

December 2017/January 2018 - N° 58/59

BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

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Cameroon, cocoa's
other nation

Pierre Zumbach: "An
international promotion
tool each year"



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“Well done”

Cameroon was in 2017 the member-State of the economic and monetary community of Central Africa (CEMAC) that resisted the most to the shocks of the global economic crisis. Leveraging on its diversified agricultural production, and the efficient multiplication of tax and custom revenue sources, the country was able to keep its economic growth rate above 4.5% against 2.5% for its neighbors. In the Doing Business, its ranking has significantly increased. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in fact lauded the various measures taken by the government in face of economic challenges. Cameroon actually did not exclusively focus on its oil revenues. Proof of this is that over the current year, the country's non-oil revenues soared by 70%. Many tax and custom reforms implemented by the State also helped widen its gross revenues base. Another positive indicator of Cameroon's good economic health are investors' influx. Indeed, in 2017, many trusted this country, including the French retail firm Carrefour Market which just opened its second office in Africa, in Douala to be precise...

This year has increased Cameroon's determination to hold to its investment schedule. The Lom-Pangar and Memve'ele hydropower dam are near

completion, and Wouri's second bridge has come online. Infrastructures are being developed at a good pace. It is obvious that Cameroon would have fared better if not for the severe drop in prices of commodities (coffee, cocoa, rubber...) However, you will discover in this edition of our magazine that the government gradually creates better perspectives for the country's cocoa, which is one of the pillars of its agriculture.

Overall, 2017 was a year where many palpable and multifaceted realizations have been achieved, to the general satisfaction of Cameroon's international partners which are now ready to trust it again in 2018.

Talking about 2018, it shows bright horizons and the country even aims for its economic growth to exceed 5%. A goal which is achievable looking at the strong foundations on which is laid the 2018 budget. Next year will be a year for the achievement of structuring projects with the priority given to infrastructures related to the 2019 African Football Cup of Nations.

Our team at Business in Cameroon wishes you happy holidays and a happy New Year!

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BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

Publisher

Stratline Limited

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Operator

Médiamania Sàrl

www.mediamania.pro

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Tel : 00 237 694 66 94 59

Printing

Rotimpres, Aiguaviva, Espagne

Circulation

Albert MASSIMB, almassimb@yahoo.fr

Tel : 00 237 694 66 94 59

Free – cannot be sold

www.businessincameroon.com - info@businessincameroon.com

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Rumours, preconceived notions, clichés, superstitions, urban legend: What is real? What is fake?

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THE CAST



**MOHAMADOU,
NÉE BILITE
HAMAN-DJODA**

On November 13, 2017, Cameroon's Head of State, Paul Biya, has signed a decree appointing Mrs. Mohamadou Bilite Haman-Djoda as the new president of the executive board of the national fund for social security.

The newly appointed official replaces El Hadj Ousmane Mey Abba, who passed away in the night of January 19-20, 2016, after heading the board for 25 years. Before her appointment, Mrs. Mohamadou was the chargé de mission at the general secretariat of the Presidency.



**CORINNE
DELÉCHAT**

The delegation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who stayed in Cameroon from October 24 to November 3, 2017, in the framework of the follow-up of the Extended Credit Facility-supported program concluded in June 2017, is quite optimistic regarding its implementation by the Cameroonian government.

In an official statement released on November 3, 2017, the delegation which was led by Corinne Deléchat said it has *"concluded an agreement with (Cameroonian) authorities that could facilitate the approval of the first review"* of the programme. This review, the IMF continues, *"will allow a second disbursement of 82.8 million DTS, thus about \$116.3 million"* (about CFA65.8 billion), if approved by the institution's board.



**YAUBA
ABDOULAYE**

From November 13 to 19, 2017, an inter-ministerial mission led by the deputy minister of economy, Yaouba Abdoulaye, was in the Far North and Northern regions of Cameroon, *"in order to identify a programme to develop and expand rice farming"*, official sources revealed. According to the ministry of economy, this program aims at curbing the country's rice deficit.

Let's recall that the Far North already hosts the SEMRY (Company for the expansion and modernization of rice farming in Yagoua), a state-owned firm whose annual production barely reaches 100,000 tons per year, for a national demand estimated to about 300,000 tons of rice.



**JOSEPH BETI
ASSOMO**

With a strong delegation, Gabon's minister of presidential affairs and national defense, Massard Kabinda Makaga, recently sojourned in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital. At the end of a meeting with his Cameroonian counterpart, Joseph Beti Assomo, at the ministry of defense, the Gabonese official said his visit aims to reinforce military cooperation between Cameroon and Gabon, by putting in place a *"legal instrument"*, in this framework.

Last April, Joseph Yakete, the Central African minister of defense, was also in Yaoundé requiring Cameroon's expertise to train the defense forces of the Central African Republic.



**HANS-PETER
SCHADEK**

On October 31, 2017, the German Hans-Peter Schadek, has officially presented to Cameroon's minister of foreign affairs his letters of credence as new chief ambassador of the European Union's (EU) delegation in Cameroon, official sources disclosed.

After presenting these letters to the President, the agronomist who holds a PhD in rural economy, has officially replaced Françoise Collet at the head of the EU's delegation in Cameroon. M. Schadek who works at the European Commission since 1993, previously worked for 10 years for the German Cooperation, in Burundi and Togo.



PIERRE KAM

The vulnerability of SMEs, which make more than 80% of Cameroon's economic fabric, was again much debated on October 24, 2017, in Douala, during the first ever SME-focused forum of the country. The theme of the event was: *"For more protected, performant and competitive SMEs."*

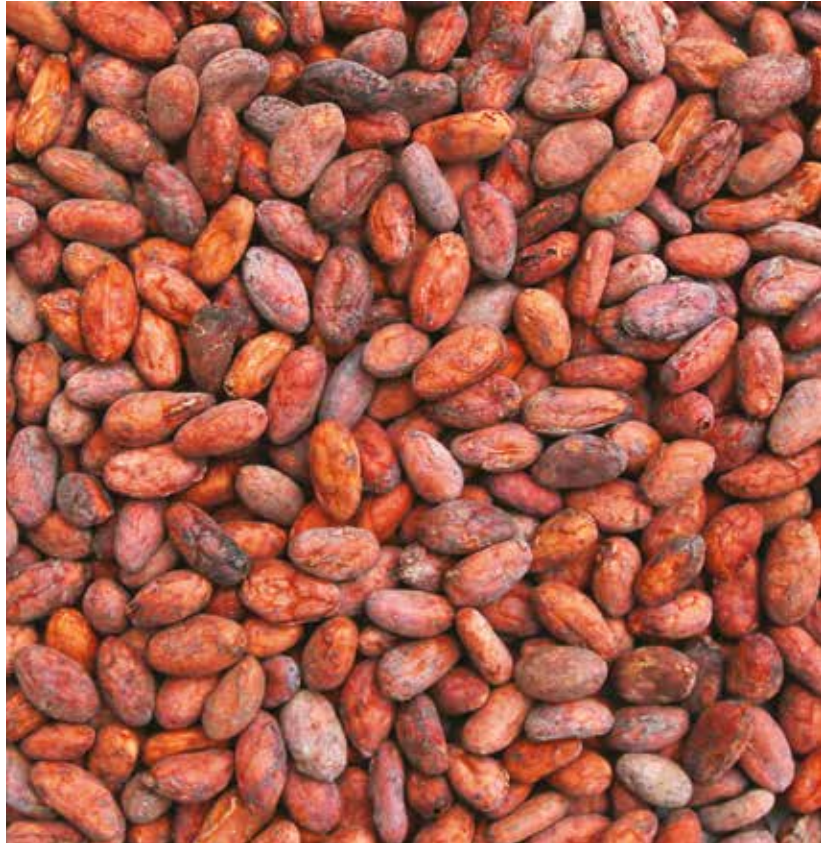
"If we only had SMEs to finance, we would have closed all the banks in Cameroon by now," said Pierre Kam, Head of the Cameroonian Loan-Lease Association (Camlease), thus confirming lenders' reluctance to provide loans to small and medium enterprises, which often have major shortcomings, both in regards to their management and structure.

To the rescue of the cocoa sector

The 2016/17 global cocoa season ended with an output surplus of 382,000 tons. According to the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), this surplus results from the fact that production increased by more than 18% over the period, while consumption rose by 3.2% only. This has caused, for some months now, a slump in global cocoa prices, going up by 40% at times.

In Cameroon, which with the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria supply more than 70% of the global cocoa output, this phenomena resulted in a drastic fall of cocoa's farm gate prices. According to official reports, after having stood at Cfa1400 per kg in some production basins of this Central African nation, at the beginning of the 2016/17 season, prices to producers tumbled to Cfa900 per kg. This equals a drop of Cfa500 per kg.

Unfortunately, things did not get better since the beginning of the 2017/18 campaign which started last August. Thus, it seems the situation recorded in the end of the 80s, whereby global prices slumped, and which resulted in a major crisis in Cameroon's cocoa and coffee industries, seems to be arising again. A concern that is more than justifiable, especially as analysts claim that the current surplus at



the source of the actual crisis could increase further by 2020-2021.

Therefore, to avoid the repetition of the bad years of Cameroon's cocoa, which resulted namely in the liquidation of the national office for the commercialization of basic products

(ONCPB) and the liberalization of the sector which was not really beneficial for farmers ; public authorities and actors of the sector are preparing to face the crisis.

In this regard, the shock therapy (strategic mutations, diverse incentives, improving farmers' monitoring and supervision, building equipment to better process beans, etc.) explored in this dossier, aims at preventing the crumbling of a sector which feeds 500,000 farmers and 10,000 families depending on the processing sector; in addition to often generating up to CFA200 billion of yearly revenues for cocoa farmers.

Brice R. Mbodiam

According to official reports, after having stood at Cfa1400 per kg in some production basins of this Central African nation, at the beginning of the 2016/17 season, prices to producers tumbled to Cfa900 per kg.

Export levy for cocoa halved not to discourage the sector's actors

Increased by almost 300% (from CFA54 to CFA150 per kg) at the beginning of the 2014-2015 cocoa season, in order to finance the cocoa-coffee sectors recovery plan which aimed at ramping up Cameroon's cocoa output to 600,000 tons in 2020, the cocoa export levy was halved at the launch of the 2017/18 cocoa season.

This measure, aims to provide exporters more margins, to in turn pay more reasonable prices to farmers for them not to be discouraged or despaired by the global fall in prices recorded since some months now on the international market.

By deciding to bringing down the export levy from CFA150 to CFA75 per kg, the Cameroonian government and local operators of the sector deprive themselves of a significant portion of the CFA600 billion needed to implement the cocoa-coffee sectors recovery plan which did not produce expected results during the 2014-2015 campaign.

Indeed, despite initiatives to promote cocoa farming, led over the past years by the cocoa and



coffee inter-profession as well as by governmental institutions such as the national office for cocoa and coffee (ONCC) or even the Fund for the Development of the Cocoa

and Coffee sectors (FODECC), the country's output has stagnated around 200,000 tons over at least five seasons.

1800 dryers and storage facilities granted to cocoa farmers

"We must first improve the quality of our product, as it is the key component for being competitive in the market. We must put in the market a well fermented and well dried cocoa, a top quality cocoa which will always find buyers and be sold at reasonable prices".

Those were the words of the minister of trade during his recent tour in the cocoa production basins in the Central, Southern, South Western

and Coastal regions.

Indeed, while visiting these areas, the official provided some groups of farmers and storage shops 1,800 bean driers, to boost the quality of their products.

This support from the government should help reduce, or better even end the discount in the price (-CFA200/kg) currently recorded by the Cameroonian cocoa on the glob-

al market, due to its humidity rate and its smoky smell, minister Mbarga Atangana said.

In some of the country's production basins, in the South Western region for example, cocoa harvesting is done in the rainy season. This is why driers are much needed to preserve the beans' quality.

Three centres of excellence for post-harvest treatment of cocoa were commissioned, to improve beans' quality

Last November 9, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, Cameroon's minister of commerce inaugurated two post-harvest cocoa processing centers of excellence in Mintaba and Si-Manyai, communities that are located in the Bot Makak cocoa production basin.

A similar infrastructure was inaugurated two days earlier in Nkog-Ekogo, a small village in Lékié, the country's leading production basin which produces 40% of its total

output. These infrastructures, which comprise beans' fermentation tanks, modern drying ovens, and tray for sun-drying, will be multiplied across the Country's production basins.

The minister of commerce said that with these three first centers, *"the cocoa sector enters a new era marked by excellence, in terms of quality"*. *"When I come to the production basins, I am called his Excellency Mr. Minister; give me that opportunity to call you excellences Mr producers by producing*

cocoa of excellent quality", he said to the producers that received the equipment.

It should be noted that the post-harvest cocoa processing centers of excellence are the concretization of a commitment made by Cameroon's president, during the last presidential campaign, to minimize the impacts of the global fall in cocoa prices on farmers.

Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana: Cameroon's cocoa "must pave itself a way on the global market"

Indeed, the crisis that results from the decrease in cocoa's prices at the international level is a great source of concerns for the Cameroonian government. *"This situation is making us restless,"* the minister of trade, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, said. This was on November 7, 2017, during a visit in the department of Lékié which is the country's largest cocoa production basin. Authorities are concerned not only by the number of people living off cocoa farming (500,000 farmers and 10,000 families in the processing sector), the economic weight of the sector on Cameroon

(generated more than CFA200 billion for farmers prior to the global price drop) but mainly and above all about the characteristics of the Cameroonian bean, which should grant it a completely different fate on the international market. *"Its red brick color attracts and its butter content is probably higher than that from other places. With all these, we should pave a way for ourselves in the global market,"* said Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, urging Cameroonian farmers to improve the quality of their product, in order to win over niche markets. *"That is the future,"* he added.



Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana.

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Towards the merger of three State entities dedicated to the training of cocoa and coffee producers

The Cameroonian government currently works on establishing a mega-structure that will merge all the functions and competences of the Cocoa Development Company (SODECAO), the National Cocoa and Coffee Office (ONCC) and the Fund for the Development of the Cocoa and Coffee sectors (FODECC), good sources revealed. According to a source close to the case, this merger aims at ending

the fragmentation of competences observed so far, as well dispersion of energies across the various entities which in spite of the many financial resources put at their disposal, failed to provide results expected in regards to the revival of the cocoa and coffee industries.

The new structure will be similar to that in place before the 90s with the national office for the commercialization of basic products (ONCPB)

which was regulating both cocoa and coffee sectors.

However this entity was dissolved with the liberalization of these two sectors. Sectors whose performances are questionable, especially in terms of output's quantity and quality. Same goes for the efficient training of farmers who seem to have been left down by the cocoa and coffee inter-profession.

A quality premium introduced at the beginning of the 2017-2018 season

On the sidelines of the launch of the 2017-18 cocoa campaign, last August 25 in Ntui, in the central region of Cameroon, the Cameroonian government has announced the introduction of a quality premium to push cocoa farmers to produce beans of better quality.

The premium will be taken from part of the levy fee paid to the Fund for the Development of the Cocoa and Coffee sectors (FODECC). It will be paid to farmers who have distinguished themselves by producing cocoa of good quality. For now however, the amount and modalities of payment of the premium are yet to be disclosed by the ministry of trade. This incentive of the government adds up to the many initiatives carried out by some exporters who have, year ago, joined the battle to improve the quality of Cameroon's cocoa, promoting the production of certified cocoa.

Such is the case of Telcar Cocoa,

local dealer for US giant Cargill. Indeed, it has, over the past five cocoa campaigns in the country, distributed about CFA3.5 billion of premiums to certified cocoa farmers. Let's recall that during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 cocoa seasons, about 97% of the beans exported by Cameroon were grade II beans.

According to the minister of trade, since its quality does not improve much, despite the combined efforts of the inter-profession and public authorities over many years, the price of Cameroon's cocoa currently records a discount of FCFA200 per kg on the global market.



Christophe Bertrand:

“I believe that I am the first in France to process Cameroonian cocoa”

Founder of the La Reine Astrid chocolate factory, located in Meudon, France, this master chocolatier processes Cameroonian beans since September 2016, in his workshop of Savigny-sur-Orge (Essonne). He is at the source of a partnership between the French Confederation of chocolatiers and confectioners and Cameroonian cocoa farmers. A partnership that shows promising results.

Business in Cameroon: How did you find out about the Cameroonian cocoa?

Christophe Bertrand: One day, a Cameroonian farmer named Aristide Tchemtchoua reached out to me on Facebook. As you know, Facebook is not just for making friends, but also for doing business. This farmer offered me to purchase her cocoa.

At first, I thought it was a joke. I answered that I would much like to buy her cocoa, but I told her that she should first send it over and I would pay only after I receive the product. She was bold enough to meet my request. And such courage, taking such a risk is laudable. She did not know me. I'm in France and she borrowed money to pay the

transportation fees for the beans she sent over. I found that quite amazing. When I received her beans, we produced some quite interesting chocolate, even if it lacked a little roundness in the mouth, because it had not been well fermented. We thought we should help Aristide and the other farmers improve the quality of their cocoa.



Christophe Bertrand, Founder of the La Reine Astrid chocolate factory: "We believed we had something to do for Cameroon's cocoa for it to no more be impacted by prices on the London stock exchange. For it rather to become a product of high quality, through proper fermenting."

And that is how I came to Cameroon with three of my fellow members of the French chocolatiers and confectioners' confederation. We believed we had something to do for Cameroon's cocoa for it to no more be impacted by prices on the London stock exchange. For it rather to become a product of high quality, through proper fermenting.

BC: What exactly does the Confederation of chocolatiers and confectioners of France plan to do for Cameroon's cocoa farmers?

CB: The first thing we will do is advertise. Currently, Cameroon's cocoa is not known. We, French chocolate makers, are among the leaders of this market internationally. With this in sight, I believe that if French chocolatiers start talking about Cameroonian cocoa, saying it is a product of quality, with an interesting aroma and roundness on the palate, chocolate makers from the US and all around the world would wonder: "what is happening with French

chocolatiers and that Cameroonian cocoa?" That's how advertising works: We will put the Cameroonian cocoa at a level where it was not until now. The second thing is that we will organize by the end of January in Cameroon, a trip with what are

of local beans.

Simultaneously, we will help farmers properly ferment their beans, in order to improve the aromatic palette of the Cameroonian cocoa. For now, it has quite a strong taste, which is quite typical to Africa. But what it lacks

"During this type of event, bonds are formed between farmers and chocolatiers, who can thus easily become buyers of local beans."

called bean-to-bar chocolate manufacturers. These are major chocolatiers who produce and sell chocolate on behalf of chocolate makers that do not operate in that segment. We are also thinking of organizing a trip with all French chocolatiers who process cocoa beans themselves. During this type of event, bonds are formed between farmers and chocolatiers, who can thus easily become buyers

is an aromatic palette, which is that little thing that tingles taste buds.

BC: Are there in France, other chocolate makers that process cocoa from Cameroon?

CB: I believe that I am the first in France to process Cameroonian cocoa. There is some cocoa processed in the Penja area (editor's note: in the coastal region of Cameroon) which

is sold in a small amount in France (editor's note: it is produced by PHP, Cameroonian subsidiary of the Compagnie fruitière de Marseille). It can be found in some shops, but I am actually the first to have processed Cameroon's beans into chocolate in France, and my product is sold under the brand *le cacao du Cameroon* (Cameroon's cocoa). Before that, maybe a few French consumers were eating Cameroon's cocoa without knowing it, because it was drowned under the chocolate product itself. We will continue our marketing on Cameroon's cocoa. For example, France's chocolatiers confederation has a stand at the Europa trade fair, which will take place in Paris in February 2018. This is a huge agri-business fair and it gathers various actors of the industry, pastry cooks, bakers, etc. At our stand, we will advertise Cameroon's cocoa, maybe in the presence of one of the top officials of Cameroon's inter-professional cocoa and coffee council. At this occasion, we will tell all bakers and patissiers present that Cameroon's cocoa exists and that it is good.

BC: How did your consumers react to this chocolate you named "*le cacao du Cameroun*", and what are the characteristics of the beans with which it was made?

CB: They were actually quite surprised by the quality of the product. They were expecting a bitter chocolate, which is not the case at all. This cocoa produces quite a good chocolate, round in the mouth. It is neither too bitter, nor too sour. It just needs to have its aromatic palette improved.

BC: Compared to other sources of cocoa you process, what would you say about Cameroon's beans? In terms of quality, is it better, average or lower?

CB: The beans I received were not bad but we will work on boosting their quality and bring them to the top level. For that, they must be well



Christophe Bertrand: "I am deeply convinced that there is in Cameroon a market for quality chocolate. Thus, it would indeed be best if the added value was created in the producing-country."

fermented since fermentation is the key element for cocoa's taste. No one cares about the varieties. The most important is to properly ferment the beans. This is why it is difficult to roughly estimate the quality of Cameroon's cocoa.

BC: You actually purchase cocoa from Cameroon and process it in France. Is it not possible to process the beans locally, by setting up a factory for example?

CB: I believe there are initiatives ongoing in that regard. As for me, I

BC: You partnered a group of farmers of a small locality in the Central part of Cameroon. This group produces about 200 tons of beans per year. Do you find this volume satisfying?

This volume is too much for me alone to handle. I took just 200 kg last year. This year, I will purchase 700 kg and next year, I plan to purchase 5 tons. In my factory, I process 20 tons of cocoa every year. However I need to have a wide range of varieties, from various origins, so that my consumers have also a wide range of choices.

"No one cares about the varieties. The most important is to properly ferment the beans."

manage a small processing unit. I am a small business owner. However, I am deeply convinced that there is in Cameroon a market for quality chocolate. Thus, it would indeed be best if the added value was created in the producing-country.

Now, the processors that we are going to bring to Cameroon during the various trips we plan to make, will have the capability to purchase much significant volumes.

Interview with Brice R. Mbodiam

Yanick Yemga:

“With the geographical indication, the price of white pepper increased from CFA 2,500 to CFA 14,000 per Kg”

As an industrial property adviser, this Cameroonian expert looks back on the opportunities offered by the products labelling program, initiated by the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), which has recorded the labelling of two Cameroonian products (the white honey of Oku and the white pepper of Penja) during its first phase.

Business in Cameroon: On Monday November 2, 2017, OAPI launched the second phase of the Support program for the establishment of the geographical indications (Pampig), supported by the French Development Agency (FDA). This time, Cameroon presents about fifteen products at the event. First of all, what is a Geographical Indication (GI)?

Yanick Yemga: Geographical indications constitute an object of the industrial property. According to the 1st article of annex VI of the Bangui agreement (which is the standard in force across the 17 countries of the OAPI space, Cameroon included), geographical indications are signs that help identify a product based on its origin, that is the territory, region or locality from which it comes. Provided that the quality, the reputation or any other characteristic of the product is essentially linked to the geographical origin indicated. These two conditions must thus be combined before talking about geographical indications. I have to specify that certain laws, like the one in effect in France, recognize two types of GIs: which are

(AOP), Controlled Designations of Origin (AOC), indications of source and even collective marks.

BC: What is the added value provided by a geographical indication to an agricultural product such as Penja's pepper or even Oku's honey, two Cameroonian products labeled during the first phase of Pampig?

YY: Your question is essential to understand the economic challenge that represent the protection and the promotion of geographical indications, especially for a country like Cameroon which has a tremendous potential as far as GIs are concerned. Being intrinsically a sign of distinction, geographical indications, beyond informing about a product's origin, help valorize this product, in the midst of plenty products of the same type.

The consumer, with the GI, is assured, not only, of the origin and the quality of the product but also that its essential characteristics are linked to its place of origin. In short, it is this sort of quality-origin insurance that the GI confers to the product, which makes the product

Under the law thus, "any natural, agricultural, artisanal or industrial product" is likely to be labelled under GI certification.

the designation of origin (AO) and the indication of source (IP). The first one has a definition close to that of the Bangui agreement, even though it does incorporate human factors. Regarding the indication of source, it only serves to indicate the origin of a product for consumer's protection. OAPI recognizes only one geographical identifier which is the geographical indication. This is regardless of the fact that they exist many more types such as Protected Geographical Indications (PGIs), Protected Designations of Origin

more popular and subsequently boosts its market value. In the end, the consumer gets value for the money he spent while the producer gains as well as his profits are more substantial. The government also makes profits through taxes, and the country's balance trade is improved because of the export of GI-labeled products.

In Cameroon, the examples of Oku's white honey and Penja's pepper are very illustrative thereon. The price per kilogram of Penja's pepper increased from CFA2,500 before



Yanick Yemga, industrial property adviser:
"Being intrinsically a sign of distinction, geographical indications, beyond informing about a product's origin, help valorize this product, in the midst of plenty products of the same type."

September 2013 (before its GI certification) to CFA14,000 in 2015. At the same time, the production increased more than threefold standing at 300 tons in 2015. This shows the tremendous economic potential GIs hold, and how they can benefit our countries.

BC: What are the legislative mechanisms put in place to protect a GI?

YY: First, it should be known that there are many methods to protect GIs. They may be protected under a sui generis (specific) legislation. They may also be protected by the collective or certification brands standard. GIs may as well be protected by the legislation referring to unfair competition or consumer's protection. Some governments also set GIs' protection mechanisms which are essentially administrative and are broken into sanitary controls and label control. What is important is that the OAPI system has chosen the sui generis legislation which is very efficient since it preserves the consumer's interest but also that of the GI holders.

BC: May any product be GI labeled?

YY: The current legislation related to GIs in effect across the OAPI area informs in this regard. The measure we



At the same time, the production increased more than threefold standing at 300 tons in 2015. This shows the tremendous economic potential GIs hold, and how they can benefit our countries.

mentioned in the answer to your first question specifies the meaning of the word “product” used in the definition of the geographical Indication given by the community legislator. Under the law thus, “*any natural, agricultural, artisanal or industrial product*” is likely to be labelled under GI certification. What matters is that the GI is useful to indicate the place of origin of this natural, agricultural, artisanal or industrial product and for its essential characteristics to be linked to its place of origin.

BC: How to get this label?

YY: Obviously, I will just talk about the OAPI system. First, it should

be emphasized that the GI is only protected if it is duly recorded by our common intellectual property office or if it has been registered as a result of an international convention signed by the OAPI’s member-States. That said, the protected geographical indication (PGI) labeling process is divided into two distinct phases. The first phase is the national recognition, done at the level of member States. Roughly speaking, on the basis of specifications validated by the national committee in charge of GIs, the identification of the product and its characteristics is conducted, also the identification of actors involved (producers and consumers) and a

delimitation of the geographical area of interest is done. Then, the national committee verifies if the GI registration application is admissible, based on the link between the product’s key characteristics and its place of origin. The second phase is the registration at OAPI. Here, there is a set of rules to follow. But what is important is that OAPI checks, before any registration, whether the standards are respected by the applicant or not. Moreover, the product’s quality is assessed and the GI legality is verified as well as the effective payment of prescribed taxes by the applicant.

Interview with Brice R. Mbodiam

Pierre Zumbach: With the FIAC, Cameroon will become a “*promotional hub for companies, with two complementary events*”

The President of the international foundation Inter-Progress talks here about the genesis and contours of the first edition of the international business and trade fair (FIAC) which will be held from March 24 to April 8, 2018, in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital.

Business in Cameroon: How did you come up with the idea for the Douala international business and trade fair?

Pierre Zumbach: The idea was born in 2008, following the first three editions of Promote, the international trade fair of enterprise, SMEs and partnership of Yaoundé. With our

mandators from the government, that is the ministry of commerce, and our supervisor, the general secretary of the presidency, and various patronal organizations and partnering heads of companies, we experienced success with Promote which became the first economic gathering of Central Africa.

We also experienced the limitations of this event, which both has the characteristics of a fair and an exhibition, and which regroups some exhibitors willing to take part in an international fair where they could seek new partnerships, investments, new customers, both locally and abroad, and present



Pierre Zumbach, President of the international foundation Inter-Progress: "This thus led Cameroon's top officials, together, to alternate the organization of both events between Yaoundé and Douala. So the first would host the FIAC on even years, while the latter would host Promote on odd years; therefore making Cameroon a promotional hub for companies, with these two complementary events."

new products and services, but where sale was not the main goal ; while others wished only to benefit from a large sale space opened to the local, regional and international markets, and where all types of commercial marketers sought to improve their efficiency, especially in regards to re-sale, export and import, etc.

Thus, according to some, Promote had to continuously promote exchanges between exhibitors themselves, and also between exhibitors and visitors; this through the organization of B to B and B to G meetings, seminars, focused debates, all in an

environment that was not noisy, fostering both individual and collective discussions. An environment which enables exchanges between a wide range of businesses, from all kinds of levels, from the startup to the large company.

Others however wished for the event to be a big party revolving around trade, with top-notch components, and the best forms of sale; while valorizing the sale of local products. These pushed to seeking products of better quality, in order to satisfy consumers, who are the true judges of commercial competitiveness.

BC: So, the FIAC is not only a replica of the Promote fair. How do you organize, in sight of all these observations?

PZ: Our mandators asked us to assess what could best meet the needs of Cameroonian firms, not only for the internal market, but also key niches on the international market.

This brought to light, on a part, Cameroon's exceptional position at the heart of Africa and on another part, the historical complementarity that exists, economically, between Yaoundé, a capital that is well positioned to hold one of the biggest



trade fair, and Douala, an economic capital, with a potential to boost multifaceted commercial action with its demographic weight and diversities.

This thus led Cameroon's top officials, together, to alternate the organization of both events between Yaoundé and Douala. So the first would host the FIAC on even years, while the latter would host Promote on odd years; therefore making Cameroon a promotional hub for companies, with these two complementary events. The two events in fact fall under the high patronage of the President himself.

Hence, Cameroon provides an international coverage to firms and other institutions concerned by economic actions, this with a yearly global promotion tool.

BC: What are the main axes of the new event that Inter-Progress wishes to organize in March 2018?

PZ: The site is temporary, with appropriate equipment, partly air-conditioned and partly ventilated. It is provided by Camtel (public telecom operator) and is located in Bependa. We wish for this edition to be a success to enable for the selection of a definite space, where will be built a polyvalent exposition centre. The 2018 FIAC will receive about 700 exhibitors practicing all types of trades. Inclusive debates will take place in a large air-conditioned room. In fact, two of these debates which actually being prepared have the following themes: *"boosting Cameroonian exports through economic partnership agreements with the European Union"*, and *"Cameroonian firms of all sizes interested in exporting to USA via the AGOA mechanisms"*.

Of course, the site will offer space reserved for discussions between traders and customers, and visitors will be many as the event is organized in the Easter period. Participants will be able to eat and drink at a big coffee snack especially designed for this purpose. The 600-seat snack comes with a podium, entertainment, and a brewery. There will be a space for games and leisure, a crèche managed by a major company, three big rides, board games, etc.

The National Employment Fund, partner of major events, will also be present to animate a youth employment fellowship.

Media Plus will insure the innovative media coverage of the event to allow for a greater range of people from various origins to take part to it. A visitor's guide will also be freely shared and will provide all information about exposing businesses, and sponsors.

BC: For a business owner, what are the conditions to meet in order to take part to the FIAC?

PZ: Registration has been made easy with the website: www.fiacdouala.org. Prices are very encouraging, as the organizer levies no fees for its

structure. Moreover, all exhibitors that will register for the first edition of the FIAC before January 31st will benefit from a special offer.

For all those wishing to study special conditions for their participation, the Inter-Progress international foundation and its collaborators are willing to receive them in Douala and Yaoundé at a specific time. This schedule will be provided to any who calls the following numbers: Douala 675 29 35 91 / 669 96 23 46 Yaoundé 222 21 44 15 / 677 70 76 79 / 669 99 93 13 / 699 93 95 88

BC: Do you have an idea of the size of foreign participants at the FIAC, given that it is supposed to be a global event?

PZ: This first edition will mainly record the participation of Cameroonian firms and others from the CEEAC zone operating in the trade sector, the 10 central African States making the CEMAC, and some delegations from farther nations. Talks are still ongoing however.

BC: What are your main expectations at the end of this event and from the alternation between the Promote and the FIAC?

PZ: Regarding the main values, no need for long talks. What an *"event's promoter"*, that is the foundation and its team in this case, hopes from any event organized to promote a business is for its usefulness to be acknowledged. And this will be done with the alternation between the FIAC and the Promote.

These economic meetings which take place under the umbrella of big fairs and exhibitions, providing exhibitors the chance to directly exchange within themselves and with visitors as well, and in this way helping overcome the risk of a poor quality of exchanges.

The use and power of spoken words are according to us the richest way to exchange and the most respectful also, especially during a major exhibition or fair.

Interview with Brice R. Mbodiam

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Boosted by reforms, non-oil revenues increased by about 70% between 2011 and 2016

Cameroon's tax authority has officially collected CFA1,615 billion as non-oil revenues at the end of the 2016 fiscal year. These revenues have increased by 70% within five years as the non-oil revenue collected in 2011 were estimated at CFA98 billion.

An authorized source at the ministry of finance explained that this substantial increase in the revenues is the result of reforms initiated within the country's tax authority for some years now. Such reforms include for example the modernization of services, simplification of procedures and revenues securing.

The new reforms allowed the implementation of innovative measures such as pre-filled forms, electronic filing and payment, tax payment via mobile money (Note: after a successful experimentation of this method with land taxes, the tax authority plans to extend it to other kinds of taxes) or the requirement for taxpayers to pay their taxes via bank transfers exclusively.

Explaining how electronic filling positively impacted the results the Cameroonian tax authority, an authorized source from the body said that its implementation in the used cars' sector has helped increase the taxes collected from CFA200 million per month, in 2011, to almost CFA1 billion per month now.

Other much recent reforms such as the transfer of the collection of airport stamps (a tax which increased from CFA10,000 in 2016 to CFA20,000 in 2017) to airlines companies or the coupling of the circulation tax or vignette with automobiles insuranc-



es (which is compulsory for drivers), have also helped boost Cameroon's non-oil revenues.

The increase is also consecutive to the widening of the tax base with the creation of special tax offices for SMEs some years ago. This resulted in the expansion of the database of taxpayers.

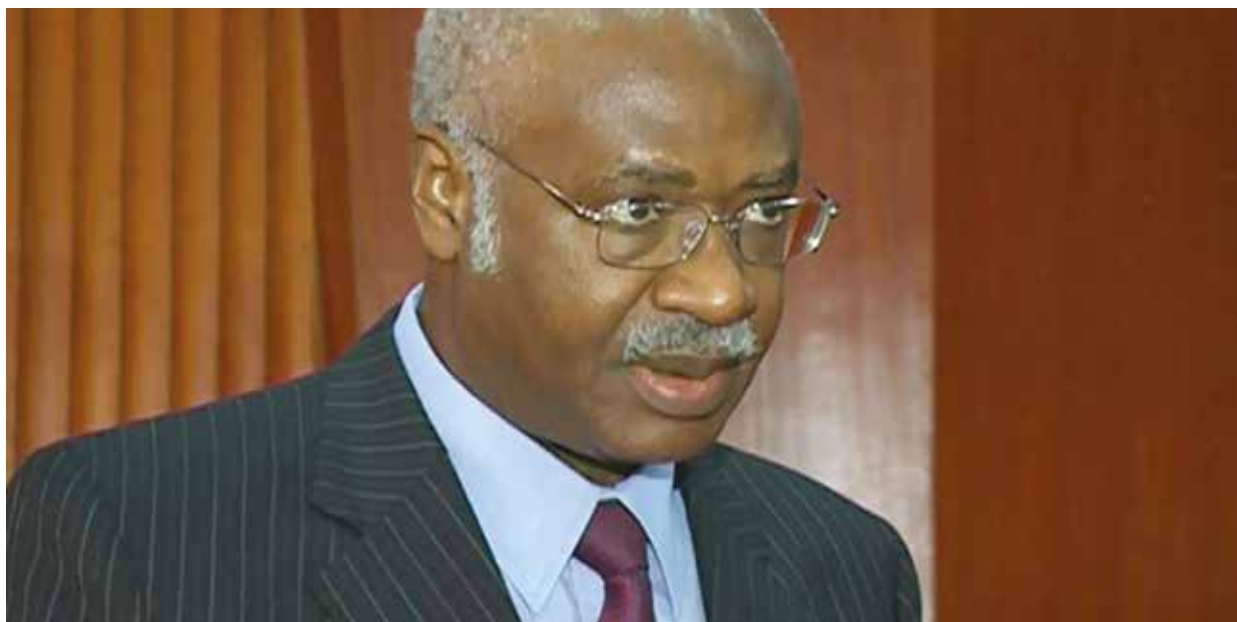
As a matter of fact, the special tax offices, alongside the tax division in charge of large companies, supervise and ensure the careful management of SMEs (which represent 80% of the industrial fabric) through approved management centers.

Since two years, due to a global fall

in the price of crude (which used to generate 25% of public revenues) and the economic partnership agreement with the European Union (which led to the decrease of custom revenues), Cameroon's government has started imposing new taxes.

Examples of such tax reforms include the accommodation tax in hotels (with an upper bound of CFA5000 per night), instituted in 2017, or the 2% tax on every electronic communication. This tax allows the public treasury to greatly benefit from the dynamism observed, over the past few years, in the local internet and mobile telephony's market.

2018: Another year of mega projects, Cameroon's government says



On November 29, 2017, Cameroon's Prime Minister, Philémon Yang, has presented parliamentarians the government's 2018 social, financial and economic programme. This was as deputies of the SDF, the country's leading opposition party, were asking for the opening of a debate on the crisis in Cameroon's English-speaking regions. According to the head of Cameroon's government, 2018 will be dedicated to major infrastructure projects in

the framework of a vast program started in 2012. He explained that the government will focus on the infrastructures of the AFCON 2019 and on the completion of projects falling under the three-year program (2015-2017) which did not yield the expected results due in part to a morose international, regional and national financial environment. Among projects that are key to the government are those for the construction of the Japoma and Olembe

stadiums (respectively in Douala and Yaoundé), the renovation of the stadiums in Garoua and the ongoing construction of roads such as the Yaoundé-Douala, Yaoundé-Nsimalen, and Kribi-Lolablé highways. Many projects for energy and water supply are also underway. The most important of these being the construction of the Nachtigal dam, in Central Cameroon. This dam will have a generating capacity of 400MW.

Free textbooks in public primary schools

Philémon Yang, the Cameroonian prime minister, announced in a circular signed on November 23, 2017, that from the 2018-2019 academic year, Cameroon's government will guarantee free French, English, mathematics, computer science and civism textbooks in the public primary schools of Cameroon. These textbooks will be available in primary schools in zones of educational priority (Far-north, North,

and Adamaoua). In this regard, Cameroon will ensure tax cuts on products that are necessary for the local manufacturing of books. The textbooks will now be in use for six years. *"In respect to the peculiarities of every educational system, only one textbook must be used to teach every course in the formal curriculum throughout the country. Only that textbook must be used by students for the courses being taught"*, Philémon

Yang explained. He also promised to stop the change of textbooks every academic year. The government also committed to promoting the use of textbooks and reading in general by not only involving decentralized territorial units (local libraries for instance) but also by facilitating the digitalization of those teaching tools through digital libraries.

AfDB praises Cameroon's "significant progress" in terms of social services and infrastructure

In its 2017 Country results brief, released on Nov. 2, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has lauded the efforts made by Cameroon, CEMAC's powerhouse, to improve social services and boost investment in infrastructures.

"As the most robust economy in Central Africa, Cameroon, has in the past decade taken steps to further boost growth, making major advances in providing health, education, and clean water, and launching an ambitious infrastructure investment programme", AfDB explained.

The financial institution pointed out that the actions initiated by Cameroon are in line with its own strategic pillars. *"Progress has been impressive, but a big leap in business competitiveness is required, to create a more diverse, inclusive, regional economy",* Simon Mizrahi from ADB said.

In the power sector, the Country Brief indicated that 2.7 million Cameroonians will have access to improved electricity services starting next year, thanks to the increase of the country's power generation capacity following the construction of many hydropower dams, with the support of AfDB.

At the same time, *"To fulfill its potential in agriculture, which accounts*



for 40% of GDP, the AfDB has helped Cameroon double agriculture output, which has lifted the livelihoods of 4.6 million farmers by 15%, including promoting smallholders agribusiness, better nutrition, and strengthening food security".

Cameroon's growth in the industrial sector *"rebounded to 5.7% growth in 2015, boosted by agribusiness and construction, and the time to start a business shrank to 15 days from 45. However, the country should cut red tape and make it easier for businesses to get loans. Internet use rose 10-fold",* and, investments in the sector

of telecommunications, such as the Central African backbone project thanks to which 1,000 kilometers of fiber optical cables will be deployed, with funding from AfDB.

In terms of regional integration, AfDB disclosed that despite the major deficit in infrastructures, trade between Cameroon and other African countries has increased over the last decade spurred by AfDB-backed cross-border road projects like the 535 km corridor between Bamenda in Cameroon and Enugu in Nigeria.

1,500 kg of non-biodegradable plastic bags seized in Douala

The importation, production or commercialization of non-biodegradable plastic bags was banned since April 1, 2014, in Cameroon. However, these bags did not disappear from markets and shops. Actually, according to official sources, 1,500 kg of non-bi-

odegradable bags have just been seized, in markets of Douala, during a raid conducted by the operational unit of the regional delegation of the ministry of environment for the coastal area. As law requests, these bags will be shredded.

In Cameroon, let's it be noted, about 10% of the six million tons of waste produced in Cameroon every day are plastic waste, according to figures from the ministry of environment.

AfDB approves a budget support of about CFA120 billion in favor of Cameroon



The board of the African development bank (AfDB) has approved on November 23, 2017, a budget support of €180 million (about CFA120 billion) in favor of Cameroon. This in the framework of the first phase of the program to support competitiveness and economic growth, the Pan African institution said. AfDB explained that this program

corresponds to the first year of a 3-year support program to be implemented from 2017-2019, in order to boost Cameroon's public finances, which decreased following the fall in prices of crude oil. A decrease of revenues that was also exacerbated by security and humanitarian challenges in Cameroon and CEMAC in general.

According to the bank, the program is aimed at preserving the macroeconomic and budgetary stability and pave the way for a strong, resilient and inclusive economic growth, by improving public finances' management and strengthening the governance and competitiveness of productive sectors such as transport, energy and agriculture.

Government sets aside CFA50 billion for elections in 2018

In the framework of the finalization of the draft budget, Cameroon's government confirmed that it will hold political elections next year. In this regard, Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh, general secretary at the presidency, sent a mail to his peer at the office of the prime minister, on November 20, 2017, to relay the directives of the president to *"increase the budget for the elections from CFA35 billion to*

CFA50 billion". However, Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh did not reveal, in the mail, which of the elections to be held. According to the legislation however, there should be municipal, legislative and presidential elections in 2018.

This budget will be highly sufficient to fund the material organization of all these elections because, the government spent about CFA21 billion

for the last presidential elections on October 9, 2011. This was financed thanks to the country's own funds. Moreover, for the twin legislative and municipal elections which were to be held in 2011 and, were finally held on September 30, 2013, CFA12 billion were progressively disbursed by the ministry of finance. So, the total amount spent for the three elections was CFA33 billion.

Free-movement compromised after the closure of the Cameroon's border with Equatorial Guinea at Kyé-Ossi

Authorized sources revealed that Equatorial Guinea's government closed the country's border, with Cameroon, located at Kyé-Ossi in Southern Cameroon, last week. This occurs barely a month after Equatorial Guinea, which was very resilient to free-movement within CEMAC, finally suppressed the visa requirements for citizens of the community for stays that do not exceed 90 days. Up till now, the authorities of Malabo have not explained this decision. This raises questions about the feasibility of free-movement within CEMAC despite the suppression of visa requirements by the member countries.



Bordeaux provides CFA65 million to Douala urban community

Fritz Ntone Ntone, the representative of the Cameroonian government at the urban community of Douala, Anne-Lise Jacquet, vice-president of Bordeaux Métropole delegated to water and sanitation, and Michel Vernejoul, adviser and delegate to international relationships at Bordeaux

Métropole, signed on November 15, a convention. Under this convention, the Bordeaux Métropole will provides EUR100,000 (CFA65.5 million) to Douala. This amount will be used for drinking water supply and toilets building in three hospitals of the Maképé Missoké neighborhood in

Douala.

As a matter of fact, this funding is in the context of the law Oudin of February 9, 2005, which grant, to local authorities and their groupings, the right to allocate 1% of their resources in the section "water and sanitation" to international cooperation initiatives.

Cameroon employers' group and development partners seek efficient cooperation approaches

The Inter Patronal Groupings of Cameroon (GICAM) met with development partners in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital, during a forum, to seek approaches toward an efficient cooperation between the two parties.

During the forum, the parties involved observed that despite being

acknowledged as an important driver of economic development, not so much is done to allow the private sector to be effective in that role even if there are many opportunities with investors.

"Some financial and technical partners said that Cameroon is not exploiting all the private sector's avail-

able funding opportunities. They also criticized the fact that our progress margin in terms of support is decreasing every year" Issac Tamba, director of the economy and public investment programming at the ministry of economy, said.

France provides CFA46.2 billion to Cameroon in the framework of the 3rd debt reduction and development contract



Louis Paul Motaze, Cameroon's minister of economy, Gilles Thibault French ambassador to Cameroon and Christian Yoka, director of the French Development Agency (AFD) signed on November 15, in Yaoundé, two conventions providing CFA46.2 billion to Cameroon in the framework of the third debt reduction and

development contract (C2D).

The first convention, which provides CFA39.4 billion, is for a triennial sector budget support (2017-2019) which aims to improve the workforce, enhance the competitiveness of private companies and modernize the management of public finances while the second convention which

provides CFA6.8 billion is for the steering section of the third C2D. The overall amount of this C2D is about CFA400 billion and, is essentially destined for social projects. The overall amount of the first two C2Ds were respectively CFA566 billion and CFA352 billion and, they were implemented in 2006 and 2011.

160 ivory, parrot feathers and pangolin scales seized from smugglers in Douala

Official sources reveal that Cameroon's police just seized 160 ivory, feathers and Pangolin scales.

These items, taken from protected animals, were seized while they were being loaded on a truck in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital. The load was hidden under bags of foodstuffs to be sent to Nigeria. In relation with this smuggling, police sources revealed that three people were arrested and, as far as the parts seized are concerned, they were to be released to the ministry of forests and fauna this November 13, 2017.



GICAM fears a planned asphyxia of private companies in 2018



The inter-employers' Group of Cameroon (GICAM) revealed, in an official statement last weekend, that 2018 could be more challenging for companies in Cameroon. In this statement, GICAM, the oldest and most important employers' group in Cameroon led by Célestin Tawamba, wrote: *"despite many requests, GICAM was not consulted concerning the elaboration of the financial law of 2018. Moreover, GICAM discovered with astonishment and dismay, after it read the document published in the press as the draft of the law, that the authors did not take into account any of the suggestions it submitted to the government in due time".* However, this exclusion of GICAM in the development of a law *"so essential for the private sector in view of its impact on taxation, competitiveness and many vital aspects of companies"* is not the only

complaint GICAM made. It also fears a seemingly planned asphyxia of companies operating in Cameroon if the financial law which will be reviewed in the coming days by parliamentarians was adopted like it is now because it contains provisions which could impose these firms unbearable constraints. These constraints will negate every effort made by Cameroon's government and GICAM to build trust in the private sector in the past years. One of these provisions that are bothering the leading employers' group is *"the expected increase of the tax burden in 2018, the oppressive nature of the law and the weakening of the scheme to pay VAT"*. Overall, GICAM thinks that Cameroon's government *"is leveraging on the need to increase the budget revenues to weaken local and export-oriented firms"*.

Public investments contributed to 1.8% of GDP in Q2 2017

On November 8, Cameroon's Institute of statistics revealed in the quarterly national accounts that the overall investments in the country, boosted by the strong growth in public investments (42.8%), have increased by 12.6% during the second quarter of 2017. *"Public investments supported economic growth during the second quarter of 2017 after the decrease observed during the first quarter. Its contribution to the quarterly GDP is 1.8%; this helped sustain total investments' growth",* the institute commented. It also revealed that this significant performance of public investments is due to the rapid development of major infrastructures projects in the public sector (stadiums, power plants, roads...). Meanwhile, private sector experienced a negative growth (-3.3%), mainly, due to lesser demand in transport materials. The rise in investment in this sector is attributable to machinery, electrical appliances, furnitures, mainly, and to a smaller extend to construction.



Customs will sell loads of wood abandoned since years at Douala port

Customs' national directorate at the ministry of finance will proceed to the sale by auction of 20 containers of wood which were to be exported. The sale will take place on November 11, 2017, at the Douala port, official sources revealed. According to operators in the sector,

it is unprecedented because, most of the times, the goods sold during auctions are imported goods. On July 22, 2017, customs were able to sell 13 containers of wood. According to our sources, the woods which will be sold have been abandoned for years by economic oper-

ators. A customs official explained that at the root of this problem, there is the *"amateurism of exporters who are eager to send the loads inside ports without even confirming the orders or clients changing their minds for several reasons"*.

Nigeria denies any implication in tensions in the English speaking regions

Paul Biya, Cameroon's president received on December 7, 2017 Lawan Abba Gashagar, high commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Cameroon and special envoy of the Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari, According to the Cameroonian presidency, Lawan Abba Gashagar delivered a message, from the Nigerian president, related to the two countries' cooperation to Paul Biya. The Nigerian diplomat denied any implication of his country in the

climate of violence that has been reigning for over a year now in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon which forms the country's English-speaking regions. He explained that Nigeria supports in no way the secessionists which demand the independence of those regions they baptized "Ambazonia". Quite the opposite actually, the Nigerian government wishes a rapid return of peace in Cameroon and the preservation of its territorial integrity. The Nigerian emissary also explained

the presence of some secessionists' leaders in Nigeria. Indeed, he said that the Cameroonians residing in Nigeria are actually favored by some clauses of the bilateral accord between the two parties which allow citizens of the two countries to stay in the other country for three months without a visa. This regulation compels the visitor to scrupulously respect the laws and regulations of the host country. The law also prohibits activities which can destabilize the visitor's home country.

In Cameroon, fiscal pressure on companies represents 57.7% of their results against an average of 46.8% in Africa

In an analysis of the Doing Business 2018 it recently released, The Inter Patronal Groupings of Cameroon (GICAM) noted that fiscal pressure on companies operating in the country represents 57.7% of their results against an average of 46.8% in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, according to the Paying Taxes 2017 report published at the end of 2016 by audit firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the World Bank, Cameroon is one of the top 10 African countries where fiscal pressure on companies is the highest. Between 2016 and 2017, this pressure, according to various Paying Taxes' reports, has increased by 9%. Indeed, the related figure was 48.8% in the Paying Taxes 2016 but soared to 57.7% in this year's edition. However, Cameroon's fiscal authorities claim that the pressure varies between 12% and 13% only.



Government said it has created 398,046 jobs in 2017



During his exposé of Cameroon's social and economic program for 2018, Philémon Yang, the country's prime minister, made a retrospective evaluation of the employment sector. Indeed, he said that the country has promoted decent employment in 2017 by creating 398,046 new jobs. *"This was achieved thanks to the different opportunities provided by the civil service, defense and security forces, the decentralized territorial units,*

the implementation of the three-year emergency plan to accelerate economic growth, governmental projects and programs and labor tracking in major construction projects such as the sites for AFCON 2019," Philémon Yang said. The minister also mentioned the effective launch of Limbé, Douala and Sangmelina's centers of vocational excellence to promote vocational training which will lead to more jobs. He also mentioned

the construction of the national institute to form trainers and the extension of programs funded by Koreans in Yaoundé. Philémon Yang also talked about the completion of the Nkongsamba vocational training center (which results from cooperation with Austria) and the provision of 30 Moroccan and 19 Algerian scholarships to young Cameroonians.

Cameroon expects 4.2% growth rate starting from 2018 thanks to a program concluded with IMF

With the measures taken for the implementation of the 3-year program it concluded in June 2017 with IMF, Cameroon's authorities are having bigger expectations for their economy. *"In sight of the proposed measures and of the global improvement of economic situation, though slight, we hope to grow starting from 2018 to 4.2% (against 3.7% projected in 2017)"*, Alamine Ousmane Mey, the ministry of finance declared.

This hope of Cameroon's minister of finance is also shared by the American rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) which in its last report, published on October 13, 2017, on the country's economy, projected *"solid economic growth"* over the 2017-2020 period.

"We forecast real GDP growth will average 4.6% in 2017-2020, driven by the implementation of large infrastructure projects such as the Kribi deep-water port, the Lom Pangar power station, and various dam and road projects. We project gas production will surge in 2018 thanks to the start of the floating liquefied natural gas terminal [...]", S&P reviewed.



A military cooperation agreement to be signed between Cameroon and Gabon

Followed by a massive delegation, Massard Kabinda Makaga, Gabon's minister of presidential affairs and national defense, just sojourned in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital. At the end of an audience with his Cameroon's peer Joseph Beti

Assomo, this member of Gabon's government indicated that the purpose of this visit was to strengthen Gabon's military cooperation with Cameroon, by setting a *"legal tool"* in this regard. Last April, it was Joseph Yakete,

defense minister of Central African Republic (CAR), who came to Yaoundé to seek Cameroon's expertise for the training of CAR's defense forces.

TRADE

Export tax on raw logs should increase from 17.5% in 2016 to 30% in 2018

According to instructions from Cameroon's presidency, the 2018 draft budget which is to be reviewed by parliamentarians will include a bill to increase the export tax on raw logs.

This tax could officially increase from 20% in 2017 to 30% in 2018 while it was 17.5% in 2016. If the bill is approved, the tax would have thus increased by 12.5% over two fiscal years.

According to fiscal experts, the repeated increase of this tax, aims at, not only, increasing custom revenues in a context of generalized decrease of public revenues, but also to encourage local processing of timber in order to create more jobs.

As a matter of fact, Cameroon's port authority (APN) revealed that, apart from oils, timber (sawn and raw) is the major product exported by the country since 2011. Indeed, often, it represents more than 50% of total exports (excluding crude oil's).



Cameroon to impose a 5% tax on 9 agricultural products

An extract of Cameroon's 2018 finance act, submitted for approval to parliamentarians on November 14, 2017, reads: *"a 5% tax will be imposed on the following products: acacia gum, rice, palm oil, hot pepper, cola nuts, millet, sorghum pepper and the vegetable called Eru"*.

A tax expert explained that these products, most of which are non-timber forest products, were

exempted from tax till now. However, Cameroon's government want to introduce this tax to deal with some shady economic operators.

In fact, some of these operators use the above-mentioned products as a cover to export taxable ones. This is to avoid paying taxes, a practice that deprives Cameroon's public treasury of huge tax revenues.

The reform also falls within the

framework of the widening of the tax base that some development partners, such as the IMF, recommended. It is aimed at maximizing the collection of non-oil revenues in order to reduce the budget deficit subsequent to the decrease of oil revenues and the general economic slowdown within CEMAC community over the past two years.

Catalyzed by local production of cement and fish, imports have decreased by 13.4% in 2016

According to figures from Cameroon's technical committee of the balance of payment, the country's imports have decreased by 13.4% in 2016, to about CFA3,095.5 billion. The committee explained that this is due to the dynamism in the local fishing sector, which led to a decrease of frozen fish imports, and the production of Cement in Cameroon which reduced the imports of cement by 91%. Also, due to the increase in its local supply, Cameroon's government prohibited the imports of cement.

It should be noted that for more than two years now, the government has also multiplied initiatives to promote aquaculture. One of such initiatives is the project to support Tilapia farming (Appui au développement de l'élevage du tilapia en cage au Cameroun) which is aimed at producing and supplying fries to fish farmers. This project was supported by FAO.

The fries produced are supplied to partners such as the members of the fish production and com-



mercialization parks that the government has multiplied in the country for two years now through the Agropoles project led by the ministry of economy.

The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries explained that the numerous projects are aimed at increasing the aquaculture production. Indeed, from 1,000 tons/year, this will raise the overall production of fish to 176,000 tons. It should be

reminded that the local demand is estimated at 400,000 tons. Back to cement, Cimenteries du Cameroun (Cimencam), subsidiary of Lafarge Holcim group, is currently rivaled by three cement firms including Dangote Cement, firm of the eponymous Nigerian billionaire, which has in fact become the leader in Cameroon's cement market barely one year after its factory was opened in Douala, the economic capital.

Cameroon has been the leading provider of sawn timber to the UK between January and August 2017

The last sectorial report of the International Tropical Timber Organization revealed that sawn timber from Cameroon was the most exported product to the UK between January and August 2017. Cameroon exported more than 25,000 cubic tons of sawn timber to the UK during the first eight months in 2017, outrunning Malaysia and Congo whose exports to the UK have increased since January.

The timber organization explained that Cameroon's timber exports to the UK have recovered this year after a decrease in 2015 and 2016.

The decrease was experienced two years after the enactment of the voluntary partnership agreements (APV-Flegt), a rigorous mechanism to ensure the legality of woods and other derivatives exported to EU. Indeed, the platform Forêt et Communauté (a group of NGO's

specialized in forest governance in Cameroon) explained that to avoid the rigorous measures, Cameroon's timber exports were redirected to China.

"Cameroon's exports of wood is turned toward China because there are no rigorous measures, by China and the producers' countries, to ensure the legality of woods and derivatives exported to China", the platform explained.

French group Le Duff opens its first restaurant Brioche Dorée in Douala

The restaurant chain Brioche Dorée, controlled by the French group Le Duff, which was announced since 2016, was finally launched on December 5, 2017, in Cameroon. The restaurant is located inside Carrefour's mall in Douala, good sources revealed. Indeed, alongside CFAO Retail whose "club des

marques" (brands club) it joined in 2015, Le Duff partnered with Carrefour.

In the framework of Le Duff's expansion plans in Africa, four Brioche Dorée will be opened in Cameroon. Under these plans, the group aims to open 30 restaurants in 7 African countries (Cameroon, Nigeria, Côte

d'Ivoire, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, and DRC) in the next 10 years.

Brioche Dorée boasts of being the leading French fast-food with over 500 restaurants in the world and more than 125,000 sandwiches sold daily.

“Carrefour Market will offer more than 1500 reference made-in-Cameroon products”
Luc Demez, MD CfaO Retail Cameroon



On December 5, 2017, Luc Demez, managing director of CfaO Retail Cameroon, confirmed that Carrefour Market will participate to the promotion of Cameroonian products. He confirmed this during the official launch of the first supermarket of

Carrefour Market in Douala. *“Carrefour Market will offer exclusive Carrefour-branded products, new quality products and more than 1500 made-in-Cameroon products. It is important for us to adhere to the development of Cameroon's economy”,*

Luc Demez said. After the Bonamoussadi Carrefour Market, the Carrefour-CfaO Retail consortium will launch a PlayYce mall at Ekoudou, in Yaoundé, in 2019. The latter will cost CFA30 billion.

FINANCE

BPCE International seeks partner for its African banks, including BICEC

In an interview with Ecofin Agency, Jean-Pierre Levayer, executive director of BPCE International, summarized his group's activities in Africa. During the interview, he also revealed that his group is looking for a partner to develop the activities of the Group's subsidiaries in Tunisia, Cameroon, Congo, Madagascar, and Mauritius.

Ecofin Agency: It's been one year since you became the executive director of BPCE International; how would you summarize what has been done since then?

Jean-Pierre Levayer: During the past year, we have conducted a strategic review of the international retail banking business; we conducted an in-depth analysis of our banks and their development perspectives. We were reassured by the results of these analyses in of our subsidiaries in Africa and the Indian Ocean. We have professional teams and our subsidiaries are renowned in the countries they are operating in. Our model of development which combines a clientele of local and international companies with average and VIP customers works well and, it is welcomed by local actors. Even if the economic environment in countries we operate in can be difficult, even if there can be negative occurrences along the way, we are sure of our results.

EA: how does BPCE International plan to expand in Africa?

JPL: We concluded that our banks are fully acknowledged in Africa. Their economic model is viable in the medium term. However, beyond this, we also concluded that to develop in Africa,



banks would benefit more from having an experienced partner, a partner which has a better knowledge of the social fabric, a good reputation and is much trusted. This to develop a more ambitious, competitive and conquering industrial project and be closer to customers.

After a close examination of the results of our strategic review, the supervisory board of BPCE International has decided to look for a financial and industrial partner that will help it expand the activities of these banks in Africa.

EA: which type of partner(s)?

JPL: We will review all our partnership options but, we will prefer a partner with whom we can have a

sustainable and quality relationship, as it is the pre-requisite for the successful economic development of the clients and collaborators of our banks: BTK in Tunisia, BICEC in Cameroon, BCI in Congo, BMOI in Madagascar and Banque des Mascareignes in Mauricia.

I know that in Africa, trust is built overtime so, we need a partner which has a thorough knowledge of the African environment and which has a development project for Africa. The development project of the banks with this partner must fall in line with that of most major banks: combine the quality of customer care with major investments in modern technologies, digital mainly, to better serve clients.

The financial system still sustain the adverse effects of commodity prices' fall, BEAC says

Chaired by Abbas Mahamat Tolli, statutory president and governor of the Bank of Central African States (BEAC), the Central African financial stability board held an ordinary session on November 21, 2017, at the bank's central department in Yaoundé.

At the end of this meeting, Abbas Mahamat Tolli signed a statement which stated that following an assessment of the risks and vulnera-

bilities weighing on the sub-region's financial system, the committee has realized that many challenges it faces are related to the evolution of the macroeconomic framework. *"The financial system still sustains the adverse effects of commodity prices' fall leading to the continuation of the financial difficulties for the various actors of the financial system, especially the member States"*, the statement reads.

The committee thus called all the actors to more caution; this more so since the sub-region suffers the fall in oil revenues which represent 25%-85% of the public revenues in the five countries which produce oil within the community of CEMAC. There is a good news though. The committee lauded the decision of the Conference of Heads of States of the CEMAC on October 31, 2017, to unify the sub-regional financial market.

BICEC's VISA cards now secure with the 3d secure mechanism Verified by VISA



The Banque internationale du Cameroun pour l'épargne et le crédit (BICEC), a subsidiary of the French group BPCE, announced that its visa cards is now secured with the 3D secure mechanism "Verified by VISA". BICEC explained that this mechanism is an international security protocol which secures online payments on merchant gateways

Verified by Visa. As a matter of fact, the bank explained that each time users are paying online with the visa cards, they will have to confirm their identities by providing a one-time code, sent to the phone numbers they communicated to BICEC after they fill the details usually required for online payments. *"This mechanism helps confirm that*

it is the real card owner making the transaction". The bank also explained that its customers can now purchase online with serenity. It should be reminded that banks and online merchants started implementing this 3D secure mechanism to prevent CNP (Card Not Present) frauds to avoid the unauthorized or fraudulent use of someone else's card.

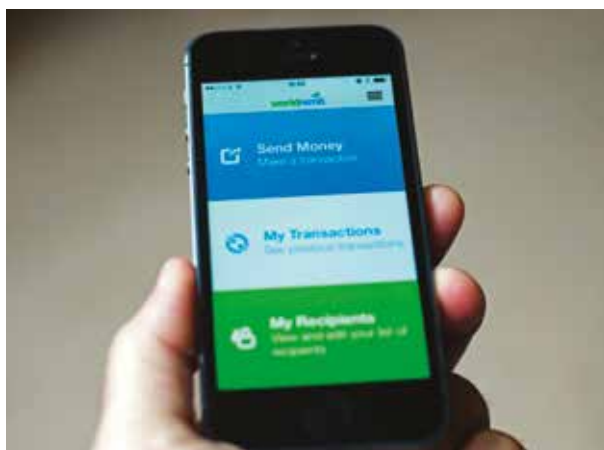
Ms. Mohamadou becomes the chairwoman of the board of director of NSIF

Paul Biya, Cameroon's president appointed Ms. Mohamadou (maiden name: Bilite Haman-Djoda) as the chairwoman of the board of directors of the National Social Insurance Fund (NSIF) through a decree on

November 13, 2017. She is replacing El Hadj Ousmane Mey Abba, a high ranking official, who died during the night of January 19 to 20, 2016. El Hadj Mey spent 25 years as the chairman of the board

of the NSIF. Before her appointment, Ms. Mohamadou was a project manager at the office of Cameroon's presidency.

Express Union and WorldRemit conquer six African countries



Authorized sources revealed that WorldRemit money transfers can be operated in the agencies of the Cameroonian operator Express Union in six African countries. These countries are namely: Gabon, Congo, Republic of Central Africa, DR Congo and Benin. By partnering with the British money transfer company some months ago, Express Union, which was only serving the Cameroonian market thus extends its services to six African countries to get some new breath of air. This is after it lost the Cameroonian money transfer market to mobile money services which are provided by mobile operators. At the same time, this partnership will allow the Cameroonian operator to compete with major brands like Western Union and MoneyGram.

This also a way for Express Union to position itself on the international money transfer market which is more open than the domestic transfer market where the firm has been struggling for about a year now, with the dynamization of Mobile money services of MTN and Orange Cameroon.

Festive season to stimulate the sector of industry during Q4 2017 – BEAC



The Bank of Central African States (Banque des Etats de l'Afrique centrale -Beac) think that there will be an improvement in Cameroon's industrial sector during the fourth quarter of 2017.

According to an analytical note published by the bank, the improvements, which will be spurred by a high market demand generally observed during the festive season (Christmas and new year), will be more noticeable in the food sector mainly in the beers, soft drinks and cooking oils segments.

The bank explained that the cement sector will also grow as construction will restart, during the upcoming dry season which will start in the second half of November. BEAC also said that the dry season will facilitate products' distribution especially in areas hardly accessible during the rainy season.

AGRIBUSINESS

After Oku honey and Penja Pepper, 15 other Cameroonian products to be labeled

On November 2, 2017, the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) has launched in Yaoundé the second phase of its programme for Extending the Protection of Geographical Indications. At this occasion, 15 Cameroonian products were presented for labelling.

Indeed, Cameroon wants to bring to light the peculiarities of products like the Kilichi of Ngadouéré, the avocados of Mbouda, shallots from Lékié, pineapples from Bafia, leather from Maroua, white yams from Mbé, onions from Garoua, the stones of Pouma... This, after it successfully labeled Penja pepper and Oku honey during the 1st edition of the program.

"We are now aware that labeling contributes to the protection of traditional knowledge and know-how while at the same time generating consistent income for producers", Denis Loukou Bohousou, managing director of OAPI, said to explain the program which is backed by the French Development Agency (AFD).



AFD distributed service vouchers to 77 Cameroonian agribusinesses

The French agency for development (Agence française de développement-AFD) recently distributed service vouchers to 77 Cameroonian small businesses in Yaoundé, Bafoussam and Bamenda. They are the first vouchers to allow the businesses access to non-financial services.

AFD explained that it identified the agribusinesses (Petites et moyennes entreprises agroalimentaires -PMEA) and competent service providers interested in working in rural zones thanks to a cartography of the first three targeted agricultural ponds. The agency also explained that it

chose rural zones because the consulting firms and other counseling structures are located in towns and, they are not necessarily acquainted with the challenges PMEAs experience.

"Service vouchers were distributed to render non-financial services more accessible to PMEAs. This partial subsidy is aimed at encouraging the businesses to use the services, to meet their needs in training and counseling in order to improve their performance", it said. Starting from 2018, the ten regions in Cameroon will benefit from this innovative scheme thanks to its integration by the SME's promotion

agency in the framework of the third Debt Reduction-Development Contract (C2D).

In 2016, AFD provided CFA145 billion to Cameroon. The agency backs projects of development of infrastructure which allow access to key services and help develop sustainable cities. It also backs projects developing family farming and businesses that create jobs.

Moreover, last year, the French development agency also supported more than 150 small businesses; it helped train more than 1,000 agropastoral entrepreneurs and supported 200,000 families.

Sodecoton to start cashew nut growing and processing



Cameroon's cotton company (Société de développement du coton-Sodecoton), the agribusiness which collaborates with some 250,000 farmers in Northern Cameroon, could become one of the pillars of the national development strategy for the cashew sector, actually being elaborated in the country.

"SODECOTON has been considering the cashew nut sector for long, in order to diversify the revenues of farmers with whom we already collaborate, producing crops such as corn, groundnut or sorghum. But, we need an alternative crop in whose downstream value chain we can also operate," Abdoulaye Abou Abba, director of agricultural production at SODECOTON, explained.

"We started with soya at first but, we were confronted with the fact that the oil derived from the crop failed to position itself in the market. Also, avian flu was a barrier to the commercialization of soybean meal. We therefore

turned to cashew," he continued.

In this regard, SODECOTON sent some staffs, for a study trip, to Benin and Côte d'Ivoire, two countries in which cashew does well.

Based on the knowledge that will be acquired in these two countries, and also various expertise sought by the cotton company, it does not exclude a possible launch of its very first cashew farms starting from 2018. SODECOTON actually plans to develop 50,000 hectares over a period of 10 years, mainly in the Far-North. This equals a quarter of areas currently dedicated to cotton farming in the country.

According to the director of agricultural production, SODECOTON also wants to *"take over the value chain with maximum processing"*, a segment which could allow the Cameroonian agribusiness industry to exceed Côte d'Ivoire's and Ghana's, where cashew processing is still low.

"We have made enough progress with

potential partner. We have a strategy, therefore the funds should follow," said Abdoulaye Abou Abba, optimistic.

Moreover, he maintains, cashew farming and the actual context in the Far North are both attractive for investors.

He explained that there is first, the will of investors to participate to the reconstruction of the economic infrastructures in this region which was devastated over the recent years by the Boko Haram terrorist group. Next, cashew trees apart from improving farmers' revenues and creating jobs, contribute to reforestation operations which are much valued by lenders.

Finally, cashew farming and processing give investors the opportunity to grow a parallel cash crop beside cotton, on which most of the three northern regions of Cameroon actually depend economically.

A chicken slaughterhouse will be opened at Dzeng in Central Cameroon within eight months

The Dzeng integrated chicken production and processing facility is completed at 85%; a delegation of the Italian chamber of commerce, which is the partner of the project, revealed this during a recent visit at the construction site.

According to the promoters of this production facility located in the central region of Cameroon, the facility and its components will be operational within eight months.

This project, whose foundation stone was laid by Louis Paul Motaze, the minister of economy, in May 2017, aims at producing 300,000 chicken meat, every year. These chicken will then be slaughtered, at a rate of 500 chicken per hour, and processed at the same plant, for which Cameroon's government promised to disburse about CFA2 billion.



Breeders in Adamaoua paid CFA1 billion as ransom in 2016 to kidnappers

In 2016 livestock farmers in Adamaoua, Cameroon's breeding hub, paid a global ransom of CFA1 billion to have their relatives freed by kidnappers.

The figure was disclosed by Moussa Yaya, the regional delegate of the ministry of agriculture, fishery and animal husbandry during a recent crisis meeting on the threat affecting the breeding sector in this part of the

country.

As a matter of fact, kidnappers scour rural areas in Adamaoua, targeting mainly major breeders and kidnapping their relatives only to release them if the ransom they demand is paid.

Often, the victims comply without informing the special unit of Cameroon defense forces deployed in this part of the country to combat organized

crime. They pay by selling their herds at cheap prices.

So, during the meeting mentioned earlier, Kildadi Taguiéké Boukar, governor of Adamaoua, advised the citizens that instead of paying the ransoms, a choice that just makes the kidnappers hungrier, they must collaborate with the defense forces.

Fearing an increase in bread's price, government abandons a provision to impose taxes on durum imports

Finally, the provision, of the 2018 finance act, under which the government planned to restore the 5% tax on durum imports, as of January 2018, will no more be part of the bill. The latter was just submitted to parliamentarians for examination and adoption.

This provision was removed under instructions from Cameroon's president. This is at least what a mail sent by Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh, general secretary at the presidency, sent to his counterpart at the office of the prime minister on November 20, 2017, suggests. In the mail, Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh conveyed the *"presidential directives"*.

According to a tax expert, the government's change of mind is a clever move to avoid populations' discontent, since elections are approaching (they are to be held in 2018).

Truly, wheat which is abundantly imported by Cameroon since the closure of Sodéblé, is used to produce bread and many other pastries. The first being a staple food Cameroonians, has always being a sensitive topic in the country as its prices shifts have always created tensions between the government and



consumers' associations in the past. It is obvious that an increase in the price of imported wheat would have inevitably impacted the bread's price or weight in bakeries. This situation

would have exposed Cameroon to risks of social unrest in a context already marked by the constant reduction of the food basket.

SCTB eyes 30% of the local flour market

The Cameroonian wheat processing company, Société camerounaise de transformation de blé (SCTB), which holds only 9.5% of the local flour market aims to reinforce its position in this market in the coming years. In fact, the company intends to increase its share in this market to 30% in the medium term and become a key actor in Cameroon's milling

industry. To this end, the firm's management relies on new investments, credible sources revealed. One of such investments is the launch of a second mill which has a processing capacity of 240 tons per day (against 360 tons for the first mill). The infrastructure was developed with a financing of about CFA10 billion secured from a pool of

lenders led by the Development Bank of Central African States (BDEAC). In this regard, the BDEAC itself contributed CFA5.6 billion while Société Générale Cameroun and BICEC, the local subsidiary of the French Banque Populaire, contributed CFA2.18 billion each.

Kidnappers undermine the breeding sector in Adamaoua just like Boko Haram in the Far-North region



Moussa Yaya, regional delegate of the Cameroonian Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries in Adamaoua, a northern region of Cameroon which is the country's breeding hub said that "there is hardly a day without cattle being stolen in Adamaoua". The official explained during an

interview with the l'œil du Sahel, a regional paper published thrice a week, that the surge of kidnapping for ransom, the farmers are victims of in Adamaoua, has destroyed the breeding sector.

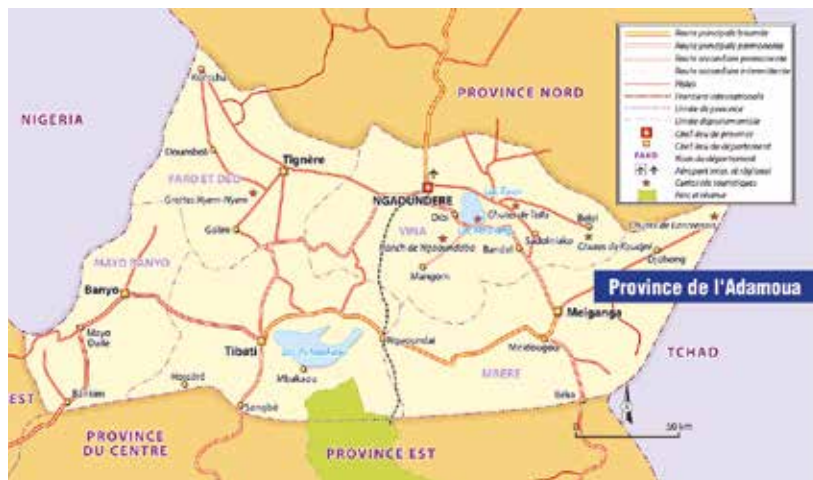
Indeed, he said that "the massive exodus of herdsmen from Vina district (Louga, Horé Djaol...) to Mayo-

Banyo or Mayo-Rey in the north, where kidnappings are less frequent and the ransoms asked lower, is recurrent. The disbanding of these herdsmen and their massive exodus, to towns, spurred by insecurity have also boosted cattle theft because there is no one to guard the animals".

Moussa Yaya explained that such condition led to the decrease in beef prices. "Bovines have lost around 40% of their selling price. The Offers are higher than the demands. This can be explained by the fact that livestock markets are now filled with bovines from Central Africa, the Far-North and North regions of Cameroon, and, also, by herdsmen selling their cattle by the dozen in order to pay the ransoms", he said.

CFA126 million granted to farmers in Adamaoua

Official sources revealed that the scheme to enhance the competitiveness of family-run farms (Programme d'amélioration de la compétitivité des exploitations familiales agropastorales- ACEFA) delivered checks to 45 farmers organizations in Adamaoua in South-Cameroon. The checks amount to CFA126 million. The facility falls within the framework of the 2nd phase of ACEFA which aims to support projects by farmers in order to enhance their productivity and revenues. The program is financed with funds from C2D which is the result of the cancellation of bilateral debt owed to France. This cancellation took place after Cameroon reach the completion point of the Highly Indebted



Poor Countries (HIPC) in 2006. As a matter of fact, HIPC was initiated in 1996 by IMF to relieve the

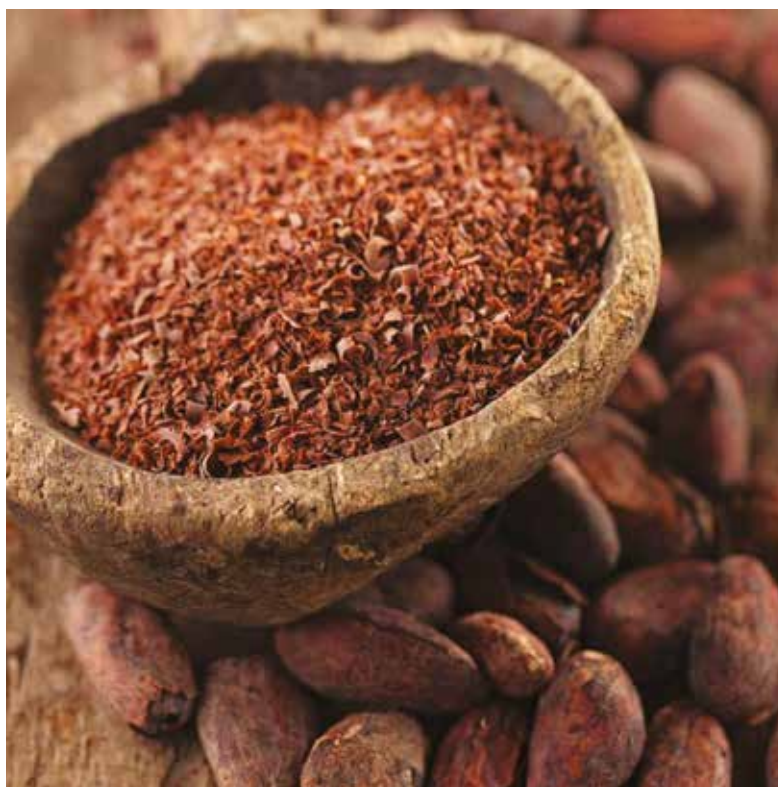
multilateral and bilateral debts of some developing countries.

22,400 tons of Grade 1 cocoa bought during the 2016-2017 campaign were rejected at port

The cocoa and coffee trade association revealed in its report on the year 2017 that during the 2016-2017 cocoa season, 22,400 tons of Grade 1 cocoa were bought but none was successfully exported.

"This means that roughly 22,400 tons of cocoa was produced and bought as G1 in farms but, they could not be exported", the trade association wrote. It also added that "this situation is worrying all of the actors of the sector in times when cocoa quality is presented as the antidote against the fall in prices and is the main challenge to face during the future cocoa campaigns".

Cameroon sold 231,642 tons of cocoa during the 2016-2017 campaign; this is 37,852 tons less than the quantity sold during the previous campaign or, 14% decrease. At the same time, the stock at the end of the 2016-2017 campaign is 9,249 tons which represent an increase by 1,255 tons compared to the stock at the end of campaign 2015-2016 which was 7,994 tons. Also, during the campaign 2016-2017, 3,400 tons of cocoa "Good fermented" were exported.



Maïscam expands its farms by 1000 hectares to capitalize on the high demands for cereals

Internal sources at *Maïserie du Cameroun (Maïscam)*, revealed that this year, Maïscam, one of the largest agribusinesses in Southern Cameroons, expanded its corn farms from 1500 hectares to 2500 hectares. Thanks to the corn harvested from these areas, the company, based in Ngaoundéré, in Adamaoua region, was able to deliver, every day, an average of 1200 tons of grits (to breweries in the country), flour and middlings (essentially delivered to World Food Program).

A manager of this company founded by the billionaire Abbo Ousmanou explained that by expanding its farms, Maïscam is capitalizing on the high demands of cereals, observed since last year, in Southern Cameroons where cereals such as corn, sorghum, millet, and rice are the staple food of the citizens in these regions.

As a matter of fact, with the huge influx of Nigerian and Central African refugees, estimated at 500,000 people, in the south, the orders of cereals

by the World Food Program (WFP) have literally exploded. Indeed, this United Nations' institution is responsible for the feeding of these refugees. These ever-increasing demands now add to the fact that cereal production has been decreasing for at least 3 years now due, not only to low rainfall but also, and most importantly due to farmers deserting their farms to flee from the exactions of Boko Haram, particularly in the Far-North.

At October 2017, banana exports plummeted more than 20,600 tons due to bad weather conditions

At October 31, 2017, Cameroon's banana producers exported 223,012 tons of banana, against 243,681 tons exported by the same date last year, official sources revealed.

This represents a decrease of more than 20,600 tons which producers attributed to the drop in national production also resulting from bad weather conditions.

Société des plantations du Haut Penja (Php) remains the leading banana exporter with 131,850 tons exported at the end of last October, down more than 9,000 tons compared to 2016.

Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), the public agri-business, with 81,636 tons exported, experienced a 12,000 tons decrease.

However, the market's Tom



Thumb, Boh Plantations's exports have increased over the reference period. Indeed, from 9,078 tons of banana exported on October 31, 2016, its exports have increased to 9,526 tons in 2017.

In view of the current exported volumes, producers will not be able to meet the 300,000 tons

projected for this year, according to Cameroon's banana producers' association (Association bananière du Cameroun-Assobacam) said.

It should be reminded that Cameroon's third most exported product is banana. It comes after oil which represents 40% of the exports and raw log and sawn timber (15%).

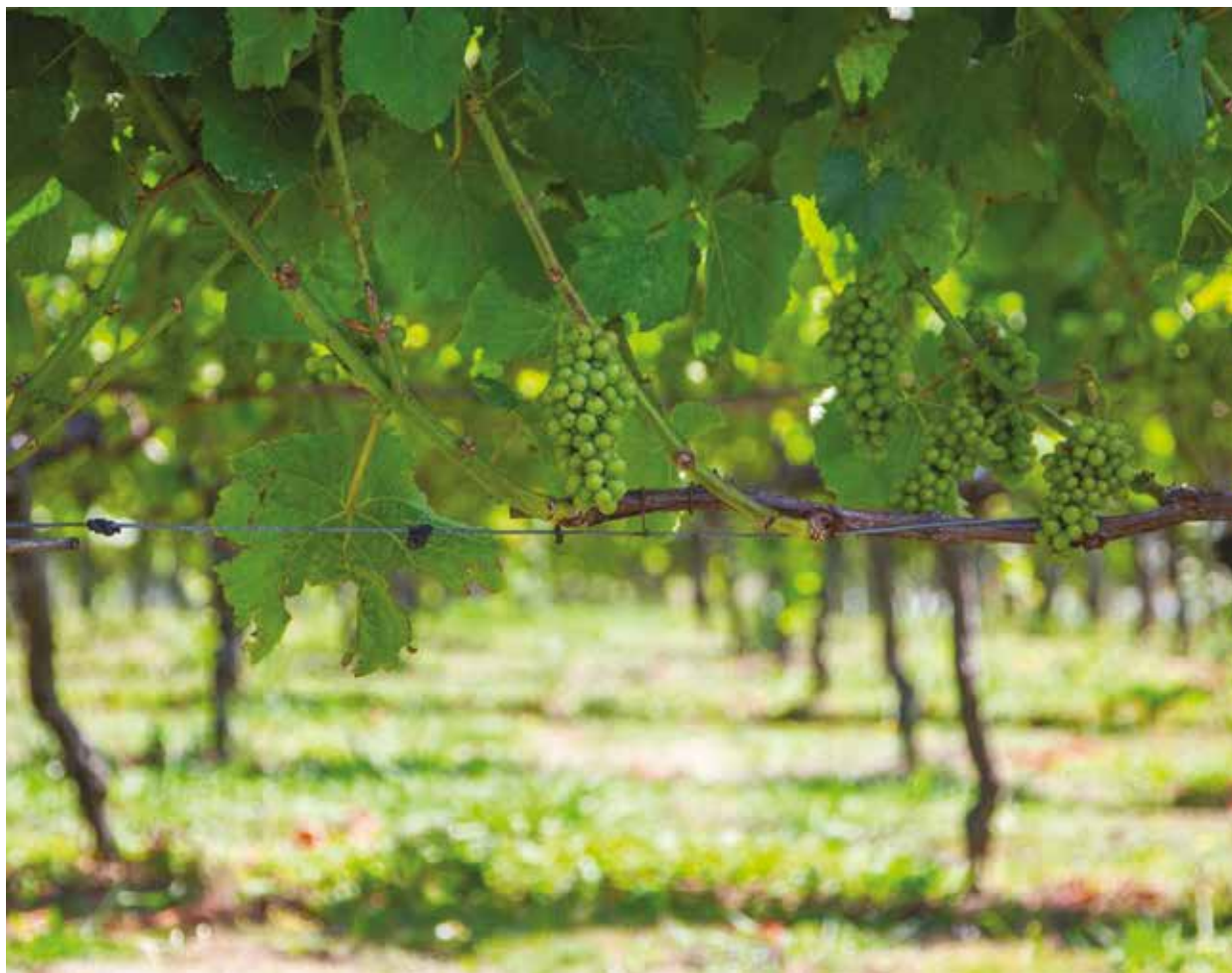
Sodecoton aims to produce 260 000 tons of cotton during 2017-2018 cotton season

SODECOTON, Cameroon's cotton development company which is the flagship of agribusiness in the three northern regions of the country, eyes a production of 260,000 tons of cotton during the 2017-2018 season. This was disclosed by sources within the company itself. This forecast is higher than the 240,200 tons produced during the previous season. It should allow SODECOTON to generate a turnover of about CFA140 billion, up CFA20 billion compared to the past season.

SODECOTON collaborates with about 250,000 producers in the northern region and employs close to 5,000 permanent and seasonal employees.



After building a CFA12bn wine bottling plant in Cameroon, BVS wishes to start viticulture in the country



On December 7, 2017, Ernest Gwaboubou, the Cameroon's minister of industry, inaugurated a wine bottling plant in Douala. The project which cost CFA12 billion was developed by société Boissons, vins et spiritueux (BVS).

The unit which is the result of the 2013 private investment incentive act, granting investors 5 to 10 years tax exonerations, will produce about 10 million liters of wines and liquor, every year, for the central African market.

According to our sources, BVS, under

its development scheme, plans to start producing fruit juice but also develop viticulture in Cameroon in order to have the raw material needed to produce wine locally. Actually, viticulture is not much practiced in Cameroon so far. However, "Viticulture en région tropicale pour la production de raisin de table : aspects et possibilités", a document published in the 70's by CIRAD, the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development, revealed that before Cameroon's independence, private

vineyards have existed in localities such as Babadjou (in the West), Nanga Eboko, Ntui (in the Central region) and Mutengene (in the South West).

Referring to Cameroon's climate, the document suggests that some hybrid vine varieties from South America can be grown around Ngaoundéré, and in Bamenda. However, the results will not be impressive, CIRAD's researchers explained in the document.

Atlantic cocoa to process 15,000 tons of cocoa per year

According to documents from Cameroon's investment promotion agency, Atlantic Cocoa Corporation, subsidiary of the Australian group Atlantic, will build a processing unit to process 15,000 tons of cocoa per year. As a matter of fact, Atlantic launched, on March 14, 2016, a bid for a license to build its subsidiary in the Kribi economic zone.

Atlantic Cocoa Corporation received its license at the same time as other firms, namely the Cameroonians Fapam Industry SA, Agro Ressources Cameroon SA and Quantum Cocoa SA. Even though the promotion agency did not give any details about the volumes to be processed, available information indicates that these firms will mainly focus of processing.



In fact, volumes to be processed by FAPAM are already known (5,000 tons) and, the remaining two companies should thus process over 5,000 tons each.

"With the new royalty fee which is CFA15 per kilogram of cocoa beans

processed and the regular revision of the custom/imports incentives, the cocoa processing sector will undoubtedly change and will impact the whole cocoa industry in the country", the cocoa trade association said.

A palm oil processing unit was inaugurated in the Central region

Ernest Ngwaboubou, the Cameroonian minister of mines, industry and technological development, just inaugurated a palm oil processing unit in Sombo, a district in Central Cameroon.

The minister explained that the processing unit, with a production capacity of two tons per hour, is the result of a program to promote the cultivation and processing of palm oil in Central and West Africa and, it cost around CFA1 billion.

He then revealed that, in the framework of this program, three other processing units will be built in the English speaking regions of the country.



ENERGY

CFA10 billion to fund SMEs specialized in renewable energies

The French development agency (Agence française de développement -AFD) and SCB Cameroon, subsidiary of the Moroccan banking group Attijariwafa Bank, just launched a CFA10 billion credit line in order to finance Cameroonian SMEs initiating renewable energy projects.

According to the banks, the loan will be granted to SMEs that meet the criteria with very competitive interest rates. They revealed that they have already identified some interesting projects.

The program should help increase the proportion of power generated through renewables in Cameroon's energy mix. As a matter of fact, wind, solar and biomass energies officially represent 1% of this mix.



AfDB grants EUR150 million loans to Cameroon for the construction of Nachtigal dam

The board of directors of the African development bank (AfDB) through its section in charge of the private sector has approved a senior loan of EUR150 million to finance the construction of the Nachtigal dam (whose generating capacity is 400MW) in Cameroon. The loan was approved on November 28, 2017, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

According to AfDB, this *"intervention responds to the urgent need to build additional production capacity that would make a major impact in accelerating the country development"*.

Moreover, this financing complements the one already consented in favor of Cameroon's electricity sector (Eneo, Kribi, Dibamba, Lom Pangar and Preretd projects which are projects to strengthen and extend electricity transmission networks). It also demonstrates AfDB's strong commitment to Cameroon's energy sector.

Nachtigal will come online in 2022, increasing the country's power output by 30% and also help lower the cost of electricity in the long term. This approval falls in line with the

bank's initiatives to promote renewable energies whose share in power mix increased from 14% between 2007 and 2011 to 70% between 2012 and 2017.

The 420 MW hydroelectric power plant, jointly designed and developed by Cameroon, EDF International-Electricité de France, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), is an essential component of Cameroon's Power Development National Plan and as such was recognized as a key priority for the country.

Tower Resources awards contract to reprocess the 3D seismic data of Thali block

The British oil and gas company Tower Resources which focuses on African markets said that it awarded DMT Petrologic GmbH & Co a contract to reprocess the 3D seismic data of Thali block in Rio del Rey. The contract covers an area of 500 square meters which encompasses the three discovery wells on Thali block and additional key wells. It was attributed to DMT Petrologist GmbH & Co following a tender to which took part six international firms. Tower resources explained in a state-

ment that the reprocessing work will provide higher resolution imaging and help obtain additional information to upgrade the existing prospect inventory on the Thali block. The work is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2018 at a cost in line with the original expectations. It should be noted the data reprocessing is one of the Cameroonian government's requirements for an extension of Tower Resources license on Thali. Drilling at the site are expected to commence in 2018.

"This work will allow us to make a more detailed evaluation of the many prospects on the Thali block, including the existing discoveries at Njonji and Rumpi. We expect to crystallize greater confidence in the volumetric estimates of existing leads and prospects as well as identifying new ones. This will form the basis for our drilling plans (...) We look forward to working with DMT Petrologic and will update shareholders as the work proceeds", Jeremy Asher, Chairman & CEO of Tower resources said.

LNG carrier Hilli Episeyo arrives at Kribi



The LNG carrier Hilli Episeyo which left Keppel Shipyard in Singapore on October 12, 2017, accosted at Kribi port in South Cameroon.

The information was revealed by Golar LNG, a partner of the French group PERENCO and of Cameroon oil company SNH (the State's secular arm in charge of oil and gas exploration) on Cameroon's first natural gas liquefaction project. Credible sources revealed that the floating unit will start operating once a processing unit is built near Kribi.

Hilli Episeyo whose processing capacity is 1.2million tons of gas per year will help produce natural liquefied gas in Cameroon while awaiting the construction of a foot-plant near the deep-water port which is yet to operate.

The floating unit which is the result of an investment of about CFA700 billion of Golar LNG will also produce 30,000 tons of domestic gas every year and 5,000 barrels of condensate every day.

ENEO demands about CFA100 billion from the government

Good sources revealed that Cameroon owes Energy of Cameroon (ENEO), the country's power utility, around CFA100 billion.

This debt comprises the bill for power consumed by the State as well as tariff-related losses, which have accumulated over the years

(since 2012, tariffs are fixed, while under the concession agreement, they must be readjusted every year, depending on investments made by the concessionaire.

In January 2017, to avoid an increase of its debt to ENEO, Cameroon's government signed a receivables

buy-back agreement with Société Générale which pay CFA1.7 billion every month to the electricity company as Cameroon's monthly power bill which, according to Basile Atangana Kouna the minister of energy and water, amounts overall to CFA2.9 billion.

Niger to restart talks to convey its oil through the Chado-Cameroonian pipeline in 2018



In 2018, Niger's authorities will restart talks for the implementation of the project to convey the country's crude through the Chado-Cameroonian pipeline. This was disclosed on November 1, 2017, by Hassoumi Massaoudou, Niger's minister of finance.

However, according to the official, another option is being considered. This one consists in conveying the crude to the port of Cotonou, Benin. This is as the latter is "*less exposed*" than Cameroon to the threat of Boko Haram, the Nigerian terrorist group which causes "*insecurity to rise*" in the Lake Chad area.

Though safer, it appears that this alternative is much more costly, our sources indicated. Indeed, they said that Niger would have to double its investment in the project as it would need not only to build a pipeline in its territory, but also another one in Benin. Quite unprofitable considering that the Chado-Cameroonian pipeline already exists. Nevertheless, if Niger's government still decides to drop the Chad-Cameroon pipeline option, it would mean that Boko Haram would have deprived Cameroon of substantial financial revenues. Truly, oil exported from Niger via the Chad-Cameroon infrastructure is subjected to a transit fee paid to into the Cameroonian public treasury. This fee which now stands at CFA618/barrel, was increased on October 29, 2013, from CFA195.

South Korea delivers a renewable energies development's master plan to Cameroon

Designed since 2013 by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the master plan for the development of renewable energies was officially delivered to Cameroon on December 7, 2017, in Yaoundé.

Based on researches conducted at eleven sites in the Central, Eastern, North Western, South Western and Southern regions, the plan reveals that Cameroon has the potential to triple its power generating capacity by 2030. A claim backed by Yeon Je Ho, manager of KOICA in Cameroon.

Indeed, Cameroon is the second country with the greatest hydroelectric potential in Africa after the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, this country whose wind, solar and biomass energies represent barely 1% of its energy mix, barely has 1,300 MW installed.



At October 31, 2017, natural gas output grew by 15.45% to 334.96 mln m³

At October 31, 2017, the total volume of natural gas produced in Cameroon was 334.96 mln cubic meters, according to the country's Oil and Gas Company (Société nationale des hydrocarbures-SNH). This figure represents a 15.45% increase compared to the volume produced by the same date last year. According to forecasts, the volume of gas to be produced in 2017 is 445.13 million cubic meters. SNH explained that this increase is mainly due to the rise in gas consumption of Kribi's thermal power-

er. The company said that it supplied 256.67 million m³ to the plant, for 0.84 million m³ consumed every day. *"This volume, which is far above the contractual obligation to receive 0.79 million cubic meters every day, allows the generation of 140 megawatts, or 64.81% of the plant's capacity"*, SNH said.

The company expects Cameroon's gas sector to perform well in the short term due to the completion works related to the LNG carrier Hilli Episeyo, in the framework of a

project to set and operate a floating plant for the liquefaction of natural gas. The latter was baptized *"Floating LNG"*.

Hilli Episeyo, which has an annual production capacity of 30,000 tons of domestic gas and can produce 5,000 barrels of condensate per day, accosted in Cameroon's waters on November 20, 2017. It is actually anchored 20 kilometers from Kribi, the seaside town.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Japoma stadium in Douala completed at 25%

The managers of the Turkish company Yenigün, selected to build the Japoma stadium, in Douala, Cameroon, explained that the stadium is completed at 25%. Indeed, the stadium will be used for the AFCON 2019, which is to be hosted by Cameroon.

According to Yenigün, the construction works are progressing according to the calendar which plans for the stadium to be delivered in September 2018. The company thinks that it can meet the deadline since about 70% of the upper section will be made of

prefabricated materials imported from Turkey.

The 50,000 seat stadium will also host two training grounds with stands, a gymnasium covered by 2 000 seats, an eight-lane Olympic sized swimming pool with 1000 seats, etc.

Roland Berger replaces PricewaterhouseCoopers to audit AFCON 2019 infrastructures

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has chosen the audit firm Roland Berger to replace PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) which was initially commissioned to conduct an assessment of the infrastructures of AFCON 2019 that Cameroon will host. Indeed, PwC renounced to the audit in August 2017.

This audit mission will be haunted by the comments of Ahmad Ahmad, the acting chairman of CAF, who said in August 2017, during a visit in Burkina Faso, that Cameroon was not ready to host the biggest football event in Africa.

At the time, his comments generated a wave of protests in Cameroon who interpreted them as a will to trust the organization of AFCON 2019 to Morocco instead of Cameroon; this as a revenge for his country's suspension as the host of an Africa U-20 Cup of Nations when Issa Hayatou, a Cameroonian, was chairing the executive committee of CAF.



35 Turkish firms displayed building materials in Douala

The Turkish international fair for construction and building materials was held from November 30 to December 3, 2017, at Yaoundé's Convention Centre. Apart from the materials displayed by the 35 Turkish companies which took part to the event, visitors also discovered the craftsmanship

of Cameroonian, Italian, Indian and Saudi companies.

For four days, the exhibitors which established business contacts during the fair exhibited their respective expertise in flooring, roofing, lighting, furnishing, industrial and concrete construction, casing...

The international Turkish trade fair was organized in a context of big infrastructure works in Cameroon. These fall under the greater achievements program, on which the president's term, started in 2011, was based.

To reduce road maintenance costs, innovative products will be used as of 2018

Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, the Cameroonian minister of public works announced to the country's parliamentarians that innovative products will be used for road maintenance in the country as of 2018. He said this while defending his ministry's budget plan for 2018. Indeed, on April 19, 2016, Philémon Yang, Cameroon's prime minister published a decree *"bringing into full effect the tender call standard for the procurement of contracts for road maintenance and renovation with innovative products or not"*.

This decree allowed for the use of five new products to maintain earth roads in the country, in order to reduce road maintenance costs and address the shortage of laterite quarries.

These products are Con-Aid/CBR Plus, made in South Africa; Rocamix made by the Chinese firm Beijing Medicines & Health products IMP; System Consolid's products made by a Spanish firm; Pavement Composite Technology fabricated in the USA by Integrated Traffic System Inc.; and Carboncor, a South African product used for cold paving.

According to road experts, for 5 years, maintenance will not be needed for earth roads serviced with such products.



Government in talks with commercial banks over the construction of 3200 social houses (second phase)

On December 4, 2017, Jean Claude Mbwentchou, Cameroon's minister of housing (MINHDU) received Tang Lezhen, General manager of China Shenyang International Economic & Technical Cooperation Corporation Limited (CSYIC), the company commissioned to build 3,200 social houses in Cameroon.

The Chinese official said 1,520 houses will be sold in 2018. About the second phase of the project

for the 3,200 houses (which could increase to 3,400 according to the MINHDU), Tang Lezhen explained that the technical details are already discussed with the project manager and, it will focus on three house types: high-standing, medium-standard and social housing units.

"Jean Claude Mbwentchou explained that because Eximbank China which funded the first phase does not want to finance the second, talks are ongoing

with commercial banks in this regard".

However, he disclosed neither the commercial banks involved nor the amount sought by government. Let it be recalled that it was on May 18, 2016, that Jean-Claude Mbwentchou signed a partnership agreement for the construction of 3,200 social houses in Cameroon with the managers of Shenyang.

Sika launches a factory to produce concrete additives



Official sources revealed that SIKA, a Swiss firm specialized in the production of chemical for waterproofing, sealing, soundproofing, strengthening and protecting structures, has just inaugurated a production unit in Cameroon.

The company explained that through the construction of this new plant, it aims to supply its materials to builders of local port and rail infrastructures with no need to import them from subsidiaries abroad before selling those materials through its

representative office installed in Cameroon in 2016.

This launch of SIKA in Cameroon, after the launch of the plants in Angola, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, is part of the Swiss company's expansion plan in Africa.

Chinese consortium selects French firm Suez to construct a water production plant



The French group Suez just revealed that it will build a water production plant, on Sanaga River in central Cameroon, on behalf of the Chinese consortium of Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) and China National Machinery Industry Corporation (SINOMACH). The French group explains that it will specifically handle *“the processing plant’s engineering studies, the supply of equipment, installation’s supervision, the plant’s commissioning”,* and the Cameroonian staff’s training.

“We are proud of this partnership with Cameroon’s authorities, Sinomach-Cmec and Eximbank of China, to provide the most suitable technical and financial solutions in response

to Yaoundé’s populations’ needs for drinking water. This project is a significant reference for the group in Africa...” Marie-Ange Debon, the group’s general assistant manager in charge of the international division, said.

Under the outsourcing contract Suez signed with the Chinese consortium SINOMACH-CMEC, the French group will collect €43 million (a little more than CFA28 billion) for its services and construction works will last 36 months.

The drinking water production plant which is funded by Eximbank of China, will be able to process 300,000 m³ per day.

This capacity is thrice that of the Akomnyada plant (also built by

Suez) which is, for the time being, the biggest infrastructure supplying Yaoundé with clean water.

Since 2012, when Cameroon launched a vast program of infrastructures, China has become the leading foreign investor in this Central African country, outshining French companies.

However, on October 2016, at the end of a meeting with Cameroon’s minister for energy and water, Gilles Thibault, French ambassador to Cameroon, indicated that *“France intends to be more present than it has been in the past in the construction of energy and hydraulic infrastructures”,* in Cameroon.

TRANSPORTATION

CAMAIR-CO reduced its monthly deficit from CFA2 billion to CFA62 million in a year

Ernest Dikoum, managing director of CAMAIR-CO, announced, during a press conference, held on November

24, in Yaoundé, that between August 2016 and July 2017, the Cameroonian airline company has reduced its

monthly deficit by CFA1.9 billion. *"Last year, in August 2016, when we were taking charge of the company, its operating deficit was around CFA2 billion. Once we canceled the flights to Paris and some other destinations, the deficit decreased to CFA840 million in January 2017. Thanks to cost controls and corporate governance, this deficit decreased to CFA62 million in July 2017,"* Ernest Dikoum said.

He also explained that the company would have got positive returns if not for the CFA100 million accumulated every month for airplane's engine rental. The managing director of CAMAIR-CO said that the company is now able to measure its performance every week.

Ernest Dikoum revealed that to reduce the deficit, CAMAIR-Co reduced its directorates from eleven to six. The company also reduced the number of employees from 734, in August 2016, to 595. Now they have five airplanes. *"We have a 767-300 (le Dja), two new generation 737-700 and two MA-60,"* Dikoum said.



Ethiopian Airlines increased the frequency of its flights to Cameroon and Gabon

Since November 3, 2017, Ethiopian Airlines flies to the capitals of Gabon and Cameroon six days a week against five in the past, official sources revealed. The Ethiopian carrier indeed stops at the Yaoundé and Libreville airports every day, except Sunday.

These destinations will be served the company's Dreamliner, which offers the peculiarity of combining comfort and space optimization for travelers and cargo alike. By increasing the frequency of its flights to Cameroon, Ethiopian airlines want to take advantage of the

dynamism observed in the country's air transport activity. Indeed, according to figures revealed by Cameroon's aviation authority, air freight advanced by 76% in 2016 while the number of travelers carried grew by 26% in this market still controlled by Air France.

Camair-Co's monthly revenues have tripled within a year to reach CFA1.2 billion

Ernest Dikoum, managing director of the Cameroonian airline company Camair-CO, revealed, during a meeting of the airline company's clients in Bafoussam, that their monthly revenues have reached CFA1.2 billion. A year ago, the same company's monthly revenues were CFA400 million.

This improvement is the result of a recovery plan implemented by the new executive team, chosen at the end of a meeting of the executive board on

August 22, 2016 when the company was going through troubled times. The recovery plan, recommended by the American firm Boeing, consists in expanding the fleet and canceling unprofitable destinations. This led the Cameroonian public airline company to limit its destinations to the national territory at first.

In this regard, the airports of Bafoussam and Bamenda were reopened after the airports of Douala, Yaoundé and those of the three cap-

itals in Southern Cameroon. Shortly, Bertoua airport in East Cameroon will also be opened.

Once it covered 8 out of the 10 regions of Cameroon, Camair-Co went to conquer African markets on October 27, 2017, by resuming its flights to Libreville. In December, the company will start flying to Bangui, Dakar, and Abidjan. It should be reminded that the frequency of domestic flights has also increased from 70 flights per week to 100.

Security level at three airports improved between 2015 and 2017



Aéroports du Cameroun (ADC), the company in charge of the management of Cameroon's airport infrastructures informed that the reinforcement of security measures started in 2015 in three airports (Yaoundé-Nsimalen, Douala and Garoua), has started to yield results. In this regard, the company mentioned that the security level passed from 54% in 2015 to 66.88% in 2017.

ADC attributes the improvements to recommendations from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Indeed, in 2015, ICAO audited the country's airports in order to improve the security level and increase traffic flow. For this purpose, it focused on the airports of Yaoundé-Nsimalen, Douala, and Garoua. Based on the recommendations,

Cameroon renovated the video surveillance system at Yaoundé-Nsimalen airport; at Garoua airport, it resolved water leakage and power outage problems and, renovated aeronautical pavements in Douala. Moreover, it recruited 158 extra workers to carry out the security measures.

MINES

Two dead during a conflict between Chinese and Cameroonians at a mining site in East Cameroon

Local sources revealed that the conflicts which usually oppose local and Chinese miners at mining sites in East Cameroon degenerated recently. The sources indicated that last week,

there was an argument between a Chinese miner and his Cameroonian peer in Bétaré Oya, an area where intense mining activities are conducted. During the argument, the

Cameroonian was killed; locals, in retaliation, burned the Chinese alive. Our sources revealed that the citizens in the area were against the Chinese exploiting "their" mining site.

One thousand artisanal gold miners stormed the four gold mines discovered at Eséka



Cameroon's national television announced that foreign and local gold miners have been storming Eséka, a district in central Cameroon since three months. This is due to the discovery of four gold mines in the locality. Local sources estimated that one thousand artisanal miners invaded the mines. Due to this unregulated mining, local authorities took some measures to prohibit artisanal mining and encourage the public to form Common Initiative Groups for an efficient mining.

Metalicon suspended for 6 months due to contractual terms' infringement



Last September, Ernest Ngwaboubou, Cameroon's minister of mines, industry and technological development decided to suspend the activities of the mining firm Metalicon for 6 months.

Official sources revealed that the mining company did not respect its contractual terms. For instance, it did not close the pits it dug during its exploration activities at Kambélé in East Cameroon. This negligence might have led to the death by drowning of a young miner, on September 3. This is not the first incident that occurred in this mining community. In June 2016, four people, including a baby and its mother, drowned in artisanal mines left uncovered after mining operations.

Apart from not rehabilitating their artisanal mines, the operators are also known for hiding the real volumes of ore they extract, to reduce the dividends paid to the State as ad valorem tax, many official reports revealed.

ITC & TELECOM

Nexttel exceeds 4 million subscribers in 3 years

VIETTEL, the Vietnamese telecommunication operator which operates in Cameroon under the name Nexttel since September 2014, revealed in an official report that it had reached a customer pool of 4.2 million subscribers last October 2017.

Nexttel, which was the first operator to be granted a 3G broadband license in Cameroon but was, however, unable to use it between 2012 and 2014, is quite close to the goal of 5 million subscribers it aims to reach

by the end of 2017, leveraging on 4G broadband which is still awaited.

Thanks to the expansion of Nexttel in Cameroon, the country has become Viettel's leading market in Africa during the first semester of 2016, two years after it started operating in the country. The operator is the third largest in Cameroon.

According to Ovum, a British firm specialized in strategic analysis in the telecommunication industry, Nexttel is the telecom operator with

the highest potential to grow till 2021.

Indeed, according to the British analyst, between February 2017 and December 2021, Nexttel will win 3.4% of Cameroon's telecommunication market, bringing its total market share to 15% over the period. Meanwhile Orange Cameroon and MTN will respectively hold 37% (+2.3%) and 44.6% of the same market over the period reviewed.

The MVMO YooMee wishes to rise from the ashes of Vodafone Cameroon

Since about two months now, Vodafone Cameroon's customers were forced to drop their internet modems after the internet provider stopped its activities in Cameroon following the withdrawal of its license by the telecom regulator on September 14, 2017.

They can now re-use these modems by joining YooMee, an internet provider which recently became a mobile virtual network operator, as its 4G sim cards are compatible with Vodafone's modems.

This is at least what a message sent by YooMee to Vodafone's ex-subscribers led to believe. This message invited the ex-subscribers of Vodafone to buy the new operator's sim cards in order to be able to use their modems. In short, with this offer, YooMee allows Vodafone Cameroon's ex-subscribers to capitalize on their investments but, it also eyes the



subscribers Vodafone Cameroon had before it stopped operation (about 2 million people). Concerning the compatibility, it can

be explained by the fact that both operators used to exploit the network of CAMTEL, Cameroon's incumbent telecommunication operator.

About half of Nexttel subscribers are in the north while its revenues in the coastal and central regions are the highest



According to official reports released by Nexttel, subsidiary of the Vietnamese group VIETTEL in Cameroon, the telecommunication firm reached 4.2 million subscribers in October 2017. The figures from the reports revealed that more than 1.9 million subscribers, about half of the company's subscribers, are located in the three northern regions of Cameroon: the North, the Far-

North, and Adamaoua. 792,988 subscribers are in the Far-North, while 725,083 are in the north and 456,866 in Adamaoua. Though the number of subscribers in each of the northern regions is above the number of subscribers in the coastal region, which is 392,675, the coastal and central regions were the top two markets which generated more revenues by October 29, 2017. Indeed, these two markets generated

more than CFA1.5 billion (around 40% of the company's revenues estimated at CFA4 billion in October 2017). This is officially explained by the fact that Douala and Yaoundé, two towns located respectively in the coastal and central regions of Cameroon, represent 80% of the country's telecommunication market.

About CFA10 billion of penalties for the four telecommunication operators

At the end of August 2017, Cameroon's telecommunication regulatory agency (Agence de régulation des télécommunications du Cameroun -ART) notified the four telecommunication operators (MTN, Orange, Nexttel, and CAMTEL) of sanctions incurred following their violation of the legislation governing subscribers' identification and the

required radio frequency.

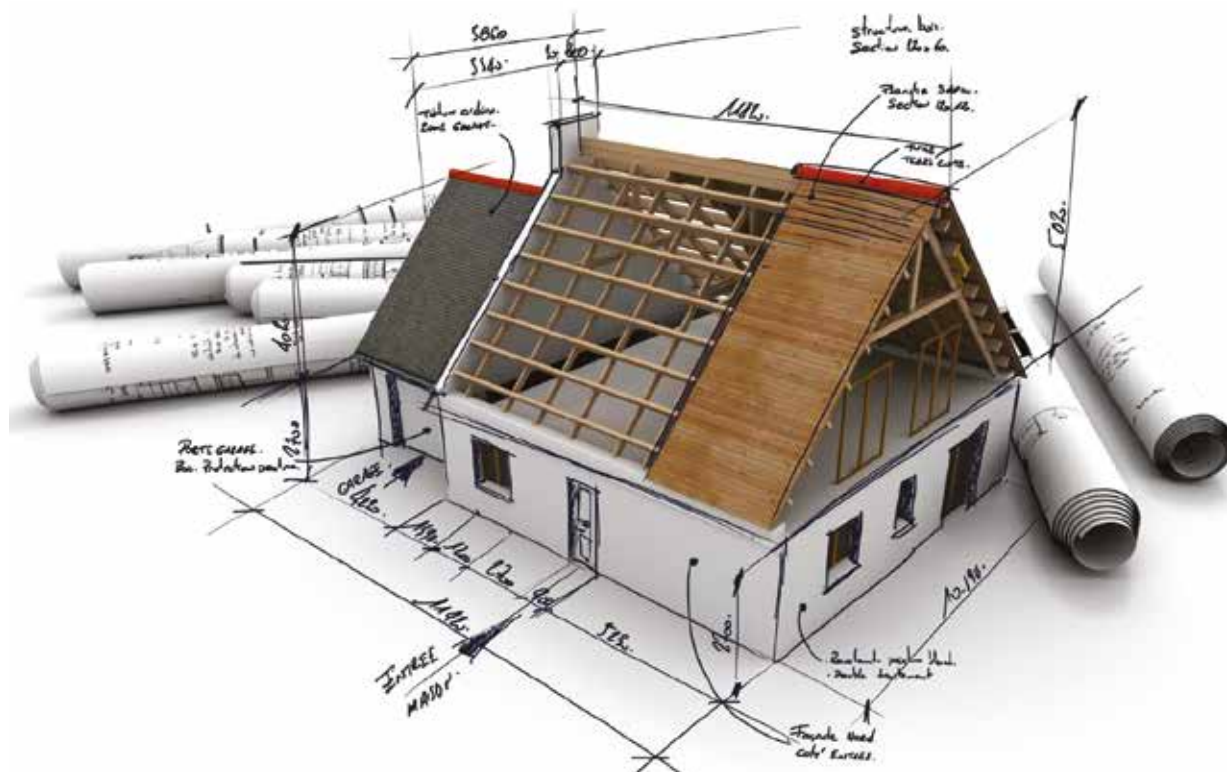
An authorized source at the ministry of post and telecommunication explained that three operators were fined at least CFA3 billion (followed by a reduction of their license by one year for some of them).

The same source indicated that CAMTEL, the public telecommunication operator's fine was lesser:

CFA300 million.

Internal sources within MTN Cameroon, whose sanction was disclosed in the review report of MTN International released at the end of September 2017, confirmed that the operator lodged an appeal to Cameroon's public authorities regarding the fine's reduction in September.

An online application to issue construction licenses to be launched soon



The Cameroonian ministry for urban development and housing is finalizing a digital application which will allow the request, processing, and issuance of building licenses online. This was announced during a seminary held in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital.

According to the Tunisian experts in charge of the project in which Cameroon invested CFA300 million, the application will be operational in January 2018, in Douala.

This innovation will help reduce delays recorded when issuing the license which is asked every person

that wants to build a house. Indeed, these applicants may have to wait years before obtaining the document. In the meantime, they suffer disturbances from agents of the town hall who visit construction sites daily.

SERVICES

Hotel sector declines by 90% in the Southwest region due to the Anglophone crisis



According to operators in the sectors of hospitality, catering and tourism in Cameroon, the turnover of hotels in the English speaking regions of Southwest Cameroon has declined by 90% since the start of social protests which later became secessionist claims in these regions.

Indeed, the two seaside resorts of Kribi in the south and Limbé in Southwest, with their exotic beaches and proper infrastructures, are the main tourist hub in the coastal area of Cameroon.

Due to the social tensions in the English speaking regions, for more

than a year now, the tourists, mostly foreigners, whose chances ranked Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest as high-risk zones, deserted the beaches, restaurants, and hotels of Limbé.

Carlson Rezidor makes a debut in Cameroon with Radisson Blu in Douala

Radisson Blu Hotel & Apartments Douala is set to open in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital in 2019. This debut of one of the world's most important and most dynamic hotel group *"brings the group's African portfolio to 83 hotels and over 17,500 rooms in operation and under development"*. This was revealed on November 9, 2017, in Brussels, Belgium by the group which operates other brands like *"Park Inn by Radisson"*, *"Radisson RED"* and

"Quorvus Collection".

The 150-room hotel, located in the business district of Douala, will offer a mix of standard bedrooms as well as studio, one and two-bedroom apartments. The hotel will also feature an all-day dining restaurant, a lobby bar as well as a Destination Sky Bar and Restaurant.

For fitness enthusiasts, this hotel whose investment amount was not disclosed will house a gymnasium and a wellness spa for guests seeking

to relax and rejuvenate. It will also house a conference room and four meeting rooms.

"We are thrilled to be entering our 30th country in Africa and what better addition than Cameroon, the groups' key market in Central Africa", Andrew McLachlan, senior vice president, business development, Africa & Indian Ocean of Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, said.

Did you know that Cameroonians like fried termites?

TRUE



Termite season is here! Indeed, termites are found on the menus and mouths of Cameroonians during the dry season. During this season, fried termites are sold in streets and roads at CFA100 per tablespoon. It is sometimes sold in unusual restaurants such as «Le Sorento» in Douala where crocodile aux termites is on the menu. Well, while some will say “Eww”, others, however, will say “miam miam”; it depends on your taste. Anyway, the love of fried termites is ever increasing and Yaoundé’s cooks are buying termites at Mvog Ada and

Mfoundi, two markets, to satisfy this growth. A cup of termites is sold at CFA300. Some of them even go hunting for termites at termite mounds and, they use different techniques to farm the termites.

FARMING TECHNIQUES

Rachèle, 28 years old and nostalgic, relates “*when we were kids, we used to wet a big bowl and wait near a termite mound waiting for termites to fly out of the mound. When they did, hop, their wings were stuck to our already wet bowls*”.

Some people insert fire into the

mound to chase out their residents. Doing so, they can be easily caught. The end result is the palate’s satisfaction. In that regard, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) encourages people to eat edible insects in order to alleviate pressures on fish and meat. So, insect eaters are free to eat termites.

Monique Ngo Mayag

Here is the cooking techniques:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ6vHiyGi1I>

It seems that “*Coupé décalé*”, is a fraud technique used in the port of Douala

TRUE



“*Coupé décalé*” is not only the Ivorian musical rhythm born around 2000 but, it is also a fraud technique used in the port of Douala.

An authorized source in the port confirmed it: “*Coupé décalé is about expensive cars being brought in containers as spare parts*”. After they are cleared as spare parts in the port,

they are reassembled in repair shops kept by foreigners at Bonabéri, the port community of Douala.

“*It is a huge loss in customs revenues*” the communication section of the port bemoaned. It also said that stevedores, customs, transport operators, and forwarders are all accomplice in the act.

The source also revealed that even business centers around the port (behind the post office, Simar; at Bonanjo tax office, at the entrance of the park, Messapresse...) have specialized in printing clearing documents.

Has a coordinator of the anti-corruption unit been arrested in Ebolowa?

FALSE



Images of stacks of banknotes are being shared on social media. Those sharing the images are claiming that the pictures are evidence taken during the arrest of a corrupted member of the anti-corruption unit in Ebolowa, Southern Cameroon. However, it is not true.

So, Cameroon has nothing to do with all these pictures. This is the link to the video shot by Brazilian policemen :

<http://videos.band.uol.com.br/16312111/stf-vai-investigar-ex-ministro-geddel-vieira-lima.html>



The man depicted on some of the pictures is Abbas Kayonga, head of mining fraud prevention unit in South Kivu, DR Congo, arrested on November 5, 2017. The pictures of the pile of banknotes associated with the case have nothing to do with him, however. They were cut from a video shot by Brazilian policemen at the house of one of their country's corrupted ex-minister.



LEADER OF THE MONTH

Cameroonian Shey Jones Yembe appointed as commissioner at the CEMAC's committee



A former student of Mathematics at Yaoundé University which is the mother of Cameroon's universities, Shey Jones Yembe has served in public companies for a long time and provided his expertise for the development of some private companies also.

Shey Jones Yembe, current president of the executive board of the Douala autonomous port (PAD), the public company in charge of the management of the largest port in Cameroon (pending the commissioning of Kribi port), has been appointed as commissioner at the CEMAC's committee. He was appointed on October 31, 2017, in Ndjamen, Chad's capital, at the end of a special summit where were gathered this economic community's heads of state.

An engineer, trained at Yaoundé national high school for engineers, who went to hone his skills in civil engineering and public construction at the Essen University in Germany, Shey Jones was state secretary at



the ministry of public works and planning between 1992 and 1997.

This former student of Nkambe Presbyterian Primary School, in the northwestern region of Cameroon, replaces his compatriot Paul Tasong, former general secretary of the ministry of economy, who was appointed at the CEMAC's committee in November 2012. Along with the new officials of CEMAC and its specialized institutions, Shey Jones Yembe was sworn into office on November, 2, 2017.

A former student of Mathematics at Yaoundé University which is the mother of Cameroon's universities, Shey Jones Yembe has served in public companies for a long time and provided his expertise for the development of some private companies also. For instance, he chaired the executive board of the National Laboratory of Civil Engineering (Labogénie) and also that of the private construction firm MAG LLC Construction Company.

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