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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE



LES RENCONTRES
ECONOMIQUES
DU CAMEROUN

2025

FINDING SOLUTION TO REVIVE
THE CAMEROONIAN ECONOMY IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF
PROFOUND CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

26 AND 27 FEBRUARY 2025 AT THE HILTON HOTEL YAOUNDÉ

Under the Chair of the Prime Minister, Head of Government
Organised by the Cameroon Business Consortium (Gecam)



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FOREWORD



As part of its mission, GECAM wishes, through these Economic Meetings impact and mobilise all economic and political players, as well as experts, around issues of interest, in order to help identify appropriate and urgent solutions that can ensure country's greater prosperity and, consequently, the development of Businesses and citizens.

The aim is to foster dialogue between the Private Sector and the public authorities, to guarantee that the foundations of our economy's competitiveness are built together. More specifically, these Economic Meetings is an ideal opportunity to address the major and specific issues of our economy in a structured format. There is also an urgent need to do everything possible to boost our country's growth once and for all. We will be discussing in a responsible manner the major issues of our environment, namely the development of agribusiness to support the import-substitution policy, infrastructure supply, the energy availability for optimal development of industries, financing of the economy, fiscal policy, governance and digital opportunities. We also need to build on our potential to make agriculture a NATIONAL CAUSE, for example, and provide more substance to import-substitution.

Overall, we want to work alongside the Government to lay the foundations for options so that Cameroon can be the breadbasket of the sub-region, but above all to build a high-growth economy through concrete solution proposals. One of our major challenges is to consolidate, and even go beyond, Cameroon's position as a powerhouse in the sub-region. We really hope that this will result in recommendations that will be followed up using consensual tools so that, together with the public authorities, we can consider the main priorities to be implemented in an effective, comprehensive and satisfactory manner.

Célestin TAWAMBA,

President of GECAM



The RECs are a GECAM initiative, for which the strengthening of fruitful dialogue between the public and Private Sectors is one of the major focus of action. In this respect, we believe that the Private Sector should organize an event of this scale, in order to create a key opportunity for meetings between national development players to analyse current issues where a useful dialogue with the public sector could more easily lead to a number of commitments, or even reforms.

The RECs are therefore a place where we want all the multi-sectoral players come together and reflect on the today's crucial issues for the revival of the Cameroonian economy.

This means first and foremost working together to identify the best solutions to these issues, and above all to speed up the country's economic growth.

PERRIAL JEAN NYODOG

Chairman of the RECs' Steering Committee



The must-attend event for economic players from Cameroon and beyond is finally there.. The Cameroon Economic Meetings are intended to be an innovative platform for exchanges, enabling attendees to forge strategic partnerships.

Headed by the Prime Minister and Head of Government, Cameroon's public bodies, opinion leaders, entrepreneurs and investors from all over the world will be present to try to shape Cameroon's economic future.

The RECs are an opportunity to take part in essential discussions on new economic challenges. This is critical given that economic players, particularly those in the Private Sector are facing numerous difficulties.

Problems with electricity supply, infrastructure, financing, taxation and many others are restrains to the growth. It is therefore more than urgent to sit down around the same table to find effective solutions to improve the business climate.

Aline Valérie MBONO,

Chair of the Organizing Committee, Executive Director of GECAM

General Theme:

FINDING SOLUTION TO REVIVE THE CAMEROONIAN ECONOMY IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF PROFOUND CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Global Objective :

The main objective of this event is to bring together all the players involved in stimulating the business environment in order to identify and propose ways of setting up a genuine global and sectoral economic recovery plan, with more inclusive public and financial policies adapted to the context, and appropriate regulations, driven by a fruitful public-private dialogue.

Specific Objectives :

- Understand the major trends in the economy, with an emphasis on opportunities but also existing constraints.
- Enable the private sector in general, and employers in particular, to identify the structural and functional constraints that hinder business development.
- Learn about the constraints faced by public authorities, both at home and abroad.
- Present the regulatory and institutional advances that are likely to strengthen our economic potential.
- Formulate recommendations for revitalizing the economy to attain medium-term emergence.
- Celebrate entrepreneurship and innovation.

Opening Planary :

Theme : What economic policy model to build a productive pact, a growth lever for the Cameroonian economy?

Global Objective : To outline the main reasons for the low growth of our economy, and then identify, on one hand, the key areas that could boost the economy's growth in light of the global economic context, and on the other hand, the major actions needed to overcome the structural constraints hindering the development of productive sectors.

Keynote Address: Prof. Jaume LLOPIS

Moderator : Prof. Henri Ngoa Tabi

Agribusiness Development Workshop

Theme : Agricultural Policy and Import Substitution: How to Achieve Transformation?

Global Objective : To demonstrate that, with the prerequisite of implementing a conducive investment framework in the agri-business sector, it can become the true catalyst for the development of the industrial and services sectors.

Workshop on taxation and customs

Theme : What is the coherence between economic policies and fiscal policies?

Global Objective : To identify pathways for making our tax system the translation into taxes of the economic policies implemented by our country for a coherent and, consequently, efficient development.

Workshop on energy and industry

Theme : What energy policy for efficient industrial development?

Global Objective : To formulate solutions for defining an energy policy that takes into account both the potential and constraints in order to promote the emergence of a diversified and clean energy supply for industry.

Governance Workshop

Theme : The Role of Governance in the Competitiveness of Public and Private Entities.

Global Objective : To demonstrate how the quality of governance can influence stability, effectiveness, balanced development, and especially the sustainability of organizations.

Infrastructure Development Workshop

Theme : The Necessity of Massive Infrastructure Investment to Increase the Growth Rate.

Global Objective : To propose a reformulation of financing and management policies for infrastructures that leverage innovative financing tools (PPP, etc.) and the role of local and regional authorities (CTD), while minimizing the pressure on public finances.

Digital and Innovation for Business Workshop

Theme : How to Significantly Improve the Quality and Cost of Communication Services?

Global Objective : To highlight the pathways for reducing the significant gap between the quality of service sold by operators and the quality actually available, in the context of global digital transformation, with the massive introduction of innovative technologies into our daily lives.

SME Financing Workshop

Theme : Financing SMEs: What is Going Wrong?

Global Objective : To highlight the constraints that limit financing capacities.

Training and employability workshop

Theme : How to Increase Youth Employability in Cameroon?

Global Objective : To formulate proposals aimed at improving job opportunities in Cameroon while facilitating access for young people. This will specifically address the job creation capacity of businesses, as well as the education system, which must ensure alignment between the needs of businesses and training.

Startup Acceleration Program :

Master Class for 50 startups on Business Plan Development Trainer :

Closing Plenary

1. Brief presentation of the General Report of the Work (ED)
2. Reading of recommendations (A Representative of the SPM)
3. Closing speech by the Representative of the Prime Minister
4. Acknowledgments by the President of GECAM.

Gala Dinner (In the presence of the Prime Minister)

1. Cultural Interlude
2. Award Ceremony for the identified winners.

SUMMARY OF THE REC's 2025 WORK

On 26 and 27 February 2025, the premises of the Hilton Hotel in Yaoundé hosted the first edition of the now annual meeting for sharing views on economic development issues in Cameroon: “Cameroon Economic Meetings (REC)”.

Under the patronage of the Prime Minister and

Head of Government, who also delivered the opening address, the REC2025 gathered no fewer than 700 leaders and players from the Private Sector, political decision-makers, civil society, parliamentarians etc., for a brainstorming on the Central Theme: **“Finding solution to revive the Cameroonian economy in an environment of profound changes in the global Economy”**.



The aim was to find the solutions to enabling our economy to forge its own path towards economic growth that creates well-being for the people, opportunities for investor and incomes for Government, building on its strengths to protect itself from the ravages of global geo-economic and political dynamics.

To discuss all these issues, experts and players in the creation, including the big businessman, TONY ELUMELU Chair of Heirs Holdings, as special guest, invited to contribute based on his experiences and achievements in the business world.

Four highlights conduct the REC2025:

- An opening ceremony marked by successive welcome addresses of the President of GECAM, the special guest, the inaugural lecture of the Keynote speaker, a high-level panel discussion and the opening speech of the Prime Minister and Head of Government;
- Thematic workshops at the same time to the Master class on business plan preparation and networking in B2B;

- A closing plenary with the presentation of the summary of the recommendations resulting from the workshop work and the official closing speech of the REC 2025;
- The “Entrepreneur’s Gala” beyond relaxation, was an opportunity to reward outstanding performances of some entrepreneurs.

1. Opening Ceremony

The REC2025 opening ceremony featured successive speeches by the Yaounde city Mayor, Luc Messi Atangana, the President of GECAM, Célestin TAWAMBA, the special guest Tony ELUMELU, the President of the Alliance des Patronats Francophones, Geoffroy Roux de Bézieux, Professor Jaume Llopis, Keynote speaker for the inaugural lecture, the Executive Director of GECAM, Mrs. Aline Valérie MBONO and the Prime Minister and Head of Government whose opening speech was preceded by the presentation of two special prizes, awarded on behalf of the business community by GECAM.

The Yaounde city Mayor, welcomed the participants and wished them a pleasant stay in Yaounde, the

city of seven hills which is hosting the REC2025.

The address by the President of GECAM provided an opportunity to recall the issues and challenges of our economy in the global context, influenced by a redefinition of the political strengths.

He points out in this climate the contradiction between the production and growth potential of the Cameroonian economy on the one hand, and the disappointing dynamics of macro-economic indicators on the other, calls for a review of economic policy guidelines. Example, underemployment which affects 62% of the working population, our country's massive indebtedness, which results in a growing debt service that burdens heavily on State finances and reduces investment capacity, the screaming infrastructure deficit, particularly in terms of energy supply and roads; difficult access to financing, especially for SMEs and so on. The Private Sector, aware of the role it has to play in setting the tone for our development, intends, through the RECs, to encourage a constructive and prosperous dialogue between the public authorities and their partners on the one hand, and the economic players on the other.

At the end of these two days, it is expected that development approaches will be identified to ensure that the really take off of the economy and that of the growth rate not longer more of resilience, but of enrichment. It is this state of mind that



prevailed in the structuring of the REC2025, which is intended to be a joint-development between employers' association, particularly GECAM, and the Government, and which has been designed to be a place where we can only discuss about the economy.

Mr. Tony ELUMELU's presence at these meetings was welcomed and his career set out as an example to inspire new generations of entrepreneurs.

Words of gratitude were expressed to the Prime Minister for his involvement and that of the members of the Government in the preparation of the RECs and his availability to chair the work sessions. Also welcome, the presence of representatives of the invited employers' associations (Alliance des Patronats Francophones, General Confederation of Côte d'Ivoire Businesses, Central African Interprofessional Group, National Employers Council of Senegal, Employers' and Interprofessional Union of Congo and International Organization of Employers)

By the way of his speech introduction, **Mr. Tony ELUMELU** Chair of Heirs Holdings, expressed his gratitude to His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic of Cameroon, to the Prime Minister, Head of Government, and to the President of GECAM for the honour they bestowed upon him as the special guest of the first edition of the RECs, which he described in these words: *« une rencontre importante et opportune qui servira de plateforme pour façonner l'avenir de l'économie camerounaise »*.

The rest of his speech highlighted his commitment to the development potential of Africa in general and Cameroon in particular, as demonstrated by the presence of UBA in Cameroon since 2008, one of his group's banks, with almost 1,000 jobs created.

However, the Cameroonian economy, which like others has suffered from various recent external shocks, needs to strengthen its capacities and diversify in order to change the trend and achieved its full potential.

He sums up the four prerequisites for definitively boosting growth and **“turn Cameroon into an investment destination for private global capital”**

- Human safety and property and the rule of law;
- Infrastructure development;
- Empowerment of young people;
- Public-private partnerships.

On this last point, collaboration between the public and Private Sectors is crucial. **“Governments must recognise that the Private Sector is not a competitor but a partner in economic development. Policies**

must not stifle businesses, but encourage their growth. The economy needs business-friendly reforms that cut red tape and excessive taxation, and make it easier to do business”

He concluded by stressing the need to seize the opportunity presented by the RECs to chart a bold and strategic course for sustainable growth, job creation and greater economic resilience.

The inaugural lecture presented by **Professor Jaume Llopis** was structured around five points:

- Diagnosis of the Cameroonian economy;
- Review of the strategic planning framework;
- Highlighting of growth drivers;
- Lessons learned;
- The wording of a “TOP TEN” of major recommendations for revitalizing Cameroon’s economy.

The presentation was followed by an exchange of views chair by Pr. NGOA TABI, with panelists including Mesdames DR. Kate KANYI-TOMETI FOTSO, CEO of TELCAR COCOA, Charlotte NDAW SAKO, Regional Representative of SFI and Messrs. Alamine OUSMANE MEY, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development. Dr. Antoine NDZENGUE, CEO of NEPTUNE OIL, BABISSAKANA, Economist, Pr. Michel Cyr DJENA WEMBOU, Permanent Secretary of PREF CEMAC.

The Prime Minister and Head of Government’s opening speech gave him the opportunity to congratulate the President of GECAM on the organization of the RECs and to praised the strong mobilisation of economic players, recalling that the last event of this kind was the last CBF edition in 2019. He sees this as proof, if needed, of the relevance of the recent GICAM-ECAM merger. He welcomed the presence of Tony ELUMELU, the special guest, and the foreign delegations. He recalled the strategic positioning of the Private Sector in the SND30 as they played a major role in driving wealth creation. He reassured the audience that the promotion of a favourable economic environment was a policy politic objective of the President of the Republic. However, he assures us that the Government is ready to listen to any ideas that could guide the adjustments to the government action. In this vein, he noted the relevance of the subjects to be discussed during the conference, which will focus on the Central Theme: “Stimulate the Cameroonian economy in the context of significant transformative effect on the global economy”.

The Prime Minister’s opening speech was preceded by the **presentation of two special awards by the Employers’ Association** to two Figures with major contributions to the development of business and private initiative in Cameroon and Africa. These were His Excellency the Prime Minister and Head of Government, who received the **“Leadership in Mediation and Governance”** award, and the special guest Tony ELUMELU, who received the **“African business impact and leadership”** award.

2. Thematic workshops, Master class and B2B session

After this ceremonial step, the two days of work included workshops, two sessions of a master class on business plan conception for entrepreneurs and young students, and networking through the organisation of B2B sessions.

Eight workshops were organised, four each day. They were attended at the highest level by members of the Government and both private and public administrations.

The workshops on the first day dealt with the following topics:

- “Agricultural policy and import substitution: how to achieve a successful transformation?”
- ‘What coherence between economic policy and taxation policy?’.
- “What energy policy for efficient industrial development?”
- “The role of governance in the competitiveness of public firms”

The second day dealt with:

- “Agricultural policy and import substitution: how to achieve a successful transformation?”
- ‘What coherence between economic policy and taxation policy?’.
- “What energy policy for efficient industrial development?”
- “The role of governance in the competitiveness of public firms”

At the end of the discussions, about fifty recommendations emerged for both public and private administrations, the implementation of which will undoubtedly contribute to a significant improvement in the growth path of our economy.

Nearly forty participants attended the **Master class session**, which focused on setting up a business, covering the concepts involved in maturing a project and drawing up a BUSINESS PLAN, which must highlight the key features of the project, namely market analysis, marketing strategy, company organisation and structuring, and financial studies.

The **B2B** sessions attracted some 115 participants from a wide variety of backgrounds:

- **Entrepreneurs** looking for new partners to develop their projects;
- **Investors** interested in financing opportunities;
- **Company managers** looking for innovative solutions to improve their performance;
- **Institutional players** involved in economic and social projects.

The diversity of participants led to rich and constructive discussions, helping to create a positive environment for collaboration.

3. The Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony of the REC2025 took place in the afternoon of February 27 headed by Mr. Alamine OUSMANE MEY, Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, personal representative of the Prime Minister and Head of Government. The ceremony included the reading of the summary of recommendations from the Workshops, words of gratitude from the President of GECAM to the Prime Minister, members of the Government and their collaborators, guests and all attendees, whose close involvement over the two days contributed to the trumpeted achievement of the RECs' ACT I. **A date has been solemnly set for the second edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings (REC2026) on March 25 and 26, 2026.**

The closing speech by the Prime Minister's representative emphasized the Prime Minister's personal commitment to addressing the recommendations formulated within the framework of government action, and to raise them to the Head of State.

The REC 2025 works were declared closed on this positive speaking.

4. The Entrepreneur's Gala

The main highlight of the gala evening to honour the entrepreneurs was the presentation of five Awards to companies for their impact in particular sectors. These were:

- **The Economic Resilience and Inclusive Growth Award** went to SOCTRACAO SARL for its contribution to local cocoa processing and the marketing of by-products;
- **The Climate Resilience & Sustainable Economy Promotion Award** went to NAME RECYCLING, which collects and industrially recycles some 3,000 tonnes of plastic waste every year;
- **The Innovation & Energy Efficiency Award** went to SOCAPALM, which has succeeded in setting up a self-powering energy system that produces almost 10 million KWH from biomass energy based on the recycling of fibers and shells from palm nut processing;
- **The Applied Research & Technological and Digital Innovation Award** went to CYBERIX Sarl, the first firm in sub-Saharan Africa to be accredited by the international payment card security council in the CEMAC zone, and the creator of the Cyclope system specialized in the fight against fraud in banking institutions;
- **The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) impacting on the support of SMEs & the mentoring of young people Award** went to PUENE FOUNDATION, whose actions for young project leaders have made it the main resource for the Youth Connect project in particular..



III- WELCOME ADDRESS BY CELESTIN TAWAMBA, PRESIDENT OF GECAM



The year 2025 already looks set to go down in history as a turning point.

A few weeks ago, we entered a new world. A high-speed world that won't wait for those who are lagging behind, and will reach out less and less to the weakest and laziest.

The prevarications of diplomacy will be swept aside by the Law of the strongest and the rigours of economic pragmatism.

If we didn't anticipate it, we'll have to adapt to this new world. And now is better than tomorrow.

Here we are, meeting in Yaoundé on February 26 and 27, 2025, to discuss our country's economy and how to boost it.

In view of the major aggregates that characterize our economy, this exercise could well take us on a journey into the land of contradictions.

Our country is endowed with one of Africa's greatest natural, energy and mineral potentials, as well as human capital,

It enjoys a strategic position that should have made it a natural sub-regional hub, **BUT**:

- A total outstanding debt amounting to 2 times the budget, even though the debt ratio is below the convergence criteria in force in the CEMAC zone;
- **CFA FRS 1,700 billion** of annual debt servicing in 2024 and a forecast of almost 2,000 billion in 2025;
- High Energy cost and not always available;
- Badly deteriorated road infrastructure, which increases logistics costs.

- I'd like to continue the list by noting an unemployment rate of nearly 6%, well below the actual rate, but an underemployment rate estimated at over 62% in 2021 by the National Statistics Institute.
- A much-criticized tax system.
- The result: an average growth rate of just 4%, which in the best-case scenario can only lead to resilience instead of development.
- And last but not least, a much-criticized tax system.

When faced such realities, methinks the time for conventional formulas and beat around the bush is over.

To move forward, we need to have a frank exchanges.

This is the spirit that has prevailed in the structuring of this new platform for Public-private dialogue.

Your Excellency Prime Minister

Ladies and gentlemen Ministers

Welcome to the First Edition of the CAMEROUN ECONOMIC MEETINGS

The CAMEROON ECONOMIC MEETINGS, which is intended to be a joint-development between employers' association, particularly GECAM, and the Government, has been designed to be a place where we can only discuss about the economy.

This time, it's the Private Sector that's coming to meet the public authorities; right here in Yaoundé, at the heart of decision-making power.

In its conception, this meeting should be the “Rendez-vous de l'Économie”, the place to be...,

In other words, it's the place where business leaders meet public authorities, development partners, experts, the diaspora... Our country is facing challenges, the dangers to which we are exposed, and perhaps even unaware, require the courage to put without complacency the diagnosis of the limitations and obstacles to our planned progress towards emergence, as envisioned by the Head of State, HE Paul BIYA.

Some of these limitations are structural, and these first MEETINGS should give us the opportunity to draw up plans for demolition of these institutional burdens,

For others, they are cyclical...

➤ **Your Excellency the Prime Minister, Head of Government,**

You have always been keen to promote dialogue between the public authorities and the Private Sector, emphasizing the major role of business in our country's development. Your presence here is further proof of your commitment to a harmonious partnership between wealth creators and political decision-makers.

Allow me to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to you for agreeing to chair these first RECs, in the organization of which you have been personally involved.

Naturally, my gratitude also extends to the **Members of the Government** who are with you and honouring us with their presence.

Within their area of competence, they contribute to the effectiveness of public-private dialogue.

I would like to thank them

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like, with your kind understanding, to take a few seconds to acknowledge the presence among us of a very special guest, a Great Man, an Exceptional Man!

The Cameroonian Private Sector is deeply honoured to welcome for the first time **Mr. Tony ELUMELU**, economist and banker. He is an emblematic figure in the economy of our sisterly Nigeria.

Mr. Tony ELUMELU is ranked by the prestigious TIMES magazine among the 100 most influential Figures in the world. Yes, Tony ELUMELU's name is intimately associated with UNION BANK OF AFRICA (UBA), because he was the one who after merging

it with STANDARD TRUST BANK, made it profitable before becoming its emblematic Chairman.

Today, UBA is present in 24 African countries. This is the work of this legend of our continent.

Because he has always been convinced that our



continent cannot develop without a strong and dynamic Private Sector, Mr TONY ELUMELU set up a foundation to promote entrepreneurship through training, financing and mentoring.

When I tell you that he has committed \$100 million to create 10,000 entrepreneurs across Africa through his foundation's entrepreneurship program, you'll understand that he's not just an influential billionaire, but also a visionary philanthropist, and a genuine Afro-optimist.

The presence at this first RECs of this champion of enterprise, this pan-African, this role model, is testimony to his support for our initiative, and undoubtedly a harbinger of a genuine economic partnership to be built between Cameroon and Nigeria.

Mr ELUMELU,

We are infinitely grateful for your presence and for your attention to our initiative.

I wish you a pleasant stay with us, and am convinced that we will count on your expertise and experience.

Through your work and your vision, you are a model and a legend of our continent.

You make Africa proud

Thank you so much for honouring us with your presence.

➤ **My very dear peers representing the Employers' Associations:**

- **Mr Geoffroy Roux de Bezieux:** President of Alliance des Patronats Francophone and former President of Medef;

- Mr **Ahmed Cisse**: President of CGECI (Confédération Générale des Entreprises de Côte d'Ivoire);
- Mr **Laurence Nassif** President of GICA;
- Mr **Antoine Ngom** Vice-President of CNP;
- Mr **Christophe Pujalte** representing President Michel Djombo of UNICONGO.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all to this first edition of the RECs, here in Yaounde, the city of seven hills, and to express my sincere thanks for your commitment to strengthening ties between the Private Sectors of our countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would be remiss in my duty of gratitude if I failed to mention the presence in this room of Mr **Amadou Sako** representing the International Organization of Employers.

Dear Mr Sako, we are honored by your presence, and we thank you for it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads of industry and business leaders,

I would like to thank you for your exceptional mobilization. It reflects your burning desire to contribute to the development of our economy.

GECAM knows the extent of your issues, your anxieties and also your capacity for resilience. Rest assured of our determination to work steadily alongside the public authorities to improve the business environment.

Together, we must have a voice in the formulation of public policy, and that is why you are here.

We are the ones to make these meetings useful.

- **Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads of Diplomatic Missions,**
- **Representatives of Development Partner Institutions,**
- **Administrative authorities,**
- **Leaders of professional associations,**
- **Distinguished guests,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

Welcome to these ECONOMIC MEETINGS, whose ambition is to mark a turning point in our collective approach to economic recovery with the multiple challenges we faced.

The general theme of this first edition of the RECs:

"REVITALIZING THE CAMEROONIAN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PROFOUND CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY,"

could not be more relevant.

The world is going through a moment of profound change, brought resulting by the repercussions of health and geopolitical crises, technological upheavals, environmental challenges and changes in international trade.

In this unpredictable and complex context, it is more imperative than ever to rethink our economic models, identify new sources of growth and strengthen our resilience in the face of external hazards.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In addition to our infrastructural deficits, we are fortunate being a country rich in natural resources and dynamic workers.

With a little determination, we should be able to seize all the opportunities offered by the current transformation of the world, to reinvent ourselves so that we can meet the challenges.

This reinvention involves structuring public-private dialogue.

These meetings have been designed to promote entrepreneurship, celebrate our champions and support young entrepreneurs, in order to create an environment that is innovation-friendly, excellence and sustainable development.

We firmly believe that they will be essential in inspiring future generations and strengthening our entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The RECs were conceived as a new framework within which to develop more inclusive and participative economic governance mechanisms.

If we want these MEETINGS to last, and if they are to be a genuine tool for political decision-making, then we're going to have to commit ourselves to reinforcing the transparency and participatory nature of economic policy decisions.

Employers' Association, armed with their right to interfere, have the right to know what motivates decision-makers to choose one public investment over another; we want to know what drive budget priorities, the factors that steer tax policy, and so on...

And business leaders need to be able to comment.

And yet, this approach is important to ensure that economic decisions take into account the needs, aspirations and values of companies and citizens alike.

The time has come to recognize that the formulation of public policy must stop to be the prerogative of civil servants alone, who are certainly competent but sometimes disconnected from the realities on the ground, and become the transparent result of consultation between all players in the economy.

Ultimately, the aim of the RECs, a showcase for public-private dialogue, is to ensure that economic decisions, whether local or national, reflect the interests of businesses. This means setting up formal frameworks where wealth creators can really shaping the direction of the economy, within a democratic and transparent framework.

Your Excellency Prime Minister,

In our environment, where many initiatives and projects end up without a future, I know that you are aware of the great hope that the Private Sector places in your leadership to make these ECONOMIC MEETINGS an annual event.

According of the Private Sector, by implementing

the emerged recommendations, the mainstreaming of these ECONOMIC MEETINGS will be a significant contribution to the development of public policies geared towards meeting the real needs of our fellow citizens, but also promoting the potential of our beloved and beautiful country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

Why should I not allow myself to dream that, united by a common vision, we could all look in the same direction, with the sole aim of developing our country, without prejudice or preconceived ideas about each other's intentions?

It is our joint responsibility, the Private Sector and public authorities, to build a future where harmony and collaboration prevail, and with one sole leitmotiv the desire to bequeath to future generations a legacy of progress, solidarity and sustainable prosperity.

We want to leave behind us not just debts, but a better world, so that those who come after us can say: "We have been blessed with a heritage of justice, innovation and hope."

Thank you for your kind attention.



IV- ADDRESS OF MR. TONY O. ELUMELU, SPECIAL GUEST

Keynote Remarks

Delivered by

Tony O. Elumelu, CFR

Chairman: Heirs Holdings Group, UBA Group, Transcorp Group

&

Founder, The Tony Elumelu Foundation

Theme:

**Finding solution to revive the Cameroonian economy in an
environment of profound changes in the global Economy
: What are the Keys?**

at the

Cameroon Economic Meeting

Yaoundé – Cameroon



Good morning, distinguished guests, His Excellency, the Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to begin by commending His Excellency President Biya, whose guiding vision ensured the Prime Minister, His Excellency, Chief Joseph Dion Ngute, the President of the Cameroon Employers Association, Célestin Tawamba, and his team convened this inaugural edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings — a significant and timely gathering that will serve as a platform for shaping the future of Cameroon's economy.

It is an honour to attend.

I believe in transformation and turn around.

I have experienced this in my own business career. I believe that those lessons are no less applicable to countries and economies.

Indeed, for Africa to succeed, for Cameroon to succeed, government and business need to unite, to invest for the long term, not just the short term, we must all be strategic and purposeful.

Last weekend, in Abuja, our energy business, Heirs Energies, the fastest growing indigenous integrated energy business in Africa, convened ministers, senior civil servants and our peers, to chart how we can all unite to boost oil and gas production. It was a celebration of unity, a practical example of how, with a committed and engaged government, a sector can be transformed. I welcome such initiatives across Africa, and particularly in Cameroon as a fellow energy producing country.

I started life as a junior banker, I built a bank, UBA, but that bank is now just one part of a broad portfolio which encompasses – power generation, power distribution, upstream oil and gas that feeds our power, healthcare, hospitality, real estate, technology and of course financial services.

Multiple sectors – with one aim – the rejuvenation of the African economy – and ultimately contribute to the economic independence of the African economy.

Like my group, Cameroon needs to envision, build capacity, diversify, to turn things around, and to execute at scale.

Cameroon should, indeed must, play a key role in development of the African economy, as a major exporter of natural resources and agricultural produce. However, we still have a long way to go to

unlock the numerous opportunities that await us in the global trade discourse. I salute the realism and the pragmatism of this forum.

I say this with conviction borne out of my experience as an investor and entrepreneur, as the Chairman of Heirs Holdings, our multi-sector investment portfolio with investments in energy, financial services, healthcare, technology, real estate and hospitality, spread across four continents.

I say this as an economist, and as the Founder of the leading entrepreneurship-focused philanthropy in Africa – the Tony Elumelu Foundation. In Cameroon alone, over 10 years, we have funded, mentored and trained 687 entrepreneurs, we have disbursed nearly \$2.8 million, and they have in turn created 6,844 jobs and contributed over \$139 million in revenue to their economy.

I speak as the Chair of UBA, an investor in Cameroon since 2008, through UBA Cameroon, an employer of 1,000 men and women, a funder and facilitator of Cameroon's economic growth.

There is no more concrete example of our dedication to the Cameroon economy, than UBA's financing of the magnificent Olembe Stadium.

I am a firm believer in Africapitalism, the economic philosophy that guides my investments. It is the conviction that the private sector, and most importantly, African businesses and entrepreneurs, hold the key to driving economic transformation on our continent.

Let's look critically at the Cameroonian economy. In recent years, the Cameroonian economy has grown by a marginal 3 – 5% annually, indicating massive opportunities for scale.

Like many countries, Cameroon has faced economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising insecurity across the continent, and this has affected its growth rate.

More critically, the loss of our youth via migration harms the economy and its potential. An economy that cannot deliver for an agile and creative youth population is a threat to all our futures.

There are so many steps that should catalyse economic prosperity for Cameroonians, but let me focus on those factors that I believe are most impactful:

- **Security of lives and properties and rule of law**

A government's first role is the security of its citizens and the creation of an environment that protects and supports property and investment. Peace, stability and the rule of law are the most basic elements of that enabling environment.

- **Infrastructure Development**

A key driver for economic development is Infrastructure Development. No economy can grow without reliable power, modern roads, efficient logistics and digital connectivity.

Investing in transportation networks, digital connectivity, and smart infrastructure will enhance regional integration and reduce the cost of doing business.

Cameroon, with its strategic position in Central Africa, has the potential to be a major economic hub—but this can only happen with the right investment in infrastructure.

- **Youth Empowerment**

Another key aspect is youth development. Africa's greatest asset is our youth. With over 60% of our population under the age of 25, we must turn our demographic advantage into an economic advantage.

We have a crisis across the continent – the persistent and continuous brain drain fuelled by migration; is a critical issue we must tackle.

Now, I do not blame any of our young ones who choose to pursue a better life outside their country. But we must take responsibility – the government, the private sector, the ecosystem – to put in place measures to attract and retain our youth.

And I have witnessed the true potential of our African youth in the work we do at the Tony Elumelu Foundation.

Since 2010, when my wife and I founded the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), and seeded it with USD100m, we have empowered over 21,000 young African entrepreneurs across all 54 African countries. These men and women have gone on to collectively create over 1.5 million direct and indirect jobs and generate over \$4.2 billion in revenue.

As I said earlier, in Cameroon alone, we have disbursed nearly \$2.8 million to 687 entrepreneurs, who have in turn created 6,844 jobs and contributed over \$139 million in revenue to their economy.

This is proof that when we invest in our people, we unlock prosperity for all.

By equipping our people with the right skills and resources, we will unlock the full potential of Cameroon's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Turn Cameroon into an investment destination for private global capital.

Countries need to demonstrate their competitive advantage. They need to market themselves. Just as businesses need strategic marketing plans, so do countries. Focus on those areas of competitive advantage – celebrate and champion them. I tell my CEOs they are our Group's Chief Marketing Officers, I say humbly our political leaders should be our counties' Chief Marketing Officers.

- **Public-Private Partnerships**

Finally, public-private collaboration is essential. Governments must recognise that the private sector is not a competitor but a partner in economic development. Policies should not stifle businesses but encourage their growth.

We need pro-business reforms that reduces bureaucracy, reduce excessive taxation, and accelerate the ease of doing business.

These are some of the things the new Trump administration in America is championing which I personally have to objection to (DOGE).

Together, we must build institutions that support long-term, sustainable economic success.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, Cameroon stands at a pivotal moment.

As we gather here today to discuss the future of Cameroon's economy in a world that is changing rapidly, we should be honest about the challenges before us in the midst of global economic shifts and regional opportunities.

We must chart a bold and strategic path to ensure sustainable growth, job creation, and build economic resilience.

he path to economic revival is within our reach, but it requires a collective commitment from the government, private sector, investors, and the Cameroonian people.

At Heirs Holdings, we believe in the three Es – Execution, Enterprise, and Excellence. I commend these philosophies to you.

Execution is pivotal to economic transformation.

Execution is the discipline of getting things done within an acceptable timeline and with sustained excellence and professionalism.

My life story shows what can be achieved, in Africa, by Africans, for Africans.

The conversations we are having today are a call to action.

My hope is that this message will inspire commitments, shape policies, and drive investments that will help build a more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous economy for Cameroon and Africa at large.

Thank you. His Excellency, President Biya, and Prime Minister, His Excellency, Chief Joseph Dion Ngute, and all present.



V- PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GECAM



It was understandably the turn of Madame Aline Valérie MBONO, Executive Director of GECAM and the driving force behind the organization of the RECs, to introduce the two-day agenda. With a poignant phrase inspired by the writings of French author Jules Renard, she announced the content of the reflections that would make up these two days: “You can’t keep wiping your glasses forever; at some point, you’re going to have to wear them”. A metaphor that calls for action, to break with the status quo, and to take concrete action to guide our economy towards its growth path. The challenge? To put on “those glasses” and take a close look at the structural challenges we all must face collectively, in order to make our economy more efficient and competitive.

For this first Edition, eight issues for discussion held by means of workshops, focused the attention of the many experts - from both government and the business world - who came to contribute to the debates. These eight issues for discussion were certainly inspired by the many diagnoses of our economy, and by geopolitical dynamics and new opportunities. These challenges require our economy to adjust to strengthen its resilience, and above all, to forge a path towards more sustained growth. The goal? Turn the Cameroonian economy into a real driving force it deserves to be, given its rich and diversified potential.

Day one: Discussions focused on:

- Agricultural policy and import-substitution policies;
- Consistency between public and fiscal policies;
- Energy as a driving force for industrialization;
- “The role of governance in the competitiveness of public and private firms.

Day two: Discussions covered:

- Infrastructure as the foundation of development;
- SME financing, a major challenge for the economy;
- Job readiness and training-employment adequacy;
- Digital transformation of public and private administrations.

An opening panel, moderated by Pr. NGOA TABI, set the technical scene around a central question: “Which Economic Policy Model should be used to build a fruitful deal to drive growth in the Cameroonian economy?”



VI- OPENING PANEL : Which Economic Policy Model should be used to build a fruitful deal to drive growth in the Cameroonian economy?

Key note speaker



Prof. Jaume Llopis is a leading expert in Strategic **Management** and an international leader with a big and various career. He holds a **PhD in Economics and Management** from the Ramón Llull University, an **MBA from IESE Business School** (University of Navarre) and a **Degree in Economy** from the the University of Barcelona.

He has held positions as **Chairman and CEO** of renowned companies such as **Moulinex, Nestlé, AGF Unión-Fénix and Borges International Group**, and served on more than **49 Boards of Directors** of multinationals and family businesses in **Europe, America and Africa**.

He is the author of several major books on Management, including bestsellers such as *“Management by Lies”* and *“Qué Hacen los Buenos Directivos. El reto del Siglo XXI”*.

Winner of the award for the **Best Marketing Manager in Spain** (1975) and of the **Best Manager of the Year** (1982, AED), he continues today to combine teaching, strategic consultancy and active participation as a **Member of the Council of the Royal European Academy of Doctors**.

Facilitator



Pr. Henri NGOA TABI

An expert in development economics and professor at the University of Yaoundé II, he heads the Department of International and Development Economics and the Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory. He is also Executive Director of MAGISTER ADVICE SARL, combining academic expertise and economic development practice. His research works focused in particular on modelling financial development in Africa and on strategies for achieving sustained economic growth. He is the author of the book ‘Growth and Employment Strategy Paper: How to achieve double-digit growth’ published in 2017.

Panel Members



The Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, **ALAMINE OUSMANE MEY**,



Dr. Antoine NDZENGUE

Founder and Director of Neptune Holding Company, he has established a diversified group in microfinance, oil transport and distribution. A former of Tradex and Cameroonian consul in Switzerland, he recently launched ABC Finances with CFAF 5 billion in capital and signed a major contract to distribute refined oil to the Cameroonian market.



Dr. Kate KANYI-TOMETI FOTSO

Founder and CEO of TELCAR COCOA, Cameroon's leading cocoa exporter. President of the Cameroon Cocoa Exporters' Union, she revolutionised the sector by creating the COOP ACADEMY

and developing a certification programme covering more than 30,000 producers.



Charlotte NDAW SAKO

Regional Representative for Central Africa of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) since 2023, she has 20 years' experience in Private Sector development in Africa. Former advisor to

the UNODC, she specialises in supporting financial institutions and SME financing, particularly in Agro-finance.



BABISSAKANA

Chairman & CEO of Prescriptor since 1998, a firm he co-founded in 1996, he has over 22 years' experience in financial and economic engineering. A Former member of Crédit Agricole du Cameroun, ...



Michel-Cyr DJIENA WEMBOU

Permanent Secretary of the CEMAC Economic and Financial Reform Programme (PREF-CEMAC), he is a recognised expert in international law. Former UN adviser and Professor at The

Hague and New York, he has made a significant contribution to the development of international law and economic reforms in Central Africa.

The first Edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings (REC) provided an opportunity to gather political decision-makers, economic operators, renowned academics, economists and development partners around the same table, in order to reflect on and propose possible solutions to the keys to Cameroon's economic recovery.

It was in this context that a high-level opening panel was held on Wednesday 26 February 2025 around the theme ***"Which Economic Policy Model should be used to build a fruitful deal to drive growth in the Cameroonian economy?"***, bringing together the following Figures under the chair of Pr. TABI NGOA:

- Mr. Alamine OUSMANE MEY, Minister of Economy, Planning and Territorial Development (MINEPAT);
- Dr. Antoine NDZENGUE, CEO of NEPTUNE OIL;
- Dr. Kate KANYI-TOMETI FOTSO, CEO of TELCAR COCOA;
- Mr. BABISSAKANA, Economist;
- Mrs Charlotte NDAW SAKO, SFI Regional Representative ;
- Pr. Michel Cyr DJENA WEMBOU, Permanent

Secretary of PREF CEMAC.

1. Key note address: Main points and Recommendations

Prior to the panel discussions, Pr. JAUME Llopis, Event's *key note speaker*, gave a scientific introduction on the theme ***"Revitalizing the Cameroonian Economy in the Context of Profound Changes in the Global Economy: What are the Keys?"***. He highlighted the following points:

- The diagnosis of the Cameroonian economy, including the strengths to be capitalised on and the weaknesses to be addressed;
- The "Cameroon 2035 vision" based on the 4 pillars below:
 - Reduce poverty to a socially acceptable level (below 10%);
 - Achieve the status of a middle-income country;
 - Become a new industrialised country;
 - Consolidate the democratic process and strengthen national unity.
- GDP growth over the last 10 years is still insufficient to achieve the ambition of becoming an emerging economy;

- The levers of growth based on the triptych:
 - Innovation;
 - Internationalisation (making Cameroon a more attractive investment destination);
 - Integration and cooperation (boost public-private dialogue and cooperation).

At the end of its introduction, the *key note speaker* noted the following conclusions and recommendations:



Conclusions:

1. Despite its plentiful natural resources and strategic geographical positioning, Cameroon has yet to achieve genuine economic transformation and a significant reduction in poverty;

Recommendations:

- R1 - Adjust the development strategy in line with the new global economic landscape;
- R2 - Revise the strategy's implementation and monitoring mechanism to make it more operational;
- R3 - A tax policy that supports business development with incentives that preserve competitiveness;
- R4 - Improve consistency between sectoral policies;
- R5 - Increase the emergence of genuine national champions to strengthen the international positioning of the economy;
- R6 - A tax policy that preserves business profitability and purchasing power for a vibrant domestic market;
- R7 - Enhancing the value of raw materials on an industrial scale;
- R8 - Increase investment in infrastructure, targeting new infrastructure and the maintenance of existing ones;
- R9 - More effective debt management;
- R10 - Lobbying to attract foreign capital in the major trading centres (Shanghai, Washington, Brussels, etc.)

2. A commitment to more inclusive growth and more effective redistribution of wealth is imperative. A large percentage of the population is still living below the poverty line, with a stagnant per capita income;
3. The reforms introduced by the Government are heading in the right direction and are already produced results, but the creation and consolidation of a competitive productive sector requires greater involvement of the Private Sector;
4. Transformation and the creation of added value are the best way of boosting the competitiveness of Cameroon's products;
5. To develop the industrial sector with its own economic and industrial fabric, it is necessary to ease access to finance for SMEs, the self-employed and entrepreneurs;
6. In short, Cameroon's workforce, production and exports are focused on low value-added products, such as raw materials. Further work is needed to achieve a structural transformation of the economy and export diversification that will enable the country to achieve strong and sustained growth.

2. Summary of panel members' contributions

Following the *key note speaker*, the moderator introduced the panel members and opened the floor to questions and answers.

MINEPAT was questioned on its assessment of the 4% growth rate in relation to Cameroon's growth and emergence goals, as well as the measures taken to support the Private Sector so that it can fully play its role as a catalyst for economic growth.

In reply, he highlighted the following:

- The SWOT analysis failed to mention the dynamism of Cameroon's population as one of the forces that can drive its economy;
- The presentation of the factors that could prevent results from being achieved was limited to endogenous factors, ignoring exogenous factors that have a negative impact on economic growth;
- Debt management is fairly satisfactory, with the debt balance at 40% of GDP, out of upper limit of 70% of GDP at Community level.

Returning to Cameroon's growth rate, he provided a benchmark highlighting the fact that world growth is around 3% and was even negative during the COVID years, while Cameroon had positive growth of 0.3%. He concludes by pointing out that the 4% rate is certainly not the target Cameroon has set itself, but is to be encouraged based on the global context in which this performance was achieved.

He went on to acknowledge that the growth rate should be closer to 10% if Cameroon's economic policy objectives are to be achieved, and to achieve this, Cameroon has a growth strategy driven by the Private Sector. The government is acting on a number of levers, including:

- Restoring macroeconomic stability;
- A consumer price policy that maintains people's purchasing power;
- Ensure the security of people and property;
- Continued investment in the infrastructure, energy and digital sectors in particular.

In response to the question of how to operate as an economic operator in a context where purchasing power remains low while production costs are rising, **Dr Antoine NDZENGUE** outlined the reforms to be adopted in order to improve the competitiveness of formal companies in an increasingly competitive economic context.

He sums up his strategy in two expressions: Cost optimization and innovation. For him, this means:

- Increasing production and sales volumes in order to achieve economies of scale to improve margins;
- Investing in storage infrastructure;
- Digitalizing internal processes; and
- diversifying activities.

On the second question, he asserts that the reforms to be adopted must be along the following:

- An approach that provides special support for businesses, in particular by giving priority to local businesses when awarding a significant proportion of contracts;
- Boosting local value chains;
- Promoting economic patriotism.

Dr. Kate KANYI-TOMETI FOTSO, basis on the fact that Cameroon's main export (apart from oil) has been cocoa since independence, asked her questions about how to:

- Get out of the repetitive circle of exporting our raw materials, with little or no processing, which undermined our balance of payments;
- Increase our exports.

In answering these questions, Dr. Kate KANYI-TOMETI FOTSO believes that the key lies in the individual and collective commitment of both Private Sector and the government. The Private Sector should therefore make a self-assessment and self-criticism of the way in which it carries out its wealth and job creation missions. To this end, she stressed the need for economic operators to:

- Faithfully carry out public contracts and on time;
- Pay their taxes in order to give the State the means to implement its economic policy and build the infrastructure needed to develop the Private Sector.

With regard to the Government's responsibilities, she emphasized the need for rational and efficient use of the taxes collected, condemning the current situation where only a few companies are overtaxed, while a large proportion continue to operate in the informal sector, with little or no taxation. To this end, she encouraged the continued digitization of tax administration, so as to be able to locate and tax every taxpayer.

She also underlined the governance issues that prevent the Cameroonian Private Sector from increasing its capacity and producing more export products, as several large-scale projects remain in the drawers of certain officials who promote personal rather than collective interest.

Mr. BABISSAKANA, with his expertise in banking, economic intelligence and project management, asked for his opinion on the following questions:

- What constraints limit the Private Sector's contribution to the industrialization process?
- What synergy of action should be considered between the State and the Private Sector to overcome these constraints?

According to Mr. BABISSAKANA, Cameroon's Private Sector faces a number of constraints:

- Weak competition, undermined by practices such as smuggling and counterfeiting, and the spread of informal activities that hampers formally established businesses. As a result, around 30% of installed industrial capacity remains unused, resulting in the loss of part of production and around 2 points of growth, as well as an estimated 5% of GDP in lost tax revenue;
- Difficulties in accessing financing for medium- and long-term investments, as banks generally offer only marginal financing for this type of operation;
- Difficulties in accessing land, especially for businesses.

At the end of his speech, he made a number of recommendations to be implemented:

- Urgently set up a genuine National Competition Authority in line with international standards;
- Create a national investment bank, as provided for in the 2020-2030 National Development Strategy;
- Develop an average of 100 to 250 turnkey industrial sites, to be made available to investors through a competitive process;
- Set up a national economic policy committee, based in the Prime Minister's office and made up of private and public sector players.

Mrs Charlotte NDAW SAKO, basis on the difficulties of access to financing, was asked for her opinion on how to increase access to financing for Cameroonian companies, and on the role to be played in this respect by the Government and the Private Sector.

In response, she began by reaffirming SFI's commitment to financing the private sector in Cameroon. With regard to the obstacles to access to financing, she pointed firstly to the inadequacy of financial infrastructures (notably credit information offices, risk and incident registers, etc.), which increases the risk of credit operations. The creation and updating of these structures will give bankers better visibility of their customers and the operations they are called upon to finance. She then highlights the need to create solid guarantee mechanisms to cover situations of total or partial default.

She concludes by stressing the need for companies to strengthen their capacities, in terms of financial education, management and governance, in order to develop bankable projects.

Pr. Michel Cyr DJENA WEMBOU, in his capacity as Permanent Secretary of PREF-CEMAC, was asked about the identification of the reasons why structural reforms are not progressing at the pace envisaged by the CEMAC Heads of State.

In answering these questions, Pr. Michel Cyr DJENA WEMBOU noted that the PREF has made significant progress, but the level of implementation of reforms remains at 52%, reflecting the fact that CEMAC is still lagging behind on 48% of structural reforms.

He stresses that the areas in which sustained efforts are still required are:

- Improving the business climate,
- Reform of the justice system;
- Strengthening the capacity of institutions dealing with corruption and administrative efficiency;
- Increasing FDI;
- Secure land tenure;
- Economic diversification with diversification of financing sources.

VII- SPECIAL AWARDS

Two special prizes were awarded to two major Figures for their impactful contribution to the development of the economy and the private sector in Cameroon and Africa.

01. Award of leadership in Mediation and Governance

The special award in “Leadership in Mediation and Governance” is awarded to Mr. Joseph Dion GUTE, Prime Minister and Head of Government. For:

- His determination to establish and maintain a fluid dialogue between the public and private sectors, always putting his money

where his mouth is, to ensure that this initiative has a lasting impact on the country's economic development;

- His pragmatic, business-oriented approach;
- Having worked on the design and implementation of the RECs.

This award aims to reflect the recognition of the Private Sector for its exceptional commitment to implementing the vision and guidelines of the emergence policy of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA.

The award was presented by Ahmed CISSE, President of the General Confederation of Côte d'Ivoire Businesses (CGECI), the Ivorian Employers' Association.



02. Award of “African business impact and leadership”

The special award in “African business impact and leadership” is awarded to Mr. Tony ELUMELU.

The award recognizes his commitment to promoting investment and sustainable growth on the continent, and his philanthropic spirit.

the award was presented by Dr. Kate FOTSO, CEO of TELCAR Cocoa



VIII- OPENING ADDRESS BY MR. DION NGUTE JOSEPH PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT



Mes dames et Messieurs les membres du gouvernement, M. le Gouverneur de la région du Centre, le chef de division du Mfoundi, le Maire de Yaoundé, le Président de l'Alliance des Patronats Francophones, Monsieur le Président du Groupement des Entreprises du Cameroun, les représentants des organisations socioprofessionnelles, les représentants des partenaires techniques et financiers, les capitaines d'industrie et les chefs d'entreprise, distingués invités, Mesdames et Messieurs, Il me plaît en ce jour de présider l'édition inaugurale des Rencontres économiques du Cameroun.

Vous conviendrez avec moi qu'il s'agit d'un événement historique qui mérite d'être reconnu à sa juste valeur. Je voudrais féliciter nos partenaires du secteur privé, sous la houlette du GECAM, pour cette initiative prometteuse. Il convient de noter que la dernière fois que nous avons assisté à un rassemblement d'une telle ampleur, remonte la

10ème édition du Cameroon Business Forum, tenue le 18 mars 2019 à l'hôtel Sawa de Douala.

Je voudrais souhaiter la plus cordiale des bienvenues à nos invités de marque dont la présence est un grand honneur à ce grand rassemblement de la communauté des affaires, M. Geoffroy ROUX DE BÉZIEUX, Président de l'Alliance des Patronats Francophones, éminent leader des organisations patronales dans les pays frères, et M. Tony ELUMELU, chef d'entreprise de renommée internationale, expert et acteur social. Je vous souhaite une chaleureuse bienvenue et un agréable séjour au Cameroun.

Chers invités, Mesdames et Messieurs, laissez moi commencer par saluer les récents développements au sein des principales organisations faîtières du secteur privé au Cameroun, en particulier la création du Groupement des Entreprises du Cameroun (GECAM), née de la fusion de Gicam et ECAM. Aujourd'hui, nous sommes heureux de constater et de bénéficier des résultats positifs de cette fusion.

Dans le cadre du dialogue public-privé prôné par son excellence Paul Biya, il est essentiel de disposer d'un leadership du secteur privé bien organisé, civique et dynamique, capable de contribuer de manière significative à des propositions allant au-delà des sites de production pour relever les défis qui entravent le développement du Cameroun. Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour féliciter l'étroite collaboration entre le gouvernement et le secteur



privé, qui joue un rôle essentiel dans l'élaboration des politiques publiques. Permettez-moi d'en mentionner quelques-uns. Tout d'abord, je voudrais mettre en exergue notre stratégie nationale de développement 2030, qui fait du secteur privé le principal moteur de la croissance économique et prévoit divers mécanismes de soutien pour faciliter son développement. Deuxièmement, il est essentiel de souligner le mécanisme de consultation entre le gouvernement et le secteur privé, en particulier au niveau sectoriel, afin d'exploiter efficacement les contributions des principales parties prenantes opérationnelles. Comme vous dans l'élaboration des politiques publiques, parmi les principales plateformes de dialogue, je voudrais mentionner l'Office national de la décentralisation, l'Office national des routes, l'Office national du tourisme, le Conseil de la réglementation et de la compétitivité et le Comité de la compétitivité. Vous conviendrez que cette approche a permis de relever les défis majeurs posés par la crise sanitaire et les récentes tensions sécuritaires, qui ont toutes deux perturbé les chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales. Enfin, nous devons reconnaître les nombreuses réformes institutionnelles lancées à la fois par le secteur privé et les autorités publiques en vue d'améliorer le climat des affaires. Je tiens à souligner qu'il existe une forte volonté politique de promouvoir le secteur privé dans le contexte actuel. Il s'agit de l'une des principales actions mises en exergue par le Président de la République, son Excellence Paul Biya, dans son allocution de clôture du 16 décembre 2024, lors du Sommet extraordinaire de la CEMAC. Ce Sommet s'est concentré sur l'adoption de mesures concrètes pour booster l'économie de la sous-région et assurer la stabilité des finances publiques. Le chef de l'État a notamment souligné que : « Comme nous l'avons observé par le passé, nous devons favoriser la diversité de nos économies, accélérer le rythme des réformes structurelles et améliorer le climat des affaires. »

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, aware that all human work can be improved, we remain attentive to the signs that could guide the adjustments to government interventions. In this vein, I would like to point out the relevance of the subjects to be discussed during the Conference, which will focus on the Central Theme: "Revitalizing the Cameroonian Economy in the Context of Profound Changes in the Global Economy". In this regards, the workshops

around which the discussions at these economic meetings will be structured are of particular interest because the issues that will be discussed are, depending on the case, challenges, issues or methods of public action. This is why I would like to urge the Private Sector partners not to overshadow the efforts made by the public authorities to boost development and stimulate the business climate. By way of illustration, I could mention the implementation of a proactive industrialization policy through the design of an industrialization master plan and the implementation of protection measures for local businesses.

The development of structured programmes aimed at strengthening food sovereignty and reducing the trade balance deficit, the most recent of which is the integrated agro-pastoral and aliotic import-substitution plan, whose implementation strategy is based essentially on Private Sector players supported by the State and development partners. The creation of fleets of ultra-modern agricultural machinery and equipment with a view to promoting second-generation agriculture, the ongoing development of several mining projects with significant positive externalities, and the implementation of projects aimed at strengthening the supply of and access to electric energy, in particular the ongoing completion of several/hydroelectric dams and power lines. The deployment of the Digital Acceleration and Transformation Project in Cameroon (PATNUC) to improve skills, strengthen infrastructure and promote digital innovation. Intensified training to ensure the availability of qualified and diversified local human resources. The use of various financing mechanisms designed to improve our country's competitiveness. These include initiatives such as guaranteeing sureties and creating an export switch funds. This is a partial list of actions underway.

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is important that an effective and efficient approach be adopted for the Cameroon Economic Meetings, so that they do not become just another meeting or one too many, or replace the Cameroon Business Forum, which has long served as the ideal framework for dialogue between the Private and Public Sectors. Rather, these two platforms should complement each other to ensure a stronger, more effective and more inclusive ongoing dialogue. In this way, all stakeholders

will be able to work in synergy to improve the business environment and the competitiveness of the Cameroonian economy. In the meantime, I would like to assure you that Cameroon remains a land of opportunity for investors from all over the world, for various reasons, the most obvious of which are:

- Natural potential of climate and ecosystem
- Sectoral diversification, from subsistence farming to marketing, processing and industrialization, combined with local availability of agricultural inputs.
- Human capital, resilience and a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem
- The vast market represented by the CEMAC countries, with a population of nearly 60 million, and Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million.
- The stability of institutions since independence and the importance of a long-term vision.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, our government is open and remains ready to respond to various requests aimed at removing all barriers to the development of the Private Sector in Cameroon. The huge presence of heads of ministerial departments

and senior officials from the public administration at these meetings illustrates, if proof were still needed, the partnership approach favoured by our group.

Ladies and Gentlemen, captains of industry and representatives of the Private Sector, I can assure you that providing solutions to your grievances is a duty for the public authorities, and I would like to assure you that the sectoral administrations considered it to be a necessity if we are to make a lasting dent in the road to emergence, when we know that we are indeed called to join forces to foreshadow the paths to emergence that the Head of State so earnestly calls for. With this in mind, the government looks forward to receive the conclusions of these reflections as well as the consequential amendments which will be the subject of consistent exploitation in the process of reviving growth in Cameroon. I wish the participants every success in the works and declare open the first edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings

Long live dialogue and public-private partnership

Long live Cameroon and its illustrious leader, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya

Je vous remercie pour votre aimable attention.



IX- THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1 – Agribusiness development : Agricultural policy and import substitution: how to achieve a successful transformation?

Host



Emmanuel DE TAILLY

General Manager of Société Anonyme des Brasseries du Cameroun (now Boissons du Cameroun) from 2017 to 2022, he has extensive experience in the agri-food and brewing industries. A great advocate of the circular economy and local Made-in, he has contributed to the promotion of national agricultural value chains in the brewing industries in Africa, notably barley cultivation in Madagascar and maize processing in Cameroon. He has also held leadership positions in the Employers' Associations of Togo, Chad, Mali, Cameroon, Madagascar and Congo DRC.

Facilitator



Charles Rémy FONDJO - MODERATOR

Expert in agriculture and Management, Charles Rémy FONDJO has a wealth of experience in the agricultural sector, notably at SOCAPALM, where he has held several management positions. Former President of USPAC, he now heads the consultancy firm COSRS, sharing his expertise in Cameroon's agricultural development.

Panel Members



**The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development,
GABRIEL MBAIROBE**



**Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries,
Dr. TAÏGA**



Christian FOSSO - GECAM

Chairman of GECAM's Agriculture Commission since 2024 and General Manager of FIMEX International, Chairman of Croplife Cameroon (Advocacy organization towards phytosanitary industry). Since 2014, he served as Chair of FIMEX International, a leading distributor of fertilisers and pesticides in Central Africa.



Abdouramane SOULBANKAI - General Manager of SCPR

Founder and Manager of Société Camerounaise de Production de Riz (SCPR) since 2009, he built up a family business selected as a national champion by MINEPAT in 2024, incorporating the entire value chain from production to marketing.



Jean-Pierre IMELE – General Manager of BIOTROPICAL, CEO of BIOTROPICAL S.A created in 1988 to produce, process and distribute organic agricultural products.

- Vice-President and founding member of RHORTICAM (Cameroon Horticulturalists' Network);
- Member of the ColeACP Board of Directors from 2000 to 2011;
- **AGRIC AWARDS**, special prize for promoting organic farming 2013 /SAILD, VOIX DU PAYSAN
- Since 2016 Support for agri-food processing at the TRANSFORM Centre (IECD) in Njombe (incubator)
- Vice-President of Coopérative du Poivre de Penja;

And so on.



MEBANDE BATE, maiden name **EKOTTO MINKOUNA Andrée Caroline Mélanie – General Manager of CENEEMA**

General Manager of the Centre National d'Etudes et d'Expérimentation du Machinisme Agricole (CENEEMA) since 2019, body responsible for promoting and developing agro-pastoral mechanized in Cameroon.

1. Main points of the introductory presentation

1.1. Current challenges and opportunities facing agriculture worldwide

Major challenges:

- Demographic growth, which requires a significant and steady increase in agricultural supply. The world's population, which was 3.5 billion in 1950, is expected to reach 8 billion in 2025, 25% of which will be in Africa.
- **Climate change is seriously undermined production and productivity, particularly in Africa, where a large proportion of the activity remains slightly modern.**
- **The need of food sovereignty to guard against the consequences of external crises such as those experienced with COVID or the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.**

Opportunities: the availability of unused arable land, 45% of which is in Africa. **Africa's role:** The

importance of Africa with its uncultivated arable land (45% of the world total).

1.2. Current situation of agribusiness in Cameroon

- Decline in the contribution of agriculture to GDP: From 34% in 1975 to around 17% in 2020.
- Stagnation in production: Food crops and cereals dominate, but are stagnating.
- Difficulties for cash crops: They are struggling to develop and exploit their potential.
- Decline in meat production: Decline between 2016 and 2021.
- Import Dependency: 5 products (wheat, fish, milk, sugar, rice) account for a significant proportion of imports.
- Mixed results from government strategies: Despite the recognition of agriculture as a priority sector.

Table 1: SWOT analysis of agribusiness in Cameroon

Weaknesses	Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate land policy and legal framework; • Poor infrastructure (roads/energy). • Limited mechanization. • Low processing rate. • Difficult access to finance and inputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abundant workforce.
Threats	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary sector in decline. • High imports (CFAF 500 billion). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves of arable land. • Climatic diversity. • Strategic sectors (cash and food crops). • CEMAC sub-region.

1.3. Recommendations for an effective agricultural policy:

At the strategic level, this would involve:

- Declare agro-industry as national priority, with a target of 30% of GDP;
- Identify strategic sectors and national champions.
- Turn the rural sector into an economic engine by creating jobs and ensuring food security.

On an operational level, the host proposes an action strategy based on 6 priorities:

Priority 1: Solving the land problem;

Priority 2: Train, supervise, structure and monitor;

Priority 3: Financing agriculture;

Priority 4: Increase productivity;

Priority 5: Promote the processing of local products;

Priority 6: A differentiated approach by sector.

2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

The discussions highlighted two key issues facing the agricultural sector, along with possible solutions.

- **Reducing the high costs of agricultural production**

Participants emphasised the challenges of high costs in agriculture, which are holding back the competitiveness and profitability of farms. They

called for concrete strategies to reduce these costs, focusing on three main areas:

- Agricultural inputs;
- Equipments;
- Workforce;
- **Land issues and securing land**

Access to land was identified as a major structural issue for agricultural development. Participants highlighted several challenges:

- Acquiring land titles
- Securing agricultural investment
- **General outlook**

These presentations highlighted two priority areas for the development of the agricultural sector:

- A structural reduction in production costs through innovation, cooperation and better access to resources.
- Ambitious land reform to guarantee fair access to land and promote sustainable investment.



3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

- R1 - Establish a Permanent Consultative Framework between the government and the Private Sector.
- R2 - Introduce agricultural subsidies (particularly for mechanization).
- R3 - Accelerate land reform
- R4 - Communicate on the range of agricultural mechanization and training for stakeholders (CENEEMA).
- R5 - Promote Agri-Business (conferences and debates, agricultural shows and fairs).
- R6 - Encourage local processing and consumption (promotion of Made in Cameroon).

Workshop 2 : Taxation and customs “What coherence between economic policy and taxation policy? ”.

Host



Pr. Désiré AVOM, Associate of Economics, since 2020

Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management (FSEG) at the University of Yaoundé II-Soa. Author of some fifty articles in international scientific

journals, including: “Tax policies in Central Africa: An empirical analysis”, published in 2011 in the Canadian Journal of Development Studies.

He is also:

- Member of the Scientific Committee of the Revue d'Économie de Développement (RED),
- Director of the institutional publications of the Revue Camerounaise d'Économie (RCE) and the Revue Camerounaise de Gestion (RCG).
- Member of the BEAC Monetary Policy Committee (CPM) since June 2024;
- Consultant to numerous sub-regional institutions (CEMAC, CEEAC, UEMOA and ECOWAS) and international institutions (WB, IMF, UNDP, AU, ADB and ECA).

Facilitator



Mr. NGOLLE V Isaac RICHARD

Has been Senior Inspector of the Financial Administrations and current Technical Adviser No. 3 to MINFI since 2018. He has more than 26 years of work experience, having served in turn as:

- Coordinator of the Standing Committee for Consultation on Tax and Customs Matters (MINFI);
- Chief of the Legislation Division, Litigation and International Tax Relations Division (DGI-MINFI);
- Research Manager at the Research, Reforms and Planning Division (DGI-MINFI);
- Head of the Tax Legislation Unit (DGI-MINFI).

He also has an extensive scientific background, teaching taxation and legislation at ENAM and holding a Masters II in Tax Administration (University of Paris Dauphine), an Executive Masters in Development Policy and Management (Sciences Po Paris) and a Doctorate in Tax Law (University of Panthéon-Sorbonne).

Panel Members



Mr. Roger Athanase MEYONG ABATH, General Manager of Taxes.

He is a Senior Tax Inspector with a 25-year career in the Cameroon tax administration.

He has a PhD in Public Finance and Taxation from the University of Paris-Dauphine, a Specialised Masters degree in Mining Administration from the École Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris, and several other degrees in economics and finance.



Mrs Laure KENMOGNE DJOUMESSI

Founder and Managing partner of Juritax Conseil since 2009, having previously worked for EY. A Cameroonian tax expert, she chairs the GECAM Tax and Customs Commission

and was the first woman to be elected President of the National Order of Tax Consultants of Cameroon (ONCFC) on 24 October 2024. She has more than 27 years' work experience in taxation and business law in Central Africa.



Mr. Fongod Edwin NUVAGA,
General Manager of Customs.

He carried projects such as:

- The implementation of CAMCIS (Cameroon Customs Information System), a fully paperless customs information system.
- The development of innovative applications such as COSMOS, NEXUS+, CUSTAT, and SANAGA to improve the efficiency of customs operations.
- Promoting the digitalization of customs procedures to secure and facilitate the payment of customs duties.



Mr. André TSAPI, Manager of HENRI ET FRÈRES

SARL operating in general trade and distribution.



Mr. Isidore BIYIHA

who has 25 years' experience in trade facilitation, is currently General Manager of the Single Window for Foreign Trade Operations (GTTC), previously Director of Operations and Executive Vice-President of

UNITRANS-CAMEROUN, President of Union of Authorised Customs Brokers and Forwarding Agents of Cameroon, and Vice-President of the National Committee to Facilitate International Maritime Transport.

Mr. BIYIHA is a transport economist and with a Master's Degree in transport and logistics from the University of Paris IX Dauphine. He played a key role in the implementation of the physical and electronic Single Window for Foreign Trade Operations in Cameroon.



Philippe TAGNE, CEO of DOOV

Economic operator and major player in mass distribution in Cameroon with more than 13 supermarkets in Yaoundé and more than 700 employees under his charge in the bakery and pastry industry.

1. Main points of the introductory presentation

Some theoretical considerations of the link between economic policy and fiscal policy

- Conceptual clarification and objectives of economic policy
- Tax policy, a driving force for State revenue mobilization
- Constraints to the implementation of fiscal policy

Economic and fiscal policies in the Cameroonian context

- General considerations of the Cameroonian economy
- GECAM's position



Main findings

- The relationship between economic policy and fiscal policy is divisive;
- Economic actors pay their taxes in a more spontaneous way when concrete achievements improving their living environment follow the tax collection;
- Government is faced with the need to satisfy the interests of several pressure groups with competing interests, which has an impact on tax policy.



2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

Overall, they focused on the consistency between economic policy and tax policy:



DGD

- There are many competing interests among economic operators (importers, exporters, manufacturers, development partners, consumers, etc.): For example, a measure to increase customs duties on a product will provoke an outcry from some, and satisfaction from others;
- The customs facilities granted to companies are not always reflected in the prices they charge consumers.

DGI

- There is coherence between economic policy and tax policy, the latter being a major tool of economic policy;
- There has been a plethora of measures to encourage investment since 1960, covering virtually all activity sectors. However, these measures have not led to a significant increase in investment.

DG GUCE

- Digitalisation is a key solution for strengthening coherence between economic and fiscal policies

Mrs Laure KENMOGNE DJOUMESSI (Chair of GECAM Tax and Customs Commission)

- Change the tax system paradigm by reducing the advance tax from 2.2% to 1.1% in the short term and capping the advance tax in the medium term, as is the case in other countries at a similar level of development;
- Increase the yield from property tax;

- Complete the ongoing process of amendment of the April 2013 Act on incentives for private investment in the Republic of Cameroon, which is proving to distort competition in sectors that are already mature, and focus the measures granted on priority sectors while taking into account the fair development of the country's various regions ;
- Provide training for members of parliament so that they have a better understanding of the issues at stake in the Finance Acts they pass;
- Publish the customs incentives granted to economic operators so that their competitors are aware of them. This will help to reduce competitive distortions;
- The ACF should be issued to all companies that are up to date with their spontaneous payment obligations;
- Tax policy should be designed and implemented by various authorities.

Mr. Philippe TAGNE (General Manager of DOVV)

- Tax policy does not sufficiently protect Cameroonian economic operators and very often results in the death of several companies, suffocated by oppressive taxation;
- Companies are confronted with a large number of abnormally long inspections, ordered by various administrations (including the tax and customs administrations), often relating to the same financial years.

Mr. André TSAPI (Manager of Henri et Frères)

The margins of distribution companies are often very small (3% in his case), yet they are subject to the same tax rates and constraints as manufacturing companies.

Contributions from participants:

- Tax and customs authorities should change their paradigm regarding the perception by economic operators, who are often immediately seen as fraudsters;
- Tax and customs authorities are very often focused on the urgent need to collect revenue, which reduces their willingness to implement genuine tax reforms.

3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

General Recommendations

- R1 - Provide parliamentarians with the tools they need to measure the consistency between economic policy and taxation policy during the adoption of the Finance Act (training, setting up a framework for dialogue between the private sector and parliamentarians in particular);
- R2 - Ensure that the same tax and customs incentives are granted to economic operators in the same sector to avoid competitive distortions;
- R3 - Ensure the introduction of predictability into the mechanisms for the coming into force of the provisions of Finance Acts having an immediate impact on the profitability of companies. Business management is subject to planning which suffers from changes that may occur immediately as a result of finance laws;
- R4 - Set up a commission responsible for proposing a rationalization of parafiscal charges to limit the proliferation observed;
- R5 - Strengthen and perpetuate dialogue between taxation and customs administrations and the Private Sector, with RECs providing one of the best frameworks for this purpose;
- R6 - Organize at the instigation of companies, training sessions for tax officers so that they have a better understanding of the specific features of activities they will have to control;
- R7 - Needed internships in companies for ENAM students to improve their understanding of this environment;
- R8 - Complete in consultation with the Private Sector, the ongoing amendment process of the Law of April 2013, which distorts competition in sectors that are already mature, and focus the measures granted on focal sectors, while considering the inclusive development of the country's various regions;
- R9 - Streamline the implementation of the import-substitution policy, based on the quality and availability of local supply and more generally, ensure that all the relevant ministerial departments strive to result in a real substance;
- R10 - Entrust an existing entity within the Government with the task of monitoring the consumers impacts of market prices of tax and customs exemptions or reductions granted to companies on selected products.

Recommendations for tax authorities:

- R11 - Reconsider the determining system for the flat-rate minimum, whose current rate of 2.2% based on turnover is maladjusted. Confirm the abolition of the 5.5% withholding tax for companies subject to the IGS. These changes will broaden the tax base by attracting certain entities to the formal sector.
- R12 - Complete the change process of CIME and DGE structure with the aim of implementing management that considers the disparities in existing turnover within their tax population, to better address the issues in each category of taxpayer;
- R13 - Complete the DGSN-DGI interfacing process as part of the registration of taxpayers required to increase the taxable population in order to broaden the tax base;
- R14 - Continue the operationalization process of Local and Individual Taxation Centres for the implementation of a better monitoring of property taxation required to broaden the tax base.

Recommendations for the Customs Authorities:

- R15 - Ensure scrupulous compliance with the time response of customs teams during post-clearance inspections.

Recommendations for Employer's Association:

- R16 - Encourage companies to systematically contact the DGI and DGD to clarify the tax or customs treatment apply to their operations;
- R17 - Raise awareness among businesses about tax compliance, and namely pass on the benefits of tax and customs concessions to consumers in the prices they charge;
- R18 - Advocate to tax and customs authorities on the basis of studies by highlighting the potential costs or profits for the State.

Workshop 3 : Energy and industry y: “What energy policy for efficient industrial development?”

Host _____



Ibrahima Ousmanou

Cameroonian entrepreneur committed to industrial and financial development.

- Founder since 2017 of MULTIPRINT Labels & Packaging, an industrial packaging company, an Islamic microfinance institution and promotes education.
- Founder of Savana, the first full-fledged financial institution dedicated to ethical and Islamic finance in Cameroon.

Chair of GECAM Industry Commission.

Facilitator _____



Mr. Perrial Jean NYODOG,

CEO of GULFCAM, an electromechanical engineer graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure Polytechnique of in 1981, and a geophysical engineer from the Institut Français du Pétrole in

1983, Perrial Jean NYODOG has a rich career with recognised expertise in the oil industry.

He has worked successively for SNH, HYDRAC and Tradex as General Manager.

He is currently Chairman of the Executive Board of GULFCAM SAS (a company specialising in oil distribution and maritime transport) since 2021. He is also a Director of the PORT Authority of Douala, Chairman of the Board of Directors of GMC Assurances, Chairman of ICC Cameroon (the National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce) and a member of the Board of Directors of **GECAM**.

Panel Members _____



Minister of Water and Energy

**Mr. Gaston ELOUNDOU
ESSOMBA**



General Manager of ENEO

Mr. Amine HOMMAN LUDIYE, since June 26, 2023, he is an energy engineer with a degree from the École Polytechnique de l'Université de Nantes, a Master's degree from the IAE Nancy School of

Management and a professional Master's degree in innovation and new technologies from the École Polytechnique de Paris. He has nearly 30 years' work experience in the energy sector in various countries. Since 2010, General Manager of COFELY in Morocco, General Manager of ENGIE North Africa in 2015, Director of ENEO and then Executive Vice President in charge of production from 2021



**Mr. Charles Bertin MADENG II
(Panzani Cameroon)**

MANAGER OF PANZANI PLANTS (Pasta and Biscuits), He is a graduate of the University of Ngaoundéré in Applied Chemistry, of the University of Yaoundé 1

(Master and DEA) in Organic Chemistry, of the University of ALEXANDRIA in Chemical and Environmental Engineering, of the FAVA Academy (Italy) in Pasta Technology. 22 years of experience in processing (Wheat) in the agri-food industry.

He participated in the construction and start-up of the 1st semolina mill in sub-Saharan Africa.



Adamou SIDDIKI

Cameroonian entrepreneur and businessman, currently:

1. CEO of NOTACAM SA (Nouvelles Tanneries du Cameroun), a company specializing in the processing of hides and skins.
2. General Manager of NOTACAM, based in Maroua.
3. Managing Director of GECAM (Groupement des Entreprises du Cameroun) for the Far North region.
4. CEO of CUIR ORGANISATION.

SIDDIKI has played an important role in the development of the leather industry in Cameroon, notably through NOTACAM, which processes around a million hides a year and exports to Europe. In May 2024, Adamou SIDDIKI was appointed GECAM regional delegate for the Septentrion regions (Adamaoua, Nord, Extrême-Nord).



1. Main points of the introductory presentation

Following the moderator's introductory remarks, the Minister of Water and Energy set the scene by presenting Cameroon's energy policy and potential projects to improve energy availability and quality. It is clear from this presentation that the strategy for revitalizing the energy sector is an inclusive one, designed to involve the private sector in structuring projects in this sector using the PPP model. This strategy requires 6,000 billion in funding, with the aim of achieving an energy mix of 5,000 MW (85% hydroelectric, 10% gas, 5% solar) by 2035.

In addition, to improve energy efficiency, a third of the above-mentioned financing, i.e. CFAF 2,000 billion, will be devoted to transport (1,200 billion) and distribution (800 billion). Similarly, to improve collection and effectively combat fraud, prepaid meters will gradually replace traditional meters. The same applies to wooden poles, which are being replaced by concrete ones.

Mr. IBRAHIMA Ousmanou's introductory presentation outlined the current state of the energy sector, the major challenges and the strategic areas for effective reform. He noted a deficit between supply and demand, with an installed production capacity of 1,742 MW (55.5% ENEO, 3.2% IPP under ENEO contract, 41.6% IPP excluding ENEO) still insufficient to cover national needs, and dominated at 66.3% by hydroelectricity (19.3% thermal, 12.4% natural gas, 2.1% solar and renewable). Access to electricity is still limited, with a national electrification rate of 75%, leaving many rural areas underserved. Industrial consumption accounts for almost 56% of national production, with high costs and unstable supplies.

Against this backdrop, the energy sector faces a number of challenges, such as largely under-exploited production potential, a financial imbalance in the sector, an imbalance between electricity supply and demand, delays in investment, inadequate network maintenance, increased instability and an inefficient resource allocation policy.

2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

Panel members then shared their outlook on energy issues, regulatory constraints and opportunities for improvement. They discussed the need to diversify energy sources, the importance of access to energy for SMEs, sustainability and energy efficiency issues, and many other topics.

For **Mr. Adamou SIDDIKI**, the energy deficit has a significant impact on the development of VSEs and SMEs in terms of additional costs, loss of productivity, reduced competitiveness and lower profit margins. This situation also hinders innovation and modernization, and leads to job losses and job insecurity, with a negative impact on working conditions and the supply of goods and services.

For **Mr. Charles Bertin MANDENG**, high energy costs have a negative impact on industrial competitiveness. In fact, the application of a



growth rate in tariffs per year over the period 2023-2025, i.e. 5% per year for customers between 0 and 3MW (15% in 3 years), 10% per year for customers between 3 and 10MW (30% in 3 years) and a 20% increase in the price of gas (supplied by Gaz du Cameroun) since June 1, 2023, are negatively affecting the performance of industries. Added to this is the unavailability of electrical energy, which leads to the use of alternative sources costing 2.5 times more. To remedy this situation, he calls for the introduction of incentives to promote the development of cogeneration projects using biomass (wood waste, etc.), the valorization of waste in industrial processes by substituting it for fossil fuels, and greater liberalization in production activities. He also advocates incentives for the production and marketing of natural gas by private investors.

For **Mr. Talla KUATE**, to solve the energy deficit, it would be necessary to involve decentralized local authorities in the production and marketing of energy, and to recycle agricultural waste for energy production.

The General Manager of ENEO reassures us that ENEO's strategy is in line with that of the government, while considering that industries are its main customers. In addition, ENEO has undertaken energy efficiency actions to regulate consumption and improve costs. ENEO is also allocating significant resources to increasing

distribution lines, changing electricity poles and introducing prepaid meters to combat fraud and improve cash flow.

Contributions from participants

Discussions focused on:

- the development of appropriate energy infrastructures;
- promoting energy quality and availability;
- promoting the energy mix;
- governance issues.

3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

- R1 - Need to improve energy efficiency and reducing losses, to optimize consumption and ensure better cost-effectiveness of the electricity grid;
- R2 - Reform of the pricing and economic model to align energy costs to promote industrial productivity;
- R3 - Development of new energy projects with private financing such as PPPs and other industrial initiatives to ensure energy autonomy;
- R4 - Effectively implement a more competitive energy mix by developing more gas and solar energy to stabilise supply and reduce reliance on hydroelectricity;
- R5 - Effectively liberalize energy production and distribution;
- R6 - Involve Regional and Local Authorities in the production and Energy marketing;
- R7 - Promote the use of agricultural waste for energy production;
- R8 - Implementation of tax and customs relief policies on imports of equipment relating to the renewable energy production;
- R9 - Help national operators to have access to natural gas production by allowing them to obtain operating licences;
- R10 - Ease access to financing for local operators in the field of energy production in remote areas to decrease demand on the network connected to industries;
- R11 - Payment by the State of its debt to ENEO to facilitate the latter's control of operations;
- R12 - Set up performance monitoring dashboard for players in the sector to guarantee better energy quality;
- R13 - Start production projects for gas-fired power stations to quickly catch-up the energy deficit;
- R14 - Review the governance of SONATREL to improve energy transmission performance.
- R15 - Liberalize the distribution sector and extend the gas marketing sector to other operators;
- R16 - Building of mini hydroelectric power stations and solar power stations in areas not covered by the grid;
- R17 - Review the Law on the energy sector to encourage private operators to get involved.

Workshop 4 : Governance “The role of governance in the competitiveness of public firms”

Host



Alain MEKULU, General Manager of CNPS since 2008, Senior Treasury Inspector since 1985.

From 2000 to 2008, he was Deputy General Manager in charge of administration and Human Resources at

Hévécam, after having held senior positions in the public administration, notably those of State Controller, General Coordinator of the Superior State Control Department and Representative of the President of the Republic.

Facilitator



Jean-Marie NKA (Economic journalist)

Senior journalist, previously Head of the Economics Editing at CRTV's Headquarter and Editor-in-Chief at the same Headquarters

Panel Members



Bernard MESSENGUE AVOM, Senior Civil Administrator, graduated from the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM). He also studied law, economics and politics in France and the United States.

He has served in many key roles in the Cameroonian administration, including State Controller, State Inspector, Chargé de Mission and Technical Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office, Minister of SMEs and Minister of Public Works.

He is Grand officier of Legion of Honor and Commander of the Order of the Pléiade of Agence Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF).



Patience MAPOKO is a more than 20 years experienced corporate counsel in the oil and gas industry. She is holder of a Master in Business Law from University of Douala where she did also follow a Diploma of Higher Specialized

Studies in Business law and taxation. She holds a Certificate in Business Strategy and Financial Performance from INSEAD and an LLM in oil and gas law from the University of Aberdeen-Scotland.

As secretary of the board of directors and leader in charge of ethics and compliance program, good governance and sustainability of organizations are her subjects of high interest.

She chairs the Association of Cameroon Corporate Counsels (ACJE in French) and the Legal, Litigation and Regulation Commission of the GECAM. She co-led the GECAM initiative for good governance that resulted in the erection of the first ever Governance Code for companies in central Africa.



Bernard YOSSA,

Industrial Chemistry from the University of Abomey-CalaVI, Benin, and holds a Master's degree in Environmental Management from the University of Paris Sud. He is the founding CEO of Beryo

International, a hygiene and sanitation services company set up in 2001.

He is also an expert in the analysis and management of fire and explosion risks at France's National Institute of Fire & Safety, and in 2015 will be setting up a consulting firm, CARE CONSULTING WORLD, to help companies achieve certification and manage industrial risks.

On a daily basis, he shares his 24 years of experience in management and good governance through seminars with SMEs across Africa.

He is the promoter of the National Forum on Industrial Safety, a platform for exchange and sharing on concrete and innovative solutions to strengthen industrial safety in Cameroon.



Me Paul T. JING Paul JING

Founder and Managing Partner of Jing & Partners since 2004, responsible for the firm's strategic growth and development.

He has over 30 years of professional experience. He is a holder of a Master's Degree (LL.M.) from HAVARD University, Cambridge Massachusetts, USA, specialising in Corporate law, Corporate & Project finance, Securities, Investment law, Banking law, Financial markets, Oil & gas, Energy, Competition law and Mergers and Acquisition.

He is a key reference in the Regional legal market in Project finance, Corporate finance, Investment law, Private equity transactions, Reorganizations, Restructurings, Acquisitions and Divestitures, Securities and Financial markets. Paul is also a Consultant for the World Bank.



Claude NDAKI MBOULET (Ph,D)

Lecturer in strategy, strategic innovation and governance. He teaches at Cosendai Adventist University, Management International University (London), University of

Douala, Catholic University of Central Africa and PKF Institute.

Head of the Management Department and Dean of the Faculty of Management and Information Technology at **Cosendai Adventist University for 10 years**. Received two awards for his work on innovation strategy in high-density sectors in Africa by African Network of Economist of innovation and capacities building a **Obafemi Owolowo University in Nigeria (2017)** and **University of Caddi Ayyad of Marrakech -Maroc (2018)**.

Co-editor of the **Journal Science technology and innovation studies (South Africa)**, he si also head of strategy at **PANESS Conseil (Cameroon)**, and senior consultant for **SENSEPORT Consulting (Paris)**.



TANANI Medhi, Regional Director at PROPARCO.

A graduate of EM Lyon Business School, he joined the Proparco Group in 2013 as a senior investment officer in the Manufacturing and Agro-Industry Sector (MAS)

division. Mehdi worked as a financial auditor with the consulting firm Price water house Coopers (PwC), mainly on statutory audit assignments, before joining the Banque Centrale Populaire de Casablanca (2010-2013) as a senior project finance officer.

1. Main points of the introductory presentation

The presentation was structured into two points as follows:

- Governance and performance of public and private entities
- Good governance in the face of certain sociological, anthropological, economic and political realities

Main findings:

- Numerous cases of unorthodox governance practices;
- Concentration of power in the hands of the CEO;
- None HR management policy;
- Failure of the internal control system;
- Mismatch to the social, cultural and economic context of the governance standards laid down by international institutions.

The presentation makes the following recommendations:

- Situate the governance principles to the realities of populations and states, to ensure effectiveness;
- Adopt structured, relevant steering and decision-making tools;
- Operationalize the policy of “perfect spending”;
- Digitize, streamline and secure the information system;
- Ensure rigorous application of accountability at all hierarchical levels.

2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

Mr. Bernard MESSENGUE AVOM about the crucial role that governance must play in all our behaviors to boost performance.

- Governance plays a key role in corporate performance;
- However, it is necessary to adapt universally accepted rules to the African context in general, and Cameroon in particular, in

order to simulate universal acceptance;

- Introduce binding measures for their enforcement.

Mrs. Patience MAPOKO about the application of good governance as enacted to all companies.

- We must not create principled objection as laid down by international organizations and our customs and practices, but rather look to see whether these principles can ensure good governance within our companies;
- Sustainability is achieved by putting in place a certain number of rules which should be used as a model for the management of all companies; this adaptation guarantees the survival of the company.

Dr. NDAKI about the strategies to implement to mitigate the phenomenon of corruption and the plundering of private or public wealth.



- There is a strong link between companies that apply good governance and competitiveness;
- The concept of governance is essentially linked to the protection of property rights;
- The economic link between those who own the company and those who manage it determines the rules that will be applied.

Me Paul JING about the relevance of governance in business.

- Good governance is the essence of business; it's the set of decisions taken to ensure the smooth running of a company, and the perception of a company's transparency;
- Eradicating corruption requires good governance, transparency and sanctions.

Mr. MEHDI TANANI about the negative contribution of the lack of governance on the delay of development and the failure of companies.

- It is a factor in attracting financial investors, boosting ratings and strengthening competitiveness. Governance is a lever for growth and attractiveness.

Mr. Bernard YOSSA about the practical elements to be adopted in the field to enforce good governance.

- How can it be effectively implemented?

Governance in Cameroon is fraught with pitfalls, in a context plagued by corruption at all levels.

- The structure must have develop rules and ethical principles applicable to all;

- Interactions with certain administrations make the application of governance difficult, due to disparaging corrupt practices such as recurrent requests for bribes for a service.

Contributions from participants

- How can we build a consensus for compliance with the rules?
- Given the CNPS CEO's refusal to be subordinated to the institution's reform dynamic, which has led to improvements in its operation and governance, and its influence in Africa and beyond, is it possible for any other manager who dares to follow this example to escape sanction?
- Is it possible to talk about effective governance without talking about governance policy at State level?

3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

- R1 - Governance is necessary to improve the competitiveness of our firms and their attractiveness in the mobilization of funding;
- R2 - It is essential to enact rules of governance that consider the particular social and cultural context of our country so that they can be integrated more easily and implemented in accordance with our anthropological environment;
- R3 - Incorporate respect for ethical values and the collective interest into education (from an early age) to fight unethical practices such as corruption, which hinder development and competitiveness;
- R4 - Implement strict and systematic sanctions against corruption in public services in order to build trust between government and business;
- R5 - Encourage SMEs to open up their capital to investors especially by going public, to ensure not only their long-term survival but also sound governance;
- R6 - That the State, which is the guardian of overall economic governance, ensures the stability and predictability of the legal rule, a meaningful justice system, such as providing training to judiciary that incorporates a good knowledge of business and the wealth creation process, and that enough magistrates are assigned to the courts and provided with the equipment and infrastructure enabling them to work effectively;
- R7 - That companies are made more aware of the solutions contained in the good governance code drawn up by GECAM with support of AFD-PROPARCO Group and encourage them to adopt the principles contained therein;
- R8 - Encourage businesses that meet the criteria to set up effective boards of directors made up of conscious members about the role they are playing in defining the company's strategy, need for competitiveness, stability, innovation and transparency in management, and who therefore implement rules that govern the clearly distribution of powers within the company.

Workshop 5 : Infrastructure development “The need for heavy infrastructure investment to boost growth”

Speaker



Pr GALEGA SAMGENA DAIGA (UY 2)

he is a full professor of law with a Ph.D. from King's College, University of Aberdeen, UK.

- Registrar (SG), University of Bamenda

- Dean, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences
- Head of Division, Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Yaounde II
- Director of Students Affairs, University of Bamenda
- Head of Department of Common Law Studies, University of Douala
- Visiting Professor in national and international institutions

Legal Consultant for national and international organizations.

Facilitator



Dr. TANG AHANDA, PM Special Adviser.

Doctor in Applied Mathematics, he has spent most of his career between the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Public Works.

At the Ministry of the Economy, he supervised various modelling projects, the methodology and monitoring of the development of sectoral strategies, as well as the development of the central CDMT.

In the field of infrastructure, he worked at the Ministry of Public Works for seventeen years, successively as Head of the Planning, Programming and Standards Division, Head of the Cooperation and Partnership Division and finally Inspector General of Services, before his appointment in October 2022 as Special Adviser in the Prime Minister's Office.

Panel Members



Representative of the Minister of Public Works

ABANDA JOSEPH

STATISTICAL ENGINEER, ECONOMIST, Specialist in public finance planning and management.

Has worked as an assistant researcher for 08 years at MINFI/ Direction des Affaires Economiques, then for 4 years as Head of the Planning Unit at MINTP and has been DAG for 07 years in the aforementioned Ministry.



M. Eric NJONG (DG BUNS)

Cameroonian entrepreneur and founder of BUNS,

specializing in the construction of bridges, roads and other special structures with over 1,500 permanent staff today,

including 30 engineers. In addition to his activities in the construction sector, Eric NJONG is also involved in the agricultural industry. He is director of Boh Plantations Limited (BPL), a Cameroonian banana production company

established in 2009. BPL is notable for being the only banana company in Cameroon owned by a private Cameroonian investor.

He is member of the GECAM Board of Directors



Willy Freddie NDJANA, (PMP, CP3P, FMVA)

Expert at the Support Council for the Implementation of Partnership Contracts (Cameroon PPP Unit). He was previously a Design Engineer at the Major Projects

Preparation Unit at the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development from 2009 to 2014.

He holds a Diplôme d'Ingénieur Statisticien Économiste, a Master's degree in Finance from the École de Management de Lyon and prestigious certifications in Project Management (Project Management Professional from the Project Management Institute), in Public-Private Partnerships (*Certified Public Private Professional* from APMG International) and in Project Finance (*Certified Project Finance Analyst*) from the Project Finance Institute.



Mr. Dieudonné ESSOMBA

Multi-disciplinary consultant who has worked for a number of organisations (media, ministries, companies, consultancies, etc.). He is the author of the book 'La Monnaie Binaire : une Voie

de développement pour l'Afrique' (Binary Money: a Development Path for Africa). He received his higher education at the Institut Sous-Régional de la Statistique et de l'Economie Appliquée (ISSEA) in Yaoundé and at the Centre Européen de Formation des Ingénieurs Statisticiens Economistes des Pays en voie de Développement (CESD) in Paris.

He worked for 30 years in the Ministry of the Economy, as a Research Officer, notably in the General Directorate of the Economy.



Professor George Elambo Nkeng

Professor of Chemical Engineering and Director of the National Advanced School of Public Works (NASPW) Yaounde – Cameroon. He obtained, with the prestigious United Kingdom Chevening Scholarship, MSc/DIC Advanced Chemical Engineering and PhD Chemical Engineering, from Imperial College, University of London, England.

He has proven that teaching, research and administration can be combined in academics, has a range of organizational responsibilities and acts as professional advisor for many teams. He is a member of the Academic Board for the PhD in the Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering, University of Padova, Italy and for the MSc Innovation and Technology, Golden Gate University, USA.

He is author of numerous scholarly articles in journals, peer – reviewed scientific proceedings and book chapters. His diverse and impactful career is a testament to his dedication to science, engineering and education.



1. Main points of the introductory presentation

The keynote presentation by Professor Galega was on the theme: ***“The urgent need for massive investment in infrastructure to boost economic growth in Cameroon: a paradigm shift towards financing and management policies using innovative tools and decentralised governance”***.

The aim was to set the scene by analysing infrastructures, raising the issue of their maintenance and the structural question of the economic model chosen by the public authorities.

In particular, he noted the need to review the legal and institutional framework governing all actions relating to infrastructure construction and maintenance, as well as the general financing framework. He also pointed out that the soft underbelly of infrastructure remains the question of financing, which is why he called for a global reflection on new and innovative financing mechanisms.

He went on to outline the main challenges in the development of infrastructure in Cameroon, which are numerous and therefore require the involvement of all stakeholders, not only to put in place coherent and inclusive public policies, but above all to ensure that the priority actions defined are implemented. The guideline should be the needs of the main beneficiaries of infrastructure, i.e. users in general and the private sector in particular.

He also pointed out that RLA must play a central role in infrastructure investment and maintenance, because proximity to users means that they are better able to adapt to their needs.

With this in mind, he ended his presentation with a number of recommendations that highlighted:

- the need to give priority to alternative methods of financing, including PPPs;
- a return to better governance of public spending;
- closer collaboration between the private sector, the RLA and the public sector.

2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

After the keynote speaker's introductory statement, the moderator gave the floor to the panellists to talk about the specific actions of the administrations they represented, in relation to the central theme of the workshop.

MINTP recalled the link between the actions carried out within the framework of infrastructures and the national strategy, the SND30. He also highlighted the main challenges faced by this ministerial department in meeting the public's expectations in terms of infrastructure construction and maintenance. Moreover, he pointed out that the current context of limited financial resources partly explains the shortcomings in this area. Finally, he pointed out that despite the efforts made by the ministry, the results were not sufficiently perceptible due to the immensity of the task and the dilapidated state of the road infrastructure in particular.

Some figures were provided to back up his argument. He pointed out that of MINTP's total budget of FCFA 500 billion, 40% comes from its own resources and 60% from donors. In addition, the SND 30 target of 122,000 km of roads includes 9,500 km of national roads, 13,000 km of regional roads and 98,000 km of communal roads.

Pointing out that MINTP only works on national roads, while supervising other road works, he said that the priority is to rehabilitate 6,000 km of roads over 10 years (i.e. 600 km per year), including 4,000 km of national roads to be asphalted. However, the total stock of asphalted roads is 10,000 km, including 5,000 km between 2010 and 2024 and 5,200 km between 1960 and 2009. As a result, in 15 years as many roads have been asphalted as have been built since independence. However, by 2024, only 400 km of roads had been opened, including the Ntui-Lena-Tibati road. This means that, compared with the strategic objective of 600km/year, 75% have been completed, for a total of 2,800km over the past 5 years. As far as the Road Fund is concerned, the resources available have been capped at 50 billion over the past 15 years, while the road network that need to be rehabilitated has doubled over the same period

In addition to these limited resources, another major challenge remains the delays in payment of invoices to public works companies. For example, he pointed out that less than half of the commitments for 2021 have been paid. This is lengthening the time needed to complete the work, and is a factor in slowing down construction.

As far as the decentralisation policy is concerned, he pointed out that regional roads remain the responsibility of the RLAs, with some EUROS 30 billion transferred to them, which is marginal in relation to real needs, particularly for the two main cities of Yaoundé and Douala.

Mr. NDJANA, Representative of CARPA, after outlining the authority's remit, indicated that it works on project preparation with the administrations and entities responsible for carrying out PPP projects, but only in an advisory capacity. He also pointed out a number of limitations that are not likely to make this tool effective. These include, in particular, limited financial and human resources, as the work of this entity also extends to various types of studies, especially economic, financial and commercial studies, which require enormous resources.

By way of proposals:

- the need to strengthen the skills of PPP players,
- the need to involve the private sector in the design and implementation of PPP projects,
- the need to work with sectoral ministries to set up self-financing project banks.

It also emerged from the presentation that this institution needs to be radically reformed, focusing on structural issues that should lead administrations to change their paradigm both in the design and implementation of projects and in their approach to seeking funding.

Mr. Eric NJONG, General Manager of BUN'S dwelt on the question of financing, asking why it works elsewhere but not here. He tried to explain, indicating that the construction and maintenance of infrastructures require a great deal of financial resources. From this point of view, it is not realistic to expect that budgetary resources alone can finance the construction and maintenance of infrastructure.

The problem of financing thus brings us back to the notion of making a profit, i.e. having recourse to the private sector, which puts up its own money and makes a profit over a given period of time. To this end, guarantees must be given to these private parties, and the environment must be cleaned up to encourage private sector players to take an interest in profitable projects. After all, projects financed and managed by the private sector are completed on time and to the highest standards, unlike projects financed from public funds.

His proposals include:

- Introducing courageous reforms, such as setting up a tool or structure responsible for maturing and validating profitable projects before they are implemented,
- Ensure that every effort is made to pay service providers within reasonable timescales,
- Identify the major players with the appropriate human and financial resources and rely on them to implement major infrastructure projects.
- Ensure that the projects implemented are validated in terms of their usefulness, profitability and respect for a certain priority in meeting national needs.

Mr. Dieudonné ESSOMA, Expert Consultant, noted the need to prioritize the projects to be implemented. He also emphasised the need for decentralisation, because with limited resources, it would be more appropriate to turn to other solutions or a different model. Faced with a need of 800 billion, the public budget would only have 60 billion. According to him, it is the main users of the infrastructure who must finance it, in other words, the RLAs must have sufficient financial resources to finance their infrastructure according to their needs.

A comparison was also drawn between the amount of debt, its appropriate use and the quality of the infrastructure, because we cannot continue to go into debt as long as structural issues have not been resolved, such as the economic model, which seems outdated, in addition to governance issues that undermine the effectiveness of government actions.

The State must therefore gradually withdraw from infrastructure issues and give them to an autonomous entity. It must also set its own priorities pursuing its objectives. Hence the need to equip itself with reliable decision-making tools capable of guiding public authorities to better manage infrastructure projects.

The speech also highlighted the need to devise a new model focusing on aspects relating to (i) financing by the beneficiaries, in particular the private sector and the RLAs, especially through PPPs, (ii) reforming the road fund to better direct total resources towards road maintenance, (iii) strengthening decision-making tools, and (iv) better prioritisation of the projects to be carried out.

Pr. **George Elambo Nkeng**, about the question of whether there is a better match between training and the use of human resources graduating from this school. He also focused on the issue of maturation.

In response, he pointed out that the training aspect is at the heart of the discussion, as it is the training that implements and carries out the works. He went on to say that the close relationship between the private and public sectors must be sufficiently close and fluid to ensure a better match between the quality of the students graduating from universities, grandes écoles and training centres and their achievements in the field.

As far as the maturation of projects is concerned, he points to the need for greater coherence and interaction between those who design projects, those who implement them, those who carry out maintenance and those who monitor them. This consistency should ensure that projects mature more effectively before they are implemented.

Contributions from participants

During the discussion phase, participants noted the need to think globally rather than segment administrations. It would therefore be advisable to create a single ministry responsible for infrastructure works, which would encompass all public works.

A number of observations were also made, notably the lack of involvement of the Private Sector in the strategic thinking of public authorities. Yet the beneficiaries are more familiar with their needs and can guide public policy. Other issues were raised, including the need for institutional reform and the regulatory framework governing infrastructure.

With regard to certain urban development instruments such as FEICOM, it was pointed out that only 14% of its funding is directed towards the major cities of Yaoundé and Douala, yet these two cities alone account for more than 60% of urban infrastructure needs. Hence the need to review the equalisation of FEICOM funding.

It also emerged from the discussions that some of the tools and support available to Chinese companies, for example, do not exist in Cameroon. This is the case with EximBank, which finances all companies operating in the construction and public works sector in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. This tool is a powerful support factor for companies wishing to build infrastructures, especially PPPs.

Under the same heading of concerns, the participants noted in particular that linked to the mobility of CENEEMA equipment, which is generally always out of gauge and faces not only the very high cost of road weighing fees, but also the impossibility of paying them on the spot in cash, due to the status of the CENEEMA which, as a public establishment, is confronted with fiscal and financial standards that do not allow it to make cash payments above certain amounts. However, it was pointed out that this establishment, which has a large fleet of tractors and machinery, has the task of helping to open up production areas, but is handicapped in its mobility in the field. Although this is a legal requirement, the fact remains that it does not encourage CENEEMA to fulfil some of its missions.

A number of other constraints have been identified to justify the current state of the infrastructure, including corruption, red tape, corruption in certain procurement procedures, lack of civic-mindedness on the part of certain service providers and the impunity that goes with it, and structural issues linked to the state of the economy, in terms of weak production, particularly of inputs and other materials used in the construction of the infrastructure.

3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

- R1 - Set up an integrated road rehabilitation programme and validate projects before they are implemented, with the involvement of the Private Sector
- R2 - Undertake a comprehensive review, involving the Private Sector to a greater extent, in order to prioritize, draw up infrastructure programmes and explore financing options.
- R3 - Implement an in-depth reform programme for CARPA to provide it more substantial financial and human resources
- R4 - Strengthen the State's strategic planning tools for selecting, financing and managing infrastructure
- R5 - Diversify and improve the infrastructure financing with innovative sources of financing based on local resources from CTDs and other private actors
- R6 - Involve the Private Sector more closely in defining training curricula in the higher education institutions which market human resources in the building and public works sector
- R7 - Improving institutional performance and overall governance in project management through digitalization
- R8 - Improve coordination between central governments, regional and municipal councils to improve project implementation and monitoring.

Workshop 6 : Digital and innovation for business “How can we catch up with the digital transformation of businesses and administrations?”

Host



Dr. Gérard Lewourien Eyoun

Founder of CYBERIX. Practising for more than twenty years, he is an expert in cybersecurity and a specialist in cyber interest intelligence. Certified by several organisations such as PECB,

Ec-Council, USDOD, UNDSS, ASIS international, etc. He holds a dozen certifications related to cyber security and banking systems security. He is a researcher at Israel's international counter-terrorism institute. He is also a forensic expert in cyber crime and also works as a strategic intelligence consultant for several multinationals.

Facilitator



Olivier Kingue

Molli economic journalist at CRTV. He is currently a senior reporter and head of the Littoral regional station in Douala.

He graduated from ESSTIC in November 2001 with a degree in journalism. A trained lawyer, he also holds an Executive MBA (ESSEC) from the University of Douala, specialising in Strategic Management of Organisations.

Olivier Kingue Molli is the promoter of the Douala Economic Forum, and since 2018 general moderator of the Forum des Opérateurs pour la Garantie de l'Émergence Économique en Afrique (Dakar).

Panel Members



Representative of MINPOSTEL, Mr. François Joseph NNEMETE BEYEME

(Deputy Director of Regulation, MINPOSTEL). ICT and Telecommunications Policy Specialist |

Business and Management Consultant, Deputy Director in charge of ICT and Telecommunications Regulation at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of Cameroon. He holds a professional master's degree in economics from the University of Rennes 1 (France) and a professional master's degree in ICT and Telecommunications Management from the UK Telecommunications Academy (UKTA).



Antoine Nkolo Biyidi

General Manager of JFN CENTER, the 1st Centre for the Incubation of Innovative Projects and the Acceleration of High Potential Companies approved by the Government of Cameroon, CEO of Douala

Tech Park and Member of the Executive Board of JFN Group. Holds an International M.Sc. in Computer Science and Information Systems, the title of IBM Engineer, a degree in General Economy and a DBA in Leadership & Management. He has over thirty (30) years' experience in the IT, Digital, Education and Entrepreneurship fields. Former of IBM France.

He also holds several certifications: (i) Professional Scrum Manager 1, (ii) Expert in Personal Development Strategies, (iii) Certified Fundraising Concepts.



Mr. François Xavier BELLA

(Orange Cameroon) Senior Manager, Head of Back-Office Operations in charge of IT&N maintenance, E2E QoS/QOE management and the SMC tools roadmap, after having been Head of the Engineering and Transmissions Department and in charge of the development strategy for its transport network. He has something like ten years' experience in network engineering, strategy, development and the management of multicultural and multi-ethnic teams in Cameroon.



Mr. Serge Armel NJIDJOU

(University Agency for Innovation)

Njidjou Serge Armel has been Head of the Studies and Projects Division at the GIE University of Dschang (2006 to 2020), Head of the Planning and Development Division at the University of Dschang (2008 to 2017), Head of the University Cooperation Division at the University of Dschang (2017 to 2020), Teacher-Coach (since 1996), Founder and Manager of the University Agency for Technological Innovation (since 2016).



Pierre-François KAMANOU

Held a Master's degree in Physics-Chemistry from the University of Yaounde Cameroon in 1983, obtained a diploma of Engineer at SUPELEC Paris in 1985, and a diploma of doctor-engineer at SUP TELECOM Paris in 1987.

From 1985 to 1997, he worked for a number of telecoms multinationals, including Alcatel-Thomson, Alcatel-Radiotelephone, TELEMATE Mobile, etc. he was managing director of MSI France, Director of Business Development at MSI Cellular Investment

He was responsible for acquiring mobile operator licenses in the countries : Cameroon, Senegal, Chad, CAR. Director of Business Development at MSI Cellular Investment.

1. Main points of the introductory presentation

The host emphasized four points:

- i. Internet coverage, which remains low and almost non-existent in remote areas;
- ii. The impact of unstable electricity infrastructure for the smooth running of digital technologies;
- iii. Mismatch between digital training provision (universities, schools, vocational training centers) and the special needs of businesses and administrations;
- iv. Inadequate regulatory and legal framework to meet the challenges of digital transformation.

The following recommendations have been made

- i. Improving digital and electricity infrastructure;
- ii. Develop digital skills in line with market needs;
- iii. Fostering innovation and digital entrepreneurship;

- iv. Improve the regulatory and legal framework to adapt it to the new challenges of the digital ecosystem, thus encouraging (national and/or international) investment in the sector.

2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

Mr. NNEMETE BEYEME François Joseph (Deputy Director of MINPOSTEL Regulation) outlined the Government's vision for the challenges of the 3-point digital transformation:

- i. The Government of Cameroon's Digital Agenda: strategic objectives, regulatory framework, government initiatives;
- ii. The quality of service and the role of the players impact the digital ecosystem: quality of service, role of regulators, Place of the consumers;
- iii. Cameroon's Digital Transformation Acceleration Project (PATNUC): UNCTAP objectives, implementation, partnerships and collaborations.

Mr. NKOLLO Antoine (General Manager of JFN), on human capital and digital skills.

- i. Skilled human resources to meet the challenge of digital transformation: state of digital skills, education and training, lack of specialization;
- ii. The reasons for the delay in digital transformation despite the existence of entities such as Minpostel, Antic and CENADI: coordination and synergy, resources and financing, organizational culture and regulation.

BELLA François Xavier (ORANCE Cameroon) on the challenges of VSEs and SMEs again digital transformation:

- i. More content tailored to user needs;
- ii. Investing more in digital infrastructure to improve the quality of interconnectivity service (Internet, 5G network, etc.)
- iii. Give access to the exploitation of fiber optics by licensed actors, in order to encourage competition and competitiveness.

Dr Ing. KAMANOU Pierre François (Chair of REPTIC), on Local Interconnection, a key pillar of the digital transformation of public administrations and businesses.

- i. Strengthening the governance of regulation
- ii. Set up (by Camtel) a local interconnection offer
- iii. Operationalize the 2 Internet Exchange Points (IXPs)
- iv. Facilitating access to public procurement for digital SMEs
- v. Supporting local startups

NJIDJOU Serge Armel (Agence Universitaire pour l'Innovation) on the current offer evaluation of communication service operators and digital service providers.

- i. Evaluation of the offer of digital service providers and operators (quality of services, diversity of offers, support and guidance)

- ii. Use of digital tools: Why do companies still use emails and personal numbers?
- iii. Challenges of digital transformation (lack of funding, limited skills, cybersecurity, resistance to change)
- iv. Adapting business processes from the organization to digital transformation (reorganization of processes, digitalization of services, integration of new technologies)
- v. Availability of skills for the Digital Agenda (internal skills, use of external experts, training)



Contributions from participants focused on:

1. Create positions or entities within each company and administration responsible for digital transformation projects, independent of CIOs (Chief Information Officer), IT Managers, etc.
2. Entrepreneurs, directors-general and the like must be the promoters of digital transformation projects;
3. Encourage competition in connectivity through offerings such as Starlink,
4. Emphasize in particular areas of artificial intelligence and digital intelligence of data collected from various sources;
5. Synergize with our different training structures, in order to harmonize digital training offerings in line with market needs.

3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

- R1 - Drawing up and implementing a National Digital Development Strategy (NDDS) in line with the SND30.
- R2 - Strengthen regulatory governance by creating a legal and technical framework for the effective implementation of regulatory texts, ensuring a fair and transparent application.
- R3 - Implementation by CAMTEL of an interconnection offer aimed at licensed operators of FTTH Internet access services and voice access services on virtual fixed numbers, to strengthen the local digital ecosystem.
- R4 - Put in place a regulatory incentive-based framework to facilitate access by digital VSEs/SMEs to public contracts, particularly for innovative services not included in the Market price lists.
- R5 -
1. Ensure the implementation of the following tasks by government agencies in charge of ICTs, in order to accelerate digitalization and strengthen the national digital ecosystem:
a. (1) Develop and deploy digital platforms for public services ;
b. (2) Support the digital transformation of public administrations;
c. (3) Promoting innovation and experimentation;
d. (4) Ensuring security and digital sovereignty;
e. (5) Coordinating the action of various actors (ministries, public operators and local authorities,...) to modernize public services and improve the user experience of citizens and public officials.
- R6 - Set up a regulatory incentive-based framework for the creation of digital free zones, inspired by successful models in African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Rwanda. The mission of these zones will be to finance and develop start-ups with major structuring projects, such as: Data centres, R&D centres, equipment manufacturing plants, software development.

Workshop 7 : SME financing “What’s wrong with SME financing?”

Host



Mr. Bernard OUNADJI

Expert with expertise in the economic and financial spectrum, ranging from corporate finance to the formulation of human development and poverty reduction programs, to the

review of public finances.

He has nearly 30 years of experience as a senior civil servant, particularly in the SNI, and as an economist in international institutions (UNDP, etc.). Since 2014, he has also served as Economic and Financial Adviser to several African countries, notably on negotiations with international financial institutions, formulation of poverty reduction plans, reconstruction plans and macroeconomic and monetary stabilization measures.

He was one of the authors of the restructuring of the banking system from his position as World Bank expert seconded to the Minister of Finance in 1991, where he was able to work for the development of the national banking project based on the rise of microfinance.

Facilitator



Omer MBADI, Journalist

A correspondent for Jeune Afrique in Cameroon, he covers news from the country in particular and from Central Africa to the mainland, with a strong interest for economics and finance. He is

also interested in the sub-region's community institutions.

Panel Members



Sylvie Amelle TCHANA SENGUET Epse MVAEBEME OKOMEN

Director Small and Medium Enterprises at the Ministry of SMEs, Social Economy and Crafts. She has previously held various strategic positions, including Head of the Statistics Unit at MINPMEESA and Research Officer at MINEPAT. Its expertise has led it to play a key role in the development of the National Development Strategy (SND 30), the monitoring of public policies and the support of SMEs in their structuring and upgrading. She is a Statistical Engineer and Economist, graduated from the National Higher School of Statistics and Applied Economics (ENSEA) in Abidjan in 2011 and holds a Master of Mathematical Sciences from the University of Yaoundé I. Rep MINPMEESA



Mr. Fernandel WAFO KUATE

Entrepreneur and leader who has built a strong and innovative company in the information and communication technologies (ICTs) and Home improvement

sector.

With a solid experience in the field of networks and telecoms, he founded CONNECTIK HALL SAS in 2003, with the desire to offer cutting-edge technological solutions to Cameroonian economic actors.

In 2017, it expanded CONNECTIK's range of services by offering Home Improvement solutions, thereby meeting the growing comfort and safety needs of individuals.



Marguerite ATANGA i

FONKWEN

Cameroonian banker, currently CEO of CCA Bank since May 2023.

She holds a DESS in Banking Management and an Executive

MBA from ESG UQAM in Canada.

His banking career spanned more than 20 years. She started at Société Générale de Banques in 1998 before joining Standard Chartered Bank in 2000, where she held various senior positions.

In 2008, she joined UBA Cameroon, progressing through the ranks to become Deputy Managing Director from 2018 to 2023.



Vivian Tchuenta Tchatchueng

Managing Director of FAKO CAPITAL, the first Cameroon-based impact investment fund he founded in 2022, with a mission to finance and support Cameroonian SMEs and startups with high growth

potential.

Prior to founding FAKO CAPITAL, Vivian held senior positions at Investors & Partners (I&P), where he was Senior Investment Manager and Deputy CEO for Cameroon, Operations Analyst and ESG at Injaro Investments Limited, covering several West African countries.

He holds an MBA and a Master's degree in Industrial Engineering. He is also certified in corporate strategy by HEC Paris.



Alexandre Beziaud

General Manager of SCB since 2020 after running the Cameroon branch of Société Générale. Aged 45 years old, he is an advanced system engineer from the Centrale Supélec and the

Technical University of Munich

1. Main points of the introductory presentation

After the moderator's introductory address, Mr. Ouandji followed his presentation, presenting a diagnosis related to the financing of SMEs in Cameroon. It is clear from this that the tightening of the conditions for access to finance for SMEs increases the level of non-performing loans from these players. Indeed, the overall effective rate (TEG) applicable to SMEs remains the highest of all economic actors in Cameroon. On the other hand, short-term loans, which are the most granted to SMEs, have the highest rates, peaking at 12%.

Against this background, the role of banks in financing SMEs remains crucial. Cameroon's low share of the banking market contributes to the marginalization of SMEs from access to bank credit, to the disadvantage of large enterprises and other multinationals. He felt that foreign banks were more willing to develop products and services for multinationals in their home country than those that could support SMEs and other local businesses. This can lead to stagnant or even declining economic growth.

On top of that, Cameroonian banks have the highest intermediation ratio. In other words, Cameroonian (local) banks have the highest propensity to convert deposits into loans (80%), compared to banks owned by Africans (65%) and those owned by French and other foreigners (57%). It is therefore important to encourage local players to invest in the banking sector, in order to improve intermediation ratios and thus improve SMEs' access to finance.

However, many constraints remain on SMEs' access to finance. These constraints include the lack of guarantees, the lack of equity capital on the part of SMEs, the sustainability of one-man business, the lack of control over the risks of SME-specific activities and the high level of interest rates, without claiming to be exhaustive.

2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

The panel members then shared their experience on the challenges of SMEs' access to finance, and also on the most immediate and remote solutions that can be brought to address this issue. They have spoken in turn.

Mme Armelle Tchana about the role of public authorities in improving access to finance for SMEs and the financing of businesses created by women.

The State has deployed a range of means to support SMEs in their creation and development, but only in view of the challenges encountered and the expected results, these means remain weak. There is therefore a need to step up support initiatives, support the ministries responsible and encourage the creation of more incubation structures for SMEs. The government should also increase SMEs' awareness of the importance of CGAs in their development and access to finance. They are bodies which enable them to improve accounting and control the tax matters according to the legal forms chosen by SMEs.

Mrs. Fonkwen Atanga about SMEs' barriers to have bank financing and credit risk reduction.

She noted that, despite the predominance of SMEs in the national economic landscape, they contribute little to GDP. Moreover, 60% die within 2 years of their creation. Of course, they bear a large share of the responsibility for this situation, particularly the size of the informal sector, which makes it difficult to provide support and trace; the poor financial education of SME promoters; poor accounting practices; asymmetrical information; the lack of guarantees and assets; and the predominance of one-man business. On the other hand, the banking sector has also been singled out, particularly with regard to: high credit interest rates for SMEs; the lack of suitable products for SME activities (the preponderance of standard banking products which do not necessarily meet the needs of SMEs). On the government side, the bad business environment has been singled out.

Mr. Beziaud, about risk mitigation for SMEs and financing for innovative enterprises.

The risk of SMEs has increased significantly at national level. The increase in the price of fuel without any real compensation, the increase in wages and the increase in late payments have destabilized SMEs. It seems necessary to focus on a refoundation of the Cameroonian economic sector, in order to bring about a change in the paradigm and behavior of the main actors. This requires a partnership approach, reducing risks

by reducing information asymmetries between SMEs, banks and large companies. To promote the financing of innovative enterprises, it is necessary to encourage different funding niches, such as the development of the interbank market. This market could allow banks with a low intermediation ratio to make available to banks with a high intermediation ratio the funds needed to support businesses. This would imply the development of innovative financing.

Mr. Ouandji about Barriers to SMEs' access to long-term finance.

It is important to improve intermediation ratios, and also to develop new sources of financing, such as capital bonds.

Vivian Tchuenta about alternative financing methods.



It is important for SMEs to be made aware of alternative sources of finance, such as private equity. Indeed, it is a way not only to improve the capital of companies, but also to improve their management with the input of new ideas. But these modes of financing are still vague, mainly because of the structure of local SMEs. They remain closed to equity or investment decisions for fear of losing their businesses. This can prevent them from raising large or small amounts of financing. He also stressed that SMEs must agree to structure themselves by clusters and sectors of activity in order to better attract finance.

M. Wafo about the role of the private sector in access to SMEs finance.

Private companies can partner with banks and microfinance institutions to develop financial products tailored to the needs of SMEs. For example, they can set up guarantee funds or mentoring programs to help SMEs with their financing efforts. The private sector can help promote the entrepreneurial culture by organizing events and training. These activities are already organized within GECAM, hence the need for companies to join in order to profit fully from them.

Contributions from participants

Discussions focused on the gap between what is said in the texts on SME financing and practice on the ground. Participants, who were mainly business leaders, noted that:

- Alternative financing methods offered by banks also have a number of constraints for SMEs. For example, in factoring, banks will only accept contracts if they are confident that they can be recovered. For more difficult invoices, they do not accept the contract;
- Despite the willingness of some entrepreneurs to open up their capital to investors, some SME promoters have been pushed out of their businesses by investors;
- Despite the availability of funding in several forms (finance lines and other banking products), SMEs still have difficulty in being informed about their existence. The real question is: where are the much-touted funds?
- SMEs remain an important source of financial support for Large Enterprises, despite the difficulties they face. There is a need to reverse the trend and allow Large Enterprises to be a real supporter for SMEs;
- The banking products and services available do not match the demand of SMEs.

3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

- R1 - Encourage SMEs to leave the informal sector for better traceability and support;
- R2 - Improve the financial education of SME managers, particularly in drawing up business plans and financial management;
- R3 - Improving the accounting and tax record-keeping of SMEs;
- R4 - Reduce information asymmetries by setting up platforms for dialogue and collaboration between SMEs, large companies and banks;
- R5 - Set up guarantee funds to improve SMEs' access to funding;
- R6 - Promote the structuring of SMEs to improve their management and encourage the development of national champions;
- R7 - Encourage banks to adapt their products and services to SMEs, at their different levels of operation and in their various sectors of activity;
- R8 - Improve the business climate by reducing corruption, administrative slowness and the inconsistency of public policies;
- R9 - Develop the interbank market to enable banks which lend less to support those which lend more. This would increase SMEs' access to funding;
- R10 - Set up a local development bank to support SME development efforts;
- R11 - Improve financial education for SMEs in order to aid in reducing ratio of outstanding SME bad debts;
- R12 - Implement equipment vouchers to improve the medium-term debt ratio;
- R13 - Set up a collaborative framework between banks, large companies and SMEs to improve the financing of large companies and to encourage them subcontracting at the national level with SMEs. This will boost the transfer of skills and technology;
- R14 - Stimulate SMEs to use alternative ways of funding, such as private equity. To achieve this, it is necessary to educate SME managers to accept collaboration mainly by opening up their capital;
- R15 - Improve the structure of SMEs into skill clusters and growth sectors;
- R16 - Improve the quality and scale of support for the creation and development of SMEs by the public authorities;
- R16 - Increase the number of incubation structures;
- R18 - Promote the use of CGAs by SMEs;
- R19 - Raise awareness of SMEs about the funding tools establish by the government and technical and financial partners.

Workshop 8 : Training and job readiness “How to increase the employability of young people?”

Key note speaker



Roaland Kwemain

Cameroonian leader and coach with international reputation. He served as world president of the Junior Chamber International and has trained leaders in more than 90 countries. He

supports companies and organizations in the areas of leadership, change management and executive coaching. He is also the founder of the Pan African Leadership and Entrepreneurship Foundation, which implements initiatives to develop leadership and entrepreneurship in Africa.

Facilitator



Nacisse Chassem

Deputy Executive Director N°1 and Head of the Delegation of the Cameroon Business Consortium (GECAM). He has served as Regional Representative and Vice-Chair of the Commission for

Improving the Business Environment at GICAM (now GECAM). In addition, he has carried out a number of consultations on decent work for the ILO.

Panel Members



Representative of MINEFOP

Director of Vocational Training and Guidance at MINEFOP.

Dr. Ibrahim Abba is currently a Cameroonian expert in education and vocational training. He has risen through the ranks of the Ministry

since 2015, having earned a PhD in Economics and a degree from ENAM. He is also a teacher and has played a key role in developing national development strategies. Its commitment: to improve the matching of training and employment for the development of Cameroon.



Zuchuon Rodrigue Raoul

Statistical Engineer and Economist obtained in 2003 at the National Higher School of Statistics and Applied Economics of Abidjan (ENSEA), holds a Diploma in Advanced Studies in

Mathematics from the University of Yaoundé I in 1999, and recently a Master II in Economic and Financial Engineering from the University of Rennes II in 2019. He has been a Subregional Specialist in Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation with the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for Central Africa and the Country Office for Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe for the past four years. Prior to this position, he spent 12 years as national coordinator of three entrepreneurship and youth and women's employment projects at the ILO Office in Yaoundé, where he contributed in particular to the integration of the employment dimension into Cameroon's national and sectoral development policy frameworks.



BISSALA Isaac

Cameroonian trade unionist with 42 years of experience. It has several important functions, including:

- President of the National Union of Employees, Officers and Executives of Banks and Other Financial Institutions of Cameroon (SYNEGCBFCAM);
- Secretary General of the Confederations of CEMAC Trade Union Workers.



Thierry NYAMEN

Doctor of Agricultural Mechanization, in his fifties, was awarded the 1st Prize and the Special Prize of the President of the Republic at the Business Creation Fair in 2003. In 2010, he was named Knight of the Order and of Value at the International Study Center of Ukraine.

Holder of a Bachelor's degree in Science (Series D) from Lycée Classique de Bafoussam, where he graduated with honors in 1989, he received a scholarship from the Cameroonian government to study in the USSR. After completing his engineering cycle, he pursued doctoral studies, during which he designed a unique machine for producing ground peanuts and extra virgin peanut oil obtained through first cold pressing. In 1998, he returned to Cameroon to put his invention into practice, manufacturing diverse and high-quality food products. By 2011, he expanded his brand to include snack foods and dog biscuits. Today, NTFOODS-TANTY transforms local agricultural raw materials into 22 products, with its soy porridge ranking as the number one infant cereal made in Cameroon.

In addition to these achievements, Thierry NYAMEN is a consultant and lectures on business creation and project management in top schools in Cameroon and abroad. He is frequently called upon by the International Organisation of La Francophonie for entrepreneurship-related matters and serves as a member of the Competitiveness Committee at the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Regional Development.

1. Main points of the introductory presentation

The presentation touched on several key issues:

- Key definitions of professional integration and employability.
- The current state of youth integration and the challenges faced.
- Concrete actions to improve employability.
- A key solution proposed: matching training and employment.

Main findings

- **High youth unemployment:** Difficulty in accessing employment despite training.
- **Training-market mismatch:** The skills acquired do not always correspond to the needs of employers.
- **Slow down economic growth:** The integration of young people is a crucial issue for growth.
- **Main goal:** Create more employment opportunities and improve the match between training and market needs.

Policy levers to enhance employability

- **Training aligned with jobs:** Integration of soft skills, digital skills and entrepreneurship into training programs.
- **Strengthening the private sector and entrepreneurship:** Creating an enabling environment for start-ups and SMEs.
- **Business engagement:** Promotion of internships, study programme and mentoring.
- **Innovation and digitalization:** Exploitation of new technologies for vocational integration.
- **State's role:** Tax incentives and a framework for youth employment.



2. Summary of contributions from panel members and participants

Gabriel Raoul DJANKOU NKUISSI about the importance of training matched with market needs and a better training-business relationship.

Stresses the need to adapt training programs to the real requirements of the labor market. He spoke of better collaboration between businesses and training institutions to ensure that young people are trained in the skills employers are looking for. This implies regular revision of curricula and active participation of companies in the definition of programs.

BISSALA Isaac about improving public employment services and establishing trade benchmarks.

Emphasizes the improvement of public employment services, in particular in terms of accessibility and efficiency. It proposes the creation of clear trade benchmarks to better direct jobseekers towards growing sectors and to define specific skills profiles for each trade. This would facilitate the matching of job vacancies with the qualifications of job seekers.

Dr. Ibrahim Abba about government programs to promote youth employment (SND30, certifications, training centers).

Highlights government programs such as SND30 (National Development Strategy 2030) to support youth employment. It mentions the importance of recognized vocational qualifications and specialized training centers for improving the skills of young people and making them more competitive in the labor market. These programs aim to ensure better integration of young people into the workplace.

Sanda Oumarou on job creation and skills upgrading.

Thierry NYAMEN about career guidance and recruitment.

He highlights the importance of career guidance to mentor young people towards promising sectors and occupations. He stresses the role of schools, universities and employment agencies in guiding young people towards training that matches



market needs. He also discusses strategies to encourage companies to recruit, for example by reducing the tax burden on recruitment or offering subsidies for youth employment.

ZUCHUON Rodrigue Raoul about promoting entrepreneurship and highlighting successful models.

He advocates greater promotion of entrepreneurship as a means of creating jobs. He underlined the importance of supporting young entrepreneurs through support programmes, funding and specific training. In addition, he proposes highlighting the success stories of local entrepreneurs in order to create a culture of entrepreneurship and encourage other young people to follow these inspiring examples.

Contributions and questions from participants

- Get businesses more involved in training.
- Ease the creation of in-company training centres.
- Raise awareness of the importance of social skills in recruitment.

3. The panel members' proposed recommendations

- R1 - Overhaul training programmes to line up with market needs.
- R2 - Implement a national strategy for entrepreneurship education.
- R3 - Promote short-term qualifications.
- R4 - Strengthen incentives for recruitment and work placements.
- R5 - Establish more formal linkage between training centres and employers 'association.
- R6 - Integrate vocational training players into economic policies.



X- CLOSING PLENARY

The ceremony was chaired by Mr. Alamine Ousmane Mey, personal representative of the Prime Minister and Head of Government.

The agenda was as follow:

At the opening, the advertisers who had contributed to the success of the event outlined the vision of their companies to the audience.

This was followed by:

- A summary of the recommendations from the various workshops and the opening panel;
- Thanks from the President of GECAM;
- The Prime Minister's closing remarks, read by his representative.



01. Summary of recommendations

This was read by Mr. Serge LONANG, Deputy Executive Director No. 2 of GECAM.

In accordance with the agenda for the 2025 edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings, the opening panel and the 8 thematic workshops were held and each resulted in the formulation of recommendations aimed at fixing the identified problems.

The opening panel discussed the issue of "Which Economic Policy Model should be used to build a fruitful deal to drive growth in the Cameroonian economy? ", The recommended measures are as follows:

Update the SND30, taking current economic dynamics into account in its assumptions;

1. Provide the body coordinating the implementation of SND 30 with full powers and a hierarchical position enabling it to effectively steer implementation (a senior SPM official could chair the body). It is crucial to strengthen the SDN30 implementation mechanism making it a genuine steering and monitoring-evaluation;
2. Improve consistency between sectoral policies (in this case, set up a body empowered to invalidate contradictory acts with the strategy's objectives);
3. Set up a National Economic Policy Committee (CNPE). This would be a body for dialogue, collaboration and the search for synergies between the State and the private sector to forge agreements on the key economic policy reforms and measures aimed at high GDP growth;
4. Turn the National Competition Commission into a genuine National Competition and Market Authority (ANCM). Its remit would be to clean up the goods and services markets and maintain healthy and fair competition. This would improve the usage rate of installed industrial capacity and reduce tax losses;
5. Reform MIRAP to become a market information management entity;
6. (It would be responsible for compiling information on production and market needs. Supply would be for private entities);
7. Lobby to attract foreign capital in the major trading centres (Shanghai, Washington, Brussels, etc.).

With regard to the first Workshop on the Development of Agribusiness on the theme 'Agricultural policy and import substitution: how to achieve a successful transformation?'

The following recommendations have been made:

8. Improving the financing of the agriculture sector through: (i) promotion and implementation of financing mechanisms tailored to agro-pastoral activities, at bank level (ii) setting up an agricultural subsidy mechanism (particularly for mechanisation) along the lines of what is practised elsewhere (EU with the CAP, USA, Brazil, India, etc.) (iii) completing the project to create an agricultural bank;
9. Speed-up land reform with a focus on agricultural and industrial land, to be specific: (i) setting up a programme to

mobilise, develop and provide agricultural land; (ii) reforming and empowering MAGZI with an economic model based on offering turnkey agro-industrial sites and economic zones; (iii) creating ZESs to increase the density of processing; (vi) determining the cancellation of a land title based on the prior approval of a multi-sectoral body under the coordination of the SPM;

10. Identify incentives to encourage the setting up of industrial production units for fertilisers, phytosanitary products and other plant material;
11. (i) Promote 'Made in Cameroon', particular by strengthening measures to support local processing and consumption sectors; (ii) Streamline the implementation of the import-substitution policy, based on the quality and availability of local supply and more generally, ensure that all the relevant ministerial departments strive to result in a real substance.

The theme of the second workshop on tax and customs issues was 'What consistency between economic policy and taxation policy.'

The following recommendations have been made:

12. Improve debt and public expenditure management to be more efficient and effective so to reduce the negative impacts on the private sector, in particular through the creation of new taxes;
13. (i) Streamline and optimize fiscal and customs incentives to: avoid competitive distortions; protect public finances; ensure consistency between incentives and economic policy objectives; (ii) Complete in consultation with the Private Sector, the ongoing amendment process of the Law of April 2013, which distorts competition in sectors that are already mature, and focus the measures granted on focal sectors, while considering the inclusive development of the country's various regions;
14. Strengthen and perpetuate dialogue between taxation and customs administrations and the private sector, with RECs providing one of the best frameworks for this purpose;
15. Provide parliamentarians with the tools they need to measure the consistency between economic policy and taxation policy during the adoption of the Finance Act (Capacity building, setting up a framework for dialogue between the private sector

and parliamentarians in particular);

16. Reconsider the determining system for the flat-rate minimum, whose current rate of 2.2% based on turnover is maladjusted. Confirm the abolition of the 5.5% withholding tax for companies subject to the IGS. These changes will broaden the tax base by attracting certain entities to the formal ;
17. Advocate to tax and customs authorities on the basis of studies by highlighting the potential costs or profits for the State.

The theme of the third workshop on energy and industry was 'What energy policy for efficient industrial development?'

The following recommendations have been made:

18. Ensure that current projects are completed by taking into account all their components (production, transport, distribution);
19. Effectively implement a more competitive energy mix by developing more gas and solar energy to stabilise supply and reduce reliance on hydroelectricity;
20. Review the pricing and the economic model to align energy costs to promote industrial productivity;
21. Speed-up payment of the public debt to ENEO to make it easier for the company to control its operations;
22. Review the governance of SONATREL to improve the performance of energy transport.

The fourth workshop focused on 'The role of governance in the competitiveness of public and private companies'.

The following recommendations have been made:

23. Incorporate respect for ethical values and the collective interest into basic education to combat practices such as corruption, which hinder development and competitiveness;
24. Intensify the fight against corruption in the provision of public services, in particular by drawing up, adopting and strictly implementing a code of ethics for public personnel;
25. Raise companies' awareness of the solutions proposed in the good governance code drawn up by GECAM with support of AFD-PROPARCO Group and encourage them to adopt the principles contained therein;
26. Encourage businesses that meet the criteria

to set up effective boards of directors made up of conscious members about the role they are playing in defining the company's strategy, need for competitiveness, stability, innovation and transparency in management, and who implement rules that govern the clearly distribution of powers within the company.

The theme of the fifth workshop on infrastructure development was 'The need for heavy infrastructure investment to boost growth'

Recommendations:

27. Set up a national road authority responsible for identifying, carrying out and ensuring the profitability of major road projects. It will ensure that the most cost-effective financing solutions are identified;
28. Implement an in-depth reform programme for CARPA to provide it with more substantial financial and human ;
29. Diversify and improve the infrastructure financing with innovative sources of financing based on local resources from CTDs and other private actors.

The theme of the sixth workshop, Digital and innovation for business, was "How can we catch up in the digital transformation of businesses and administrations? "

Recommendations:

30. Drawing up and implementing a National Digital Development Strategy (NDDS) in line with the SND30;
31. Strengthen regulatory governance by creating a legal and technical framework for the effective implementation of regulatory texts, ensuring a fair and transparent application;
32. Implementation by CAMTEL of an interconnection offer aimed at licensed operators of FTTH Internet access services and voice access services on virtual fixed numbers, to strengthen the local digital ecosystem;
33. Setting up a regulatory incentive-based framework to facilitate access by digital VSEs/SMEs to public contracts, particularly for innovative services not included in the Market price;
34. Set up a regulatory incentive-based framework for the creation of digital free zones, inspired by successful models in African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Rwanda. The mission of these

zones will be to finance and develop start-ups with major structuring projects, such as: Data centres, R&D centres, equipment manufacturing plants, software development, etc.

The seventh workshop on SME financing focused on 'SME financing, what's wrong? "

Recommendations:

35. Quickly and effectively set up a National Investment Bank and restructure the BCPME;
36. Improve the financial education of SME managers, specially in the use of alternative financing, business plans preparation, financial and accounting management, the financing tools implemented by the government and technical and financial partners;
37. Reduce information asymmetries by setting up platforms for dialogue and collaboration between SMEs, large companies and banks;
38. Set up guarantee funds to improve SMEs' access to funding;
39. Encourage banks to adapt their products and services to SMEs, at their different levels of operation and in their various sectors of activities.

The theme of the eighth workshop on training and job readiness issues was: "How to increase the employability of young people? "

40. Align training programmes with market needs;
41. Strengthen the financial capacity of the National Employment Fund, enable it fully play its role as the employment of job seekers and in forecasting for the reduction of the unemployment rate;
42. Develop and implement a national strategy for entrepreneurship education.
43. Promote short-term qualifications;
44. Strengthen incentives for recruitment and work placements;
45. Integrate vocational training players into economic policies.

Finally, a major and decisive recommendation is to:

46. Establish by means of formal act from His Excellency the Prime Minister and Head of Government, a participatory or joint committee for the monitoring the above recommendations

02. Thanks from the President of GECAM

This address was intended to be short, to express the deep gratitude of the Employer's Association, and indeed of the private sector, all the participants for their invaluable contribution to the success of this first edition of the REC.

Specific thanks were expressed to the Prime Minister for his personal involvement, as well as the large and unprecedented involvement of the members of the Government.

The Government's involvement was also evident in the workshops through the personal and active involvement of several members of the Government

(MINADER, MINEPIA, MINEE). This involvement led to the formulation of tangible commitments on the latter, particularly with regard to expanding energy supply. It is also worth noting that the Minister for the Economy has mobilised some twenty senior officials from his department to take part in all the workshops, so that they can immerse themselves in the recommendations made.

Finally, the Prime Minister was asked to pursue this commitment through careful examination and effective implementation of the recommendations.

A date has been set for the second edition of the RECs on 25 and 26 March 2026, which will also be an opportunity to assess the progress made in implementing the recommendations.



03. Closing remarks by the PM

Read by **Mr. Alamine OUSMANE MEY** personal representative of the Prime Minister and Head of Government



Distinguished members of government, distinguish Figures, President of the Cameroon Business Consortium, representatives of socio-professional organisations, representatives of technical and financial development partners, Heads of industry and business leaders, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have come to the end of the first edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings, a highly commendable initiative. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the stakeholders for their effective and active participation in this intense work of deep reflection and rich and fruitful exchanges. Without doubt, your interest in the relevant themes and, above all, the high quality of your contributions have lived up to legitimate expectations, both during the plenary session and in the workshops, Thank you very much. I would particularly like to thank the panel members for their excellent presentations. As we all know, they have magnificently facilitate these two days of meetings I would also like to offer my warmest congratulations and encouragement to the Cameroon Business Consortium and to all those who have worked both in the spotlight and behind the scenes to make these meetings a complete success. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the Figures who have come from friendly and partner countries to honour this now historic event with their august presence. I hope that their stay in Cameroon, the land of the Indomitable Lions or the Continent as it is often described, has given them the desire, the great desire to return very often and specifically to invest in a win-win approach.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests, at the formal opening of these meetings, I urged you to reflect and exchange views on all aspects of the economic issue growth driven by the Private Sector in Cameroon in a climate of profound change. Of course, one of the virtues of these meetings is exactly that they have given rise to friendly debate in a constructive manner, without wishing to impose any point of view in order lecturing, and rightly so. Given the breadth and richness of the discussions that have taken place here in Yaoundé, I cannot dwell on all the opinions expressed, as that would be a time-consuming. I would simply like to take note of the recommendations that have just been read out and adopted by all the participants in these first Edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings. I can assure you that these recommendations will be brought to the very high attention of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya, after the Government has studied their institutional, financial and legal feasibility and their priority. I promise you that they will not go unheeded. In any event, we will be assessing how mature they are at the next session of the Cameroon Business Forum, which I shall be chairing this time in Douala, in the very near future.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, to conclude, I would like to share with you once again the analysis of the President of the Republic in his end-of-year address for 2024 and the New Year 2025, when referring to the industrial sector and correlatively to the Private Sector as a whole. The Head of State said: "There is no doubt that the development of this sector is the keystone of the economic emergence to which our country legitimately aspires."

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is on this basis coupled with calls for great mobilisation of all players for our country's emergence, that I declare closed the first Edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings. Long live the dialogue between the State and the Private Sector, Long live the public-private partnerships, and Long live Cameroon and its illustrious leader, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya.

Thank you for your kind attention.

XI- Acceleration program for start-ups: Master Class for 50 start-ups on business plan preparation

Trainer



FONIN NKOUONKAM ALAIN, Managing Partner of AIM (Agribusiness Investment Management) SARL, a consultancy firm which he is co-founded. Its main activities include carrying out technical and financial studies, drawing up business plans, assisting in the search for financing, and interim organising and managing.

He is a graduate of the Université Libre de Tunis (Specialised Master's Degree in Management Control and Auditing), after having studied at the Institut des Hautes Etudes en Management (Commercial Engineering Degree in Marketing) of the INSTEC Group (Higher Institute of Commerce and Distribution Techniques) in Abidjan.

In the wake of the first Edition of the Cameroon Economic Meetings (REC 2025), GECAM also wanted to contribute to the competitive spirit of young entrepreneurs through a short acceleration program in a Master class.

The overall theme for the Master class was: **Business plan preparation.**

In fact, research into the main obstacles encountered by young entrepreneurs in developing their business indicates the issue of mobilising conventional financing, in this case bank financing. While the start-up of a project very often relies on the mobilisation of own or family resources, its expansion and sustainability generally require larger and more stable capital. At this point, promoters need to persuade potential investors that the project is profitable. The business plan, which is the book of information about the project, becomes the essential tool for communicating the project's prospects. It is the key element required by financiers to assess the economic relevance of the project. It highlights the promoter's mastery of all the relevant parameters surrounding the project, and the clear mechanisms for achieving a return on investment, with details of the timescales, requirements and resources needed.

The fact that many promoters are unfamiliar with the basic principles involved in business plan preparation is one of the main barriers to accessing bank finance.

Accordingly, on 26 and 27 February 2025, two Master class sessions were held on the preparation of

Business plans for entrepreneurs, led by Mr. Alain FONIN NKOUONKAM.

The first session was held on 26 February from 9.45am to 1pm and the second on 27 February from 11.30am to 2.30pm in the BETE A room at the HILTON.

The main objective of this training was to help SMEs draw up their profitable technical and economic project in a document that would be attractive to stakeholders, in particular banks and financial institutions, so as to control the implementation and development of their project.

36 learners attended the training, 30 on the 26th and 6 on the 27th.

I- Organisation of the course

Using an interactive talk format, the trainer led the entrepreneurs to draw up their project in a document that would be attractive to stakeholders, so as to master implementation and development, while ensuring that their project is technically viable and economically profitable. **An example of a Business plan was shown as a practical case.**

The training was structured in three phases:

PHASE 1: PROJECT MATURATION

In this phase, the topics covered were:

- The project idea;
- Gathering of preliminary information: estimates;

- Analysis of the Business model (sources of revenue, key activities, key resources, partners, value proposition, customer relations, market segments, distribution, cost structure).

PHASE 2: DRAFTING THE BUSINESS PLAN

This phase covers market analysis, general policy and strategy, marketing strategy, company organisation and structuring, and technical and financial studies.

➤ Market analysis

- Dynamics and prospects of the sector worldwide and in Cameroon;
- Competitive analysis (bargaining power of customers, bargaining power of suppliers, threat of new entrants and threat of substitute products);
- PESTEL analysis (factors in the general environment);
- Participatory SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

➤ General policy and strategy

- Strategic vision of the company;
- Missions, company values and setting of strategic goals.

➤ Marketing strategy

- Market segmentation;
- Targeting;
- Company positioning;
- Product policy;
- Pricing policy;
- Communication policy;
- Distribution policy.

➤ Company organisation and structure

- Legal form;
- Organizational chart;
- Staffing plan.

➤ Technical study



Review of technologies (state of the art)

- Definition of basic metrics and limitations (e.g. desired annual production, composition, budget to be respected, geographical constraints, sources of income if other than the main product of interest);
- Review of input preparation technologies;
- Review of competing technologies;
- Review of applicable standards and regulations;

Preliminary flow chart

- Choice of technologies;
- Technological proposal for transferring equipment between units
- Production of the process flow diagram (PFD)

Mass and energy balances

- Definition of the operating ranges and selection of an operating condition for carrying out the mass and energy balances;
- Definition of assumptions for carrying out mass and energy balances;

Define the key figures for the production units (sizing);

- Describe the products;
- Describe the raw materials;
- Draw up the staffing plan;

➤ Financial study

- Project cost;
- Investment plan and structure;
- Analysis of development hypotheses;
- Project implementation schedule;
- Financing plan;
- Forecast operating costs over 5 years;
- 5-year projected turnover;
- 5-year forecast income statement;
- 5-year cash flow plan;
- Financial analysis: Rate of return, payback period; break-even point;
- Risk analysis;
- Sensitivity analyses.

PHASE 3: COMPLETION OF WORK

- Proofreading;
- Executive summary;
- Light version;
- Infographic;
- Pitch;
- Confidentiality agreement.

II- RESULTS

Participants were made aware of the importance of drawing up a business plan and had a better understanding of the content of the document.

Following the question and answer session, an example of a business plan for a limited company was presented to the entrepreneurs, enabling them to put theory into practice.

The training ended with practical advice on the importance of drawing up a business plan.



XII- The B2B

Introduction

The Economic Meetings B2B workshops took place on 26 and 27 February 2025 same day-to-day spaces as workshops, bringing together key players from the economic world for fruitful exchanges, opportunities for collaboration and strategic partnerships. The event attracted **115 participants** and involved **14 companies** from a wide range of sectors.

Workshop objectives

Main objectives of the B2B workshops:

- Facilitate discussion between companies and participants to discover new business opportunities.
- Promote collaboration between different economic players to stimulate innovation and growth.
- Highlight market trends and challenges with a view to finding solutions tailored to companies' needs.

Running of the event

The B2B workshops were organised in the form of interactive sessions in pairs, where participants had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with representatives from companies in various sectors.

The sessions were adjusted to the various needs of the participants, whether they were young entrepreneurs, investors or managers from large companies.

Profile of Participants

The event attracted **115 participants** from a wide range of backgrounds:

Entrepreneurs looking for new partners to develop their projects.

Investors interested in financing opportunities.

Companies managers looking for innovative solutions to improve their performance.

Institutional players involved in economic and social projects.

The diversity of participants led to rich and constructive discussions, helping to create a positive environment for collaboration.

Participating companies

All the 14 companies and public authorities that took an active part in these workshops.

Results and Effects

The B2B workshops created synergies between the participants and the involved companies. :

- **Positive feedback:** Participants expressed general satisfaction with the quality of the discussions and the organization of the workshop. Many emphasized the richness of the discussions and the choice of speakers.
- **Negative feedback:** Participants expressed a problem with the simultaneous running of the Workshops and B2Bs, which prevented them from attending the B2Bs.

Conclusion

The B2B workshops of the Economic Meetings were a resounding success, providing an ideal platform to encourage sharing expertise, collaboration and the creation of new business opportunities. The participation of 115 economic players and the involvement of 14 intervening companies demonstrated the importance of this type of event in energizing the economic landscape and fostering the development of a sound business network.

The event not only strengthened existing business relationships, but also laid the foundations for future fruitful collaborations, contributing to the growth of local businesses and job creation in various sectors.

Recommendations for Future Editions

- **Increase sector diversity:** Invite more companies from emerging sectors, such as artificial intelligence and renewable energies.
- **Optimize discussion time:** Offer more time for face-to-face discussions, to encourage more in-depth sharings.





XIII- THE ENTREPRENEUR'S GALA: AWARDS CEREMONY



The RECs were also an opportunity for employers to showcase the excellence of their entrepreneurs. A jury chaired by **Me Jackson Francis KAMGA**, former President of the Cameroon Bar Association, identified and selected the winners of the five prizes. The aim was to award prizes to 5 companies that stood out in their field of activity, while respecting the criteria drawn up by the scientific committee.

Five areas of excellence were selected:

- Economic resilience and inclusive growth



- Climate resilience & promoting a sustainable economy
- Innovation and energy efficiency
- Applied research & technological and digital innovation
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with an impact on SME support & youth mentoring

To identify the nominees, data was collected by the scientific committee, which at the end of the process issued the final jury with a shortlist of 15 companies (3 for each theme).

1. Economic resilience and inclusive growth: **SOCTRACAO SARL**

General Manager: NDEH Dieudonné

Activity: Cocoa processing and marketing of by-products

The company has a factory specialized in cocoa processing and the marketing of its by-products (chocolates, cocoa powder, cocoa butter, chocolate spread, toilet soaps, hair oil, etc.), under the “NYA MBOA” brand. It also manufactures semi-industrial processing machines locally, and provides installation and training in the use of this equipment.



2. Climate resilience & promoting a sustainable economy: **NAME RECYCLING**

General Manager: Roblain NAMEGNI

Activity: Plastic packaging recycling.

The company collects and transforms plastic packaging into granules for export to European industries. 3000 tons are recycled every year. It works in partnership with SABC.



3. Innovation and energy efficiency: **SOCAPALM**

General Manager: Dominique CORNET

Activity: Creation of energy from waste products and utilization of 100% of the energy created.

Apart from ENEO and diesel oil, the energy produced by the turbines during machining is almost 9,935,547 kWh. The turbines are fuelled by the fibers and shells from the machining of walnut bunches. A 2nd biomass boiler has been installed at Mbongo. Socapalm has also installed solar-powered public lighting.



4. Applied research & technological and digital innovation: **CYBERIX Sarl**

General Manager: Dr. Gérard EYOUM

Activity: cyber security, instruction and training, legal cyber expertise

A national leader in cyber security, CYBERIX is the first firm to be accredited by the International Payment Card Security Council.

They running in penetration tests, payment system audits and cyber intelligence.

Cyberix has designed the Cyclope System, a system specialized in the fight against fraud in banking institutions. This system ensures the security of operations, the prevention of data leakage and the detection of financial fraud.

Accreditation obtained: Qualified Security Assessor, the only one in the CEMAC zone to be accredited by SWIFT INTERNATIONAL.



5. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with an impact on SME support & youth mentoring: **THE PUENE FOUNDATION from Hôtel Franco**

General Manager: Hon Françoise PUENE

Activity: Guidance and Empowerment of young people

Training, coaching and support activities for young project leaders in several towns. She is the main resource person supporting MINJEUN's Youth Connectt government project.





REC 2025

1st EDITION

