

# THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD IN CAMEROON

Reference: The Second and Third periodic report (Art. 1-15) of Cameroon to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN Doc. E/C.12/CMR/2-3)



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANoRF	African Network on the Right to Food
AES Sonel	Societe National d'Electricite
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
ACDIC	Action Camerounaise pour la Défense de l'Interet Commun
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
CESCR	Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
CEMAC	Economic monetary Communities for Central African States
CAMTEL	Cameroon Telephone
CAMAIR	Cameroon Airlines
CAR	Central African Republic
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women
CESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women
CDC	Cameroon Development Cooperation
CAPP	Cameroon Agricultural Policy and Planning Project
CPDM	Cameroon People Democratic Movement
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FIAN	FoodFirst Information and Action Network
FIMAC	Financement des Micro-réalisations Agricoles et Communautaires
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPIC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative
HEVECAM	Rubber Production Industry
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MBOSCUA	Mbororo Cultural, Social and Development Organisation
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
SEMRY	Société d'Expansion et de Modernisation de la Riziculture de Yagoua
SNEC	Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroon
SODERIM	Rice Development Cooperation
SODEBLE	Société de Développement pour la Culture et la Transformation du Blé
SCAN	Fruit Canning Industry
SODEPA	Société de Développement et d'Exploitation des Productions Animales
SOCAPALM	Société Camerounaise de Palmeries
U.S.	United States
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNVDA	Upper Noun Valley Development Authority
UN	United Nations
WFP	World Food Programme

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cameroon is a country situated on the Gulf of Guinea within the equatorial and tropical regions of Africa. It is well endowed with natural resources especially for agriculture. With a surface area of 475,442 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 19.406.100 inhabitants as at January 2010 there is ample cultivable land. In the far North, uncertain rainfall and a dense population combine to render food security a problem, but in general the country has been able to feed itself well. There are still vast rainforests in the southern part subject to rapid depletion through timber exploitation and population pressure.

The Government is sensitive about the importance of agriculture to the wellbeing of the State and is concerned to ensure that its position and role should not be undermined. Agriculture and livestock is the mainstay of the economy, accounting for close to 20% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and engaging over 60% of the active population mostly peasants who are responsible the production for over 80% of the food consumed across the country. Cameroon has important export crops such as coffee, cocoa, cotton, palm oil, bananas, fruits, rubber, tea and timber. Besides, petroleum is creating new conditions for growth.

However, over the past 15 years Cameroon has been importing significant quantities of food items such as rice, maize, onion, tomatoes, milk and poultry even though it has a clear comparative advantage in producing them. This has been very worrisome as it undermines local production potentials and pushes many producers out of the production chain as a result of unfair competition. Civil Society activist campaigning on food sovereignty have been very critical on the importation policies and have drawn the attention of the decision makers to this issue. A very impressive campaign undertaken was against the importation of frozen chicken in 2006, yielded a change in policy followed by other measures that boosted the local poultry sector.

Legal and institutional frameworks related to Right to Food initiatives such as the management of natural resources (forest, agricultural land, water and pasture lands), markets, and support systems apparently do not offer sufficient protection for natural resource dependent communities and the urban poor as they are often vulnerable to hunger and poverty. Large commercial plantations have displaced communities from their lands and huge fishing trawlers have cleared the coast lines of fish leaving local fishermen with dry nets and empty boats. Logging operations and other huge investors in the mining, power and oil sectors are favoured over forest dependent communities and intermediaries between produces and consumers face various hurdles in the marketing chain.

Peoples' Right to Food is hampered by several problems despite the huge production potentials. The Cameroon Movement on the Right to Food using the Guidelines on the Right to Food its assessment of the situation in Cameroon identifies the following limitations:

- Over centralization and a less efficient bureaucracy;
- Lack of synergy amongst the different key actors concerned with the rural sector and agricultural development;
- Insufficient budget allocation for agriculture coupled with mismanagement of resource;
- Insufficient personnel to effectively ensure the implementation of its agricultural production policies, programs and projects;
- Importation policies and related competition producing negative impacts on local systems and livelihood;
- Land tenure and secured access and control over land being big challenges for many communities and peasant farmers;
- Poorly developed transport infrastructure and access to remunerative markets;
- High cost of inputs and rising food prices with insufficient subvention in the agricultural production and support to vulnerable groups;
- Low level of mechanization and access to credits.

Cameroon, no doubt, is a country with great agricultural potentials which could play a very important role in poverty reduction and sustainable development in the country. Most agricultural production is coming from small-scale farms. Low-income farmers' account for the most of the staple food production that feeds the country and a very significant proportion of the national production is also sold to the sub region. Agriculture has important linkages with other sectors of the economy, implying a potentially high multiplier effects for economic growth. The success of Cameroon's agriculture is not only important for the producers and the nation, but has a significant impact on the realisation of the Right to Food in the central Africa sub region. This is because the Right to Food in this is guaranteed via South –South exchange via a huge network of peasants and local economic operators who survive thought the chain. The following recommendations are therefore necessary to be considered by the State to achieve this goal:

- Ensuring state's compliance with its obligation to protect producers especially small-scale producers against unfair competition, poor bargain, price volatility and natural disasters that result in significant loss of their production, which affect their access to food. In compliance of its obligation to fulfil the State should put in place support measures to cope with environmental externalities via regulations on order to maintain sustainability.
- Strengthening agricultural sector governance to perform to the optimum by creating an enabling environment for market chain functions, setting and enforcing fair standards and policies that take into consideration various particular needs of small holder producers and operators to maximize their potentials. Some issues where governance needs to be reflected include:



- ✓ ensuring food safety;
  - ✓ facilitating contract enforcement;
  - ✓ providing public investments;
  - ✓ negotiating on trade matters in line with states right to adequate food obligations;
  - ✓ organizing safety net for marginal groups;
  - ✓ defining access to and management arrangements for natural resources;
  - ✓ providing agricultural statistics and timely information on the markets.
- To adopt policy reforms on access to productive resources such as land, forestry, water to ensure that the interest of local communities are better protected and respected. The land ordinance of 1974 plays a crucial role in land administration and has serious consequences on security over land, distribution of land, land management (access to and control over land). Evidently, big investors and land brokers receive more attention and protection from the State with regards to land issues to the detriment of local communities and small scale producers who ironically account for over 80% of domestic food production and employs over 60% of the active population. The current land ordinance needs to be reformed to provide sufficient protection for small holder producers and ensure that communities' lands are preserved via customary land regulation for present and future generations, guaranteeing the sustainability of access to food for the Cameroonian population. In a similar manner, the 1994 Forestry and Wildlife Laws should be reviewed to ensure that the interest of forest communities are better protected and respected with regards to logging activities.
  - Economic, social and cultural rights should be incorporated into national legislation with an effective commitment to respect, protect and fulfil these rights, ensuring that these are clearly embedded in the Constitution and reflected in the decisions of judiciary system.
  - Build capacity of various stakeholders at all levels of the Cameroon society regarding the Right to Adequate Food as clarified in the General Comment Nr.12 of the Committee on ESCR and in the FAO Guidelines on the Right to Food, to tailor their policies, programs and projects, to respond effectively and to perform within an ethical and legal framework. There is generally insufficient knowledge and information at all levels of the Cameroon society on the Right to adequate Food in general and especially on the FAO Right to Food Guidelines. Consequently the need for the State to build the capacity first of its front line actors to understand and seek to tailor its policies, programmes and projects to conform with these existent international standards on the Right to adequate Food. The State also has the duty to strengthen the capacities of producers' organizations and inter-professional associations to deal with challenges associated with economies of scale (e.g: concentrated marketing chains, limited access to input and output markets).
  - Strengthening the capacities of producers and inter-professional organizations to deal with challenges associated with economies of scale within their production sectors. Properly organized small scale producers make great contributions in production systems, information, technologies, experiences transfers and taking advantage of opportunities.

The Government should support a proper organization of these producers via the decentralized structures and provide adequate space for their participation in policy issues. Given the fact that these producers are usually very isolated, dispersed and not very literate, a range of methodologies should be put in place to ensure that their contributions are captured and taken into consideration.

- Recognizing the contributions of small scale producers and genuinely engage them in decision making processes on planning and policy issues, according to the human rights principle of participation.
- Providing support systems to improve rural productivity of small holder units that will contribute to the achievement of the MDG 1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger) especially for the vulnerable groups. Agricultural productivity and crop yields from small holder production systems are considerably low. The lack if not a gross insufficient system of soil enhancement and support to farmers are the main undermining factors to productivity. Yet African Governments in the Maputo Declaration pledged to increase state budget allocated to agriculture to 10% between 2008/2009. MDG 1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger) especially for the vulnerable groups cannot be achieved without state support to improve productivity.
- Improving access to remunerative markets especially in the central Africa sub region and Nigeria which offers great market potentials especially for small holder producers. Unfortunately poor regional integration, poorly developed transport infrastructure and the absence of proper trade policies constrain the access to these markets. The State should make concrete trade and commercial agreements, which are in line with states human rights obligations and which are able to promote the marketing of agricultural products within the framework of South-South trade and ensure protection and movement of people and their products. The Government should support this process by developing transport infrastructure; ensure security controls do not hamper the efforts of peasants, provides market information and subsidizes storage and transformation facilities. The Government should also review its import policy, in order to ensure compliance with its obligation to protect and to boost local production and markets. Importation that leads to dumping, proceeding from countries with highly subsidized agricultural systems use to compete unfairly at national level to the detriment of local producers, most often small scale farmers, breeders and fisher folks.
- Consolidation of rural development policies programs and projects to be consistently in control of the rural sector's policy agenda. Several ministries are responsible for the rural sector. Their activities have a direct bearing on food and on related aspects of food production. For the Government to be consistently in control of the rural sector's policy agenda, analytical capability in this area should be consolidated. There could be units in the Ministry of Planning and Regional Development, the Prime Minister's office or elsewhere that is responsible for inter-institutional coordination.
- Improving access to credit and labour saving devices for Cameroon's smallholder and provide opportunities for income generation and use of labour-saving technologies. One of the main obstacles to progress for Cameroon's peasant farmers lies in access to credit,

as interest rates and collateral requirements are simply too high for the majority of them. Encouraging micro-credit enterprises for processing and marketing of produce, and offering support to local savings and credit groups, would provide opportunities for income generation and use of labour-saving technologies. With women farmers the primary agents in food production, training female extension officers to work with them could also be an important step in improving the livelihoods of Cameroon's rural population. The State should study the possibility of making credit facilities go directly to these groups of low income small holder producers and promote research and extension on various adaptable productivity enhancing devices.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Cameroon faces serious problems such as a stagnating per capita income, a relatively inequitable distribution of income, a heavy public service that is more on the consuming than the producing side, economic mismanagement, pervasive corruption, and a challenging business environment for both local and foreign investors. It remains one of the lowest-ranked economies on the World Bank's annual Doing Business Survey and is regularly ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world according to the Transparency International Annual Perception Index. The Wall Street Journal and Heritage Foundation ranked Cameroon 132<sup>nd</sup> (with 52.3 points) out of 179 countries in the January 2010 Economic Freedom Index: It further commented that, Cameroon faces challenges common to developing African nations such as “ inefficient bureaucracy, an unreliable legal system, and poor infrastructure. Restrictive regulations hurt employment and productivity growth. Restrictions on trade are common, and the weak judicial system allows pervasive corruption and erodes the potential for long-term economic growth.”<sup>1</sup> Despite the current difficult economic situation, the Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Louis Paul Motaze, when speaking on the Cameroon’s Economic Report in April 2010, asserted that the socio-economic prospects are getting brighter every day which was evident by the many foreign economic delegations visiting Cameroon and high level meetings taking place in the country.<sup>2</sup>

The Agriculture sector contributed 19.8% to the GDP while industries contributed 29.7% and Services were 50.4%. Official statistics for 2009 had inflation at 5.3%, indicating a weakening of Cameroonians’ spending power. Land use is as follows: arable land 13%, permanent crops 2%, permanent pastures 4%, forests and woodland 78% (rainforest represents 40% of total land use), and others 3%. The main environmental issues are: deforestation; overgrazing; desertification; poaching and over fishing. Arable land is estimated at 7.2 million hectares, but only 1.8 million hectares are effectively cultivated.<sup>3</sup>

The most important cash crops are cocoa, coffee, cotton, bananas, rubber, palm oil and kernels, tobacco, tea, pineapples and peanut. Cameroon is among the world’s largest cocoa producers with 130.000 tons of cocoa beans produced in 2004 and 200.005 tons produced in 2009.<sup>4</sup> The main food crops are plantains, cassava, corn, millet, yam, cocoyam, potatoes and beans. Estimated production of food crops in 2004 was as follows: sugarcane 1.450.000 tons; cassava 1

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<sup>1</sup> The Den, <http://www.dibussi.com/2010/01/2010-economic-freedom-index-cameroon-.html>, consulted on 27 July 2011

<sup>2</sup> The 2011 Cameroon Economic and Product Market Databook, <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/76092344/The-2011-Cameroon-Economic-and-Product-Market-Databook>, consulted on 05 August 2011

<sup>3</sup> New Agriculturist, Country profile – Cameroon, July 2001, <http://www.new-ag.info/en/country/profile.php?a=871>, consulted on 27 July 2011

<sup>4</sup> Cameroon Tribune, <http://www.cameroon-tribune.cm>, consulted 05 August 2011

950.000 tons; sorghum 550.000 tons; corn 750.000 tons; millet 50.000 tons; yams 265.000 tons; sweet potatoes 175.000 tons; potatoes 135.000 tons; dry beans 95.000 tons; and rice 62.000 tons.<sup>5</sup> Recent population statistics in Cameroon (Published by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development Jan.2010) indicates that 52% of the population lives in urban centres, indicating a strong drive towards urbanization. At the same time, food production is still largely characterized by low productivity. Agriculture and food production value chains have a pivotal role in economic growth, and are directly linked to social and cultural development of the people. Consequently the State has a great role to play in ensuring its proper development such that the population is able to realise their Right to adequate Food.

Today, Cameroon seems to be living on its past glories as economic and social conditions fall short of guaranteeing a decent life for millions of urban and rural dwellers, caught in a web of hunger, poverty, unemployment and underemployment. This is grossly manifested by:

- a drop in the country's growth rate to 2% in 2009 as opposed to 2.9 % in 2008, 4.2% in 2003 and 5.0% in 1995.<sup>6</sup>
- an obscured and deteriorating fiscal situation partially resulting from a continuous drop in oil revenue thus forcing the government in September 2010 to down size its budget by 50 billion francs CFA.

This four parts report presents the actual situation faced with respect to access to adequate food and how the State is responding to the situation. The first part gives the general background of the country and the second part examines the standard of living of the vulnerable groups as well as the legal framework for the Right to adequate Food. Part three looks at specific policy sectors and economic development initiatives relevant for the realization of the Right to adequate Food. The fourth part presents a general conclusion and a list of recommendations to the State necessary to improve its implementation of – and compliance with - the Human Right to adequate Food. The following methodology was applied for the realisation of this report:

- Field visits and 4 regional workshops across the country that held in (Buea, Bamenda, Ebolowa and Garoua) between December 2009 and March 2010. Over 100 persons participated during these workshops, and field visits were made to over 20 subdivisions with extensive consultations and appreciation of grassroots issues.
- Visits were made to Government departments (Prime Ministers Office, Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock) to seek information.
- A national workshop was organised in mid 2010 to trained Civil Society organisation on how to write the Parallel report to the Committee on Economic and Social Council. The workshop provided important orientation on the work, and provided inputs on the Country Report on the Right to Food that was served as the background to this Report.
- The writing of this report benefited from the financial and technical support of Bread for All-Switzerland and FIAN International Secretariat.

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<sup>5</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office, GDP data and GDP forecasts; economic, financial and trade information; the best banks in Cameroon; country and population overview, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/cameroon>, consulted on 05 July 2011

<sup>6</sup> Institut National de la Statistique du Cameroun, <http://www.statistics-cameroon.org/>, consulted on 27 July 2011

## **1.1 Vision 2035 and the GESP: A vain ambition or a glimmer of hope for the poor and hungry?**

Besides the present predicament, Cameroon has developed a long term development strategy, Vision 2035 aimed at making the country an emergent nation. The first phase of this vision is outlined in the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) 2010 – 20, that sets out framework for boosting growth to 5.5%, creating formal sector jobs and cutting the underemployment rate from 75.8% to under 50% and reducing monetary poverty rate from 39.9% in 2007 to 28.7%.

The government has taken emergency measures to stimulate the agricultural sector, assigning priority to products such as maize, rice, manioc, potatoes, palm oil and plantains. Given the signs of recovery observed in developed countries, real gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to rise to 3.5% in 2010 and 4.6% in 2011. Where public finances are concerned, the government is directing its efforts to increasing non-oil revenue in order to reduce the economy's vulnerability to oil price volatility. Its programme for 2009 and 2010 calls for continued mobilisation of non-oil revenue by broadening the tax base, the idea being to increase the tax yield by bringing new taxpayers into the system.

## **2. THE SITUATION OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD IN CAMEROON**

### **2.1. Food and nutritional situations of the most vulnerable groups**

An Early Warning Unit (EWU) was created within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide information on the situation of malnutrition under the project *Cameroon Agricultural Policy and Planning Project (CAPP)*. This project which benefited from the financial support of the USAID was implemented between the mid 1980s up to the mid 1990s. A Market Information System (MIS) was also established to provide information on trends for various products at the national level. The effectiveness of these systems is doubtful as complete information is hardly available from the field and systems of collection are not very comprehensive and efficient. Even when information is available in the various government services especially the department of statistics, it is poorly communicated to the public and accessibility to information is difficult.

Food insecurity, malnutrition and hunger are persistent within the urban and rural areas in Cameroon. Official information from the National Institute of Statistics put the poverty rate in 2007 at 39.90% with 12.20% for urban area: and 55.00% rural area.<sup>7</sup> This situation is not due to the lack of food, but to poor systems for regulating the access to food resulting from inadequate development policy approaches. Development policies are not sensitive to the protection and promotion of the cultivation and consumption of local products. Significant investments in giant

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<sup>7</sup> Institut National de la Statistique du Cameroun, <http://www.statistics-cameroon.org/>, consulted on 27 July 2011

agro industrial projects have failed, wasting huge resources and leaving thousands of actors in the production chain frustrated. Examples of some of these investments are presented in point 3.5 on Agro-industrial investments. Bad governance in the drawing up and implementation of rural development projects makes many projects best bets for Government functionaries to the detriment of the producers and other actors in the chain.

## **2.2. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and realities for Cameroon**

As the MGDs are conceived as a set of global bench marks to be used by countries in order to make commitments and to develop strategies and actions in various domains for the improvement of the welfare of their people, two of the MDGs will be examined in the context of the Right to Food.

### **2.2.1. Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

The Government commits to halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of persons living below the poverty line and to halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of persons who suffer from hunger in line with the global target. It however, makes no allusion to the promotion of decent work that should strive to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. Concern for decent work is very important as under employment rate in 2005 stood at 75.80%.<sup>8</sup>

Many young people, especially those living in poverty have difficulty in finding work as a result of inadequate education and skills or the absence of information about job opportunities. As such they are engaged to work under indecent conditions, characterized by low wages (about \$2 a day), without sufficient protection, long work hours and no insurance cover. Such types of employment are common in plantations; where the system of contracting work takes advantage of poverty and hunger situation of a majority of job seekers.

MDG assessment for Cameroon published in December 2003<sup>9</sup> pointed out the following challenges in the domain of agriculture across the country with significant impacts on hunger and poverty;

- promotion of food security through increase in water sources, animal health coverage, improvement of food preservation techniques in the Far North and North Regions
- intensification of the activities of development partners involved in the agricultural, fishing and cattle rearing domains in the North Region,
- control of population pressure on existing resources in the Far North Region,

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<sup>8</sup> Institut National de la Statistique du Cameroun, <http://www.statistics-cameroon.org/>, consulted on 27 July 2011

<sup>9</sup> Republic of Cameroon, MDG's Progress Report at a Provincial Level, [http://earthtrends.wri.org/povlinks/poverty\\_resource.php?poverty\\_resource\\_ID=2235](http://earthtrends.wri.org/povlinks/poverty_resource.php?poverty_resource_ID=2235), consulted on 05 July 2011

- improvement road network in the North, East and North West Regions,
- delimitation of farmland from pasture land in order to eradicate agro-pastoral conflicts in the Adamawa and North West Regions,
- fostering of foodstuff farming for the rising population and opening up of production zones in the Center Region,
- establishment of pioneer agriculture and livestock rearing zones in a bid to develop these aspects and to satisfy the market needs of the sub-region in the East Region,
- promotion for the industrialization of traditional farming and fishing concerns and the valorisation of the cultural wealth in the Littoral,
- halting the extension of the desert (through projects such as the Green Sahel),
- improvement of access to phyto-sanitary and zoo-sanitary treatments, reduction of the costs of agricultural inputs and equipment, and easier access to financing for agricultural and pastoral micro-projects in the West Region.

Neglect or inadequate responses to these challenges are evident by a surge in food prices with the demand for food in the domestic and sub regional market exceeding supply pushing tens of thousands deeper into hunger and malnutrition. It is surprising that Cameroon with its abundant potentials was caught in the web of the 2008 food riots that left over 100 persons dead.<sup>10</sup>

- *During the February riots, which spread to 31 localities including Yaounde and Douala, and the subsequent government crackdown, security forces shot and killed demonstrators and rioters. While the government reported 40 persons killed, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as La Maison des Droits de l'Homme, stated that security forces killed over 100 persons. (US Department of State 2008 Human Rights Report for Cameroon Published February 2009)<sup>11</sup>*

*UNICEF, in a report on Cameroon (March 2009) speak of a silent emergency on health, water, sanitation and nutrition needs especially in the Northern and Eastern Regions with over 63,000 refugees from Chad and Central African Republic and 200,000 host population under pressure and lack of adequate access to basic services with the available resources over stretched beyond local capacity. The report stipulates that, for the last 15 years nutrition and survival needs are not met resulting to 45,000 children dying every year due to malnutrition. The North and Far North Regions accounting to almost 70% of the 6.1% National prevalence for acute malnutrition amongst 6 – 59 months old children with 110,000 children in the Region suffer from acute malnutrition and 25,000 from severe acute malnutrition. The consequent has been according to the report an increase of under-five mortality rate from 139 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 149 deaths per 1,000 births in 2006 due to poor mental and basic health care, persistent malnutrition (acute and chronic) and preventable diseases – meningitis malaria and water borne diseases.<sup>12</sup>*

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of State, 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/118990.htm>, consulted on 27 July 2011

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of State, 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/118990.htm>, consulted on 27 July 2011

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, Cameroon, <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/cameroon.html>, consulted on 27 July 2011



## 2.2.2. Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

The Government of Cameroon commits to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two fifths, between 1990 and 2015 in keeping with the global target. The percentage of under 5 mortality rate per 1000 live births is yet to witness a decrease with 148 in (1990) and 154 in (2009). Exclusive breast feeding for children under six months regarded as the most important child survival intervention world wide is witnessing what experts describe as an unacceptably low rate of 21.2% only in 2006.<sup>13</sup>

Poor infrastructure, insufficient trained health care workers, on site poor health care and feeding practices limit intervention and leave hundreds of thousands vulnerable to especially children as indicated by the tables below.<sup>14</sup>

Prevalence of children under five years of age with weight deficit for their age (under weight)

Year	Number	Percentage
1991	320.000	13.6%
2006	560.000	19.3%

Under - five height deficit for their age (stunted)

Year	Number	Percentage
1998	550.000	24.4%
2006	880.000	30.4%

Under – weight deficit for their weight (wasted)

Year	Number	Percentage
1991	70.000	3%
2006	170.000	6%

Hunger and malnutrition is endemic in the Northern part of the country which is located in the Sahelian and Sudano-Sahelian agro-ecological zones. This region has suffered from food crises for the last three decades as a result of natural and man-made disasters and the growing impoverishment of the rural population. A comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis conducted in 2007 by the World Food Programme (WFP) found<sup>15</sup> that poor agricultural production, low education and income levels, and inadequate infrastructure are responsible for vulnerability and food insecurity in this region. The East region that harbours a multitude of refugees also experiences stress on its resources.

Disasters recorded between 2002 and 2010 forced thousands of people to move from their home. They are now displaced without adequate food and secured sources of livelihood.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, Cameroon, <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/cameroon.html>, consulted on 27 July 2011

<sup>14</sup> Cameroon: Household and Health Demography Survey Report 2008, p.77

<sup>15</sup> World Food Program, Cameroon, <http://www.wfp.org/countries/Cameroon/Overview>, consulted on 27 July 2011

- The landslides in Wabane in the South West region and Donga Mantung in the North West region displaced over 2.000 people;
- the floods in the Far North region leaving over 1.000 homeless;
- the fire disasters in Zhoa in the North West which burnt down over 500 homes;
- the fire disasters in Bakassi in the South West Region;
- five markets which burnt down over 2.500 market sheds in Douala (three incidences);
- the fire in Tiko and Kumba in the South West region.

Though there exist a Service for Civil Protection in the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, it is not equipped to promptly respond to emergencies via the provision of basic needs such as food, medication, shelter in the event of such disasters. The minister of Commerce, Louis Malgloire Mbarga Atangana, made frantic visits to the fire disaster sites promising Government's assistance which has not yet been delivered.

The global economic crisis has seriously impacted on Cameroon's oil, cotton, timber, and rubber sectors, depressing exports, growth, and overall consumption. Public frustration over rising prices was partly to blame for an outbreak of social unrest and violence in many Cameroonian cities in February 2008. In March 2008, the Government announced a reduction in food import tariffs and other measures designed to reduce the cost of basic commodities.

The WFP is assisting over 200.000 people in the three northern regions, whose situation are critical in terms of education, agricultural production and the nutritional condition of the population of Cameroon. Its activities are aimed at helping to reduce poverty in a sustainable manner by promoting basic education and increasing food security through the creation of assets for the most vulnerable households. WFP provides food aid to primary schools, improves food security for at-risk populations by setting up community cereal granaries, and improving rural infrastructure through food-for-work (FFW) activities while also working, through an emergency operation, with Central African Republic and Chadian refugees. The Counterpart Program with support from the United States also runs a food aid project in Oku, Bui Division in the North West Region. Comprehensive food aid programs to vulnerable groups are all externally driven although they should be the responsibility of the Cameroonian State. Creating and running food aid projects without considering long-term solutions - undermines the development of opportunities to move food from regions of abundance to regions of need. This also undermines local regional and national strategies and actions to build food reserves. Reliance on external food aid systems that run for a long period as in the Northern parts of Cameroon, erodes local production initiatives, deepens dependence and defeats the very essence of guaranteeing peoples' right to food in a sustainable manner. Food Aid programmes should exploit and strengthen opportunities for local solutions such as moving food from areas of surplus to deficient areas.

The Government in its desire for growth and economic development usually overlooks the interest of peasants, as preferences are given to big investors with little consideration to the

follow up of decisions taken to protect their livelihood. This is typical of the coastal areas with large commercial plantations, mining, power generation and the Kribi deep sea port sites, where local communities have been pushed to marginal lands or displaced without adequate or no compensation at all. Indigenous communities in Mbongo surrounded by the SOCAPALM oil plantation in the Sanaga Maritime Division are demanded to move out. In Kribi where construction work of a deep sea port has commenced, financial compensation and resettlement plan is yet to be concluded for the inhabitants of 23 villages that are displaced. In the North West Region, local inhabitants and the minority Bororo community were totally uprooted from the land for the establishment of a tea plantation and a cattle ranch.

## **2.3 Refugees**

According to United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)<sup>16</sup>, over 100.000 refugees entered Cameroon between 2007 and 2008, 62.300 of them coming from Central Africa Republic; 41.600 refugees from Chad, 2.500 refugees from Nigeria and others from Rwanda, Congo-Kinshasa, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and other countries. Majority of them were resettled in the East and Adamawa regions. In 2008, 12.000 of them were urban refugees with 9.000 in Yaoundé and 3.000 in Douala. The international medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières in a press release of July 31, 2007<sup>17</sup> described the mortality rates, medical and nutritional situation among the refugees as having exceeded emergency thresholds as it embarked on targeted food distribution to meet the vital needs of this vulnerable population. The release further stated that children between six months and five years of age show severe acute malnutrition of 3.9%, as well as moderate acute malnutrition of 7.4%. Even more critical figures have been found among 5 to 10 year olds, with 7.5% severe and 16.3% moderate levels of malnutrition. These figures clearly reflect the worsening food situation of these refugees and the delay in sending assistance, resulting in excessive mortality rates between three and seven deaths per 10.000 people per day at the sites around Ngaoui, Ndokayo, and Gbiti, which is three to seven times higher than the emergency threshold.

## **2.4 Inmates and Street Children**

### **2.4.1 Inmates**

Daily rations provided to inmates in most of Cameroon's prisons, especially in Yaounde and Douala are hardly sufficient. In most prisons, just one meal is served, which is hardly of good quality and quantity to meet the daily food needs of the detainees. Families often have to

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<sup>16</sup> UNHCR, 2011 UNHCR country operations profile – Cameroon, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=4a03e1926>, consulted 27 July 2011

<sup>17</sup> MSF, Press Release, Cameroon – Critical nutritional situation for refugees from Central Africa Republic, <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/press/release.cfm?id=2095>, consulted 27 July 2011

subsidize the food these inmates receive, and even so, the process of delivering the food is laborious and there is no guarantee that the person to whom the food is destined will receive it. The extreme situation is partially due to the overcrowded nature and poor conditions of prisons: the Douala New Bell Prison for example was constructed to host 700 inmates but had 2.868 persons in 2008. However, Cameroonian vice Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, Amadou Ali on 24 November 2008 told Parliament that the Government would allocate 2 billion CFA francs (\$40 million) in 2009 to build new prisons throughout the country. To this effect, construction works have been launched in some prisons, but yet to be completed to solve the congestion problem, while the poor nutrition situation remain unaddressed as witnessed in the Bamenda Central Prison.

#### **2.4.2 Street Children**

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, approximately 2.000 children lived in the streets of the major urban centres of the country in 2008. A significant number of these children are refugees who live in the street as bidders without a home and a family. Guaranteeing food for such children is a difficult task. Currently, the Ministry, in association with communities and some Councils, has established the "Project to Fight the Phenomenon of Street Children", aimed at offering psycho-social care, and bolstered the intake capacities of specialized centres and took measures to enable some of them return to their homes. Progress in this direction is still very slow, as the number of street children increased by the day. With the advent of decentralisation, councils are expected to address more of the issues at the local level as the management of social centres is placed under their responsibility.

#### **2.5 Indigenous People and Minorities**

The Bakas, Bakola and Bagyeli (Pygmies) are forest people who number about 100.000, residing in the South and East Regions and suffering various forms of exploitation and discrimination with a direct bearing on their livelihood. They, including children, continue to be subjected to unfair and exploitative labor practices by landowners, including forced work on the landowners' farms during harvest seasons without payment, continuous logging of the forests without fair consideration for their livelihood and compensation. Logging is destroying their unique forest-oriented belief system and pushing them from their traditional social and economic systems to a more rigid modern society in which they are poorly adapted.

A Report on Human Rights for Cameroon in 2008<sup>18</sup> published by the US Department of State indicated that, local Bakas along the path of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline continued to complain that they were not compensated fairly for their land or had been cheated by persons posing as

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<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of State, 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon, p.456, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/118990.htm>, Consulted on 27 July 2011

Baka representatives. In 2006, the committee in charge of the follow-up on the pipeline organized an evaluation seminar to determine the level of compensation for the Bakola and Bagyeli. The committee agreed that despite improved access to education and healthcare, much remained to be done to improve living conditions for the pygmies.

The Bororos, a traditionally nomadic people numbering over 100.000, are found in five regions which are the North West, East, Adamawa, Far North and North regions. Today, they are compelled to adapt to a sedentary life due to demographic pressure. Even if their ownership and control over land is justified by a long stay with a communal life, by the fact that they have fruit trees, houses and other ancestral relics on these areas, they have a weak ownership and control over land.

Moreover, they now face serious shortage of pasture during the dry season which is the transhumance period, leading to frequent problems between farmers and herds men. The Bororos due to their low level of education are exposed to and suffer from various forms of intimidation including detention, exploitation and extortion of cattle and money. When conflicts occur between them and the farmers, vicious local administrative officials, traditional leaders, members of the judiciary system and the forces of law and order delay or pass unfair judgments and create conditions that will necessitate their continuous exploitation and the draining of their cattle wealth. In the North West Region, a business magnet with ties to the Government is reported to have deprived several Bororo families of their land and cattle, and used his money and influence to instigate the beating and the imprisonment on false charge of members of the Mbororo Cultural, Social and Development Organisation (MBOSCUDA) that is fighting for the rights of the Bororos.

## ***2.6 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)***

The situation of Internally Displaced Persons is a growing phenomenon in Cameroon within rural and urban settings. The 2008 United States Department Report on Human Rights in Cameroon reported that, in 2005 between 10.000 and 15.000 citizens in and around the Adamaoua regional villages of Djohong and Ngaoui were displaced following attacks and looting by unidentified armed groups from the Central African Republic (CAR).

Extreme violent ethnic and tribal conflicts especially over land in the North West Region between 2005 and 2011 (Bafanji/Balikumbat/Babalang, Bali/Bawock, Oku/Mbessa, Boworo / Musaka etc) has left thousands of families homeless as houses were burnt down, farms destroyed, and animals killed. The most recent of these conflicts in 2011, the border town of Baworo left closed to 5.000 persons displaced. Over 3.500 women and children are scattered in neighbouring villages without any sustainable measure in place to guarantee their Right to Food,

medication and shelter. The women in this community have lost all their seeds and food stock as the fields and barns were burnt down.<sup>19</sup>

Conservative figures from local monitoring systems estimate that in 12 towns and cities in Cameroon, over 5.000 homes have been demolished and 25.000 businesses uprooted in the processes of urban rehabilitation since 2005. This required forced eviction of people from their homes and business places that are later demolished.<sup>20</sup> The above mentioned situations have serious consequences on the livelihood of many families, especially on their Right to Food as no measures were put in place to provide relief to these affected. These persons mostly from the poor levels of the society had to adapt to new forms of life that further exposed them to hunger, poverty and suffering. In this regards, the state failed in its duty to protect women, the young, the elderly and the disabled as well as to provide social services (food, shelter, security etc) as prescribed by the constitution in the preamble and in Part One, Article 1.1.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.7 Destruction of Food Crops in Farms and Plantations by Animals**

Destruction of crops is common in the North, South West and South regions since 2005, for communities close to National Parks and Reserves that harbour elephants. The most recent destruction took place in April 2010 in the South Region, where a troop of elephants broke out of the Dja forest reserve. Their passage left over 800 persons in 8 different villages in a desperate situation as their farms were destroyed.

As reported by *Le Jour* newspaper of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010, these communities explain the hostile attitude of the elephants by the fact that their habitat is disturbed by timber exploiters and poachers, which force them to seek refuge in neighbouring villages. The inhabitants described their situation as almost catastrophic, calling on the Government for assistance, including the provision of food aid, and to escort the elephants back to the reserve. The director of Wildlife and Protected Areas in the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife reacting to the situation said that the law guarantees the protection of people and their livestock against wild animals, but is silent on the type of compensation that the population can count on in this situation. While the Senior Divisional Officer for Dja and Lobo acknowledged that the need of food aid and to relocate people is urgent, the CPDM Member of Parliament of the area, who is also a forest exploiter, is wondering what the population thinks the Government should do. It is a shame to imagine that an elected official who have to speak and defend the interest of his people is partly at the centre of their suffering.

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<sup>19</sup> The Justice and Peace Commission of the Barmeda Archdioceses: Report on Bali-Bawock inter tribal crises, 2008, p.45

<sup>20</sup> Cameroon tribune newspaper, No 4590, Monday April 12/2005, p.16

<sup>21</sup> Cameroon's 1996 revised constitution in the preamble and in Part One, Article 1.1, p.7

## **2.8 The Right to Adequate Food in the Legislation of Cameroon**

### **2.8.1 The International Covenants, Charters and Conventions**

The Government of Cameroon is sensitive and committed to the global drive for a minimum standard that regulates the welfare of all persons and has demonstrated this by ratifying and adopting several international human rights instruments. Some of them include:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter on Human Rights;
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 24/06/1984;
- the Action Plan and the Declaration of World Food Summit in Rome of the 19th November 1996;
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child 11/01/1993;
- the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) 20/06/1989;
- the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) 23/08/1994;
- the Convention on the Right of Minorities;
- several legislation concerning People with Disabilities and Internally Displaced People.

Even though the African Charter does not contain any provision guaranteeing the Right to Food, through a decision of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, *SERAC v Nigeria* (2001), the Charter was understood to include the Right to Food. The Commission employed a purposive interpretation for which it has become known by a combined reading of such provisions as right to life (Art. 4), right to health (Art. 16) and the right to economic, social and cultural development (Art. 22), to accept that the Right to Food is implicit in the African Charter. The right to food is said to be inseparably linked to the dignity of human beings and is therefore essential for the enjoyment and fulfilment of other rights such as health, education and political participation. According to the Commission, the African Charter and international law required Nigeria to protect and improve existing food sources and to ensure that all citizens had access to adequate food. The Government of Cameroon as a signatory of the above Charter therefore has the duty to ensure that it guarantees the food needs of its population in different circumstances who find themselves in a situation where they can not provide for themselves. Unfortunately, this is not the case, as no functional emergency relief system exist that is run by the government and can respond promptly to emergencies or situations where the government has forced people to move.

In addition, under Article 15 of the AU Protocol to the African Charter Human and Peoples' Rights on the Right of Women in Africa, ensures that women have the right to nutritious and adequate food. In this regard, the Kenyan government is expected under this article to take appropriate measures to: a) provide women with among other things, the means of producing nutritious food, and, b) establish adequate systems of supply and storage to ensure food security. Cameroon has yet to ratify this protocol.

The ratification of human rights treaties requires States to enshrine the contained rights in their national laws and to ensure that those rights are not violated. It has to take measures to provide effective protection, promotion and fulfilling of these rights. Such a transfer is not just confined to the passing of the appropriate legislation but requires a law enforcement process in order to enable judiciary actions in cases of abuse.

## 2.8.2 National Legal Instruments

Cameroon's most applicable legal instrument, the 1996 Constitution has no specific reference to the Right to Food and there is no known legislation referring explicitly to the promotion or protection of the Right to Food. However, in its preamble, strong recognitions are made to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter on Human Rights with precise aspects pointing to the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living. The preamble also highlights some key resolutions of the State to guarantee, protect and provide for every citizen including the members of minority, vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The preamble states in paragraph three that, *"We the people of Cameroon... resolved to harness our natural resources in order to ensure the wellbeing of every citizen without discrimination, by the rising living standards, proclaims our right to development as well as our determination to devote all our efforts to that end and declares our readiness to cooperate with all States desirous of participating in this national endeavour with due respect for our sovereignty and the independence of the Cameroonian State."*<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, Part VI of the Constitution which relates to Treaties and International Agreements, states in article 45 states, *"Duly approve or ratified treaties and international agreements shall, following their publication, override national laws..."*<sup>23</sup> The elements for the Right to Adequate Food are therefore embedded in the Constitution of 1996 even though the Constitution is not expressing the idea directly but implicitly.

Other legal instruments that have an indirect bearing on Right to Food include:

- The Cameroon Forestry and Wildlife Law of 20th January 1994, which provides for the allocation of concessions as community forest and payment of forest royalties to communities and councils. These measures enable the local populations to have access and benefit from the rich forest resources.

Land Ordinance N° 74-1 of 06 July 1974 related to access and ownership of land.<sup>24</sup> Cameroon land tenure system regards all unoccupied land as national land and recognizes land ownership

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<sup>22</sup> Cameroon's 1996 revised constitution, section 1, Article 1, p.5

<sup>23</sup> Cameroon's 1996 revised constitution, section 2 Article 8, p.20

<sup>24</sup> Cameroon's 1996 revised constitution, section 5 Article 30, p.40



based on the acquisition of a land title. This situation is a big challenge for many communities of small holder farmers especially those who do not even know the importance of a land title, let alone the procedure to obtain it. Most peasants cannot afford the cost necessary for land registration and are unable to go through the cumbersome procedure. The erosion of Customary Land Rights threatens the survival base of indigenous people who depend on their land and natural resources therein for their livelihood.

The effectiveness of these laws, and their enforcement, in securing individuals' Right to Adequate Food, however, is questionable. Usually there is a big divide between the law and its application for the following reasons:

- Vulgarization of the laws is poorly done. Consequently, most people do not know the laws;
- those who know the law use it to exploit poor and illiterate community members;
- the law is subject to varied interpretations and there is no scrupulous follow up of the law after adoption;

The respect to gender issues, the Constitution is very silent with respect to issues of gender and the land tenure ordinance does not make any allusion on access to land for women. Theses silence couple with the application of customary practices especially over land thought repealed by the 1974 ordinance impacts very negatively on women.

The judiciary in Cameroon is under the President of the Republic and the extent of its independence is questionable. For very sensitive issues, political influence comes into play and most often the poor are unable to properly access the judiciary system. It is commonly said in Cameroon that *justice is like a commodity reserved for the highest bidder*.

### **3. POLICY SECTORS RELEVANT FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD**

The State in general promotes agriculture and recognises that it occupies a very important position in the economic and social development of the country. In a general way, it is sensitive to the interest of the rights-holders while designing, implementing and monitoring public policies but does not flag issues of promotion of the Right to Food.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) prepared ahead of Cameroon's qualification to benefit from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPIC) served as the road map for development in the agricultural and rural development sectors in particular. This document, sets goals and targets to be attained in lined with the MDGs. Periodic reporting on the MDGs therefore serve as quick measures of progress towards the full realisation of the Right to Food as in the 2007 report. Conflicts between herdsmen and farmers were highlighted as the major cause of poverty in the North West region.

At the close of 2009 financial year, the Government released a new policy orientation document, the Growth and Employment Strategy Document that is also known as Horizon 2035, whose

implementation is aimed at making Cameroon an emerging nation within the next 25 years. Besides, it has elaborated the Rural Development Strategy Document to provide orientation in this domain. Despite the existence of these policy documents and plans, monitoring systems are weak, implementation is fairly effective, citizens' participation is mostly at the grassroots and the integration of their views is not strongly reflected in the final document with regards to the impact of policies and programs in favour of the Right to adequate Food. Besides, a significant number of actors with important stakes in the chain, citizens' participation at the grassroots are ignored during the consultation and their interests are left out in the big picture of the Right to Food.

### ***3.1. State Institutions Specifically Designed to Implement the Right to Food***

Over 17 Ministries are concerned with plans, programmes and projects related to the rural sector and agricultural development. The role of these Ministries can be grouped in six categories that should ensure a comprehensive intervention to stimulate and sustain dynamics associated with the Right to Food. These categories are:

- Production and Research done by the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industry, Forestry and Wildlife and Scientific Research and Technological Innovations;
- marketing done by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce;
- labour and social welfare done by the Ministries of Labour and Social Security, Social Affairs and Women Empowerment and the Family;
- youth employment and support programmes done by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Small and Medium Size Enterprises;
- infrastructure done by the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development and Public Works.

The Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family created to enhance gender equality and promotion of women's' issues is less visible in the policy arena. The Family Code and policy document developed by the Ministry for the past 10 years is yet to be presented and adopted in parliament, which amongst others will address some of the issues related to women and access to land. Given that majority of the peasant farmers are women who witness the hardest burden of toil; the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should have joint programmes with the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family to empower women.

The personnel, financial resources and programmes run by these ministries constitute a huge national asset for the transformation of the rural world and agricultural landscapes in Cameroon. Unfortunately, there is very limited synergy amongst these actors as some of them perform overlapping roles resulting in duplication or poorly defined roles resulting in neglect. It is not clear if these institutions have a mandate to promote, mainstream or monitor the implementation

of the Right to Adequate Food within the administrative and Governmental framework and within society as a whole. There is lack of synergy amongst the different key actors concerned with the rural sector and Agricultural Development and this is greatly responsible for the precarious situation that Cameroon is witnessing to effectively guarantee the Right to Food.

### **3.2. State Budget Allocated to the Agricultural Sector**

According to information obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture, resources allocated to agriculture are low compared to the size of this sector that engages over 60% of the active population and contributes about 40% to the Gross National Product. Only about 5% of the budget is directed to the rural sector to cover its functioning, the personnel salaries and office expenses, the counterpart funds for cooperation projects, the support to producers groups as well as the financing of rural equipment. Information obtained from three Ministries concerned with the rural sector and agriculture indicates the following budget evolution:

Evolution of Budget Allocated to some Ministries (in Billion CFA)<sup>25</sup>

Ministries	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Agriculture and Rural Development	60.3	34.6	27.6	27.7	23.4
Livestock, fisheries and animal industry	20	16	15	09	-
Research and Technological innovation	13	7	3	-	-

The budget shows a significant shift from 2009, this new emphasis placed on the promotion of agriculture happened after the February 2008 strikes associated to the food crisis. Following the crisis the President of the Republic ordered that agricultural output should be doubled within six months. However, the officials in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development noted that the mobilization of resources does not sufficiently take into consideration the specificities of the sector such as the agricultural calendar.

The agriculture sector in Cameroon is typically a pro-poor sector. It employs over 60% of the active population, most of them residing in the rural areas. Paradoxically, this sector suffers greatly as it receives less than 5% of the state budget, although the Maputo Declaration signed by African heads of States in 2004 recommended allocating at least 10% of the state budget to the agricultural sector.

Besides the low budget allocation of this sector, corruption, embezzlement, favouritism and mismanagement of finances and resources have been demonstrated as serious institutional limitations that hinder farmers from benefiting from the resources and facilities designed for them. This situation has been aptly demonstrated by ACDIC in two investigative publications in 2006 and 2009, titled *Cameroon is losing its food sovereignty and the misfortunes of Cameroon's*

<sup>25</sup> Cameroon: *Growth and Employment Strategy Paper*, 2009, p.200

*agriculture respectively. ACDIC concludes that, for every 100fCFA spent by the Ministry of Agriculture, only 5fCFA reaches the farmers. In a typical case study on the National Support Programme for the Maize sector, findings indicated that 33% of 288 groups that should have benefited from State subsidies declared they did not receive any subsidy.*

*Women especially in rural areas benefit least from the meagre allocations that eventually reach the grassroots. This is due to the fact that they have a low literacy rate, consequently do not have sufficient access to information and also cannot fill out the necessary documents necessary to access resources when available. Instead cases of exploitation of rural women groups are bound as, those who have to serve them swindle financial and material resources that is destined for them.*

### **3.3. Insufficient Personnel**

With an agricultural population of over 5.6 million persons and a field staff capacity of less than 70.000 workers,<sup>26</sup> Cameroon has insufficient personnel to effectively ensure the implementation of its agricultural production policies, programmes and projects. The vast nature of the country, coupled with poor accessibility in some areas, completely deprive some farmers of technical assistance that is very vital to enhance the production and productivity efforts. Though the National Agricultural Extension and Research Programme has split each region into sectors for proper coverage by the personnel, it is still far from being effective and efficient. For over 10 years the Government has stopped recruiting personnel into the Agriculture and related Ministries, while aging ones went on retirement. The situation till date leaves the Ministries with a huge deficit in personnel and also a vacuum in experience as the retired personnel goes away without adequately transforming their skills, experiences and competences.

### **3.4. Rural Development and Agricultural Promotion Initiatives to Support Peasant Farmers**

The main goal of the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, Livestock Fisheries and Animal Industries and Research and Innovations is to increase agricultural production with the aim of: reducing poverty and improving the livelihood of farmers, boost export trade for various cash crops and other products demanded in the international market and a food self sufficiency. To achieve these, the Government has put in place structures, programmes and projects with defined objectives to cover the national territory. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development since 2007, runs over 54 corresponding projects or programmes, while the Ministry of Livestock had 13 projects and programmes that respond to the following:

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<sup>26</sup> Cameroon: *Growth and Employment Strategy Paper*, 2009, p.96

- Provision of financial assistance in the form of grants, subsidies or micro-credits
- building and strengthening capacities to enable increase in production and productivity
- provision of improved seed and breeds;
- construction and rehabilitation of rural and agricultural infrastructures;
- provision of technical support to follow them up in the production and marketing processes;
- support for the organization and strengthening of farmer's organization;
- support for the acquisition or the direct provision of equipment and inputs.

With over 68 programmes and projects particularly dedicated to supporting the agricultural sector at the grassroots, it is expected that the assistance received by the agricultural population especially in rural areas is appreciable. Over centralisation, a weak capacity to deliver, high overhead cost compared to the proportion of assistance that effectively reach the peasants for the purpose intended, short duration of programmes and projects limits their ability guarantee sustainability on a long term and impacts on a wide scale.

Of the 68 projects and programmes put in place, there are non-destined specifically for women and the disabled or programmes to ensure that they have specific benefits. However, the ministries are sensitive to gender issues and gender questions are considered to a certain extent in the field. Nevertheless gender sensitivity and considerations are not enough as long as men and elite farmers will always outsmart poor peasant women and the youth as far as access to resources (land, credit, information, technology, seeds etc) are concerned. Yet the poor peasant women constitute the majority of farmers producing the bulk of the national food supply with the least support. Many disabled persons, including very critical cases, are without any official support to guarantee their access to food. Direct financial support for youth initiatives as in the Ministries of Youth Affairs and Small and Medium Size Enterprise Arts and Handicraft are some experiences that could be applied for women and disabled persons. This should be organised and run at the lowest decentralised level and focus principally in the rural areas to be effective and create benefits for the most disfavoured. Besides current programmes should be assessed and monitored in a gender desegregated manner to ensure that women participate and benefit significantly. Above all women, youth and disable persons should be enabled to know national and international policy mechanisms related to the Right to Food and participated in a legitimate manner in various aspects of design, implementation, monitoring and accountability.

### **3.4.1. Access to credit**

Over the years, institutions and programmes that provided credit facilities to peasant farmers like Credit Agricole Bank, the FIMAC Project and other credit programmes that are components of some integrated agriculture or rural development projects have hardly proven to be sustainable. The management and sustainability of most of these initiatives have been flawed by bad

governance. On the instruction of the head of State in January 2011, two banks are to see the light of day: a bank for financing small and medium size enterprises and a farmer’s bank. The announcement of the Creation of the small and medium size enterprises bank by the minister of finance took all by storm as it was expected that the discussion on the modalities to create the bank will be open to contributions from various grassroots stakeholders. Negative experiences with regards to the creation of specialized banks still leave many sceptical on its survival and service to the real target. Reaching out with credit and financial support packages to the rural poor with little collateral and resilience to cope with adversities continue to remain the big challenge in meeting the Right to Food for local producers and systems that depend on the local production systems. Without adequate decentralisation, and implantation of viable local credit and financial support systems both banks will end up serving the rich.

### 3.4.2. Farm inputs

The economic crises in the mid 1980s pushed the Government to drop subsidies on fertilizers and other farm chemicals. This, coupled with a poor and insufficient system of subsidies to farmers, has had a great impact on their yields and engagement in agriculture.

The agricultural future of Cameroon lies in the rain fed areas. Improvement in soil fertility at the farm level is a key element for maintaining and improving crop yields. Throughout Cameroon, low-fertility soils are a major constraint on crop production (IFDC, 1986). Under these conditions, an increasingly important impact of fertilizer on food-crop yields can be expected with the cereal crops, particularly with maize which requires a high level of soil fertility for good yields. In 1999, the intensity of fertilizer use was 7 kg per hectare of cropland in Cameroon, just over half the average of 12 kg for sub-Saharan Africa and far below the world average of 94 kg. Reasons for low fertilizer use according to Jacob F. Teboh<sup>27</sup> include unfavourable input and output prices, limited access to credit, infrastructural constraints, and the non conductive policy environment.

Table: evolution of fertilizer consumption in Cameroon

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tonnage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
2002	34.899	94/167
1992	20.900	105/162
1982	33.834	76/146

Source: *World Development Indicator Data base*<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Jacob F. Teboh : *Trends In Fertilizer Consumption in Cameroon*, September 1996, p.121-122

<sup>28</sup> The World Bank, Cameroon, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/cameroon>, consulted 05 August 2011

Cameroonian cacao production has been treated as an extractive industry with fertilization from forest litter, traditionally, spraying of insect and disease pests and consequent low yields, about 326 kg/ha (Fig. 1), and low returns to farmers, while in Southeast Asia, Indonesian cocoa producers are obtaining 1.1 metric tons/ha by reducing the shade and by fertilizing and controlling pests better according to Harounan Kazianga and John H. Sanders.<sup>29</sup>

One consequence of this diminished profitability is the decline in the use of pesticides. Farmers know that control of both Black Pod disease and capsid bugs is essential for high-quality cacao and for increasing yields. Previously the Government had subsidized the costs of this control but with the structural adjustment, the Government stopped the input subsidies and farmers are no longer effectively controlling these pests leading to losses of 35 to 65%. It is not economically feasible to eliminate all of this damage but it becomes more profitable to eliminate damage as the yields increase with increased fertilization or new cultivars.

A number of associated techniques could raise farmers' incomes from the low level extractive industry that currently characterizes Cameroon's cacao production. This requires various policy support measures to accompany the farmers. If small farmers in Cameroon and other West African countries lose their market share to Southeast Asia, the welfare of many small farmers will be threatened. Sources from the FAO in 2002 indicate that, West African smallholders produce about 70% of the global cocoa supply and in 1997-98; there were an estimated 2.4 million cocoa farmers in the four leading cocoa producing countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon).

Moreover, substantial Government revenue will be lost. Government subvention resulted in an increase in cocoa production from 175.000 tons 3 years ago to 205.000 tons in 2009. Achieving food self sufficiency, however, remains crucial for the Right to Food. This does not necessarily mean an expansion of cut and slash annual cropping. Agroforestry provides a combination of tree crops and food crops on the same piece of land. Peasant farmers should be encouraged and supported in exploring such multi-cropping of food and trees as it may increase per hectare sustainable food production.

### **3.4.3. Transport infrastructure and marketing**

Rural roads and farm-to-market roads remain poorly developed, with some being viable for less than six months in a year. This situation coupled with high cost of fuel is a major obstacle for the transport of agricultural products to the markets. Production zones remain largely unexploited as producers would not want to see their investment wasted. Besides in areas where transport systems are well developed, the movement of goods is subject to several controls by the forces of

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<sup>29</sup> Harounan Kazianga and John H. Sanders: *Cacao Production in Cameroon: Technology, Profitability and the Environment*; September 2002, p.67

law and order. These numerous controls delay the transportation of perishables to the markets, thus making them lose their quality as transportation facilities are not adapted. Several controls by law enforcement officials are strongly associated with corruption and or extortion. Critical also on these issues is the weak level of sub-regional integration that has serious constraints on the movement of goods and persons. The border closure between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea has often frustrated the transportation and marketing of agricultural products from Cameroon.

The Tibati road is a transit corridor for heavy duty cargo vehicles linking the Southern part of Cameroon with Northern part then Chad and Nigeria (170 km boarder) that run across the vast plain of production zone of cattle, maize, plantain, bean. The table below presents the time spent and cost in travelling from one location to another due to the nature of the road and the season.

Location	Distance (Km)	Duration/ season		Price /season	
		Dry	Rainy	Dry	Rainy
Banyo -Foumban	220	5 -6 hours	2 days	5.000fcfa	6.500fcfa
Banyo - Tibati	115	8 hours	2 -3 days	3.500fcfa	4.000fcfa
Banyo - Ngoundere	340	10 – 12 hours	1 week	6.000fcfa	7.000fcfa

### 3.4.4. Land Tenure Policies and Programs

Cameroon’s land legislation since 1974 has largely eroded customary rights over land and imposed the State as the owner of all empty lands and forest. The Government in Cameroon has recognized the need to rationalize the land tenure system, for it is the main means of production and source of income of the majority of the population. According to the law on land tenure rights, ownership of land can only be claimed by possession of a land title or certificate. Despite the various modifications, some mechanisms of the intended conversion were left unclear. This led to increasing family/tribal conflicts.

Tension has also been generated because of ignorance of the legal steps to be followed by rural peasants who have been evicted from lands on which they claim certain rights. Examples of communities that have been deprived of their land due to the creation of large capitalist plantations are found in the South West, Littoral and South Regions of the Country like the Coastal area in rich volcanic soils. For the case of Forest Exploitation, the Communities are found in the East and South Regions. The process to obtain a land title is long, cumbersome and costly. Most local people do not even know the importance of a land title let alone the procedure to obtain it. Paradoxically, rich and elite class as well as cooperated bodies buy up large expansions of land from the local poor establish land titles and push them out.



A review of the 1974 Land Tenure Ordinance as announced by the Head of State in Ebolowa in January 2011 is an opportunity to articulate the interest of communities especially women and vulnerable groups with regards to a secured land tenure that guarantees their Right to Food and a sustainable livelihood. It is therefore necessary for law makers and civil society actors to begin a process of grassroots consultation to get the contributions from their constituencies that take into consideration the varied customary land tenure systems.

### **3.4.5 Importation Policy and Competitiveness**

Over the past 15 years, the Government has adopted an economic policy that resulted in a sharp increase in the importation of food items. This massive importation trend has had major consequences for the economy:

- Imported products in most cases sold at prices lower than locally produced food and consequently attracting more buyers and more importation based on favourable market trends. Massive importation had very negative impacts on poultry, rice, tomatoes, milk and onion production, as most producers could not break even at current market prices. Many were therefore forced out of production and adopted a new trade or down sized to a level that cannot sustain their livelihood.
- This situation, while generating dependency on foreign products, puts in danger the sustainable availability of food at country level. In fact, if external markets increase prices, economical access to food can be negatively affected, because people are not in place to pay higher prices imposed from abroad, and food availability can be affected, because national production has been discouraged, so that national food is not available for national consumption.
- Massive importation of food products led to changes in consumption patterns, in urban areas especially but also in rural areas at an alarming rate. Rice and flour products constitute about 20% in the diet of most homes across Cameroon. Over 85% of the rice and 100% of the wheat consumed in Cameroon are imported. Shift in consumption pattern is enhanced by competitiveness of imported products motivated by factors such as price, packaging, advertising and handling making them available in even the most remote areas.

### **3.5. Agro-industrial investments**

There is significant investment in Cameroon in the agro-industrial sector. This investment dates as far back as the late 1800's with the establishment of colonial commercial plantations especially by the Germans. Today, these investments especially, in commercial plantations are dominated by external investors, with the Government also playing an important part, while nationals are almost missing in the scene.

Besides, after the independence, the Government created facilities to produce and support small holder initiatives such as SODERIM, UNVDA and SEMRY (for rice), SODEBLE (for wheat), the Milk Project, the Food Preserving Company and SCAN (for tomatoes, mangoes and guava) and SODEPA for cattle to modernise and expand production. A study carried out by ACDIC<sup>30</sup> profiled the collapse of four giant agro-industrial complexes as evidence of failure of the agricultural policies with respect to modernisation, transformation and processing.

Table indicating some collapsed agro-industrial industries set-up by the State:

<b>Agro-complex</b>	<b>Created</b>	<b>Capital Invested</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>closed</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
SODERIM (West Region)	1978	1.550 million fcfa	Mechanization of rice cultivation and processing via small holder producers.	1988	1.500 producers thrown in a state of confusion
SODEBLE (Adamawa Region)	1975	4.500 million fcfa	Develop 600.000 hectares of land and produce 150.000 tons of cereal per year to give a national autonomy in cereal and boost livestock feed in the Region.	1988	1.500 producers thrown in a state of confusion.
The Milk Project (Adamawa Region)	1994	3.500 million fcfa	Develop cattle breeding and stimulate dairy activities in order to reduce the importation of milk.	2002	2.000 milk producers abandoned to themselves.
Food Preserving Company & SCAN (West Region)	July 1994	3.500 million fcfa	Process surplus of tomatoes as well as other products such as mango, guava etc.	March 2001	16.000 producers employed abandoned to themselves.

*Source: ACDIC Publication on Food Sovereignty 2006.*

The collapse of these agro-industrial complexes represents huge losses of public finances and missed opportunities for small holder producers whose production potentials are directly linked to such structures. The collapse of these investments is consequent on the absence of a result based management culture, weak systems of control and public accountability. Equally the organisation and management systems provided local people to have very little say, poor exploitation of market based management as the structures were feed by a seeming endless support by the state. Alternative systems to maximise the performance of these agro-industries would have been to create these facilities as enabling structures to organised farmers to master

<sup>30</sup> ACDIC Publication on Food Sovereignty 2006

the required techniques of production for a competitive market based of certain standards and norms. The facilities would also have serves as facilitator for the search of markets and improve marketing systems. The National Produced Marketing Board that operated in West Cameroon is a good example of a local agro complex, which mobilised huge capital and strive successfully until government intervention contributed to its ruin.

### ***3.6. Commercial Plantations, Forest Exploitation and Access to Land for Peasant Farmers***

Commercial plantations, whose implantation dates back to the colonial period of the mid 1800's, and capital plantations located mostly in the fertile coastal regions are dominated by external investors. Vast stretches of rubber, banana, and oil palm, covering hundreds of thousands of hectares of land, employ tens of thousands of casual and seasonal labourers, who work in the plantations to feed the processing chain with materials that are directed for export. Apart from the CDC, SOCAPALM, HEVECAM that has significant Government investment and the Cameroon Tea Estate/ Ndawara Tea Estate with significant local private investment, this sector is dominated by external investors. As opposed to Government investment mentioned above that witnessed collapse, external investments are flourishing as new plantations are set up while existing ones expand in scope and scale.

Cameroon is a rural country where agriculture plays a primary role. The agriculture is the main source of survival and income for over 80% of the active working population over 90% of which are made up of small peasant farmer families. During the colonial period large commercial plantations were set-up especially in the coastal region of Cameroon for rubber, palms, banana and tea. Till date, this region is still witnessing the setting up of plantations and the phenomenon is also taken up by rich elites. The setting up of commercial plantations required the clearing of thousands of hectares of the forest, displacement of local communities and depriving them of their habitat and livelihood base.

While setting up commercial plantations enables the rich to expand their capitalist investments, this is at the detriment of indigenous and local communities who depend on the forest for their livelihood. Plantations take up the best lands, pushing the rural people to cluster in camps and cultivating marginal lands that are hardly productive enough to feed themselves and secure surplus for the market and are negotiated at high cost. At the centre of this situation is the inability of the Government to set and implement laws that protect peasant farmers and local communities.

Cameroon at present is a luxury destination for foreign land speculation as the state law favour land deals for investment. This is evident by a Malaysian conglomerate land speculation of 300,000 hectares (ha) of land for palm oil plantation, the Chinese in Center Region for Rice, the Americans

in the South West Region for palm oil plantation and the Indians in the South West Region amongst others.

What is challenging is that in Cameroon, land deals are hardly made public especially to local communities who themselves are very weak to negotiate. They more often find themselves frustrated when deals are concluded with certain conditions applying which contribute in deepening their situation of hunger, poverty and suffering. At present it is difficult to say what proportion of Cameroonian land has been acquired by these foreign interests, nevertheless it seems that state is not complying with its obligation to protect the access and control over land of the peasants from big investors, causing, allowing its peoples difficult options to feed themselves.

### **3.6.1. Commercial Planters and Land Grabbing**

The expansion of the plantations is gradually endangering Cameroon's bio-diversity and destroys the livelihood base for rural and forest dependent communities. The Rural population especially women are being deprived of their land and livelihood because of the construction of commercial plantations and they are forced to cultivate on marginal lands far away from their villages. These farmers often have to rent land for farming and cannot harvest enough crops to feed their families.

-The tea plantation in Tole, in the South West Region is more an instrument of labour and land exploitation than an opportunity for small holder farmers.

-In Ombe, South West region, large capitalist plantations dominate the area pushing local food producers to marginal lands with clear constraints to access to land for their agricultural practices. Small holder farmers struggle to survive by cultivating on risky slopes at the fringes of oil palm plantations, crossing in large streams.

- In Kossala, Kumba (South West region), the controversial occupation of large hectares of land by the establishment of a private plantations deprives community members from their land, thus resulting in frequent conflicts, oppression of the some community members who are usually detained while long standing litigation is yet to provide a ruling to bring the rest.

- In the North West, the Mbororo Social, Cultural and Development Association is fighting for the rights of a minority group mostly that see its access to land undermined as a rich political elite has grabbed vast areas of land on which they practice their pastoral activities for the establishment of tea plantations and cow ranches.

-In the South, Center and East regions, the exportation of large portions of forest and communal land, sold at give-away prices to elite, rich and influential classes who take advantage of the poverty, high level of illiteracy and ignorance of the local population to exploit them. They quickly move on to establish land certificates showing ownership of the land as prescribed by law. Of course the cost and procedure to establish a land certificate is inaccessible for local people.

-In Kribi, the construction of a deep sea port is going to impact negatively on the fishing activities of the population settled in this area whose livelihood depends on fishing activities.

-Poorly established rules and regulations on land use in declassified protected area is causing chaos resulting in conflicts of interest between farmers, herds' men and hunters. Farmers suffer the most as cattle graze in their farms and hunters run across their fields in search of games.

-The fertile Lagdo plane harnessed with the construction of the dam is overpopulated in result of the settlement of people from the extreme North Region encouraged to move there some 35 years ago. Today, elite from the North are sponsoring local gangs to uproot the settled population so that they can own the land. Periodic armed clashes have been recorded over the past years between the two groups.

### **3.6.2. What is happening in the plantations and in the communities?**

- Generally housing conditions are poor characterized by congestion, poor drainage poor hygienic and sanitary conditions, poor access to social services such as water, electricity and access roads. The sanitary conditions clearly affect the Right to adequate Food of people, because these make people more propense to illness impeding absorption of nutrients.
- Working conditions are poor, characterized by, low wages, poor retirement benefit schemes, long work hours, no insurance coverage for a majority of the low income and vulnerable workers, inadequate protective equipment at the job site, poor medical facilities, poor means of transportation and discriminatory working conditions amongst others. Lack of adequate income, makes it more difficult for people to feed themselves and their families.
- Within the communities, the local communities complain of disrespect of local customs, pollution resulting from toxic chemicals use, affecting food quality; rising food cost for the products extensively cultivated in the plantations, affecting economical access to food; loss of livelihood based on biodiversity, affecting their right to an adequate standard of living; and disrespect of the plantation limits.
- The workers and the populations are not free to express their opinions thus suffering various forms of exploitation and oppression.
- The congested situation in the plantation exposes women and young girls to various forms of abuses, assaults and especially sexually transmissible infections. Besides, children pick up undesired attitudes and behaviours.

The Cameroonian state should adopt all possible measures to protect it population, as for example better regulation, monitoring and investigation mechanisms and remedies for these affected by the mentioned land grab.

### **3.6.3. Example on Campaigning on the right to food**

The National Coordination Committee, a cross section National CSOs in solidarity with FIAN, Bread for All and the World Day of Prayer Committees of Germany and Austria brought to the attention of the Prime Minister and Head of Government of Cameroon the plight of peasant and forest dependent communities living around the huge commercial plantations and also the adverse conditions of the majority of workers in these plantations. This was done via a Postcard Campaign and a video documentary in October 2010 as Cameroon was the focus for celebration of World Day of Prayer. During this period, some important social and economic issues that negatively impact the population, especially at the grassroots, are identified and brought to the attention of the government of the focus country. In Cameroon, the activities of logging companies in forest communities and commercial plantations were identified as negatively impacting access to agricultural land and compromising the livelihoods of the population especially women. This issue of commercial plantations was further confirmed in a series of focus group discussions held in some commercial plantation communities.

The campaign solicited the Prime Minister to oversee the following:

- A revision of the 1974 Land Ordinance, to ensure sufficient access to land for peasants and guarantee protection of communal lands via clear mechanisms that define and protect these rights especially for ordinary community members and future generations.
- A proper audit of commercial plantations to ensure that employees, especially those at the lower ranks, have decent working conditions that guarantee a better income, safety at their job and a secure future at retirement.
- A review on the policy and procedures for the creation of commercial plantations to ensure that their creation and or expansion do not compromise the rights and benefits of local communities to livelihood and their future land needs.
- The creation of an observatory with clear terms of reference that monitors and reports on a bi-annual or tri-annual basis on the conduct of affairs in and around plantation areas that ensures the rights of communities and workers are not compromised for corporate benefits.
- The institution of a public accountability system within the framework to publish what you earn as the basis to enable plantation owners to invest in the improvement of worker conditions.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The natural diversity and human potentials make Cameroon a safe haven as far as the ability of people to feed themselves is concerned. It has a large rural population, actively engaged in agriculture capable of producing enough to feed the nation and respond in a very sensitive manner to the dynamics on the Right to Food. The State is aware of the great potentials of the agricultural sector and has initiated and supported hundreds of programmes and projects to boost agricultural production. Unfortunately, Cameroon is still far from being efficient in providing institutional and support systems necessary to tap this huge potential and to guarantee peoples' Right to Food.

Using the FAO Guidelines to assess the country's Right to Food situation indicates that institutional framework conditions, designation and implementation of agricultural policies, programmes and projects as well as governance issues are the major constraints that frustrate the system. At the center of it all is over centralization. Cameroon's public management system suffers from over centralization and inefficient bureaucracy. Planning, directing and monitoring of most programmes and projects with significant potential impacts to cause change are based in the relevant Ministries in Yaounde the capital city. The power of decision making, the rapidity to respond to important impulses on the ground, the ability to get the necessary feedback and adjust project performance is too slow. Besides, centralized planning systems often assume that the country is homogenous so socio-cultural and regional economics dynamics are often overlooked.

Over centralized systems turn to focus more on the management of intermediary structures, the respect of procedures and hierarchical lines, while the local producers suffer. The weakest link in the chain is the local level, where the production actually takes place, like within councils of sub divisional delegations for agriculture or livestock. Most of the personnel who are at this level are too weak to make critical decisions or to make their voices adequately heard yet they are those closest to the producers and are at the base of the production.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CESCRC**

- To urge the state to ensure sufficient protection to small-scale producers against land grabbing.
- To request the state to provide an enabling environment and specific programmes and policies to improve the productivity of small scale farming.

- To ask the state to strengthen Agricultural Sector Governance.
- To demand that the state reforms the policies on access to productive resources to the effect that speed up processes for the revision of the 1974 land tenure ordinance and ensure the processes take into account the protection of customary land rights beyond the mere representation or consultation with traditional leaders. To be inspired by the FAO guide lines on land tenure and natural resources management during the revision process.
- To request the state to include the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights into National Legislation.
- To urge the state to facilitate and promote genuine participation of Small Scale Farmers in policy design and decision making in relation to land and agriculture.
- To urge the state to improve access to remunerative markets for small scale farmers.
- To request the state to consolidate rural development policies, programmes and projects centred on small scale farmers at local level and avoid too much waste of resources in bureaucratic processes.
- To urge the state to improve access to Credits and labour saving devices for small scale farmers via systems that build on local realities and managed in and around locally councils for the purpose of transparency and accountability.
- To urge the state to put in place a national emergency disaster management fund with efficient and rapid response units at the local level that support victims with dignity and prevent them to be used as objects of pity.
- To urge the state to support the setting up an independent observatory to monitor the impact of commercial plantations, mining companies and other huge projects on the livelihood of local communities, workers and plantations.



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# **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO THE CESCRO TO BE ASKED TO THE STATE OF CAMEROON**

## **National Implementation**

1. Despite the huge agricultural potentials (physical and human) disposed by Cameroon in the Central African Sub Region, why is Cameroon still importing so much food?
2. What is the country planning to do in the years ahead to lead the Sub Region as a viable agricultural pool for Africa in the light of South - South Trade?
3. What especially Right to Food measures is the government putting in place to deal with the cholera situation that has spread to over 5 of the 10 Regions of the Country?
4. What national strategies are in place to ensure that the populations are strengthened to be guarantee their food need in an independent manner?
5. Why is the the national emergency disaster management fund is not responding to those in disasters?
6. Can the poor masses actually put their hope in government policies, programs and projects?

## **Intergovernmental Organizations**

1. Can the government demonstrate that there is sufficient progress in guarantee food sovereignty for Cameroon? How is this progress recorded and communicated?
2. How does the government monitor and communicate the impact of their activities of Industrial commercial plantations to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the local populations, workers and the environment?

## **Private Enterprises**

1. How will the government protect its people against land grabbing?

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