

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix-Travail-Patrie

ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE

CABINET DU PRESIDENT

9^{EME} LEGISLATURE

ANNEE LEGISLATIVE 2017

2^{EME} SESSION ORDINAIRE

JUIN 2017

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace-Work-Fatherland

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

9TH LEGISLATIVE PERIOD

2017 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

2ND ORDINARY SESSION

JUNE 2017

OPENING SPEECH

**BY RT HON. CAVAYE YEGUIE DJIBRIL,
SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Yaounde, 8 June 2017

- **The President of the Senate;**
- **The Prime Minister, Head of Government;**
- **The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;**
- **The Attorney General of the Supreme Court;**
- **Members of Government;**
- **Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Representatives of International Organisations;**
- **Honourable Members of the National Assembly;**
- **Distinguished members of Civil Society;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we open our proceedings for the second Ordinary Session of our House for the 2017 legislative year, the topical event warrants us to join the entire nation to express our consternation and deep compassion following the death of His Lordship Jean-Marie Benoit Bala, Bishop of Bafia. Through my voice, the National Assembly extends its sincere condolences to the hard-hit Catholic Christian community.

In the same vein, I am saddened to announce the death of one of our colleagues. Hon. MADJELE passed away on 14 May, after an illness. She was a CPDM Member of National Assembly from the Mayo-Kani north in the Far North Region who was serving her first term.

On behalf of the entire House allow me, from this rostrum, to pay her tribute and wish that her soul rest in peace in her native land.

In these painful circumstances, please rise for a minute of silence in their memory.

SILENCE

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite this sad news, I would like to wish you a warm welcome and a pleasant stay at the National Assembly on the occasion of this plenary sitting.

Honourable Members of the National Assembly, my Dear Colleagues,

I am happy to observe that beyond our differences and divergent views, the warmth and conviviality that have always characterized our reunions are intact. This is undoubtedly proof that we all are conscious of our particularly important role as elected representatives of the People.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As in the past, the second ordinary session opens today, after the celebration of the National Day of Cameroon, **the celebration of Unity**. In spite of some calls for boycott aimed at inciting compatriots to counteract the general move for unity, it is clear to see that the 45th edition of the National Unity celebrations, this 2017, fully lived up to expectations. Once again, it confirmed how deeply Cameroonian men and women treasure the unity of their fatherland. We can say without mincing words that during the 45th celebration of National Unity, **the Republic of Cameroon, a unitary and decentralised State**, was magnified more than ever, clearly circumventing the spectre of division.

“Cameroon’s unity is a precious legacy with which no one should take liberties”, President **Paul Biya** fittingly reminded us in his address to the nation on 31 December 2016. Several other messages from the nation’s driving forces, shortly before the National Day, consistently proclaimed the sanctity of this legacy. On this note, I am happy to mention the declaration of the North West Fons’ Union published in Bamenda on 5 May 2017, I quote: **“We reaffirm our commitment to a one and indivisible, bilingual and multicultural Cameroon”**. End of quote. **I couldn’t have said it any better.**

In my capacity as Lamido, a title devolved to Traditional Rulers in my native region, I must agree with their vision of Cameroon. May I personally extend heartfelt and hearty congratulations to my counterparts, Fons of the North West, for this brave, pertinent and historic stance. It is undeniable proof that **wisdom and good sense** will prevail against the ambitions of some individuals.

Also, on behalf of the entire House, I would like to warmly commend the people of Cameroon for their maturity, for their extraordinary and exceptional mobilisation on 20 May 2017. The longer we stay united, the better Cameroon will be. I will never stop reminding you that “**United we stand, divided we fall**”.

Therefore, **my fellow countrymen**, I would like to encourage you to always believe in the virtues of dialogue, no matter the disagreements we may have. I therefore extend patriotic greetings to all fellow citizens who, at some point in time, expressed themselves through personal standpoints and opinions or through group demands and who later agreed to sit down for open, candid and constructive dialogue during negotiations with the public authorities.

They are the true patriots, contrary to **the extremists, the die-hards**, the boycott policy experts. The efforts of these true

patriots have not been in vain. The results are evident. Let me mention as examples, some actions taken or underway:

- the creation of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism;
- the release, without external or internal pressure and for purposes of appeasement, of the citizens arrested within the framework of the violence perpetrated in the North-West and South-West Regions;
- the publication of the official English and French versions of the Penal Code and OHADA Instruments;
- the upcoming reforms of the legal and judicial system with the creation of the Common Law department at the Supreme Court;
- the upcoming recruitment of more English-speaking lecturers, trainee judicial and legal officers and trainee court registrars at the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM);
- the creation of new departments in State universities to balance out or harmonise teaching of the two official languages and law in these institutions;
- the massive recruitment and redeployment of staff at higher, secondary and basic education levels;
- the disbursing of special grants, as well as the processing and payment, in April 2017, of substantial salary arrears to young secondary school teachers.

Just to name a few.

In that regard, I must applaud with deference the main architect of this entire process, **His Excellency Paul Biya**, President of the Republic, Head of State. Let me especially laud the **clairvoyant leader, humanist brimming with experience and wisdom; the leader ever keen to listen and sensitive to the aspirations of his compatriots.**

As regards the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, the MUSONGE Commission as it is now called, allow me, **ladies and gentlemen**, to congratulate each of its 15 members. They are vested with the full confidence of the Head of State who appointed them and that of the people of Cameroon who have high hopes in them. This is why I firmly believe that these personalities will introduce the appropriate mechanisms to foster and promote **the culture of harmonious coexistence**, a determining factor in the consolidation of our national unity and our quest for emergence.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On a totally different topic, may I recall that the 2016-2017 academic year is coming to an end. After the unrest throughout the year in the North West and South West Regions, thousands of our young compatriots have for some days now – in relative serenity, I might add – been sitting for the various official and entrance examinations at the different levels of education.

Firstly, on behalf of all Members of the National Assembly elected in the 9th Legislative Period, I wish these young compatriots total success.

Allow me to seize this opportunity to solemnly acknowledge and commend, in this Plenary Hall of the People, the measures taken by Government to ensure the effective holding of all national and entrance examinations nationwide, thereby defeating the conspiracy cooked up by some to cause a blank school year in Cameroon. The technical ministries of Basic, Secondary and Higher Education deserve the congratulations, encouragement and full support of our House. I however recommend that they remain vigilant. Till the end, they must ensure that their initiatives are consolidated and make sure that they achieve all the expected positive results.

I also hope today, more than in the past and especially with respect to the future, that surveillance will be reinforced on campuses as well as school and university hostels. In these milieus, drugs are being circulated and consumed at increasingly worrisome proportions.

We need youths with healthy bodies and minds able to face the challenges of today and tomorrow – youths worthy of our great country.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, allow me to present a brief overview of the recess period which ends today. Since we parted ways on 11 April 2017, our House has been intensively active, especially on the diplomatic front. Apart from the audiences granted by your humble servant to a wide array of personalities, the National Assembly hosted a delegation of European parliamentarians on 24 March 2017. Discussions with Cameroonian parliamentarians delved on biodiversity preservation, forest governance and land reforms. Another visit, this time from our Chadian colleagues, came under the framework of the Chad-Cameroon Friendship Group.

On the international scene, it is my immense pleasure to announce that during the recent General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, our compatriot CHUNGONG Martin was re-elected to the prestigious post of Secretary-General of the IPU. **Congratulations.**

Some of the parliamentary delegations deployed include the delegation of National Assembly Members and Senators headed by the Senior Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. ETONG Hilarion, which participated in the 25th Africa Regional Assembly of the Francophonie Parliamentary Assembly (APF) from 22 to 24 May 2017 in Morocco.

Speaking of our cooperation with APF, let me also announce that the National Assembly of Cameroon was elected into the NORIA programme, for the funding of internal projects over four years.

The first project to be carried out under this framework and in the course of this year is called: **“LIVE STREAMING WEB TV”**. Costing a total of **thirty thousand Euros**, that is, a little over **nineteen point five million CFA Francs**, this project is a tool for the closed circuit broadcasting of our plenary sittings. **Let me say a heartfelt thank-you to APF.**

On that note, I declare open the proceedings of our House for the second ordinary session of the 2017 Legislative Year.

Long live the National Assembly,

Long Live Cameroon, and its illustrious leader, His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

Thank you!