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BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

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An interview with Isaac Tamba

***"Infrastructure remain
our priority until 2019"***

5 Cameroonians
contributing to the success
of international corporations



Flexicadastre, for a better
management of mining data



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A bet on brilliant minds and infrastructures

As much as Cameroon wishes to attract foreign investors to boost its industrial production in sectors like agriculture, infrastructures, mining and to modernize other profitable industries like telecommunications, services as well as help its digital economy bloom, it is important to know that many Cameroonians are the pride of the nation, which is the leading economy of the CAEMC (Central African Economic and Monetary Community) region, heading various renowned international financial institutions. High executives and top technocrats, trained in the best schools, both in Cameroon and abroad, they are many, young men and women, Cameroonians, to lead multinationals. Skillful and competitive, these *made in Cameroon* brilliant minds are the stars of the firms employing them and subsidiaries they lead. They are well-known for their leadership, expertise, inventiveness, creativity and sense of innovation. In this edition of *Business in Cameroon*, our team introduces you to some of these icons of the Cameroonian private sector. Handpicked, these *self-made men* are an anchor for investors interested in profitable sectors of the economy...

It cannot be overemphasized enough, the human factor is a true source of development. Indeed, human resources in Cameroon are highly selective and competitive. Having rapidly understood this, the government helps the private sector face economic challenges such as State's roadmaps, the implementation of the DSCE (Strategic Document for Growth and Employment) and the three-year emergency plan, which are the three main beacons of investment in Cameroon. Also, public spending

has been carefully structured and planned until 2020. It focuses mainly on the development and modernization of infrastructures. It is the government's permanent leitmotiv. Based on the assertions of the managing director of the department of economy, public investment planning at the ministry of economy, planning and land development (MINEPAT), our readers will, in the pages of this edition, get to know the major infrastructure projects being developed in the country. They will be able to truly grasp the importance of these projects towards Cameroon's emergence in 2035. In a difficult global economic context, the country has developed a plan and acquired all the necessary instruments to boost investments. For example, the nation is working to improve power transmission in order to connect populations and companies located in the remote areas to the national grid, and also to insure actual power sufficiency. A must for true industrial development which Cameroonians are expecting, in line with President Biya's greater achievements or "*Grandes réalisations*" programme launched in 2011. Cameroon's emergence depends largely on a greater power output expected starting from 2018 with the delivery the Lom Pangar, Memve'ele, Mekin hydropower dams and many similar projects.

You might have guessed by now. Power is one of Cameroon's main economic challenges, both in the short and medium terms. Hundreds of millions of euros are being invested in new power projects. In the present edition, besides hydropower projects, gas and thermal power plants are also covered.

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THE CAST



**JAKOB
SIDENIUS**

The Cameroonian Minister of Transport, Edgar Alain Mebe Ngo'o, inaugurated on 18 May 2017 in Douala, the economic capital, the 3rd gantry crane of the port of Douala. This equipment, according to Jakob Sidenius, Managing Director at Douala International Terminal (DIT), the company holding the concession for the container terminal at the port of Douala, this gantry crane *"complies with the highest standards in terms of environmental protection: low CO2 emission and 30% less energy consumption compared to existing equipment"*.

According to the Managing Director of the Autonomous Port of Douala (PAD) Cyrus Ngo'o, *"this equipment scheduled in 2008, comes today mainly because of the necessary measures and the debates which took place, regarding the geo-mechanical stability of the dockside and its capacity to bear this third crane. This technical prerequisite having been completed in 2014, the application of the bill of specifications, for this tool, was set in motion"*.



**HENRI EYÉBÉ
AYISSI**

The Cameroonian Minister of Agriculture, Henri Eyébé Ayissi, officially launched phase 2 in the Grassfields integrated participative development project in the North-Western region, valued at FCfa 29.4 billion; and the Mbappit Mount rural development project in the Noun, Western region, funded with FCfa 16.6 billion.

This global funding of approximately FCfa 46 billion, which represents over 90% of the funding required for the implementation of the 2nd phase in these two projects, we learned, was provided by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). Through various supports given to producers, these two projects aim to substantially increase the production of potato, maize, oil palm, rice and cassava in the North-Western and Western regions of Cameroon, to improve farmers' income.



**MOHAMED
KRISNI**

Appointed as Managing Director of the Société Commerciale de Banque Cameroun (SCB Cameroun) in October 2015, Mohamed Krisni is no longer in charge of this local subsidiary of the Moroccan bank group Attijariwafa Bank, we learned from reliable source. He was replaced by his compatriot Mohammed Mejbar.

This the 2nd Managing Director to change in this Cameroonian banking institution since the dismissal of Jamal Ahizoune at the end of 2015. Logically, after his appointment as head of SCB Cameroun, Mohamed Mejbar should have also joined the Board of Directors of Attijari Securities Central Africa, an asset management company created by the Attijariwafa group and based in Cameroon, with a scope of action covering the Central African region.



**ALAMINE
OUSMANE MEY**

The Inland Revenue Administration of the Cameroonian Ministry of Finance will take a new step in June 2017 in the process to digitise its services, through the launch of the electronic tax declaration for the change of ownership for used cars, the Minister of Finance, Alamine Ousmane Mey announced in a press release.

In this regard, indicates Minister Alamine Ousmane Mey, *“registering operations for the import and local sale of used vehicles will be done via a teledeclaration system on the Inland Revenue Administration website. Related payments will be done exclusively through bank transfers”*. As a reminder, the Cameroonian Inland Revenue Administration launched, a few years ago, a vast modernisation process, which includes digitising its services.



CYRUS NGO'O

During the commissioning ceremony of the 3rd gantry crane of the port of Douala, on 18 May 2017, Cyrus Ngo'o, the Managing Director of the Autonomous Port of Douala (PAD), the public company in charge of managing this port infrastructure, announced that a coastal navigation service will be established between the port of Douala and the one in Kribi, in the Southern region.

In other words, the deep-water port of Kribi (whose commissioning has been expected for at least 2 years now) being better adapted to berth larger vessel, which is not the case in Douala, will directly ship some goods to the port of Douala. As a reminder, also called short distance shipping, coastal navigation consists in transferring, on smaller vessels, goods between two close ports.



**CHARLES
METOUCK**

On 11 May 2017, the Special Criminal Court (TCS in French), a special jurisdiction set up to judge those who misappropriated public funds in Cameroon, issued a new ruling of adjournment and partial dismissal in the case State of Cameroon vs. Charles Metouck, former MD of Société Nationale de Raffinage (Sonara) and its co-accused. In this new case, the former MD of Sonara, who is already serving two prison sentences of 9 and 15 years, is accused, with some of his former colleagues, and mainly the Chairman of this public company, John Ebong Ngolé, of allegedly embezzling over FCfa 60 billion, our sources revealed. The case follows the use by the Cameroonian legal system of a report produced by the Contrôle Supérieur de l'Etat, dating back to 2010, indexing Charles Metouck, and in which a first trial led to his conviction, on 21 October 2015, to a 15-year prison sentence.

Cameroonians heads of multinationals



Some months ago, we revealed in this very magazine, the faces and career paths of Cameroonians who are excelling within international financial institutions. At the end of the non-exhaustive inventory of these ambassadors flying high the Cameroonian flag, emerged some interesting profiles, who are forging their paths, rather admirably, within multinationals, sometimes of global standing.

These men and women from Cameroon, in addition to having already succeeded in entering the very closed and competitive circle of management in multinationals, actually became heads of subsidiaries which are for some of them, leaders in very specific sectors of activity.

Even more, it should be noted that these Cameroonian men and women all exert their leadership in the service sector, particularly finance and telecom, which are certainly two of the most dynamic sectors and the main drivers in several economies these past years.

Simply put, through their responsibilities which they fulfil in a competent manner, these compatriots have managed to board, without complex, the high-speed train of innovation, effectiveness and efficiency, criteria which characterise multinationals and just business in general, in this era of globalisation. As a result, these managers elevate Cameroonian expertise, not in football or music, for example thanks to the bass guitar

virtuosos that the country produces for the pleasure of music lovers worldwide; but rather in sectors which are at once sensitive and strategic such as finance and telecoms. In short, these crowned heads, sometimes trained in Cameroon, who later enhance the visibility of multinationals beyond the borders of their country, bring a sharp contradiction to the belief that in Africa, in general, there are only “powerful men” in politics. Because, the profiles you are about to discover prove that in Cameroon, in particular, there are “powerful” women and men in the international private sector.

Brice R. Mbodiam

Elisabeth Medou Badang, a Cameroonian mark within the telecom group Orange

On 31 May 2017 in the Maképé neighbourhood, in the suburbs of Douala, the Cameroonian economic capital, the Prime Minister, Philémon Yang, inaugurated the Orange Cameroun complex. An investment valued at approximately FCfa 16 billion, this complex is not only the location of the headquarters of the number 2 in the mobile telephony sector in Cameroon, but also the biggest data centre in Central and Western Africa. This jewel will certainly remain as the most important proof of Elisabeth Medou Badang's time as head of the Cameroonian subsidiary of this French telecom group. *"Orange chose Cameroon. I want to talk about what your country owes to Elisabeth Medou Badang, who fought so hard. When I listen to the debates which often come up on respecting commitments, applying, drawing up bills of specifications, we must learn to appreciate this contribution"*, Bruno Mettling, CEO for Africa and the Middle East at Orange, even highlighted during the inauguration ceremony.

Indeed, since her arrival in the top management of Orange Cameroun, in December 2013, this Cameroonian has been taking on projects one after the other to better position the company she leads on the local telecom market. From getting approval for 3G and 4G permits to rolling out these technologies the same year (March and December 2015), to the explosion of the Orange Money service, which today has close to 4,000 sales points (and over 2.8 million users) throughout Cameroon and a swipe card allowing its holders to use the network of Visa-enabled automatic teller machines in the country, through the implementation of the new brand identity of the company, or the ongoing deployment of the ACE



Since her arrival in the top management of Orange Cameroun, in December 2013, this Cameroonian has been taking on projects one after the other to better position the company she leads on the local telecom market.

submarine cable; Elisabeth Medou Badang is bursting with dynamism at the head of Orange Cameroun.

Dynamism and above all an array of Cameroonian skills that she also asserts from 2010 to 2013 during her spell at the head of the Orange group Botswana subsidiary. Indeed, under her direction, we read on the internet site of the French ambassador in Gaborone, Orange Botswana *"gained three points in profitability in two years and multiplied the launch of innovative services, while contributing to the country's development notably through a partnership with the University of Botswana, support to community organisations fighting against AIDs or developing telecommunications access for as many people as possible"*.

All things which resulted in this former Proparco manager, who joined Orange Cameroun in 1999 (then

known as Mobilis), being made a Knight in the French National Order of Merit. Indeed, following a decree signed on 1st July 2013 by François Hollande, the then French Head of State, this ambassador of Cameroon received her medal from Anne de la Blache, then Ambassador of France in Botswana, on 20 September 2013. On this occasion, Elisabeth Medou was presented as *"a figurehead in the telecommunications sector in Africa"*, whose *"expertise and management vision"* have been tried and tested. An opinion certainly shared by the jury of the Africa Telecom People Awards (ATP Awards), 2014 edition. That year, indeed, the jury of this competition awarded the MD of Orange Cameroun the trophy for Best Telecom Manager in Africa.

BRM

Gwendoline Abunaw, a purebred banker at the head of Ecobank Cameroun



Former student in Banking and Finance at the University of Buéa, in the South-West regional capital of the country, Cameroonian Gwendoline Abunaw is since May

2017 the brand-new Managing Director of the local subsidiary of the Pan African banking group Ecobank. Holding a MBA from the London Metropolitan University, the newly promoted Director started her banking career in 1998 as Risk Analyst at Standard Chartered Bank. Between 2001 and 2003, she studied in London, before joining the Ecobank Cameroun group upon her return, where she worked as Corporate Relationship Manager. A year later, Gwendoline Abunaw is recruited by Citibank, before returning in 2011 to Ecobank Cameroun. Appointed Head of Corporate Banking and co-opted into joining the Board of the Cameroonian subsidiary of Ecobank, Gwendoline

Abunaw was fast-tracked to the position of Deputy Managing Director in 2015.

Since May 2017, this true banker inherited the management of a subsidiary of the Ecobank group which has been posting rather laudable performances for the past 2 years, and which managed to leave the 5th spot in the ranking of Cameroonian banks, to become 4th bank in the country behind Afriland First Bank, Bicec and Société Générale. In February 2017, at the end of a general meeting of shareholders held in Douala, Ecobank Cameroun announced a net income before tax of FCfa 13.8 billion in 2016, an increase of 23% compared to 2015.

Freddy Tchala, at the heart of the MTN network

One year after his compatriot at the Orange group (Elisabeth Medou Badang), Cameroonian Freddy Tchala was chosen as Best Telecom Manager in African in 2015, by the jury of African Telecom People Awards. Though already at the head of MTN Côte d'Ivoire that year, the jury specified that the Cameroonian manager was rewarded for his work at the head of MTN Congo Brazza, which he had just left to lead the largest subsidiary of the South African group MTN International in francophone Africa.

In Côte d'Ivoire since 2015, Freddy Tchala is on his 3rd assignment as MD of a subsidiary of MTN. He was also MD of MTN in Guinea, from September 2008 to July 2011; then in Congo Brazza, between July 2011 and June 2015. But it was in Cameroon, his country, where this marketing graduate from the



Catholic University of Central Africa in Yaoundé, started his story with South African multinational. He was also Marketing Director of MTN Cameroon, from September 2005 to October 2008.

Three years spent drafting up and implementing marketing strategies for the leader in the telecom

market in Cameroon, coupled with two stints as MD of subsidiaries of the MTN group, which today enable Freddy Tchala, former Brand Manager at BAT (British American Tobacco) Cameroun (1999-2002), to still maintain MTN as leader in the Ivorian mobile market.

Georges Wega, first African to manage the Senegalese subsidiary of Société Générale

In May 2016, the French banking group, Société Générale, entrusted the management of Société Générale des Banques du Sénégal (SGBS) to Cameroonian Georges Wega. The latter, who until this promotion was Deputy Managing Director of Société Générale Cameroun, officially took office a month later, after the validation of his appointment by the regulatory body in the banking sector in ECOWAS.

Georges Wega's promotion at SGBS was considered by the Senegalese press as a *"mini revolution"*, since, as highlighted by local newspapers,

it *"finally celebrated an African as Head of a bank which remained very conservative in its senior management"*. Poached from UBA Cameroun in June 2014, where he was Managing Director, Georges Wega took charge of Operations at Société Générale Cameroun in July 2014.

A graduate of the University of Quebec in Canada, Georges Wega knows the financial world well. He successively worked for the financial branch of General Electric in Brussels and Amsterdam; for Barclays Bank in London; then UBA, the Nigerian banking group for which he man-



aged the Cameroonian subsidiary during 4 years, before joining Société Générale.

Mathieu Mandeng presides over the future of Standard Chartered Bank in Mauritius



Former MD of the local subsidiary of Standard Chartered Bank and former President of the Professional Association of Credit Establishments of Cameroon (APECAM), Cameroonian banker Mathieu Mandeng leads, since September 2015, the Mauritian subsidiary of Standard Chartered Bank. Recently, he was even elected Vice-President of the association of bankers of Mauritius.

A former employee of Citibank, Mathieu Mandeng left his mark during his tenure at the head of the Cameroonian subsidiary of Standard. In 2013, year during which Standard Chartered Bank achieved *"exceptional"* results as described by its MD, this same bank received from the Minister of Finance, the prize for *"best seller of Cameroonian public securities"* on the Central Bank market. An efficient contribution in raising

financial resources for the State, which led Mathieu Mandeng and Standard Chartered Bank to be appointed by the government, in early 2015, as co-arranger (with Société Générale) of a Eurobond of FCfa 750 billion, the very first in Cameroonian public finance history. But, aside from these actions with the State of Cameroon, Standard Chartered Bank was, during the Mandeng era, an important provider of funds for the Cameroonian economy, through important credits granted to companies. This was the case for the financial package created in the framework of the project for the construction of the gas plant in Kribi, which was then presented to the national banking world as a great first, considering the maturity of the loan which was 10 years.

Isaac Tamba

“Infrastructures are our main priority until 2019”

Managing Director of the Economy and Public investment planning department at the ministry of Economy, Planning and Land Development, this academic gives here his opinion on a recently released book on the DCSE (Strategic document for growth and employment), the government's roadmap to achieve emergence by 2035. The official here also highlights choices made by the Cameroonian government in this framework, in a difficult global economic context.

Bisness in Cameroon: Sir, after recently attending the dedication ceremony for the book titled “DSCE: how to achieve a two-digit growth?”, how do you perceive the book?

Isaac Tamba: As the minister of Economy said, we are very satisfied about the book. Because any work, research or contribution which is likely to challenge our choices is most welcomed. At the ministry of Economy, we are willing to discuss economic matters. During the book's

dedication, the minister shared with the audience some of its opinions after the reading. We are indeed satisfied because such contributions are rare in our environment. Often, we get such contributions from our technical and financial partners, which are institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, the European Union or AFD.

BC: Still in regards to the book, do you believe there are things to change in the DSCE ?

IT: I do not believe this is what the books aims to achieve. If you read it well, it is just a partial assessment of the DSCE. It should be noted that the DSCE is much more complex than it was presented in the book. It revolves around three main axes. The first is growth strategy. The second is employment strategy and the third is State's strategic management. These three axes make a whole and the DSCE's objectives must be understood with these axes in mind. However, the book's authors have



Isaac Tamba, Managing Director of the Economy and Public investment planning department at the ministry of Economy, Planning and Land Development: "The first strategic pillar of its growth axis focuses on infrastructures. This axis was not picked randomly."

focused only on the first axis and covered only two segments out of five of the growth axis. We believe these two segments to be of minor importance. First there is the modernization of the production system. And here, it has also been partially covered. Next is regional integration and diversification of exchanges. That is all I can say. Once more, I sustain that the book provides only a partial and limited assessment of the DSCE.

BC: So, according to you, what is the most important in the DSCE ?

IT: The DSCE combines politics, thinking and action or praxis as it is known to Greeks. The first strategic pillar of its growth axis focuses on infrastructures. This axis was not picked randomly. Indeed, if Cameroon is considered today a resilient nation, it is because of infrastructures. From 2010 up to now, infrastructures represented 67% of the State's budget as the government decided to focus on developing infrastructures to bridge gaps that emerged after two decades of structural adjustment. In regards to power which is crucial, you might remember

power outages. It is true that it is not in the past yet, but we have recorded some improvements. It is looking at these improvements that the President of Cameroon and his administration have decided to push on and invest more in infrastructures. We wished for the provision of an external opinion regarding this initiative, to know if we are on the right track. This would have helped question ourselves about second-generation projects on which the ministry of economy is already thinking. Why ? Well, because the first strategic axis englobes first-generation only. Therefore, a constructive criticism that informs us about our methods, sectoral choices, financing modes is most welcomed. First, it should be noted that that we have assessed first-generation projects, identified our strengths and weaknesses and know that there is room for improvement.

BC: Mr. MD, the book we are talking about puts into question the government's decision to opt for a "Big push" strategy which consists in investing in all sectors simultaneously to insure growth...

IT: This has nothing to do with the "big push" strategy. We based our strategy mainly on infrastructures. 67% of the 2017 investment budget is dedicated to infrastructures while 9% goes into modernizing the production system, which is the second strategic axis. Other sectors, seven over all under the DSCE, capture about 2%. You can see that there is no dispersion, what you see here is rather the concentration of efforts in the sector which is most important to us: that is infrastructures. That is why I was wondering if what was being discussed here is really the DSCE, if they have actually read it? Or if they are confusing the DSCE's objectives with the government's budgetary efforts?

BC: Considering all the crises that Cameroon and other nations in the region have experiences recently, should we not less focus on infrastructures and more on major sectors in order to achieve by 2020, DSCE's objectives ?

IT: We are progressing as we should. Actually, the ministry of economy is the same in charge of the private sector. This is an important detail, and you must consider it so to



Isaac Tamba: "Going even further, the minister of economy has decided to establish a policy to directly support the private sector."

understand our priorities. From 2010 to 2017, we have put an accent on public investment. You may recall that in 2010, public spending's share in the State budget was about 18%. Now, it is more than 30%. This falls under a voluntarist approach. The State has decided to boost growth which will later be spurred by private sector. And for the private sector to achieve that, some conditions must be gathered.

I do not wish to discuss business environment. You know very well that Cameroon's ranking the Doing Business is not what we expected, even if since 2016 there has been an improvement. The latter is mostly due to efforts made in the infrastruc-

tures sector to help private sector bloom. We copied the model of countries situated in South-East Asia, which followed the same path we are on since 2010. A path which made Cameroon an enviable economy in terms to growth.

"That is why I was wondering if what was being discussed here is really the DSCE, if they have actually read it? Or if they are confusing the DSCE's objectives with the government's budgetary efforts?"



For example, in 2017, while forecast for economic growth in the region stands at about 1%, Cameroon stands out at around 4%. By investing in dams (Lom-Pangar, Mekin, Membe'élé, etc.), it is so that private companies have access to power, and ensure that by 2018-19, all conditions are in place for the private sector to fully expand. We give them all our support. Going even further, the minister of economy has decided to establish a policy to directly support the private sector.

So let me reassure once again, choices made in the framework of DSCE have nothing to do with dispersion. Infrastructures are our main priority until 2019. We are also developing key projects with some of our partners. During political discussions



"By investing in dams (Lom-Pangar, Mekin, Membe'élé, etc.), it is so that private companies have access to power, and ensure that by 2018-19, all conditions are in place for the private sector to fully expand."

with these partners, we made sure that this decision will remain as it is.

BC: The main concern about the DSCE has always been the mobilization of funding needed to implement it. Indeed, aside that financing is getting harder to obtain, Cameroon also has to deal with threats such as Boko Haram, a battle which costs a lot, a drop in prices of commodities, or the entry into force of economic partnership agreements with the European Union, which caused a decrease in tax-custom revenues. In sight of all these, shouldn't the

objectives of the DSCE be revised?

IT: The three-year emergency plan developed by the President in 2014 was already in a way an adjustment to the DSCE. We are well aware of the challenges we are up against since 2014. We know they are not going to vanish this year. During discussions with our partners, we received guarantees that the funding gap present since 2015 will be bridged between 2017 and 2019. We will then have some space to breathe. Also, the last bond sold by the State was oversubscribed. Each time we sell a bond, it is oversubscribed. This means there is liquidity. As

for national saving, it only needs investment to boom. Presently, brainstorming is taking place to valorize national savings. We are working with the ministry of finances to see how to give life to the Douala stock exchange. The oversubscription of bonds is proof that there is potential which should be tapped into. We need long-term resources and we have Cameroonians who are willing to provide them to us. As done elsewhere, why not negotiate with them to obtain these resources for 10 years, in order to rely less on the debt market?

Interview by Brice R. Mbodiam

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

IMF insists on urgency to clean up public finance sector to put an end to the decrease in foreign exchange reserves in the CEMAC zone

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its report on *"Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa"* published this month of May 2017, notes that many countries, in 2016, suffered from the sharp fall in commodity prices.

"This is particularly the case for countries exporting commodities, particularly oil exporting countries, such as Angola, Nigeria and the countries in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)", indicates the IMF. According to this report, the delays observed in the execution of necessary adjustments lead to an increase in the public debt,

create uncertainty, restrict investments and could possibly generate even more important problems in the future.

"For the most affected countries, it is still urgent to clean up the public finance sector to put an end to the decrease in foreign exchange reserves and offset losses in budget revenues, especially in the CEMAC countries", repeats the IMF. The insistence of this global financial institution is in direct line with the alarm raised in April by Kadima Kalondji, Resident Representative of the IMF in Cameroon.

In 2010, while visiting Libreville

in the framework of a seminar addressed to media professionals in the sub-region, Kadima Kalondji assured that the community's foreign exchange reserves were FCfa 6,000 billion. But these reserves have since dropped to FCfa 2,000 billion, therefore an erosion of FCfa 4,000 billion in 2016.

The Representative of the IMF then pointed an accusing finger at the fall in revenues and oil exports as well as the explosion in public investment expenditure in a difficult and unfavourable financial environment for oil-based economies.

Yaoundé and Paris are considering a meeting between Paul Biya and Emmanuel Macron

Gilles Thibault, French Ambassador in Cameroon was received, on Tuesday 30 May 2017, by the President of the Republic, Paul Biya, for a meeting. On the agenda, an overview of the topics of common interest.

Talking to the press after close to two hours of exchanges, Ambassador Gilles Thibault said that the election of President Emmanuel Macron and the parliamentary election scheduled for mid-June 2017 were at the heart of the discussions with the Cameroonian Head of State.

It should be noted that following the election of Emmanuel Macron on 7 May as President of France, Paul

Biya addressed on 8 May a letter of congratulations to his counterpart. The Cameroonian President then assured his new peer of his availability

to work, with him, towards maintaining the goodwill between Yaoundé and Paris to open new horizons in their cooperation.



In 1st semester 2017, France already granted 2.3 million Euros for humanitarian assistance in Cameroon

The French Ambassador in Cameroon has just completed travel in the Far North. For his second trip in this region, Gilles Thibault went to Logone-et-Chari where he was accompanied by the Representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Cameroon, Abdoulaye Balde. Gilles Thibault visited the border post separating Cameroon from Chad as well as the fire station, both benefiting from European Union funding. He also visited the premises of food distribution set up by the WFP in the town of Kousséri, through a cash transfer system, that today allows assistance to be brought to 40,000 people throughout the region.

The second day of the visit, the French diplomat and Abdoulaye Balde went to the Goulfey district hospital, where nutritional activities set up by WFP and Action Against Hunger (Action contre la Faim - ACF) assist in the prevention and cure of acute malnutrition in

young children. At Makary district hospital, in Fotokol and Mafoufou, they visited water, hygiene and sanitation projects set up by the NGO Solidarités International in favour of Cameroonians displaced by the conflict with Boko Haram, and vulnerable host populations. The trip of the ambassador ended in Mayo-Kani, south of Maroua. At Guidiguiss, he went to meet young people supported by the National Programme of Participative Development (Programme National de Développement Participatif - PNDP) in the development of their agricultural or animal breeding projects, financed under C2D funds. A solution to promote employment and reinsertion of young people in the area. According to Gilles Thibault's accounts, France has already allocated during the year 2017, an amount of 2.3 million Euros (FCfa 1.5 billion) for humanitarian assistance in Cameroon, besides the regional contribution (Niger,



Cameroon and Nigeria) to actions of the High Commission for Refugees (HCR) also to the tune of 2.3 million Euros.

National Social Security Fund (Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale) wishes to achieve total paperless processes

At the Assurtech forum, whose aim is to put insurance providers in contact with developers, Alain Noël Olivier Mekulu Mvondo Akame, Managing Director (MD) of the National Social Security Fund (CNPS) explained in Douala on 31 May, how technological changes have contributed to modernising the organisation he leads. Since 2011, the MD indicated, electronic management of documents and their automatic readability is in

operation. This should, at the end of the 2013-2017 strategic plan, lead to total paperless processes, notably archiving and courier. An integrated hospital management system has also been set up to significantly improve revenues.

Furthermore, since December 2016, highlighted Mr. Mekulu Mvondo Akame, physical identification of beneficiaries of pensions are biometric. Practically, when the pensioner's

number is called, he approaches the computer with the high resolution webcam and biometric terminal, to record his data in the Authentication System.

Finally, indicates the MD, thanks to its electronic address, as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts, the CNPS can now handle its clients' requests quicker. During the year 2016 for example, 583 requests and claims were received and processed.

Towards a 3rd trial against Charles Metouck, ex-MD of SONARA, condemned this time with Chairman of the Board, John Ebong Ngolé



On 11 May 2017, the Special Criminal Tribunal (Tribunal Criminel Spécial -TCS), special court set up to judge the purloiners of Cameroon's public funds, has issued a new order of referral and partial dismissal in the case of the State of Cameroon against Charles Metouck, former MD of the National Oil Refining Company (SONARA) and his co-accused. In this new affair, the ex-MD of SONARA, who is already serving two prison sentences of 9 and 15 years, is accused, with certain former collaborators, and above all the COB of this public company, John Ebong Ngolé; of alleged misappropriation of a sum of more than FCfa 60 billion, reveals our sources. The first hearing of this new trial should take place in the coming weeks. The affair follows the use of a report from the Contrôle Supérieur de l'Etat dated 2010 by the Cameroonian legal system, indexing Charles Metouck, and whose first part led to his condemnation, on 21 October 2015 in Yaoundé, to a term of imprisonment

of 15 years, for misappropriation of over FCfa 500 million of public funds. The second case, whose pre-trial phase the TCS has just completed, implicated not only Charles Metouck, but also among other high profile people including John Ebong Ngolé, Chairman of SONARA, expert in oil taxation Albert Léonard Dikoumé, or Ibrahim Talba Malla, MD of SONARA and MD of the National Hydrocarbons Prices Stabilisation Fund (Caisse de Stabilisation des Prix des Hydrocarbures - CSPH) at the time of the facts.

According to the TCS referral and partial dismissal order dated 11 May 2017, the two last managers cited benefit from a "*dismissal*" for "*insufficient charges*" against them. Ibrahim Talba Malla, who benefits from this development by the investigating judge of the TCS was serving on the SONARA Board of Directors at the time of the facts, in his capacity as MD of CSPH. He had been suspected in this matter, in company with other members of the Board, of having wrongly received fuel expenses for having attended different sessions, during the 2007-2010 period. Regarding John Ebong Ngolé, still COB of SONARA and Charles Metouck, former MD of the only oil refinery in Cameroon, and the co-accused who are Edinguele Edinguele Jean Joule, Moue Mbeleck Michel, Yenwo Molo Godfrey and Nkengne Véronique, née Makamtse Ngatcheussi; they see "*sufficient charges*" gathered against them, "*in a personal capacity and collectively*", for alleged misappropriation of more than FCfa 60 billion.

In the coming weeks, Charles Metouck, who managed SONARA

for 11 years, will face a 3rd trial. Since 23 April 2013, he is serving a 9-year prison sentence for destruction of documents. Some months earlier, he had been surprised in his office, three days after his dismissal, destroying certain documents, concluded the judges in the first Metouck affair. Not only has the latter always denied having destroyed company documents, but Mr. Metouck also presented a document signed by the Chairman of SONARA, John Ebong Ngolé, which expressly authorised him to enter his former office on the day of the incident, for a work meeting with his replacement, Ibrahim Talba Malla.

Incarcerated in the Central Prison of Buéa ever since, Charles Metouck was transferred to Yaoundé central prison on 8 May 2013, following his summons to the TCS. This court had brought before itself the charges against Mr. Metouck in the report of the Contrôle Supérieur de l'Etat on the management of SONARA. Published in February 2013, this report accuses the former MD of SONARA of having caused a financial prejudice of FCfa 26 billion to the Cameroonian refinery, through 20 management errors. For these facts Mr. Metouck was stripped of his rights to run a company or Cameroonian public service for 7 years.

The 15-year prison sentence pronounced on 21 October 2015 against Mr. Metouck by the TCS, only relates to a part of this dossier, of which the second phase was completed last May, once again condemning Charles Metouck, who this time finds himself in the dock with the Chairman of SONARA.

Chadian oil transit duties' revenues in Cameroon drop by close to FCfa 2 billion during 1st quarter 2017



During the first quarter 2017, revenues generated by transit duties for Chadian oil in Cameroon via the Chad-Cameroon pipeline peaked at slightly over FCfa 9 billion, a decrease of FCfa 1.8 billion compared to the FCfa 10.8 billion collected over the same period in the previous year. This drop in transit revenues is explained by the slowdown noted in the oil production in Chad, mainly due to the prices for this commodity which have become less attractive on the international market for some months. Indeed, as highlighted by the Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH), Cameroonian State-owned company in oil production, during the first quarter of 2017, only 11.2 million oil barrels of Chadian oil transited through Cameroon, against a little over 14 million barrels during the first quarter of 2016.

The Cameroonian tax administration will launch in June 2017, the electronic tax declaration for the change of ownership for used cars

The Tax Authority at the Cameroonian Ministry of Finance will take a new step, in June 2017, in its paperless services process, with the launch of the change of ownership electronic tax declaration for used cars, the Minister of Finance, Alamine Ousmane Mey, announced in a press release.

In this regard, indicates Minister Alamine Ousmane Mey, *"the registration of import and local sales operations for used cars will be done via a tele-declaration system on the Tax Authority's website. Related payments will be exclusively through bank transfers"*.

As a reminder, the Cameroonian Tax Authority launched, some years ago, a vast process of modernisation,



which includes providing paperless services. This not only to facilitate the process for taxpayers, by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT; to secure revenues; and reduce as much as possible physical contacts between Tax agents and taxpayers, which often open the door to acts of corruption.

Norway wants to intensify economic cooperation with Cameroon, by opening a consulate in Douala

The Cameroonian government just approved the appointment to Douala, the economic capital of the country, of Mohamed Abdoulaye Diop as Honorary Consul of Norway in Cameroon, we learned from authorised sources. The opening of a Norwegian Consulate in Cameroon should help intensify exchanges between the two countries, whose economic cooperation is rather timid. Indeed, this Nordic country does

not appear on the list of Cameroon's main partners. Incidentally, in addition to the Norwegian actions in the education and health sectors, particularly in Northern Cameroon, the Cameroonian government signed in January 2017 a credit agreement of FCfa 37.8 billion with the Norwegian bank Giek, to finance drinking water supply projects in the country.

FINANCE

BEAC disposes of more than FCfa 1000 billion of its investment portfolio in 2016

In its annual report 2016, the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) advises that the Trading Room Strategy Committee decided to sell about FCfa 1,000 billion of its investment portfolio during the fiscal year. This was done with a view of complying with the requirement of the obligatory share of 50% of external net worth of the BEAC deposited in operating accounts.

This disposal was done three times. First on 29 June 2016 for an amount of FCfa 380.65 billion. At the end of this operation, the nominal value of the investment portfolio went from 2,344 billion to 1,931 billion. Then, on 30 August, it was a nominal amount of FCfa 475.5 billion. The value of the investment portfolio came down, after the disposal to 1,488 billion against 1,931 billion previously.

Finally, on 02 December 2016, a nominal amount of FCfa 243.3 was sold off. The nominal value of the investment portfolio went, at the end of this operation, from 1,488 billion to 1,304 billion. These different partial disposals of the portfolio, claims BEAC, generated in total capital gains of FCfa 230.65 billion.

Ecobank bets on digital to boost financial inclusion in Cameroon



The general management of Ecobank Cameroon announced in a press release that in 2017, the company is focusing on digital channels to boost the financial inclusion currently estimated at 20% in the country, for a population of over 20 million people.

To exceed the rate of access to banking services of 20%, Ecobank indicates that it will capitalise on digital services such as "Ecobank Mobile App", internet banking for private and corporate customers, the use of bar codes for payments, and banking

partnerships with third parties. *"The digital strategy in question directly promotes one of the main development factors of our economies, which is, financial and economic inclusion of the population. Ecobank will thus be able to reach and serve a greater number of clients in Cameroon, including those who do not have any bank account",* the bank explains.

Already in 2016, the banking group highlighted, the digital transformation enabled the company to consolidate its growth in 2016 with an increase of 23% in the earnings before tax (FCfa 13.840 billion) compared to 2015, and a rise in the equity yield ratio at 50%. In Cameroon, as in Africa in general, Ecobank is even considering merging a number of branches for a better digital optimisation. The objective of the Pan African group is to serve 100 million clients by 2020 against the current 11 million.

The regulatory body in the Western and Central African insurance sector suspends the activities of Cameroonian insurer Samaritan

The Regional Insurance Monitoring Commission (CRCA) of the CIMA (Inter-African Conference of Insurance Markets), the regulatory body in the insurance sector in Central and Western Africa, recently suspended the operations of the Cameroonian company Samaritan. This suspension confirmed by the cancellation of the temporary authorisation granted to Samaritan in April 2016, as revealed by the pro-government daily, is a result of the indebtedness, which today peaks at roughly FCfa 4 billion, rendering it incapable of meeting its commitments towards insurance policyholders.

As a reminder, the regional regulatory body in the insurance sector has had its sights on Samaritan Insurance since 2012, year during which CRCA enjoined the shareholders of the insurance company to return the funds taken from the company's accounts to develop other activities.



Compared to Gabon, Cameroonian Treasury bonds are popular on the BEAC market

Cameroon and Gabon were present on the government securities market of the Bank of Central African States (BEAC), on 24 May 2017, to raise a total amount of FCfa 14 billion. The fact established at the end of this raising of capital is that, compared to Gabon, Cameroonian Treasury bonds are popular. Because, out of the FCfa 5 billion sought, the country was able to raise FCfa 8 billion. Being a coverage rate of the amount auctioned of 160%. The minimum in-

terest rate is 3.4% and the maximum, 4.1%. On its side, the State of Gabon was looking for FCfa 9 billion. Only, the total amount of submissions was FCfa 3.7 billion. Thus, being a weak coverage ratio of 41.46%. And paradoxically, the minimum interest rate proposed was 5.5% and the maximum, 5.8%. investiraucameroun.com already noted on 24 May 2017 that, on last 10 May, these two countries of the Economic and Monetary Community

of Central Africa (CEMAC) had already met on the BEAC market. And that the favour of subscribers was to the advantage of Cameroon, whose rate of subscription for the offer reached 266%, against 97% for Gabon. The Gabonese Treasury only mobilised a little more than FCfa 6 billion out of the FCfa 8.5 billion solicited, which moreover is, at an interest rate of more than 5%, against 2.9% for Cameroon.

AGRICULTURE

Dilapidated infrastructure and competition from China compromise cotton sector in Cameroon

In the framework of the European Week, the town of Yaoundé just hosted a forum for experts to exchange about the cotton sector on the theme: *"Development, challenges and perspectives of the cotton sector in Cameroon and support from partners"*.

The event organised by the European Bank of Investment, the European Delegation and the Support Unit to the National Payment Mandate Issuer of the European Development Fund was meant to not only highlight the value chain in the cotton sector and its contribution to the economy in the Greater North of the country. But also, to consider financing perspectives from development partners.

This forum showed that the cotton sector in Cameroon is facing enormous challenges. With regards to the production, huge losses were recently registered due to the wetness of the cotton, depreciation of cotton seeds and soya stocks, and poor product sales. Sodecoton's fleet of trucks and ginning and oil factories are dilapidated. There are frequent power cuts. To find a solution to these failures, Sodecoton's financing needs were estimated at approximately FCfa 40 billion in the short term.

With regards to processing, the company Cicam is now the only textile industry in the CEMAC sub-region. While in 1985 it processed 85% of the cotton fibres produced in the country, Cicam today only represents 5% of the Cameroonian market. Over 80% of the African cot-



ton is currently processed in China at much lower costs.

Experts at the forum discussed about the lines of action to reorganise the sector. These include increasing production areas and improve mechanisation, intensifying the sustainable management of soil fertility, increasing cotton oil production capacities, promote cotton fibre and by-products such as refined oil and cattle feed, investigate the creation of a high-quality cotton brand *"Made in Africa"*.

The cotton sector has a particular

importance for Cameroon and especially in the northern areas, marked by high poverty rates and suffering from lack of security. The Cameroonian cotton area covers 85,000 km² with approximately 200,000 cotton producers, and a production approaching 250,000 tons per year. Over two million people in Cameroon depend in one way or another on the cotton value chain. The tax impact of the sector can be estimated at FCfa 30-40 billion/year and the contribution to the GDP of the northern regions is 8-10%.

Launch of the 2017 agricultural season in the North with a focus on reconstitution of the productive capital

The Cameroonian Minister of Agriculture, Henri Eyébé Ayissi, just launched, in Maroua in the Far North, the 2017 agricultural season in the three northern regions of Cameroon. This new season, specified Minister Eyébé Ayissi, is characterised by the “reconstitution of the agricultural capital”.

Indeed, for over 2 years now, northern Cameroon, particularly the Far North region, has been facing raids

by the Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram, which, according to Henri Eyébé Ayissi, disorganised “production systems” and caused “the displacements of the population” whose main income-generating activities are farming and breeding.

“In 2016 and 2016, we worked on emergency solutions with the special donation from the President of the Republic. We have now moved into durable solutions. This is, in particular,

about making available agricultural inputs, various equipment and materials to enable the population to restart their activities, as we are heading for the provision of quality seeds, for farmers to be able to have sufficient quantities of seeds”, explained the Minister of Agriculture, thereby revealing the actions which will enable, this year, the restoration of the agricultural sector in Northern Cameroon.

Cameroon will launch a development program for its horticultural sector with the support of the EU



The Cameroonian government will soon launch a development programme for its horticultural sector, financed by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), we learned at the end of a workshop organised in Douala on 16 and 17 May. The meeting, we learned, was meant to identify the levers on which it is necessary to act, to give an impulse to the development of horticulture in Cameroon.

Labelled “Fit For Market” (FFM), this programme is meant to support the horticultural sectors in African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries, whose main horticultural products exported to European Union territories are increasingly in demand. These are particularly banana, with Cameroon being the main producer in ACP countries in 2015, before passing the leadership to Côte d’Ivoire in 2016, after the national

production dropped by 30,000 tons. But according to Jeremy Knops, Programme Director at Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP), in addition to banana, Cameroon has other products such as sweet potato, cassava, plantains, papaya or mango, which could also be exported to EU countries.

PHP, leader in the Cameroonian banana market, is fearing “a disaster if prices do not increase”



Armél François, Managing Director of Société des plantations du Haut Penja, subsidiary of Compagnie fruitière de Marseille, which dominates in the production of banana in Cameroon, is visibly very concerned about the performance of PHP in 2017.

“(...) We have no option but to note that the banana market in Europe is largely below the figures used when the 2017 budget was being drafted. In other words, prices are low!”, announces the MD of PHP in the latest edition of *“Au Coeur de la PHP”*, the quarterly bulletin of this agro-industrial unit. In this situation, the MD points out, *“PHP’s margins are becoming very low and the year could end up in disaster, if prices do not increase and more importantly if we do not do anything”*. Indeed, we learned, the European market, main destination for

Cameroonian bananas, is currently over-supplied. Particularly due to the abundance of Latin-American dollar bananas, whose producing countries, this year, are not facing *“any weather (el Niño, la Niña, cyclones and other tropical storms), tectonic (earthquakes), volcanic, social or political phenomenon (...) , which had not happened for many years”*, explains Armél François.

Therefore, to balance the company’s accounts against this international situation regarding banana prices, the MD of PHP listed some austerity measures which are necessary to implement. *“The entire personnel of PHP and each of us can and must contribute to the effort made by the company to adapt to these market conditions. We will surely have to forego some benefits without reconsidering the essential for the telephone,*

fuel allowances, car mileage, but also convenience overtime and other small benefits taken from the company and where senior management showed a kindness which can no longer be the case”, writes Armél François in the editorial of PHP’s magazine.

As a reminder, according to statistics from the Association bananière du Cameroun (Assobacam – Cameroon’s Banana Association), PHP exported 124,875 tons of banana in 2016, representing half the global exports of Cameroonian producers (249,610 tons). Beside banana, this food company also produces Penja white pepper (approximately 40 tons per year), and just moved into cocoa, with the creation of farms covering 150 hectares and the construction of a processing unit producing chocolate locally under the brand *“Atelier des cinq volcans”*.

TRANSPORTS

Japan releases FCfa 33 billion to start the 2nd phase of work on Yaoundé-Brazzaville corridor

Louis Paul Motaze, Minister in charge of the Economy (MINEPAT), proceeded, on 31 May 2017 in Yaoundé, with the signature of exchange of notes which seals the mobilisation of FCfa 32.9 billion, from the government of Japan for the development of the Yaoundé-Brazzaville corridor (section Mintom-Lelé, with a length of 67 Km).

Through this concessional loan, indicated the MINEPAT, Japan wishes to show its desire to actively contribute to the socio-economic development

of Cameroon. Especially since the project was on hold, awaiting additional funding to start the second phase which comes to complete the construction of this corridor, whose first part was handed over at the beginning of 2017. For a total amount of 104.7 billion, the co-financing of the African Development Bank (FCfa 40.7 billion) in this project, was raised on 15 April 2016. That of the Development Bank of Central African States (20 billion) was on 22 December 2016. As well as that of Cameroon (13.9 billion).

"Above and beyond the fact that the said corridor will encourage trade between Cameroon and Congo, it should be highlighted that it will equally contribute to facilitating economic integration in CEMAC and to the economic development of Cameroon", declared Louis Paul Motaze. Who added that, this trunk road would improve projects already underway in agriculture and environmental sectors among others, and produce a synergetic effect in promoting rice production and sustainable development in the sub-region.

Towards a partnership between Camrail and Italian company Italfer to modernise Cameroonian railways



The concessionary train transport operator Camrail, subsidiary of Bolloré, and the Italian company Italfer held a meeting on 31 May in Douala in respect of a partnership. The final objective, according to reliable sources, is that the tandem accelerate modernisation of the railways in Cameroon. During this meeting, Camrail indicated that it has, for example, already renovated 175 km of lines between Batchenga, in the Centre, and Kaa, in the East region. In this regard, investment of an amount of FCfa 2.4 billion, enabled renovation of railway ties, bi-blocks sleepers and ballast beds. In mid-May, Eric Melet, Bolloré Transport & Logistics General

Manager of Development, visited the work sites, by way of Ebaka quarry, to see what had been achieved. The company Italfer S.P.A, for its part, represents a consortium of Italian companies. It signed with the Minister of Public Works (MINTP), Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, last April, an agreement linked to renewing the existing railway lines (Douala-Mbanga-Kumba and Douala-Yaoundé). The company has in its specifications the supply of passenger rolling stock (passenger cars, railcars). It must also construct a passenger station at Yaoundé and provide its support in the implementation of a training policy in railway professions in Cameroon.

ENERGIE

American Noble Energy will coproduce 47 billion m³ of natural gas and 18 million barrels of condensates on Yoyo block with SNH

The Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH – National Hydrocarbons Company) signed, on 1st June in Yaoundé, with the Texan company Noble Energy, a production sharing contract for 47 billion m³ of natural gas and 18 million barrels of condensates on the Yoyo block, located in the Douala/Kribi-Campo basin.

Kelly Latter, Vice-President of Noble Energy, indicated that the signature of this contract with the Cameroonian side represented

by Ernest Gbwaboubou (Minister of Mining) and Adolphe Moudiki (Deputy MD of SNH), will increase the visibility of the oil giant. The agreement between the State of Cameroon and the American company will run for 25 years, renewable one time, for a period of 10 years. Noble Energy is an important American oil and gas company, with activities in oil and natural gas production and exploration. It has onshore operations in the USA as well as operations in the deep waters



of the Gulf of Mexico. It additionally carries out exploration and production activities in countries such as Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, and offshore operations in Ecuador, China and Israel.

British Aggreko will install 10 MW of thermal power this coming July in Maroua, in Cameroon's Far North

Eneo, the public service concessionaire in the electricity sector in Cameroon, owned by the British investment fund Actis, recently signed with Aggreko, an independent power producer, a contract to install from July 2017, a thermal plant of 10 MW in Maroua, in Cameroon's Far North region.

From official sources, this plant will help in reducing the terrible energy deficit which the three northern regions of Cameroon are currently going through, where almost all towns are without electricity two to three times a week, between 6am and 10pm.

At the origin of this detrimental situation for households as well as companies such as Sodecoton and

Cotonnière industrielle du Cameroun (Cicam), who have production units in this area of Cameroon; is the reduction in electricity production by more than 50% on the Lagdo dam. Indeed, according to authorised sources, the Lagdo dam plant, sole major energy infrastructure in the three northern regions of Cameroon, only produces about 30 MW of electricity, out of an installed capacity of 72 MW.

Experts attribute this decline to the dam's reservoir being choked with sand, which is not able to retain enough water, and the unfavourable climate conditions, with limited rainfall as a consequence.

Incidentally, advised sources repeat, even in a situation of optimum

production, the Lagdo plant is now insufficient to supply in energy the northern regions of Cameroon, whose population has been experiencing a boom since 1982, when this structure was commissioned. The increase in the energy offer in the country, for its part, officially grows at an average rate of 5 to 6% every year.

The hopes of the population in the Greater North regions of Cameroon are therefore focused on the announced construction of the Bini dam in Warak, in the Adamawa region, a structure which will be able to produce an additional 75 MW by the end of 2018. The construction works are carried out by Sinohydro, based on a Chinese financing.

State of Cameroon asks Chinese bank ICBC for financing to renovate ageing Lagdo dam

During a visit in the North on 29 May 2017, Basile Atangana Kounga, Minister in charge of Water and Energy (Minee), declared that he was made aware of the obsolescence of the Lagdo hydroelectric dam.

"I had a full renovation study of the Plant carried out, with the option of increasing its capacity from 72 MW to 80 MW. The estimated cost for this operation is FCfa 100 billion", declared the government member. According to him, procedures are underway at the Ministry of Economy, to raise funding. The Minee revealed that, he recently supported the Prime Minister, Philemon Yang, in China to present the Lagdo renovation project to a Chinese bank, ICBC (International and Commercial Bank of China).

During this visit, Joël Nana Kontchou, General Manager of Eneo Cameroon, the company in charge of the electricity sector explained that, since its commissioning in 1963, Lagdo has been the main source of production in the Northern Grid (Réseau Interconnecté Nord - RIN). With an installed wattage of 72 MW and only one reservoir, it could in the past cover the electricity needs for



the entire region.

"But with the demand growing by 7.8% on a yearly basis, 72 MW of maximum power has already been reached this year. This is to say that the infrastructure has almost reached saturation at the electromechanical level, and additionally, at the operating level, filling the reservoir depends on the vagaries of the weather and environmental hazards. Studies have shown a silting which is natural, due to the period of operation and geotechnics of the soil in this region", indicated the MD of Eneo.

While the funds are being raised to renovate the Lagdo dam, Basile Atangana Kounga mentioned short- and medium-term solutions. He talked for example about the Bini project in Warak in the Adamawa.

This will bring 75 MW to the Northern grid, which exceeds the current capacity needed at peak times. Therefore, in reality, with the upcoming commissioning of this structure, the RIN should have a large excess in terms of installed energy capacity.

Apart from this solution, the Minee announced that the concessionaire Eneo would install and commission, at the latest by July 2017, a 10 MW thermal plant in Maroua. All related contracts have already been signed with the company Aggreko. In the medium-term, Eneo will build two solar power plants in Maroua and Guider, with respective capacities of 15 and 10 MW, thus 25 MW in total. The tender processes are already underway.

Cameroonian Nyong Power Plants Corp will generate 250 MW of electricity on the Nyong

The Cameroonian company Nyong Power Plants Corporation (NPPC) signed on 1st June in Yaoundé, an agreement with the Cameroonian government to produce 250 MW of electricity in the framework of the "Song-Mbong/Kelempeck Hydro Project". Said project will be developed on the Nyong River. According to the explanations of Paulin Etoga, Project Coordinator, on the technical side, a reservoir

of 3.5 billion m³ storage capacity which will be connected further up to a backbone network from Edéa. Concerning financing, this structure will cost between FCfa 500 and 550 billion, with the associated power transmission lines. To accomplish this, the company NPPC said it will be working with a selection of national and international partners. Paulin Etoga lists for example Swiss Hydro Operations International, a

leader in the production of hydroelectric energy. This company was represented by Charles Laurent Mouvet and Baena Del Alberto Carlos at the ceremony for the signature of the master agreement with Basile Atangana Kounga, Minister of Energy. Among other international partners, there is Finergreen France, the financial consultancy firm for the project.

INDUSTRIE

Société des Eaux Minérales du Cameroun posts net loss of FCfa 316 million as at 31 December 2016

The Water Company of Cameroon (Société des Eaux du Cameroun - SEMC), subsidiary of the Société Anonyme des Brasseries du Cameroun (SABC), announces that it will table, to the Board of Directors, next 7 June in Douala, a resolution according to which, it posts a net loss of FCfa 315.9 million as at 31 December 2016.

The logical consequence of this loss, according to SEMC, is that the credit balance of FCfa 113.9 million becomes a debit balance of FCfa 202.07 million. Performances which

register the downward trend of the first six months 2016. Indeed, the subsidiary of SABC had experienced a significant decrease in net income: from FCfa 207 million as at 30 June 2015 to -FCfa 66 million at 30 June 2016. A decrease mainly attributed to the hike in fixed costs of FCfa 132 million and depreciation of FCfa 128 million

During the Board of Directors' meeting next 7 June, they are expecting the new impetus of SEMC which did not succeed, as promised in June 2016, to reverse the negative perfor-

mances. And yet, the company indicated last year that it would develop sales ex-works and reduction in final distribution costs in order to remain competitive in the market. In other terms, it would develop a system that would require customers to pay all the costs of transport, customs charges and bear the risks linked to the transport of goods to their final destination. Which, manifestly has not changed the declining trend of performances.

Sodecoton in need of Fcfa 40 billion in investment to run at full capacity



Due to the obsolescence of its equipment, the Société de Développement du Coton (Sodecoton – Cotton Development Company), agro-industry giant in Northern Cameroon, had to lower the production capacity of its nine cotton ginning units to

200,000 tons, against an installed capacity of 350,000 tons, Mohamadou Bayero, MD of Sodecoton, revealed recently. This was during a Forum on the cotton sector organised on 10 May 2017 in Yaoundé, as part of the activities celebrating the 60 years of

the European Union in Cameroon. To revert this downward trend in its activities, Mohamadou Bayero revealed, Sodecoton needs investments estimated at FCfa 40 billion, including FCfa 11 billion to be released in emergency by the shareholders of this company, with the most important being the State of Cameroon. The funding, we learned, will not only mainly help with the upgrade of Sodecoton's industrial equipment, but also its mobile equipment which has become old and insufficient. Despite these difficulties, the Northern Cameroon agroindustry giant is planning for a cotton production of 248,150 tons of cotton grains during the current 2016-2017 season, against 258,000 tons produced during the previous season.

MINES

Cameroon will launch “Flexicadastre”, an IT system to guarantee the management of mining data



The Ministry in charge of Mining and Technological Development (Minmidt) advises that it will launch online in July 2017, “Flexicadastre”, a computerised version of the mining registry.

Based on the presentation of Georges Luc Olinga Moantsoga, Deputy Director of the Mining Registry, “Flexicadastre” is *“the expression of the commitment of the government to promote and encourage investments in the sector, so as to further contribute to the economic and social development”*.

Ultimately, this IT system should work to guarantee a good management of mining data and ensure that awarding procedures are transparent and reliable.

Yet, Mr. Olinga Moantsoga notes that Cameroon is considered as a geological scandal area due to the great diversity of its mining potential. There have however been many technical and administrative weaknesses in mining its many deposits. These shortcomings include overlaps between various permits (logging,

mining, agro-industrial ... etc.), mining permits encroaching on each other, extremely long waiting periods for investors, the mining permit registry not being updated, a lack of mining registry map, etc.

“Flexicadastre” was created with the support of a South African consultancy firm, Spatial Dimension. This firm set up this application in over ten countries worldwide. Including in Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Peru, etc.

TIC & TELECOM

CRTV, the Cameroonian public television is getting ready to broadcast in streaming on internet

Charles Ndongo, Managing Director (MD) of the public Cameroonian broadcasting channel, CRTV, just launched a national open call for tenders for the implementation of an internet TV streaming solution. The projected cost of the operation after preliminary studies is FCfa 17 billion, according to the MD.

He specified that this request for proposals is open to Cameroonian companies. The deadline for submission is set for 6 June 2017. Visibly going through a modernisation process, CRTV, as announced by Charles Ndongo in February, should open, in 2017, two new specialised TV channels. An expansion which is

in line with CRTV's policy in place since 2016 as part of the digital move. The public broadcasting channel is planning to move from "broadcasting", open to the entire world to "narrowcasting", with targeted viewership. The opening of a local radio in Kribi, the Southern Cameroon seaside town, is also expected.

Lagging behind compared to MTN and Orange, Express Union promises 40% commission on Mobile Money service charges

The Cameroonian microfinance outfit Express Union (EU) which has lagged behind telecoms operators MTN and Orange in Mobile Money since 2011, has just launched an offensive aiming to entice.

To this end, Express Union, is actually inviting traders, credit retailers (call-boxes), dealers, hairdressers, shop keepers and economic operators to join the network of franchise/retailers of the service "Express Union Mobile Money". The microfinance company promises up to 40% in commission on charges in the form of micro credits to develop subscriber activities.

The offer of EU appears enticing because it is higher than the percentage of 5% that call-boxes, for example, receive from MTN and Orange for



the different types of transfers. Considerably more, Express Union Mobile is proposing a commission nearer to the 50% that the Union of Delegates and Commercial Distributors of Telecom Products in Cameroon (Syndicat des Délégués et Commerciaux Distributeurs des Produits des Télécommunications au Cameroun - SYDECIPROTEC) claim, often through strikes, at the

duopoly Orange-MTN.

As a reminder, the Telecoms Regulatory Body in Cameroon indicates that, since its launch in 2011, this sector recorded up until 2014 transactions totalling FCfa 72 billion. This amount corresponds to 9 million transactions via SMS. To date, more than 6,000 Mobile Money payment points exist throughout Cameroon.

SERVICES

Bureau Vallée, leader in the office furniture and discount stationery sectors in France, is coming to Cameroon



The Cameroonian office furniture and stationery market just welcomed a new operator, and not the least. This is the company Bureau Vallée, presented as the leader in the French

market, who chose the city of Douala in Cameroon, for its first shop in Africa, we learned from reliable sources. Choosing Cameroon, for this office

furniture and stationery operator, who now has 22 branches outside France, including 16 in Spain and four in Belgium, can be explained by the opportunities offered in the supply of office equipment in Cameroon, a service which represents a sizeable share in the operating budgets of companies and especially the public administration on a yearly basis. Bureau Vallée thus enters a market which at the same has potential for growth and is also competitive, where the French firm could quickly find a place, as it specialises, we learned, in offering discounted prices, which logically should be extremely competitive compared to the ones currently offered on the local market.

Issa Hayatou, former CAF President, appointed Chairman of the Board of the National Football Academy of Cameroon

On 24 May 2017, the Cameroonian Head of State, Paul Biya, appointed his compatriot Issa Hayatou as Chairman of the Board of the National Football Academy (Anafoot) of Cameroon.

This public institution, promised by the Head of State in his speech to the Cameroonian youth on 10 February 2010, will have as its Managing Director Carl Enow Ngatchu, coach of the women's national football

team of Cameroon, unfortunate finalist at the latest edition of the AfCON organised in Yaoundé and Limbé in 2016.

Unfortunate candidate to his own succession as Head of the African Confederation of Football (CAF) which he managed for 29 years, Issa Hayatou, now honorary Vice-President of FIFA; will bring his experience to Anafoot. As a reminder, the missions given

to this academy are: initiation and supervision of the youth in the practice of high level football, initial and continuous education of trainers in theoretical and practical football education, development of national expertise in football-related professions, collection, storage and distribution of documentation related to football, as well as primary and applied research in professions linked to football.

Scientists develop Loascope, an instrument that measures the level of onchocerciasis infection

Teams at the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) and the Centre of Research on Filariasis and other Tropical Diseases (Centre de Recherche sur les Filarioses et autres Maladies Tropicales - CRFILMT), have completed an innovative strategy in Cameroon opening the door to the eradication of onchocerciasis in the forest areas of Central Africa. The researchers thus developed between February and May 2017 a tool that allows measurement in every individual, of the level of infection by *Loa loa* in order to ensure that the treatment is without risk. If the infection is not found or if it exists below a level where there are no risks

of serious secondary effects (which is the case in more than 95% of the population), treatment by the drug "Mectizan" can be administered. On the other hand, if the person presents a very high level of infection, they are not given Mectizan and an alternative individually-tailored treatment protocol is proposed (establishment of such treatment, which is spread over four weeks, cannot be envisaged for all the population). Thus, this strategy combining an initial test before treatment is called Test and Treat.

The project team perfected an instrument allowing precise and quick measurement (in less than

three minutes) of the level of *Loa loa* infection with a drop of blood taken from the tip of a finger. This instrument, the Loascope, is made up of a small optical magnifying device linked to a smartphone. It is thus perfectly portable and adapted to field usage conditions. In 2015, the Test and Treat strategy allowed more than 15,000 people to be treated in the Okola health area, in the Centre region of Cameroon, without any cases of serious secondary effects. This first phase showed the feasibility of such a strategy in the framework of treatment on a large scale.

First contemporary art gallery opens in capital of Cameroon



The first contemporary art gallery of the city of Yaoundé was inaugurated on 30 May by the Minister of Arts and Culture, Narcisse Mouelle Kombi

and the French Ambassador in Cameroon, Gilles Thibault. Undertaken by the Cameroonian government and the French embassy,

the renovation and construction of the building housing the new gallery were carried out as part of the Debt reduction and Development Contract (C2D) between Cameroon and France. According to the comments given by the French diplomatic representation, this new space now offers to young Cameroonian artists the possibility of exhibiting their works and a platform to exchange. Starting from 30 May and this until 31 July 2017, this gallery is hosting an exhibition entitled "*Journey(s), contemporary art in Cameroon*", bringing together 23 Cameroonian artists. The event gathers the works of experienced artists and young talents, from every artistic discipline: painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, video. The forty-odd works on exhibition therefore offer visitors the picture of a lively, diverse and original artistic creativity.

Is there a Home Office tracking social networks?

A message currently shared advises that all telephones are connected to a government device. Is there any truth to this?

FALSE



A message shared on social networks announces a new regulation from the Home Office. It advises that all communication platform are under surveillance. Firstly, there is no Home Office in Cameroon. Philémon Yang's government rather has a Ministry of External Relations and a Ministry of Local Administration. And a source working for one the two administrations indicates that there

is no measure taken to "connect all device to the system of a ministry" as suggested by the message currently shared.

Which brings about a wave of paranoia. Especially as said message asks to avoid "talking about everything with your close relations on the telephone. All social networks are being monitored".

We learned from a reliable source

that the intelligence job is rather taken up by the National Security Agency (Direction générale de la Sécurité nationale - DGRE) and is rather selective. "We cannot monitor every Cameroonian", says our source. Moreover, to counter terrorist attacks, there is indeed a law regarding communication content.

M.N.M.

LEADER OF THE MONTH

Issa Hayatou, former CAF and FIFA President, becomes Chairman of the Cameroon Football Academy

During the past four decades, he was the most honoured Cameroonian in Pan African and international institutions.

On 24 May 2017, the Cameroonian Head of State, Paul Biya, appointed his compatriot Issa Hayatou as Chairman of the Board of the National Football Academy (Anafoot) of Cameroon. This public institution, promised by the Head of State in his speech to the Cameroonian youth on 10 February 2010, will have as its Managing Director Carl Enow Ngachou, coach of the women's national football team of Cameroon, unfortunate finalist at the latest edition of the AfCON organised in Yaoundé and Limbé between November and December 2016.

Unfortunate candidate to his own succession as Head of the African Confederation of Football (CAF) in March 2017, Issa Hayatou, who has also just been appointed honorary Vice-President of FIFA, the global football organisation; will therefore bring his long and vast experience to Anafoot, whose mission is to improve the practice and management of football in his country.

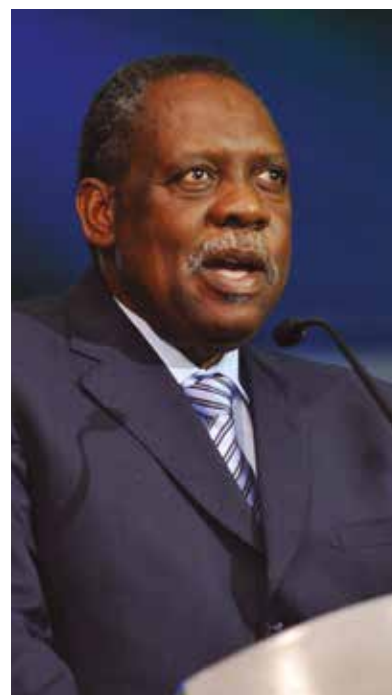
To achieve this, he will contribute to the implementation of the main missions given to this academy. These are, among other instructions from the Head of State, initiating and supervising the youth in the practice of high level football; initial and continuous education for trainers in theoretical and practical football ed-

ucation; developing national expertise in football-related professions, collecting, storing and distributing documentation related to football; as well as primary and applied research in professions linked to football.

This roadmap, at first sight, suits both young Carl Enow Ngachou and Issa Hayatou, a real titan in the African and worldwide football sector, who over a period of 29 years, cumulated eight consecutive terms at the head of the African Confederation of Football (CAF). On his curriculum, which he continuously developed within football institutions, is a period, in a temporary capacity, as Head of FIFA (after the resignation of Sepp Blatter in June 2015), under whom he was a long-standing Vice-President.

The most honoured Cameroonian in Pan African and international institutions during the past four decades, several years after the likes of Nzo Ekegaki (Secretary General of the African Union Organisation between 1972 and 1974) and William Aurelien Eteki Mboumouna (successor of Nzo Ekegaki at the OAU between 1974 and 1978), who also happened to be Vice-President at UNESCO from 1963; Issa Hayatou left his mark as Head of CAF.

Africa indeed owes him some important reforms which enabled the African football to enhance its visibility at the global level. These are in particular, the increase of the number of African teams participat-



Unfortunate candidate to his own succession as Head of the African Confederation of Football (CAF) in March 2017, Issa Hayatou will bring his long and vast experience to Anafoot, whose mission is to improve the practice and management of football in his country.

ing in the World Cup to five teams, the organisation of the first World Cup in Africa in 2010, the negotiation of several sponsorship contracts for African football by multinationals. The last one was signed with the French oil company Total, who became in 2016 the sponsor of all major CAF tournaments for a period of 8 years.

Brice R. Mbodiam

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