



De votre domicile, payez votre facture d'électricité en toute confiance et sérénité
From your home, pay your electricity bill in all confidence and ease

> Reçu disponible > Pas de coupure pour impayés si vous réglez dans les délais > Receipt available > No disconnection for outstanding bills if paid on time

in | f | t | InsideEneo



The Guardian Post

DAILY

Cherished by many, haunted by some, read by them all

Editorial

When fake chiefs, land-grabbers take corruption crown

When it comes to bribery and corruption, which have been endemic and pervasive in Cameroon for years, the police, customs, treasury and taxation services often wear the crown of shame. *Cont'd on page 4*

Yaounde roads, 41 years under Biya!

Page 6



Issues of the moment

By Cyprian Ntiamba Obi Ntui

Cheating & marital instability

The Guardian Post carried an investigative report on why married women cheat on their husbands. May be some men who sign for Christian marriages also have reasons the cheat on their wives.

But in a society that tolerates polygamy, many men who sign for polygamous unions do not see why they should stick to their wives, and the society does not frown at it, if such men flirt; which could be considered as the first step towards taking in another wife.

Infidelity, as we all know, is the main cause of trouble and hostility in many marriages, even leading to divorce in many instances.

The truth also is that the consequences of divorce in families reverberate from generation to generation many years after the man and woman have left the world to join their ancestors in eternity.

How some victims justify their acts

The craving to buy and own material things pushes many women into infidelity. Some mature women understand that the quest to own material things is insatiable. So, if a woman expects her man to buy her all that she wants, then she will become unfaithful.

And the more you search for men who can give you all you need, the more you keep rolling. You eventually become a woman who cannot marry.

Sexual satisfaction is also another area where some women justify why they cheat, claiming that their man is incapable of satisfying them. Whereas, the reality is that not every sexual encounter leads a woman to orgasm. So, in every marriage, it takes time for the partners to understand themselves, open up to one another and make some adjustments so that the man tries to make her woman attain sexual satisfaction.

A marriage should be based on love, mutual acceptance, respect and above all, fear of God. If this is the foundation, the emotional disconnect, indifference to one another's feelings that alienate the woman, eventually sending her outdoors to seek for inner support, do not arise.

Do me ado you!

Many justify cheating on grounds that their partner first cheated on them. Experience shows that when couples keep God away from their marriage, such justifications for committing sin become common.

But when God is a part of the marriage; indeed, when God is considered the foundation of a marriage relationship, partners temper their reactions with mercy.

They do not see fighting back or paying the partner in the same coins an option or a solution to their problem. Instead, resorting to retaliation for whatever reason only permits the problem to fester, get worse and eventually lead to the worst happening – break up of the home.

The devil thrives in setting marriages asunder because he knows that when homes are broken, future generations are in jeopardy. And unless a miracle happens along the line, the devil will continue to hold such families hostage.

When God is part of the family relationship, partners learn and inculcate the virtue of personal discipline. In which case, they do not see sexual intercourse outside marriage as a simple matter.

They know and understand how transcendental sex is, and the temporary and eternal consequences that may arise from just one careless sexual encounter.

The problem of partners discovering strong differences that make a faithful marriage relationship impossible could be handled prayerfully during courtship, for those who aspire to remain faithful to their partners until death do them part.

That is why even highly conservative churches that keep potential couple apart until after marriage now create opportunities for potential young couples to interact and understand one another before signing the dotted lines ... For better or for worse.

From the scriptures, Christian couples know how Father Abraham had such relations with Sarah's house help and the consequences continue to haunt humanity even today.

The intense hatred between Jews and Arabs; and the inability of Israel and Palestine to live in peace, serve as a good warning.

10 crafters to represent Meme at SW regional crafts competition

By Njingang Godwin

Some 10 crafts persons, and crafts enterprises involved in the production of local products in the craft sector have been selected to represent Meme Division in the South West Regional Craft competition scheduled to take place in mid-November. A two-day event to select Meme representatives, organised by the Ministry of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and the Handicrafts, took place at the Kumba I Council on October 25 and 26.

The winners were chosen from the five Sub-divisions that make up Meme Division after a careful scrutiny by a jury headed by the Divisional Delegate for Decentralisation and Local Development, Linonge Daniel Meombo.

Addressing the forum on day two of the exhibition, the 1st Assistant Senior Divisional Officer for Meme, Tcho Zoum Leonard, congratulated the laureates for their outstanding performances in the exhibition. He said the population of Cameroon keeps increasing and there is need for the crafts persons to double their outputs to meet up with local needs and beyond. He also used the forum to encourage them to be hard-working and keep the flag of the Division flying higher in the Small and Medium Sizes Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts sector.

Speaking earlier on day one, the Divisional Delegate for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and the Handicrafts, Dibo Peter Akama, said the theme this year reflects on digitalisation, which is important for the growth and free flow of goods and services in the local and global market. He noted that the government thought about substituting goods being powered by digitalisation because it goes a long way to give a



Dibo Peter speaking to the press after the exhibition



Some exhibitors during the Divisional fair

positive image on the Gross Domestic product, GDP of the nation.

Dibo added that Cameroonians depend so much on importation, which has a negative concepts in international trading.

The various laureates to represent the Division include, Ebule Magdalene Bokuba, Divisional President of Crafters. She had a cash prize of 80,000 FCFA and a certificate of excellence. The others were the Konye Area Farmers Cooperative, KONAF-COOP, that emerged 2nd with a cash prize of 75,000 FCFA and a certificate, ANUCAM came 3rd with a cash prize

of 65,000 FCFA and certificate of excellence. The 4th and 5th persons had 55,000 FCFA and 50,000 FCFA respectively, while the other five laureates had 25,000 FCFA.

According to the head of the jury that selected the various crafts persons and enterprises, they were chosen following some criteria Viz:-aesthetics, culture, added value from local materials, mastery of ICT tools and others.

The representatives of the Meme handicraft sector thus have a short while to prepare for the regional competition coming up in less than two weeks.

SOCAPALM net profits hit 13.7 billion FCFA in first quarter

By Cyprian Ntiamba Obi Ntui

Despite the turbulent local and international business climate, the Cameroon Oil Palm Corporation, SOCAPALM, managed to record a net profit of some 13.7 billion FCFA, during the first quarter of the current financial year.

This was unveiled by the management of the corporation in the company's quarterly report as at end of June this year. This performance, the management said, represents a hike in net profit after tax of 15.6 percent year-on-year, despite lower output in production.

Quantitatively, the report showed that as at June 30, 2022, net profit after tax was 11.8 billion FCFA, jumping to 13.7 billion FCFA, as at end of June 2023.

"This positive performance was achieved despite a notable decline in the production of both palm oil and palm kernels," the corporation said.

According to the officials, crude palm oil production saw a 12.2% year-on-year decrease, dropping from 110,445 tons at the end of June 2022 to 96,918 tons during the same period in 2023. Simultaneously, palm kernel production declined by 12.4%, falling from 23,516 tons to 20,589 tons between the two periods.

"We've witnessed a significant surge in the costs of agricultural inputs, production factors, and land rents, as have many companies. However, our ability to maintain these results can be attributed to our rigorous management of



Oil palm nuts ready for processing

operating expenses and ongoing advancements in agricultural and industrial techniques," a representative and spokesperson for the Board of Director of SOCAPALM explained.

Harping on the trend of increasing costs, the management stated that the company experienced an upsurge in sales over the period despite the decline in production due to rising production costs.

According to the activity report, the turnover increased by 7.4 billion FCFA in the first half of 2023, marking a 14.5% rise. This, the management attributes to an "uptick in the approved selling price of crude palm oil and a more favourable valuation of palm kernels, which offset the reduction in crude oil production".

The management clarified that the company does not provide specific details regarding what it means by "more favourable valuation of palm kernels." However, sources within the palm

oil industry confirm that a readjustment of the price at which SOCAPALM sells its product to the processing industry was discreetly decided in 2022.

"During a meeting of the Oilseed Sector Regulation Committee, SOCAPALM cited production challenges arising from the significant proliferation of small-scale oil mills in village plantations. Consequently, these plantations now prefer to process their oil rather than supply palm nuts to SOCAPALM mills. In response to this situation, it was agreed that to attract more palm nuts from village plantations, SOCAPALM should increase its purchase price per kilogram of palm nuts from 60 FCFA to 100 FCFA. To support this initiative, it was also decided that the selling price of SOCAPALM's crude palm oil to the processing industry will be raised from 450 FCFA per liter to 550 FCFA," a reliable in-house source is quoted as having explained.

Vocational training minister, stakeholders review respect of petroleum code

By Morine Tanyi

The Minister of Employment and Vocational Training, Issa Tchiroma Bakary, and actors in the oil sector have reviewed the level of implementation of the Petroleum Code.

This was the substance of a meeting that took place at the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training yesterday. Discussions touched on ensuring companies are implementing the law No 2019/008 of 25 April 2019.

Special interest was on Article 153 of the law, which stipulates that national petroleum resources must allow for the development of local manpower and expertise.

Stakeholders at the meeting also discussed ways to step up the technical know-how of youth in the oil industry and contribute to tackling unemployment.

Speaking during yesterday's meeting, Minister Issa Tchiroma said the problem of youth unemployment remains a major preoccupation of government. In this light, he said the government is determined to work with actors in the oil industry where there is still huge potential for youth employment and shortage of skills.

The minister said his meeting with stakeholders is part of a drive to better appropriate the existing legal, institutional, operational and strategic mechanisms for professional integration in the oil industry. Government, he also said, is

bent on ensuring citizens also occupy positions when it comes to jobs in the oil sector.

Minister Tchiroma said the development of national human resources, creating jobs and creating wealth for Cameroonians is also a priority of the powers that be.

The National Development Strategy, SND 2020-2030 and Biya's Vision 2035, he said, pays special interest on national human resources development, technology transfer and the use of local industrial companies and services.

The petroleum code, he said, requires oil companies to invest more in salaried employment, self-employment, vocational training, technology transfer and corporate social responsibility.

To this end, he instructed those in the sector to ensure that recruitment within oil companies are not done without respecting quotas for national manpower as per established categories.

Issa Tchiroma said since 1947, which is 76 years ago that Cameroon has been involved in oil exploration, "the activity remains in the hands of foreigners. If nothing is done to build up a competitive national human capital in this field, foreigners will continue to exploit our black gold, leaving us only a tiny fraction".

He opined that "more than in the past, employment and vocational training must be at the heart of strategies for setting up and developing production units, particularly in the oil sector, where there is a real lack of national skills".



Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary speaking during ceremony



Actors in the oil industry with Minister Tchiroma and collaborators

To boost economic empowerment:

US launches women entrepreneurship training programme in Cameroon

By Macwalter Njapteh Refor

Some 50 Cameroonian women will undergo a training on entrepreneurship in a bid to optimise and leverage their full economic potentials in Cameroon.

This will be under the US government's Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, AWE, 2023 edition, launched on October 26, in Yaounde.

The launching ceremony was chaired by the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at the US Embassy in Yaounde, Mary Daschbach.

This was in the presence of the Inspector of Services No.1 at the Ministry of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts, Nathan Ntanen, and the Resident Representative of United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, in Cameroon, Aliou Dia.

Delivering her remark, the Chargé

d'Affaires said the trainees have been selected from 12 cities in Cameroon to support women in their growth, innovation, and leadership path and to promote economic prosperity.

The 50 women entrepreneurs will be trained through the US online platform, DreamBuilder, combined with in-person mentorship and facilitation on the skills and networks needed to scale successful businesses.

The training to last for three months, is funded by the US government and implemented in partnership with US government exchange alumna, Valerie Neim.

"When women are successful, communities prosper, and countries thrive," the Chargé d'Affaires noted in her remarks.

Upon completion of the three-month programme, the participants will become the first-ever Cameroonian AWE cohort and will join a community of former participants of US government-funded

exchange programmes.

"This cascade of impact illustrates the vision we have for AWE Cameroon on this day - to plant a seed that will yield significant harvest for the Cameroonian economy tomorrow," Daschbach stated.

The AWE is said to support the US government's National Strategy on Gender

Equity and Equality aimed at advancing women's economic empowerment globally.

Implemented in nearly 100 countries, the AWE has supported more than 25,000 women entrepreneurs around the world to develop their entrepreneurial ideas and grow their businesses.



Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at the US Embassy, Mary Daschbach, speaking during event



Officials during the AWE-Cameroon launch ceremony in Yaounde



Officials, pioneer AWE-Cameroon cohorts during launch

Cont'd from page 1

This year however, those who have taken over the baton of ignominy are land-grabbers and fake chiefs; drawing perhaps from Fako Division, which in recent times dominated headlines with such vices.

In presenting last year's Anti-Corruption Status Report on October 27 in Yaounde, the Chairman of National Anti-Corruption Commission, CONAC, Rev Dr Dieudonne Massi Gams, divulged that of the 3,472 denunciations, the largest number of complaints came from the State Property and Land Tenure sector, followed by territorial administration with regards to chieftaincy, corruption, finance, education and public contracts sectors in that order.

He added that last year, CONAC received 7,061 reports, compared to 6,705 in 2021, showing an increase of 356 cases of complaints. He said a total of 2,603 of the reports were received via CONAC's toll-free number, 1517, while 3,472 were received via administrative mail, 565 by e-mail and 401 through WhatsApp.

Of those complaints, the CONAC Chairman said, sanctions, ranging from warnings to dismissals were slammed on 18 State employees.

Rev Dr Massi Gams added that 77 private companies were also excluded from public contracts for two years while 34 other companies were suspended from all logging activities for corruption.

In addition, he said, 121 students were suspended for examination fraud in universities and other higher institutions of learning.

Court judgments, ranging from fines and prison terms from 10 years to life

Editorial

When fake chiefs, land-grabbers take corruption crown

imprisonment, were also meted out on culprits, the CONAC boss explained.

"We hope that this trend will continue in the years ahead," he said, while calling on Regional and Local Authorities, "whose commitment to the fight against corruption has so far been timid," to step up to the plate.

The Guardian Post is delighted that CONAC has noted the trepidation in the fight against corruption and embezzlement of funds in councils.

Since the conflict in the North West and South West Regions started, many of the councils have not been carrying out investment projects.

Many mayors like in Lebialem Division of the South West Region, for instance, are not resident there, operating from Dschang, in the West Region, yet, their financial reports have indicated executing investment projects even by 100 percent!

Rev Dr Massi Gams said more emphasis on the fight against corruption will be laid in rural areas in order to involve them in the national fight against the scotch.

It is commendable that CONAC is

taking the fight to council level. We do understand it is working on a shoe-string budget and insufficient staff to effectively carry out such a risky and daunting assignment, but there are other civil society organisations and patriotic individuals ready to assist in the fight.

We are delighted that CONAC received 129 external contributions for the report, compared to 96 received in 2021, which is indicative of the concerns of civil society.

"This is the highest number of contributions ever recorded for an Annual Report," the Chairman stated.

With Barrister Akere Muna's Now Movement, which recently trained some youth from all ten Regions, to tackle corruption at grassroots level, we hope the number of external complaints will increase this year, given the high rate of corruption.

Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, at the same period CONAC was presenting its report, gave Cameroon a humiliating score of 26 on a scale from 0 ("highly corrupt") to 100 ("very clean").

When ranked by score, Cameroon

ranked 142nd among the 180 countries in the Index, where the country ranked first is perceived to have the most honest public sector.

It is therefore clear that at this rate of corruption, the country cannot develop, not to talk of emerging in 2035 as middle-income economy.

There is still much work to be done, especially by the government, represented by ministers who should set the trend in fighting corruption from the top down.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case. How could only 27 ministries contribute to the report, down from 29 in 2022? Rev Dr Massi Gams, however, expressed regrets about the lack of contribution from the Ministries of Defence, Territorial Administration, Energy and Water Resources, State Property, Survey and Land Tenure and Secondary Education, which have been indicted in the report as some of the champions of illicit wealth.

Their failure to make a contribution illustrates the tepid political will of the government to fight corruption. But CONAC is not giving up.

The Guardian Post encourages its indefatigable Chairman, Rev Dr Dieudonne Massi Gams. He needs the full support of the civil society to pile more heat on Yaounde to give the body autonomous powers to arrest and prosecute suspects.

The bottom line, however, remains government's inability to respect Article 66 of the constitution for top officials to declare their assets before taking office and after office, which is the only proof of illustrating a genuine political will to curb corruption in Cameroon.

Community Development, Peace & Social Transformer's Notebook

By Rosaline Obah*



Community Development, Peace Notebook:

Bridging divides for lasting peace with mediation

In a world rife with conflict and tension, the role of mediation as a tool for conflict resolution has emerged as a beacon of hope. From international disputes to local community frictions, the art of mediating disputes is proving to be an invaluable means of bridging divides and fostering lasting peace. As communities worldwide grapple with the aftermath of conflicts, the spotlight is increasingly turning towards mediation as a constructive and transformative approach.

Mediation, at its core, is a process of facilitated dialogue where neutral third parties guide disputing parties towards a mutually agreeable resolution. Unlike adversarial methods, mediation emphasises communication, understanding, and collaboration. The effectiveness of this approach lies in its ability to address the root causes of conflict rather than merely treating the symptoms.

In regions where historical animosities run deep and cultural divides seem insurmountable, mediation has proven its mettle. From the Middle East to Northern Ireland, success stories abound where skilled mediators have navigated complex webs of grievances to unearth common ground. The power of dialogue, when harnessed effectively, has the potential to transform seemingly intractable conflicts into opportunities for reconciliation and understanding.

At the grassroots level, community-based mediation initiatives are making waves, proving that the principles of dialogue are universally applicable. Non-governmental organisations and local leaders are stepping up to mediate disputes ranging from property disagreements to interpersonal conflicts. In doing so, they are not only resolving immediate issues but also sowing the seeds of a more harmonious and cooperative community.

In neighbourhoods especially in crisis-hit zones in Cameroon, community mediation concerns have become invaluable resources. Trained mediators work with neighbours, families, and businesses to find common ground, preventing disputes from escalating into more serious confrontations. These local initiatives, demonstrate that the principles

of mediation can be applied effectively on a small scale, with ripple effects that resonate far beyond the immediate participants.

As the world celebrates the successes of mediation, the situation in Cameroon stands as a stark reminder of the challenges that persist. Cameroon has grappled with internal conflicts, particularly in regions like the North West and South West, where tensions as a result of the ongoing socio-political crisis in affected communities have erupted into violence. Political disputes, economic disparities, and historical grievances have fuelled a complex and multifaceted conflict that has resisted easy resolution.

The toll on communities is evident, with displacement, loss of lives, and a fractured social fabric, leaving scars that are slow to heal. In such a context, the need for effective mediation is pressing. The conflict in Cameroon demands a nuanced approach that takes into account the diverse array of grievances and aspirations among the population. International actors, including the United Nations and regional bodies, are increasingly recognising the importance of mediation in addressing the root causes of the conflict and forging a path towards lasting peace.

The way forward for Cameroon

To break the cycle of violence in Cameroon, a multifaceted strategy centered on mediation is imperative. First and foremost, there is a need for a concerted effort to bring all relevant parties to the table. Mediators, with a deep understanding of the cultural and historical nuances at play, can facilitate dialogue that goes beyond surface-level grievances to address the fundamental issues fueling the conflict.

Community-based mediation initiatives, drawing on local knowledge and expertise, can play a pivotal role. Training and empowering local leaders and mediators to address disputes within communities can foster a sense of ownership and agency, crucial components for sustainable peace. These initiatives should be supported by broader national and interna-

tional efforts aimed at addressing the structural issues contributing to the conflict, including political and economic disparities.

International organisations, such as the United Nations, can provide valuable support by offering mediation expertise, resources, and a platform for dialogue. The international community must engage with Cameroon to ensure that the mediation process is inclusive, transparent, and representative of the diverse voices within the nation.

As the world continues to grapple with conflicts large and small, mediation stands out as a beacon of hope. The situation in Cameroon underscores the need for a robust and comprehensive mediation strategy that addresses the root causes of the conflict. By harnessing the power of dialogue and collaboration, Cameroon has the potential to emerge from the shadows of violence into a future characterised by lasting peace and shared prosperity. The path forward requires a commitment from all stakeholders—local, national, and international—to embrace the transformative potential of mediation for the collective wellbeing of the Cameroonian people.

To ensure the success of mediation in Cameroon, a holistic approach must be adopted. Beyond addressing immediate grievances, efforts should be directed towards instituting structural reforms that promote inclusivity, equitable resource distribution, and political representation. The road ahead is challenging, but with a steadfast commitment to mediation and comprehensive reforms, Cameroon can rewrite its narrative, moving from the shadows of conflict into the light of enduring harmony.

**Rosaline Obah is a Peace and Community Development Specialist; National and International Consultant in Strategic Communication, Corporate Crisis Management, Peacebuilding, Public relations, and Gender/Rights issues. She is a Trainer of Peace journalism, Conflict Transformation, Do No Harm, and Digital Literacy/Rights*

Journalists sharpen knowledge on interpretation of Malaria Indicator Survey findings in Cameroon

By Macwalter Njapteh Refor

Over 20 journalists from print, audio-visual and digital media have sharpened their understanding and interpretation of results of the Malaria Indicator Survey, MIS, conducted in Cameroon in 2022.

The press men and women were schooled during a three-day workshop organised from October 27 to 29 in Mbankomo, outskirts of Yaounde in the Centre Region.

The capacity building workshop was organised jointly by the Ministry of Public Health through its malaria fighting arm known as National Malaria Control Programme, NMCP; the National Institute of Statistics, NIS; and the global advisory and technology services provider called ICF.

During the workshop, the Head of Demographic Statistics Division at NIS, Anaclet Desire Dzossa, said the essence of the workshop was to improve the awareness-raising amongst the population on malaria-related issues through the powerful influence of the media.

“Journalists are important segment in the communicating of information either to the public or the decision-makers,” Dzossa said.

Dzossa, who also doubles as Technical Coordinator for MIS 2022, further explained that journalists have better ways of relaying information and in simple language easily understood, compared to the technical jargons often used by the experts

“So it was import for us to ensure that this important segment understands how the data were obtained, the methodology, the questions asked and the results obtained as well as how to interpret them in order to better communicate the outcomes of the survey to the public that are in need of the information,” Dzossa added.

Going by the NIS official, if better communicated, the findings of the malaria survey will help public authorities to

make the right decisions concerning the fight against the disease while the informed population will better understand the reality of the country concerning malaria and to adopt good behavioural patterns towards the fight against malaria.

“Journalists are important elements for the relay of information in the language understood by the public,” Dzossa reiterated.

The training of journalists was facilitated by ICF through the Demographic and Health Surveys, DHS Programme, a USAID-funded project that collects, analyzes & disseminates accurate & representative data on population, health & HIV through more than 300 surveys in over 90 countries.

The DHS Programme Communications Manager, Sabina Behague, stated that: “We supported the new Malaria Indicator Study that was just published in Cameroon for 2022. It is important for journalist to understand how to read and understand the data that featured in the report so that they can report accurately on the results to the public”.

Facilitator expresses satisfaction

The workshop facilitator expressed conviction that the lessons acquired will impact the participants as they exercise the duty of their profession.

“The journalists whom I worked with were very engaged and interested in proving their ability to interpret the data,” she noted.

For three days, the journalists performed hands-on exercises on maths and statistics, and finding the data story behind the number indicators of the survey.

“The numbers don’t tell a story but the journalists can interpret the numbers to tell an important story for the public,” she added.

At the end of the training, the journalists on their part, pledged to apply the



Cross view of participants during workshop in Mbankomo



Officials, facilitator, participants in group photo

lessons acquired during the training to better inform and educate the population to adopt behavioural change in line with the global fight against malaria as well as to inform policy-makers to take informed decisions for the interest of the general good.

The workshop, it should be noted, is part of a strategic plan to vulgarise the results of the malaria survey and it comes after the official launch of 2022 Cameroon MIS findings on October 26. The findings were launched by the Minister of Public Health, Dr Manaouda Malachie in Yaounde.

It is worth noting that the 2022 Cameroon MIS was implemented from

August 22 to December 1, 2022, by NIS in close cooperation with the NMCP.

The 2022 CMIS also benefited financial support from the government of Cameroon; the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, through the US President's Malaria Initiative, PMI; and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Global Fund.

Meanwhile, ICF provided technical assistance through the DHS Program, a USAID-funded project providing support and technical assistance in the implementation of population and health surveys in countries worldwide.

At audience in Yaounde:

Minister, Saudi Ambassador explore ways to strengthen cooperation in transport sector

By Macwalter Njapteh Refor

The Minister of Transport, Jean Ernest Massena Ngalle Bibehe, and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Cameroon, have explored the different ways to foster cooperation between both countries in the transport sector.

It was during an audience granted to the Saudi Ambassador by the transport minister on October 24.

The minister was accompanied in the audience by the Minister Delegate, Secretary General, Director of Road Transport, Head of the Division of Studies, Planning, Programming and Cooperation, amongst other collaborators.

Speaking during the meeting, Minister Massena Ngalle Bibehe said relations between the two countries have been existing since 1966, though cooperation in the transport sector is yet to experience a major impact.

However, he stated that a bilateral agreement relating to air transport was signed in March 2016 between the governments of Cameroon and Saudi Arabia, on the instructions of the Head of State,

President Paul Biya.

The Minister of Transport then used the opportunity to share with his guest, Cameroon's objectives of increasing transport supply through a multimodal system by 2035.

The Minister further reassured the Saudi Ambassador of the availability of his technical services to provide him with a detailed presentation of each sub-sector to be explored. This in a bid to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in the transport sector.

While saluting the level of cooperation ties between both countries, the Ambassador reiterated the desire of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to strengthen trade with Cameroon.

The meeting between both personalities were followed by a series of presentations by some heads of technical services on some prominent projects in their respective sectors, which could be the subject of cooperation.

For instance, the Director of Road Transport focused his presentation on the development of inter-urban transportation in the ten regions of the country, while the Director of Railway Transport spoke about the development and exten-



Saudi Ambassador poses with Transport minister

sion projects of the railway networks in Cameroon.

The presentation of the Director of Maritime Affairs and Waterways placed

emphasis on the development of sea transport and phase two of extension of the Kribi Deep Seaport.

Yaounde roads, 41 years under Biya!

By Maxcel Fokwen

The new dawn that President Paul Biya announced for Cameroon on November 6, 1982, when he assumed the highest office of the land, has been going through thorough assessments on different parameters.

Forty-one years and still counting as Head of State, analysts say in most cases, it is promises and pronouncements versus what is on ground.

Those who have been looking at his score sheet argue that there is no better place to start X-raying how the nation has fared and is still faring under Biya's leadership than beginning from the seat of power, Yaounde.

Yaounde, which incarnates what Cameroon, analysts say, is a paradox of shame when it comes to roads in the over four-decade plus of Biya's rule.

Many who lived the last years of the late President Ahmadou Ahidjo's leadership and are still alive today, argue that Yaounde, beyond its formless infrastructural outlook, has regressed in terms of its urban road grid.

Others are pointing at a culture of neglect, lack of vision and maintenance as accounting for the yawning craters, artificial lakes, bumpy and potholed-infested road network in Yaounde. Many say it is rather uncommon to circulate in Yaounde without living the sad reality of a road network that speaks of those in power having run out of ideas to put things in order.

Critics say Yaounde, in the last forty-one years under President Biya, has rather lost its beauty and form. The roads that made Yaounde the dream of many in the yesteryears, others have been arguing, have been allowed to shrink to almost footpaths.

New road projects that government has embarked on in recent years, they say, have rather been scamming schemes where unscrupulous cartels loot the public treasury while the citizenry continues to be deprived of good roads.

Even in the phase of the outright failure of Biya's foot agents to embellish Yaounde, those who believe in the maxim that uneasy lies the head that wears the crown, say the blame for the shameful look of Yaounde, rests solely on the shoulders of President Biya.

For others, the state of roads in Yaounde today rather leaves them with the view that Biya's 41 years of leadership have been uninspiring and leave nothing to write home about.

The Biya regime, many argue, may have survived turbulent times in 41 years, but the shocking road network of the nation's capital, coupled with terrible drainage problems, point to a disaster that has been on for years.

They say it is possible for a pregnant woman in labour, to suffer miscarriage in Yaounde, given the bad roads like it is in some rural and remote areas of Cameroon.

Bad roads everywhere you go in Yaounde

For regime apologists and other dyed-in-the-wool supporters of the Head of State, the rotten state of roads in Yaounde, many denizens say, is loud enough for them to bury their heads in shame. A rapid tour of Yaounde shockingly shows that bad roads are abundant in almost every neighbourhood.

The situation, many lament, is more aching, given that these major streets in the nation's capital are used by millions every day.

Surprisingly, the shame that has



President Paul Biya: What road network balance sheet for Yaounde, 41 years in power?

covered Yaounde through bad roads has not spared even the neighbourhood where the President of the Republic, Paul Biya, lives. Here, we are talking about the Etoudi Marche area and Etoudi Canal 2 roads; both, just a stone throw from the Unity Palace.

Other neighbourhoods with bad roads that have no one bordering about are: the Presidential Guard, GP, Melen, Biscuiterie, Emombo, Essos, Nkolmesseng, Anguissa, Efoulan-Lac, Efoulan Carrefour, Carrefour MEEC, Oyomabang, Cite Verte and Madagascar neighbourhoods.

That is not all. The is also: the Marche Nkoleton, Bata Nlonkack, Biyem-Assi, Accacia Carrefour, Marche Madagascar, Santa Barbara, Nkolmbong Abbatoire, Mendong Gendarmerie, Entre Simbbock-Carrefour Jovance stretch, Marche Central and more.

Throwing dust in people's eyes all the time?

Those who argue that the bad state of roads in the nation's capital speaks of a country experiencing regression and stagnation for over four decades, are further lampooning the Biya regime for throwing dust into people's eyes for too long.

Those who hold this line of thought say members of government have, for several decades under President Biya's watchful eyes, played to the gallery and cameras for long, but nothing has changed.

A case in point is the Nkolmesseng stretch that is neither manageable in the dry season nor in the rainy season. The Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Celestine Ketcha Courtes, has been to the stretch severally, making promises, but nothing has changed. The road has remained unworked like she came and met upon her appointment in 2018.

Analysts concur that she too will play to the gallery and go like her predecessors did several years ago.

Many observers say after 41 years in power, the Biya regime should own up to the embarrassment and the international shame Cameroon has attracted, thanks to the ugly state of roads in Yaounde.

Even the multiple meetings that have been staged across the decades that Biya has been in charge and still counting, have not changed the road fortune of Yaounde.

While municipal authorities are decrying spiraling anarchy in the housing sector, the nature of roads, many say, appears more dreadful. The roads, some say, constitute more threat to public peace and order than

the wind government has been chasing for years.

Making mockery of a people, wasting opportunities

Those who say President Biya has no excuse as to why roads in Yaounde are the way they are in 2023, add that the situation is rather a mockery of the populace.

Analysts appear unanimous that occasions that would have helped the Yaounde regime to save face, have also been squandered.

Recall that Cameroon, between 2019 and 2023, hosted the African Nations Championship, CHAN and the 33th edition of the Africa Cup of Nations, AFCON.

Many say these were windows to give the road network in Yaounde a new look.

This reporter has, on several occasions, pictured instances where gaping potholes are being filled with earth in the heart of the capital city. Others were seen whitewashing certain avenues and painting stones to give the semblance of the roads being in shape, but time, critics say, has laid bare the situation of things for all to see.

Sloganeering & sleeping while city rots?

While some say they can't understand why even the capital city can't boast of goods roads, there are those who have opted to see the bad state of roads as the outcome of a regime that spends time in sloganeering and playing around while Yaounde is sleeping into ruin.

They say all the slogans that Biya has used to open the different mandates he has won to lead since 1982, roads in Yaounde show, have been empty talk and cheap politicking.

Yaounde a disastrous example of decentralisation?

Outside the major roads that speak volume of nothing moving, most of the city dwellers in the seven Subdivisions that make up Yaounde, say the capital city is an example of failure in decentralisation.

While the central government has been shamed for leaving roads to get bad, the role of councils, city dwellers say, are not felt when it comes to maintaining roads in their municipalities.

Shockingly, the Subdivisional Councils and the City Council in Yaounde are among the richest nationwide. What they do in terms of even maintaining roads, many

Yaounde denizens we spoke to say, is not known.

Many say they know of streets that have never been graded for decades and no one cares! Many Yaounde residents say they consider the capital city a very big village, owing to its worsening state of roads.

"What is the difference between roads in Yaounde and those in my native village, Weh in Wum, Menchum Division of the North West Region," a Yaounde resident who pleaded to stay anonymous questioned angrily.

"How do I convince my kith and kin back in Menchum, that the same trouble we go through, while travelling from Wum to Bamenda, is exactly what I am witnessing driving through the nation's capital, Yaounde?" he questioned further.

PM Dion Ngute on fruitless mission to salvage situation?

Apparently, having come to terms with the stark reality that the bad state of roads in Yaounde has harvested for Cameroon, international shame, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, Chief Dr Joseph Dion Ngute, summoned concerned stakeholders for a meeting last October 26, to urgently address the situation.

But how can a situation that has lasted decades be adjusted under emergency conditions? Analysts have praised the PM for the move, but say they are almost certain that nothing will change.

For one thing, the Minister of Decentralisation and Local Development, Georges Elanga Obam and his counterpart of Housing and Urban Development, Celestine Ketcha Courtes, left the meeting that was staged at the Star Building with twisted faces and fallen jaws; telling whoever cared to listen that, as it stands, there is no money to urgently address the worrying bad state of roads in Yaounde!

To further worsen the situation in what many say points to the Biya regime having had no vision to modernise Yaounde, the Minister of Public Works, Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi, rather said in the long run, roads in the nation's capital will be classified and plans made to construct them.

Analysts say it is baffling that in 41 years, the Biya regime is still talking about classifying roads in Yaounde!

Even the timing of the PM's meeting with many ministries almost exhausting their budgets and waiting for 2024, observers say, speak volumes of a system not properly coordinated.

Worst still, even the 2024 budget for most ministries have been drawn. Many say they fear no special budget lines have been included in concerned ministries' 2024 budget to salvage the shame in Yaounde.

Urgent need for special road fund for Yaounde

For many, government must leave the cosmetic measures and unfruitful gatherings it has been staging over the years to get pragmatic and reverse the situation.

Town planners and road construction experts say President Biya should, as a matter of urgency, institute a special road fund worth hundreds of billions of FCFA to repair, construct and open up more roads in Yaounde, whose population is growing at a geometric rate.

Without this, they sustain, Yaounde will remain the capital city of shame it has been for forty-one years under President Biya.

Agricultural transformation in Africa:

Scholars brainstorming on putting universities at heart of drive

By Dewah Fabrice Teh

Scholars from 160 universities in over 40 African countries have begun brainstorming on how to put higher institutions of learning at the heart of Africa's agricultural transformation drive.

The meeting, which opened in Yaounde yesterday, is the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Africa, ROFURUM.

It is taking place under the theme: "Transforming higher education to sustainably feed and create prosperity for Africa".

The Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, Prof Jacques Fame Ndongo, opened discussions. The conference will run till Thursday November 2.

During the four-day gathering participants are exchanging notes on fostering collaboration between African universities to drive development through agricultural transformation.

They will also look at restructuring universities to promote agriculture development-oriented research works, scientific innovations and entrepreneurship.

These issues, the authorities detailed, will strategically be to ensure that universities produce qualified human resources capable of enabling the continent get the best from its agricultural potential.

Time to make Africa agriculturally

Speaking as the forum opened yesterday, Prof Jacques Fame Ndongo expressed gratitude to ROFURUM for choosing Cameroon as the host of the ongoing forum.

The minister told the participants to use the ongoing conference to strategise on how to change the continent's narrative in terms of agriculture and the zone's general socio-economic vibrancy.

"Think and act African. Give Africa the change that it needs in the domain of agriculture to ensure food self-sufficiency for a better and a brighter future," Prof Fame Ndongo said.

"We should make proposals that meet the requirements of the African continent. This is a turning point for the African continent. Let's think big and



Authorities, participants in a group photo after the launch of the forum yesterday



Officials pose with a special ROFURUM award handed to President Paul Biya for his contributions to agriculture in Africa

have the courage to dream big," the member of government emphasised.

The minister, in his speech, made suggestions, which, he said if introduced in the organisation and functioning of universities on the African continent, will help facilitate the task of placing the institutions as key players in the agricultural transformation. This, he said, is vital in the African Union, AU, Agenda 2063.

The Minister, amongst others, spoke on the need to promote the use of technologies in universities and the need for universities to design Masters and PhD programmes good enough to contribute positively to development.

Prof Fame Ndongo also drummed the need for the involvement of more women

in the production, transformation, and commercialisation chain of the continent's agricultural sector.

Cameroon fronting continental shift

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, ROFURUM was instituted in 2004 as a tool to promote agriculture on the African continent through the African university system.

Cameroon, which is organising the bloc's 19th AGM, is the first country in the Central African sub-region to do so.

Yesterday's event was attended by several top-ranking dignitaries from Cameroon and abroad. Among them: were the Chadian Minister of Education,

the Malawian Vice Minister of Education and the Executive Secretary of ROFURUM, Patrick Okori.

Biya gets special recognition

The ROFURUM head expressed the bloc's gratitude to Cameroon for hosting the event. The bloc in the process, paid homage to the Head of State, President Paul Biya, for his matchless contribution to promoting the growth of agriculture on the African continent notably via education.

The group iced the gesture with a special award to the Head of State, Paul Biya, for the incredible strides made in boosting the domain of agriculture not only in Cameroon but in the whole of Africa.

Health minister puts nation on alert as conjunctivitis rife

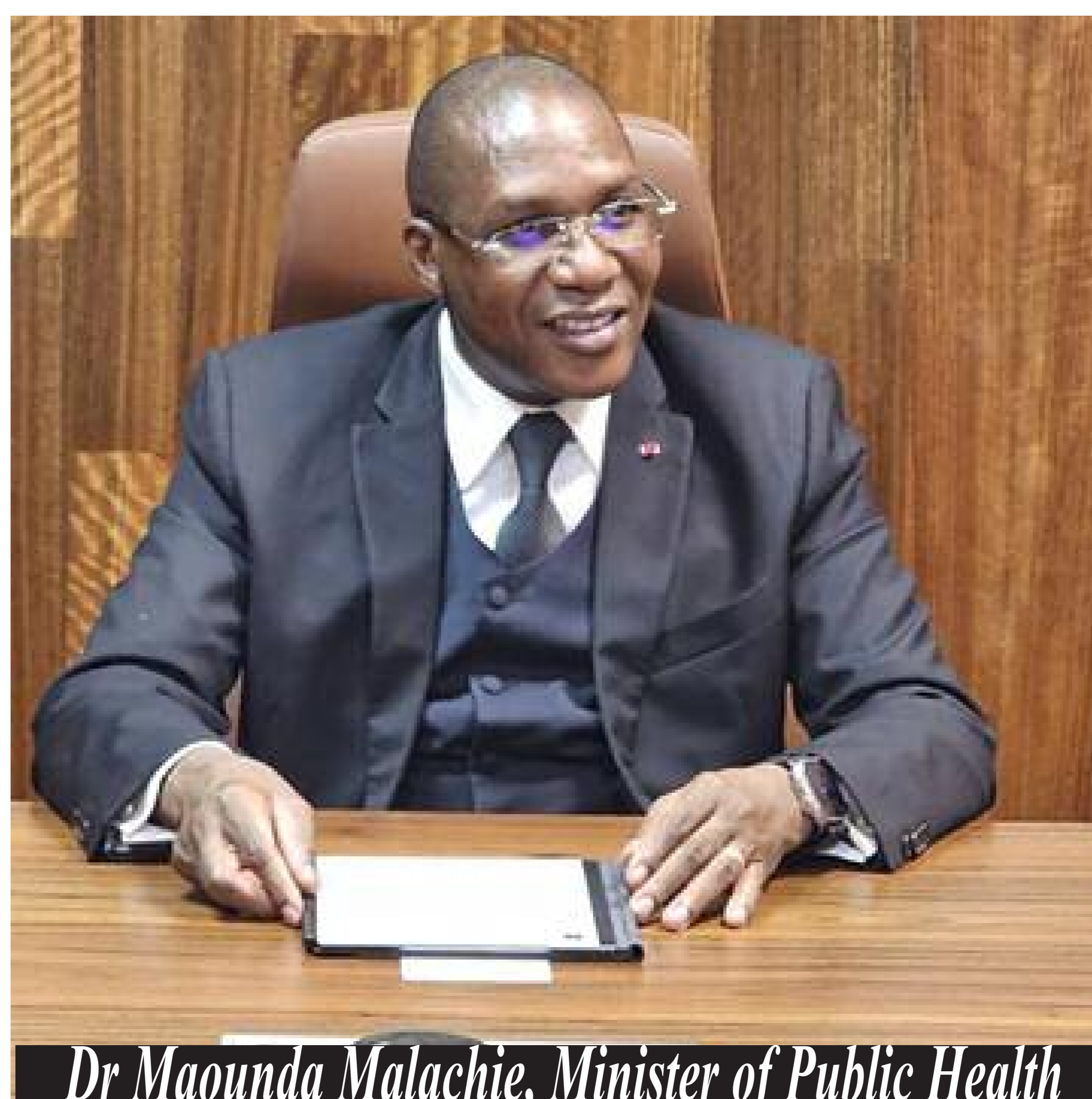
By Morine Tanyi

The Minister of Public Health, Dr Manaouda Malachie, has put the nation on alert as cases of conjunctivitis have become rife nationwide. In a release issued yesterday, Minister Manaouda said the infection has been detected in places where people cluster such as schools and workplaces.

He advised the population to report any cases of conjunctivitis to the nearest health facility. According to Dr Manaouda, conjunctivitis is a benign disease and an epidemic resulting from highly contagious viruses with a high risk of contamination and affects persons of all age groups.

Regarding the symptoms, the member of government noted that conjunctivitis epidemics come with red eyes, itches, clear or purulent discharge, sticky eyelids, and blurred vision.

This situation, he said, represents a high risk of propagation in the community and neighbourhoods, especially in schools among youngsters and workplaces among



Dr Maounda Malachie, Minister of Public Health

parents.

Dr Manaouda, in the release, went on to call on the population to report any suspected case of an infected person to the nearest health facility. He equally reiterated the need to respect preventive measures against diseases transmitted by lachrymal or respiratory secretions.

To be safe, he called on citizens to ensure they wash hands regularly with clean water and soap or use a hydro-alcoholic solution, avoid rubbing their eyes in case of symptoms. He also urged people to limit close contacts with people suffering from conjunctivitis without protection and use of single-use towels or tissues.

In schools, the minister advised that any infected child should be sent home to avoid a situation where the diseases can further spread and contaminate more children.

Dr Manaouda equally used the opportunity to remind all healthcare workers that infection, prevention and control guidelines must always be followed in the fight against the spread of the disease without relenting. He also indicated in his note of yesterday that for further information, users can call the toll-free number 1510.

Welisane Foundation, partners take breast cancer awareness walk to Douala

By Elizabeth Banyitabi

Members and partners of Welisane Foundation, a not for profit organisation advocating for the empowerment of the female gender, have extended a walk staged to raise awareness, educate and push for early detection through screening for breast cancer to Douala.

The walk in Douala on October 28, drew the cottons on the month-long activities carried by Welisane Foundation and its partner, 'Dare To Live with Anjoh', both onsite, online and the media to mark the Breast Cancer Awareness Month, also known as Pink October.

The annual campaign seeks to raise awareness about breast cancer impact, its causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. This year's edition was held under the distinguished patronage of the Minister of Public Health with the theme, 'bridging the care gap by fighting together'.

Welisane Foundation and Dare To Live with Anjoh took many to the streets of Douala, with sensitisation messages right down to the Douala Parcours Vita where persons were offered free screening on breast cancer.

The disease has been marked as one of the most infectious and fast-killing cancer types mostly affecting women. The World Health Organization estimated, in 2020, that there were 2.3 million women diagnosed with breast cancer with 685,000 deaths globally.

As of the end of 2020, WHO data noted that there were 7.8 million women alive who were diagnosed with breast cancer in the past five years, making it the world's most prevalent cancer. Breast cancer occurs in every country of the world in women at any age after puberty,



Programme Officer of Dare To Live with Anjoh leading sport walk in Douala

but with increasing rates in later life. Amongst 10 women screened, eight are said to manifest symptoms of breast cancer. However 0.5-1% of men are infected by breast cancer globally.

"All should get involved"

True to her mission to curb the prevalence in Cameroon, the founding president of Welisane Foundation, Mokwe Welisane Nkeng, said it was important for all to get involved.

"We want to get the entire population of Cameroon involved and you know the biggest cities are Yaoundé and Douala, so we want to get these parts of the country really mobilised for the cause of breast cancer. Throughout the years we worked in rural and semi-urban areas, notwithstanding Yaoundé and Douala are the epicentres," she said.

Leading the noble cause against breast cancer, Welisane said it's important because the general idea around the foundation is for women to know their rights.

"We noticed that women do not take care of themselves, they take

care of any other person except themselves...we are calling on women in particular to know about the dangers of breast cancer...get checked because you can't pour from an empty cup, start with yourself so you can take care of your entourage," she added.

Louiza Manka, Chief Operations Officer of Dare to Live with Anjoh, emphasised that the two foundations are sending a message that early detection saves lives.

"The only way we can achieve these objectives as the theme says, bridging the care gap by fighting together, is through early screening, so that women will be able to know if there any signs and symptoms. Any woman who will be positive for screening will be referred to partner hospitals for more elaborate screening and care," Manka noted.

The medical personnel called on women and men to regularly check their breast in front of a mirror.

Symptoms to watch out for, she said, are noddles, boils, abnormal pains, inverted nipples for people who were not born with inverted nipples... orange peels skin, flaky skin around the breast area, noddles



Founder of Welisane Foundation leading fitness exercise at Parcours Vita-Douala



Medic demonstrating how to self-check breast cancer

around the armpit, abnormal discharge on the nipples etc.

Describing the self-care process, Manka told participants to lift one hand across their heads while maintained straight, use the three middle fingers to press the breast starting from the nipples to the upper armpit area in circular motion. The participants at the end of the day, expressed delight to have been part of the noble cause.

One of them, Elomo Jemea Mokwe, revealed that she has learned a lot from the screening and sports

walk. In the same light, Forbang Batcham said he took part in the campaign because men are also prone to be infected with breast cancer.

"Women should not be left alone in the fight," he said.

Batcham believes if more men get involved, more lives will be saved.

After the awareness walk, the team went to hospitals and patients' houses to support them, gave help to children who have been orphaned because they lost their parents due to breast cancer.

Buea: NDES Foundation donates modern water facilities to three communities

By Mua Patrick

Renowned Non-Governmental Organisation, the Nde Zachariah's Descendants Foundation, NDES Foundation, has donated water schemes to three communities in Buea, South West Region.

The benefiting communities include Bomaka, Malingo and Molyko, all localities in Buea Subdivision.

The community water projects were publicly commissioned Saturday October 28. This was during a heavily attended public event.

The momentous event marked a significant milestone for the Buea communities. The projects are aimed at addressing the pressing issue of access to clean water.

Authorities said the initiative stands as a testament to the strength of local action in community development.

The NDES Foundation, a non-profit organisation led by the visionary Enyih Stanley Nde, has long been dedicated to improving the lives of the people in Buea and its surrounding areas.

"This newly inaugurated community water project has been a labour of love, designed to alleviate the water-related hardships faced by some communities in Buea," said Stanley Nde.

Meanwhile, during the commissioning ceremony Saturday, the secretary of NDES Foundation, Boma Miranda Mah, eloquently spoke on behalf of President Enyih Stanley Nde.

She emphasised the project's significance and the fundamental philosophy that underpins it – local action.

Mah stated: "This project exemplifies the power of local action in community development. It's a project born from the understanding that we, the members of these communities, are the ones who truly know the challenges we

face. By working together, we can devise solutions that fit our unique circumstances".

It was disclosed that the community water project is a collaborative effort, the spirit of unity and self-reliance.

It includes the construction of a modern water network of distribution points to ensure clean and accessible water for residents in the said beneficiary communities.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by local dignitaries, community members, and representatives from various organisations. The attendees were filled with hope and optimism for the positive change this initiative would bring to their lives.

This water project is expected to improve public health, enhance the overall quality of life, and foster economic development within the community.

"Access to clean water is not only a fundamental human right but also a critical element in the growth and prosperity of any society," the benefactor noted.

"As the NDES Foundation's community water project now begins its journey, it serves as a model for other communities, inspiring them to take action into their own hands and address their unique challenges. The people of Buea, Cameroon, have shown that by coming together and understanding their local issues, they can create sustainable solutions that will stand the test of time" the organisation added.

"In the face of daunting challenges, the NDES Foundation's commitment to improving the lives of the people it serves shines as a beacon of hope. This event marks the beginning of a brighter future for these communities in Buea, where access to clean water is no longer a distant dream but a tangible reality, thanks to the power of local action and community development," the organisation continued.



Members of the foundation at one of the donated stand taps



Representatives of the Foundation at the inaugural

The Nde Zachariah's Descendants Foundation, NDES Foundation, it should be said, was established in 2019 by the surviving family of Ma Nde Elizabeth and Pa Nde Zachariah, who resided in Buea, in the South West Region. Their legacy continues to inspire the Foundation's mission.

In their memory, the family is dedicated to assisting some of Cameroon's most overlooked rural communities.

The primary focus of the foundation is on empowering the communities to achieve self-reliance and long-term sustainability.

From its inception, the NDES Foundation has held true to the values of community, inclusion, and transparency.

The foundation believes that by working closely with these communities, respecting their unique needs and strengths, and maintaining open and honest communication.

My encounter with Amba fighters in North West

By Asong Ndifor

Since the brutal conflict pitting Defence and Security Forces and Ambazonia fighters or Amba Boys in the Bushes started some six years ago, I have been writing about atrocities and ordeal residents in the North West and South West and regions go through daily, without experiencing any.

I recently saw a gruesome video of two innocent civilians being publicly executed in Guzang, Momo Division of the North West by Amba Boys. It was such a horrific and a graphic illustration of how barbaric some of the boys could descend to the nadir of barbarism.

When I was invited to preside at a wedding ceremony of a family member in Mbengwi, Momo Division of the North West Region, the thought of that horrid execution chilled my delicate spine and I objected without hesitation. But the family pressure, dangled with an ultimatum, became unbearable. So, I had no choice but to pray and take the trip to Mbengwi.

The Momo divisional headquarters wasn't a strange town as I used to go there for holidays during my years in Cameroon Protestant College, CPC, Bali. I was told things were "normalising in Mbengwi" and with a tarred road from Bamenda, the trip would take just 30 minutes.

When I arrived at Bamenda at 8 p.m. on Friday October 20, a city I have occasionally visited since the conflict started, I observed a frightening difference. It was like a dim graveyard. I asked why the city, the most fortified in the region, was in such a gloomy atmosphere.

The reply was that a visitor to the town driving in security uniform was chased by the Boys and he abandoned the car and escaped. It was later burnt and the population expected a swift retaliation with innocent civilians as potential victims, drawing from past experiences. So, most people locked themselves up at home.

That further scared me, but my host in-laws told me Mbengwi was calm and a Toyota Prado vehicle had been placed at my disposal to take me and five members of my delegation to Mbengwi and back in Bamenda by 5p.m.

On Saturday morning, we took off and



View of road to Mbengwi

at the first checkpoint at Mile 90, with a makeshift shade protected by bags of sand, the driver went to "settle" there, while the other members of my delegation were ordered out of the vehicle. I guessed as a senior citizen they allowed me to remain in the vehicle.

A French-speaking soldier in black mask scrutinised the identities of my fellow passengers before they walked some 50 metres to join me in the vehicle that was ordered to be driven further from the checkpoint after the "settlement".

From there we continued our journey for some 30 minutes and the vehicle veered into a bush path.

"Where are we going to?" I asked. The driver said we could not take the tarred road because for over three months the Amba Boys had prohibited movements on the tarred road. Why? The driver said they did so in protest the creation of a military camp in the area and that only security vehicles ply the road occasionally. He explained further that the rich who have ceremonies in Mbengwi do bribe the Boys to give them safe passage.

Paradox of a conflict

What a paradox that a facility meant to protect innocent civilians had instead been made punitive by Amba Boys to the people they claim to defend! Just about an hour meandering through maize and

vegetable farms amidst shrubs, three young men in their twenties emerged some 100 metres on a straight stretch as our vehicle approached. They waved a sign with pistols in the air and our driver stopped immediately.

"Those are the Boys," he said, as he slammed the car to a halt and asked four young men travelling with me to get down and stand on the line with their identification papers. As they did, I remain seated while we drove towards them.

Two were moving majestically to meet the passengers who were on the line, while one remained on the spot waiting for us. As we approached him, he moved to the driver's side, fidgeting with his pistol and stared at me with contempt. I took courage, mixed with fear of the unknown to greet, "How are you?"

He frowned, offering no word and moved backwards peering inside the car.

The driver said he needed "support". Still not in a mood to defy fear, I hurriedly offered a 5,000 FCFA note that was handy, but the driver quickly pushed it inside the car and whispered to me to give just 500 FCFA, which I handed to the driver.

When the two finished screening the other members of my entourage, my companions moved to meet me in the car as the Boys vamoosed into the shrubs

without notice, probably to wait for other victims at a different point, I was told.

My fellow travellers narrated how they questioned one of them who is a treasury official in Bamenda. He had to lie that he works in a private clinic. I was told if any of them was a security or government official, he would have been kidnapped and possibly killed if no ransom was offered.

The journey which would have taken 30 minutes finally took two hours thirty minutes and at 6 PM when I wanted to return, the driver told me "nothing moves in Mbengwi" which is largely deserted, after nightfall. I could observe mainly some few parked commercial motorbikes in centre Mbengwi and security forces heavily armed in three checkpoints in the town.

Dreaming of encounter with Amba Boys

I had no choice than to stay the night dreaming of my encounter with the Amba Boys, praying not to have a repeat experience the next day. God heard my prayers and as I returned on Sunday, there was the news that a quarter head had been killed in the region.

The four young men who accompanied me would have crushed the haggardly, dirty and hungry-looking three Amba Boys in any physical combat. But they were armed. The encounter reminded me of Senator Mbella Moki urging civilians to "terrorise the terrorists". I wonder how he would have done that if he was in my shoe.

The experience reminds me again of the sour rhetoric Anglophone ministers, senators and parliamentarians often spew in Yaounde about "normalcy returning". I challenge them to visit their constituencies and hold rallies in Mbangwi, Njinikom, Wum, Kumbo, Menji, Muea, Bangem, Mamfe, Mundemba etc without security guards and return to Yaounde to tell the real situation on the ground.

They should not count their teeth with their tongues. Senator Regina Mundi can tell them again that "we are in a real war" situation and truth has been executed by those in Yaounde and their acolytes in Bamenda and Buea, who are benefiting from the blood oozing in the two regions.

Drugs from Cameroon worth 806 million FCFA seized in US

By Mua Patrick

The United States Customs and Border Protection, CBP, have said they seized roughly \$1.3 million, a circa 806 million FCFA worth of ketamine in an air cargo shipment from Cameroon.

The seizure was carried out on October 10 at Washington Dulles International Airport. The value of the seized ketamine was estimated at \$1.3 million.

Officials said they discovered the animal tranquilizers after CBP's agriculture specialists scrutinized a shipment falsely

labeled as "Garri and Water FuFu" destined for an address in Washington DC.

Customs and Border Protection, CBP officials said they uncovered seven packages, including five labeled as Water Fufu and two packages labeled as Garri, products typically derived from cassava.

Within the bundles, CBP agriculture specialists and officers discovered five bundles containing a crystallized white powder.

CBP officers used a tool to confirm the presence of ketamine hydrochloride in the packages.

Ketamine hydrochloride is a Schedule III non-narcotic compound regulated

under the Controlled Substances Act, and is a potent animal tranquilizer with both medical and illicit applications, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, DEA

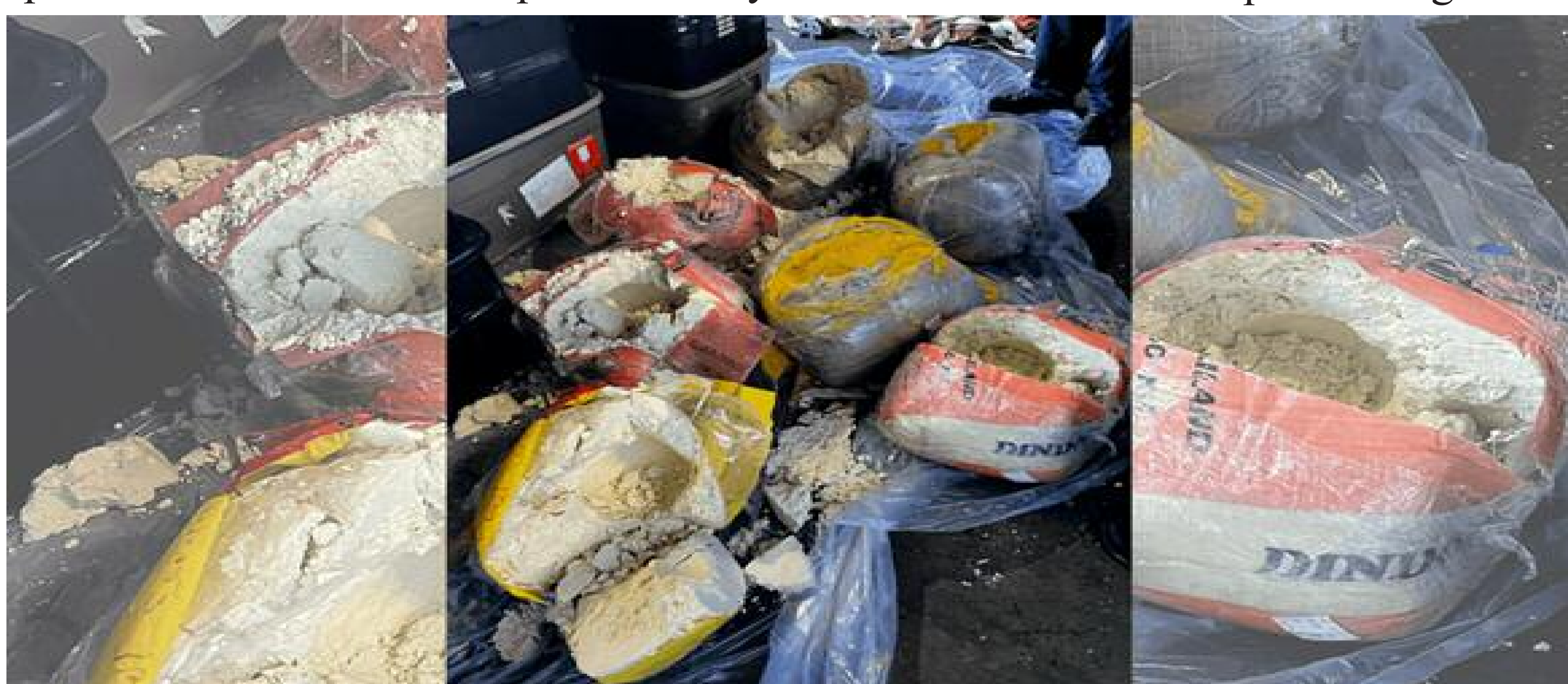
The DEA said ketamine is medically used to induce sedation, immobility, and pain relief, but has recently been abused for its ability to induce dissociative sensations and hallucinations and to facilitate sexual assault.

Overdosing on ketamine can result in severe health consequences, including nausea, irregular heart rate, muscle stiffening, unconsciousness and respiratory failure.

The seized ketamine weighed approximately 45 pounds and 15 ounces. No arrests have been made yet, as the incident remains under investigation.

Acting Area Port Director for CBP's Area Port of Washington, DC, Christine Waugh emphasized the ongoing efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations smuggling illicit narcotics into the United States.

"Customs and Border Protection remains committed to keeping our country and our communities safe from the scourge of dangerous drugs," Waugh said.



Partial view of the substance seized



Ketamine found in cargo shipment at Washington Dulles International Airport

To promote growth: Nkafu Institute edifies 25 young Cameroonians on excellent policy writing, analysis

By Dewah Fabrice Teh

Renowned Cameroon-based Pan African nongovernmental organisation, the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation, has through its think tank, the Nkafu Policy Institute, trained some 25 young Cameroonians on public policy analysis techniques, values and management.

The institution edified the youngsters on the crucial topics during a four-day intensive training. The training was organised in Yaounde from Wednesday October 25 to Friday October 27.

Trainees during the scheme got drilled amongst others on improving their skills in policy analysis both qualitatively and quantitatively and how they can promote evidence-based public policy through the writing of result-oriented Op-Eds, policy briefs and reports.

The youngsters selected from all walks of life including administration and public policy making fields, were also edified on understanding the process of planning an effective policy advocacy campaign and how to advocate for change as a tool to drive development in the society.

The experienced trainers charged with the coordination of the close to week-long session also briefed the trainees on, business management, business creation, leadership and public speaking.

Contributing to nation's dev't strides

Speaking in an interview at the end of the session Friday, the coordinator of the project, Bin Meh congratulated all the participants for their immense contribution in making the just concluded project which was the 5th edition of the Nkafu training, a successful one.

He described the session as an enriching experience that will help shape the future of Cameroonian poli-



Economic Policy Analyst at Nkafu Policy Institute, Bin Meh, addressing participants during works



Participants, authorities at the end of the training last Friday

cy making and implementation and contribute in the continuous and steady development of Cameroon through the promotion of people and result-oriented policies.

"This gathering was crucial and it has empowered these young Cameroonians to be able to understand what policy is, how they can identify policy, how they can propose policy and advocate for policy change," Bin Meh who is an Economic Policy Analyst at Nkafu Policy Institute stated.

"With these skills, the trainees will know on how to identify policy issues, analyze them and bring out strong pol-

icy recommendations that can be put forth for the betterment of the society," Meh added.

Trainees express gratitude

Participants at the end of the training, expressed gratitude to the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation and the think tank, the Nkafu Policy Institute for the privilege to get the vital knowledge and skills through the scheme.

They described the knowledge acquired during the training as one that will not only contribute in their personal growth but serve as a key player in their drive towards making change in the society through their various fields

of work.

"We need in a society where its imperative for us to have a better understanding of the policies taken no matter the level and structure and this platform offered us that," Sob Kamwa Francois Melvin Kamtchoum, a trainee from the Technical Secretariat of the Steering Committee for the Rationalisation of Regional Economic Communities in Central Africa, said.

"I have learned how to streamline my ideas and how to direct what I think are results of my findings into actionable solutions to decision makers. These are very important tools in my profession," Sob Kamwa added.

Atemnkeng Emiliene Atabong, a poet and visual artist who also participated in the training, made similar remarks.

She added that the knowledge and skills gathered through the Nkafu program will go a long way in guiding her towards her goal of serving as a major and passionate changemaker in the society through the proper use of policies.

"It has been a beautiful experience with a lot of knowledge gained. I am confident that if I use these skills, I can contribute in us having a better society," Atemnkeng who holds a Masters degree in Political Sciences, stated.

About...Nkafu Policy Institute

The Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation is a Cameroon-based Pan African NGO engaged in catalysing Africa's economic transformation through social entrepreneurship, science, technology, innovation, public health and progressive policies designed to create economic opportunities for all.

Nkafu Policy Institute, for its part, is a think tank at the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation with the mission to present in-depth and independent policies to the state and to the public at large.

The institution has over the years, served as a major think tank contributing in driving change in the country.

To promote literary works:

Association seeks culture ministry's support to print 1000 books for students

By Morine Tanyi

The association, CENE Litteraire, has appealed for support from the Ministry of Arts and Culture, MINAC, to print 1000 books on African literature which will be distributed free to students.

Barrister Flore Agnes Nda Zoa, president of the association formalized the appeal over the weekend during an audience granted members of the association by the Minister of Arts and Culture, Bidoung Mkpatt.

The audience took place at the Conviviality Hall of the National Museum in Yaounde. Nda told the minister that, her association seeks to promote and defend literature works produced by African and Afro-descendant writers with a focus on humanity, society, politics and culture.

She also said the association targets organising literary meetings with writers strengthen multifaceted support for writers. Nda also briefed the MINAC boss on the construction of literary residences, the



Minister Bidoung Mkpatt (third from right) speaking during audience

award of literary prizes to best books that celebrate the African continent; promotion of award-winning works on the African continent through the hosting of literary coffee exchanges and organising debates.

Nda said, as leader of the association, she has been financing projects alone. As the vision is expanding, she said there is need for more support to realise the lofty projects on ground.

"We expect that the ministry will assist us financially in the produc-

tion of some books that will be distributed for free to some 1000 students," Nda stated.

This year, she noted, the book that was selected on the national book list is that of the prolific writer Imbolo Mbue. The author's right of the book she said, has been bought from the French publisher and they need just the necessary funds to have the book printed for distribution. Nda said it is important for students to read and get fresh insight. She said there is need for students to



Officials pose with minister after audience to solicit support

read more of what concerns their country and culture.

Apartment for writers

Nda also briefed the minister on a project to construct a six apartment building in the Essos neighbourhood of Yaounde for writers. The CENE Litteraire president explained that most writers lack a calm and serene place to develop their projects, reason she is embarking on the project.

For the building project, she said: "We are equally pleading with the

ministry to see if it is possible to give feeding allowance" to writers during their reflection.

Minister Bidoung Mkpatt saluted the projects of the association and the consistency of its president. He promised to ensure officials of the ministry collaborate with the association to ease projects realization.

Minister Bidoung Mkpatt reminded his guests of fresh government actions to improve the artistic sector in the country.

Cameroon ranked among countries with worst respect for rule of law

By *Mua Patrick*

Cameroon has been ranked bottom place in the latest Rule of Law Index released by the World Justice Project, WJP.

According to the ranking released last week, Cameroon found itself placed 134th out of 142 countries globally regarding adherence to the rule of law.

The ranking was unveiled as part of the 2023 index, published in Washington, DC, United States.

Countries ahead of Cameroon in the Sub-Saharan region include Rwanda, Namibia, Mauritius, Botswana, South Africa, Senegal, Ghana, Malawi, The Gambia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Kenya, Togo, Zambia, Ivory Coast, Niger, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Madagascar, Angola and Guinea.

The World Justice Project report employed eight key indicators to assess countries' performance: constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, and criminal justice.

Last year, Cameroon was ranked 134th out of 140 countries surveyed. The WJP report observed that this marks the sixth consecutive year of global declines in the rule of law.

In 2023, 59 percent of the surveyed countries experienced a decline in the rule of law. On a global scale, Denmark secured the top spot in the 2023 WJP Rule of Law Index, followed by



File photo: Soldier about to publicly execute woman in Far North

Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Germany.

At the other end of the spectrum, Venezuela holds the lowest score, with Cambodia, Afghanistan, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC trailing closely.

In terms of specific indicators, Cameroon's performance varies. In constraints on government powers, the country ranks 121th globally.

For absence of corruption, Cameroon is ranked 138th while on the indicator on open government, the country is placed 132. For the aspect of fundamental rights, Cameroon is ranked 127th while on the issue of Order and Security, the country is ranked 134. It is occupied the position of 121th on regulatory enforcement globally.

On civil justice, Cameroon is ranked 122nd meanwhile on criminal justice, it was ranked 140 out of 142 countries.

"The World remains grappled by rule of law recession characterised by executive overreach,

curtailing of human rights, and justice systems that are failing to meet people's needs," said WJP president, William Neukom.

The countries with the biggest rule of law declines in the past year are Sudan, Mali, Iran, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan, while the countries that improved their rule of law score most 2022-2023 are Bulgaria, Honduras, Kenya, Slovenia, and Jordan. Honduras was also a top improver last year.

About Rule of Law Index

The World Justice Project, WJP Rule of Law Index is the world's leading source for original, independent data on the rule of law.

Now covering 142 countries and jurisdictions, the Index relies on more than 149,000 household surveys and 3,400 legal practitioner and expert surveys to measure how the rule of law is experienced and perceived worldwide.

Yaounde-Douala highway: Gendarmes seize huge consignment of pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs

By *Morine Tanyi*

Gendarmes have seized a huge consignment of illicit pharmaceuticals and other items among them foodstuffs along the Yaounde-Douala highway.

The goods are said to have been impounded during an operation that spanned October 21 to 24. Gendarmes are said to have made use of the modern ZBV scanner van and Mini Z hand-held scanner to detect the goods.

According to an officer who was part of the team that seized the goods, the Mini Z hand-held scanner was used to scan the bus of certain travel agencies.

The source said it was in the course of the scanning that the goods were identified. Most of the vehicles are said to have left Yaounde for Douala.

Equipped with the mini hand-held scanner, gendarmes, the officer added, scanned the luggage of passengers and the vehicles of a number of travel agencies. Consequently, a huge quantity of smuggled goods and products of dubious origin was seized in the course of the operations.

Items seized included; soft drinks, stocks of medicines and many other products that security sources said, are

judged unfit for consumption.

The operation, the same source said was equally a way to tighten security in Yaounde and its environs. Meanwhile, the ZBV scanner van, the officer said, remains deployed along the Yaounde-Douala highway, precisely at Okoa Maria for the same purpose.

According to another gendarme officer, during these operations, vehicles along the Yaounde-Douala highway are closely inspected to detect any objects that could threaten the safety of persons and property.

The impounded products are said to have been handed over to the Yaounde Motorized Road Platoon for further investigation and verification.

In the meantime, the operation according to officers of the National Gendarmerie will continue in order to ensure the safety of people and their property throughout the national territory.

To recall that, some months back, unidentified persons used projects to attack vehicles along the Yaounde-Douala road. The situation caused the Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji to organise emergency meetings to arrest the situation.



Gallons of chemicals, buckets impounded



- Appartments
- Rooms
- Swimming pool
- Spa, Sauna, Massage
- chalets
- Meeting Rooms
- Conference hall



BUEA MOUNTAIN HOTEL CONTACTS:
 Tel: +237 233 32 22 99 / 233 32 20 88 - Fax: +237 233 32 26 56
 Email: info@mountainhotelcameroon.com

Olympic Games qualifiers:

Cameroon face Uganda today in must-win game

By Deng Eric

The senior women's national football team of Cameroon will clash against their counterparts of Uganda today in a second leg round two fixture of the African zonal qualifiers for the 2024 Olympic Games.

The highly awaited encounter comes up as from 5pm at the Reunification Stadium in Douala.

The Indomitable Lionesses go into the fixture knowing that anything short of win with a two-goal difference, will see them exit the qualifying competition.

Cameroon had suffered a 0-2 defeat in the hands of Uganda in the away leg fixture which was played on October 26 at FUFA Technical Centre in Uganda.

The loss, compromised Cameroon's chances of advancing to the third round of the qualifiers. However, pundits believe though difficult, it is not impossible for the Lionesses to overturn to the negative result.

Coach Jean Baptiste Bisseck and team continued preparation for the game after returning from Uganda



Cross section of Cameroonian players during training session in Douala

on Saturday October 28.

The lead trainer and his staff have been putting emphasis on finishing, given that Cameroon must win the match with a two-goal difference.

Uganda Crested Cranes, Cameroon's opponent for today's match arrived Douala on Sunday and will be looking to consolidate their lead they secured during the away

match.

The winner of the match on aggregate will face either Ethiopia or record African champions Nigeria in the next round.

It is worth mentioning that the Cameroon women's national team is gunning to become one of two African women's football teams in the 2024 Olympic Games to run

from July 24 to August 10.

In case of elimination, Cameroon would have missed out on two major international competitions in women's football.

Last month, the Indomitable Lionesses were eliminated in the race to the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations by the Starlets of Kenya

Bafmeng United having difficult start to life in Elite Two

By Deng Eric

Bafmeng United Football Academy have had a difficult start to life in the MTN Elite Two championship.

The North West Region club emerged as vice champions of the 2023 National Interpools tournament to gain promotion to the second tier but have not been able to get things moving in the country's second tier league.

The Menchum Division club failed to play their match day one fixture against Foncha Street FC of Bamenda as a result of the absence of licenses.

The team turned up for the match which was programmed at the University of Bamenda Stadium in Bamibili on Saturday October 28 but the clash couldn't go ahead as planned.

The Guardian Post gathered that officials of the club didn't apply the licenses early enough, reason while only 12 licenses were available at the time they had to play their first encounter in the league.

Even at that, at least six of the 12 players with licenses weren't fit to play the game due to various injuries.

Reports emerged again yesterday that the team risk missing their second match against FC Yaounde II on Wednesday November 1, due to the fact that the situation of licenses hadn't changed.

When this reporter reached out on phone to Bafmeng United President, Meh Joseph Kum, he said they are working on getting the situation handled before the next match day.

"We applied for 24 licenses, three were rejected because the documents needed weren't complete but I've submitted them. The delay now is at the



Some Bafmeng United players prior to their cancelled match against Foncha Street FC

level of FECAFOOT. We hope to have the licenses tomorrow," Bafmeng United President told The Guardian Post yesterday.

He added that they also faced difficulties because the coach who qualified them for Elite Two, Soh Simplis left the club alongside five players whom they had retained in the squad for this season.

Bafmeng United failed to retain coach Soh as the team's lead trainer after he led them from the regional league through the National Interpools.

Panthere of Nde then stepped him to hire his services. Bafmeng United then opted to bring in former YOSA and PWD Bamenda coach, Nkabyo Martin as head coach.

Provided they get their licenses and are cleared to play, their litmus test in Elite Two will be against FC Yaounde II.

The match has been programmed

for tomorrow November 1 at the Annexe 1 of the Ahmadou Ahidjo Stadium in Yaounde as from 1:30pm.

Bafmeng United is lodged in Group A of the 16-club Elite Two championship.

Key fixtures for match day two

Besides match pitting Bafmeng United against FC Yaounde II, there are a total of seven other matches that will be played across the country.

Unisport of Bafang will host Renaissance of Ngomou at the Bafang Municipal Stadium. Both team will be looking to record their first win in the championship.

Unisport suffered a 0-1 defeat to Racing of Bafoussam on match day one while Renaissance played a 2-2 draw with Tonnerre Kalara Club of Yaounde.

The Bamendzi Stadium in Bafoussam will host the clash between Racing and Tonnerre of Yaounde while Aigle of Moundou will host Foncha Street of Bamenda.

Rangers Bafut in search of first win One of three North West Region clubs competing in the Elite Two championship this season, Rangers FC of Bafut will be in search of a first win in the league this 2023/2024 campaign.

They will be playing their second home game against Eding FC of Lekie in Bamibili.

Eding who were relegated from the Elite One at the end of last season, are coming into the fixture, fresh from a 3-1 win over FAP of Yaounde on match day one. Rangers on their part managed a goalless tie against Dragon of Yaounde.

Elsewhere in Limbe, Isles of Hope Sports Academy, ISOHSA will play host to Djiko FC of Bandjoun.

The fixture expected to generate fireworks, will take place at the Limbe Centenary Stadium as from 3pm.

Both teams secured victories on match day one and will be looking to continue the fine run.

2023 National Interpools champions, ISOHSA who defeated Panthere of Nde 1-0 during the first day of play while Djiko inflicted a 4-1 defeat on Leopard of Douala.

Still in Group B, Dragon of Yaounde will face AS FAP in an all-Centre Region derby at the Annexe I of the Ahmadou Ahidjo Stadium.

The last group encounter in the group will pit Panthere of Nde against Leopard of Douala. All two teams suffered defeats in the first games this season.