 launched an operation to save 13 tons of gold.

*"This has been revealed by the national coordinator of program supporting artisanal mining (Capam), Jean Marcel Essomba. These evacuations are not really felt since we are, at the same time, launching exploitation of other sites, in the Adamaoua. It just looks like a displacement of activities. But the fact remains that we could have gained more if there was no dam to fill," he says.*



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