

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix-Travail-Patrie

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace-Work-Fatherland



**23rd SESSION OF THE GOVERNING
COUNCIL OF UN-HABITAT**

Nairobi, 11 to 15 April 2011

***ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY CLOBERT TCHATAT, MINISTER
OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON***

April 2011

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN-HABITAT,
DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It's a real pleasure for Cameroon to take part, among fellow nations from all over the world, in this twenty third session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

We would first of all like to thank Mr Joan CLOS, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT for the good organization of this important event and the Government of Kenya for the warm welcome which our delegation has been granted since its arrival.

We would also like, Mr Chairman, to extend to you, as well as the entire members of your Council, our congratulations for your election at the helm of this Council.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat is holding in a global context marked by more and more advanced urbanization; for its scale and pace, it seriously affects the regional and human balance, both in urban and rural areas in the vast majority of countries, especially in developing countries, exacerbating inequalities.

The major challenge is to control this phenomenon with which our countries are faced today; the present meeting is therefore an ideal opportunity for reflection and sharing of experience. Our respective governments are called upon to take collective actions to bring humanity to recognize the rights of every individual to access to land, housing and basic urban services.

I therefore welcome the theme of the 23rd session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT which has been dubbed “**Sustainable Urban Development through Expanding Equitable Access to Land, Housing, Basic services and Infrastructure.**”

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Cameroon, as in most developing countries, the urban areas have often been occupied under chaotic conditions.

In general, the observed rapid population growth gives rise to a serious imbalance between supply and demand for housing and urban services resulting in considerable deterioration of habitat conditions. According to the latest available statistics, there is an overall deficit of 500,000 housing units. The consequence thereof is the proliferation of lingering housing in informal and sub-integrated settlements.

Moreover, because of the scarcity of developed land in cities, there is so much pressure on urban land, resulting in considerable speculation.

Finally, existing mechanisms do not always allow for the vast majority of the population, access to funding, because of low incomes and bank guarantees required.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Against this backdrop, Cameroon has undertaken in recent years, a series of actions intended to check the induced effects of urbanization.

Thus, the Government has set medium and long term development goals aimed at making Cameroon "an emerging, democratic and diversified but united country" by the year 2035. The Growth and Employment Strategy Paper which lays down and specifies strategic provisions for the

implementation of this vision for the first decade, i. e. (2010-2020), gives pride of place to the harmonious development of the national territory, improving the living conditions of populations and the eradication of inequalities.

In urban development, the objective is not only to control the growth of cities and turn them into centres of production and consumption necessary to the growth of the industrial sector, but also promote the emergence of outlying towns and secondary towns which can structure economic activities in urban areas and surrounding rural areas.

Several programmes for the maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of urban infrastructure, improving access to basic urban services (water, electricity, waste management and waste water), control of land use (through urban planning) and institutional capacity building are being implemented.

Particularly with regard to urban planning, many cities of Cameroon are trying to develop regulatory documents and tools laying down their development planning and strategies.

Regarding infrastructure, we have committed over the past five years, an extensive renovation program of urban road infrastructure in our major cities for about \$ 600 million.

In terms of access to basic services, investments to increase the potential for energy production result in the construction of several major hydroelectric dams, including the Lom Pangar, Memvele and Mekim, as well as and a gas plant in Kribi, which will regulate and strengthen the current hydraulic flow and power, with additional 650 megawatts hours, at a cost of about 1.4 billion dollars. Moreover, close to 800 million dollars have been mobilized to finance projects for access to drinking water in urban centres; by so doing, the government intend to achieve an access rate in the area, of 70% by 2020.

In terms of access to land and housing, we welcome the guidelines spelt out by the third African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) held in Bamako in November 2010.

Last January, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA, instructed government to fast track land reform which focuses on:

- facilitating access to land;
- setting up a fund of reserve land;
- developing public-private partnerships, as part of concerted development schemes, etc.

An extensive program of reserve land has been launched around the major cities to allow the development of construction projects of social housing.

Faced with strong demand, an emergency program to build ten thousand (10,000) social housing units and development of fifty thousand (50,000) plots has been launched and shall be completed by 2013.

Moreover, the government has put in place incentives in favour of the private sector interested in investing in social housing.

Regarding the upgrading of slums, the Government pledged to eradicate the phenomenon that particularly affects large cities, through restructuring / renovation of inner city areas. An appropriate regulatory framework has been adopted by the Government.

In this regard, we welcome the initiative of UN-HABITAT, through the Participatory Programme for the Upgrading of Slums, whose second phase was launched in March 2010 in three cities of Cameroon, with the support of the European Union and the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (FEICOM).

Of course, Cameroon can only benefit from the adoption by the Governing Council of the programme of activities and the draft budget submitted by the Executive Director.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On a whole, I would like to reaffirm solemnly here that the various actions taken by the Cameroonian Government are prompted by the need to ensure a harmonious and integrated development of cities, for the benefit of all segments of the urban population, especially the most vulnerable. The primary objective is to reduce inequalities in cities in terms of access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure essential for sustainable urban development. In this regard, I appeal to development partners to support technically and financially these efforts. The Government is making efforts, but the needs are enormous.

Finally I express the hope that this meeting gives us the opportunity to adopt common strategies at the international level, to provide adequate solutions to these major concerns.

Long live international cooperation,

Thank you for your kind attention.