

**REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN**

*Paix - Travail – Patrie*

**ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE**

**CABINET DU PRESIDENT**

**9ème LEGISLATURE**

**ANNEE LEGISLATIVE 2017**

**NOVEMBRE 2017**

**REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

*Peace - Work – Fatherland*

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**SPEAKER’S OFFICE**

**9<sup>th</sup> LEGISLATIVE PERIOD**

**2017 LEGISLATIVE YEAR**

**NOVEMBER 2017**

**OPENING SPEECH**

**BY**

**THE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,**

**RT HONOURABLE CAVAYE YEGUIE DJIBRIL**

**Yaounde, 14 November 2017**

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am first and foremost obligated to perform the sorrowful duty of inviting you to turn your thoughts to our departed colleague Hon. LISINGE Arthur EKEKE, CPDM Member of the National Assembly of the Buea Urban Constituency, who died on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 after an illness. He was a member of the Production and Trade Committee and was at his first mandate in this House. On behalf of Members of the National Assembly, I extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved family and to the Buea Urban Constituency. Hon. LISINGE Arthur EKEKE may your soul Rest in Perfect Peace! I now call on you to please rise to pay homage, by holding a minute's silence, in memory of the departed.

### **SILENCE**

- 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 Organizations;
- Honourable Members of the National Assembly;
- Distinguished Members of the Civil Society;
- Dear Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

In spite of the overwhelming pain that we feel at this moment, let me wish you a warm welcome to this chamber, on the occasion of the plenary

sitting which marks the beginning of deliberations of the third ordinary session of the National Assembly, for the 2017 Legislative Year.

Since we separated on 7 July, our House, as you are certainly aware has been as usual, very active in various spheres. On the international scene, our House continued to win new victories. Our colleague and compatriot, Honourable MONJOWA LIFAKA Emilia, Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly, was elected Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), International Executive Committee. This was at the end of the deliberations of the 63<sup>rd</sup> CPA Conference on 7 November 2017, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Well before her, it was another colleague and compatriot, Honourable OWONA KONO Joseph Hyacinth who won a double victory. As a matter of fact, he was unanimously elected to two prestigious posts: that of President of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) and as Co-President of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the ACP – and the European Union. The elections took place on 11 October 2017 in Brussels, Belgium, on the occasion of the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the two organizations.

Other colleagues and compatriots, who maintained their positions, are Hon. EYOUM MINONO Lydienne épouse EPOUBE, re-elected on 12 July 2017 to head the Women's Network of the Parliamentary Assembly of *La Francophonie* (APF), Hon. ETONG HILARION, Senior Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly, also re-elected as Bureau Member of the APF.

Hon. ZAM JEAN Jacques was also re-elected as Regional Coordinator of the Parliamentary Network for the Sustainable Management of the Central Africa Forests Ecosystems (REPAR). The network held its General Assembly in Libreville Gabon on 13 October 2017. In the same REPAR Bureau, there are two other compatriots: Hon. DOUVAOUISSA AISSA HAMADI, Member of the National Assembly. She now holds the post of assistant treasurer, and Mr. MAATA Joseph Roland, Senator, elected Special Adviser No. 2.

I join all Members of the National Assembly and guests here present, to wholeheartedly congratulate you all. Your promotions are definitely the results of individual merits and hard work but also eloquent proof of the trustworthiness, credibility and seriousness which is characteristic of our

Institution. Better still, this is a clear expression of the personal aura and relevant choices of the leaders of our country, led by His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic, Head of State, and Head of Cameroon's diplomacy.

**Dear colleagues,**

**Congratulations once more.**

Still within the sphere of parliamentary diplomacy, our Parliament hosted two important meetings. First, the Continental Conference of the Pan African Parliament on the theme: "the Problems of Political, Social and Economic Integration on the African Continent".

Then, the international seminar organized by the Network of Women of the Parliamentary Assembly of *La Francophonie* on the Protection of the Rights and the Economic Empowerment of Women, within the framework of Sustainable Development Objectives. These meetings which recorded a huge success enabled the National Assembly to once more showcase its know-how and gave the guests the opportunity to savour the delights of Cameroon's legendary hospitality. Let me also mention the equally successful celebration, in ten years, by our House on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017, of the International Day of Democracy, under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The organizing committees of the various events should find in this the expression of my personal satisfaction.

Last but not the least, the long awaited construction of the new main building of the National Assembly would soon materialize. Actually, the Peoples' Republic of China, represented by the Ambassador in Yaounde, and the Republic of Cameroon, represented by the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, signed on 22 September 2017, a grant agreement to the tune of 8 billion 300 million CFAF, without cash flow, within the framework of the construction of that edifice. This is the initial financing which will enable feasibility studies to be carried out and for construction works to actually commence.

It is not superfluous to reiterate my keen interest and that of the National Assembly with regard to the actual construction and within the shortest possible time of this huge project which moreover falls in

line with the policy of modernizing the institutions of the Republic, under the personal impetus of the Head of State. That is why, collectively and at the initiative of your humble servant, the Bureau of the August House set up a follow-up committee for that project chaired by our colleague Hon. DATOUO Theodore, Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly.

I would also like to seize this occasion, to once more commend the excellent cooperation ties that exist between Beijing and Yaounde. The National Assembly of Cameroon hereby expresses its profound gratitude to the Peoples' Republic of China, for this grant which is sufficient proof and confirms the great friendship that binds our two countries and our two people. Let me speak as it is done in Beijing, I simply say *SHE SHE*, a thousand times *SHE SHE*, thanks a thousand.

- The President of the Senate;
- The Prime Minister;
- Honourable Members of the National Assembly and Dear colleagues;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

The third ordinary session of the National Assembly for the 2007 Legislative year, which is opening today as well as all of the kind, will mainly be devoted to the scrutiny and adoption of the State Budget for the next financial year. Backed by the 2018 Finance Law, the new State Budget intervenes within a global context still characterized by a persistent world economic downturn, due to the drop in oil prices and products like cocoa and coffee on the world market.

At a lower level, let me mention the dwindling sub-regional trade caused by the same gloomy market situation further compounded by acts of terrorism perpetrated by the Islamic sect Boko Haram.

Specifically, on the bilateral and multilateral sphere, Cameroon must get into the 2018 financial year, with old and new commitments, notably: the pursuit for the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement made with the European Union, the

implementation of the economic and financial programme concluded with the IMF, on 26 June 2017 for the period 2017-2020, in addition to the major infrastructural projects, policy pillars of the Greater Achievement Programme of President Paul Biya for the current seven-year mandate. The successful completion of these projects is therefore an imperative as well as the execution of the three-year plan for growth acceleration and the three-year special youth plan. On the political sphere, the likelihood of holding elections in 2018 should not be ruled out.

Another personal significant commitment of the Head of State is the organization of the African Football Cup of Nations, AFCON men in Cameroon. During the reception of Cameroonian sportsmen, medalists in international competitions at the Unity Palace on 10 August 2017, President Paul Biya, stated and I quote: “AFCON 2019 is here already. You have an appointment with African sportsmen here in Yaounde and the event will take place on the scheduled date, take my word for it”, end of quotes. This means that the 2018 budget must include the key to success for the said event through meticulous and methodical preparations. I would like at this moment to express the satisfaction of the Nation’s Representatives, regarding the deployment of local committees to the Regions. From the initial to the final stages, government must show active solidarity in carrying out the works on the various worksites of the AFCON. The commitment of the President of the Republic must not waver.

Internal and external factors make 2018 a year of expectations. That means the draft budget which will soon be tabled for scrutiny must take this into account. It must be a realistic draft budget in compliance with the major guidelines of the budgetary policy as defined by the President of the Republic in his circular of 20 June 2017.

Yet beyond that, 2018 being in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of programme budget of our country, its budget must be a tool for the consolidation of Africa’s leadership steered by President Paul Biya and of Cameroon, or at least of African south of the Sahara, a position which makes our country the engine of the CEMAC zone.

Your Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The elected representatives that we are have as duty to convey the aspirations of the people we represent here. That is clear; Cameroon is first of all an agricultural country. It is also clear that the second generation agriculture which was launched during the last Agro-pastoral Show in Ebolowa is struggling to actually take-off. Besides, the Nation's Representatives wish that the process should be accelerated so as to respond to the President's vision based on the formula: massification and diversification. It is a question of dealing with increasing food needs domestically and to export in order to generate foreign currency.

We therefore commend the efforts made by government to ensure good quality agriculture for our country notably, inter alia, the regular and free provision of agricultural machines, providing producers with good quality seedlings, supervision, training and assistance for the self-employment of the youth within the framework of acquiring agricultural skills. With regard to this last point, it would also be desirable to increase the number of training structures, encourage innovating skills in the field of agriculture and establish more adequate funding mechanisms in that field.

We also commend the progress made and the promising prospects in the area of potable water and electricity supply. Within the context of the emergency plan, 900 boreholes will soon be completed in the 10 regions. At the same time, the Batchenga/Yaounde project has started. This is a key project to the tune of 500 billion FCFA that will make it possible to cover by 2019, not only our capital city, but also the neighbouring towns.

Electricity supply has been boosted with the setting up of the Electricity Transportation Company, (SONATREL). The Lom Pangar, Me'mvele and Mekim dams have been completed while others like the Mini Wara are being awaited.

That means Cameroon's energy potential shall be able, in the long run, to enable a real balance between local supply and demand and be exported to other neighbouring countries.

Nevertheless, Cameroonians are still subjected to random power cuts and load shedding for long periods, not excluding those in our local areas who are still languishing in darkness, with no hope of getting electricity supply. In that regard, the People's Representatives recommend the following:

- speed up the process to make SONATREL operational , in order to improve on the distribution of power supply;
- rehabilitate the existing structure;
- in-depth reform in the electricity sector, which increasingly has many stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to commend this revolution carried out in the commercial sector. In fact, despite the drastic fiscal measures, the inflation rate has greatly been under control for 8 consecutive years, hence, falling below the convergence criteria in the CEMAC zone, especially with regard to prices of imported products. Such a situation is the outcome of the dialogue between Government and economic operators. A situation, that further enabled the word shortage to be practically removed from trade governance in Cameroon. Another obvious outcome of this dialogue is the recent decrease in the price of the cooking gas bottle. Stakeholders in this sector, now benefit from support measures from the Government that has done everything possible to improve Cameroon's storage capacity, from 5 days to one month.



We encourage Government not to relent in its efforts in 2018. The Government must play fully its role as a regulator, so as to always boost household consumption.

- Mr. President of the Senate;
- Mr. Prime Minister, Head of Government;
- Your Excellences;
- Dear Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen ;

I cannot end my speech without talking about the state of affairs in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. It is obvious that there is need for unanimity in order for Cameroon to maintain the form of the State: a unitary, decentralized, one and indivisible State. That is to say, most Cameroonians stand for the unity and integrity of their country. At a time when the bells of pacification are chiming, the National Assembly can only urge everybody to remain within the confines of dialogue and consultation. **Cameroon is our country. None of us would ever like it to be destroyed whatever the reason. Let us work together for the peace, cohesion and unity of our beloved country.**

Thus, I hereby commend and greatly appreciate the recent pacification missions to the field, led by the Prime Minister, Head of Government and his teams, as instructed by the Head of State. My wish is to see Cameroon make the most from this tour, so long as it the demonstration of the willingness of President Paul Biya and public authorities to actually seek solutions to the various problems that have been raised.

I would like to seize this opportunity to condemn acts of violence and other crimes that are still being perpetrated in schools. These acts are unacceptable and unbearable. Are these acts individually perpetrated? If

this be the case, the People's Representatives are calling on Government to assume its responsibilities. Perpetrators of these crimes must be identified and severely punished in accordance with the law. However, there is still hope. The hope of living in peace in Cameroon within the ten Regions of the country, the hope of seeing Cameroonians united as never before and living together in harmony, throughout the national territory.

It is on this note of hope that I declare open the working sessions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of our House for the 2017 Legislative Year.

- Long live the National Assembly,
- Long live Cameroon,
- Long live His Excellency, Paul Biya, President of the Republic and Head of State.

Thank you.