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# BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

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## Discovering multinationals that thrive in Cameroon

Meeting with the  
Cameroonian who fights  
for global tax fairness



A Cameroonian at the head  
of Oragroup



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By Brice R. Mbodiam



# A land of opportunities

In this edition of your magazine, we talk about some of the multinationals that are faring well in Cameroon. This is proof that the country is a good place for investors. A condition it owes first to its geographic location. Indeed, Cameroon lies between Nigeria and ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States) countries and thus serves as a gateway to a market of more than 300 million consumers, straddling West and Central Africa.

Moreover, the country has many natural riches and comparative advantages that are poorly exploited, and unexploited even. Let's take for example the Eastern region where many world-class ore deposits have been lying for eons, awaiting to be exploited at an industrial scale. Same goes for Cameroon's hydropower potential; it is the third largest in Africa, after DRC and Ethiopia. Yet, the country, ironically, still is plagued by power outages. Between 2015 and 2017, Cameroon imported about XAF1000 billion of frozen fish and rice, despite having abundant arable lands and a sea coast that spans nearly 1,500 km. There are also opportunities in mass retail. The country, according to French mass retail giant Casino Group, is one of the very few in Africa to have 10 cities with at least 100,000 residents each.

The last thing that makes Cameroon a perfect destination for investors is its business climate which the government keeps improving through multiple reforms and incentives. The most important of these reforms is the 2013 law facilitating private investment in the Republic of Cameroon. This law, revised in 2017, provides investors tax exemptions, and other incentives, for a period of 5 to 10 years. This has got many investors flooding to the country and so far, even if many projects are taking time to be concretized, the Investment Promotion Agency (API) has identified 181 contracts inked with various investors.

This shows that, in spite of more or less justified concerns (the country has been experiencing major security crises since 2013) expressed by institutions like Coface or U.S ratings agency Standard & Poor's, Cameroon still finds support from many investors. There is a simple reason explaining this: the plethora of opportunities the country holds overshadows any other concern.



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urban legend: What is real? What is fake?

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## COMPANY OF THE MONTH

# Cameroon: American Taylor Guitars moves to secure its supply with 20,000 tree planting project



Since 2016, Crelicam, subsidiary of American acoustic guitar manufacturer Taylor Guitars, launched a project aimed at planting 20,000 ebony trees by 2021 in Cameroon. According to Barbara Wight (photo), Crelicam's finance director, *"Protecting this endangered species means protecting the music world... and (means) that the music coming from Cameroon's forest will continue."* She indicates that Taylor Guitars has

been using Cameroonian ebony trees for more than 40 years to manufacture globally renowned acoustic guitars.

The investment is estimated at more than half a billion CFA Francs and, according to Barbara Wight, cited by Reuters, it will secure Taylor Guitars' supply of ebony trees for the coming 1,000 years.

The American group employs 60 Cameroonians. In 2014, via its local

subsidiary Crelicam, it received the business excellence award. This yearly award is presented to American firms that play a key role around the world in terms of sustainable development, respect for human and employment rights, environmental protection, market liberalization, transparency and other democratic values.

**BRM**

## MONTHLY STATISTICS

### 14 205 tonnes

In June 2019, Cameroon exported 14,205 tons of banana, the banana association Assobacam indicates. Compared with the 16,979 tons exported in June 2018, this represents a drop by more than 2,700 tons.

During the period under review, PHP, subsidiary of French group *Compagnie fruitière de Marseille*, exported 13,021 tons while Boh Plantations exported 1,184 tons. Due to security and financial challenges amid the Anglophone regions' separatist crisis, CDC is still absent from the register of banana exporters in Cameroon.

### 6000

Agents from the national anti-fraud agency recently seized 6,000 corrugated sheets in Yaoundé. According to the agency, these sheets illegally imported from Equatorial Guinea, do not meet applicable laws in Cameroon.

First, the importer does not have a certificate of compliance. In addition, the sheets' thickness does not meet Cameroonian standards.

Apart from the sheets seized, the agency also dismantled a network of counterfeit branded whiskey in the capital city. The producers of this whiskey had their laboratory in a private residence.

### XAF115 billion

Close to 1 million CEMAC citizens own a banking card for international payments. This was revealed by Valentin Mbozo'o, general director of the Central African region's interbank group for electronic money governance GIMAC, during an interview with Cameroon's state-owned media. According to the director, in 2018, the owners of these cards made transactions estimated at XAF115 billion towards destinations outside the CEMAC region. XAF71 billion of these transactions were made with Visa cards and the remaining via MasterCard and Union Pay International cards.

### 20 MW

XAF15 billion. This is the amount GDS Orion Solar plans to invest in the construction of a 20 MW solar power plant in Ngaoundéré. This information was revealed on June 21, 2019, during the signature of an investment agreement by the investment promotion agency API and GDS Orion Solar.

GDS Orion Solar indicates that the Ngaoundéré solar plant, which will become the largest of such infrastructures in the country, will create 290 jobs. Additionally, apart from providing energy to the population, it will help diversify the country's energy mix in which solar, wind and biomass have a combined share of less than 1%.



# Cameroon: The opportunity land for multinationals



Many multinationals have been operating in Cameroon for ages, and have gained, over the time, monopoly power for entire activity segments or products. For instance, for about 50 years, the production of cement has only been the activity of Cimenteries du Cameroun (Cimencam), the local unit of French firm Lafarge which recently merged with Switzerland's Holcim to form LafargeHolcim. The merger occurred at a time when the Cameroonian market welcomed new cement producers such as Morocco's Cimaf, Nigeria's Dangote and Turkey's Medcem. The arrival of these operators sparked a stiff competition on the market to the extent that, less than two years after it came, Dangote grabbed the leadership from Cimencam.

This is only one of many more, less mediatized however, success stories. Here, we look back at some of the companies that generate figures on the Cameroonian territory. Cameroon plays such a key role in some multinationals' portfolio that losing this market would "create a hole" in their financial balance. For other major groups, even if it is not a main market, the country, due to its geographical location (close to Nigeria and to the ten ECCAS countries, including those of CEMAC), constitutes a strategic hub for those interested in conquering much larger markets. Cameroon is obviously a land of opportunity both for local and foreign economic operators.

**Brice R. Mbodiam**



# Cameroon accounts for 20% of French grain trader Céréalis' turnover

French grain trader Céréalis exports every year about 200,000 tons of wheat towards Cameroon. This makes, according to CEO Remi Depoix, around 20% of the company's revenues.

Depoix says of an average of €200 million (XAF131 billion) generated in West and Central Africa per annum, Cameroon accounts for XAF26 billion. The two regions capture one million tons from Céréalis per annum.

Over the next ten years, the company intends to double its turnover in West and Central Africa, mainly focusing on increasing exports to Cameroon. "There is a very remark-

*able milling industrial activity in Cameroon, with a dozen important players. Some mills are expected on the market very soon and others that shut down will reopen as well. The milling activity is so important in Cameroon that the country re-exports wheat to Chad, the Central African Republic and even Nigeria,"* explains Remi Depoix.

As a reminder, since the public wheat development firm (Société dedéveloppement du blé Sodeblé) closed in the 1990s, Cameroon has resorted to import to meet 100% of its wheat needs. In 2012, for example, the country spent XAF102 billion to import more than 517,000 tons,

according to official statistics.

In need to reduce exports, the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, is currently testing some improved wheat varieties over about 200 sites across the country. "We have high altitude and low altitude varieties. Based on a number of research criteria, we have set up these plots and have already selected four varieties," explains Clémentine Ananga Messina, the Minister Delegate to the Minister of Agriculture. According to the agriculture minister, Gabriel Mbaïrobe, the government plans between 50 and 100 hectares of wheat, as from 2020.

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## Champagne flows in Cameroon

Cameroon was ranked the 6th largest champagne consumer in Africa in 2018, like in 2016, and 51st worldwide. This is the latest ranking by the Inter professional committee of wine and champagne.

In 2018, Cameroonians spent XAF2.7 billion (€4.212 million) to purchase 156,212 bottles of 75 cl champagne. In 2017, they consumed 170,040 bottles (13,828 more than in 2018) and 154,813 bottles in 2016 (-1,399 less than 2018). The top three Africa's largest champagne consumers in 2018 are South Africa (21st worldwide) with 1,061,612 bottles, Nigeria (27th worldwide with 582,243 bottles) and Côte d'Ivoire (40th worldwide for 303,250 bottles).



# Three Swiss traders capture 50% of Cameroon SNH's crude oil output

In 2013, about 50% of the total crude oil produced by Cameroon's national hydrocarbons corporation -SNH- was purchased by three Swiss trading companies, a report entitled *"Swiss trading companies, African oil and the risks of opacity"* showed.

*"While market data suggests that the Spanish oil company Cepsa is the top single buyer of SNH oil, Swiss traders Glencore, Gunvor and Vitol together bought around half of the crude sold by SNH in 2013. These sales resulted in payments by Swiss companies to the Cameroonian state of around \$600 million, equal to 12 percent of 2013 government revenues,"* explained the document, which is a collaboration between Berne Declaration, Swissaid and the Natural Resource Governance Institute (US).

According to the document, the Cameroonian case helps illustrate how individual sales can matter more to the government seller than to the trading company buyer. It says that in 2013, Glencore bought four cargos from SNH, resulting in payments of around \$400 million. For Glencore, these sales are relatively small. The

company's 2013 annual turnover of \$233 billion in 2013 is nine times greater than Cameroon's entire 2012 GDP. For the Cameroonian government, on the other hand, these four

sales alone equaled one third of its total oil and gas sector earnings, and are enough to cover its entire national health budget.



# Cameroon is the fourth largest market of British behemoth Diageo

During a visit in Cameroon in August 2014, Andy Fennel, then president of British group Diageo for the African region, indicated that the country was a strategic market for his group. According to the executive, Cameroon is the fourth largest market in the world for Diageo, which produces the well-known drink Guinness.

With its 22 million residents, Cameroon is also the group's second largest market in Africa just behind Nigeria, Andy Fennel added. To boost Cameroon's position in its portfolio, obviously, Diageo has been implementing various development projects like encouraging local production of cereals, soybean notably, in order to reduce importation of

production input. The group's local subsidiary that controls 16% of the Cameroonian market also signed a supply agreement with the local government in the framework of a corn, cassava and sorghum production boosting project funded by the World Bank Group (XAF50 billion).

## Cameroon: An opportunity to boost sales of Chivas whiskey in Central Africa, brand ambassador Ken Lindsay says

Apparently, Cameroonians have developed a taste for Chivas-branded whiskey. Indeed, during a ceremony organized by BVS distribution, the brand's exclusive distributor on June 13, 2019, in Yaoundé, it was revealed that close to 120,000 bottles of the said whiskey are sold in Cameroon every year. Compared with the 60 million bottles sold every year by Scottish group

Chivas Brothers Ltd, *"Cameroon is still a small market but, it is also a dynamic one,"* Ken Lindsay, Brand Ambassador for Chivas Brothers Ltd since 1995, indicates. *"Along with Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, Cameroon is one of the best opportunities for Chivas to boost the sales of its whiskey in Central and West Africa,"* the brand ambassador who visited Cameroon recently added.

To cash in this opportunity offered by the country, Chivas Brothers Ltd, one of the 126 Scottish whisky distilleries, opened a representation office in Cameroon a little more than two years ago, Lindsay recalled. According to data published by Cameroon's trade ministry, between 2015 and 2017, an average XAF30 billion was spent every year to import liquors and other drinks.

## Cameroon: Viettel's leading African market in H1, 2016

Cameroon seems to be a really fertile land for Vietnamese telecom operator Viettel Global, which in the country operates under the brand name Nexttel. This should explain the judicial battle between its two shareholders for exclusive control. According to the H1, 2016 financial report published by Viettel Global, the Cameroonian subsidiary has been the leader of the operator's African market with XAF21 billion (\$35.9 million) generated. The performance of Nexttel, which has been in operation in Cameroon since September 2014, was thus above that of the Tanzanian (Halotel), Mozambican (Movitel) and Burundian (Lumitel) subsidiaries that generated \$25 million, \$33 million and \$18.26 million respectively during the period under review. The first operator to receive a 3G license in Cameroon, Nexttel exploited its 2-year license for just months because of delays in the launch of its activities. It entered the



Cameroonian market, dominated by MTN and Orange, by investing heavily in rural areas. With this investment strategy and the quality of its internet well-ap-

preciated by users, Nexttel has been able to acquire five million users despite the managerial tensions it is experiencing.



## Cameroon among Top 3 African countries where Dangote cement's sales grew in 2017



In March 2018, Nigerian cement producer Dangote published the audited results of its 2017 financial year. The report revealed that Cameroon was among the Top three African markets with the highest growth for Dangote Cement's sales during the period under review.

*"We expanded our footprint from eight*

*countries to ten with the opening of new facilities in the Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone, while our operations in Cameroon, Senegal and Ethiopia achieved strong sales growth during the year,"* Joe Makoju, then Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, said in the report.

The cement producer explained that

with about 22 million tons sold in 2017, it was by far the largest cement producer in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its turnover during the period under review was NGN805.6 billion.

That year, by September 30, 2017, Dangote cement had sold 938,000 tons of cement in Cameroon. Compared with the 806,000 tons sold by the same period a year earlier, this was a 16.4% rise.

In 2015, the group built in Douala, a plant with a production capacity of 1.5 million tons. The Nigerian group, new market leader in Cameroon, plans to build another in Yaoundé where its competitor Cimencam, local subsidiary of Lafarge Holcim, inaugurated a production plant with a capacity of 600,000 tons per annum. Inaugurated in April 2019, this plant increases the group's production capacity to 2.2 million tons.

## In H1 2017, UBA Cameroon was the most profitable subsidiary in Francophone Africa for Nigerian banking group UBA

With NGN1.956 billion (XAF2.951 billion) profit in H1 2017, the Cameroonian subsidiary of Nigerian banking group United Bank for Africa (UBA) has been the most profitable subsidiary in Francophone Africa, the group's H1 2017 financial report revealed.

Among all of the group's subsidiaries, Cameroon's had the second highest

net result behind the Ghanaian whose net result, over the same period still, was NGN7.981 billion (a little more than XAF12 billion), six times what UBA Cameroon generated. UBA Cameroon is followed by the Senegalese subsidiary, then by the Congo Brazzaville and Chadian subsidiaries that respectively generated NGN1.763 billion (about XAF2.6

billion), NGN1.593 billion (XAF2.4 billion) and NGN1.301 billion (XAF1.9 billion) of net profit by June 30, 2017. Apart from Cameroon, other French-speaking African countries where the Nigerian group operates include Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Gabon, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

*“Cameroon surely has some of its tax earnings gone with the €17 billion of Africa’s wealth held in tax havens worldwide”*  
- Alain Symphorien Ndzana Biloa

Author of “Sauvons l’impôt pour préserver l’État” (which translates into Saving Taxes to Preserve the State), a book published in January 2018 by Panthéon à Paris, this Cameroonian tax specialist advocates an overhaul of the international tax system. He believes that without a third generation international tax system, Cameroon will not be able to mobilize enough funds to achieve sustainable development goals. Here, he explains why and expands on the main axes of the overhaul.



*"According to French economist, Gabriel Zucman, 44% of Africa's wealth is held in tax havens equating losses of €17 billion in tax income"*

**Business in Cameroon:** In your recent book, *"Sauvons l'impôt pour préserver l'État"*, you said States' tax power is eroding. How is this reflected in Cameroon?

*Alain Symphorien Ndzana Biloa :* In Cameroon, the erosion of the State's taxing power translates into : an increasing public debt due to difficulties to raise revenues as financing needs scale up; a low fiscal pressure rate (16.5% in 2017); treasury issues and in part also, the EFC-backed economic and financial program with IMF.

**BC:** You also said that with the current international tax system, African countries cannot get the funds they need to achieve sustainable development goals. Can you give some actual examples of how this system prevents Cameroon from having more tax income?

*ASNB :* The current international tax system fosters global tax evasion, mostly by multinationals operating in Cameroon. These firms resort to offshore financial markets, tax havens, hybrid systems and conduct treaty shopping. Through the latter, they avoid paying taxes by shifting profits made in our country to countries with an insignificant tax rule and where their operations are minor. According to French economist, Gabriel Zucman, 44% of Africa's wealth is held in tax havens equating losses of €17 billion in tax income. Cameroon surely has some of its tax earnings gone with these €17 billion of Africa's wealth held in tax havens worldwide

**BC :** Like many other countries worldwide, Cameroon strives to tax digital businesses. Is this also

**an issue caused by the current international tax system?**

*ASNB :* With the current international tax system, for a business to be taxed in Cameroon, it must have a physical presence in the country. That implies having material assets and staff, as well as a physical workplace. However, now in our digital world, we have companies like Google, Amazon and Facebook which operate in countries like Cameroon, having users despite a low or inexistent physical presence. This prevents Cameroon's tax authorities to levy taxes on income generated by such operators in the country.

**BC :** You wish for the implementation of a "third-generation international tax system". What will be the attributes of this system?

*ASNB :* First off, what I call sec-



ond-generation tax system is plagued with two major challenges : the absence of an international institution handling tax cooperation and a fragmented taxation of multinationals by the various countries where they operate, in a world that keeps changing with globalization and digitalization.

Therefore, the third-generation international tax system I wish for would tackle these issues by: ensuring the creation of an international institution that will handle global tax cooperation ; and also setting a single tax that will be paid by multinationals. The proceeds of this single tax would be shared between all countries where a given multinational has operations. The proceeds will be shared based on key criteria such as turnover, size of staff and assets. These two innovations will mitigate the negative impact of globalization and economic digitalization on tax earnings.

**BC : In a recent article, IMF's managing director shared all arguments you listed in your book regarding the need to reform the international tax system in place. Would you say it means your request is advancing?**

ASNB : We are already being heard by many. It is not only Mrs. Lagard (Ed. Note: She has recently suspended activities at the head of the IMF) and the IMF that understood what is at stake here. The UN also share the opinion that there is no future for the world with the current international tax system. In its fourth report on financing for sustainable development, the UN inter agency taskforce, which regroups more than 60 agencies of the Bretton Woods institution, reached the same conclusion. Indeed, this taskforce said tax earnings are insufficient and that there is a mismatch between the tax regulation in place and shifts spurred by globalization and digitalization. The entity also said that without reforming both national and international financial systems, the interna-

tional community will not be able to deliver the 2030 Agenda. Regarding taxes, it thus recommends that States tackle all challenges related to tax systems preventing them from mobilizing enough tax earnings, as a result of digitalization.

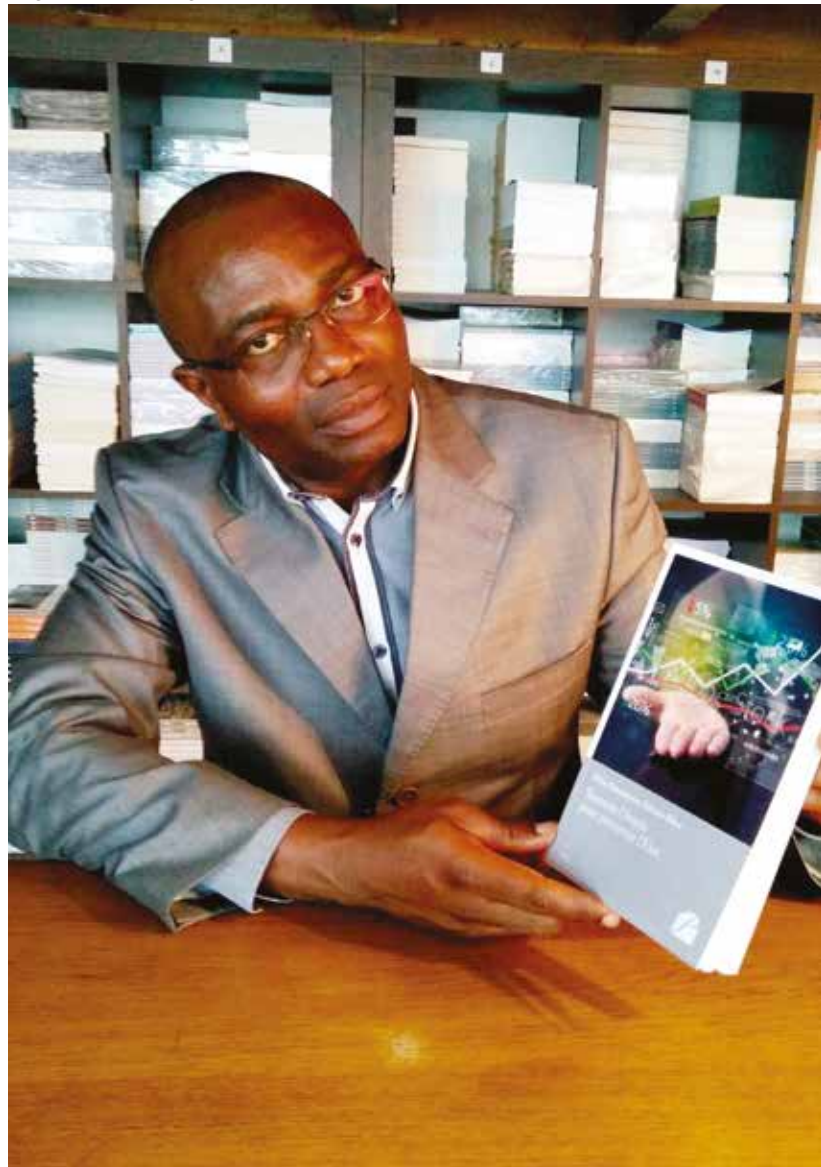
Let's also recall that during the G20 summit held on June 28-29, 2019, Heads of States approved the project of their finance ministers and the OECD to put in place by 2020 an international tax system that aligns more with globalization and

digitalization.

BC : Do you actually think that there is a chance for this reform to take place ?

ASNB : Even if nothing is sure yet, we can hope. Our fight is going on. We imperatively need a third-generation international tax system to finance sustainable development and that's actually my main center of interest at the moment. We will see how things turn out before the end of the first half of 2020.

BC : In Africa, and Cameroon spe-



*"This taskforce said tax earnings are insufficient and that there is a mismatch between the tax regulation in place and shifts spurred by globalization and digitalization"*



*"Africa must improve its regional integration infrastructure to harmonize cooperation policies, programmes and tools, and also boost and diversify its economies"*



*"The current international tax system fosters global tax evasion, mostly by multinationals operating in Cameroon. These firms resort to offshore financial markets, tax havens, hybrid systems and conduct treaty shopping."*

cifically, it seems authorities are not paying much attention to the weak mobilization of tax revenues despite these being vital. Why is it so?

ASNB : It would be unfair to say that African countries are ignoring the issue. The thing is since this is a global issue, it requires a global solution. African countries, and other developing nations of the world, have at many occasions, knowingly during international summits, pleaded for a change of regulations and the establishment of an inter-governmental organization that will handle international tax cooperation.

In his speech at the General Debate of the 71st UN General Assembly themed The Sustainable Development Goals : a universal push to transform our world, on September 22, 2016, Cameroon's President, Paul Biya, had declared : Today, let us get organized to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fare better. Since it is about "transforming our world and leaving no one behind, let us then find wherewithal to realize our ambitions." Actually, progress made so far regarding the matter results from the plea of African countries, which lag far behind when it comes to development.

**BC : What could be done to get Africa organized to advance this cause ?**

ASNB : Africa must improve its regional integration infrastructure to harmonize cooperation policies, programmes and tools, and also boost and diversify its economies. Tax revenues across the continent would rise subsequently. Now that the UN, the OECD and the G20 appear to share the same opinion regarding a reform of the international tax system, what African countries have to do is come together with other developing nations worldwide and do everything to accelerate the process and preserve their interests. Their survival depends on it.

**Interview by Aboudi Ottou**

# PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

## Rebound in economic growth within CEMAC praised by the IMF

At the end of the IMF administrative board's meeting to discuss CEMAC countries' common policies to support its member countries' reform agenda, the Bretton Woods institution praised the stabilization of economic conditions within CEMAC recently.

According to the institution, this stabilization is characterized by a

rebound in regional growth, overall budgetary position close to equilibrium and accumulation of foreign reserve exceeding expectations.

Indeed, after sluggish growth in 2017, the economy grew slightly to 1.7% in 2018 and 3% at end June 2019, according to the region's central bank's director Abbas Mahamat TOLLI.

This performance is almost the same

as the forecasts made by the central bank's monetary policy committee at the end of its meeting this year, on March 21, 2019, in Ndjamena.

In addition, CEMAC countries' foreign reserves reached XAF3,822 billion at end June 2019. On December 31, 2017, it was estimated at XAF2,552 billion and XAF3,360 billion at end 2018.

## Parliament authorizes ratification of the CFTA agreement

At the end of the June 2019, ordinary session, Cameroon's parliament approved the draft bill authorising the head of state to ratify the continental free trade zone agreement. During her visit to Cameroon, in April 2019, Vera Songwe, executive secretary of the UNECA, urged Cameroonian authorities to ratify the agreement they were among the first to sign in Kigali (March 21, 2018). Presented as an appropriate opportunity to save economies and limit the impact of the drop in the prices of commodities produced in Central Africa, the continental free trade area is a market of 1.2 billion individuals. Its GDP is estimated at \$2,500 billion, provided all the 55 member states of the African Union join it.





# Switzerland mediates an inclusive dialogue between Anglophone separatists and the government



**Will an inclusive dialogue between Cameroon's government and the Anglophone separatists, who took up arms in late 2017 to demand division, be organized soon?**

According to *Le Temps*, Switzerland received the official mandate of Cameroon's government to "facilitate negotiations between the warring parties."

This information is not that much surprising in view of the multiplication of exchanges between the two countries' officials recently.

The media indicates that Switzerland has already initiated discussions with the separatists' representatives. *"By coincidence, while president Paul Biya was moving into Intercontinental hotel in Geneva last Sunday, leaders of the rebellion came in dispersed orders at a station service in the Valaisan Alps. They were stealthily welcomed by representatives of Federal Department*

*of Foreign Affairs," Le Temps* reveals. In May 2019, during a mission of reconciliation in the two Anglophone regions, Cameroon's prime minister Joseph Dion Ngute announced that the head of state was open for discussions with the separatists.

Let's note that the Anglophone crisis started as corporatists demands from teachers and lawyers in those regions in 2016. Despite the government's solutions to the problems raised by the strikers, the crisis changed into separatist claims in late 2017.

## CONSEQUENCES

Since then, the separatists and the regular army have been fighting themselves. The insecurity led by those combats forced thousands of people to flee from these regions to neighbouring towns and to Nigeria. In addition, according to the International Crisis Group, within 20

months, 1,850 deaths were recorded. At the economic level, there is a real disaster. This is illustrated by the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC)'s experience. Indeed, for its installations and 22,000 staffs' security, this agribusiness, which is the second largest employer in the country after the government, had to temporarily stop operations. As a result, The country's banana exports dropped and, since September 2018, CDC has disappeared from the list of banana exporters in Cameroon. Some of its plants are now used by separatists as training camps. At the same time, during the last cocoa campaign, the South West, which is the largest production basin, lost its place to be replaced by the Centre. Due to the insecurity, numerous producers simply deserted their farms.

## Capital expenditure drops by about 46% in Q1, 2019

According to the Q1, 2019, budget execution report, capital expenditures dropped sharply to XAF184.5 billion during the period under review. This represents a more than 46% drop year to year.

In detail, capital expenditures with the government's own resources were estimated at XAF38.7 billion.

Year to year, this represents a decrease by XAF103.7 billion (-72.8%). In comparison with this year's target of XAF670.6 billion, it represents a 14.2% execution rate.

Capital expenditures with external resources reached XAF145.5 billion representing a year to year decrease by XAF37.5 billion (-20.5%).

Compared with the year's target of XAF617 billion, it is a 23.6% execution rate.

The drop in performance is due to cashflow problems experienced by the government for months now. It is also due to the postponement of some financial supports by external partners.

## Tax expenditures created by EU economic partnership and investment promotion law to rise to XAF8.9 bln this year



Cameroon's fiscal expenditure is still high, the tax administration informs. According to this administration, this is due to the economic partnership agreement with the European Union and the implementation of the April 18, 2013 law on private investments' promotion. These two tools greatly reduced the tax base. Data published by the administration reveal that while the overall tax expenditure is decreasing, the tax expenditures under the private

investments' promotion law and the EU economic partnerships have been increasing. For instance, in 2016, the overall tax expenditure was XAF198.6 billion. In 2017, it decreased to XAF183.4 billion and continued its downward trend to reach XAF149.5 billion in 2018. It is expected to drop further to XAF157.3 billion in 2019 and to XAF149.5 billion, XAF142 billion and XAF134.9 billion in 2020, 2021 and 2022 respectively if the government does not create a new

tax exoneration regime.

At the same time, tax expenditures created by the economic partnership with the European Union and the investments' promotion law have risen from XAF0.3 billion in 2016 to XAF1.8 billion in 2017 and XAF4.8 billion in 2018. In 2019, it is expected to reach XAF8.9 billion. It could rise to XAF14.5 billion, XAF20.8 billion and XAF27.7 billion in 2020, 2021 and 2022 respectively.

## Cameroon expects XAF900 bln of customs revenues in 2020

In 2020, Cameroon plans to raise XAF905 billion of customs revenues, the Government Financial Operations Table (GFOT) reveals. In 2021, this revenue should increase to XAF925 billion and XAF955 billion in 2022, the table informs. The customs authority indicates that in the 1960s, 75% of the budget revenues was constituted of customs revenues but, nowadays, it is 18%. Though in relative value, there is a decrease in customs revenues' contribution to GDP, but in absolute value, the volume of these revenues have increased. For instance, in the past 11 years, it increased from XAF401.3 billion (in 2007) to XAF803.2 billion (in 2018). According to the customs authority, this increase in absolute value should continue in the next three years.



## Cameroon to find solutions to manage payment of salaries it owes its civil servants

Cameroon will find a solution for the salaries it owes civil servants, the ministry of finance indicates in the budgetary stance that should serve in the elaboration of the 2020 finance law.

According to the ministry, the first assessment of this debt revealed that in 2016, it was close to XAF230 billion owed for promotion, reclassification and retirements.

The ministry explains that the delay between the recruitment of civil servants and their effective consideration in the payroll database as well as lateness in the update of payments to these servants are factors that favor an accumulation of the debt. The important delays between works that entitle salary rights and the effective payment of these salaries favor the constitution of a wage debt which is

very difficult to control, the stance indicates.

To address the problem, the government plans to put a mechanism in place to help assess the debt's effective volume, ensure its payment and remove factors that could lead to its increase. The main tool that will be used for these purposes will be the payroll management system Sigipes II expected to be delivered in 2020.



## Civil servants' management system Sigipes II will be available in 2020



**The second version of Cameroon's IT system for civil servants' management (Sigipes II) should be available in 2020, the 2020 fiscal stance recently submitted to the parliament reveals.**

According to the stance, the completion of Sigipes II will help rationalize civil servants' pay in the coming three years. The payroll will be sanitized and there will be a better management of human resources, the wage debt as well as the IT system. This will lead to an organized civil service.

The government indicates that it wants the creation of Sigipes II because, the physical counting

operation (COPPE 2018) revealed important failures in the current civil servants' management system. There were, for instance, unreported deaths, abandonment of posts and mobility problems.

This highlights the failure of the current human resources management system, the budgetary stance indicates adding that the IT system is currently unable to ensure secure management of the civil service workforce. There is also the inability to analyse data on staff and payments, making it difficult to conduct retrospective studies and formulate wage policies.

« WE ARE WAITING »

Let's note that Sigipes II should have been operational since 2016. The promise was made by former minister of civil service Michel Ange Angouing in 2014. Because of delays in the delivery of this system that finished the XAF7.67 billion provided by the European Union, former prime minister ordered an audit on March 30, 2017.

On August 17, 2018, during an interministerial programme reviewing council in Yaoundé, Joseph LE, current minister of civil service revealed that the findings of that audit have been transmitted to the authorities entitled to receive them. *"We are waiting for the hierarchy's new orders,"* he said.

## Cameroon to increase taxes on products harmful to health, morality and environment



Cameroon recently submitted its fiscal stance before the parliament in preparation for the 2020 finance law. According to this stance, in 2020, the tax on some products could rise. The stance indicates that in the short term, 2020 particularly, the country will anchor excise duties on CEMAC's new rules on excise duties' harmonization. It will also boost customs revenues' mobilization increasing excise duties on products

(tobacco, alcohol, hydroquinone, industrial waste, cars, motorbikes and finished goods with high sugar percentage) that are harmful to health, morality and the environment. There will also be a gradual restoration of duties on tax-free products such as rice, wheat and fish. Part of the revenues generated by these taxes will then be affected to a fund in charge of these sectors' development locally. Because of the suspen-

sion of these taxes, the government loses substantial resources yearly, the stance explains.

For instance, Cameroon loses close to XAF15 billion yearly because of wheat tax allowances. The 5% tax on rice and fish instead of the normal 20% leads to XAF28 billion and XAF16 billion yearly losses respectively.

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## Publicly guaranteed debt reached XAF7,557 bln at end April 2019

At end April 2019, Cameroon's publicly guaranteed debt reached XAF7,557 billion or 35.2% of GDP. According to the debt amortization fund CAA, this represents a 3.3% quarter to quarter rise but, compared to a year to year basis, it is a 15.5% rise.

CAA explains that the country's debt has increased by more than 37% in less than two years due notably to

instalments on the budget support in the framework of the IMF's economic and financial programme. There is also a structured debt of XAF577 billion (BEAC's statutory advances), XAF200 billion of funds raised via issuance of treasury bills and acceleration of large infrastructures' construction.

At end April 2019, the country's publicly guaranteed debt was constituted

of 99.4% of direct public debt evaluated at XAF7,510 billion (about 35% of GDP) and 0.6% of debts approved by the government evaluated at XAF47 billion or 0.2% of GDP.

This year, XAF1,283 billion has been budgeted for debt servicing. This is about 25% of the overall budget estimated at XAF5,212 billion.

# GICAM suggests temporary suspension of some products' imports to resolve the currency crisis



*"Due to genuine threats of a paralysed economy, Gicam is staying in touch with monetary authorities for the identification and implementation of solutions to this problem. Gicam notably suggests the urgent application of three protective measures that will help reduce the negative impacts of this currency crisis. These are notably the temporary suspension of the importation of some goods and the limitation of the importation of products that are more or less important. Priority should also be given to payments for the importation of products and services that are important or in strategic sectors."* These are the measures suggested by the Inter Patronal Groupings of Cameroon (Gicam) to Cemac's monetary authorities to resolve the currency crisis the community has been experiencing for months now.

## **"AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE"**

According to Célestin Tawamba, president of Gicam, the current currency shortage is *"of an unprecedented scale"*. In an official communiqué, he explains that this shortage

led to a considerable decline in local firms' imports of inputs, production equipment and maintenance tools. He indicates that if nothing is done in the shorter term, the situation could force companies to suspend or even stop operations due to foreign partners and suppliers' loss of confidence.

Gicam informs that apart from its impact on imports, this crisis presents other risks for the economy. *"Due to the non-payment of premiums owed to international re-insurers, companies could lose the protections of their assets. Country risk is degrading and tends to scare credit insurers away from our firms,"* Célestin Tawamba said.

## **REGULATION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE OPERATIONS**

The currency shortage was created by the Cemac zone central bank's move to contain the decrease of the current account's level. This account shared by Cemac countries is located in France's public treasury. It is used to support Cemac countries' imports. Since 2015, it has been highly used

but poorly replenished because of the drop in the price of commodities (oil notably) exported by Cemac countries.

To replenish and keep it at a level that helps avoid a devaluation of the XAF, Beac decided to tighten the rules for international fund transfers. This restrictive monetary policy led to difficult access to currency at commercial banks. Accused by banks to be the culprit, Beac has always put the blame on commercial banks accusing them of nurturing *"artificial shortages"*.

To restrict access to currencies, Beac published a new regulation, deemed much more restrictive, on foreign exchanges. On June 10, 2019, this bank prescribed that henceforth, payment and withdrawal operations outside the CEMAC region should be capped at XAF5 million per individual and per trip. In addition, online payments for people located outside the region were capped at XAF1 million per individual per month. Above these stated levels, the transactions should be justified.



## Cameroon serviced XAF138.2 bln of debt in Q1, 2019

Between January and March 2019, Cameroon spent XAF138.2 billion on debt servicing, the ministry of finance indicated in the end March 2019 budget execution report. Year to year, this represents an increase of XAF26 billion (+16%). The same source reveals

that XAF106.2 billion was used for external debt servicing while domestic debt servicing was estimated at XAF32 billion.

According to figures published by the Autonomous Amortization Fund, by May 31, 2018, the country's debt was XAF6,527 billion. This is about 32% of

GDP, unlike the 35% indicated by the IMF. Richard Evina Obam explained that the reason IMF indicated 35% is that it included the more than 3 months supplier debts (more than XAF1,800 billion) owed to Sonara, the national refinery.

## CEMAC countries to be supplied with loose change by November 2019



In CEMAC countries, Cameroon notably, it is increasingly becoming difficult for traders to access loose change that is necessary for their day-to-day operations. During a press conference on July 4, 2019, Dieudonné Evou Mekou, the central

bank's vice-governor indicated that these coins would be supplied by November 2019.

*"We effectively discussed the issue. It was handled by the vice-governor and orders have been passed,"* Abbas Mahamat Tolli, the central bank's

governor said.

Let's note that many coin exports networks maintained by the Chinese have been dismantled in Cameroon. Once exported, these coins are used to fabricate various tools and objects.

# Cameroon adopts its 2020-2022 Economic and Financial Planning Document

During the July 3, 2019, ministerial council presided by prime minister Joseph Dion Ngute, Cameroon adopted the Economic and Financial Planning Document (DPEF) for the 2020-2022 period. The DPEF will then be submitted before the parliament for the budget orientation debate. According to the minister of finance Louis Paul Motaze (photo), this debate will provide an opportunity for the national assembly and the government to contribute to the elaboration of the macro-economic and budgetary framework. The said document also animates debates

about the finance act, conditions, tools and means that guarantee public finances' middle-term sustainability.

The finance minister also indicated that the government's policy in terms of public finance for the 2020-2022 period will be centred around three points. These are the reduction of budget deficit, debt control and enhancement of the currency reserve. From 2.5% of GDP in 2018, the budget deficit is expected to drop to 2% in 2019 and finally revolve around 1.5% from 2020 to 2022. Public finance should be consolidated by

increased mobilisation of non-oil internal revenues, expenses optimisation and control of internal and external debt to a sustainable level. Louis Paul Motaze also talked about the measures recommended to improve the quality of public expenditures. These are the control of the government's routine expenditures (water, energy, telephone and rents) and subsidies granted to public institutions. Donations to international organizations will also be rationalized while reforms will be passed on special-purpose accounts to boost their performances.

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## Anti-fraud agency seizes 6,000 illegally-imported corrugated sheets in Yaoundé

Agents from the national anti-fraud agency just seized 6,000 corrugated sheets in Yaoundé. According to the agency, these sheets illegally imported from Equatorial Guinea, do not meet applicable laws in Cameroon. First, the importer does not have a certificate of compliance with the regulations. Also, the sheets' thickness does not meet Cameroonian standards. Apart from the sheets seized, the agency also dismantled a network of counterfeit branded whiskey in the capital city. The producers of this whiskey had their laboratory in a private residence.





## Government denounces the diaspora's hostility towards the presidential couple in Switzerland



**On June 29, 2019, René Emmanuel Sadi, Cameroon's minister of communications (Mincom), published a communique. According to the document, On June 25, 2019, individuals claiming to belong to an organisation named "Brigade Antisardinards" decided to ransack a hotel in Geneva, Switzerland, to disturb the private visit of Paul and Chantal Biya. On June 29, the group protested in a street in the capital city.**

*"Due to the recurrence of these baffling and inappropriate acts perpetrated by a part of the Cameroonian diaspora, the government expressed the nation's indignation and strongly condemned such unacceptable acts*

*that damage Cameroon's reputation," M. Sadi wrote.*

The ministry reveals that the protesters have been called to order by Switzerland's public force and are being questioned on the motives that drive Cameroonians *"to show the whole world their unpatriotic feelings and prejudice to the country."*

### AN OPPOSITION PARTY

On January 26, 2019, the "Brigade Antisardinards" claimed responsibility for the attacks on Cameroon's embassies in Paris, France and Berlin, Germany. During those violent acts in Paris, some of them removed Paul Biya's picture from the wall, destroyed and replaced it with Maurice Kamto's. The latter is the leader of an

opposition party named Mouvement pour la Renaissance du Cameroun (MRC). MRC, on the other hand, rejected any links to the acts perpetrated by the so-called "Brigade Antisardinards."

Maurice Kamto is currently being detained and prosecuted for organizing an unauthorized protest in Cameroon on January 26, 2019. He organized this protest to claim victory in the October 7, 2018, presidential election despite the results published by the constitutional council. This institution, last resort in such cases, declared Paul Biya the winner with 71.28% votes against 14.23% for the MRC's leader.



## IMF invites CEMAC countries to provide “unfailing support” to the new foreign exchange regulation, BEAC says

The administrative board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is supporting the implementation of BEAC's new foreign exchange regulation. This is revealed in a communique published by the bank's governor on July 2, 2019, at the end of a meeting of the said administrative board about CEMAC's joint policies. According to the communique, the new regulation must have the full support of national authorities. This position statement comes amid strong criticism from economic operators towards the BEAC. For instance, the Inter Patronal Groupings of Cameroon (Gicam), in a recent communique, indicated that the new regulation is not providing tangible solutions to firms' problems (currency shortage notably) nor does it reassure economic operators. Instead, the groupings say, this regulation has just established increased administrative controls that are detrimental to imports. Indeed, to stop the drastic drop in CEMAC countries' foreign reserves, which is exposing the currency to devaluation, the central bank tightened the regulations of international fund transfers. Recently, it issued new for-



ign exchange regulations. According to economic operators, these regulations have restricted access to

currency thus affecting imports and other international transactions.

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## 2018 Corporate tax payment's deadline extended to Aug 15, 2019

A 5-month extension has just been granted to large firms operating in Cameroon for the payment of their 2018 taxes, a communique signed by assistant minister of finance Yaouba Abdoulaye indicates. According to the document, the deadline is now August 15.

Initially, the ministry of finance set the deadline for March 15, 2019, and invited the corresponding taxpayers to meet the deadlines so that they can avoid sanctions for payment failure.

For the time being, the deadline of June 30 for the electronic transmis-

sion of 2019 tax/statistics statements has not changed.

Let's note that via the tax dematerialization process, the tax administration wants to exceed the XAF2,200 billion of tax revenues raised during the 2018 fiscal year.

## Cameroon instructs the elaboration of a 5-year rural and urban development plan

Mandated by Cameroon, the consortium Studi International-Beta Consult presented a report on the project for adoption of a 5-year sustainable rural development and town planning on June 25, 2019, in Yaoundé.

According to Jean Tchoffo, general secretary at the ministry of economy and town planning, this initiative is the result of the government's ambition to implement physical planning of the territory. This will help correct natural disparities and imbalanced development.

For two days, all the involved parties (public administrations, decentralised collectivities, the civil society and the private sector) were invited to complement the report.

The government expects solutions that will help create an integrated national economy.

According to Jean Tchoffo, the goal is to control the development of towns and transform them into



production and consumption centers that are necessary for the development of an industrial sector. The 5-year plan should also promote the emergence of peripheral areas, the development of average or secondary cities able to structure economic activities in urban areas and participate in the development of neighbouring rural zones.

In urban areas, the main approach

is a control of the development and improvement of the living conditions in order to boost competitiveness as well as economic, social and environmental efficiency.

The environment segment will essentially focus on environment protection, sustainable management of resources and the intensification of climate change resilience projects.

## Minister of communications exposes deviances and incitement to ethnic hatred in local media

During his meeting with promoters of media outlets, and publication directors in Yaoundé on June 20, 2019, René Emmanuel Sadi, Cameroon's minister of communications presented a less desirable side of the media environment in Cameroon.

According to M. Sadi, there are *"blatant violations of not only journalistic ethics but also of the professional principles that make the facts sacred."* The minister adds that everyday, local media fall into deviances such as incitement to hatred as well as the

apology of irredentism and regionalisms that are dangerous catalysts for tribalism.

He also exposed the *"completely unacceptable and irresponsible"* attitude of the operators of some written, audiovisual or online media who chose to deliberately and continuously practice journalism without taking into account the rules of the field and republican values.

According to the official, when media discourse is tainted with manipulation, disinformation,

unfounded statements or systematic derogations to the nation's values, it undisputedly confuses the national opinion.

He thus advised media professionals to set an autoregulation system apart from the regulation done by the regulator Conseil National de la Communication.

*"I am convinced that this is how we can reach an optimal level of responsibility that will undoubtedly help reduce legal proceedings against journalists,"* the official indicated.

## Water and energy sectors captured 44% of funds raised by Cameroon in financial markets in 2010-2019 (Ministry of Finance)



Since 2010, most of the funds raised by Cameroon in financial markets was devoted to water, energy and road infrastructures projects. According to figures published by the general directorate of the public treasury at the ministry of finance, 72.5% of the XAF2,616 billion raised between 2010 and 2019 were

captured by projects in those three sectors. With the construction of three dams (Lom Pangar, Memvé'élé and Mekin) as well as water treatment plants, the water and energy sectors captured 44% of the overall funds. Next comes the road infrastructure sector with more than 28%.

The construction and renovation of football stadiums in preparation for the AFCON captured 13.5% against a little more than 6% for the industry and services sectors. The sectors that benefited the least are mining (little above 3%), port infrastructures (2.6%), agriculture (1.5%) and telecom (0.6%).



# FINANCE

## BEAC caps electronic payments and withdrawals outside CEMAC

On June 10, 2019, the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) published a document that identifies the conditions for using the CEMAC's electronic payment methods outside the region.

*"The use of electronic payment methods outside CEMAC is limited to current transactions that are within the currency allocation threshold prescribed by exchange control legislation,"* the document signed by the bank's governor Abbas Mahamat Tolli indicates.

Physical Payment or withdrawals using systems outside the CEMAC are capped at XAF5 million per user for every trip. Above this level, the traveller will have to justify the reason such an amount is being requested.

For online transactions, the cap is XAF1 million per user every month or the transaction should be justified via any traceable means within 30 days.

Issuing banks, commercial notably,



are called to ensure compliance with these new rules.

Internal sources reveal that the new measures are aimed at fighting money laundering, terrorism and informal trade that led to an erosion

of about 50% of SubSaharan countries' GDP. It is also worth noting that the rules are published in a context marked by a shortage of currencies in the sub-region; a situation regularly reported by employer organizations.

## Finactu selected to support the creation of the national reinsurance company

Consulting firm Finactu has just been selected by Cameroon and the country's association of insurance companies ASAC to provide support in the creation of a national reinsurance company, official sources reveal. This selection follows an international tender process. The national reinsurer will be owned by the government, insurance companies operating in the country

and a strategic partner. Thanks to the project, Cameroon wants to join the rank of African countries having their own national reinsurance companies (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Sudan, Senegal, Gabon, Namibia and Nigeria). Founded in 1999, Finactu has offices in Geneva, Paris and Casablanca. It provides strategic and operational counselling as well as corporate

financial services. *"More than 100 clients in 30 emerging countries have trusted us to date, giving Finactu a privileged experience in various sectors: banking, insurance and reinsurance, private equity, social protection, public policies, agriculture, telecom, postal services and education,"* the company explains.

## BGFIBank's CEO Henri Claude OYIMA appointed president of the administrative board of CEMAC's unified stock exchange



Stakeholders of the newly created Central African region's stock exchange met on July 4, 2019, at the exchange's headquarters in Douala. During the meeting organized to appoint new management, the administrative board appointed Henri Claude OYIMA, CEO of BGFIBank, as president of the administrative board.

The new president's 6-year mandate marks the official launch of the regional financial market's activities. He thanked the administrators and promised to strive to dynamize the market and encourage as many firms as possible to get listed.

Let's note that with administrators from Gabon, Congo and Chad, Henri Claude OYIMA has been militating for the creation of a stock exchange in Gabon since June 2007.

## IFC's project portfolio estimated at XAF133 bln

In Cameroon, the IFC's project portfolio is a bit more than XAF133 billion (\$228 million), the World Bank group's subsidiary dedicated to the private sector indicates in an official communique. The most important project funded by the institution is Nachtigal dam in

the central region. This energy infrastructure that can generate up to 420 MW after expected commissioning in 2023, will increase the country's installed capacity by 30%. IFC holds 20% stake in this project alongside Cameroon (15%), French EDF (40%) and investment vehicles

Africa50 (15 %) and Stoa Infra Energy (10 %)

Apart from support investor in the private sector, the institution also provides consulting services to Cameroon for improvement of the business environment.

## Commercial banks imported over XAF80 bln of foreign currency without approval in April-May 2019

Between April and May 2019, banks operating within CEMAC imported more than XAF80 billion of foreign currency without the central bank BEAC's approval, the central bank indicates.

The central bank, revealing that it has imposed sanctions on these banks, informs that executing clients' orders without required warrants for BEAC's coverage has turned those banks to debtors towards their correspondents in banking and rapid transfer services.

The XAF80 billion illegally imported is almost equal to the XAF92.3 billion discovered in the 2,188 foreign currency accounts fraudulently opened for CEMAC residents between 2,000 and February 2019.

*"A permanent monitoring by BEAC will help avoid such behaviors and punish all the infringers,"* the central bank informs.



## BDEAC and Commercial Bank Cameroon invests XAF4.5 bln in the construction of a 4-star hotel in Douala

The development bank of central Africa, States Banque de développement des États de l'Afrique centrale (BDEAC) and Commercial Bank Cameroon (CBC) recently invested XAF4.5 billion in the construction of a 4-star hotel in Bonapriso, Douala. According to information provided by the BDEAC, this co-funding

will help B&B Investment SAS, the project's carrier, build a lodging establishment containing 125 standard rooms, 5 rooms for disabled people and 20 suites. It also indicates that the project will boost Cameroon's GDP and reduce unemployment by creating 122 direct jobs during its execution phase and 156 direct jobs

during the operation phase.

BDEAC reveals that the construction of this hotel falls within the framework of one of the axes of the government's national priority. This axis consists in attracting tourists and increasing the tourism sector's contribution to GDP from 6.8% to 10%.



## Cameroonian native Jean Claude Ngwa becomes first managing director of newly created Central African unified exchange

Former president of Douala Stock Exchange (DSX)'s regulator Jean Claude Ngwa has been appointed as the managing director of the Central African region's unified stock exchange. This was at the end of a meeting of the administrative board held in Douala, on July 4, 2019.

This Cameroonian native was president of the Inter-African Conference on Insurance Markets (CIMA). He thus becomes the first ever managing director of this unified exchange born from the merger between DSX in Cameroon and Libreville, Gabon based exchange Bourse des valeurs

mobilières de l'Afrique centrale (BVMAC).

The administrative board also chose Gabonese Henri-Claude Oyima (CEO of Bgfi Bank) as president of the administrative board of this exchange operational since July 5, 2019.

## CEMAC: 2,188 foreign currency accounts illegally opened by resident economic agents (BEAC)

Amid currency shortages within the CEMAC, the region's central bank (BEAC) recently published data that partially explains the problem. According to the BEAC, between 2000 and 2018, CEMAC countries allowed resident economic operators to open numerous foreign currency accounts without prior authorization from the BEAC. At end February 2019, the number of such accounts was estimated at 2,188.

A detailed analysis of the data reveals that Cameroon allowed the opening of 244 foreign currency accounts containing a record amount of XAF53.6 billion. Central African Republic approved 31 accounts containing XAF146 billion while Congo holds 202 accounts for XAF27.23 billion. Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad respectively allowed the opening of 239 (XAF9.9 billion), 59 (XAF439 million) and 1,413 (XAF886 million) accounts.

To ensure flexibility, the BEAC issued a foreign exchange regulation allowing a transitory period of six months (starting from March 1, 2019) to regularize the said accounts' status. As of end May 2019, 37 applications



were submitted to the central bank including 21 applications to regularize accounts' status and 16 account opening applications. The BEAC finally indicates that more

than 95% of the operations that require a foreign currency account are handled by CEMAC's financial system.

# CEMAC : BEAC eases rules on international transfers to address the currency shortage



**The Bank of Central African States (BEAC), local banks and economic operators have reached a consensus about the new foreign exchange regulations issued by the Central Bank.**

This was revealed by Abbas Mahamat Tolli, BEAC's governor, during a press conference held at the end of a meeting organized in Douala on July 4, 2019, to inform economic operators and local banks about the regulation. According to the governor, the exchanges were open and heated but, in the end, an agreement has been reached to help overcome the currency crisis affecting CEMAC countries. The first measure aimed at addressing the problem is an agreement, by the Central Bank, not to systematically reject transfer requests from commer-

cial banks that have sufficient foreign reserves to carry out those transfers. In return, those banks promised to hand back the same amount of currency provided by the Central bank, labelled in the same foreign currency, within reasonable time. Otherwise, they will receive monetary penalty valued at 5% of the volume of assets they illegally hold outside the CEMAC zone.

According to the IMF, the volume of assets illegally held outside the CEMAC zone by local firms and institutions is estimated at XAF3,000 billion. This is about the same amount of foreign reserves in CEMAC countries' current account on June 30, 2019. Abbas Mahamat Tolli indicated that banks were reluctant to repatriate their external assets despite the central bank's injunction and foreign ex-

change rules. Those banks developed an interbank market and even a black market, the governor added. Trades from these markets represent 50% to 80% of their net banking income.

## TRANSFER REQUESTS' RETENTION

According to governor Abbas Mahamat Tolli, transfer requests submitted by commercial banks with illegal external assets, make 32.4% of the overall transfer requests the central bank receives. The remaining requests are usually processed within 24 hours and almost always approved, the central bank reveals.

These figures indicated by the governor dispels the widespread negative belief that BEAC blocks the supply of currencies to commercial banks.

The second measure agreed upon during the meeting is an agreement by economic operators and banks to disclose details of importers and other companies requesting international transfers to the BEAC. That way, the central bank can directly inform the requester about the processing status of the said request. The requester will then contact BEAC to inquire about the transfer's status.

The governor indicates that the second measure is aimed at ending commercial banks' practices that include not sending transfer requests to the central banks making the requester believe that processing time is increasingly longer. Yet, since the regulation came into effect in March 2018, processing time dropped from 20 days to 24 hours, the governor added. He also revealed that during the recent inspections conducted by the BEAC, it was found out that 60% to 80% of economic operators' transfer requests were held back by commercial banks. They were thus not submitted to the central bank for processing.

## Eugène Blaise Nsom becomes new BEAC director for Cameroon

Eugène Blaise Nsom is the new national director for the CEMAC region's central bank BEAC in Cameroon, the central bank's governor announced on July 8, 2019. The nomination of this Cameroonian official by the government was approved by BEAC's administrative board, during a meeting on

July 3, 2019.

Graduated from the national school of administration and magistracy, Eugène Blaise Nsom served as the first general director of the treasury in Cameroon. He then left the Cameroonian public administration to join BEAC as director of audit.

Holder of a Master of Advanced Studies in monetary analysis from University of Poitiers, France, Eugène Blaise Nsom has also been part of the central African region's financial stability board.

## Cameroon among “vulnerable” countries in terms of investment (Coface)



On July 4, 2019, French credit insurer Coface published its social and political stability index (indice de fragilité politique et sociale en Afrique). In the index that informs investors about the degree of fragility of potential investments in Africa, Coface ranked ten African countries as “vulnerable”. These are namely Cameroon, Angola, Egypt, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Uganda, Chad,

Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Cameroon's presence on this list can be explained by the security crisis it has been experiencing since 2013, Boko Haram attacks in the Far-North notably. In 2017, the two anglophone regions were also affected by corporate demands that degenerated into separatists claims that regularly oppose separatist militants and the

regular army. For many months now, Adamaoua is also being faced with kidnapping. The kidnappers mainly target breeders whose families usually save by paying important ransoms. In addition, in the East, Cameroon is also attacked by rebels from the Central African Republic who do not hesitate to cross the border to wreak havoc on Cameroonian territory.



## Payment by CEMAC citizens outside the region, via banking cards, reached XAF115 bln in 2018

Close to 1 million CEMAC citizens own a banking card for international payments. This was revealed by Valentin Mbozo'o, general director of the Central African region's interbank group for electronic money governance GIMAC, during an interview with Cameroon's state-owned media.

According to the director, in 2018, the owners of these cards made transactions estimated at XAF115 billion towards destinations outside the CEMAC region. XAF71 billion of these transactions were made with Visa cards and the remaining via Mastercard and Union Pay

International cards. He indicates that the recent cap imposed by the central bank for transactions outside CEMAC via banking cards will help stem capital flights. It will also ensure better traceability of financing flows in and out of the CEMAC region, he adds.

## AfDB's "active portfolio in Cameroon is the most important within the Central African region" (AfDB's vice president for regional integration)

By signing, on July 2, an agreement to build the AfDB's regional offices for the Central African region in Yaoundé, Khaled Sherif, vice president in charge of regional development for the institution, outlined some of the reasons Cameroon was chosen to host the headquarters.

*"The bank's active portfolio in Cameroon is the most important within the Central African region. To date, it is evaluated at XAF1,313 billion,"* Khaled Sherif said.

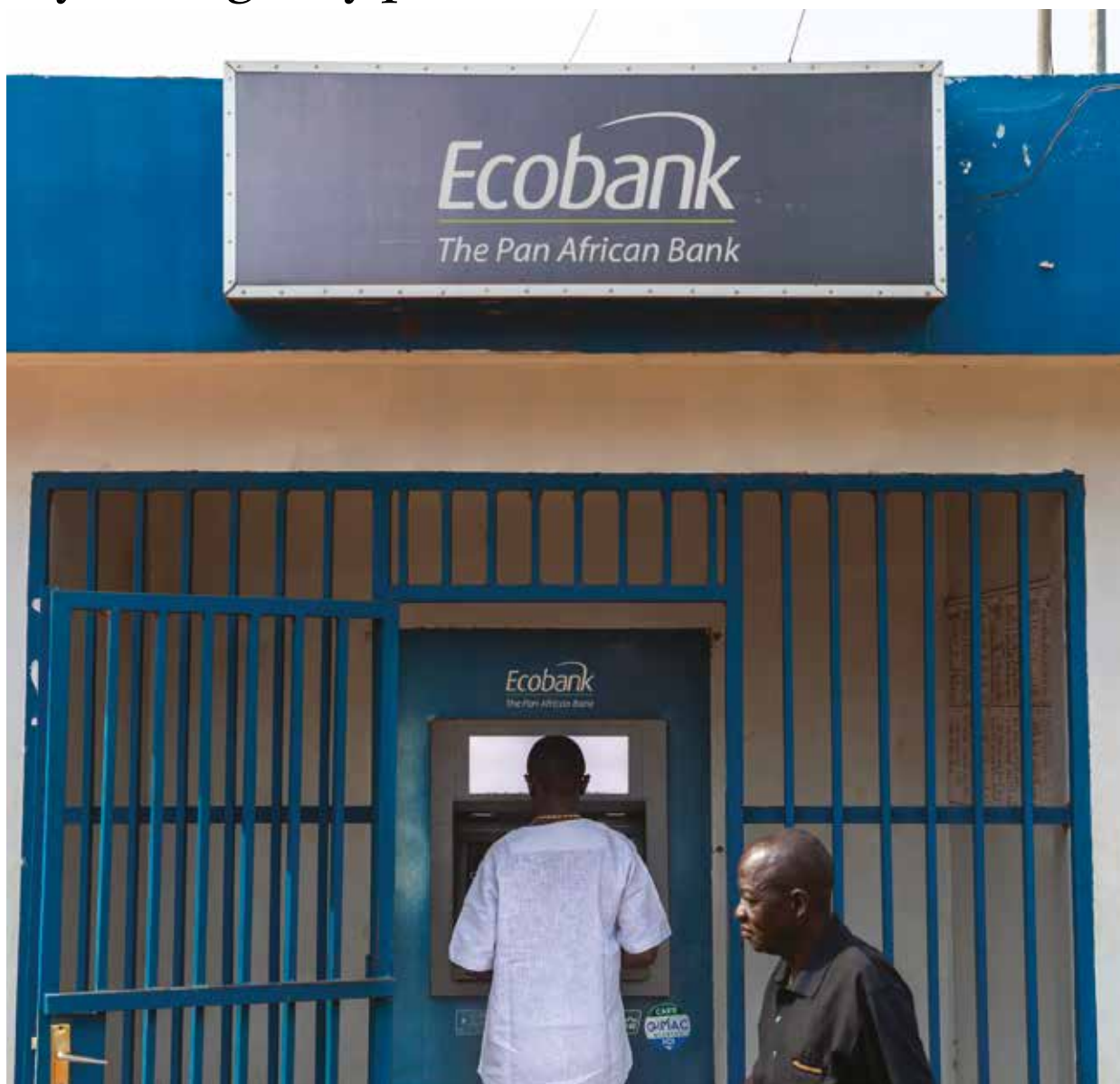
He added that with its geographic location, at the centre of the region; it is conferred a strategic and important position.

Cameroon's minister of foreign affairs Lejeune Mbella Mbella who signed the host agreement indicated that the country was honoured to host this headquarters. He reminded that president Paul Biya had agreed for the headquarters to be built in Yaoundé since May 9, 2018. The new headquarters will have jurisdiction over Congo, Central African Republic, DR Congo and Gabon. *"The goal is to bring the bank closer to its member states to favor integration in Central Africa,"* the minister of foreign affairs said.

The first project funded by the AfDB in Cameroon is the construction of Douala airport's terminal in 1972. To date, 114 projects have been implemented for a total commitment of 2,913 billion of accounting units, which is about XAF2,360 billion.



## Ecobank to invest additional XAF25 bln in a 3-year urgency plan



Célestine Ketcha Courtès, Cameroon's minister of urban development, presided the relaunch of the road works that fall within the framework of the 3-year urgency plan Planut. During the ceremony on June 26, 2019, in Yaoundé, the official indicated that president Paul Biya has renewed the Planut's funding agreement with "financial partner" Ecobank for an investment

of XAF25 billion extensible to XAF60 billion.

Célestine Ketcha Courtès invited business leaders to send the project execution plans within 48 hours, and site journals at the end of every month. Engineering firms were tasked to find workers.

The Planut is funded by five banks namely, BGFI, Standard Chartered Bank, Banque Atlantique, Ecobank

and Deutsche Bank.

In the 2018 budget execution report, Cameroon's ministry of finance criticized the unclear spending for the Planut projects. The lack of clarification has a negative impact on the budget because *"all these projects are paid via cash advances that generate an important volume of debts that require large budgetary coverage,"* the ministry wrote.

# AGRIBUSINESS

## A kilogram of “Pure quality” cocoa costs about XAF600 more than standard cocoa

XAF1,650; this is how much a kilogram of cocoa beans from excellence centers is bought by French chocolate makers. These excellence centers were built in the country's production basins in the framework of a partnership between French chocolate makers and the Coffee-cocoa board CICC.

This is far above the maximum of XAF1,060 per kilo (and a minimum of XAF1,020) paid to farmers that do not produce beans that match the quality of those from excellence centers. According to Christophe Bertrand, the French chocolate maker that brought Cameroonian cocoa to his peers' attention, this price is a result of the label “committed chocolate makers” launched months ago. “With this label, French chocolate makers are committed to buying this quality cocoa from Cameroonian farmers' cooperatives. This year, we are buying it at XAF1,650 per kilogram,” he explains adding that every year, this price can be discussed. The cocoa beans excellence centers are constructions equipped with specific fermentation and drying equipment. Coupled with a quality assurance scheme, these excellence



centers help produce “pure quality” cocoa.

In view of the advantages provided by these centers, the cocoa board plans to build them around the country. In the long term, these centers will be built in the 36 regions to provide access to more than 1,500

young producers from the “New Generation” program.

The “New Generation” program was launched to attract young people into cocoa production. In 7 years, it has helped establish more than 2,500 hectares of new cocoa trees.

## CDC still expecting remaining XAF9 bln of promised XAF13 bln to pay salary arrears

In June 2019, Cameroon authorized XAF13 billion to be provided to CDC to help it pay its salary arrears. Till July 5, 2019, CDC, the agribusiness confronted with various

difficulties due to the Anglophone crisis, received only XAF3.7 billion. A little more than XAF9 billion is thus still expected. Officially, the 22,000 workers em-

ployed by CDC, most of whom have been forced into technical unemployment due to violence perpetrated by separatists, demand between nine and twelve months of arrears.



## Sodecoton expects 600,000 tons of yearly cotton production by 2025



During the sixth edition of Yaoundé international agribusiness fair, ended on July 7, 2019, Cameroonian cotton producer Société de développement du coton (Sodecoton) reiterated its ambition to reach 600,000 tons of yearly cotton production by 2025. During the 2018-2019 campaign, it had already reached a record of 320,000 tons.

According to the company's managing director Mohamadou Bayero Bounou, to reach this target, Sodecoton plans to develop high-yielding seed varieties instead of introducing genetically modified crops as planned initially. He revealed that Sodecoton and its research partners, CIRAD and IRAD notably, have elaborated convention-

al varieties that are not genetically modified but provide up to 3.5 tons per hectare.

*"A well-elaborated and applied technological itinerary as well as a cautious insecticide treatment programme allow better management of parasitic attacks in the production zone and obtain better yields," he said.*

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## Cameroon: CDC produced only 878 tons of rubber out of targeted 4,000 tons due to Anglophone crisis

In H1, 2019, Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) produced only 878 tons of rubber out of the targeted 4,000 tons. This was revealed by the corporation's general director Franklin Ngoni Njie, during a visit of the Cameroonian minister of agricul-

ture at CDC's headquarters on July 5, 2019. According to the general director, this 23% realisation rate is mainly due to the anglophone crisis that has already forced CDC to shut down its banana production activities. He explained that to date, only

seven out of the company's eleven rubber plantations are operational, in Mounjo. At the same time, CDC's two processing units located in Penda Mboko and Tiko currently operate at 10% to 20% of their nominal capacity due to insecurity in the two Anglophone regions.

# CDC's palm oil production dropped drastically in H1, 2019

**Like its banana sector, Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC)'s palm oil sector has started a downward spiral.**

According to figures published on July 5, 2019, CDC produced only 2,100 tons out of the 17,400 tons production target for H1, 2019.

The corporation's management indicates that this is due to the insecurity created by anglophone separatists. Because of this insecurity, only three of its seven oil palm plantations are operational, workers having deserted the remaining ones.

Authorized sources reveal that those three plantations are also not

operating at their full capacity. In addition, CDC sometimes processes its palm oil at the production plants of Socapalm, another operator in the sector.

## 16 WORKERS KILLED

Since the start of the Anglophone crisis in 2017, CDC has been going through hard times. Since September 2018, it disappeared from the registry of Cameroonian banana exporters because some of its banana plantations have been converted into training grounds by separatists. They do not hesitate to brutalize or even kill workers stubborn enough to come to work.

According to the high management, since the start of this crisis, 16 workers have been killed while 98 have been injured during the separatists' attacks.

Apart from these human losses, CDC is also financially affected. Its management indicates that it needs XAF29 billion to recover.

In detail, Franklin Ngoni Njie, its general director explains, XAF7 billion is needed in the rubber sector, XAF14 billion in the banana sector and XAF7 billion for the palm oil sector. The remaining XAF1 billion is to be used to pay salary arrears.





## Cameroon exported 14,205 tons of banana in June 2019



In June 2019, Cameroon exported 14,205 tons of banana, the banana association Assobacam indicates. Compared with the 16,979 tons exported in June 2018, this represents a drop by more than 2,700 tons. During the period under re-

view, PHP, subsidiary of French group Compagnie fruitière de Marseille, exported 13,021 tons while Boh Plantations exported 1,184 tons. Due to security and financial challenges amid the Anglophone regions' separatist crisis, CDC is still

absent from the register of banana exporters in Cameroon. Let's note that the volume of banana exported in June 2019 is above that of April 2019, which remains the month with the lowest banana exports during H1, 2019.

## Forest revenues grew 122% YoY to XAF32 billion in 2018

In 2018, Cameroon generated XAF32 billion in forest revenues, the ministry of forestry indicates. Year to year, this represents a 122.76% increase. According to the ministry, forest tax represents 33.64% of the revenues. It indicates that this above-target performance is due to three factors. These factors are notably high wood

demand, the valorization of waste wood from forest exploitation and an increase of woods sold by auction. During the year under review, Cameroon exported 1,143,296.4 m3 of woods and 2,259.02 tons of non-wood forest products valued at XAF2.33 billion. In the wood-energy sector, the country put

18,123.84 metric tons of fuel woods and 1,915.81 metric tons of charcoal in the market. Revenues generated by the fauna sub-sector is estimated at XAF646.3 million. Let's note that the eight communes surrounding hunting zones collect part of the wildlife fees included in the leasing contracts.



## Affected by supply difficulties, tomato price rises significantly in the Far-North



In Maroua markets in the Far-North, a crate of tomatoes is now XAF14,000, L'œil du Sahel reveals. Three months ago, that same crate would have cost XAF3,000. Due to the dramatic price increase, *"a pile of four tomatoes currently is sold at XAF400 while between December [2018] and March [2019],*

*this same pile was XAF50,"* says Biri Adamou, a trader interviewed by the above-mentioned media.

According to retailers, this price increase was created by supply difficulties. They indicate that tomato culture has been dropped in numerous production basins in the Far-North to be replaced by millet

and corn growing. These two cereals are essential in people's diet in the northern regions in Cameroon. Because of these shifts in farmers' growing habits, retailers are obliged to buy their tomatoes in Adamaoua, which is hundreds of kilometers from the Far-North.

## In 2018, Cameroon headed the Top10 wood suppliers to Vietnam

Cameroon headed the top10 of Vietnam's wood suppliers in 2018, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) reveals in its sectoral report covering the June 16-30, 2019 period. With wood exports to Vietnam valued at \$215.8 million or XAF125 billion during the period under review (a year to year rise by about XAF10 billion), Cameroonian timber

growers outranked countries like Belgium, Congo, China, the USA, Ghana, Malaysia, Cambodia and Angola.

Let's note that despite the FLEGT (Forest Law for Enforcement, Governance and Trade) regulation deemed more stringent on the origin of wood imported by the European Union, this common area remained the leading destination for

Cameroonian woods in 2018. China came second according to figures published by the ITTO.

Logging, which has become more stringent recently, is the largest non-oil exports revenues provider in Cameroon. The ITTO expects this activity to grow more in the coming years because of the commissioning of Kribi deepwater port in South Cameroon in March 2018.

## Cameroon gets closer to its 2020 fisheries production target with 293,000 tons of production in 2018

Between 2014 and 2018, Cameroon's yearly fish production grew from 252,214 to 292,675 tons, the ministry of livestock and fisheries indicates. This represents a notable increase by 40,461 tons within four years or a yearly increase by more than 10,000 tons.

According to the ministry, this increase is 98% closer to the 2020

production target. It is made possible by numerous actions implemented. These are notably better monitoring of coastal areas, the reduction of post-capture losses and the development of commercial aquaculture. To reduce illegal fishing, an agreement has also been signed with the ministry of defence. Young people were also encouraged to join the sector.

In the aquaculture sector, the ministry indicates that during the period under review, production has risen from 2,166 tons in 2014 to 5,214 tons in 2018. This increase which is 65% closer to the 2020 target is due to the promotion of entrepreneurship in the sector and the development of commercial aquaculture with strong involvement of the private sector.

## Cameroon: Target of 600,000 tons [of cocoa] by 2020 will probably not be met (Government)

Between 2014 and 2018, the volume of yearly cocoa production in Cameroon rose from 281,000 tons to 336,000. This is revealed by the ministry of agriculture in the report of the implementation of the rural sector's development strategy.

According to the ministry, this rise is due to the restoration of old orchards, the increase in crop areas and projects in the framework of the ministry's coffee-cocoa sectors' relaunch strategy.

Despite this increase, the ministry writes, *"the target of 600,000 tons by 2020 will probably not be met."*

This statement is not much of a surprise. In 2018, the Inter Patronal Groupings of Cameroon published a report on the impact of the Anglophone crisis on national economy. The report reveals that the SouthWest has lost its place as the nation's leading cocoa producing region. According to the grouping, this region's cocoa sales dropped from 45.45% to 32% during the 2017-2018 campaign, representing a decrease by 43,000 tons. The monetary loss is



estimated at XAF56 billion of export revenues.

For the 2018-2019 campaign, based on the critical security environ-

ment, the grouping forecasted between 60,000 tons and 100,000 tons of losses.

# ENERGY

## Orange Cameroon launches energy distribution offer with solar kits

Orange Cameroon just launched its energy distribution offer via solar kits, internal sources reveal. Baptized Orange Énergie, this offer also includes satellite internet and television and can be paid via the operator's Mobile Money service. The various kits offered to residents are constituted of a central unit, a solar panel and three bulbs. Depending on the client's available resources, a 4G box can be added for internet connection and a satellite television set.

The price for this service is comprised between XAF205 thousand and XAF379 thousand (payable within 12 months). It comes with a 2-year guarantee and customer service. Orange Cameroon thus joins Total in the promotion of solar energy in Cameroon. For years now, this oil company has been selling Awango-branded solar lamps. Total indicates that it sells more than 90,000 solar lamps yearly in Cameroon. These offers contribute to the diversification of the country's energy

mix, which is largely dominated by hydroelectricity and thermal energy.

In the mix, solar, biomass and wind energies barely represent 1%.



## The construction of Mbakaou mini hydropower plant launched by a private producer

On June 20, 2019, the foundation stone of the Mbakaou mini hydropower plant was laid in Adamaoua. The project carried out by an independent producer IED Invest Cameroon will generate 1.4 MW of energy extensible to 2.8 MW. Officially, this infrastructure, which

will cost XAF4.5 billion (including the construction of the transport line), will be delivered in 2020. Mbakaou mini hydropower plant will provide energy to 3,000 households in Tibati. The energy produced by IED Invest Cameroon will be bought by Eneo in the framework of an agreement

signed on June 16, 2016.

*"This project will help Eneo replace the costly energy from Tibati and Mbakaou thermal power plants with clean energy and save about XAF300 million per year,"* Adolphe Ndjouke Thome, general secretary at the ministry of water and energy, explains.



## GDS Orion Solar to invest XAF15 billion in Ngaoundéré solar plant (20MW)



GDS Orion Solar plans to invest XAF15 billion in the construction of its 20MW solar plant in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon. This information was revealed on June 21, 2019, during the signature of an investment agreement by the investment promotion agency API and GDS Orion Solar. With this agreement, the energy project will benefit from the incentives provided by the 2013 law on private investments in Cameroon. This law amended in 2017 grants various tax and tariff incentives to investing companies for five to ten years.

GDS Orion Solar indicates that the Ngaoundéré solar plant, which will become the largest of such infrastructures in the country, will help provide 290 jobs. Apart from providing energy to the population, it will help diversify the country's energy mix in which solar, wind and biomass energy represents less than 1% of the whole mix. The choice of making Ngaoundéré host the infrastructure is not by accident. Indeed, according to various studies, the three northern regions in Cameroon (Adamaoua, the North

and the Far-North) are the most exposed to the sun in the country. According to the energy regulator (Arsel), the average daily sun exposure in these parts is 5.8 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> while in the south, it is 4 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>. There is little information on GDS Orion Solar but some sources indicate that it is a joint-venture formed by French producer Générale du solaire and financial partners like Arborescence Capital, which has had interest in the Ngaoundéré project since its elaboration.

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## Russian oil company Lukoil eyes Cameroon's LNG

Cameroon is a good investment opportunity for LNG projects, according to Vagit Alekperov, president of leading Russian oil company Lukoil. He indicated this during the annual meeting of shareholders on June 20, 2019. Lukoil indicated that it wanted to develop a strong gas asset that will help produce LNG. This announcement falls within the

framework of Lukoil's new expansion strategy that plans for increased investments in Africa, where many basins are under-exploited, and to take advantage of the booming LNG market. Congo is the second targetted country. In the central African country, Lukoil recently signed an \$800 million agreement with New Age for

the acquisition of 25% stake in the Marine XII permit. Recently, sources close to the company indicated that it was preparing large projects in Ghana and Nigeria. In Ghana, for instance, it is present in the DW/CTP permit where only crude oil has been discovered to date.

## Government's domestic gas subsidies up from XAF32 bln to XAF35 bln in 2018 (CSPH)

In Cameroon, the oil products' price stabilization institution CSPH provided XAF35 billion to subsidize domestic gas during the 2018 fiscal year.

Compared with the XAF32.6 billion provided during the 2017 fiscal year, this represents an increase of about XAF3 billion. According to the CSPH, *"the strong rise in gas consumption calls for increased imports to fill the gap in national production."*

During the year under review, Société nationale des hydrocarbures (SNH) supplied about 10,000 metric tons of domestic gas in the Cameroonian market. This represents 463 loads of tankers and 736,702 cylinders of 12.5 kilograms, which are used by households.

The CSPH adds that this 12.5kg cylinder of gas that Cameroonians usually buy at XAF6,500 in fact costs between XAF10,000 and XAF11,000. This means that the state subsidizes between XAF3,500 and XAF4,500 per 12.5-kilogram cylinder of domestic gas.



## SNH supplies clean and cheap energy to 41 companies using GDC's distribution network

Société nationale des hydrocarbures (SNH), Cameroon's company that negotiates oil and gas contracts, informs that on June 1, 2019, 41 companies were connected to the distribution network built by Gaz du Cameroun (GDC).

According to the SNH, those companies are now using natural gas as power source.

The state-owned company indicates that the network, which now spans

over fifty kilometers, is being extended to allow the connection of more companies.

GDC, subsidiary of Victoria Oil & Gas, is SNH's partner in the Logbaba association, which launched the production of natural gas at the Logbaba gas field in Douala.

This production helps supply clean energy, which is cheaper than fuel and gasoline, to companies located in Bassa and Bonabéri.

The average daily production of Logbaba plant exploited by GDC at the start of 2019 was 8.5 million standard cubic feet. This represents a 51% quarter to quarter increase. This year, the record level of 12.96 million standard cubic feet was reached on January 18, 2019.

The SNH estimates that the quantity of domestic gas supplied in the market between January 1 and April 30, 2019, is 8,058.61 tons.

## Cameroonian Georges Bassalang Bolemen appointed Tradex Equatorial Guinea's managing director



Cameroon's native Georges Bassalang Bolemen has been appointed as the managing director of Tradex Equatorial Guinea. This is revealed by the Cameroonian oil products dealer Tradex in a note published July 1. In the note, Tradex indicates that the newly appointed executive was chosen by the Equatorial Guinean subsidiary's administrative board during its meeting of June 27, 2019. The CV presented by Tradex informs

that the new managing director is an oil engineer who graduated from École nationale supérieure du pétrole et des moteurs in France. He began his professional career in 1998 with OPEL in Germany. He continued with Mercedes before working at Robert Bosch and General Electric later. Georges Bassalang Bolemen started his career in the oil industry in 2003 with Total. In December 2011, he was hired by Tradex as the Key accounts

manager, a position he filled till June 27, 2019.

Tradex Equatorial Guinea whose social capital is XAF1.5 billion was founded in 2019 to sell petroleum products and byproducts. Since 2015, Tradex has been operating in Equatorial Guinea in maritime bunkering, in Luba Freeport's exclusive economic zone notably, thanks to a partnership with Luba Oil Terminal Equatorial Guinea (Loteg).



# Eneo plans targeted cut of energy provision to public institutions because of “close to XAF100 billion” debt

**The cash-flow problems Eneo, public energy distribution group in Cameroon, is going through seem for a while now to have worsened in H1, 2019.**

In an internal note seen by Business In Cameroon, the company's general director described a more than awkward financial situation. “We've just completed an H1, 2019 during which our financial situation greatly worsened,” the general director Joël Nana

during this month of July 2019. The said authorized sources reveal that these measures could range from a reduction of the energy supplied to state-owned institutions to targeted power-cuts.

One of the first victims of these measures would be Alucam that uses more than 40% of the energy generated by Eneo. According to our sources, this company, which is still unable to recover from the departure of its strategic partner Rio Tinto, has increasing

translate into the reduction of non-essential spendings by 10%, the elaboration of a list of projects that can be delayed till the new fiscal year and rationing of thermal power plants' fuel supplies.

Recently, information circulated announcing negotiations for the sale of British investment fund Actis' stake (51%) in Eneo. Internally, this information is relativized. “This is a wrong interpretation. Indeed Eneo is currently negotiating with many



Kontchou wrote to its executives. According to him, this situation is due to a below-target reduction of distribution losses, spendings that are not in line with available resources, debt recoveries in drastic drop because of an accumulation of debts owed by state-owned institutions. An authorised source at ENEO indicates that these debts are close to XAF100 billion to-date.

In a bid to recover those debts, the energy distribution company is planning to take drastic measures

problems paying its energy bills. Eneo also expects government and public institutions' debts to be securitized. That way, those securities can help raise funds from banks and investors.

## IS ACTIS, THE BRITISH INVESTMENT FUND THAT CONTROLS ENEO, ON THE LEAVE?

In the note, the general director also recommended urgent safeguard measures. Officially, this should

financers to raise funds in order to implement its investment programme. One of the investors offered to enter into the capital of this company. This is how the information about Actis' departure came to be... When the concession agreement was being extended, the government, which feared Actis' departure, was advised to introduce a term setting a deadline before which Actis could not leave,” an internal source indicates. It adds that this deadline could not possibly be one year.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## French firm EJN Negri commissioned to build a new wharf for oil tankers at Douala port

French firm EJN Negri has been commissioned to build a new wharf in Douala autonomous port, the port authority informs.

The new infrastructure's foundation piles have been laid, the authority indicates. It adds that the construction of the platform's concrete structures

has started. *"Next comes the construction of the pedestrian bridge, pipeline, 2 mooring dolphins and 2 berthing dolphins,"* the port wrote adding that EJN Negri has already installed defence devices and their shields.

Let's note that about 18 years ago, the Douala-Bonabéri port's mooring

dolphins were destroyed by two accidents. Quay N°1 of the conventional port had then been temporarily prepared for oil tankers' unloading operations.

However, with the important fire hazards, the construction of a new wharf has become crucial.

## NHPC advised to outsource some of Nachtigal dam's construction works to local SMEs



Cameroonian minister of water and energy Gaston Eloundou Essomba recently visited the site of Nachtigal dam.

During his visit, he advised the company in charge to outsource some of

the dam's construction works to local SMEs. He also expressed his will to see most of the workers on this site be residents of neighbouring areas. With a generation capacity of 420MW, Nachtigal dam whose com-

missioning is expected in 2023, is to be the largest in Cameroon. It will boost the country's capacity by 30%. This infrastructure will be built by a consortium led by Besix Group, a Belgian construction company.

## Yaoundé creates its second refuse dumping site



Gilbert Tsimi Evouna, Cameroon's representative at Yaoundé urban community informs that a second dumping site has been created. Spanning over 25 hectares, the dumping site is located in Ongot, Mefou and Akono department. *"We are pleased to announce that financial transactions with residents and procedures with authorities in charge of land deeds are completed. The documents of the three land deeds was officially handed to Yaoundé*

*urban community on June 24, 2019,"* he indicated.

The official added that the urban community spent XAF3 billion on this dumping site and access roads would be completed soon. Gilbert Tsimi Evouna informed that the maintenance of the first site located in Nkolfoulou is being planned. Before the completion of Ongot site, Urban DNA dumped its refuse at the Nkolfoulou site. Urban DNA is the second operator

commissioned by Yaoundé to complement Hysacam in its road, market and public places' sweeping and refuse collection task. The company was chosen because Hysacam was unable to collect all of the about 1,300 tons of refuse produced in Yaoundé daily. Hysacam on the other hand claims that its inability to fulfil its mission is the result of late payments by the government.



# INDUSTRY

## Glass factory Socaver initiates customer visits to acquire new market shares

Glass factory Société camerounaise de verrerie (Socaver), subsidiary of Société anonyme des brasseries du Cameroun (SABC), informs that it has initiated customer visits in West and Central Africa. The goal of these visits is to assess their level of satisfaction and inquire about their bottle, crates and plastic needs. Socaver indicates that it could po-

tentially supply 65 cl and 50 cl bottles to Brasseries du Congo (Heineken group). It also plans to get in contact with Bralico in Congo and Brassivoire in Côte-d'Ivoire. *"This national and international reconquest helped fill the 2019 order book. The sales team is already at work to sell the 36,000 tons that will be produced in 2020,"* Socaver indicates.

It also reveals that it convinced some local clients to work with them again. Those are notably Guinness Cameroon SA and Union camerounaise des brasseries (UCB) that have not bought bottles from Socaver in the last ten years. It is also working with brewer BVS to develop new products and negotiations with Sofavinc.

## Comil SA and Sadisuc Sarl to invest XAF5 bln in sugar production in Cameroon

On June 21, 2019, Cameroon's agency for investments promotion API signed two investment agreements with Comil SA and Sadisuc Sarl. These two companies plan to invest XAF5 billion in sugar production in the country. Thanks to these agreements, the two companies will benefit from the tax incentives provided by the 2013 law (amended in 2017) on private investments in Cameroon.

Comil SA will invest XAF3.5 billion in a sugar production plant employing 300 people. Sadisuc Sarl plans to invest XAF1.5 billion to expand its Douala-based production unit. This expansion project will create 95 additional jobs.

These two investment agreements are part of a lot of 6. Included, the number of agreements signed by the API since 2014, when the 2013 investment promotion law was created, has reached 181.

Let's remind that in 2015-2017, Cameroon's sugar imports were estimated at XAF64.4 billion according to the ministry of trade.



## Search for financing for new Ngaoundéré oil-mill “well advanced,” Sodecoton informs

Société de développement du coton (Sodecoton), flagship of North Cameroon's agribusiness, informs that its search of financing for the construction of a new oil-mill in Ngaoundéré are “*well advanced*.”

According to Sodecoton, the new mill will help meet the ever-growing needs of the Southern part. The company expects its cottonseed production to reach 400,000 tons by 2022. Oil and by-products' production should follow the same pattern, Sodecoton indicates adding that the corollary of such increase will be growth in the monthly production of various livestock feeds to 100,000 bags. Let's note that Sodecoton has already upgraded its Maroua oil-mill with a XAF2.5 billion loan contracted from Afriland First Bank. With this investment, the plant's milling capacity rises from 70,000 tons (in 2016) to 110,000 tons. Next will come Garoua plant's upgrading thanks to an outstanding loan of XAF6 billion from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa.



## Chinese agriculture machinery manufacturer Cic Taihua plans to build an assembly plant in Cameroon

Executives from Chinese firm Cic Taihua recently met members of the Cameroonian chamber of agriculture Capef in Yaoundé. According to official sources, this meeting was to identify the agriculture machinery needed by local farmers. Indeed, the firm plans to build an

agriculture machinery assembly plant in the country.

*“We don't plan to manufacture heavy machinery for producers who are majorly small farmers,”* one of the executives indicated. He also revealed that his firm was able to adapt to farmers' specific needs.

According to Cic Taihua, once the plant is built, farmers who want to can purchase agriculture machinery on credit. With the profit made thanks to those machines, they can be able to pay the instalments.

## American Taylor Guitars moves to secure its supply with 20,000 tree planting project

Since 2016, Crelicam, subsidiary of American acoustic guitar manufacturer Taylor Guitars, launched a project aimed at planting 20,000 ebony trees by 2021 in Cameroon. According to Barbara Wight (photo), Crelicam's finance director, *"Protecting this endangered species means protecting the music world... and (means) that the music coming from Cameroon's forest will continue."* She indicates that Taylor Guitars

has been using Cameroonian ebony tree for more than 40 years to manufacture globally renowned acoustic guitars.

The investment is estimated at more than half a billion CFA Francs and, according to Barbara Wight, cited by Reuters, it will secure Taylor Guitars' supply of ebony trees for the coming 1,000 years.

The American group employs 60 Cameroonians. In 2014, via its local

subsidiary Crelicam, it received the business excellence award. This yearly award is presented to American firms that play a key role around the world in terms of sustainable development, respect for human and employment rights, environmental protection, market liberalization, transparency and other democratic values.

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## I.Cuir Sarl to invest XAF960 mln in the leather sector in the North

Cameroonian company I.Cuir Sarl plans to invest XAF960 million in a hide processing unit in Maroua, Cameroon. This investment will benefit from the investment incentives planned by the 2013 law on private investment in the country. An agreement has been signed in that regard by the company's managing director and the director of SMEs promotion agency that has a single window aimed at implementing the incentive measures. According to I.Cuir's promoters, between 2 and 5 years of operation, the plant will provide jobs to about 150 people. This is a real employment opportunity for the northern region, which is considered as the poorest in Cameroon.





## Cameroon nears 2020 palm oil production target with 413,000 tons produced in 2018



Between 2014 and 2018, Cameroon's palm oil production recorded a notable rise from 343,000 tons to 413,000 tons, the ministry of agriculture reveals.

For the ministry, this production is closer to the target of 450,000 tons by 2020. It indicates that though the target had been underestimated, the positive performance is due to the

actions undertaken in that sector. These are notably the implementation of a palm oil and rubber development strategy, the inclusion of the palm oil sector in the value chain development programme and provision of subsidies to producers. Indeed, on February 14, 2018, the union of palm oil producers Unexpalm signed an agreement

with the government for a program to support fertilization of palm gardens in rural areas. Valued at XAF3.6 billion, the 8-year program is a government initiative to provide subsidized fertilizers to producers. Thanks to this initiative, fertilizer prices have been reduced by 25% and a multi-year perpetuation fund has been set.

# MINING

## 300 new mining sites discovered in 5 regions in 2014-2019 in the framework of World Bank- backed programme Precasem



Between 2014 and 2019, 300 new mining sites were discovered during exploration operations in Cameroon. This was revealed by the minister of mines Dodo Ndocké, during a press conference prior to the Cameroon International Mining Exposition (Cime) that will take place on 2-4 September 2019 in Yaoundé. These sites were discovered in the East, the West, the North, the Centre and in Adamaoua. The minerals discovered on these sites are exten-

sive. They range from gold, zinc, rare earth, uranium, nickel and rutile to manganese.

The exploration operations were organized in the framework of the project *Projet de renforcement des capacités dans le secteur minier* (Precasem), funded by the World Bank Group to boost the country's mining sector. Thanks to that project, in January 2014, the government initiated the airborne geophysical surveying of 160 thousand Km<sup>2</sup> in six

regions. In addition, on January 24, 2017, Cameroon officially launched a geological mapping and geochemical sampling programme in those regions. The programme was entrusted to three cabinets, BRGM, BEIG3 and GTK namely.

The goal of these projects is to evaluate the country's actual mining potential. Let's note that before the Precasem, only 40% of the country's territory had been checked for mining resources.



# TRANSPORTATION

## Egyptair to launch Cairo-Ndjamena-Douala line on July

Egyptian air carrier Egyptair will launch the Cairo-Ndjamena-Douala line. Three times a week (Monday, Thursday and Sunday), the carrier will fly from Cairo in Egypt to Douala in Cameroon, passing through Ndjamena in Chad.

According to Airlineroute, these flights will be operated with Airbus A320 that can accommodate 16 business-class passengers and 129 in economy class. The schedule is as follows: departure from Cairo at 8:15 am to arrive in Ndjamena at 11:25 am and land in Douala at 2:50 pm. The return flight will take off from Cameroon at 2:50 pm; depart from Chad at 5:30 pm to finally land in Cairo at 10:30 pm.

The carrier is coming to Cameroon amid strong changes in security measures at Douala airport. Indeed, starting from July 8, 2019, the passengers' screening and luggage check, which were once carried out by a police unit, will be done by agents of Cameroon's aviation authority.



## Chadian air carrier Tchadia Airlines opens subsidiary in Cameroon

Chadian air carrier "Tchadia Airlines" recently opened a subsidiary in Douala, Cameroon. Business in Cameroon learnt from a notarial deed signed on June 7, 2019. The subsidiary, whose legal representative is Hailu Tesfaye Girma, is now part of the 19 air carriers

that operate regular flights towards Cameroon.

Other carriers such as Egyptair, Air Algérie, Air Sénégal, Arik Air and Tropical Air Gabon also submitted demands to operate flights toward Cameroon.

According to the Aviation authority,

this appeal for Cameroon "*testifies of the reliability*" of the current monitoring system in the country.

Let's note that the corporate office of Tchadia Airlines S.A, whose social capital is XAF9 billion, is in Ndjamena, Chad.



## Aviation authority's safety division officially takes charge of passengers and luggage check at Douala airport

On July 8, 2019, travellers embarking or landing at Douala international airport should have noticed the absence of policemen and customs at various airport security posts. In fact, they have been replaced by agents of the safety division newly created by the aviation authority in application of the presidential

decree of January 8, 2019. This decree approved the implementation of a civil aviation security programme (Programme national de sûreté de l'aviation civile du Cameroun-PNSAC). According to an official from the aviation authority, the policemen and customs officials are not leaving

the airport. They will instead devote themselves to the tasks entrusted to them by the decree. The new regulation provides that additional screenings usually performed by carriers should henceforth be conducted at screening windows at the entrance of departure lounges.

## Douala port to receive new dredging equipment by end July 2019



The port authority informs that by the end of July 2019, a new dredging equipment for Douala-Bonabéri port platform will be received. It is a Beaver 50 type suction dredger for water bodies and docks with assistance boats and its accessories, the port authority indicates. Soon, an

Easy Dredge TSHD 3000 type suction dredger will be acquired for the port's access channel. The renovation dredger Chantal Biya, which has been unusable for nine months now, will also be soon completed. The port authority reminds that the port's dredging was costly but now, it

will be monetized via dredge materials' recycling. The costs can thus be reduced. According to estimates, the port authority will save more than XAF5 billion (amortization excluded) per year. These funds can thus be used for 3-year dredging.

## Airport tax revenues went up by more than 100% to XAF11.2 billion in 2018



Cameroon generated XAF11.2 billion in airport tax during the 2018 fiscal year, the finance ministry reveals in its 2018 budget execution report. Compared to the XAF5.2 billion raised a year earlier, this represents more than a 100% year to year increase.

This improvement is primarily due to an increase in the country's air traffic during the period under review. Indeed, the state-owned carrier realized its best performance since launch in 2011 but, foreign carriers were also attracted to Cameroon's sky.

The increase in this segment of tax revenues is also the result of a reform of this tax segment in March 2015. According to tax authorities, the reform consists in securing revenues by transferring its collection to carriers. Three years later, the reform seems to have produced significant results.

# ITC & TELECOM

## Telecom regulator slams XAF3.5 bln fine on Orange, MTN and Nexttel



XAF3.5 billion fine was slammed on MTN Cameroon, Orange Cameroon and Nexttel, a communique published by Philémon Zo'o Zame (photo), director of the Cameroonian telecom regulator indicates.

Respectively, MTN and Nexttel were fined XAF1 billion each while Orange was fined XAF1.5 billion.

According to the communique, this is due to "repeated breaches of the decree n° 2015/3759/PM of September 3, 2015, setting the terms and conditions for subscribers and terminals' identi-

*fication. These breaches include sales of pre-registered sim cards, sim cards' sales by road corners, phone numbers' activation without prior identification, and ownership of more than three sim cards by a single private person."*

The operators are also being fined for not implementing the recommendations of the 2017 electronic communications networks' audit commissioned by the government, despite their numerous promises to do so.

This audit realized by Swedish

Cybercom Group revealed that the operators' investments were not proportional to the increase in their subscriber base. It also indicated that there were technical deficiencies (non-compliance with international standards in terms of equipment and settings) and non-optimized networks.

Following the audit, operators were allowed up to six months to correct the identified shortcomings.



## Plant disease detection app Agrix Tech awarded 2019 special presidential prize for digital innovation



Agrix Tech, an app that detects plant diseases and finds a solution for them, has just been awarded the special presidential prize. This prize, awarding the best digital innovation this year, was handed out after a national competition during the digital innovation week organized by the ministry of posts and telecommunications on June 24-28, 2019.

*"Our project is the most innovative because it is about the small farmer who is ignored by everyone most of the time. You just have to take a picture of the affected plant with the app and it will detect the disease affecting your plant as well as the appropriate treat-*

*ment or inputs to use to boost your crops. One of the app's advantages is that it can be used without an internet connection. The diagnostics are given in many local languages to help our farmers who do not speak French or English. They just have to select a language,"* explains Dorothée Mvondo Nganti, co-sponsor of Agrix Tech. *"I am delighted and comforted because the head of state was not wrong by saying that digital economy is the big challenge of the century. Young people are the ones to take up the challenge (...) With the theme ; create, innovate and dare, the youth showed that they have understood the goals*

*of this competition. The quality of the projects and the number of participants indicates that the message was received and that the best is yet to come,"* said Minette Libom Li Likeng, Cameroon's minister of posts and telecommunications.

The whole value of the award is XAF15 million. It comprises of XAF6 million cash, a laptop, free internet connection for three months, and incubation in the innovation hub of Swedish equipment supplier Ericsson in Dubai. It also entitles the winner to meetings and experience sharing with Dubai-based startups.

# Yes, an officer of the Cameroonian army has been forbidden entry in the USA due to illegal trafficking of protected species

**TRUE**



A communique supposedly published by the American department of justice is being shared for days now. According to the said document, Jean-Claude Ango, a high-ranking officer of the Cameroonian army, has been forbidden from entering US territories because of protected species' trafficking. StopBlaBlaCam contacted the US

embassy, which confirmed the information. The embassy explains that the officer, his wife and his direct families cannot travel to the USA. The European Union's representation in Cameroon also reacted to this news by publishing a statement. *"Like many of Cameroon's partners, the EU has also taken note of the public designation. It is related to the seizure, in December 2017, of 216 tusks*

*and 81 elephant tails by the southern antenna of Dja wildlife reserve,"* the institution wrote.

The European Union reminds that it praised Cameroon and all the involved parties for their alertness. It also indicated its support in the fight against poaching and ivory trafficking.

# No, the Cameroonian government is not disbursing XAF54.5 billion to build the new headquarters of the National Assembly

**FALSE**



Is Cameroon disbursing XAF54.5 billion for the construction of the new headquarters of the National Assembly in Yaoundé? Well, this is not true.

Contrary to what is said on social networks, the construction of the new building to house the lower house of the Cameroonian Parliament is entirely financed

by China, it is a “no-counterpart gift.” This means that the money was given to Cameroon, without any material or monetary compensation. “It’s a gift from China. It means you are given money which is not to be refunded, unlike the loan that you will repay later. China is offering us this building. So the money is not from the state coffers. Officially, it is a gift, but

China is aiming for something else behind this donation. They may use it to convince us about something else in another area,” an economist explains. The new headquarters of the National Assembly will cover a 37,500 m<sup>2</sup> area. It will include a main block, a 400-seat hemicycle and auxiliary facilities.



# Yes, street medicines are banned in Cameroon



The sale of medicines on the street is prohibited in Cameroon, as in many other countries on the continent. Though people do not respect the regulation, the practice is indeed banned.

Article 53 of Act No. 90/035 of 10 August 1990 on the exercise and organization of the profession of pharmacist in Cameroon stipulates that no one, even a pharmacy diploma holder, is allowed to distribute

medicines on public roads, at fairs and markets.

A reminder of this was made by the Minister of Public Health, Manaouda Malachie, in a press release issued on July 10, 2019. In this address, the Minister *“draws the attention of those who carry out this illegal activity in stalls, kiosks, pro-pharmacies or even illegal storage stores, that they are liable to prosecution,”* in accordance with the law.

The illegal sale of medicines also affects people's health and the economy, since 40% of the drugs sold in Cameroon are smuggled, according to official data.

The minister intends to put an end to it with the operationalization of a squad to combat such practice. The squad's mission is to *“systematically seize and destroy these drugs and products, with the support of other administrations concerned.”*

# Yes, €1 is still about XAF655.9 in Cameroon this month of July 2019

**TRUE**



Despite the numerous denials, the rumors about a devaluation of the XAF used by CEMAC countries is still persistent. This month of July 2019, some Cameroonians started over again adamantly claiming that the XAF has been devalued against the Euro. According to them, €1 is now equal to XAF800, not the about XAF655.9 it used to be since the fixed parity instituted at the creation of the Euro. As attested by a communique signed by Cameroon's minister of finance Louis Paul Motaze, on July 2, 2019, the fixed parity

is still unchanged. The currency has thus not been devalued even though some people claim that they were offered a Euro at XAF800 during their transactions. Let's note that Cameroonian users could think that the local currency has been devalued because of the currency shortage being experienced in the country. In other words, there's not much Euro in the market. The demand being more important than the offer, it is illegally being overbid. This does not mean that there is a devaluation.

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix, Travail, Justice

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace, Work, Justice

MINISTRE DES FINANCES

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

00000438

MINIFORD de

07 JUL 2019

fixant la parité des principales devises étrangères et monnaie de la zone Franc.

LE MINISTRE DES FINANCES,

Vu la Constitution ;  
Vu le Code des Douanes CEMAC ;  
Vu le Règlement N°02/18/CEMAC/UMAC/CM portant réglementation des changes dans la CEMAC du 28 décembre 2018 ;  
Vu la Loi N°2018/022 du 11 décembre 2018 portant Loi de Finances de la République du Cameroun pour l'exercice 2019 ;  
Vu le Décret N°2018/090 du 02 mars 2018 modifiant et complétant certaines dispositions du Décret N°2011/008 du 09 décembre 2011 portant organisation du Gouvernement ;  
Vu le Décret N°2018/091 du 02 mars 2018 portant réajustement du Gouvernement ;  
Vu le Décret N°2013/066 du 28 février 2013 portant organisation du Ministère des Finances,

ARRÊTÉ :

TITRE I :

DISPOSITIONS GÉNÉRALES

Article 1<sup>er</sup> : - (1) le présent Arrêté fixe la parité des principales devises étrangères et monnaie de la zone Franc applicable du 05 juillet 2019 au 30 octobre 2019.

(2) Il s'agit de :

1 Dollar des Etats-Unis	USD	876,000
1 Dollar Canadien	CAD	426,890
1 Livre Sterling	GBP	714,110
1 Franc Suisse	CHF	390,500
1 Couronne Norvégienne	NOK	47,900
1 Couronne Danoise	DKK	87,910
1 Couronne Suédoise	SEK	81,810
1 Yen Japonais	JPY	6,370
1 Dollar Singapourien	SGD	425,300
1 Rand Sud-Africain	ZAR	40,310
1 Euro de l'Union Européenne	EUR	655,947
1 Dollar Hong Kong	HKD	72,750
1 Dollar Australien	AUD	400,300
1 Real Brésilien	BRL	150,800
1 Real Brésilien	BRL	150,700
1 Peso Argentin	ARS	13,440
1 Livre Égyptienne	EGP	24,470
1 Dollar d'Indonésie	IDR	140,800
1 Won Coréen	KRW	6,500
1 Peso Mexicain	MXN	20,330
1 Ringgit Malaisien	MYR	179,110
1 Dollar Neo-Zélandais	NZD	301,800



# No, the man in this picture was not beaten by Paul Biya's personal guards

**FALSE**



A picture is being shared on social media since the week started. According to some people, the man in this picture is a Cameroonian who was beaten by president Biya's personal guards. According to the rumors, the man was beaten because he was going to protest against the president at Intercontinental hotel in Geneva, Switzerland. Our investigation indicates that this picture was posted online a long time ago and that the man is not

even a Cameroonian.

A reverse-search on Google reveals that he is from Niger. According to an article published on February 1, 2018, by malisenegal.com, he was beaten for having an illicit affair with a married woman.

The woman's husband caught the lovers in their matrimonial home and decided to take things into his own hand. He then decided to rearrange the man's face.

*"I did nothing. I was dating a married woman but, when we started, she told*



*me her husband has travelled and is always not around. I just visited her one evening and, as it was late I spent the night there," the beaten lover said.*



## LEADER OF THE MONTH

# Cameroonian Ferdinand Ngon Kemoum becomes Oragroup's MD



Cameroonian financier and banker Ferdinand Ngon Kemoum became, on 1 June 2019, the new Managing Director of the pan-African banking group Oragroup, after former MD Malian Binta Touré Ndoeye stepped down.

Before Mr. Ngon came to this position, he has been the bank's Deputy Managing Director between October 2009 and September 2015 and then went to investment fund Emerging Capital Partners where he has occupied the position of Managing

Director and head of the Douala office.

But since June this year, the banker returned to his old firm as Managing Director. He comes back in a very good context marked by growing performances for Oragroup. Last year, the group reported a total balance sheet of XAF2,171 billion, 21% more than the previous year; and the new MD is expected to keep the company on this upward path. Ngon is the second Cameroonian banker promoted by Oragroup in a

year after fellow Josiane Tchoungui, who joined the bank in September 2018, was appointed MD of Orabank Benin, Oragroup's subsidiary in Benin.

Ferdinand Ngon Kemoum has worked in other banks such as Amity Bank Cameroon (now Atlantic Bank following a buyout), Banque Méridien Biao Cameroon and Meridien Bank Cameroon (which are no longer operational) and Afriland First Bank.

**BRM**

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