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Motto: *Peace-Justice-Progress*



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Report of the National Workshop on:
‘Cameroonian Youth and Vision 2015.’

Organised by:
***CAMYOSFOP in Partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
(FES), Cameroon***

November 24 – 26, 2008

Report of the National Workshop on: Cameroonian Youth and Vision 2015.

Introduction:

The workshop on Cameroonian Youth and Vision 2015 organised by the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP) in partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) took place in the conference room of FES from November 24 – 26, 2008. The workshop brought together 25 youth activists from the ten Regions of Cameroon to brainstorm on their role on Vision 2015.

Vision 2015 is all about the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Cameroon by 2015. These goals that were put in place by 192 Heads of State and Government of the world including the Cameroon Head of State, H.E. Paul Biya during the September 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit included:

- Eradicating poverty and extreme hunger.
- Achieving universal primary education for all.
- Promoting gender equality.
- Reducing infant mortality.
- Improving on maternal health.
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- Ensuring environmental sustainability.
- Promoting partnership for development.

The youth in particular has become a special focus in the promotion and achievement of these goals as they are the future leaders of Cameroon and the world. Therefore, these young people should be mobilised towards the achievement of these goals coined 'Vision 2015.'

In analysing the situation in Cameroon, it is realised that it will be difficult for these goals to be achieved if the youth is not trained on good governance; empowered economically through entrepreneurship and the National Youth Policy. As a result, the workshop endowed the participants with material resources, skills, and national synergy, which would enable them contribute maximally to the democratic, gender-equal, peaceful and right-based development of Cameroon. Hence the achievement of Vision 2015.

Official Opening Ceremony:

The official opening ceremony of the workshop that took place on November 24 was presided at by the Programmes Officer of FES, Susan Bamuh Apra on behalf of the Resident Representative of FES.

Susan praised CAMYOSFOP for her leadership in youth development in Cameroon. It is for this reason that FES saw CAMYOSFOP as a reliable partner to work with in enhancing the development of the youth in Cameroon. The first test of this partnership according to her, was the mobilisation of the Cameroonian youth to actively participate in the July 22, 2007 Parliamentary and Municipal elections in Cameroon through the organisation of a workshop with 30 university students drawn from both government and private universities. She stated that the present workshop falls in line with the implementation of some of the Action Points developed by CAMYOSFOP after the workshop **‘University Youth Participation in Elections.’** She added that FES and CAMYOSFOP have pledged to take the momentum forward in mobilising the Cameroonian youth in actively participating in the 2011 Presidential election and further elections in Cameroon.

Talking about the workshop on the Cameroonian youth and Vision 2015, she said, Vision 2015 was one of the areas FES has been working on, in empowering the youth on eradicating poverty; good governance and active participation in decision making. According to her, FES offers the right opportunity for the civil society to force the government to fully implement the commitments she took in front of the international community during the Millennium Summit that promulgated the MDGs.

On this note, FES is expecting far reaching recommendations that will enhance the role of the youth, the government and the various stakeholders involved in the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

Ngalim Eugene Nyuydine, the Executive Director of CAMYOSFOP in welcoming the participants, thanked the FES for the trust they have in CAMYOSFOP, which has led to the continuation of the partnership that was established some two years ago. The fruit of the partnership was the organisation of the workshop on ‘University youth participation in elections in Cameroon,’ from May 23 – 25, 2007. He further said, the CAMYOSFOP has been constantly consulted by the FES on a number of programmes on youth issues. Reason why both the CAMYOSFOP and the FES saw the need to organise the workshop on ‘The Cameroonian Youth and Vision 2015.’

Considering the fact that the youth needs to be empowered on policy and development issues he stated that this workshop will obviously change the landscape of the participation of the youth in the development of Cameroon and the achievement of Vision 2015. He promised that this will be done through the creation of a vibrant National Youth platform on networking. Through the platform, members will be constantly consulted on burning issues related to youth development in Cameroon. He ended his welcome speech by wishing all the participants a wonderful stay during the three day workshop. On this note he looked forward to a ripple effect of the outcome document of the workshop.

Objectives of the workshop:

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To enhance commitment to Youth development issues, and set up a data base for sharing information and best practices on Youth development.
- To build capacities of youth Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- To roll back Youth unemployment through a roadmap declaration in view of influencing Youth employment Policies.
- To put in place an effective network of NGOs capable of acting as frontline implementers of the declaration.

Proceedings of the workshop:

The methodology of the workshop was participatory. This included presentations, workshops and plenary sessions. Presentations included: Information market; priorities for the Cameroonian youth- what future without the youths?, Youth involvement in meeting the deadline for the MDGs; Good governance - the key to meaningful development; Entrepreneurship - what future for the Cameroonian youth; and The National Youth policy - Reality or Rhetoric.

Day 1

Activities for day 1 began at 10:30 am at the conference hall of the FES with the MC presenting members of the high table followed by an introductory word by each of them. They were Susan Bamuh, projects officer for FES, Eugene Ngalim, Executive Director of CAMYOSFOP, Charles Linjap, Youth Consultant and a moderators for the program.

Eugene Ngalim on behalf of CAMYOSFOP proceeded to an elaborate run of the seminar throwing more light on expectations, fears, and objectives and finally on the relevance of the subject matter: The MDGs; The role of Cameroonian youths in achieving vision 2015. He also made mention of the outcome of the first seminar CAMYOSFOP organised in partnership with FES. Mrs Susan Bamuh then took the floor and reiterated the mission FES has towards the Cameroonian youths. She said they were bent on raising awareness in the spirits of the young people thereby grooming them to take up more active roles in spheres of decision making and politics in general thereby shunning vices like corruption, illegal immigration and fraud. Charles Linjap then made a few clarifications with regards to workshop methodology, ground rules, the outcome document, recommendations and daily evaluations. This first part of the seminar ended with a family photograph.

Modules

The first module for the day focused on the MDGs and African youths, and was presented by Marie Tamoifo Nkom, spokesperson for the MDGs and the African Youths. This presentation provided answers to fundamental questions such as what is the role of the African youth in achieving vision 2015, what obliges youths to opt for illegal immigration as a solution to their problems, what is brain drain and what are its consequences on the *providing and destination countries*. She ended her presentation by making a series of remarks such as; the need for expertise to enhance youth development, the need to improve upon education in developing countries, the need to emulate the examples of emerging countries such as China, promote gender equality, greater youth participation in spheres of decision making, and more youths should strive to contribute their quota towards achieving vision 2015. This was followed by an enriching question and answer session.

Questions

1. What is the hidden agenda of the developed countries by elaborating the MDGs?
2. Will the achievement of the MDGs positively influence lives at grassroots levels?
3. What are the measures put in place to ensure the achievement of the MDGs come 2015?
4. Are the MDGs objective or subjective?

Answers provided

This was followed by the projection of a documentary on the Global Youth Leadership.

Module 2 was presented by Eva Etongue Mayer, Head of the Promotion and Protection Division of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF). Her presentation was based on good governance; the key to meaningful development. After defining major concepts such as democracy, corruption, good governance and human rights, she further specified that since the year 1998, Cameroon has opted for good governance by playing a dominant role in the running of state institutions and state projects such as the criminal procedure code, managing legal affairs, the penitential administration(now attached to the Ministry of Justice to facilitate legal procedures), better manage the civil society, computerizing work plans in the Public Service, and creating checks and balances on excesses, anti corruption campaigns etc. With regard to youths and democracy, she urged the youths to be involved in elections; voting is essential if their voices must be heard. Young people should also try to curb corruption by not being corrupt themselves. In the area of human rights, youths should encourage the creation of human right clubs in schools and their communities. She finally urged youths to be active in projects for the development of our nation.

Questions

1. What are the measures put in place by the NCHRF to effectively implement human rights in Cameroon?
2. How can the Commission influence electoral laws?
3. What accounts for the divergence between electoral laws and the voter age?

Answers provided

Evaluation of day 1.

The evaluation was done under 8 categories namely

1. Time Management
2. Meals
3. Modules (Presentation and intervention)
4. Moderation
5. Punctuality
6. Accessibility
7. Communication
8. Others.

All the participants took part in the evaluation at the end of the question and answer session on the evaluation of the 2007 workshop on 'Youths and elections' in Cameroon.

Methodology:

1-Individual evaluations under each of the 8 categories were recorded by participants as follows:

- 'G' for Good
- 'A' for Average
- 'CBB' for Could Be Better.

2-The frequencies for all the codes (G, A and CBB) were recorded under each of the 8 categories.

3-The data collected will be analysed by all the participants to derive the performance status of day 1.

G-Good.

A-Average.

CBB-Could Be Better.

Category	Code	Frequency	Outcome	
1	G	5	A	
Time	A	9		
	CBB	3		
2	G	15	G	
Meals	A	2		
	CBB	0		
3	G	10	G	
Modules	A	7		
	CBB	0		
4	G	10	G	
Moderation	A	7		
	CBB	0		
5	G	5	A	
Punctuality	A	9		
	CBB	3		
6	G	7	A	
Accessibility	A	8		
	CBB	2		
7	G	7	A	
Communication	A	10		
	CBB	0		
8	G	9	A	
others	A	8		
	CBB	0		

What was the general performance on day one from your analysis of the data presented above and why?

Time Management:	Average
Meals:	Good
Modules:	Good
Moderation:	Good
Punctuality:	Average
Accessibility:	Average
Communication:	Average
Others:	Average

Activities for Day 1 ended at 4: 45 pm

Day 2

Activities for day 2 began at 8: 30 am with the evaluation of day 1 and a presentation of the report of day 1 by the rapporteurs. After receiving suggestions for amendments from the participants, the report was validated.

Module 1

This module was based on the information market; and what prospects for opportunities were available for the Cameroonian youths. This was presented by Mr Charles Linjap, following the participatory approach. The participants themselves defined key terms such as; employment, unemployment, structural unemployment, discouraged unemployment, underemployment, the formal and informal sectors, the secondary, primary and tertiary sectors, information, information market. At the end of this highly interactive presentation, the following pertinent remarks and suggestions were made

*poverty can hardly be analysed in an economy which has as much as a 92 percent inclination to the informal sector

*developing countries should opt for the secondary sector of production which is labour intensive, thereby curbing youth unemployment .

*more youth participation in decision making

*involve youths in policy making; PRSP II

*put in place a National Youth Council

*Professionalise education in Cameroon

*Encourage youth placements and internships

*Encourage tax holidays and tax shelters to trigger investment.

Questions

Given that this session was purely interactive, the question and answer session was integrated in the presentation.

Answers provided.

Module 2

Presented by Thomas Tchetmi, youth consultant, and this focused on the National Youth Policy. He started off by calling on the participants to identify the problems that the Youths of Cameroon face, and added that there was need for proper analyses of these problems in a bid to remedy them. He proceeded to the African Youth Charter, of which he made an in-depth presentation of. Cameroon though very active in the promotion of the ideals of this document has however not ratified it. He urged the youths to be a lobbying force compelling the government to ratify it. With regards to the National Youth Council (NYC), it will in effect be the platform par excellence where the youths can speak up and seek solutions to their problems.

Questions:

1. How transparent is the process of setting up the NYC?
2. What are the advantages/benefits of the African Youth Charter to the youths at the grassroots level?

Answers provided.

Module 3

Entrepreneurship; what future for the Cameroonian youths; was presented by Gilles Lewat, founder of Youth Business Cameroon, and winner of the best business project for 2005. After defining entrepreneurship and who an entrepreneur is, he then delved into more practical illustrations and reasons why young Cameroonians should develop and enhance their entrepreneurial skills; justifying that the government or the formal sector will not always provide jobs for all qualified unemployed youths. He also urged youths to desist from considering financial limitations a stumbling block to venturing into their own projects.

Observations and Suggestions

- *school curriculum not geared towards encouraging entrepreneurship
- *youths lack motivation to create their businesses

*entrepreneurship can positively shape the future of the Cameroonian youth

*entrepreneurship keeps youths off crime, creates jobs etc

Questions:

1. How realistic are business agreements signed between Cameroon and Europe eg AGOA?
2. What are dissuasive mechanisms adopted by certain donors?
3. Why has it become so difficult for youths to obtain funding from donors?

Answers provided.

Visit of the FES Boss

We were then honoured to receive the FES Boss for Cameroon and Mali, Dr Reinhold Plate, who expressed satisfaction that the youth of Cameroon were concerned about the MDGs and their future by 2015. He hammered on the fact that Cameroon though considered the giant of the sub region, however does not provide the necessary impetus required to ensure a holistic development. He further urged youths to take up the role of future planning and suggested that participants came up with a leaflet on guidelines for harmonizing development related actions in the sub region. The FES foundation would equally wish to have Cameroon pilot youth activities for the sub region.

The first workshop session began at 2: 30. Participants were placed in two groups where they brainstormed on the modules, bearing in mind the objectives of the seminar

Evaluation of day 2.

The evaluation was done under 5 categories namely

1. Time Management
2. Moderation
3. Modules (Presentation and intervention)
4. Reports
5. Working groups

All the participants (18) took part in the evaluation at the end of the working session.

Methodology:

1-Individual evaluations under each of the 5 categories were recorded by participants as follows:

- 'G' for Good
- 'A' for Average
- 'CBB' for Could Be Better.

2-The frequencies for all the codes (G, A and CBB) were recorded under each of the 5 categories.

3-The data collected will be analysed by all the participants to derive the performance status of day 2 (participatory approach).

G-Good. A-Average. CBB-Could Be Better.

Category	Code	Frequency	Outcome	
1	G	7	A	
Time	A	9		
	CBB	2		
2	G	13	G	
Moderation	A	5		
	CBB	0		
3	G	15	G	
Modules	A	3		
	CBB	0		
4	G	13	G	
Reports	A	5		
	CBB	0		
5	G	18	G	
W. Groups	A	0		
	CBB	0		

What was the general performance of day 2 from your analysis of the data presented above and why?

Time management: Average

Moderation: Good

Modules: Good

Reports: Good

W. Groups: Good.

Activities for day 2 ended at 4:30 pm.

Day 3

Activities for day 3 began at 8:30 am with an orientation on workshops and resolutions to be arrived at. This was followed by a presentation of the structure of the outcome document. The next item on the agenda was the evaluation and report of day 2 presented by the rapporteurs. This was followed by a plenary session wherein participants validated the outcome document.

Outcome document.

Following the deliberations in the various workshops, participants identified the following key problems confronted by the Cameroonian youth in general and youth civil society in particular in the achievement of Vision 2015:

General problems faced by the Cameroon youth:

- Unemployment.
- Corruption.
- Inaccessibility to information.
- Poor participation in the political process.
- The absence of youth advocacy and lobbying institutions.
- Gerontocratic obstacles to youth accession to power.

Problems confronting Youth Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):

- Lack of expert training.
- Inadequate legal framework for Youth.
- Invisible hands of statesmen in Youth NGOs.
- Weak access to funding.
- Inadequate networking mechanisms among Youth organisations.

Conference Recommendations:

The conference agreed on a set of recommendations that would be transmitted to the government of Cameroon and other partners of development: The recommendations were as follows:

Unemployment:

- Encourage Youth entrepreneurship.
- Institutionalise youth placements and internships.
- Structure and register actors of the informal sector into the economy.
- Put in place a National Youth Service corps.

Corruption:

- Institutionalise Citizenship and moral education.
- Creation of ombudsman structures in key institutions.
- Whistle blowing and public denouncing.
- Fight impunity

Workshop Recommendations:

The workshop participants agreed on a set of recommendations that would be transmitted to the government of Cameroon and other partners of development: The recommendations were as follows:

Inaccessibility to information.

- Put in place an official data base system on Youth issues.
- Inculcate the spirit of reading by promoting modern regional libraries.

Poor participation in political processes.

- Reduce voter age from 20 to 18 (revise the electoral law)
- Implicate youths using quota systems in all decision making process.
- Accelerate the creation of the National Youth Council.

Collateral recommendations for the proper functioning of youth Civil Society organizations (CSO):

- Inadequate framework structures for youth NGOs.
- Semester capacity building training programs for youth CSO leaders.
- Create a one-stop registration office for CSOs.
- Diversify the representation of youth CSOs in state institutions.
- The state should provide grants to youth NGOs to help promote their actions.
- Accelerate the putting in place of the National Youth Council.

The following resolutions were arrived at:

- Put in place a National Youth Forum on Networking.
- CAMYOSFOP should come up with the modalities of coordination for this youth forum.
- There is need for a common code of good practices within the CEMAC Region.
- Draft a manual of youth policies capable of impacting the CEMAC region.

General Evaluation:

Judging from the specific and general objectives set for this seminar and what actually happened during the three day programme, we were able to arrive at the following evaluation of the programme from a general perspective.

1. Both the specific and general objectives were met.
2. Participants left the seminar more determined to strive for better youth involvement in spheres of decision making.
3. Participants agreed to face the challenges of our time and to strive to be nation builders.
4. They undertook to shun corrupt practises and to promote moral ethics in their spheres of influence.
5. They finally agreed to disseminate the knowledge they had acquired from this seminar and to contribute to the processes of the long expected changes in youth policies and policies in general.

Conclusion:

In officially closing the workshop, the Resident Representative of FES Dr Plate congratulated the participants for the wonderful and exciting deliberations that they had during the past three days that led to lofty recommendations and resolutions for the workshop. He equally noted that vision 2015 was not only limited to issues that were deliberated during the three day workshop but could be extended to issues of peace and security in Cameroon and the entire CEMAC and ECCAS region. For this reason, the youth needs to take interest in the issues of peace and security in the region. This, to him could be through the following: Awareness raising conference on trans-frontier insecurity such as the 'Coupeurs des routes,' syndrome in the Northern parts of Cameroon and the neighbouring countries of Cameroon such as Chad and Central Africa Republic; Researching on the illicit proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons; and the need for more proactive initiatives on human security in the oil rich waters of the Gulf of Guinea. He ended his closing statement with a positive note of, 'While looking forward to identifying other credible youth organizations for FES to partner with, we will continue to work in partnership with CAMYOSFOP in empowering not only the Cameroonian youth but the entire youth of the Central African region.'

Participants expressed their appreciation to FES and CAMYOSFOP for hosting the workshop and for their efforts that ensured a positive outcome. They promised to take the momentum forward in implementing the recommendations and the resolutions of the workshop in their various Communities and making Vision 2015 a reality in Cameroon. CAMYOSFOP on her part promised to circulate the outcome document of the workshop to the various stake holders on youth development in Cameroon for

an effective implementation of the recommendations and resolutions of the workshop.

Appendix:

- **Draft programme for the workshop**
- **Various presentations**
- **Word by workshop participant**