

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

9th Legislative Period

LEGISLATIVE YEAR 2016

1st Ordinary Session

(March 2016)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie

OPENING SPEECH

BY

THE ELDEST MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Yaounde, 10 March 2016

- **The Eldest Member of the Senate;**
- **Mr Prime Minister, Head of Government;**
- **Members of Government;**
- **The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;**
- **The Attorney General of the Supreme Court;**
- **Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament and Dear Colleagues;**

- **Distinguished Members of the Civil Society;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Once more, in accordance with the relevant legal provisions, I have the singular honour to mount the rostrum of our august House in my capacity as the Eldest Member.

Hence, on behalf of the Provisional Bureau which I have the honour to chair and my humble self, I wish you a

very warm welcome to the National Assembly for this plenary sitting devoted to the opening of the first ordinary session of our Chamber for the 2015 legislative year.

But before we proceed, I would like to inform you that we have amongst us special invitees from several countries of the sub-region. They are attending a workshop on promoting sustainable investment in agriculture:

legal and policy options. I wish to particularly acknowledge the presence of MPs of the CEMAC Parliament and its President, Hon. Vincent Mavoungou. I pray them to rise for recognition. You are welcome. I wish you a pleasant stay in Yaounde.

- Your Excellencies,**
- Honourable Colleagues,**
- Distinguished Guests,**
- Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Without mincing words, our session is opening within the context of sorrow caused by the terrorist acts being perpetrated in the northern region of our country by heartless individuals who fear neither God nor man. I am referring here to the radical group known as the BOKO HARAM sect which has caused sorrow and bereavement to several Cameroonian families. To all those who have fallen: women, men, children, the

elderly and elements of the defence forces, may their souls rest in peace. In this regard, may you kindly rise for a minute of silence in honour of our dear departed ones.

[**Silence**]

- Ladies and Gentlemen,
I wish to seize this opportunity to once more commend **His Excellency PAUL BIYA, President of the Republic, Head of State and Commander-in-chief of the**

Armed Forces for his absolute resolve to overcome BOKO HARAM once and for all. I equally hail the same determination of the defence forces who are recording victories in spite of the difficulties on the battle field. I give them my total encouragement. I know, **Dear Colleagues**, that all of us in this House are resolutely behind the Head of State, Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, and behind our

defence forces. Such is the stance of all Cameroonians irrespective of political or religious leanings who have continued to pledge their support and solidarity towards our valiant soldiers and compatriots in distress in the areas concerned. The most recent gesture which I am delighted to point out here is the disbursement of over five billion CFA francs on the instructions of the **Head of State, His Excellency PAUL**

BIYA for the urgent construction of school infrastructure in the Far North Region in a bid to enhance the accommodation capacity of the schools charged with absorbing the displaced pupils and students. This is a far-reaching gesture after two others namely: the great patriotic march at the 20th May Boulevard in Yaounde and the offer of gifts worth over 80 million CFA francs to the war victims and the

defence forces in Maroua on 6 March 2015 by the elite of the Adamawa, North and Far North Regions. My wish is to see such gestures of solidarity emulated.

It would be a remiss of me if I did not acknowledge here the resolute mobilization of the international, African and other sub-regional communities. Pending a possible United Nations resolution, the African Union,

the Community of Central African and the West African States coupled with the Countries of the Lake Chad Basin, several friendly countries as well as various government and non-governmental organizations have, through multifarious actions, pledged their support to Cameroon in the war. On behalf of the Nation's Representatives, I extend profound gratitude to all and sundry.

Still in the same vein, the combination of the African forces presently noticed on the field, coupled with the recent summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Central African States in Yaounde, is a solace in our hopes to see the radical BOKO HARAM sect eradicated once and for all. Already, information from the battle front smacks of a kind of panic within this troop of terrorists,

thereby heralding the imminent fall of this sect and its leader who is a real incarnation of the devil.

To all friendly countries, led by Chad, followed by Niger and Benin, whose troops are part of the coalition, we extend special gratitude as the war against BOKO HARAM is more than ever a common cause. The old man that I am exhorts them to go forward because victory is theirs, victory is ours

and it is especially the victory of African solidarity.

- Honourable Members of the National Assembly and Dear Colleagues,

The agenda of our proceedings provides for the election, in the days ahead, of the Permanent Bureau of our Chamber. It is an exercise to

which we are accustomed. It is governed by suitable mechanisms, rules and discipline. I appeal to you to undertake this exercise with serenity. Let us not give room to certain sirens of misfortune and other doomsday professionals who flirt with useless speculations. **Cameroon is standing tall and moving forward.**

I now declare open the proceedings of the first

ordinary session of the National Assembly for the Legislative year 2015.

- **Long Live the National Assembly,**
- **Long live Cameroon with its illustrious Leader, His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces!**

Thank you!