

National Seminar /Workshop on: Cameroonian Youth and the Phenomenon of Unemployment and Migration in the 21st Century.

By

**The Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP),
in partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Cameroon.**

Venue: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Conference Hall, August 10 – 12, 2009

Workshop Outcome Document

Representatives of youth organizations from the ten Regions of Cameroon met at Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Conference hall from August 10 to 12, 2009 in view of rolling back hiking unemployment and illegal migration in Cameroon. The strategic objectives for this workshop were:

- Provide broad and far more responsive solutions regarding the fight against youth unemployment and illegal migration by Cameroonians, as adequate options to curb current trends.
- Build the capacities of 30 Cameroonian youths in order to fight against rising youthful unemployment and migration.
- Ensure greater awareness through the media, policy-makers and the wider public, in view of cutting down youth unemployment and illegal migration.
- Craft out a workshop outcome document, inclusive of likely solutions capable of reducing the level of unemployment and illegal migration.

The topics presented and discussed during this workshop included:

- Illegal youth migration and the effectiveness and weaknesses of control strategies: Reaping the benefits and mitigating the risks, presented by Mr. Evina Roger of the Organization for International Migration (OIM) office in Yaounde;
- Youth illegal and professional migration: Cameroon development strategies that adequately attends to concerns of youth unemployment and migration, presented by Dr. Tabi Akono Francois of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP);
- Youth participation and integration in national development strategies: From problem identification, policy choices to national development

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programs, implementation and monitoring, presented by Mr. Obam Zoa Francis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MINJEUN);

- Migration and development and the realization of the opportunity for Cultural exchanges and economic impact on human mobility: The Cameroon and France Accord on migration, presented by Mr. Etoundi Richard of the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX) and Mr. Tsala Yves of the Solutions aux Migrations Clandestine (SMIC);
- The Inter-relationship between Migration and Human Rights: Rights and responsibilities of migrants in their host countries presented by Mr. Langmia Julius Sabum of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF);
- The operational directory of jobs and employment 'ROME,' and the support programme to returnee Cameroonian migrants presented by Madam Nnang Thérèse, of the National Employment Fund (NEF);
- The role of Civil Society Organizations in creating second chances for the integration of youth unused capabilities in the working of the local economy, presented by Mr. Tsounkeu Martin of the Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN);
- Youth Civil Societies and their Influence on Migration and Employment, presented by Mr. Asek Stephen of the International Governance Institute (IGI) of Cameroon

Mindful of the key problems confronted by youths regarding unemployment and illegal migration thus:

- Limited access to job-market information;
- Limited access to private sector jobs especially less qualified youths;
- Limited access to start-up capital in order to start-up small business initiatives;
- Tribalized private sector companies have further worsened the integration of youths from marginalized economic backgrounds;
- Inadequate public employment policy for youths especially on 'placement' and 'learning-by-doing approach' to job acquisitions in Cameroon;
- Poor participation of youths in all decision-making processes and even in political parties hence most youths feel and act like 'excluded citizens' thereby paving the way for illegal migration;
- Some university youths are political victims after strike actions and most often, most of them end up as political asylum seekers overseas;
- The search for 'fast cash' through drug trafficking and prostitution has prompted some Cameroonian youths to seek illegal migration as the only option to escape acute poverty;
- Violation of fundamental human rights;

- Limited access to vocational skills;
- Economic growth does not match demographic growth;
- Embezzlement;
- Inadequate projects of development for youths (Limited funding and little success rate);
- Limited fiscal triggers in order to boost investment;
- Limited Trade Unions for vulnerable groups such as farmers;
- Social exclusion of minority groups (Linguistic ethnic and even disable persons);
- Gender disparity.

After thorough deliberations through plenary sessions, workshops and other events, we the participants have put together the following Recommendations that we strongly feel ought to be implemented in order to empower youths to effectively redress youthful unemployment and illegal migration practices:

I. Unemployment:

- Encourage youthful entrepreneurship;
- Institutionalise youth placements and internships;
- Provide start-up capital and possibly provide additional capital for youthful actors in the informal sectors in Cameroon;
- Put in place the National Youth Service Corps;
- Provide financial support to youth NGOs;
- Track all public investment spending on youthful employment in Cameroon;

II. Illegal Migration Overseas:

- Roll back state-terrorism by the forces of law and order on university students who participated in strike actions in order to deter asylum seekers from illegally migration;
- Create agreements among neighbouring nations in order to establish a better understanding regarding pre-empting youth from illegally migrating;
- Promote and protect fundamental human rights of youths in order to reduce unemployment and decrease illegal migration;
- Equip young people with the ability and skills that are required for them to help reduce unemployment and illegal migration;
- Strengthen the exchange of information on the job market in order to reduce unemployment and illegal migration;
- Increase salary scale for all jobs in Cameroon in order to deter migration.

- Put in place a National Youth Council capable of designing policies in order to reduce youthful unemployment and illegal migration;
- Propagate roll back strategies across key media structures in Cameroon.
- Resettle repatriated youths through a special support grant in order to guarantee their re-insertion in Cameroon;
- Motivate and encourage youth participation in all decision-making processes regarding unemployment and illegal migration;
- Provide positive role models to influence the behavioural change and improve on the misperception among youth in reference to unemployment and illegal migration;
- Strengthen partnerships between the public, private and civil society sector in Cameroon.

Effects of Unemployment and Migration:

- Increased crime wave (Drug trafficking, human trafficking, prostitution, homosexuality etc);
- Violation of human rights through torture;
- Poor political marketing;
- Brain drain;
- Capital and technological transfer.

Recommendations:

- Dissemination information on youth projects across the wider public;
- Youths should participate in conceiving all projects concerning them;
- Increase salary scale to a logical level;
- Retirement should be automatic for persons on due retirement;
- Ensure all schools have farmland in order to guarantee sustainability for this activity in the future.

Resolutions:

- Strengthening the networking mechanism for the National Youth Forum for networking;
- Strengthening the Yahoo Group created to enhance the National Youth Forum for Networking;
- Design platform projects for Cameroon youths with sub grantees.

Conclusion:

The participants of this workshop realized and recognised the major impacts of unemployment and illegal migration upon the lives of youths, thus the need to create awareness and stand up to relieve the causes and effects of unemployment and migration among the youths in Cameroon.

Finally participants expressed their appreciation to Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP) for hosting the workshop and for their efforts that ensures a positive outcome.

Yaounde, August 12, 2009.