

INTRODUCTION

1- On 5 May 2002 in Pretoria, South Africa, the State of Cameroon during the 31st session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights defended its consolidated report spanning from the period of independence to 31 December 2000. The purpose was to build a genuine and constructive dialogue with the Commission with a view to better promoting a culture of human rights in Cameroon.

2- After the different Commissioners read through the report and the Commission held discussions with the delegates from Cameroon at the discussion session, the Commission expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved by the State of Cameroon in the promotion of human rights especially as concerns the following:

- Suppression of political offences;
- Release of political prisoners;
- Poverty reduction, combating corruption and HIV/AIDS control;
- Catering for youths who do not attend school;
- Access to medical care;
- Protection of marginalized groups.

3- The Commission, taking into consideration the above areas of concern made the following recommendations to the State of Cameroon:

- a. The Government of Cameroon should revamp its policy of access to free, compulsory and universal basic education so as to eliminate gender discrimination.
- b. The Government of Cameroon should improve the living condition in its prisons in order to make them comply with the principles of the Charter and to international standards.
- c. The Government of Cameroon should continue to work in close collaboration with NGOs so that the rights enshrined in the African Charter become a reality for all the citizens.
- d. The Government in addition was urged to pursue the promotion of the culture of the respect of human rights so as to reduce tensions existing between Anglophones and

Francophones within the country and encourage the peaceful coexistence of various ethnic groups in the country.

- e. The Government was urged to ratify as soon as possible the protocol creating the African Court.
- f. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon was requested to inform the African Commission, in its next periodic report, of the progress it has achieved in the aforementioned areas of concern.

4- This periodic report which covers the period from 1 January 2001 to 18 December 2003 has been drafted in accordance with Article 62 of the Charter and following the general instructions on the form and content of reports by States on human and peoples' rights.

5- It presents to the Commission the new measures taken and the progress achieved in the respect of the rights enshrined in the Charter and the factors and difficulties faced by the Government of Cameroon in implementing the Commission's recommendations mentioned above.

6- Nevertheless, given that the Commission initially scheduled for 20 June 2004 the examination of the periodic report of Cameroon, we deemed it judicious, for the purpose of comprehension and follow-up, to include in the content information of the year 2004. Furthermore any reference to paragraphs in this report concerns the English version of the initial report and the reference to pages concerns the French version.

7- The 7th periodic report of the State of Cameroon (Cf./os (XXXIV)/332 A of the ACHPR) has been written within the background of the following new facts:

- At the socio-political level, the Government of Cameroon continues to embark on consolidating the achievement of its democratization process through:
 - the setting up of institutions provided for in the Constitution of 18 January 1996 (the Constitutional Council, the Audit Bench) and decentralisation;

- the consolidation of and improvement in the functioning of the structures for the protection of individual freedoms (National Commission of Human Rights and Freedoms, National Elections Observatory);
- At the economic level, the Government took time to conceive all policies that would form the bases for economic, social and cultural advancement of the population, in particular:
 - The National Programme on Governance (NPG);
 - The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP);
 - The National Programme for Participatory Development (NPPD).

8- This marks a turning point in the pursuit of reforms being carried out in Cameroon ever since the country reached in October 2000 the decision point of the debt relief reinforced initiative for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC).

9- This report is broken down into two parts. The first part presents new facts with regard to the general legal and institutional framework under which the protection of the rights laid down in the Charter is being carried out. The second part deals with the new measures and actions that will ensure the exercise in Cameroon of the following rights:

- Civil and political rights;
- Economic, social and cultural rights;
- Peoples' rights and elimination of all form of racial discrimination;
- Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

PART I
INFORMATION ON THE LEGAL AND
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS PROTECTION IN CAMEROON
FROM 2001 TO 2003

10- The socio-political and legal landscape of Cameroon has experienced profound changes during the 1990-2000 decade with a series of liberty laws being enacted on 19 December 1990 (Cf-Initial Report, pgs 6-7) and the law amending the Constitution of 18 January 1996. Since 2001, the Government of Cameroon has been consolidating reforms that had been initiated earlier, notably by ratifying new international conventions (Chapter 1) and carrying on the setting up of institutions that guarantee human rights promotion and protection in Cameroon (Chapter 2).

CHAPTER I: The legal framework

11- Apart from the ratification of new instruments (Section I), the Government of Cameroon embarked on the formulation of new policies for promoting economic, cultural and social rights intended to serve as major guidelines in several sectors (Section II).

Section I: State of international legal instruments applicable in Cameroon in the area of Human Rights (from January 2001 to December 2004)

12- Cameroon, in the Preamble of its Constitution “affirms its attachment to the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and all duly ratified international conventions relating thereto”.

13- Cameroon has ratified most of the international legal instruments relating to Human Rights as was pointed out in the previous report (Cf paragraph 29, Initial Report, English version). Since 2000, new legal instruments were signed and ratified. They include:

- Convention No. 138 of the ILO on the minimum working age, ratified by the Decree of 14 April 1998 (ratification instrument deposited on 13 August 2001);
- Convention No. 182 of the ILO on the worst forms of child labour, ratified by the Decree of 27 May 2002 (ratification instrument deposited on 5 June 2002);
- The protocol relating to the setting up of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, ratified in 2003;
- The Statutes of the African Biotechnology Board (Decree of ratification No. 2003/037 of 4 February 2003);
- The Framework Agreement on Civil Protection Assistance, ratified in 2002;

- The protocol aimed at preventing, repressing and punishing trafficking in persons, in particular women and children, ratified by Decree No. 2004/120 of 18 May 2004;
- The Cartagena Protocol on the prevention of biotechnological risks, relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Montreal, 29 January 2002), ratified by Decree No.2002/017 of 18 January 2002;
- The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Stockholm, 22 May 2001), ratified in 2003;
- The Protocol against the illegal trafficking of migrants by land, air and sea, an addition to the United Nations Convention against Organised Transborder Criminality (New York, 15 November 2000), ratified by Decree No. 2004/121/of 18 March 2004;
- The Basel Protocol on responsibility and compensation in case of damages resulting from transborder movement and elimination of dangerous wastes (Basel, 10 December 1999), ratified in 2000;
- The Kyoto Protocol on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climatic Changes (Kyoto, 11 December 1997), ratified in 2002.

Section II: Measure to include the provisions of international convention ratified by Cameroon

14- Decree No. 264/DL/MJ of 17 September 2004 set up, under the coordination of the Ministry of Justice, an inter-ministerial technical committee tasked with formulating national instruments of application of:

- The United Nations Convention against organised transnational criminality and its additional protocols;
- The Convention against corruption;

- International instruments for combating terrorism.

15- The said drafts of the legal and statutory instruments had to be ready by end of April 2005 as required by the said Committee.

16- In addition, the ongoing formulation of the Child Protection Code would ensure among others that national legislation is consistent with international legal instruments, especially as concerns:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Convention No. 138 of the ILO on the minimum employment age;
- Convention No. 182 of ILO on the worst forms of child labour;
- The additional protocol on the United Nations Convention against organised transnational criminality, aimed at preventing, repressing and punishing trafficking in persons, in particular women and children;
- The African Charter of the rights and welfare of the Child.

CHAPTER II: Significant actions at the Institutional level

17- The previous report presented the political system in general and the functioning of the judicial power and the legal corps that assist in making the courts function and in promoting human rights (paragraphs 34 to 128 of the Initial Report).

18- At this juncture, considering the difficulties faced by the Government and the areas of concern for the Commission, this chapter will deal with actions undertaken in view of improving on the functioning of:

- The Judicial Power (Section I),
- The prison system (Section II),
- The maintenance of law and order (Section III),
- The other structures in charge of human rights promotion and protection (Section IV).

Section I: The Judicial Power

19- In the previous report by Cameroon, the following diagnosis was made of the Cameroonian judicial system:

- Non-setting up of new judicial institutions provided for in the Constitution;
- Justice not accessible to all;
- Judicial delays;
- Inadequate human and material means;
- Absence of adequate infrastructures;
- Poor working conditions;
- Non-respect of the judicial professional ethics.

20- At the level of the Ministry of Justice, the following plan of action was put in place since 2000:

- The setting up of a new judicial device in accordance with the new constitutional provisions, and actions to revive it;

- Improvement on the status, management, material working conditions of judicial and legal officers and para-judicial staff, as well as building their training and documentation capacities;
- Facilitating access to justice;
- Speedy judgement of cases;
- Setting up of the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court;
- Setting up of a Constitutional Council;
- Technical audit of the judicial system;
- Compilation of Common Laws Cases;
- Computerisation of the judicial system;
- Documentation of courts;
- Reinforcement of the operational capacities of the Anti-Corruption Unit;
- Drafting a new Criminal Procedure Code, appointing a magistrate to examine contentious civil matters taking into account the specificities of both judicial systems and giving a power of evocation to the Supreme Court;
- Drawing up a code of ethics for each judicial or legal profession;
- Implementing the Treaty on the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA).

The following development will present the actions undertaken by the Ministry of Justice as well as those underway.

Sub-section I: Actions that have been carried out

21- These actions cover four aspects, namely:

- Legislative and statutory areas;
- Infrastructures and equipment;
- Human resources;
- Administration management.

A – At the legislative and statutory levels.

22- The Government through the Ministry of Justice formulated and contributed in formulating many texts outlined in the matrix "Justice Sector". These are:

- Law No. 2003/008 of 10 July 2003 punishing offences outlined in the OHADA Uniform Acts currently in force;
- Law No. 2003/0039 of 10 July 2003 appointing competent courts recognised by the Uniform Act relating to the right of arbitration and to the method of referring matters to them;
- Decree No. 2002/301 of 3 December 2002 amending and supplementing certain provisions of Decree No. 80/299 of 26 July 1980 on the administrative organisation of courts (this decree withdraws the trade and personal property credit register from the registry of the Appeal Court of the Centre. By handing it over to the Registry of the Court of First Instance, access to this register is thus eased for economic operators as well as traders);
- Decree No. 2002/299 of 3 December 2002 appointing the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court as the authority responsible for appending the enforcement order on the rulings of the OHADA Joint Court of Justice and Arbitration and on arbitrary rulings in application of the arbitration rule of the said Court and Uniform Act relating to the right of arbitration;
- Decree No. 2002/300 of 3 December 2002 appointing the Minister of Justice as the national competent authority to receive notification copy of requests for advisory opinion addressed to the OHADA Joint Court of Justice and Arbitration;
- In the area of government–private sector discussion, of a judicial corps–private sector discussion framework set up by Decision No. 022/MJ of 2 October 2002.

23- The State of Cameroon proceeded to revamp the legal environment to comply with the new Constitution. In this vein, several instruments were also formulated, namely:

- Law No. 2003/005 of 21 April 2003 on the functions, organisation and functioning of the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court;
- Law No. 2003/004 of 21 April 2003 on the organisation and functioning of the Constitutional Court;
- Decree No. 2004/081 of 13 April 2004 appointing the President of the Audit Bench;

- Decree No. 2004/082 of 13 April 2004 appointing members of the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court;
- Decree No. 2004/080 of 13 April 2004 amending certain provisions of Decree No. 95/048 of 8 March 1992 on the status of the Magistracy.

B – Concerning infrastructures and equipment

24- In order to bring justice closer to the people and make the administration of justice more efficient, many courts were opened and many court premises constructed or renovated. In this regard, fourteen courts were opened: Yaounde (Ekounou), Yaounde (Administrative Centre), Douala (Ndokoti), Douala (Bonajo), Ambam, Banguem, Fundong, Ngoumou, Poli, Tcholliré, Tignère, Bengbis, Menhji and Ntui. Four court premises were constructed, namely: Yaounde (Administrative Centre), Yaounde (Ekounou), Douala (Bonanjo) and Douala (Ndokoti). In addition, the premises of the Supreme Court, the Appeal Courts of the Centre, Littoral, West, North-West and South-West were extended.

25- Besides, all courts in the country were provided with reasonable amounts of working material and tools. In this respect:

- Three hundred and forty-five (345) typing machines (worth ninety-three million four hundred and sixty-seven thousand two hundred and ninety-four CFAF (93,467,294frs)), computers, photocopiers and other office equipment were distributed;
- Vehicles of the Peugeot 607 mark were assigned to Advisers at the Supreme Court;
- Twenty all weather vehicles were assigned to various Presidents of Appeal Courts;
- The computerisation phase of courts started with the acquisition of microcomputers for the Appeal Courts of the Littoral in Douala and Centre in Yaounde. Courts in these towns have also given microcomputers.

C – Concerning human resources

26- In order to better assess magistrates, a new element of assessment concerning honesty has been included in personal information sheets.

27- Furthermore, three seminars were organised in Douala and Yaounde to acquaint magistrates with the OHADA Laws and Community Law. Two seminars on the restitution of the OHADA Law were organised respectively in June and July 2003 for magistrates and registrars in Douala and Yaounde.

D – Concerning administrative management

28- It should also be pointed out that 5 (five) Cameroonian magistrates are currently on training at the Ecole Régionale Supérieure de la Magistrature (ERSUMA) of Porto Novo in Benin. This school assists in the training and further training of magistrates and court auxiliaries.

Sub-section II: Actions being carried out

29- These can be divided into three levels;

- At the legislative and statutory levels;
- At the level of equipment and infrastructures;
- At the level of human resources.

A – At the legislative and statutory levels

30- Arrangements have been made with the OHADA Secretariat and the African Development Bank (ADB) for the translation of the OHADA Uniform Acts into English.

31- In view of acquainting users with current administrative procedures at the central services as well as in courts, a steering

committee to prepare the handbook on administrative procedures of the Ministry of Justice was set up.

32- The handbook, work on which has reached an advanced stage, throws more light on the above-mentioned procedures and also contributes in combating corruption. In this regard, an anti-corruption unit has been set up in the Ministry of Justice which, through the suggestion boxes placed in courts and through field trips, gathers information which after cross-checking are used in taking measures towards cleansing up the judicial sector.

33- Finally, it should be pointed out that the report on the technical audit of the judicial system had been handed in and was even examined during a validation seminar.

34- Concerning the revamping of the legal environment, note should be taken of the fact that much work has been done with regard to the formulation of texts on the organisation and functioning of the Supreme Court, Judicial and Administrative Courts, Regional Audit Courts.

35- Such is also the case with texts relating to the Rules and Regulations governing the Magistracy, the Special Rules and Regulations of Court Registrars and those relating to the Higher Judicial Council and Judicial Organisation.

36- A study is being carried out on easing access to justice by simplifying the procedure of reconciliation, getting legal aid and which requires the revision of texts in force in the area.

37- Furthermore, the publication in the two official languages of the official reports and rulings of the Supreme Court is underway.

38- Besides, the deadline for ending judicial procedures was taken into account in the draft Criminal Procedure Code, as well as in the draft law amending certain provisions of Ordinance No. 72/04 of 26 August 1972 on judicial organisation (Article 4, paragraph 4(new)) and that on the organisation and functioning of the Supreme Court.

B – At the level of infrastructures and equipment

39- Construction work on seven court premises is going on. Progress in construction work in terms of percentages is as follows:

- Court of First Instance of Nkongsamba 40%;
- Bafia 75% ;
- Yabassi 95% ;
- Batouri 30%;
- Eséka 20%;
- Kumbo 20%;
- and Mora 40%.

C – At the level of human resources

40- The formulation of texts relating to the rules and regulations governing the corps of court registrars has reached an advanced stage. Such is also the case with those relating to the professions of notaries, bailiffs and lawyers, the drafts of which will be discussed in Commission.

Section II: The prison system

41- The prison system in Cameroon has been facing a lot of problems since ten years ago due to the evolution and change in the socio-political and economic environment of the country.

42- The most recurrent problems are overcrowding in cells, abnormally long periods of detention on remand, insufficient food or food of poor quality, precarious nature of healthcare system.

43- In a bid to seek solutions to these multiple problems, the President of the Republic in 2001 set up an ad hoc committee responsible for “reforming the prison system and formulating a new penitentiary policy”. Moreover, by Decree No.2004/320 of 8 December 2004, the Prison Administration was attached to the Ministry of Justice.

Within the framework of the reform mentioned above, actions have been carried out in the following areas:

Sub-section I: Prison infrastructures and conditions of detention

44- Most penitentiary institutions in Cameroon are housed in old building inherited from colonisation. Because of their structure and obsolete architecture, they do not meet the minimum standards required to ensure appropriate detention conditions for persons under arrest.

45- The available structures in all our prisons can only accommodate less than 7000 inmates. The prison population on its own is actually estimated at 20.000 inmates. Thus, there is a deficit of more than 13,000 places. Overcrowding is therefore one of the most recurrent problems facing the Prison Administration.

46- However, public authorities are pooling their efforts to solve this problem. In this regard, since the 1997-1998 financial year, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MINATD) has been allocating a quota of its annual investment budget for the renovation of prisons. For the past three (3) years, the sum of 252,932,500 CFA francs has been disbursed for this purpose.

47- Furthermore, a credit of 150,000,000 CFA francs was set aside for studies on the opening of five new prisons in Yaounde, Douala, Kumbo, Nkambe and Kaélé. There is no doubt that the construction of these prisons will solve the problem of overcrowding.

48- Actions towards solving the problem of overcrowding are carried out in conjunction with other services (notably justice) and with the support of foreign partners like the French Cooperation, European Union, NGOs, etc.

49- To reduce overcrowding, 6,037 inmates benefited from the collective free pardon granted by the Head of State in November 2002. In the same light, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation on a regular basis transfers inmates from overcrowded prisons to less crowded ones.

50- With regard to the long periods of detention, discussions are going on at the level of Government to shorten them and speed up cases pending before courts. In this wise, the government of Cameroon intends to lay down a framework for permanent discussions between the Prison Administration and the Justice Administration.

51- The European Union is not left behind as far as seeking ways and means of drawing up the delicate programme of reducing the period of detention. It set up in Yaounde and Douala the Programme for the Improvement of Conditions of Detention (PACDET) the main goal of which is to make an inventory of, assist and sensitise needy prisoners on their rights and especially on appeal procedures.

Sub-section II: Healthcare in prisons

52- Overcrowding favours the propagation of diseases because of cramped spaces. The Government of Cameroon is pooling its efforts to ensure better health coverage of inmates.

A –Health infrastructures and equipment

53- Each of the 67 functional prisons in Cameroon already has a sickbay even if most are still at the embryonic state. The prisons of Douala and Yaounde have a laboratory with technicians capable of carrying out first aid tests. In all the prisons, the Prison Administration has 185 health staff with 8 penitentiary doctors recruited in 2001.

54- At the financial level, in addition to the credits obtained from the State budget, NGOs and religious communities lend their support to heads of these institutions through the health management of inmates, but all these actions are not enough considering the many needs.

Sub-section III: Feeding

55- Article 29 of Decree No. 92/052 of 27 March 1992 on Prison regulations in Cameroon (still in force) provides that the daily diet of inmates should be balanced and sufficient to enable them to avoid any food deficiency and give them the much-needed energy for their health.

56- This objective is far from being attained in 2000 because of the increase in prison population and unforeseen events (low rainfall, flood...), which sometimes upset forecasts. Nevertheless, efforts are made so that the daily diet takes into account staple meals of each locality and requirements of the customs and religions of the inmates. The Government very often provides for extension of credit when the budgetary estimates can no longer be met.

Sub-section IV: Socio-cultural and leisure activities in prison

57- Since 2001, officials of penitentiary institutions have been increasingly organising cultural activities. Some prisons like Kondengui in Yaounde and New Bell in Douala have permanent programmes of animation and cultural weeks. Some organisations and charity groups very often organise cultural activities in prison and thus help in raising the spirits of inmates. This is the case of *Arche de Noé*, *Foyer de l'Espérance* of Yaounde; the Centre for Arts Promotion and the *Réinsertion des Volontaires dans la Société* (RVS), a common initiative group based in Bafoussam. In the other prisons, activities are limited at least to choral groups.

Sub-Section V: Education, vocational training, labour and production

58- This aims at strengthening the strategy geared toward taking real care of the inmates so as to reform and prepare them for social reintegration. Some courses conceived on the pattern of classical education are offered, especially in examination classes, occasionally to minor inmates.

59- Moreover, penitentiary labour known as forced labour is carried out at two levels: inside and outside the prison. It helps increasingly in the vocational training of prisoners.

60- Inside the prison, inmates do mainly odd jobs in workshops. In rural areas, they get involved in breeding and agriculture. This is the case of Upper Farms in Buea and Mantoum in the Noun Division. Outside the prison, labour is geared essentially toward manpower transfer.

Sub-section VI: Supervising staff

A - Prison Administration staff

61- The problems faced by the prison administration are inadequate staff and lack of adequate training among its staff.

62- In April 2003, the number of staff was 2,693 taking care of 20,273 inmates, representing a ratio of 1 warder for 8 inmates (1:8), largely above the international ratio of 1:2. This ratio sometimes reaches the proportion of 1 warder for 20 inmates (1:20) in some prisons.

63- Statistics show that the staffs are inadequate. Moreover, the staffs are aging, with an average age of 46 years. Retirement is massive.

64- Concerning the inadequate staff, it should be pointed out that the State has planned the recruitment of more than 700 persons into all the grades of the warders corps.

65- With regard to adequate professional training, it should be stated that human resource training is a major asset to all organisations in the quest for efficiency. In fact, it helps in creating a conducive environment for executing their mission and objectives.

66- In this light, the complete revision of the curriculum of the National School of Prison Administration (ENAP) of Buea is a major concern of the Government because of the need of adapting skills to changes witnessed in the environment. The targeted objective is to make this institution capable of meeting the challenges of modernising the prison apparatus and contributing to the development of the culture of human rights in prisons.

B – Specialised staffs

67- Specialised staffs are those who have undergone training in a special technical area, which is of interest to prison administration.

68- Since 2000, the number of specialised staffs per sector is as follows:

- Medicine: 166 persons, including 8 medical doctors recently trained in ENAP,
- Agriculture: 24 persons,
- Breeding: 3 persons,
- Youth and animation: 10 persons
- Social workers: 8 persons
- Stores accounting: 112 persons.

C – Inspections and visits

69- In view of establishing a genuine and constructive dialogue with all international institutions responsible for problems of detention and respect of human rights, the Government of Cameroon, through visits to prisons by the Minister of State for Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MINATD) assesses on the spot difficulties faced by inmates and the corps of warders.

70- Furthermore, the Government allows institutions like the International Red Cross and Special Rapporteurs to visit prisons in Cameroon.

71- In this vein, the following visits were made by Cameroonian authorities as well as Special Rapporteurs and by officials of structures responsible for human rights promotion and protection.

1). Visits by MINATD, ICRC and Special Rapporteurs

- *Visit by MINATD*

72- Upon assumption of duty at MINATD, the Minister of State in his first outing undertook two visits to the Central Prisons of Yaounde and Douala respectively on 23 December 2002 and 26 June 2003. This was an occasion for him to observe “within the walls” and see all the difficulties faced on a daily basis by inmates.

- *Visit by ICRC*

73- The Presidency of the Republic granted a permanent authorisation to the ICRC to visit detention centres in Cameroon. During these visits, its delegates are allowed to converse out of hearing of the prison staff and even record their conversation with inmates. Within the framework of this mission, several prison institutions (Yaounde, Douala, Garoua, Maroua, Bamenda, Bafoussam, etc) were visited.

- *Visit by Sir Nigel RODLEY*

74- The United Nations Special Rapporteur for Torture, Sir Nigel RODLEY from 12 to 20 May 2000 visited several prison institutions in Cameroon.

- *Visit by Doctor Vera MLANGAZUWA CHIRWA*

75- From 1 to 14 September 2002, the Special Rapporteur for Prisons and Detention Conditions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights visited five (5) of the largest prisons in Cameroon.

76- The opening of the prison doors to these international officials and the taking into account of their observations and proposals are proof of the willingness of the Government of Cameroon to ensure the respect of human rights in prisons, even if this effort is ruined by the little available means.

2). Inspection of Prisons

77- Since 2000, inspection or control missions are conducted regularly in prison institutions on the initiative of either local authorities or MINATD services.

78- The outcome of such visits helps in detecting areas in which some officials have failed, and in guiding the Central Administration in decision-making intended to improve on the conditions in prisons.

Sub-section VII: Difficulties and prospects

A – Difficulties faced by the Prison Administration

79- Notwithstanding the efforts constantly made by its officials to rationalise work, the Department of Prison Administration is not spared by the adverse effects of the current economic crisis, which is reflected in the following:

- the low level of budget with respect to the enormous missions,
- the small allocation of credits for reinforcing the functioning of prisons;
- insufficient budget for the purchase of clothing and kits;
- insufficient investment budget that will ensure restoration works, new constructions or the massive purchase of rolling stock and security equipment;
- lack of enough working space with many workers cramped in offices.

B – Difficulties faced by ENAP

80- The National School for Prison Administration (ENAP) is facing the following problems:

- obsolete and inadequate infrastructures, shortage in boarding premises for the growing number of students and trainees;
- obsolete and chronic shortage in capital goods as well as teaching material;
- insufficient recurrent budget.

C – Difficulties faced by prisons

81- Cameroonian prisons face serious problems in carrying out their missions of guarding and rehabilitating the 20,273 inmates registered in 2002, with structures which can barely accommodate 6,707.

82- The ills faced by this institution include most importantly:

- the precarious nature of the healthcare service;
- too much overcrowding (it sometimes reaches 300% in some prison institutions);
- obsolete infrastructures and equipment inherited for the most part from the colonial administration;
- shortage of detention premises;
- insufficient recurrent budgets;
- inadequate feeding;
- near absence of structures for reintegration or probation;
- acute lack of staff and over use of the few available;
- lack of lodging for administrators and their collaborators.

D – Prospects

83- The reform of the Prison Administration, which is being carried out gradually, would be accelerated with the help of foreign partners.

84- In this regard, actions have been planned with the cooperation of our partners, namely: French, German Cooperation Agencies, European institutions (NGOs), to:

- set up prisons database;
- restructure some prisons;
- construct new prisons and restore some;
- open prison farms.

85- The Government of Cameroon intends in future to:

- modernise certain instruments governing the Prison Administration;
- revive monitoring Commissions of prisons;
- increase the current staff through massive recruitment.

86- All in all, the Cameroonian prison system is certainly experiencing some hitches to its smooth functioning. However, the major ills facing prisons are known. These are obsolete prison structures, the

ever-growing prison population and which is made up of very young persons experienced in sophisticated methods of committing crimes.

87- Nevertheless, the Government of Cameroon is striving, by taking as reference international legal instruments, at realising, with the means available, the objective of humanising the conditions in prisons. Finally, Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004 organising the Government attached the Prison Administration to the Ministry of Justice. Through this instrument, the Government hopes to ensure a better follow up of prison issues.

Section III: Policing

88- The previous report presented the role of police and gendarmerie forces in managing individual freedoms (paragraphs 88-94; 153-155 of the initial report).

89- It should be underscored that these forces are presently being accused by citizens and national and international institutions of human rights protection of violation of human rights.

90- Aware of this state of affairs, the Government of Cameroon is increasingly taking measures aimed at sensitising, educating and punishing police or gendarmerie staffs accused of human rights violation.

Sub-section I: Specific administrative measures taken at the level of the police

91- The attention of the police staff is constantly being drawn to the violation of human rights and freedoms.

92- The Delegate General for National Security, in his speech delivered on 4 August 2000 during the graduation ceremony of students from the National Police College, reminded the graduating batches "that the respect of the Republican legality, individual freedoms and human rights must be at the centre of their concerns".

93- Decree No. 2002/003 of 14 January 2002 on the organisation of the General Delegation for National Security in its Article 103 created

within public security police stations the function of head of post, one of the missions of which is to ensure particularly the security of those in custody.

94- The following regulatory provisions are constantly being brought to their attention by high-ranking officials responsible for police custody.

a) Only Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents of Police have the power to keep persons in police custody, under the permanent control of the State Counsel;

b) Officials of police stations every morning check the situation of those in custody in view of detecting in time possible patients who should be referred as soon as possible to the hospital for appropriate medical care;

c) Registers of persons in custody shall be countersigned every day by the same officials who shall inquire of the effective presence and good health of persons kept in cells;

d) Any inhuman or degrading treatment of persons in police stations should be banned as a working method, especially:

- the use of the stick and whip as means of obtaining confessions;
- the abusive use of aerosols and service weapons.

95- Generally, the scrupulous respect of the rights and freedoms of persons, while taking into account the need to preserve law and order, must be considered as the cardinal line of conduct that has to be borne in mind by the police officer.

96- Encouraging the use of the record of persons in custody comprising the following headings is envisaged:

- reason for keeping in custody;
- date and time;

- general look of the individual at the time of be kept in custody;
- his state of health at the time of coming out (removal of chains or discharge);
- other information on the articles taken from him and kept at his disposal, if they do not concern the investigation.

97- Furthermore, officers of the judicial police are constantly requested to scrupulously respect the period of time in custody. To verify the effectiveness of these measures, high-ranking officials of this corps carry out regular checks within police units.

98- Besides this internal check, judicial authorities monitor the respect of the rules, instructions, methods and practices of interrogation, provisions concerning custody and persons arrested. To this end, the State Counsel carries out visits, more often unexpectedly, in cells of Police Stations and systematically releases any person whose detention is not legal.

99- It is worth mentioning the Circular note No.00466/DSGN/CAB of 6 April 2001 that the Delegate General for National Security addressed to all central and external officials of national security on the improvement of conditions of custody. This note, widely publicised, prohibits once again police officials from carrying out acts likely to violate the dignity of persons kept in custody, whatever the reasons for their being kept in custody. It particularly prohibits the prior stripping of individuals kept in police custody of their clothes.

Sub-section II: Specific administrative measures taken at the level of the gendarmerie

100- According to organic instruments, the national gendarmerie is an elite military corps responsible, in normal period, for ensuring public security, law and order and the implementation of laws and regulations of the Republic.

101- International conventions on human rights protection to which Cameroon is party are part and parcel of instruments used by the

National Gendarmerie to ensure respect on behalf of citizens as well as through the exemplary behaviour of the gendarmes themselves.

102- The official message of the Secretary General of the Presidency issued on 18 April 1996 to the Secretary of State for Defence in charge of the National Gendarmerie and the subject of which is "The reprehensible acts of the forces of law and order" are constantly being brought to the attention of the gendarmerie staffs. The Secretary General of the Presidency then instructed "a diligent, dissuasive treatment, and without complacency... of the accused so as to safeguard the population and re-establish the needed trust amongst the latter and the security forces".

103- Repeated instructions from the Gendarmerie High Command and lower-level measures are regularly given to gendarmerie units to stress the obligation to respect and protect human rights, and first and foremost combat torture and other maltreatments.

104- It is in this regard that during the annual meeting of Legion Commanders and officials of central services of the gendarmerie on 12 December 2000, the Minister of State, Delegate at the Presidency in charge of Defence delivered a special sensitisation speech on the defence of rights and freedoms, underscoring that "*internally, the respect of human rights, individual and collective freedoms, in other words, the rule of law that gendarmes must incorporate as a fundamental option of government policy, the aspirations of the Cameroonian population themselves for peace and more freedoms, impose on us new obligations intended to provoke within our corps changes in behaviour, both individual and collective..... the vision of a citizen-oriented gendarmerie and a gendarmerie of proximity ... is an excellent theme*".

Section IV: Other structures for human rights promotion in Cameroon

105- These are:

- The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms;
- The National Elections Observatory;
- The National Anti-Corruption Observatory;

- The Audit Bench;
- The Constitutional Council.
-

Sub-section I: The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms

106- As mentioned in the previous report, the difficulties in functioning faced by the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms lie in the absence of a budget for the Commission. This has greatly jeopardized the execution of its programme and has forced it to be increasingly dependent on foreign contributions.

107- Nevertheless, from 2001 to 2003 the Commission carried out many activities (cf. Report on activities for 2001, 2002, 2003, in annex).

108- Finally, the new instruments governing the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms have been enacted. These instruments take into account the preoccupation of the Commission with regard to the long term of office of members of the Commission and the absence of an autonomous recurrent budget.

Sub-section II: The National Elections Observatory (NEO)

109- The National Elections Observatory (NEO) was set up by Law No. 2000/016 of 19 December 2000. It is tasked with "monitoring all elections and referendums".

110- The mission of this structure is to contribute in ensuring the respect of the Electoral Law in a manner as to guarantee smooth transparent, objective, free and fair election and the security of ballots, by assuring voters as well as their candidates, the free exercise of their rights.

111- NEO comprises 11 members including a president and a vice-president. They are appointed by a decree of the President of the Republic after consultation with political parties, the civil society, for a term of office of three years renewable once (cf. Article 3(new) of the law mentioned above, amended and supplemented by Law No. 2003/75 of 22 December 2003, in annex).

112- NEO has a permanent secretariat run by a secretary general. It has a budget that enables it to carry out its functions. Since 2000, the year of its inception, NEO monitored the legislative and municipal elections of May 2002 and the Presidential election of 11 October 2004 (Cf. Enclosed DOC. NEO).

Sub-section III: The National Anti-Corruption Observatory

113- The Prime Minister, Head of Government in Circular note No. 005/CAB/PM of 18 July 2001, instructed the setting up in ministries and other public or para-public services internal anti-corruption units. The National Anti-Corruption Observatory placed under the supervision of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, coordinates these units.

114- To date, many actions have been carried out, prominent among which are:

- Adoption of a government plan against corruption in public services and parastatals. This plan recommends short and medium term measures in the following areas:

- Human resources management;
- Improvement in administrative procedures;
- Devolution and decentralisation of decision -making powers;
- Setting up and reforming of institutions;
- Restoration of State authority;
- Sensitisation of populations.

- Effective setting up of anti-corruption units in all public services and para-public Corporations. Generally speaking, these units have so far carried out various actions, the most important of which are:

- Sensitisation of public workers in the respective services;
- Building the capacities of members of these anti-corruption units on control procedures and mechanisms of sanction;

- Studies aimed at identifying factors and corruption risk areas in services and para-public corporations concerned;
- Placing of suggestion boxes in services;
- Participation in the drafting of handbooks of procedures;
- Production of various sensitisation aids (folders, notices, publicities, etc);
- Putting in place of reception and information desks;
- Ongoing drafting of codes of ethics for areas that do not have.

115- Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that many of these anti-corruption units cannot function smoothly because of inadequate financial and material means to enable them successfully carry out their actions.

116- Government intends to improve on the working conditions of members of the anti-corruption units and empower them so as to effectively combat the phenomenon of corruption in all its forms (cf. Enclosed Doc. The National Anti-corruption Observatory).

Sub-section IV: The Audit Bench of the Supreme Court

117- The Audit Bench of the Supreme Court was created by Law No. 2003/05 of 21 April 2003. This court shall henceforth play the very important role of protecting State funds and materials, thus working in a resolute way to curb corruption. The role mentioned above seems to be reflected in the very functions of the Audit Bench and the sanctions laid down by the above-mentioned law.

A – Functions of the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court

118- The Audit Bench which is made up of judicial and legal officers appointed by a decree of the President of the Republic has the competence to control and rule on public accounts or documents as well as those of:

- public accountants certified or by right;
- the State and its public institutions;

- decentralised regional communities and public institutions;
- public or semi-public corporations.

The Audit Bench controls and rules on:

- the accounts and enclosed documents of certified public accountants of legal entities under private law in which the State is the sole or majority shareholder;
- the accounts of certified public accountants of legal entities under public law in which the State and/or other legal entities under public law hold individually or jointly more than half the capital or votes in the decision-making organs;
- the accounts and enclosed documents of certified public accountants of persons whatever their legal status, in which the State and other legal entities under public law jointly hold the decision-making power or minority blockage power;
- the accounts and enclosed documents of certified public accountants of legal entities, whatever their legal status, benefiting or receiving compulsory deductions like those of the social insurance or vocational training;
- the accounts and enclosed documents of certified public accounts of legal entities, whatever their legal status, operating a public service of State monopoly;
- the accounts and enclosed documents of certified public accountants of legal entities, whatever their legal status, which receive direct or indirect financial assistance from the State or from a legal entity under public law;
- the accounts of individuals performing official duties or those of certified public accountants of legal entities assigned a specific mission receiving by right the fruits of national or international generosity under conditions laid down by the instrument granting the financial assistance mentioned above.

119- The certified accountant in the sense of the law mentioned above is any duly appointed person in charge of accounts and responsible for handling funds and stores accounting materials.

120- The *de facto* accountant on his part is any person who, not having the title of accountant and not acting in this capacity, gets involved in receipts and expenditure operations, handling of public funds, regulated or not regulated, as well as those of public institutions and public and para public corporations.

121- Also considered a *de facto* accountant a person who, not having the title of store accountant, collects, keeps and assigns material belonging to a legal entity under public or private law in which the State holds at least 20% of the capital.

122- The Audit Bench sitting and deliberating on the matters enumerated above may pronounce sanctions against unscrupulous accountants.

A - Sanctions pronounced by the Audit Bench

123- Without prejudice to criminal proceeding against him, the public accountant is assumed to be personally and financially responsible for:

- the malpractice noticed in his accounts;
- carrying out audits as provided for by the laws and regulations;
- collecting income and paying justified approved expenditure;
- keeping funds and assets;
- handling funds and transferring available liquid assets;
- keeping the accounts of his post.

124- In this regard, any accountant who does not present his account in the forms and time limit prescribed by the law shall be sentenced by the Audit Bench to pay a fine of a maximum sum equal to half of his monthly duty allowance at the time the deed was established, and one month later.

125- Furthermore, the accountant who does not respect the injunctions made on his account within the prescribed time limit shall face the same sanction, this by injunction and one month later if he does not give an admissible explanation on the delay.

126- Such will also be the case of the accountant clerk appointed substitute of the defaulting accountant or his rightful claimant, to present an account or comply with the injunctions. The accountant in office is responsible for presenting the account of transactions carried out by accountants whose term of office has expired, or complying with injunctions concerning the management of his predecessors.

127- Finally, the Audit Bench may sentence the *de facto* accountant to a fine calculated on the basis of his personal liability and depending on the amount and duration of the possession or handling of funds and assets without however exceeding the total amount of funds unduly held or handled.

128- It should be pointed out that the setting up process of the Audit Bench is at a very advanced stage. In fact, the President of the Republic through Decrees No. 2004/81 and 2004/82 of 13 April 2004 appointed the President and members of the said Bench (cf. annex Doc. The Audit Bench).

Sub-Section V: The Constitutional Council

129- Within the framework of the implementation of the new institutions created by the Constitution of 18 January 1996, Law No. 2004/004 of 21 April 2004 created and organised the functioning of the Constitutional Council.

It rules on:

- the constitutionality of laws, treaties and international agreements;
- the constitutionality of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly and the Senate prior to their implementations,
- conflicts of powers between State institutions; between the State and the regions, and between the regions.

130- The Constitutional Council, in view of strengthening the democratic process, ensures the regularity of presidential elections, parliamentary elections and referendum operations. It also proclaims the results thereof. Apart from the area of jurisdiction mentioned above, we would first present its composition (A) before focussing on its role of monitoring the regularity of elections and referendum operations (B).

A – Composition of the Constitutional Council

131- The Constitutional Council comprises eleven (11) members designated for a non-renewable term of office of nine (9) years, appointed by decree of the President of the Republic and designated as follows:

- Three (3), including the President of the Council, by the President of the Republic;
- Three (3), by the President of the National Assembly after consultation with the Bureau;
- Three (3), by the President of the Senate after consultation with the Bureau;
- Two (2), by the Higher Judicial Council.

132- Besides the eleven members provided for above, former Presidents of the Republic are ex-officio members of the Constitutional Council for life.

133- Within the framework of the protection and promotion of the right to vote, which is one of the fundamental rights of the citizen, the Constitutional Council plays a major role in the electoral process.

B – Monitoring the regularity of the electoral process

134- Monitoring takes place during presidential elections (A), election of members of parliament (B) and referendum operations (C).

a) Concerning presidential elections

135- The Constitutional Council, as judge of candidates eligible to run for the post of president, rules on petitions for partial or total

cancellation of elections. It also hears complains relating to the colour, initials and symbols adopted by the candidate.

136- In this regard, matters may also be referred to it by any person whose candidature was not accepted, any candidate or political party having taken part in the election or any person acting in the capacity of a government agent for the said election.

b) Concerning the election of members of parliament

137- As judge of the eligibility of candidates into the National Assembly and the Senate, any petition relating to the ineligibility of a candidate may be referred to the Constitutional Council. Any voter registered in the electoral list, any candidate or representative of the list concerned can thus refer matters to it.

138- The Constitutional Council also rules on all petitions concerning the proper conduct of election of members of parliament. In this case, any political party having taken part in the election in the constituency concerned or any person acting as an agent of the government in this election can refer matters to it.

c) Concerning referendum operations

139- The Constitutional Council proclaims the results of referendums. It ensures and rules on their proper conduct. In this regard, either the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, or the President of the Senate may refer matters to it. The Council may, depending on the nature and seriousness of irregularities either maintain the said referendums or cancel them partially or totally.

**PART II
INFORMATION ON EACH RIGHT, DUTY AND
FREEDOM WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION
OF ARTICLES OF THE CHARTER**

140- With regard to the previous report, the purpose of the developments contained in this part is to present the new measures and actions carried out in view of improving the promotion of the following rights:

- Civil and political rights;
- Economic, social and cultural rights;
- People's rights and the elimination of all forms of racial discriminations;
- Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

CHAPTER I: New policies on the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights

141- This section is meant to summarize the different programmes and basic documents formulated recently and that will serve as guideline for any action geared toward promoting economic, social and cultural rights in Cameroon.

We will focus on:

- The National Programme on Governance (NPG);
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP);
- The National Programme on Participatory Development (NPPD)
- and Decentralisation.

Section I: The National Programme on Governance

142- On 29 June 2000, the global strategy paper implementing the National Programme on Governance for Cameroon was approved by the Head of State.

143- In this new environment in which the private sector and the civil society henceforth have well-defined roles to play and a specific range of actions to carry out, the State, which first of all disinvested completely from the public sector, is expected to play essentially the role of facilitator and regulator.

144- To enable it to play this role, the National Programme on Governance selected five priority areas:

- The putting in place of an administration whose constraints of public origin are simplified ("Public Administration" sector);
- The strengthening of the Rule of Law, especially through creating a legal and judicial environment that guarantees the security of investments as well as that of persons and their properties ("Justice" sector);

- The promotion of the culture of accountability in economic, financial and social management (“Economic, financial and social management” sector);
- The strengthening of transparency in the management of public affairs by fighting corruption (“Anti-corruption” sector).
- The setting up of decentralisation structures to ensure an effective and efficient participation of the population in the management of public affairs (“Decentralisation” sector).

145- The implementation structure of the National Programme on Governance (NPG) comprises:

- The Steering committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, Head of Government; it is the consultation, orientation, stewardship and decision-making organ of the programme;
- The National Coordination, organ for monitoring, evaluating and mobilising resources from development partners and for sensitising the entire society on the objectives of the Programme;
- Realisation agencies, organs responsible for the effective implementation of action programmed within the framework of the NPG. These are ministries, civil society and private sector organisations, within their areas of competence;
- Sector Advisory Committees, consultation organs, each in its own sector, on projects and matters concerning the implementation of the NPG.

146- From July 2001 to June 2003, activities of the National Coordination centred, in accordance with the specification document, on the monitoring, evaluation, and mobilisation of resources from development partners and sensitisation of the entire society on the objectives of the National Programme on Governance. (See Enclosed Doc. National Programme on Governance).

Sub-section II: The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

147- The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is a series of economic, social and cultural reforms that Cameroonian authorities have conceived. It is the fruit of collaboration among the masses, civil society, private sector, development partners and public services. This is a decisive stage in the monitoring of reforms carried out by Cameroon since the country reached in October 2000 the decision point under the enhanced debt relief initiative for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC).

148- The aim of these reforms is to reduce poverty through a strong and sustainable economic growth, a better management of expenditure, and conveniently targeted poverty reduction policies and to strengthen governance.

149- To the Cameroonian authorities, the PRSP is:

- An integrated development framework for Cameroon, which is centred around macroeconomic and sector strategies for accelerating growth, reducing poverty, and helping Cameroon achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- A consultation mechanism bringing together the civil society and development partners, which is the fruit of a participatory process and intensive consultation, and which will serve as a reference and consultation mechanism between the Government, civil society and international community to discuss major guidelines in economic and social management;
- A framework for coordinating government programmes and donors assistance strategies, including setting priorities, efficiently coordinating the actions of various branches of the administration and the Government, and mobilising internal and external resources towards achieving Cameroon's sustainable human development objectives;
- A medium-term consistency framework for setting financial and budgetary priorities and allocating resources accordingly, while ensuring consistency between resources derived from economic growth and the short and medium-term financing requirements.
- A framework for defining and organising important analytical work programmes and strengthening capacities for guiding development management, including statistical work for monitoring the strategy, preparing macroeconomic and sector frameworks.

150- In view of attaining the objective mentioned above, the main strategic focus areas of the PRSP are:

- Priority 1: *Promoting a stable macroeconomic framework;*

- Priority 2: *Strengthening growth by diversifying the economy;*
- Priority 3: *Revitalizing the private sector as the main engine of growth and partner in delivering social services;*
- Priority 4: *Developing basic infrastructures and natural resources while protecting the environment;*
- Priority 5: *Accelerating regional integration in the framework of CEMAC;*
- Priority 6: *Strengthening human resources and the social sector and facilitating the integration of vulnerable groups into economy;*
- Priority 7: *Improving the institutional framework, administrative management and governance (Cf. Annex: Doc. The PRSP).*

Section III: The National Programme for Participatory Development (NPPD)

151- The National Programme for Participatory Development (NPPD) was created by Its goal is to support the development efforts of the Government of Cameroon in the rural areas. It is a mechanism that helps people to participate in carrying out development projects in their localities. To achieve this, the NPPD must be consistent with the development strategy of the rural sector, of which it must be one of the implementing structures.

152- This programme also brings support the decentralisation process embarked upon by the Government of Cameroon as stated in its Constitution and which will bring nearer to the citizens decision-making structures as concerns the carrying out of development activities.

153- To ensure greater efficiency and reduce the risks of failure of the NPPD, an evaluation of all the development programmes and projects executed so far has been made. These are mainly the classical integrated rural development programmes and centralised programmes managed from the top to the bottom and financed by the main donors

and other partners of Cameroon (FDA, European Union and GTZ). Within this framework, the following projects have been assessed:

- The National Programme for Agricultural Extension and Research (PNVRA);
- The West Benoue Development Project:
- Project for rehabilitation of water points for cattle in the North and Far North Provinces;
- The Development Project of the Mandara Mountain region (PRDM);
- The Support Project for the Rural Self-promotion (PAAR) of the Mayo Sava Division (Cf. Annex Doc. The NPPD).

Section IV: Decentralisation

155- Provided for in the Constitution of 18 January 1996 which states in Article one that "The Republic of Cameroon shall be a decentralised unitary State", decentralisation consists of a transfer of special competence and appropriate means by the State to decentralised regional communities, regions and councils. On 22 July 2004, three laws respectively on the guidelines on decentralisation and the rules applicable to councils and regions, decentralised regional communities provided for in the Constitution were enacted. Their implementation will be highlighted in the next periodic report of the State of Cameroon. (Cf. Annex: Law on Decentralisation).

CHAPTER II: Civil and political rights

156- In the previous report, information on these rights is still relevant. In this regard, Cameroon has a dual legal system inherited from colonialism (Roman-Germanic Law and Common Law). This dual system has been made more complex by the coexistence of the written law and customary law.

157- The administrative system on its part allows for the coexistence of three great models of administrative organisation: centralisation, devolution, and decentralisation.

158- Concerning the political system, there is separation of powers between the Executive, Legislative and the Judiciary.

159- The following measures were taken in view of improving on civil and political rights in Cameroon:

Single section: Measures aimed at ensuring a better protection of persons and their properties

160- In a bid to further strengthen each day human rights promotion and protection in Cameroon, provided for in the African Charter on Human and Peoples', the Ministry of Justice, during the past three years, carried out several actions, prominent among which are:

- Non-discrimination and equality of all citizens before the law (Article 2 and 3),
- Independence of the Courts (Article 26);
- The right to life, liberty and to the security of his person (4 and 6);
- The right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being (Article 5);
- The right to have his case heard (Article 7(1));
- The right to property (Article 14);
- The principle of equality of offences and penalties as well as that of making punishment personal (Article 7(2));
- The right to national and international peace and security (Article 23);

- Strengthening the protection of individual liberties.

1 – Non-discrimination and equality before the law (Articles 2 and 3)

161- Under the terms of Articles 2 and 3 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, any individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms and to equal protection of the law.

162- The information contained in the previous report is still valid (paragraphs 131 to 133, Initial report). Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that a technical audit of the judiciary system in Cameroon was carried out, which enabled a diagnosis to be made of its malfunctioning and to propose suitable reforms for a more credible justice system. A plan of action was drawn up (Cf. Chapter II, Section I of this report).

163- In this light, Circular note No. 010/SG/MJ of 2 December 2002 of the Minister of State for Justice, Keeper of the Seals on the relations between judicial officers and judicial police, reiterates to the former the need to show proof of dignity, loyalty, neutrality and non-discrimination acknowledged in their oath.

2 – Independence of the Courts (Article 26)

164- Article 26 states that States parties to the present Charter shall have the duty to guarantee the independence of the courts.

165- This shall be done by improving the working conditions of the judicial staff, construction of court premises, training of staff and provision of documentation.

166- The Ministry of Justice for the past two years has undertaken significant actions on all these aspects.

167- It is in this regard that it carried out a study to computerise the judicial system while at the same time providing the Douala-Bonanjo Legal Department with a computerised card index.

168- Concurrently, and in order to ensure a better understanding of the law, young judicial officers at the start of their career are handed

over a minimum package of documents made up of the OHADA Law, Insurance Code, Labour Code and Criminal Code.

169- Furthermore, on the initiative of the Presidency of the Republic, officials of the Ministry of Justice in the course of the year 2000 participated actively in a seminar organised in Yaounde in collaboration with the Agence Internationale de la Francophonie (AIF) and relating to the dissemination of law in Cameroon. It should also be mentioned that during the same period, training seminars were organised for judicial officers in order to get them acquainted with the OHADA Laws.

3 – The rights to life, liberty, security of the person (Articles 4 and 6)

170- These provisions of the Charter lay down the principles of the inviolability of the human person in his right to freedom and security.

171- In this respect, many Circular notes issued by the Minister of State for Justice, Keeper of the Seals are worth mentioning here and prominent among which are:

- Circular note No. 09/24/IGSJ/MJ of 14 August 2001 instructing checking of detentions in prisons;
- Circular note No. 025/03.019/PPE/DAPG of 26 April 2003 on reinforcing checking on custody.

172- The holding in Yaounde of four meetings by court presidents respectively on 11, 12 and 13 July 2001, then on 4, 5, and 6 February 2002 and on 10, 11 September 2003 and on 21 July 2004 falls in line with the same desire to provide citizens with quality justice, justice that respects the rights mentioned above.

173- During these three meetings, the Court Presidents discussed among other things:

- Strategies of combating judicial delays
- Criminal proceedings;
- Individual liberties and responsibility of the judicial officer,
- Enforcement of court rulings;
- Gathering of statistics;
- Respect of rules of professional ethics by the judicial officer;
- Strategies of combating corruption;

- The role of courts in the electoral process.

*4–The right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being
(Article 5)*

174- Under Article 5 of the Charter, every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in the human being.

175- The Government, through the Minister of State for Justice, Keeper of the Seals, intervened within this context by issuing Circular Note No. 0026/03/032/AP/DAPG of 15 April 2002 in which he instructed judicial officers to protect the physical integrity and image of assumed authors of infringements against the criminal law.

176- Finally, through Circular Note No. 39/CD of 28 May 2002, the Minister of State for Justice, Keeper of the Seals called on State Counsels to forward to him all rulings relating to infraction on the law against torture (Article 132 of the Criminal Code).

5 – The right to access to justice (Article 7(1))

177- Every individual, in pursuance of this provision of the Charter, shall have the right to have his cause heard.

178- In this light, the opening since two years ago of many courts falls in line with the determination of Government to bring justice nearer the people, reduce the formerly high legal costs caused by the long distances covered by persons in order to have their cases heard.

179- Furthermore, and while waiting for the outcome of the invitation to tender for the translation of the Official Gazette, the Ministry of Justice has embarked on publishing the OHADA Uniform Acts in view of disseminating this law.

180- Besides, the Ministry of Justice is currently busy simplifying the procedure of legal assistance so as to enable many citizens to be able to better ensure the defence of their interests (Cf Paragraph 43, Chapter II of this report).

6. The right to property (Article 14)

181- Under Article 14 of the Charter, the right to property must be guaranteed.

182- In Circular note No.00536/IGSJ/MJ of 23 December 2002 relating to transactions and construction of properties, the Minister of State for Justice, Keeper of the Seals instructed judicial officers and other legal staffs to carry out all useful verifications before offering to buy any building whatsoever, this to prevent them from compromising themselves by buying buildings that are under disputes.

7-The principle of legality of offences and penalties and that, which makes punishment personal

183- At the same time that this text states that an individual shall only be tried and punished under the terms of an enacted law, it also specifies that punishment is personal and can only be imposed on the offender.

184- It would be worth noting that the Circular note No. 002/9062/DAPG of 15 October 2002 issued by the Minister of State for Justice, Keeper of the Seals, reminds State Counsels of the fact that minors below 18 years shall not be subject to military law in pursuance of Articles 5 and 6 of Ordinance No. 172/5 of 26 August 1972 on judicial organisation (still in force).

8-The right to national and international peace and security (Article 23)

185- Article 23 of the Charter lays down the principle of the need to national as well as international peace and security to which all peoples have a right.

186- The setting up of proximity police and gendarmerie units in large towns like Yaounde and Douala falls in line with the desire to ensure the maintenance of the peace and security of persons and their properties.

187- In this regard, consistent with its policy of promotion of peace within the national territory as well as in neighbouring States, the Government embarked on the search for a fair and equitable solution based on international law, to the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria. Thus, the solution of the Bakassi dispute with the 10 October

2002 verdict by the International Court of Justice at the Hague, at the same time as it is still providing security to the populations concerned, has eased the tension between Cameroon and Nigeria, which moreover set up a Mixed Commission responsible for ensuring the proper implementation of the said verdict. That Commission is co-chaired by the Minister of State for Justice, Keeper of the Seals.

188- In order to harmonise the criminal procedure throughout the national territory and thus contribute in better protecting individual liberties, the Minister of Justice for the past two years brought into the limelight the draft Criminal Procedure Code, which had been shelved for several decades.

189- This draft instrument, which was enriched by the reports made by a European Union expert, will soon benefit from contributions of the Commonwealth that submitted a copy to its legal experts.

190- This document of more than 700 articles comprises provisions that guarantee individual liberties. Provided for in this document are:

- the intervention of the lawyer during preliminary investigation;
- damages to victims of torture;
- institution of a medical examination before and after detention;
- reduction of time spent in procedures;
- the institution of examining magistrates;
- generalising the release on bail.

CHAPTER III: Economic, social and cultural rights

191- The rights dealt with in this chapter are the following:

- the right to work;
- the rights of the family, the mother, and the child;
- the right to feeding;
- the right of the disabled and the elderly;
- the right to health;
- the right to education;
- the right to a shelter;
-

Section I: The right to work (Article 15): promotion of human rights in the area of social security since the year 2000

192- The information contained in the previous report on this aspect is still relevant. Nevertheless, reforms have been embarked on the access of citizens to social security (Paragraphs 219-221 of the initial report in English). In fact, the economic difficulties faced by Cameroon during the past two decades, as well as the unpatriotic attitude of employers led to financial shortage in the coffers of the National Social Insurance Fund (NSIF). This state of affairs did no longer permit the NSIF to honour its commitments towards contributors to the social insurance scheme.

193- Consequently, Government put in place a strategy to reform our social insurance system bearing in mind the following objectives:

- The promotion of social welfare by curbing poverty, inequalities and checking exclusion;
- The respect of the dignity of the human being; the extension of the social security scheme.

This reform is centred on two aspects:

- The rehabilitation of some aspects of the NSIF;
- The in-depth reform of social security in Cameroon.

194- In order to implement this reform, Government set up, by Order No. 00086 of 13 April 1998, the Steering Committee for the Rehabilitation of the NSIF and Comprehensive Reform of Social Security. After a series of meetings, the Committee drafted the terms of reference requested by the Inter-ministerial Committee Mission for the Rehabilitation of Public and Para-Public Corporations.

Sub-section I: Rehabilitation of the National Social Insurance Fund (NSIF)

195- It should be pointed out that this task was assigned to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which began streamlining the subscribers/contributors card index and modernising the management system. This work is almost complete, what is remaining is the implementation of the mechanisms of appropriation and perpetuation of assets.

196- It is in this regard that measures were taken to revive the recovery of social insurance subscriptions especially with the signing of Law No. 2001/017 of 18 December 2001 on the restructuring of procedures of recovering social insurance subscriptions, which led to a significant increase in social insurance revenue owed this body. The consequence of this was the resumption of the payment of social insurance benefits frozen since 1996, this to great satisfaction of beneficiaries.

197- It is also necessary to underscore the State's action in managing the social insurance debt owed the National Social Insurance Fund (NSIF) by public and para-public institutions and corporations under bankruptcy or liquidated.

198- Furthermore, one should point out with satisfaction the signing of Law No. 2001/018 of 18 December 2001 handing over to the State the coverage and management of family allowances of its workers governed by the Labour Code, the objective of which is to ensure that the social insurance benefits of this category of State personnel are paid.

Sub-section II: The comprehensive reform of social security

199- Aimed essentially at extending social security to branches of social protection and to social groups of the population that are not covered by the scheme, studies were requested to this effect from

successful firms which are at work and their provisional reports on the diagnosis of what is existing is gradually being submitted to the steering Committee for endorsement.

Section II: The right to feeding (Articles 16 to 18)

200- States parties to the Charter must guarantee adequate food to their populations and enact laws to this effect.

201- The previous report spelt out the major guidelines for the implementation of the new agricultural policy of Cameroon based on four aspects:

- Increasing agricultural production so as to ensure food security for the country;
- Promoting agricultural financing institutions;
- Land reform, to enable women and children to have access to land;
- Modernising the institutional framework for agricultural sector management.

202- Only the legal framework and access to resources experienced some changes.

Single Sub-section: Changes in the legal framework and access to resources

203- The following measures and action plans are connected to the creation of an environment conducive for the promotion of the right to feeding, which started way back in the year 2000 through:

- the formulation and adoption of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in 2000;
- the formulation of the Rural Sector Development Strategy Paper;
- the New Agricultural Policy (New Challenges: 1999)
- Law No. 92/006 of 14 August 1992 on the organisation of common initiative groups;

204- Within the same context, the State of Cameroon, through its Ministry of Agriculture has, since about ten years, implemented a series of activities and action plans aimed at guaranteeing for all access to

basic resources and services. These programmes, under various headings, are the following:

- Micro financing and decentralised credits: These are:
 - the Community Development Support Programme (PADC: 2003);
 - the National Programme for Agricultural Extension and Research (PNVRA, 2002).
- Water: The execution, in collaboration with the FAO, of sector by sector programmes aimed at guaranteeing access to potable water to the Northern region of Cameroon is underway.
- Land (as available natural resource): The State, through press organs, sensitises the population by informing them of the modalities of application and the provisions of Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July 1974 organising the land tenure system, because access to land is fundamental to rural populations and especially women majority of whom are involved in agriculture.
- Genetic resources and other inputs: There is a law on the development of seedlings and another on the production of fertilizers (cf Enclosed Doc. Law).
- Sanitary security of food and improvement in production and conservation methods: Concerning this area, the Government enacted Law No. 2003/003 of 21 April 2003 on phytosanitary protection.
- Food security

205- Measures taken by the State in this area are aimed at satisfying the needs of populations, eradicating hunger. Remarkable efforts have been deployed in helping populations of the North, Far North and more exposed vulnerable groups through the setting up and reform of the Cereal Board by the following decrees:

- Decree No. 75/440 of 21 June 1975 setting up the Cereal Board;
- Decree No. 89/1806 of 12 June reorganising the Cereal Board.

206- It should be called to mind that the mission of the Cereal Board is to build grain reserves (buffer stock) and redistribute cereals to populations threatened by hunger spectre in times of low supply to the populations of the North. Furthermore, the State, in collaboration with international partners, drew up the following programmes:

- Programme for the preservation of Food Security (PPSA): the objectives of this programme, implemented with the collaboration of the FAO, are to identify the vulnerable groups, ensure that foodstuffs are available and supply is regular;
- Emergency Food Aid Programme: Under this programme, the State of Cameroon has always been committed, with the assistance of international institutions (FAO/WFP, HCR, FAO/WHO Food Codification Index Commission, TELEFOOD) to mobilising emergency food aids for the benefit of war refugees and sub-Saharan populations exposed to recurrent famine due to drought.

Section III: Protection and empowerment of the family, mother and child (Article 18 of the Charter)

Sub-section I: Protection and empowerment of the family and mother

207- Consolidating the family base, natural foundation of the human society, strengthening inter and intra-family solidarity, protecting the rights of each of its members and improving the living conditions of families are the essential elements of the policy of the Government of Cameroon on the protection and empowerment of the family.

208- In this respect, many programmes and projects have been drawn up, most of which are under execution (See initial report, Paragraphs 23 to 283).

209- Cameroon's legislation on the protection of the family is very rich and diversified, with respect to the many criminal, civil and social provisions laid down (See Initial Report, Chapter III, paragraphs 130-190). This protection will be strengthened at the civil level with the ongoing formulation of the Persons and Family Code. The Technical Committee set up to this effect in January 2000, after various national

consultations has produced a draft which had already been submitted for examination by the Government prior to its adoption by the parliament.

210- In substance, the said Code intends to harmonise the regulations in force in the Francophone and Anglophone regions of the country while adapting them to the socio-economic realities of Cameroon, institute more equity and justice, strengthen family solidarity and ensure a more efficient protection of the rights of the woman, the child and other vulnerable social categories.

211- Furthermore, the various programmes enumerated in the previous report continue to be implemented. Within the context of reducing poverty, emphasis is being laid on the development or the strengthening of production capacities and management of family resources, and on education on responsible parenthood.

212- Moreover, faced with the ravages of HIV/AIDS, the Government adopted a national programme to control this pandemic. The goals of this multi-sector programme are to reduce the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate and lessen the socio-economic impact by involving all actors in the programme. The Inter-ministerial Committee that was set up in this respect and extended to the private sector in April 2001 recommended the creation, within the working milieus, of an environment conducive for carrying out programmes for the prevention of infection and of management of patients.

213- In the same vein, the Prime Minister, Head of Government in Circular note No 01/CAB/PM of 11 December 2001, instructed all Ministers and Directors General of public or para-public corporations, to set up and organise in each sector Central Coordination Commissions of the sector by sector programmes for STI/HIV/AIDS control.

214- With regard to the social aspect of this programme, emphasis is laid on prevention within the family and community, the education of adolescents on sexual life, provision of psycho-social care and finances to infected persons and orphans and children rendered vulnerable by AIDS, assistance to families of victims and technical support to Associations, NGOs and private providers of social works.

215- The contribution of the civil social is very remarkable in the promotion of the well being of families and vulnerable groups of the

society. Many associations, private providers of social works and NGOs extend their actions to the field.

216- In this vein, Mrs Chantal Biya, wife of the Head of State, has personally put in a lot especially by setting up a network of African First Ladies known as "African Synergy against Suffering", and a Foundation that bears her name, which comprises the "Mother-Child Centre" of Yaounde, pilot centres for HIV/AIDS screening and management of infected persons (Cf. Enclosed Doc. African Synergy).

217- The ongoing project to revive social centres that are spread out to the urban, sub-urban and rural areas will enable these structures to be fully involved in implementing the various programmes for the benefit of the family.

218- Generally, the Government of Cameroon, with the assistance of United Nations agencies and the civil society, has just begun assessing the policy and achievements registered since 1994 in favour of the family, toward the celebration in 2004 of the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

Sub-section II: Protection and promotion of the rights of the child

219- The Government of Cameroon has always been and is still preoccupied with the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare of the child.

220- In this respect, Cameroon has signed and ratified many international instruments on human rights in general, and the rights of the child in particular (See Initial Report, Chapter I, paragraphs 29 to 33). Cameroon, very recently, has ratified other international conventions in the area of human rights (See paragraph 13 above).

221- On 5 October 2001, there was also the signing of two optional protocols to the Convention on the rights of the Child, one on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, and the other on the sale of children, prostitution and pornography involving children. The process of ratification of these optional protocols is on.

222- Discussions are being carried out in view of ratifying the Hague Convention on cooperation and protection of children in the area of international adoption.

223- Furthermore, Cameroonian delegations actively took part in various international meetings on the child, especially:

- The two sub-regional meetings held in Libreville in February 2000 and March 2002 on transborder trafficking of children in French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa; Cameroon thus formulated a draft sub-regional convention against this ill, a draft which will be submitted to other States for examination;
- The 2nd World Congress on the exploitation of children for commercial purposes (Yokohama, 2001);
- The extraordinary session of the United Nations on children in May 2002 in which the Cameroonian Head of State made an official statement emphasising the determination of the Government to protect the rights and promote the welfare of children; from which a world Declaration for "a World worthy of children" was issued;
- The Stockholm (Sweden) meeting of September 2002 on combating trafficking in human beings; especially women and children in Africa and the European Union, followed by the 2nd Conference of African and Europeans Ministers of Social Affairs held in Ouagadougou in November 2002 on the same subject, which led to the adoption of a plan of action to combat this phenomenon;
- The November 2001 international seminar of Yaounde on "The rights of the child and poverty reduction" at the end of which it was decided in particular that an African group for the rights of the child will be formed in a bid to mobilise and further involve the civil society in all matters concerning the child;
- The 1st Libreville meeting of February 2003 on harmonising national legislation on combating child trafficking in French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa where strategies were adopted to strengthen the prevention of trafficking, improvement in catering for victims and the penalisation of offences in countries of the sub-region;

- The international seminar of Ouagadougou in March 2003 on the rights of the child and social exclusion in which Cameroon was maintained in the restricted committee tasked with formulating the African draft of the rights of the child.

224- At the national level, the legal framework for the protection of the child was reinforced especially with:

- Decree No. 2001/109/PM of 20 March 2001 on the organisation and functioning of public institutions that cater for minors and the re-education of socially maladjusted minors; this decree provides, among other things, for the setting up of boarding, re-education and reception and transit centres and Home-Workshops.
- Decree No. 2001/110/PM of 20 March 2001 on the organisation and functioning of public institutions for early childcare (day nurseries, children's resting places, babies' rooms).

225- An instrument is under formulation that will open a certain number of these institutions throughout the national territory in addition to already existing ones.

226- Moreover, the formulation of the Child Protection Code has started with the review of the existing body of legal instruments and carrying out of several studies.

227- Alongside these existing public institutions or those to be created exist many private providers of social works, associations or NGOs that provide guidance and assistance to the child. An inventory of these private sponsored institutions is being made so as to better monitor their activities.

228- New programmes and projects for the child are being executed with the support of partners. Such is the case of:

- ❖ The Cameroon/UNICEF 2003-2007 Cooperation programme signed on November 2002, comprising five sub-programmes, namely;
- The sub-programme "Survival and integrated development of the infant", comprising the project "health and nutrition of the infant" and the project "early learning and education";

- The sub-programme "Basic education", comprising projects "Access to education" and "Quality education";
- The sub-programme "Skill and participation of the adolescent in his/her own development", comprising the project "HIV/AIDS prevention and counselling" and the project "Life skills";
- The sub-programme "Special protection", comprising the projects "reinforcing the legal and institutional framework" and "protection of vulnerable groups (children in conflict with the law, HIV/AIDS orphaned children, children living or working in the streets and exploited children";
- The sub-programme "Planning, evaluation and communication", is made up of three projects: "social statistics", "planning and evaluation" and "communication".

❖ The Cameroon/ ILO international programme for the abolition of child labour, which comprises two components:

- The sub-programme "Combating child trafficking in French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa" (LUTRENA); on this, negotiations are going on for the signing of an Agreement on the implementation of the project "Socio-economic rehabilitation and reintegration of children victims of trafficking", in the North-West province;
- The sub-programme "WACAP", the launching of which took place in September 2003 and which is aimed at combating child labour in agricultural plantations.

❖ The MINAS/Belgium Red Cross programme, the collaboration agreement of which was signed in the year 2000 and which is based on "Socio-economic rehabilitation and reintegration of street children". The programme is being implemented by two structures: the "Centre d'Ecoute" of Messa and the reception and social reintegration centre for street children (CARSER) of Etoug-Ebe. The first phase of this project is being evaluated, and the wish is that this pioneer experience, up till now limited to the town of Yaounde, be extended, if the results are glaring and the means available, to other large towns.

229- In perspective, besides the formulation of the Child Protection Code, new guidelines will be laid down to strengthen the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare of the child by:

- the imminent formulation of a national plan of action (NPA) for “ a world worthy of children”, as a continuation of the world plan adopted during the last extraordinary session of the United Nations devoted to children;
- adopting a national plan to combat child labour, the draft of which has been formulated;
- setting up a mechanism for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of international legal instruments relating to the child; in this light, study trips have been made to some African countries, and the formulation of an institutional model suitable to Cameroon is being finalised.

Section IV: Protection and empowerment of the disabled and the elderly

Sub-section I: Protection of the disabled

230- The developments contained in the first report (paragraphs 225-283) are still relevant. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that Cameroon took over the plan of action for the African decade for the disabled (1999-2009). Furthermore, it ratified the Convention on the setting up of the African Institute for Re-adaptation (AIR).

231- Also, a Cameroonian delegation actively took part in the Special Session of the United Nations and in the deliberations of the Special Committee tasked with formulating an international, global and integrated convention for the protection of the rights and promotion of the dignity of the disabled, which took place in New York respectively in June 2003 and from 24 May to 4 June 2004.

232- At the national level, the Preamble of the Constitution makes the protection and empowerment of the disabled a national solidarity requirement when it states: “the Nation shall protect (...) the disabled”.

233- This preoccupation is translated into a series of legislative, regulatory and institutional measures. Generally, there is a body of legal instruments with specific provisions on the disabled in the areas of health, education, employment as well as other measures.

234- In fact, the Cameroonian legislation on the protection of the disabled is rich considering the multitude and diversity of rights accorded

to this target population. However, the exercise of these rights by those concerned is hindered by some obstacles, prominent among which are:

- absence of a clearly defined policy in this area;
- absence of policing measures in the Law of 21 July 1983 against the offenders of the law;
- inadequate quality and quantity of human, material, financial and technological resources with respect to guidance and assistance needs.

235- Studies carried out by "Handicap International" led to the identification of major aspects needed for drafting a policy document in the area, and auditing of two pilot guidance and assistance institutions: the "National Handicap Rehabilitation Centre" of Etoug-Ebé (Yaounde) and the "Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind" of Buea. This document will help build the institutional capacities of these pilot structures.

236- Much work has been done on the ongoing revision of the Law of 21 July 1983 relating to the protection of the disabled and its decree of application of 26 November 1990. Government is scrutinising a bill on the protection and empowerment of the disabled before it will be submitted to the parliament for adoption. It provides, among other things, for a national solidarity fund for the disabled in particular.

237- In concrete terms, the Government through the Ministry of Social Affairs in particular, is carrying out a series of diversified and multi-faceted actions, among which are:

- the provision of medical assistance for medical tests, hospitalisation fees or money for purchase of drugs, evacuation for health reasons and functional re-education of poor patients;
- special education and admission into schools of visually or hearing, mentally or nerve impaired children to follow the normal system of education, especially after the completion of the special primary education cycle, and to undertake university studies and enter higher institutions of learning;
- the promotion of public and private institutions for rehabilitation and vocational training of the disabled;
- technical and financial support towards revitalising associations of the disabled;

- psycho-social and material assistance to mental patients who roam about and to their families;
- promotion of income-generating activities and support to cooperative groups of the disabled;
- promotion of sports for the disabled through the national federation of sports for the disabled and assistance to the disabled to take part in national and international sports competitions. It should be noted here that the National Institute of Youth and Sports (INJS) has just included in its curriculum modules for the training of sports teachers specialised in sports for the disabled;
- the granting of subsidies to private providers of social works for guiding and assisting the disabled;
- the provision of tools, through grants or support to the acquisition of carriages or tricycles, white sticks or clutches, orthopaedic shoes, spectacles and hearing aids.

238- Furthermore, considering the transversal and multi-sectoral nature of the actions to be carried out, the regular holding of the national committee for the socio-economic re-adaptation and reintegration of the disabled, a privileged platform for consultation in this regard brings a lot of hope as concerns the improvement in the situation of the disabled, with the participation of latter.

239- At the level of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, negotiations are underway with the Italian Association OASI MARIA of TROINA in view of signing a partnership convention for the catering of mentally deranged persons. This project provides on the one hand, the construction and equipment of a hospital complex in Yaounde, and on the other hand, the construction of a village in Mfou for the social reintegration of the mentally disabled.

240- Similarly, the Government through the Ministry of Social Affairs in July 2004 signed two partnership agreements, including:

- one with the Italian Association AIAS d'AFRAGOLA for the setting up of a rehabilitation centre for the disabled in Maroua, with an aspect for human resources training;
- the other with the National Association of the Blind of Cameroon (ANAC) and a French NGO for the easing of access for the visually

impaired to information and communication technologies, with emphasis on the setting up in the Collège de La Retraite of Yaounde of a pilot centre for training trainers.

241- It is hoped that the international community would support all these efforts of Government that are hampered by inadequate quality and quantity of human, material, technological and financial means.

Sub-section II: The situation of the elderly in Cameroon

242- In Cameroon, by the elderly we usually mean any person or woman aged above 60 years.

243- From the various general population censuses, from 1976-1987, it was observed that the population of the elderly in Cameroon increased from 588,618 to 688,080 in 2003.

244- According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the elderly in Cameroon accounts for 6% of the total population. Through projection and while waiting for the next population census, the population of Cameroon, today estimated at 15,292,000 inhabitants, would be made up of about 917,520 elderly persons. The percentage of 6% given by the UNFPA will rise to 10% in 2050 and the elderly by then would have reached 3,964,200.

245- This growth in the population of the elderly in the world in general and in Cameroon in particular is as a result of scientific progress, which inevitably prolongs life expectancy. This growth in population, the economic crisis and the gradual disappearance of traditional solidarity mechanisms, without forgetting the effect of globalisation predispose the elderly to become the poor and fragile groups of the society.

246- As a matter of fact, from the requests for aid made to the Ministry of Social Affairs, it can be noted that the elderly face the following problems:

- physical and mental health;
- cleanliness;
- lack of wholesome and diversified food;
- contempt and rejection;
- prejudices;
- isolation and solitude;

- difficulty in having access to a tolerable physical and social environment;
- lack of intimacy and private life;
- abandonment;
- verbal and physical violence, etc.

247- All these problems are conspicuous among the elderly who have no children.

248- In order to prevent and limit the worsening living conditions of the elderly, the Government, assisted by the civil society, is striving to promote the implementation of the five cardinal principles laid down by the UNO namely:

- Independence;
- Participation;
- Medical care;
- Personal fulfilment;
- and dignity.

1). In the area of the promotion of independence

249- Government's policy, which stems from cultural practice, is aimed at keeping the elderly in their family and community of origin. Since 1998, the problems faced by this social category are being addressed in the Ministry of Social Affairs, which has a Department for National Solidarity. This department is tasked, among other things, with the promotion of the physical and socio-economic welfare of the elderly.

a) At the Physical level

250- The Ministry of Social Affairs, with the assistance of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, takes care of the sports activities of the associations of the elderly. This activity, initiated in the political capital Yaounde, is gradually being extended to the whole country. It is aimed at maintaining and developing the muscle tonicity of the elderly so as to give them as much as possible autonomy in their daily activities. This activity is accompanied by free goodwill medical parameters, notably taking of blood pressure level, rate of heart beat, weight, etc.

b) At the socio-economic level

251- Government's actions are geared towards satisfying the specific and individual needs of the elderly. Nevertheless, these actions can be grouped into two:

- the elderly, former workers in the public, para-public or private sectors: the ministry responsible for the elderly works within this framework for the benefit of retired persons in rapidly treating their files and paying their pensions;
- the elderly having worked, in the course of their active life, in a liberal profession: to them, the government grants regular financial assistance, corresponding to the type of socio-economic activity that each elderly person wishes to carry out, depending on his/her actual capabilities, in view of having a minimum income necessary for living.

2). Concerning participation

252-The State of Cameroon does not stop advocating the participation of the elderly in any activity, whether in the family, associations or nation.

253- Each year, this action is included in the different themes of the International Day for the Elderly, which emphasises the ideal of building a society for all ages as advocated by the United Nations.

a). At the family level

254- Cameroon is working hard so that the elderly can have a place that will permit them to play their role beside the youths. The latter in turn will better understand the status of these elderly persons in the society.

255- In this regard, intergeneration meetings bringing together a thousand elderly persons and youths were organised in the towns of Limbe, South west province; Kribi, South province; Yaounde, Centre province. These meetings served as occasions for collecting needs for elderly persons as expressed by the elderly themselves.

b) At the association or community level

256- The formation of associations is encouraged in order to enable the elderly to have a forum where they can meet and discuss together, exchange their experiences and eventually set up joint projects that will generate income for them and prevent isolation.

257- Within a community perspective, the notion of solidarity storehouse was launched in 1999 on the occasion of the International Year of the Elderly. This initiative falls in line with Government's concern in reducing poverty and combating social exclusion.

258- As a matter of fact, the notion of a solidarity storehouse is a form of socio-economic organisation set up in the urban or rural area, which enables the population to be self-reliant in satisfying pressing, vital and priority needs.

259- This form of organisation encourages, among others, the catering for more vulnerable members of the community and in particular the elderly, by giving them medical assistance, food and ensuring their hygienic and sanitary conditions.

3). In the area of medical care

260- The needs of the elderly are of particular importance here, considering the fragile physical and mental nature. Here, Government's action is two-fold:

a) Individual medical assistance

261- It is granted in the form of direct or indirect assistance:

262- Directly, Government gives financial assistance to poor elderly persons who apply for an institutional support to buy drugs or to undertake some medical care.

263- Indirectly, there is a concerted action among the Ministries of Social Affairs, Public Health and the Economy and Finance to take charge of the generally expensive medical treatment of some elderly persons or to evacuate them for medical reasons.

264- It should also be pointed out that the Government, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, distributes, depending on the available

budget, equipment (tricycles, clutches, medical glasses) to the elderly with some form of physical or sensory handicap.

b) Medical assistance for hospitalisation

265- The Ministry of Public Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs promotes medical care for the elderly in the geriatrics ward of the Central Hospital of Yaounde. This pilot project will gradually be extended to hospitals in the provinces.

4) In the area of personal fulfilment

266- This is an action considered as resulting from other factors like independence, participation and the health of elderly persons. This action started with excursions to Limbe and Kribi and brought together about one hundred elderly persons.

267- The coming together of elderly persons in associations could help in further conceiving activities aimed at this objective.

5) With respect to dignity

268- In Cameroon, we are aware of the fact that elderly persons have to live in dignity and security, without being exploited nor subjected to physical or mental cruelty. Dignity and security of the elderly are by the way contained in the provisions of the Cameroonian Criminal Code that punishes any child who carries out acts of cruelty on his parents, by refusing to provide him with subsidies or provide for his upkeep.

6) Difficulties

269- Empowerment of the elderly is being done at a time when Cameroon has hardly come out of the great economic crisis that has affected the whole world and in particular countries of the South.

270- Due to this difficult economic situation, solidarity crumbled, opening a gap to a phenomenon not known before: abandonment and exclusion of the elderly. Thanks to the breakthrough in medical science, the human being is able to live much longer. This breakthrough will in future increase the number of elderly persons. Most of them do not benefit from social security schemes and thus increase the number of needy persons.

7) Prospects

271- On examination, the socio-economic indicators showing the improved situation of our country remain weak vis-à-vis the requirements of competitiveness imposed by globalisation. Nevertheless, they are gradually becoming stronger thanks to the strengthening of the democratic process, good governance, the anti-corruption and poverty reduction measures adopted by Cameroon. Furthermore, additional resources obtained from the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, most of which have been allocated to social sectors, would help build the institutional capacities of structures working in this area.

272- Our wish for the future is to see a general improvement in the economic, social and cultural situation of Cameroon. This redeployment of resources will also be extended to the elderly, by laying emphasis on the years ahead and in the light of the main conclusions of the 2nd World Assembly on Old Age held in Madrid from 5 to 12 April 2002 on the following priority actions:

- Promotion of the notion of solidarity storehouse;
- Opening of “Elderly homes” to serve as leisure and support structures for exchanges, games as well as pedagogy among the elderly and younger generations;
- Setting up of a National Committee on Old Age (CONAVI);
- Empowerment of the elderly, through sensitisation, by organising educative talks in social centres in urban areas and the other forms of dialogue in rural areas;
- Drafting and publication of a legal collection on the protection of elderly persons.

Section V: Right to health (Article 16)

273- All information given in the previous report all still relevant. Nevertheless, the main health indicators fall progressively between 1991 and 1998 as the table below shows:

Expected level of key health indicators in 2015			
Indicators	1991	1998	2015
Neo-natal mortality rate (per 1000)	31.5	37.2	10.4
Infant mortality rate (per 1000)	65	77	21.7
Child mortality rate (per 1000)	65.6	79.9	21.9
Infant-child mortality rate (per 1000)	126.3	150.7	42.1
Malnutrition rate (12-23 months (%))	32	44	16.0
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	430	430	107.5
Source: EDS 1991 and 1998. Millennium Summit Documents			

274- In this respect, improving the state of health of the population is both an economic and social development and poverty reduction objective. Competent authorities expect to realise this objective by implementing the Health Sector Strategy adopted in October 2001.

Sub-section I: Controlling diseases in general

275- Concerning the control of diseases in general, the determination of Cameroonian authorities is to reduce the overall morbid burden attributable to communicable diseases that so far have been highly prevalent throughout the country. Most of these diseases are preventable through an effective policy combining prevention, information and treatment. This policy will help fill the wide gap in economic growth resulting from the heavy morbidity burden due particularly to some infectious diseases (malaria, tuberculosis, onchocerciasis, HIV/AIDS, etc) and other mechanisms relating to them commonly known as diseases of poverty. Controlling these diseases will unleash the productive potential of labour, thereby extending the range of productive opportunities, significantly raising the rate of economic rate.

a) Combating malaria

276- Concerning malaria control, the Government has restructured the National Malaria Control Programme by creating the Central Technical Group (GTC) with a Permanent Secretariat as well as provincial units to combat this disease. The programme has acquired 150,000 chemically treated mosquito nets and an equal number of insecticides using HIPC funding. Distribution of these mosquito nets and insecticides to pregnant women began in early 2003, and the Ministry of Public Health acquired 660,000 additional mosquito nets and insecticides during the same year.

The Health Sector Strategy		
OBJECTIVES	PRIORITIES	PROGRAMMES
<p>1- Reduce overall morbidity and mortality by at least 1/3 within the most vulnerable groups of the population.</p> <p>2- Establish, within one hour walking distance for 90 percent of the population, health facilities that deliver the Minimum Package of activities (MAP).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p>3- Practice effective and efficient resource management in 90 percent of health centres and public and private health services at different pyramid levels.</p>	<p>1 - Support for treatment demand</p> <p>2-Enhance treatment supply</p> <p>3- Institutional development</p> <p>4- Support for public administrative hospital and 2nd category hospitals</p>	<p>1- Combating disease</p> <p>2- Maternal, child, and elder persons health</p> <p>3- Health promotion</p> <p>4- Enhancing local response/community partnership</p> <p>5- Essential drugs and medical consumables</p> <p>6- Increase of infrastructure capacity and strengthening of equipment</p> <p>7- Human resource development</p> <p>8- Improving working conditions and working resources</p> <p>9- Developing partnership</p> <p>10- Improving sector governance</p> <p>11- Structural reform</p> <p>12- Subsidies for upgrading public administrative-hospitals</p> <p>13- Operating and investment funds for 2nd category hospitals</p>
<p>Source : MINSANTE, Health Sector Strategy, 2002</p>		

277- On the other hand, the Government has adopted a National Anti-Malaria Strategic Plan in line with the “Roll Back Malaria” Initiative, which aims to halve malaria-related morbidity and mortality by the year

2010, particularly among the most vulnerable segments of the population (children under 5 and pregnant women). To this end, the Government plans to: improve the quality of care and treatment; intensify vector control; train personnel; promote malaria control; develop partnerships; strengthen operational research; conduct integrated epidemiological surveillance; and set up supervision, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms.

b) Fighting tuberculosis

278- The Government has restructured the National Tuberculosis Control Programme by creating a GTC with a Permanent Secretariat and provincial units. The programme has used HIPC funds to acquire drugs. The government has been able to reduce the cost of treatment from an average of CFAF 30,000 to CFAF 5,000 per month. It has also formulated a National Tuberculosis Control Programme covering all the 10 provinces, which will be adopted soon. Upon implementation of this plan, the government will: create a Diagnosis and Treatment Centre (DTC) for every 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants by using the "DOTS" strategy; enhance technical supervision by involving provincial hospitals; and build the capacities of other health workers outside DTCs to effectively handle cases.

c) Fighting onchocerciasis

279- The government will continue implementing the action against onchocerciasis in partnership with NGOs and other partners using the following strategies:

- distribution of Ivermectine through communities to all persons eligible for treatment in hyper-and semi-endemic zones;
- passive distribution of Ivermectine in hypo-endemic zones; training of staff involved in onchocerciasis control;
- information, education, and communication targeting the population at risk.

d) The Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI)

280- The authorities reorganized this programme by creating a Central Technical Group (GTC) with Permanent Secretariat. They will also implement strategies contained in the five-year EPI plan of action centred on: the mobilization of additional resources within the framework of vaccination independence, basic training and in-service training for the health personnel responsible for implementation, the rehabilitation/renewal of equipment, vehicles, and the cold chain???, development of communication for behaviour change, entering into contracts with health districts, implementing an injection safety policy, introducing new vaccines such as those against yellow fever and hepatitis B, strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of programme activities, strengthening EPI management at all levels and enhancing epidemiological surveillance.

e) Essential drugs, reagents, and medical supplies

281- The government will improve access to such items by the population by making them available at all health facilities. The government has already reduced the prices of essential drugs, reagents, and supplies by about 40 percent to make them affordable to the population. A substantial supply of essential drugs, acquired under the HIPC programme, will help improve their availability at health facilities.

f) The National Pharmaceutical Master Plan

282- To attain its main objectives in the sector, the government will implement the National Pharmaceutical Master Plan by:

- developing an effective national system for the supply of drugs, reagents, and medical consumables (the SYNAME), with central facilities and branches with decentralized management;
- organizing an operational system to ensure the quality of medical tests and pharmaceutical products;
- organizing a selection system for pharmaceutical products, preferably under their common international denomination;
- developing pharmaceutical research;
- establishing a pharmaceutical monitoring system, subsidizing selected expensive therapies and medical tests and facilitating private sector access to generic drugs, etc.

G) Emergencies, epidemic, and disasters

283- The government will establish effective care mechanisms focused on the following strategies:

- The development of effective epidemiological surveillance posts for rapid decision-making and adequate response;
- Staff training at all relevant levels;
- The development of emergency operational networks;
- Information, education, and communication interventions and operational research.

h) Financing health care

284- The government will take appropriate measures to help cover the cost of treatments by instituting, a health risk-sharing system through the development of health mutual benefit associations. In this connection, a support unit for the development of health mutual benefit associations has been created at the Ministry of Public Health, with the mandate to: draft a mutual health insurance code, coordinate the stakeholders involved in supporting mutual health insurance, and undertake a pilot study on the development of community-level health mutual benefit associations.

Sub-section II: Maternal, adolescent and elderly person health

a) Maternal, adolescent and elderly person health

285-The government will implement the following strategies to effectively address the health problems of these groups:

- Developing a minimum package of activities in the form of curative, preventive, and proactive care at each level of the health pyramid;
- Promotion of reproductive health adapted to the needs of adolescents/ youths; basic and in-service training for all health care providers;

- Enhancing operational research in reproductive health;
- Enhancing the health information system for programme management;
- Monitoring and evaluating reproductive health activities.

b) Food and nutrition focused on the child

286- With the support of development partners, the government will implement programmes which, by 2011, will help to halve protein-energy malnutrition among children under 5, reduce anaemia by one-third among women of childbearing age and preschool children, eradicate vitamin A deficiency among children under 5 and eradicate iodine deficiency-related difficulties.

c) Encouraging and supporting breast-feeding

287- To achieve this objective, the Cameroonian authorities will strive to encourage and support breast-feeding as well as better infant nutrition practices, improve the policy of systematically administering iron and folic acid supplements to pregnant women and promote the production and consumption of iron-rich local food products, administer Vitamin A supplements to all women who have delivered and to children aged 6 months to 5 years and promote the consumption of iodine-enriched salt in all households, etc.

Sub-section III: Non-communicable diseases

288- Some non-communicable diseases constitute major public health problems. Accordingly, the government intends to strengthen the non-communicable diseases programme by implementing the following measures:

- developing an operational epidemiological surveillance system for non-communicable diseases;
- developing systematic screening for breast, cervical, and prostate cancer;
- developing screening for diabetes, high blood pressure, and sickle cell anaemia.

Sub-section IV: Fighting AIDS, a Government Priority

289- According to the information available, the first 21 cases of AIDS were diagnosed and reported in Cameroon in 1986. Subsequently, the epidemic spread rapidly among the sexually active population. In 1999, the total number of new cases stood at 20,419 cases. The prevalence rate rose from 0.5 percent in 1987 to 2.1 percent in 1991, 3.8 percent in 1998, and 11 percent in 2000.

290- Analysis according to sex and age indicates that youths are affected with 43 percent of the HIV positive individuals being between age 15 and 35, women are more affected than men by a 3:2 ratio and transmission is predominantly heterosexual, with 90 percent of infections occurring during unprotected sexual intercourse and 10 percent resulting from blood transfusion and mother-to-child infection.

291- According to UNAIDS estimates, of the 540,000 Cameroonians living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in 1999, some 290,000 were women aged 15 to 49, while 22,000 were children aged 0 to 14. Projections indicate that 1,500,000 Cameroonians lived with HIV/AIDS in 2001 and that more than 150,000 had been orphaned by the disease.

292- The epidemiological situation is marked by a rapid increase in HIV positivity and AIDS patients, particularly among youths, women, the armed forces, truckers, and sex workers.

293- Top Government authorities became involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS early on through: creation of a committee to combat AIDS and the National AIDS Control Programme in 1986, formulation of a short-term programme against AIDS covering the 1988-1992 and 1993-1995 periods, and the preparation of a framework plan against AIDS for the 1998/2000 period. No satisfactory results were obtained through these programs. (Cf. Initial Report, Paragraphs 322-325)

294- In September 2000, the government adopted a strategic plan to combat AIDS for the 2000-2005 period. By means of this plan, the authorities expect to reverse the epidemic's current trend, reduce HIV positivity to less than 10 percent, and cut the incidence of HIV by 25 percent among youths, men in uniform, and women between now and 2005.

295- The strategic plan has been implemented within a context of a new and improved programme management, a multi-sectoral approach, and the decentralization of intervention. It is aimed at encouraging future generations of Cameroonians aged 5-14 to adopt a healthy life style in the HIV/AIDS era, adults to understand that they live in a world with HIV/AIDS and must adopt responsible sexual behaviours and Cameroonian society to receive basic solidarity in support of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

296- The outcome of the implementation process has been to:

- Broaden the national response through the development of sector plans by the public administration (the Ministries of Defence, National Education, Youth and Sports, Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Women's Affairs, Social Affairs, and Higher Education); the signing of agreements with religious groups and private sector enterprises to wage the battle against HIV/AIDS within these communities, especially through preventive education, the promotion of condom use, and care for AIDS patients;
- Enhance local response by setting up a process involving local authorities and communities by creating local NGOs;
- Strengthen and organize programme management through the creation of a joint monitoring Commission, which meets regularly; the creation of a multidisciplinary central management team, and capacity building and improved logistical support for the central management team, as well the identification of offices for that team;
- Reduce the price of antiretroviral drugs, the cost of which has ranged between CFAF 15,000 and CFAF 28,000 per month and patient since August 1, 2002 (Cf Initial Report English version, \$=325: the cost was CFAF 21,000). Since 1 October 2004, tuberculosis patients are receiving free treatment. Antiretroviral drugs cost only CFAF 3000 per month for generics and CFAF 7000 for patent drugs.

297- The government is committed to the programme, and its financial support has risen continually since 1986 from CFAF 53 million in 1986 to slightly over CFAF 1.6 billion in 2000. Donor willingness to

support the programme has also increased. Of the CFAF 213 billion in HIPC resources over the 2000-2003 interim period, the AIDS Control Programme has received CFAF 5.4 billion with a view to accelerating the implementation of the following interventions: 100 percent condom use; counselling and voluntary screening; and behavioural changes among youth.

Section IV: Right to education (Article 17 (1))

298- The previous report focussed on the several difficulties confronting education in Cameroon.

299- As a matter of fact, from 1990 to 2000, this sector was hard hit by the economic crisis reflected among other things in:

- inadequate infrastructures due to very high enrolment in the primary, secondary and higher education levels;
- the precarious situation of teachers which is characterised by difficult working conditions;
- the need to reform the education system in Cameroon (cf. Initial Report, French version pp 64-65, 67).

300- Since 2000, the State of Cameroon, as the means permit, has been striving to tackle these problems facing the educational system at all levels (nursery, primary, secondary and higher educations).

Sub-section I: Nursery, primary and secondary education

301- In a bid to assert the compulsory nature of primary education in Cameroon, the Head of State in a statement to the Cameroonian youth on 10 February 2000, decided to abolish the payment of the required fees.

302- This statement was buttressed by Finance Law No. 2000/08 of 30 June 2000, which in Article 11 (3) confirmed the free principle of attending public primary schools.

303- With regard to the other organisations of education, the rates of the required fees are laid down in Article 2 of Order No. 20/B1/1464/MINEF/MINEDUC/CAB of 13 February 1996.

304- The payment of the required contribution in terms of fees and dues for each pupil or student is as follows: (cf. Table)

Level of Education	Nursery	Post Primary	Primary	1 st Cycle General Secondary	2 nd Cycle General Secondary
Rate	7,500	4,500	0	7,500	10,000

It should be pointed out that enrolment into primary education witnessed a marked increase (Cf. Table 1, 2, 3, page 78 of this Report).

305- If during the 1990-2000 decade it was noticed that many children were not going to school because of the adverse effects of the economic crisis on the living conditions of the population, from the year 2000 and up to the period of submission of this report, the government took measures aimed at raising citizenship awareness by building the capacities of the youth to participate in the development of his country.

306- Activities that have to contribute to this capacity building, apart from the abolition of school fees, consist in the training of teachers in human rights and the rights of the child.

A – Activities

307- The primordial action that the State of Cameroon took consisted in training teachers and peer educators in combating HIV/AIDS through communication for change in behaviours in school milieus. This training aims at sensitizing the youths on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It also enables them to acquire the spirit of communication and sensitisation. The role of the youths is to inform, train other youths on STIs and HIV/AIDS, sensitise them on combating the pandemic through the promotion of less risky behaviours and through education on reproductive health, because without youths sound in body and mind, education would not achieve its objectives.

308- Generally, and since the 2000-2001 academic year, the following measures have been taken:

- Provision of school material;
- Increasing education supply;

- Introduction at all levels of education of the values of justice, peace, respect, human dignity, tolerance, moral and civic education;
- Participation of teachers (Inspectors of Pedagogy and others) in sessions aimed at building their capacities in human rights;
- Promotion of the Olympic spirit in school milieus.

Furthermore, the following measures are being constantly implemented:

1) Introduction of pedagogic innovations

309- The following pedagogic innovations have been implemented in schools:

- School, Friend of Children, Friend of Girls: (EAEAF): This is a school based on the respect of the rights of the child, a healthy school that protects the health of children, that will promote equality among girls and boys and where families, communities and children are involved and take part in it;
- "Big Sister" Initiative. In the African culture, the eldest of the girls takes care of the very young ones, particularly little girls who begin going to school;
- Association of Pupils Mothers: This Association ensures the smooth implementation of school and extra curricula activities for the benefit of all children, and regularly monitors girls to ensure that they are actually in school;
- Community Preschool Centre: This is a preschool education environment for boys and girls aged between 3 to 5 years;
- Involvement of all education community actors in combating HIV/AIDS;

2) Training

310- The following seminars were organised:

- Training of the central management team:20 persons trained;
- Training of provincial supervisors: 200 supervisors trained (2001 – 2003);
- Training of peer educators (2001 – 2003).

3) Cooperation

311- This involves establishing a partnership with international organisations, NGOs and all the social actors concerned with improving the quality of education in Cameroon.

In this regard, establishing a partnership of proximity with the following International Organisations, Associations, Specialised NGOs is continuing:

- UNICEF - WORLD BANK - NACC - UNFPA-UNESCO – etc.
- CAMNAFAW – FESADE – LINACAPE – IRESCO – Cameroon Scouts, etc.

4) Teaching Staff

312- Within the framework of improving teaching conditions, the following measures have been taken:

- Improving the working condition of teachers (increasing the technical allowance and granting assessment and output allowances);
- Rationalising the management of National Education staff. In this vein, the staffs remain in their post of duty and are only transferred following some modalities. (Cf Circular note No. B1/1464/MINEDUC/SG/DESG/DRH of 2 July 2003).

313- Concerning modalities for transferring staff, there are four types of transfers:

- a) Transfer for personal reasons: this can only take place if the teacher has put in at least 3 academic years in the initial post, and 5 years for the administrative staffs;

- b) Transfer to join one's family: this concerns wives or husbands who want to meet their spouses;
- c) Transfer for service reasons: the Administration transfers staff to satisfy a service need;
- d) Transfer for health reasons: the worker submits a medical file, which is examined.

314- The following measures are being carried out:

- Equipment of classrooms in all provisions;
- Construction and rehabilitation of school buildings in all provinces;
- Construction of water points and latrines in schools;
- Construction of fences.

315- With regard to all the measures mentioned above, the following results and statistics can be seen and they concern the areas listed below:

Table 1
2000/2001 enrolments per sex and level of education

	Boys	Girls	Total
Nursery	63,610	62,664	1,262,274
Primary	1,447,881	1,241,171	2,689,052
Post-primary	11,513	5,951	17,464
Secondary	368,763	315,820	684,583
Teachers Training	5,189	7,543	12,735
Total	1,896,356	1,633,149	3,530,105

These ratios highlight the desire to strike a balance between and ensure gender equity.

Table 2
2002/2003 enrolment per level of education

	Public	Private	Total
Nursery	52,570	86,146	138,716
Primary	2,142,086	656,437	2,798,523
Post Primary	1,351	254	13,785
Secondary	472,459	196,670	669,129
Teachers Training	6,739	/	6,739
Total			3,626,892

Table 3
Trend in enrolment from 2000 to 2003 per level of education

	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
Nursery	126,274		138,716
Primary	2,689,052	2,723,504	2,798,523
Post Primary	17,464		13,785
Secondary	684,583		669,129
Teachers Training	12,732		6,739
Total	3,530,105		3,626,892

Enrolment data for 1999/2000 academic years are not available. Enrolment in the primary level for 2001/2002 academic years stood at 2,734,504.

316- When comparing the enrolment for 2000/2001 academic year (3,530,105) with that for 2002/2003 academic year (3,626,892), we notice that there is an increase; this is attributable to the adoption of the free basic education policy. This increase is also the outcome of the offer made by government to provide the ministries responsible for educational matters with subsequent financial means as table 4 shows:

Table 4
Budgetary evolution of the Ministry of National Education for 2000/2001, 2001-2002 and 2003 financial years

Year	Amount	Recurrent Budget	Investment Budget
2000-2001	167,490,000,000	146,490,000,000	21,000,000,000
2001-2002	197,979,536,000	173,514,536,000	24,465,000,000
2002-2002	97,153,127,000	92,688,127,000	4,465,000,000
2003	176,384,900,000	160,884,900,000	15,500,000,000
2004	183,638,000,000	173,638,000,000	10,000,000,000

317- In this respect, it should be pointed out that in 2002 there was a transitional budget (July-December 2002), and as from 2003, an important change was effected as the financial year ran concurrently with the calendar year.

318- In 2003, there was a drop in the budget while in 2004 there was an increase. With regard to the drop or increase in the budget, each ministry depends on what the government puts at its disposal and the budget is drawn up following this amount.

Table 5
Number of schools for each level education for 2000-2001 year

	Public	Private	Total
Nursery	694	1079	1773
Primary	6,877	2,955	9,832
Post primary			215
Secondary			1,113
Teachers Training	47	3	50

NB: When compared to the 1990s, there is a net increase in the number of schools from 8,354 schools in the 1990/1991 academic year to 12,983 in 2000/2001.

For the 2002/2003 academic year, Primary and Nursery education alone had 3,962 schools.

Table 6:
Number of classrooms for each level of education 2000-2001

	Public	Private	Total
Nursery	1,411	2,400	3,811
Primary	35,096	16,472	51,568
Post primary			607
Secondary			13,883
Teachers Training	257	21	278
Total	70,147		

NB: In 1990-1991, the number of classrooms was 48,756. In 2000/2001, this number rose to 70,147.

For the 2002/2003 academic year, primary and nursery education had a total number of 55,426 classrooms.

319- A reform endorsed by Orders No. 64C/84/MINEDUC/CAB reorganising the First School Leaving Certificate Examination in the English and French-speaking parts of Cameroon calls for further reflection and understanding of the youth rather than his memory.

320- Finally, the creation of two ministries responsible respectively for basic education (primary and nursery schools) and secondary education (general and technical), translates into concrete reality the new vision of the government of Cameroon concerning primary and secondary education (Cf. Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004).

Sub-section II: Higher Education (Article 17 (1))

321- In the previous report nothing was said about higher education for lack of reliable information.

322- Presently and since the university reform endorsed by Decree No. 93/026 of 19 January 1993, emphasis is being laid on the support of the fundamental mission of the University institution: teaching, research, support to development.

323- Systematically and for all State Universities, equal access is assured to all depending on each one's aptitudes. University fees per academic year are 50.000 CFAF.

324- The involvement of private initiatives beside the State is an added guarantee that gives freedom of choice to candidates who are becoming many to undertake higher education.

325- With the adoption by the National Assembly, on the one hand, of a bill on the orientation of Higher Education and the signing into Law on 16 April 2001 by the Head of State, on the other hand, Higher Education reform in Cameroon fell in line with a comprehensive and systematic reform agreed upon with the endorsement of international donors.

326- In this respect and this since the year 2000, the action taken by the Ministry of Higher Education to promote human rights and in particular the right to higher education, can be appreciated through the following measures:

- Improving the legal framework on higher education;
- Improving the material conditions of the teaching corps;

- Continuous provision of guidance and assistance to students;
- Promoting forums for social dialogue.

A- Improving the legal framework on higher education

327- The Constitution of 18 January 1996 in its Preamble states: “the organisation and supervision of education at all levels shall be the duty of the State”. A set of legislative and regulatory instruments put in place since 2000 aim at making this Constitutional provision a concrete reality. Among the most important instruments are the following:

- Law No.005 of 16 April 2001 on the orientation of Higher Education. This law lays down the general legal framework and fundamental guidelines of Higher Education in Cameroon. It affirms that the State shall grant to higher education a national priority character. Finally, it lays the legal basis for the existence of a private sector of higher education in Cameroon by stressing that “private partners shall assist in offering training at the higher level”;
- Decree No. 2001/823/PM of 19 September 2001 to lay down common rules applicable to private institutions of higher education. This decree, issued in application of the law on orientation, aims at encouraging and supervising private initiative assistance to the increase in the supply of higher education and specifying the roles and relations between the various actors;
- Order No. 073/CAB/PM of 6 December 2001 organising and spelling out the modalities of functioning of the National Commission on Private Higher Education;
- Order No. 01/0096/MINESUP of 7 December 2001 laying down conditions for the setting up and functioning of private higher education institutions;
- Order No. 02/0035/MINESUP of 16 April 2002 laying down conditions and modalities for obtaining authorisations for teaching, agreements and approvals for posts of responsibilities in private higher education institutions.

328- These instruments form the basis on which private higher education functions. Others that are under formulation will soon

supplement them. Among them is the bill on private higher education institutions preparing candidates for foreign examinations and that on distant learning. The set objective being to increase the supply of training at the higher level and, consequently make higher education accessible to all depending on the aptitudes of each and everyone.

B- Measures to improve on the material conditions of the teaching corps

329- Thanks to the growth in the national economy in the late 90s, Decree No. 2002/041 of 4 February 2002 increased the salaries of teachers of higher education. This measure supplemented several others concerning the improvement on the teacher's conditions. These include especially Decrees Nos. 2000/048, 2000/049 and 2000/050 of 15 March 2000. The first decree increased the retirement age for staff of Higher Education on the one hand, and on the other hand, the last index for each of the ranks. The second decree fixed the incremental index of Higher Education Staff while the third concerned the modalities for the remuneration of Assistant Lecturers in universities.

330- Two instruments on the management of the career of lecturers were signed in October 2001. They relate respectively to granting authorisation to supervise research works (HDR) and on the criteria for recruitment and promotion of lecturers in public higher education institutions. These instruments testify government's determination to safeguard and make more credible the process of recruitment and promotion of lecturers.

331- Other initiatives have been taken with the same desire to improve on the condition of the lecturer and it is necessary to enumerate them here. These initiatives are notably:

- The credit-computer contract project with university lecturers. The goal of this contract is to enable beneficiaries to acquire computer equipment in the form of reimbursable loan at very flexible conditions;
- The academic mobility programme, the objectives of which are the strengthening of national inter-university cooperation and cooperation with public and para-public bodies, the establishment of partnership with the Diaspora and foreign partner bodies and institutions;

- The support programme for the completion of dissertations, theses, Authorisation to supervise research (HDR);
- The support programme for scientific activities (colloquiums, seminars, roundtables, etc);
- The support programme for the publishing of scientific books.

The goal all these measures is to encourage competition and academic excellence.

C – Measures to guide and assist students

332- Under the combined effects of improving on the conditions of the functioning of private higher education institutions, as a result of the new regulation and efforts deployed by government to provide suitable social and academic infrastructures to public university institutions, the supervision of student has been improved upon.

This table shows the ratio of supervision of students per lecturer and University in 1999/2000

Universities	Lecturers	Students	Ratio
Buéa	215	5,834	1/27
Douala	295	8,847	1/30
Dschang	34	10,518	1/31
Ngaoundéré	181	3,424	1/19
Yaoundé I	858	19,459	1/23
Yaoundé II	264	11,198	1/42
Total	2,153	59,280	1/28

333- Concerning assistance to students, the State pursued its new policy on assistance and student welfare characterised by well-targeted special actions. These actions are aimed at correcting regional disparities noticed in higher education by better taking into account the social situation of candidates, as well as their past and present academic performance in a bid to give greater importance to excellence.

334- In the area of student welfare, efforts are being made to improve on the housing and feeding conditions of students. Accordingly, each University has a hall of residence and a restaurant. To benefit from

these services, students pay a modest contribution (150 CFAP per meal but which costs the university 750 CFAP and 2000 CFAP per room, including water and electricity).

335- As regards vulnerable groups in particular like girls and the disabled, special measures to encourage them have been taken.

This table shows the granting of aid to students per criterion, amount and University in 1999/2000

Criterion	Excellence		Young girls in scientific and technical fields (100,000FCFA)		Doctorate (150,000FCFA)		Disabled and social cases (75,000FCFA)		Total		Per-centage %
	No.	Financial benefit in103	No.	Financial benefit in 103	No.	Financial benefit In 103	No.	Financial benefit in 103	No.	Financial benefit in 103	
Buea	224	16,800	57	5,700	-	-	23	1,725	304	24,225	14.23
Douala	186	13,950	47	4,700	03	450	63	4,725	299	23,825	14.00
Dschang	155	11,625	44	4,400	21	3,150	79	5,925	299	25,100	14.00
Ngaoundéré	145	10,875	57	5,700	25	3,750	20	1,500	247	21,825	11.56
Yaoundé I	337	25,275	124	12,400	134	20,100	91	6,825	686	64,600	32.11
Youndé II	220	16,500	-	-	14	2,100	67	5,025	301	23,625	14.10
Total	1,267	95,025	329	32,900	197	29,550	343	25,725	2,136	183,200	100.00

336- In addition to these actions, the Ministry of Higher Education has put in place many programmes such as:

- the university assistance programme known as "Work Study Programme". This programme consists of offering jobs within the university milieu to students while at the same time letting them continue with their studies;
- the organisation of various paid holiday jobs.

D- Promotion of forums for social dialogue

337- The Ministry of Higher Education has remained steadfast in its logic of permanent dialogue with the different components of the university community. The following forums for social dialogue have been put in place:

- The Permanent MINESUP/Lecturer Consultations Framework (Decision No. 00/0076/MINESUP of 18 February 2000);

- The Coordination and Follow-up Committee of Meetings between the Ministry of Higher Education and Representatives of Supporting Staff in public university institutions (Decision No. 02/0569/MINESUP/SG/DAG/CJ of 13 September 2002);
- The Tripartite Committee for the follow-up of meetings with students (Decision No. 03/004/MINESUP/CAB/SG of January 2003).

338- These forums for dialogue fall within the light of shared governance as a strategy for strengthening the partnership approach, institutional schooling and the need to share responsibilities within the higher education milieu.

Section VII: The right to a shelter

339- Government's policy on accommodation is aimed at financing urban housing for each citizen and at the least cost in urban areas, improving on housing in the countryside by bringing in new building materials so as to build solid houses.

340- In this regard, measures worthy of interest had been taken and outlined in the Initial Report (Cf. Initial Report, Paragraphs 293 to 298). This section will dwell on the evolution of government's policy on housing and enumerate the actions carried out in the past three years in this area.

341- It should be pointed out that the basic policy on housing and its temporal evolution had been redefined in 2000.

Sub-section I: Basic policy on housing

342- Just after the creation on 7 October 1997 of the Ministry of Urban Affairs, the Head of State, while on a visit in Douala, spelt out once again the missions of this ministry, namely: "to promote in the area of town planning, a more dynamic policy, put in place a new policy on low-cost housing with the participation of the private sector".

343- In this vein, government gave instructions for profound reflections to be made on the reform of the low-cost housing sector; an expression that embodies accommodation, the environment and green spaces, parking lots, socio-cultural structures that help in improving on the living standard of the population.

A – Main missions of the reform

344- They are:

- to combat the spontaneous sprouting up of houses;
- to provide access to accommodation to a large portion of the population;
- to satisfy the population's needs in social and collective facilities
- to master urban growth.

Furthermore, irrespective of the reform, government also embarked on modernising the structures in charge of housing (Cf Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004).

B - Social impact of reforms

345- The Housing Loan Fund of Cameroon, since it was restructured, has resumed providing funds at attractive interest rates. It also embarked on the construction of low-cost housing. Such is the case especially of the "Olembe Horizon 2001" project where among the expected 1800 houses, some were built to the satisfaction of the population.

Sub-section II: Government housing policy trend

A- Theoretical framework of the housing policy

346- The policy on housing is based on continuity in the sense that social justice and improvement in the living standard of the population constitute a major priority.

347-This strong political will be concretised in the following measures:

- Launching of a far reaching programme on the reform of the low-cost housing sector;
- Restructuring of some State companies given the task of building low-cost houses;
- Signing of conventions and other partnership agreements with interested organisations or friendly countries.

B – Practical framework of the reform

348- Several initiatives by private promoters have been brought to the services concerned for the execution of programmes for low-cost houses.

349- In this light, SIC, the Real Estate Corporation is negotiating with STABEX International for the execution of the programme for constructing 5000 low-cost houses under a new procedure known as "PLASTBAU".

350- Another convention for constructing 10,000 low cost houses is being examined by SIC and the TERN BANK Ltd.

351- A project for the construction of 10,000 low cost houses by a real estate promoter is also being negotiated with the support of Tunisian partners. The Cameroon-Tunisia five-year real estate programme for 10,000 houses is an important vector of development and poverty reduction in Cameroon. It comprises four aspects:

- Improving urban housing;
- Creating of 6000 direct jobs;
- Developing subsidiary economic activities;
- Improving living standard for 10,000 families.

352- In the same vein and at the internal level, the dynamic association of youths has also presented a programme for constructing low-cost houses.

353- Whatever the case, the ongoing attainment of objectives fixed by the national programme for the reform of the low-cost housing sector will help in improving the living conditions of the population and in reducing poverty, in accordance with the commitment taken by Cameroon in the Libreville Declaration.

354- These are long-term objectives to be implemented with the government, civil society and the other sustainable development actors.

CHAPTER IV: PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

355- In the previous report, the analyses of these rights centred around a healthy environment and the right of every individual to take part in the cultural life of one's community (Cf Initial Report, English version, paragraphs 421 to 443). This chapter, in addition to these two rights, focuses on peoples' right to peace and security, the right to information and includes the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.

Section I: Right to participate in cultural life, benefit from scientific progress and share the interests with others (Article 17(2))

356- Information contained in the Initial Report, paragraphs 433 to 443 is still relevant. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that Cameroon, a crossroad of civilisations, is a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural country that intends to preserve this identity.

357- The defence and promotion of cultural diversity, compatible with the respect of human dignity, involve the commitment to respect human rights in general and the rights of the indigenous population and of minorities in particular. The Preamble of the Constitution of 1996 confirms the attachment of Cameroon "to the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human of Rights, the Charter of the United Nations, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and all duly ratified international conventions relating thereto".

358- In this light, actions geared towards cultural protection and promotion have been carried out at the national and international levels to ensure a better legibility and visibility of cultural rights, copyrights or related rights. There have been breakthroughs and improvements in this area. These are intended to be responses to the final observations made by the Commission on the Initial Report presented by the State of Cameroon.

359- They can be perceived at the levels of the legal and institutional framework, concrete actions and prospects.

Sub-section I: Improving on the legal and institutional framework

360- Under cultural rights, the government signed a number of instruments, which form the legal basis of actions that have been carried out. These are:

1) Law No. 2000/05 of 17 April 2000 on copyrighting. It aims at ensuring and strengthening the protection of the cultural and intellectual heritage from usurpation and fraudulent imitation that can be facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT);

2) Law No. 2000/010 of 11 December 2000 governing archives. It enables instruments for the protection and valorisation of cultural know-how to be strengthened;

3) Decree No. 2001/950/PM of 1 November 2001 laying down modalities of application of Law No. 2000/11 on copyrights and related rights. This decree puts an end to the existence of the former copyrights corporation, ushering in four corporations each representing a particular artistic field (Music, Literature and Theatre Arts, Audiovisual Arts and Photography, Plastic Arts). It also established openness, competition and the rule of uncertainty previously noticed in the sharing of copyright dues by encouraging creativity among other things.

4) Decree No. 2001/38/PM of 5 December 2001 opening a special allotment account to support the cultural policy. As a matter of fact, the recent formation of the Commission for the selection of cultural projects in May 2003 had to increase the supply and demand for cultural goods, having as result direct incidences on job creation, wealth and poverty reduction. Concrete actions have also resulted from the legal framework.

Sub-section II: Actions geared towards implementing the pertinent provisions of the ACHPR

361- These are actions specific to the government and those carried out in collaboration with the civil society.

A – Government actions

362- The Ministry responsible for promoting culture carried out the following actions:

1). Organisation in 2001 of an exhibition of works of art in the National Museum on the theme "Art, Architecture and Traditional Houses" and exchange of views on tested techniques of construction, balance and harmony with the environment.

2). Launching in November 2001 of the general inventory of the cultural, tangible and intangible, heritage in view of undertaking its physical census and to discover any work which, because of its ethnological, archaeological, historical and artistic nature constitutes a national heritage that the State has the urgent duty to hand down to future generations.

3). Execution of the programme to set up rural radio stations throughout the national territory so as to valorise national culture in local languages in its entire dimension. This action was carried out a few years ago in cooperation with international institutions like the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF).

4). Participation of Cameroon in October 2002 in Beyruth in the Francophonie Summit devoted to cultural diversity. Cameroon supported UNESCO'S action in favour of adopting multiculturalism as a guarantee to international peace and security as well as to the justification of the need, at the global level, for an agreement on the reduction of the digital divide so as to enable all persons to enjoy a greater freedom of speech, creativity and dissemination of works, by each person in the language of his choice.

5). Signing, with bilateral partners, of various cultural cooperation agreements like the following:

- Cooperation agreement with Turkey in 2001;
- 2002-2003 executive programmes with Egypt;
- exchange programme with Tunisia in 2002.

B- Actions in collaboration with the civil society

363- The protection and valorisation of the heritage and traditional know-how cannot be the exclusive preserve of the government. In this light, the private sector is playing a major role in financing cultural activity. This has given rise to the proliferation of cultural associations and NGOs.

364- In this regard, a card index of associations and NGOs has been established in the Ministry of Culture while waiting for the decision setting up a bureau that will be responsible for associations.

365- Consequently, besides local festivals (the NGUON, MBOG LIA, BASSA MPOO, NGONDO, LIE LA TATOMDJAP...) and the National Festival of Arts and Culture, government continues to promote cultural activities from the different components of the national society in areas as varied as:

- 1) The Festival of Cartoons and Humour of Yaounde (FESCARHY) in 2001 and 2002;
- 2) The Festival of Televisions (FESTEL) in 2000;
- 3) The "Théâtre du Chocolat", drama for children, in 2002;
- 4) The "Rencontres théâtrales internationales du Cameroun" (RETIC) in 2002;
- 5) The "Ecrans Noir du Cinema" in 2001 and 2003.

Sub-section III: Prospects

366- These are:

1) The drawing up of a legal framework governing cultural patronage, sponsorship in order to further encourage economic operators to get involved in financing cultural activities;

2). Preparatory activities for the launching of road construction or road maintenance works which are aimed at setting up "village road committees", having among other roles the ensuring of the preservation of sites that fall under cultural heritage and taking into account local realities and feelings;

3). The gradual functioning of the national museum as the window of all the cultural wealth and heritage, national archives and national library;

4). The opening of many public libraries in local communities;

5). The completion of the construction of the Arts Centre in the South province of Cameroon as well as its inauguration, the laying of the foundation stone for those of the West, South-West within the framework of a vast programme to build arts centres in all provincial headquarters, as major places of artistic creation, representation of creative works and celebration of national culture. The aim is to provide the man of culture with an adequate structure where he can evolve, expose his cultural product, share and see the life of specific cultural identities.

Section II: Peoples right to peace and security (Civil Protection)

367- Cameroon is exposed to a wide variety of disasters leading to a high prevalence of risks. Consequently, Cameroon, which is generally shown as Africa in miniature, also seems to reflect in its complex nature the continent in the areas of natural and technological risks.

368-The management of all types of disasters is a concern to public authorities, which, with the support of bilateral and multilateral donors, are carrying out daily activities aimed at informing, intervening and reassuring:

- Informing the population on how to prevent disasters through sensitisation and education of the masses;
- Intervening in order to provide an appropriate response to crises that occur, through the effective organisation of relief for survivals;
- Reassuring through management centred on rehabilitation, social reintegration of persons having suffered reserve fortunes.

369- Obviously, since the management of disasters is irregular and dynamic because of its diversified typology, we shall successively point out the different sectors affected by disasters, the improved institutional intervention framework, the measures put in place as well as prospects.

Sub-section I: Typology of disasters

370- From the recent inventory of disasters in Cameroon, six main categories can be identified.

A – Categories of disasters

1– Geological disasters

371- These are landslides, earthquakes, gas emissions and volcanic eruptions.

372- a) As far as landslides are concerned, understood as a geological phenomenon, they occur as a result of heavy continuous rains, volcanic activity or earthquake, generally affecting hilly areas and regions with steep slopes. This is the case of the landslides that occurred in the Rom village in Nwa Subdivision, North-West province in November 2000 which caused the death of two persons. This is also what was observed on 14 September 2000 in Menchum Division, resulting in the blockage of the Wum-Bamenda road.

373- Besides, geological phenomena of lesser magnitude accompany or resemble landslides. This is the case of the falling in of earth on 23 January 2000 in Mvog-Betsi in Yaounde and in the Kaolin mine of Balengom in the Bazou Subdivision (NDE Division), which caused the death of several persons.

374- b) With regard to earthquakes, in July 2002, a case was signalled in Kribi. Fortunately, no material or human casualty was registered. However, it remains a disaster risk given the unforeseeable nature of this geological phenomenon.

375- c) Emission of gases on its part did not take place in the period under review. But, there are risk-prone regions that require preventive measures in all respects (North-West, West of Cameroon).

376- d) Finally, volcanic eruptions, understood as major geological disasters that bring melted rocks in contact with the land surface. In this regard, in May 2000, Mount Cameroon underwent an eruption that was more effusive than explosive. This is why there was limited material damage and no losses in human lives.

2– Climatic-ecological disasters

377- They are of several types:

a) Floods, where the system of drainage for rainwater and running water is the problem. The latter was observed in Douala in April

2001, notably at the commercial centre and in Yaounde in some neighbourhoods.

378- The second cause of floods is relief. In fact, regions situated below and are surrounded by mountains are subject to floods because they form the convergence point of rising and running waters. Such was the case in Bamenda on 9 August 2001, Maroua on the 19 of the same month with two deaths, Bertoua on 29 September, Nkongle in the Faro on 24 March 2001, with the destruction of plantations.

379- b) Gales and thunderstorms destroyed houses and public buildings in March 2001 in Yaounde, Maroua in 2001, Mfou in the same year where ten classrooms were destroyed, and in the Upper Nyong Division where 43 houses and 2 schools were destroyed.

380- c) Invasions by locusts or elephants. The Diamaré Division in the Far North Province witnessed destructions caused by elephants in 2002.

3- Medical-health disasters: epidemics, pandemics

381- Several cases of diseases were made known: meningitis with 21 deaths and 17 persons hospitalised on 17 March 2002 in Wabane in the Lebialem Division; 6 deaths out of the 24 cases made known on 5 April 2002 in Dschang (West province).

382- Concerning pandemics, that of HIV/AIDS calls for more attention with the prevalence rate of 12% of the total population in 2002. The evolution of this pandemic provokes the re-emergence and gradual development of some diseases that had been reduced to a great extent among the population (tuberculosis, herpes zoster).

4 Technological disasters

383- Generally, there are several types of disasters caused by technological progress: fire disasters occurred in markets and private houses.

5- Sociological disaster: armed conflicts, vandalism

384- Territorial problems are for example those that brought the State of Cameroon and Nigeria into dispute over land and maritime

border, especially the Bakassi peninsula. This dispute caused many casualties in particular among the military. This matter was referred to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, which gave a verdict on 10 October 2002 in favour of Cameroon.

1– Disasters linked to transportation: accidents by land, sea and air

385- Generally, accidents on land are the most common. They are caused by the carelessness of drivers and the technical fault of vehicles.

386- Concerning accidents at sea, it should be made known that a ship caught fire on 3 May 2001 at the Douala port.

387- Whatever the case, considering the heavy financial losses and human casualties resulting from the disasters that have occurred in Cameroon, the government decided to get a risk-management mechanism in collaboration with bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Sub-section II: Risk management measures

388- This comprises the institutional framework and the support by skilful partners.

A– Institutional framework

389- This involves making a list of actors involved in civil protection.

1. Department of Civil Protection in the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation

390-It is responsible for:

- the general organisation of civil protection throughout the national territory;
- carrying out studies on civil protection measures in times of war and peace;
- establishing relations with national and international civil protection organs;
- organising training courses for persons involved in civil protection;

- examining requests for compensation and financial aid by persons victims of disasters;
- controlling the use of aid;
- coordinating means put aside for civil protection, notably for relief, rescue, logistics purposes, the use of back-up and auxiliary troops;
- transferring corpses;
- monitoring and managing aid.

2. National Risk Observatory

391- This is an operational structure tasked with gathering, treating and disseminating information on risks and natural, technological, industrial and social disasters in view of increasing the efficiency of the Department of Civil Protection.

B– Support of government action

392- Government action includes:

- action by the council and civil society;
- bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

1- The council and civil society

393– a) The council, which is responsible for improving the living standard of its population, has a pragmatic knowledge of local realities.

394- b) The population with civic awareness sensitised on the “culture of prevention” and participation in intervention activities, in case of major risk or disasters, are the first actors and beneficiaries of civil protection services.

395-c) Non-governmental organisations and humanitarian organisations, the assistance and interventions of which boost the government action towards vulnerable communities.

2– Bilateral and multilateral cooperation

396–a) With regard specifically to partnership with France, Cameroon signed a multifaceted Convention with this country whose overall objectives comprise three steps:

- Strengthening civil protection measures;
- Improving the prevention of natural disasters;
- Rationalising the management of crisis situations.

397–b) With regard to partnership with: the International Criminal Police Organisation (ICPO), officials of the Department of Civil Protection, National Fire Fighters Corps and other government officials were trained by ICPO. Within this perspective,

- Cameroon ratified the Framework Convention on Civil Protection Assistance, adopted under the auspices of ICPO in May 2002;
- Cameroon joins the rest of the ICPO Member States to celebrate on March 1 of each year the World Civil Protection Day by organising various sensitisation campaigns throughout the country, as well as on 8 October the Day of National Disaster.

398- With the UNDP, a National Programme for Disaster Prevention and Management was drawn up with the support of the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It is aimed at strengthening management in the area of planning, prevention and management of disasters.

399- With the International Federation of Red Cross Societies and Red Crescent Movements, a partnership Convention is being drafted, centred on the following aspects:

- Training, capacities building and exchange of information;
- Industry contribution and technical support;
- Facilitating the mobilisation of international assistance.

Sub-section III: Concrete actions by government

These are actions effectively carried out by government during the occurrence of disasters in Cameroon. In each case, government carried out the following actions:

1. Sensitisation of the population on the current risk and the appropriate measures to take to avoid trouble;
2. Organisation of information seminars and education of actors and beneficiaries during disasters. This in particular is the case

- of the conference organised by the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research after the last eruption of Mount Cameroon;
3. Organisation of emergency relief to take care (granting of material, financial aid, assistance in kind) of victims of disasters;
 4. Preventive measures so that such disasters do not occur in future;
 5. Measures for social reintegration.

400- In other words, the government carried out actions before, during and after disasters.

401- Before the disasters, this involved encouraging prevention by informing the public, sensitising and educating the masses.

402- During the disasters, action was based on drawing up and implementing a wide contingency plan intended to ensure the effective coverage of risks.

403- After disasters, there was the adoption and execution of measures for rehabilitating and caring of victims.

Sub-section IV: Prospects

404- These are:

- continue sensitising the population and get them to acquire the culture of prevention and management of disasters;
- complete the file on the setting up in Cameroon of a sub-regional centre for civil protection;
- provide assistance to development, an emergency intervention plan;
- formalise the partnership convention with the International Federation of Red Cross Societies and Red Crescent Movements;
- render operational the National Risks Observatory.

Section III: The right to information (Article 9)

405- For want of reliable elements of appreciation, nothing was said about this right in the previous report.

406- The contribution of Cameroon in promoting human and peoples' rights especially on the aspect relating to the right to

information can, since the 1990-2000 decade, be assessed in two phases taking into account:

- On the one hand, the concrete achievements of Cameroon in liberalising social communication in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of 2 June 1972 amended by the Constitutional Law of 18 January 1996, which enshrines the principle of the freedom of communication, of expression, and of press (still in force) (I);
- And on the other hand, the concretisation of the institutional function of information and regularisation assigned to the Ministry of Communication by Decree No. 2002/213 of 3 August 2002 organising the said Ministry (II).

Sub-section I: Promotion and liberalisation of social communication

The following achievement can be cited:

A- At the legislative and statutory level

407- Law No. 90/052 of 19 December 1990 on the freedom of social communication and its 1996 amendments that abolished censorship:

- Law No.98/016 of 16 December 1998 regulating advertising in Cameroon;
- Decree No. 91/287 of 21 June 1991 on the organisation and functioning of the National Communication Council;
- Decree No. 2000/158 of 3 April 2000 on the setting up and exploitation of private audio-visual communication organs;
- Order No. 005/MINCOM/CAB of 10 July 2001 setting up an Anti-Corruption Unit in the Ministry of Communication;
- Order No. 017/MINCOM/CAB of 23 September 2003 on the setting up, organisation and functioning of the National Commission for Examining Applications for Public Assistance to Private Communication Organs;
- Decision No. 015/MINCOM/CAB of 17 June 2003 appointing members of the Committee for the implementation of the National Programme on Governance in the Ministry of Communication.

408- From these different instruments, one can notice:

- The strengthening of the policy of promotion and liberalisation of social communication;
- The abolition of prior censorship;
- The system of simple declaration for the written press;
- The government's assistance to private communication organs;
- The establishment of the right to reply;
- The principle of compensation for press offences against third parties.

B – In the area of taxes

409- Cameroon signed the Florence Agreement and the Nairobi Protocol whose goal as for as communication is concerned is to succeed in obtaining exemption from payment of customs dues on press inputs and VAT on computer equipment.

410- As a result of this trend in the promotion of the right to communication and free expression, today, the media is booming, testifying the existence of the rule of law in Cameroon.

411- To illustrate this we can mention the existence of:

- 200 private newspapers;
- About thirty radio and television stations;
- Many cable distributors and cyber media;
- Communication Units in the main public services;
- Communication Centres in the diplomatic missions of Cameroon abroad.

On this media landscape, freedom of expression is thus being established and supported by a strong involvement of public authorities.

412- In this regard, the following can be cited:

- Institutionalisation of the permanent communication by political parties represented in the National Assembly, even outside periods of election;
- Support to the implementation of the Computer – Education – Communication plan;

- Conception and use of a website for the National Programme on Governance;
- Setting up of Rural Community Radios within the framework of a protocol agreement signed on 17 December 2001 between the Ministry of Communication, the National Programme on Governance and UNDP;
- Distribution exercise in 2002 of digital radio receivers in the provinces of Cameroon;
- The Systematic media coverage of various human rights events;
- The coverage of the second phase of the "satellite operation" of "shady zones" of communication so as to enable everyone to have access to different audiovisual organs; protection of minorities; promotion of cultures, national languages and values.

413- All these achievements, which form the basis of a constant determination by the State to protect the rights of different actors in the communication sector, however call to mind the duty of respecting the difference between **liberty and responsibility**.

Sub-section II: The communication mission assigned to the Ministry of Communication

414- According to its institutional missions, the Ministry of Communication ensures communication needed in promoting cooperation ties existing between the State of Cameroon and non-governmental, national or international bodies in the light of promoting the rights of persons or reducing poverty and combating exclusions in order to foster harmonious development.

415- It is in this respect that whenever it is necessary, it draws the attention of citizens and public authorities to existing reports on various rights, because of the involvement of Cameroon in a number of international conventions on various areas.

416- Concerning exclusively the communication sector in relation with human and peoples' rights, there are:

- The Protocol Agreement signed on 17 December 2001 between MINCOM, the National Programme on Governance and the United Nations System in Cameroon;
- The Framework Agreement signed on 14 January 1987 between MINCOM and the Francophonie Agency on the subject of rural radio stations (still in force);
- The Convention of 25 February 2003 between MINCOM and UNICEF on the Communication Cooperation Programme.

Section IV: Right to a healthy environment

417- This involves the conservation of a healthy environment and access of the population to potable water and electricity.

Sub-section I: The environment

418- Information contained in paragraphs 424 to 432 of the Initial Report remains relevant here.

419- Nevertheless, it should be noted that paragraph 426 of the previous report mentions cases of land dispute between individuals and the State, villages and among individuals themselves.

420- In this respect, it has been noticed that since the 1974 land legislation that regulates all procedures in land matters, Cameroonian courts have registered many cases of land disputes. Since 2000, information campaign on the modalities of acquiring land titles and on the procedures in land dispute cases is being carried out in public and private media.

421- In the case of land dispute, the following internal remedies exist in Cameroon:

A – Internal remedies for land dispute cases among communities

422- Land disputes among communities are presently governed in Cameroon by Decree No. 78/322/PR of 3 August 1978 setting up Commissions to settle disputes relating to boundaries of administrative districts and traditional command units under their jurisdiction.

Under Article 1 of this Decree, the following structures have been set up:

423- a) Local Commissions in charge of ruling, in the first instance, on disputes concerning the fixing of boundaries of administrative districts or those of traditional command units under their jurisdiction.

424- b) A National Commission in the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, which rules in the second and last instance.

425- Article 2 provides that the Local Commissions mentioned in Article 1 shall be chaired by:

- The District Head when the dispute involves districts or traditional command units of a district;
- The Sub-divisional Officer when the dispute involves districts or traditional command units of the same subdivision;
- The Senior Divisional Officer when the dispute involves subdivisions of the same division;
- The Governor when the dispute involves divisions of the same province;
- The Minister of Territorial Administration or his representative, when the dispute is between two or several provinces.

426- They comprise in addition to the administrative authorities that chair them:

- Traditional rulers concerned;
- a representative from the Land department;
- a representative from the Survey department;
- a representative of the Minister of Agriculture;
- two personalities chosen because of their high moral standards.

427- According to Article 3, members of the Local Commissions are appointed by the Order of:

- The Senior Divisional Officer, on the proposal of the Sub-divisional Officer, when the dispute concerns subdivisions and districts;

- The Governor, on the proposal of the Senior Divisional Officer, when the dispute concerns divisions;
- The Minister of Territorial Administration, on the proposal of the Governor, when the dispute concerns provinces.

428- Article 4 regulates the National Commission, which comprises ten members appointed by Order of the President of the Republic on the proposal of the Minister of Territorial Administration who, as of right, presides over it.

429- According to Article 5, an official appointed by the Chairperson of the Commission concerned handles secretarial duties.

430- Article 7(1) states that in case of dispute, the chairperson of the competent Commission shall be informed through a stamped petition.

431- The Chairperson, within the thirty days following the submission of the petition, appoints members of his Commission, which meets, as a matter of obligation, within the fifteen days that follow.

432- According to Article 8(1), the Commission, after hearing the parties and if necessary undertaking a visit of the site, passes judgement by a secret ballot and in the event of a tie, the Chairperson gives his casting vote.

433- The ruling by the Commission is contained in a report signed by all the members and forwarded through official channel to the Minister of Territorial Administration within a time limit of 30 days from the date of the meeting.

434-The ruling by the Commission may be appealed against within 15 days through a petition addressed to the Minister of Territorial Administration through the administrative authority of the area (Article 9).

435- The National Commission meeting on ground of an appeal must pass judgement within the 60 days following receipt of the file (Article 10).

436- The record of final rulings by Commissions is forwarded by official channel to the Minister of Territorial Administration (Article 11).

437- These records are endorsed by the Order of:

- the President of the Republic, when the ruling of the Local or National Commission which has become final, leads to the amendment of the instruments having set up the administrative units concerned;
- the Prime Minister, when the ruling concerns several provinces without modifying the boundaries of these districts;
- the Ministry of Territorial Administration for rulings concerning administrative districts and traditional command units of the same division.

438- The Commissions mentioned above take cognisance of all the disputes not finally settled by the "Boundary Tribunal" set up by Law No. 62-LW-9 of 22 August 1962 by the former federated State of West Cameroon.

B – Internal remedies concerning land disputes among individuals

439- Land disputes among individuals fall under the jurisdiction of local commissions set up by the administrative authority; these are land advisory commissions set up by Decree No. 76/166 of 27 April 1976 laying down conditions for obtaining a land title; this decree regulates their composition, functioning and resolutions.

440- As a matter of fact, Article 12 of the Decree states:
"Appointed by the Senior Divisional Officer and sitting at the level of the district or subdivision, the Commission shall comprise:

- The Sub-divisional Officer or the District Head, Chairperson;
- A representative of the service of lands, Secretary;
- A representative of the survey service;
- A representative of the town planning service if the project is an urban one;
- A representative of the minister whose competence has a link with the project;
- The traditional ruler and two personalities of the village or community where the project is found, all members.

441- Article 13, which determines the functioning, states that the Commission shall meet at least once in a quarter and convened by its Chairperson.

442- The convening order and agenda must reach the members 10 (ten) days before the date of the meeting.

443- The agenda is posted up on boards in the divisional, sub-divisional or district offices of the place of situation of the land; it shows the location of the land, estimated surface area as well as the project envisaged.

444- The jurisdiction of this Commission is defined by Article 14, which states:

The Advisory Commission shall:

- propose to the divisional authority the partitioning of the rural land into farming and pastoral land following the needs of the population;
- give a well-founded opinion on the applications for the granting of land;
- examine and settle, if need be, disputes submitted to it within the framework of the procedure for obtaining land title on the outbuildings of occupied or exploited national land;
- select lands indispensable to village communities;
- receive all observations and information with respect to the management of national land and make suggestions to the Minister in charge of lands;
- examine and settle if need be:
 - all disputes that had been referred to it by the courts such as proposals for registration pending in the service for lands following the coming into force of Ordinance 74/1 of 6 July 1974 on the land system and State lands;

- objections to the registration of lands made in respect of the decree provided for in Article 5 of the Ordinance mentioned above;
- all claims or challenges to an ownership right on unregistered lands brought by communities or individuals before the courts.

445- Finally, Article 15 states that resolutions of the Commission shall be adopted by simple majority vote of members present, and valid if the ruler of the village or of the community and a notable had participated in the proceedings. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson gives his casting vote.

446- The Commission's report must contain all the information and objections received during investigations. It is forwarded at the same time with the file to the Minister in charge of lands.

C– Local remedies for land disputes between the State and individuals

447- Disputes between the State and individuals fall within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court sitting in administrative matters.

448- Under the terms of Article 9 of Ordinance No. 72/6 of 26 August 1972 to organise the Supreme Court and amended by subsequent instruments, the Supreme Court takes cognisance of all administrative disputes with the State, communities and public institutions.

449- The administrative dispute comprises:

- a) Annulment appeals for abuse of authority, and in non-criminal matters, interlocutory matters appeals on appreciation of legality. In the light of this article, the following constitute abuse of authority:
 - Legal flaw;
 - Incompetence;
 - Violation of a legal or statutory provision;
 - Misuse of power.

- b) Actions for compensation of damages caused by an administrative act;
- c) Disputes involving contracts except those signed even implicitly under private law terms or lands for public utilities;
- d) Disputes concerning public land;
- e) Disputes distinctly granted by law.

450- Common Law courts take cognisance, in accordance with the private law, of any other action or dispute, even if it involves legal entities, the responsibility of such a legal entity being taken over as of right by his representative, author of the damages caused while carrying out his functions.

451- By the terms of Article 7 of Ordinance No. 74/2 of 6 July 1974 proprietors and occupants of good faith in possession of rights over outbuildings on public land prior to the entry into force of the above-mentioned Ordinance can only be ousted if general interest so requires and given compensation calculated as in the case of expropriation.

452- Under Article 1 of Ordinance No. 74/1 of 6 July 1974 instituting the land system, the State guarantees all persons or legal entities who are the sole owners of lands, the right to freely use and get rid of them.

453- The State is the custodian of all lands. In this regard, it can intervene in order to ensure a rational use or to take into account the national defence exigencies or economic options of the nation.

454- Article 2 of the instrument cited above States that the following lands "shall be part of the private ownership right".

- a) registered lands;
- b) freeholds lands;
- c) lands acquired under the transcription procedure;
- d) final transfer of lands;
- e) lands registered as "Grundbuch".

455- Upon entry into force of the present Ordinance, holders of the rights stemming from acts enumerated in b, c, and d and from this

article under the terms of Article 3, had to deposit them in the provincial or divisional service of lands for them to be published in the land registers. If the rights are not published, no constitutive, modifying or transfer deed of the real rights over the buildings in question can be transferred to or contested against third parties.

456- Furthermore, holders of land certificates or certificate of occupancy of lands in urban areas were required, under penalty of forfeiture, to transform them into land titles within a time limit of ten years as from 5 August 1974, date of publication of Ordinance 74/1 of 6 July 1974; this deadline has been extended to 15 years for lands in rural areas (Article 4).

457- Article 5 of this instrument states that holders of final judgements or judgements for transfer of rights over land in urban areas were also required, under penalty of forfeiture, to contact the competent service for lands within a period of 10 years as from 5 August 1974 in order to transform them into land titles; the said deadline has been extended to 15 years for lands in rural areas.

458- However, in order to carry out activities that are of public, economic or social interest, as stated in the provisions of Article 18 of Ordinance No. 74/1 of 6 July 1974, the State can classify as public land or incorporate in its private land or that of other person under public law, portions of the national land and land that is subject of an ownership right as laid down in Article 2 of the Ordinance cited above.

459- The law gives to any person who, in his dealings with the State, feels injured the possibility of bringing a contentious action for remedy before the Administrative Bench of the Supreme Court in Order to get compensation.

460- Nevertheless, bringing the matter to this court follows certain conditions, which are laid down in Article 12 of Ordinance No 74/6 of 26 August 1972 to lay down the procedure of the Supreme Court, which states:

“Appeal before the Supreme Court is only admissible after the rejection of an appeal for mercy addressed to the competent minister or to the authority statutorily entitled to represent the public authority or public institution in question”.

461- Silence kept by authority for a period of 3 (three) months over a request or complaint addressed to him shall constitute a rejection of an appeal for mercy. In the event of a request for compensation, the competent authority nevertheless has, after having, if need be, accepted the principle of compensation, an additional period of 3 (three months) during which to propose the amount.

462- The appeal for mercy must, under the pain of foreclosure, be submitted:

- a) Within two months of publication or notification of the judgement appealed against;
- b) In case of a compensation request, within 6 (six) months following the time when damage was caused or taken cognisance of;
- c) In case of self-disqualification of an authority having binding competence within the four years from the date during which such authority defaulted.

463- Judgements given by the Administrative Bench of the Supreme Court are likely to have rights of appeal before the plenary session of the said Bench, which under the Ordinance No. 72/6 of 26 August 1972, constitutes, in administrative matters, the second instance of the Court.

D- Information on Cameroon's wildlife

464- One of the main concerns of the State of Cameroon is the conservation of its wildlife.

Cameroon enjoys a striking ecological, cultural, and anthropological diversity. Nearly 90 percent of African ecosystems are represented here and are divided into vast Sahelian, Sudanese, forest, mountain, marine, and coastal zones. Development of those ecosystems has always been conducted in a disorganized manner, thus resulting in the destruction of vast ecosystems in the last few decades. Such damage primarily derives from diverse phenomena provoked and sustained by conscious or unconscious man made activities – poaching, overgrazing, uncontrolled bush fires and shifting agriculture.

465- Cameroon has among the richest, most diverse wildlife on the African continent, including about 409 species of mammals, 183 species of reptiles, 849 species of birds, 190 species of amphibians, and 39 species of butterflies. In order to preserve certain ecosystems, Cameroon opted for management of biodiversity through a network of protected areas. All the wildlife reserves in 2002 covered about 14 percent of the national territory, or 6,656,000 hectares. Among other facilities, the network includes ten national parks, six wildlife reserves, one wildlife sanctuary, three zoological gardens, 35 hunting zones, ten hunting zones under community management, etc.

466- In Cameroon, forests covering over 22 million hectares have been exploited for several decades now for lumber, timber and firewood. Other non-ligneous resources such as its wildlife and other forest products have been exploited as well. That kind of exploitation does not go without perceptible impact on the environment. As a matter of fact, the forest is receding by about 100,000 hectares per annum.

467- In respect of biodiversity, in the last several decades Cameroon has recorded significant damage to its ecosystems (marine and coastal, humid forest, and wooded tropical savannah notably) following the unsustainable exploitation of its biological resources. Such exploitation is due among other things to destructive agricultural, forestry, and pastoral practices; population pressure; and overexploitation of forest, water, wildlife, and floral resources.

468- Despite the existence of a Framework Law on environmental management and the adoption of the poaching control strategy included as part of the Emergency Plan of Action, coupled with the establishment of an Inter-ministerial Environment Committee, poaching and biodiversity degradation still remain acute. To remedy the situation and preserve the various ecosystems, the government formulated a coherent strategy embodying the principles adopted in AGENDA 21 in Rio in 1992.

469- The strategy places emphasis on environmental appraisals, notably the impact studies required for any project pertaining to development, engineering works, equipment, or installation liable to damage the environment, as well as on environmental audits. Furthermore, the government has formulated a biodiversity strategy and an associated action plan. Implementation of that action plan will help promote sustainable management and exploitation of the various ecosystems and thereby comply with international Conventions, regional

agreements, and sector plans on biodiversity, such as the International Convention on Intervention in the High Seas, the Kano Convention, the National Forestry Plan; and draw up a contingency plan for the management of hydro-meteorological and/or geophysical disasters, etc.

Sub-section II: Access of the population to potable water

470- In order to ensure access of the population to potable water, the Government signed a law and texts of application, which have been concretised in the realisation of certain projects.

a) At the legislative level

471- These are:

- Law No. 98/005 of 14 April 1998 to.....

b) At the statutory level

472- The following texts of applications have been enacted:

- Decree No. 2001/161/PM of 8 May 2001 on the duties, organisation and functioning of the National Water Committee.
- Decree No. 2001/162/PM of 8 May 2001 laying down modalities for the appointment of sworn agents for monitoring and controlling water quality.
- Decree No. 2001/164/PM of 8 May 2001 specifying the modalities and conditions for tapping surface water or underground water for industrial or commercial purposes.
- Decree No. 2001/165/PM of 8 May 2001 specifying modalities for protecting surface water and underground water from pollution.
- Decree No. 2001/216 of 2 August 2001 opening a special account for financing sustainable development projects in the area of water and sanitation.

473- The implementation of this body of legal instruments saw the appointment of a stores accountant, the appointment and swearing-in of water inspectors (March 2002).

c) Projects realised so far

474- The following projects have so far been realised:

- Construction of 250 boreholes in the East, funded by the AFD.
- Construction of 40 water supply systems by gravity in the North-West Province, funded by the French Development Agency.
- 20 water sources harnessed in the East and South-West provinces, funded by the French Development Agency.
- Construction of 400 boreholes in the North, Far North, East, Centre, Littoral and West provinces, funded by Islamic Development Bank (IDB).
- Construction of 360 boreholes all over Cameroon, funded by HIPC resources. 10 water supply systems in the North-West province funded by HIPC resources.
- Construction of 300 boreholes and water wells all over Cameroon, funded by the Public Investment Budget (PIB).
- Construction of 100 boreholes in the Far-North, funded by the Belgian Cooperation.
- Mokolo-MORA road project, funded by the Islamic Development Bank (ongoing project).
- Restoration of 30 SCANWATER water supply systems.

To be added to the above list are many other works carried out by NGOs like "Water is Life", CEMAC, Pro-village, Cave etc.

Sub-section III: Access to electricity

475- As regards the electricity sector and despite the privatisation of the power utility, the National Electricity Corporation (SONEL), and the existence of a legal and regulatory framework liberalising and introducing competition, the supply of electrical energy and the quality of service rendered to the public in general still have huge shortcomings.

476- In the face of such difficulties, the government has opted for a strategy aimed at facilitating maximum development of the existing potential, through appropriate incentives giving priority to basic hydroelectricity, additional natural gas and renewable energy for remote areas not yet connected to the interconnected grid and making sector management more transparent and efficient.

477- A new institutional framework was established with the creation of the Electricity Sector Regulatory Board (ARSEL) and the Rural Electrification Board (AER). The new framework opens the way for competition in the electricity sector (Cf. Enclosed document).

478- Substantial investment is needed to meet the high demand for electrical energy at a time when large-scale industrial projects are under consideration. The next periodic report will dwell on the achievements realised in this area.

CHAPTER V: Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination

479- Concerning racial discrimination, the facts stated in the Initial Report have not changed (Cf Initial Report, Paragraphs 444-462). Nevertheless, some aspects related to paragraphs 453, 454 and 457 of the Initial Report have changed.

480- With regard to paragraph **453**, at the cultural level, associations for cultural promotion among target populations have been formed and are being managed by the populations themselves. These are:

- The Association for the Self-promotion of the Population of East Cameroon (AAPEC);
- The Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA), whose goal is to develop and disseminate specific cultural aspects,

481- Concerning paragraph 454, from a horizontal point of view, projects for income generating activities are being carried out, such as the project for the betterment of the BAKA of Mongo and Cyrée, supported by INDISCO and the ORMBIT EMAC Office (GICA CYMA).

482- In the same vein, a project for the Baka of Djoum, Oveng and Mintour is under realisation, with the support of the Technical Cooperation of the Kingdom of Belgium in Cameroon.

483- The Government of Cameroon in collaboration with the NGO Plan Cameroon has initiated a support project to enable children of school-going age to have birth certificates.

484- Pygmies are being admitted into vocational training schools (Government Teachers Training Colleges) and into the Cameroonian Armed Force.

485- As regards paragraph **457**, within the framework of the promotion of the languages of the underprivileged populations, a "Baka-French Dictionary" has been edited.

486- The Mbororo on the other hand are now being recruited into the Public Service (Presidency of the Republic), are members of political parties (Political Bureau of the CPDM Central Committee) and the Association of Cameroon businessmen.

CHAPTER VI: The elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

487- The information contained in the Initial Report, paragraphs 463-508, remains relevant.

488- Nevertheless, it is important to reiterate that the women empowerment policy is working through the tasks assigned the Ministry of Women's Affairs following the Decree of 7 December 1997, reorganised by Decree No. 2002/216 of 21 August 2002. As a matter of fact, this Ministry is charged with the "elaboration and implementation of measures related to the respect of the rights of the Cameroonian women in the society, the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and increasing guarantees of equality in the political, economic social and cultural areas". These tasks reinforced with the family aspect by Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004, organising the government, have permanently been executed with the collaboration of ministries, international organisations and partner NGOs.

489- With regard to the areas of concern of the Commission, certain measures and new actions have been taken to give meaning to the provisions of the Charter.

Section I: Progress made in the areas of concern of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights

490- This progress is seen at many levels:

Sub-section I: At the level of the legal and institutional framework for the protection and empowerment of the woman

491- A National Women's Observatory charged with monitoring the advancement of the Cameroonian women has been created in the Ministry of Women's Affairs. This body is in the process of going operational.

492- Specialised technical units have also been created. These are: Women empowerment centres and appropriate technological centres set up in each divisional headquarters.

493- Women empowerment centres have as principal tasks, the moral, civic and intellectual training of the woman in order to empower her economically, socially and culturally. Consequently, 30 centres have gone operational while 5 will soon go operational.

494- Appropriate technological centres mainly take care of the training, further and in-service training and specialisation of women in agro pastoral, household and crafts works. A pilot centre has gone operational in Maroua (Far North Province).

Sub-section II: At the level of some data on the situation of the woman (cf Initial Report, paragraphs 478-484)

495- 1) Female parliamentarians since June and September 2002:

- total number of parliamentarians:180
- number of female parliamentarians: 19
- percentage of female parliamentarians: 10.5%

496- 2) Women managing councils:

- Number of substantive women mayors: 10 as against one only in the 1996 municipal elections.

497- 3) Women in government and management positions in all ministries:

- Ministers: 4 as against 39
- Secretaries of State: 2
- Secretaries general of ministries: 4 as against 39 (percentage, 10.25%).

498- 4) Women in legal professions

Profession	Total number of workers	No. of Women	Percentage
Lawyers	864	144	16.7%
Bailiffs	204	34	16.7%
Notaries	50	19	38%

Source: MINJUSTICE (2000)

499- From these statistics, there is a marked increase in the number of women in the different spheres of decision making. This increase is essentially due to the strong political will, made possible by the encouraging measures taken which aim at reserving a quota for women.

500- The education and training of women are reinforced because they constitute the means through which women can gain access to decision making spheres. This notwithstanding, it can still be noticed that there are so many women in lower positions in the administration. Their distribution varies according to the corps and profession.

Section II: Measures taken to implement the provisions of the Charter.

501- These are measures taken at the socio-economic and legal levels.

Sub-section I: At the socio-economic level

502- Projects have been drawn up to build the capacity of women.

A– The “Gender population and development” project

503- This project ended on 31 December 2002. Some of its aspects have been taken into consideration in the new cooperation project “the Promotion of gender equality and equity” with activities on “Gender equality and equity” whose goal is to contribute to the reduction of inequalities between men and women. This is done with the support of UNFPA.

B– The “Global Programme for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality” with the support of UNDP.

504- This programme is being implemented in pilot centres in five provinces: Adamawa, West, North, North-West and Littoral. Presently, MINCOF has funded close to 3000 income-generating projects through credit schemes.

C- The "Far North Province Women's poverty reduction" Project

505- Supported by the African Development Bank (ADB), this project has granted funds to projects, more than 70% of which was directed to the rural woman. Concrete actions have been taken to help rural woman who make up the majority of women. Prominent among these actions are:

- the organisation by the First Lady of Cameroon, Mrs. Chantal Biya of training and exchange visits between the rural women of Cameroon and those of Equatorial Guinea in Yaounde;
- the organisation of public awareness seminars on the promotion of the image of the rural woman in the society;
- the participation of the Cameroonian woman at the 3rd World Congress of the Rural Woman in Madrid in October 2002;
- the celebration of the International Day of the Rural Woman every October 15, when women have to display their skills in order to seek national commitment and solidarity in support of their efforts. In support of the actions of the authorities, the civil society is equally involved. This is the case of:
 - the Circle of Friends of Cameroon (CERAC), an association created by the First Lady of Cameroon. It has given material and financial support to all the rural women of Cameroon;
 - the Chantal Biya Foundation, the Mother and Child Centre, which champions the prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child;
 - the NGO, African Synergy for the Fight against AIDS and Suffering whose Founding President, Mrs Chantal Biya is taking measures aimed at preventing HIV, treating and providing psycho-social care to patients and researching on the pandemic.

D- The initiatives by the Africa Institute of Computer Science (IAI-Cameroon) in favour of women

506- The initiatives by IAI – Cameroon in favour of women are aimed at building women’s capacities to make use of, manage and master computing. The objective of these initiatives is to train 120,000 women by the year 2012 to enable them to:

- use the computer;
- keep abreast of technological advancement;
- open up to the outside world;
- explore the opportunities which the New Information and Communication Technologies offer, given that they create outlets, establish useful partnerships in business like having access to markets and exportation of local products to foreign markets;
- become modern and effectively fight to reduce poverty.

507- To date, the operation had been launched in the Centre, East, Littoral and Adamawa provinces where women have been trained. Women have shown their great interest in this training through their massive participation and commitment. This training will be extended to other provinces.

E- The initiatives by the National Institute of Youth and Sports (INJS) in favour of women

508- INJS has initiated and put in place a project called “Women – Sports – Leisure – Health”. This project was first carried out during the celebration of the International Women’s Day on March 8. Given the participation and commitment of women to this project, it has become permanent. It aims at:

- offering the woman a conducive area to express herself and excel in her many duties as a mother, wife and agent of development;
- making her do sports in order to fight against stress, obesity and other cardio–vascular diseases as well as blood pressure and diabetes;
- establishing close links between sports, leisure and the health of the woman so that she can effectively play her many roles.

F- The place of technical education and vocational training

509- Technical education and vocational training enable young girls to:

- acquire information and technical training leading to professionalisation;
- master technical education and get set to exploit the available vocational training opportunities;
- do sciences;
- participate, through this, in development.

510- As concerns the celebration of international days reserved for women in general, one can cite:

- the international Women's Day celebrated every March 8. On this day, there are reflections on topics of current interest, such as "man-woman partnership, poverty reduction and HIV/AIDS control, man-woman partnership and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- the Day of the African Woman celebrated every July 31;
- Gender Equality Day, celebrated every September 6;
- the International Day of the Rural Woman, celebrated every October 15;
- Mother's Day, celebrated every March.

511- The celebration of these days is testimony of the desire of the government to respect its commitments towards the international community by involving women and the national community in the fight against gender discrimination.

Sub-section II: At the legal level

512- Much work has been done on some studies and projects such as:

513- a) *The study on violence on women:* this study continued with the drafting of a bill that will be submitted to many sectors, prior to the adoption of the bill proper.

514- b) *A National Plan of Action on Female Genital Mutilations* was endorsed in December 1998 and a study was conducted on the area

concerned in the year 2000. The plan of action drawn up in this area is gradually being executed with the support of the WHO.

515- c) *The Family Code* has been formulated, endorsed and is in the course of adoption. This Code has taken into account national concerns with regard to the empowerment of the woman.

Section III: Difficulties and prospects

Sub-section I: Difficulties

516- Despite the wholesome measures taken by public authorities to overcome the difficulties faced by women, one can point out:

a) *With respect to the financing of activities:*

517- The difficulties of having loans from traditional banks; inadequate know-how in drawing up projects.

b) *With respect to the institutional framework:*

518- A central mechanism for coordinating and monitoring actions carried out by ministries, donors and the other development actors like NGOs and women's empowerment associations, has not yet been put in place.

c) *With respect to human and material resources:*

519- The human and material resources are inadequate to effectively ensure the coordination of activities carried out in the field by development actors for the empowerment of the woman.

520- Furthermore, the Ministry of Women's Affairs does not have enough resources of its own to carry out the missions assigned to it. It is for this reason that bilateral and multilateral cooperation has to be reinforced.

Sub-section II: Prospects

521- The following actions are being considered:

- Rendering operational the National Women's Observatory;

- Setting up new centres for the empowerment of the woman and appropriate technologies;
- Pursuing the building of women's capacities in drawing up income-generating projects;
- Pursuing the search for funding in order to set up a national support fund for women's political activities;
- Adopting a draft law on violence on women;
- Pursuing the publicising of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform, as well as the legal instruments for the empowerment and protection of the woman;
- Using HIPC funds to open day nurseries in order to ease the tedious work of women;
- Setting up a centre for receiving women, victims of various forms of violence;
- Encouraging many women to form associations and according to sector of activities.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

522- Cameroon reiterates its attachment to the rights of citizens as enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

523- Undeniable efforts are being made so as to ensure that Cameroonian legislation is consistent with international standards immediately they are ratified.

524- Much progress has been achieved in the areas of concern pointed out by the Commission during the presentation of the initial report of the State of Cameroon.

525- At the economic, social and cultural levels, the drawing up of various programmes (NPG, PRSP, NPPD), which directly bring the population into their execution phases, will enable the population to monitor their development.

526- In this regard, the Government of Cameroon, within its framework of its policy to make education free, compulsory and universal, decided to stop the payment of fees in all government primary schools (Paragraphs 296, 297, 298, 299 of this report). Pedagogic innovations were carried out in schools and finally, government is pursuing its policy of establishing a partnership of proximity with international organisations, associations and NGOs working in the area of education. The recent creation of the Ministry of Basic Education by Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004 shows, if need be, the interest that Government attaches to the education of youths in Cameroon (Cf. Annex for the decree).

527- Concerning prison conditions, the following measures have been taken in order to improve on the condition of detainees:

- Reducing overcrowding in prisons by creating five new prisons in Yaounde, Douala, Kumbo, Nkambe and Kaélé;
- Reducing the detention period;
- Transferring those judged and sentenced from central prisons to secondary prisons;
- Attaching the Prison Administration to the Ministry of Justice is the most significant prison reform (Cf. Decree No 2004/320 of 8 December 2004).

528- While developing the facts in this report, the impact of NGOs, the civil society as well as bilateral and multilateral partners was always highlighted.

529- The drawing up of the various programmes (National Programme on Governance (NPG), Poverty Reduction and Strategy Paper (PRSP), National Programme for Participatory Development (NPPD), which directly bring the population into the execution phases, and the setting up of institutions provided for in the Constitution with the signing of the laws on decentralisation, the promotion of the culture of the respect of human rights and peace, are helping to reduce tensions between the various components of the Cameroonian society.

530- The execution and follow-up of the various programmes mentioned above and the functioning of the institutions will be developed in the next periodic report of the State of Cameroon.

531- Nevertheless, it should be pointed out, with respect to the developments made above, that much remains to be done, notably in:

- reducing poverty, especially as it concerns access of all to social amenities (health care, education, road infrastructures, water and energy);
- civic and political rights education (combating corruption), human rights education (mostly for persons responsible for applying the laws and regulations of the Republic).

532- However, with the effective execution of the programme, which is supposed to put into concrete reality the great ambitions of the Government of Cameroon, the State of Cameroon hopes to raise and improve on the standard of life of the citizens. This programme centres on the following:

- Pursuing the modernisation of Cameroon's democratic system;
- Improving on the economic programmes of Cameroon;
- Fostering social progress;
- Maintaining peace and security;
- Improving on the image of Cameroon abroad.

533- Consequently, and more than ever before, the State of Cameroon, through frank and constructive dialogue, hopes to count on the cooperation of the Commission and all the human rights promotion and protection institutions as it deploys its efforts to establish a cultural of human rights in Cameroon./-