

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER'S OFFICE

9th Legislative Period

LEGISLATIVE YEAR 2018

3rd Ordinary Session

(November 2018)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie

ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE

OPENING SPEECH

BY

THE RT HON. CAVAYE YEGUIE DJIBRIL
SPEKAER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Yaounde, 2 November 2018

- **Mr Prime Minister, Head of Government;**
- **The President of the Constitutional Council;**
- **The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;**
- **The Attorney General of the Supreme Court;**
- **The Chairman of the Economic and Social Council;**
- **Members of Government;**
- **Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Representatives of International Organizations;**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament and Dear Colleagues;**
- **Distinguished Members of the Civil Society;**
- **Dear Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are bereaved again. Death has snatched away two of our colleagues, Hon. ELOUNDOU Barnabé and Hon. DOUGOUF DJONKIO ALI. The two CPDM MPs who passed away on 28 and 31 October respectively are from the Lékié Constituency in the Centre Region and the Mayo-Tsanaga Constituency in the Far North Region. They have bowed out of the stage at the time Hon. ELOUNDOU was about finishing his first

mandate while Hon. DOUGOUF was finishing his second.

May you rise for a minute of silence in memory of the departed.

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Silence
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- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In spite of the pains we have following the demise of our colleagues, it behoves me to warmly welcome you to the National Assembly for this plenary sitting devoted to the opening of the 3rd ordinary session of our Chamber for the 2018 legislative year.

The effective commencement of our proceedings today, after the 7th October 2018 presidential election, is an additional proof of the good health, the solidity and the

harmonious functioning of the institutions of the Republic. On behalf of the Members of the National Assembly, I therefore use this solemn occasion to hail the calm and serenity that characterized the conduct of the said election.

Generally speaking, Cameroonians again showed maturity and lucidity before, during and especially after the verdict of the Constitutional Council.

May I equally voice my great satisfaction with the efficiency and the total competence shown by the stakeholders in the organization of the operations notably, Elections Cameroon, the Administration, Divisional and National Vote Counting Commissions. Special distinction to the Constitutional Council whose first attempt at a presidential election was brilliant.

On the whole, Cameroonians freely exercised their democracy and our country's democratic progress was showcased and even admired by all and sundry as evidenced by the scores of congratulatory messages

already received by our illustrious President-Elect. The fact that most of the messages acknowledged that the election was properly conducted has further enhanced our country's credibility.

It is for this reason that I am strongly opposed to any call for civil disobedience and division. I therefore appeal to your collective sense of responsibility. In this regard, I personally commend the responsible stance that some members of the clergy have taken and which is in sharp contrast with the stance of their peers who disregard universal ideals.

In my reasoning, as religious leaders, members of the clergy generally have the binding sacred vocation to preach peace, unity, living together and to shun discord. They have the binding and sacred duty to advocate national concord. They should not instigate provocation and open conflict. It also behoves them to educate and give sound teachings to members of their respective denominations on love for one's neighbour, tolerance, respect for our institutions and those who incarnate them and, in particular, respect for the will of the people since it is the will of God. *Vox populi vox Dei*. **All authority comes from God** is a well known maxim.

Disregarding the will of the People is tantamount to questioning one's calling as a member of the clergy, a servant of God. Whether you are an Imam, a Pastor, Reverend Father, Bishop, Arch Bishop or Cardinal, instigating discord will only dishonour you.

In any case, I urge the government to assume its responsibility and crack down attempts from any quarters to destabilise our country and to identify all those who foment disorder in a bid to undermine the happy outcome of the commendable electoral process that we are celebrating today.

As for our compatriots, we urge them to remain vigilant and to return to the fold in order to overcome the new challenges that await Cameroon during the new seven-year term. As we look forward to the oath-taking ceremony in the days ahead, all the Members of the National Assembly join your humble servant to deferentially and sincerely congratulate the President-Elect, **His Excellency PAUL BIYA.**

- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In line with our parliamentary practice and the laws of our Republic, the 3rd Ordinary Session of the National Assembly is devoted mainly to the scrutiny and adoption of the State budget for the next financial year. The November 2018 Ordinary Session will not depart from the usual practice. The Nation's representatives will be expected to scrutinize the 2019 State budget in the days ahead. As commodity prices, especially oil prices, are now beginning to pick up again in the global economy, we need to press on with the diversification of the economy initiated a few years ago and which has, so far, sustained our economy's resilience and enabled it to weather the adverse effects of the global economy which, on the whole, did not spare African economies. The said economic situation was compounded by security concerns at different levels. As concerns security issues in Cameroon, we hereby deplore the destruction of the production bases in the Far North, North West and South West Regions. Smuggling and the shortfall in foreign currency further exacerbated the situation. As a result, the State could not collect enough revenue since the conditions were not favourable for it to implement its income generation policy.

In this regard, I wish to congratulate and extend words of encouragement from the Nation's representatives to the Government of the Republic which remained resolute and deployed considerable efforts to cope with the shortfall in revenue collection and did not also fail to carry out expenditure as warranted by the need to stamp out instability. And the outcome is evidently the calm atmosphere that we are experiencing at this moment.

The calm atmosphere or the country's good economic standing at this moment should not make Government to relent. The 2019 State budget should therefore enable it to pursue its policy. And we should not also forget that Cameroon is in the last year of its programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The objective of the IMF Programme is to consolidate our country's budget. And that objective can be achieved only through effective implementation of the new Financial Regime of the State.

Indeed, voted on 11 July 2018, this law, which is a typical Constitution in the domain, opens up new horizons in the domain of public finance management, as it seeks to restore discipline and budgetary orthodoxy.

I therefore call on the elected representatives to master this new instrument because the 2019 budget will be the first to be executed in accordance with the said law. Moreover, I will personally ensure the training of Members of the National Assembly so that they can adapt to the new dispensation. They will eventually be efficient in scrutinizing and adopting the 2019 draft budget.

As the 2018 budget played its role in the war against instability and lent great support to the organization of the senatorial and presidential elections, as well as the optimal preparation of the entire AFCON, the People's Representatives hope that the 2019 budget will be geared towards the same purpose. Security remains a major challenge as we expect other elections in the near future.

As for the 2019 AFCON, the Elected Representatives that we are recommend that the new budget should not only guarantee preparations, but also the organization and the conduct of the competition per se. We have not forgotten the construction of various employment generating infrastructures which is underway. The thorny issue of the practicability of our road network

must be one of the priorities. We are accustomed to saying that *where a road passes, development follows*.

With regard to our international commitments, I urge the Government to continue debt servicing so that Cameroon can continue to earn the trust of our development partners.

Being the first budget under the aegis of the “Great Opportunities”, this 2019 budget should enable the President of the Republic to smoothly implement the social project of this Seven-year term of office, the basis on which he has just been re-elected by a significant majority of Cameroonians.

In conclusion, I would like to mention and praise the current initiative to ensure the physical counting of State personnel, “COPPE” 2018. It is a laudable endeavour which will undoubtedly discourage or even put an end to the phenomenon of ghost civil servants. It thus responds to the increasingly assertive will of public authorities to improve the public finances, particularly by overseeing the wage bill. The initiative is now at the pre-litigation phase. I encourage the government to continue the initiative. I hope, however, that the said

operations are organized in a way that would avoid the harassment of the compatriots concerned.

On this note, I declare open the proceedings of the third ordinary session of our House for the 2018 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,**

Thank you.