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Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**Combined second and third periodic reports submitted by
States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the International
Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

Cameroon*, **

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACAPPEM	Cameroon Association for the Promotion of Nursery Schools
ACAT/LT	Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture - Coastal Branch
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGIR-PPTE/ENSP	Higher education viable-initiatives management and professionalization support project
AI	Amnesty International
ALUCAM	Cameroon Aluminum Company
ALVF	Association for Combating Violence against Women
ANAFOR	National Agency for Forest Development
APAC	Association for Professional African Women in Communication
APDHAC	Association for the Promotion of Human Rights in Central Africa
ARSEL	Power Sector Regulation Agency
ARV	Antiretroviral drugs
BUCREP	Bureau for Population Census and Research
CAED	Shelter for children in distress
CAEMC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CAMAIR	Cameroon Airlines
CAMAIR CO	Cameroon Airlines Corporation
CAMPOST	Cameroon Postal Service
CAMTEL	Cameroon Telecommunications
CAMWATER	Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation
CAO	Computer-assisted mapping system
CAPP	Provincial pharmaceutical supply centre
CDE	Cameroon Water Company
CDPM	Marine Fisheries Development Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CENAME	National Centre for the Supply of Essential Drugs and Medical Consumables
CENEEMA	Agricultural Mechanization Study and Experimentation Centre
CEP	Primary education certificate
CEPAB	Bafoussam Craftsmen Promotion Centre
CERAC	Circle of Friends of Cameroon
CEREBEPA	Regional Centre for the Well Being of Older Persons
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CET	Common External Tariff
CETIC	Technical, industrial and commercial junior high school
CFC	Cameroon Mortgage Bank
CHOC	"Change habits - oppose corruption"
CHU	University hospital
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIPRES	Inter-African Conference on Social Security
CIRD	Inter-University Documentary Resources Centre
CNDHL	National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms
CNE	National Centre for Education
CNH	National Housing Council
CNIC	Cameroon Shipyard and Industrial Engineering Ltd
CNLS	National Anti-AIDS Council
CNPS	National Social Security Fund
CNRH	National Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities
CNV, CONAVI	National Committee on Ageing
COMETES	Coordination and modernization of higher education technological establishments
CONAC	National Anti-Corruption Commission
CONRHA	National Committee for the Rehabilitation and Socio-economic Reintegration of Disabled Persons

CRAN	Food and Nutrition Research Centre
DEA	Diploma of Advanced Studies
DESS	Specialized Higher Education Diploma
DGSN	National Security Department
DPNE	National Employment Policy Statement
DS	Health district
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECAM	Household Survey
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EDC	Electricity Development Corporation
EDS	Population and Health Survey
ENAM	National School for the Administration and the Magistracy
ENIEG	Teacher training college
ENIET	Technical teacher training college
EPI	Expanded Programme of Immunization
ERSI	Regional Fire-Safety School
ESCR	Economic, social and cultural rights
FARP	Research and Professionalization Support Fund
FEICOM	Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance
FENTEDCAM	National Federation of Decentralized Local Councils Trade Unions of Cameroon
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FIMAC	Community Agricultural Microprojects Investment Fund
FLE	Family life education
FNAM	National Fund for Personal Health Insurance
FNE	National Employment Fund
FNPF	National Civil Servants' Fund
FNPS	National Social Welfare Fund
FSLC	First School Leaving Certificate
G7	Group of seven highly industrialized nations
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GDLN	Global Development Learning Network
GDP	Gross domestic product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GESDP	General Economic and Social Development Plan
GFAC	Organization of Businesswomen of Cameroon
GICACYMA	Cyrie and Mayos common initiative alliance group
GNP	Gross national product
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
GUCE	One-stop service unit for foreign trade operations
HACI	Hope for African Children Initiative
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IADM	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI)
IAI	African Information Technology Institute
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IGA	Income-generating activities
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMPM	Institute for Medical Research and the Study of Medicinal Plants
IPAVIC	Poultry professional association in Cameroon
IRGM	Institute for Geological and Mining Research
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JERSIC	Days for Research Excellence and Innovation in Cameroon
JLV	Subnational immunization days
LANACOME	National Laboratory for Drug Quality Control and Expertise

LMD	BA/MA/PhD
MAGZI	Industrial Zones Development and Management Authority
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple indicator cluster survey
MIDEPECAM	Maritime Artisanal Fishery Development Mission
MINADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MINAS	Ministry of Social Affairs
MINATD	Ministry of Regional Administration and Decentralization
MINCOMMERCE	Ministry of Trade
MINDAF	Ministry of Property and Land Affairs
MINDUH	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
MINEDUB	Ministry of Basic Education
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINEE	Ministry of Water and Energy
MINEFOP	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training
MINESEC	Ministry of Secondary Education
MINESUP	Ministry of Higher Education
MINFOPRA	Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reform
MINJUSTICE	Ministry of Justice
MINPLAPDAT	Ministry of Planning, Development Programming and Regional Development
MINPMEESA	Ministry of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicraft
MINPROFF	Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Promotion
MINRESI	Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation
MINREX	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MINSANTE	Ministry of Health
MIPROMALO	Local Materials Promotion Office
MTEF	Medium-term expenditure framework
MUPROF	Mutual Benefit Society for Land Property
NAP	New pedagogical approach
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NGP	National Governance Programme
NICT	New information and communication technology
OCASC	Organization of Catholic Health Services in Cameroon
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHBLA	Organization for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa
OLC	Anti-Corruption Observatory
ONADEF	National Forestry Development Office
ONEFOP	National Monitoring Service for Employment and Vocational Training
ONEL	National Elections Observatory
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OVC	Orphans and other vulnerable children
PAMODEC	"Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work" Support Project
PANERP	National Energy Action Plan for Poverty Reduction
PANGIRE	National Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management
PANIFD	National Action Plan for the Integration of Women in Development
PARE	Education Sector Reform Support Programme
PDSE	Power sector development programme
PGAFEG	Comprehensive Programme for Women's Advancement and Gender Equality
PIAASI	Integrated support project for participants in the informal sector
PIB	Public Investment Budget
PID	Douala Infrastructure Project
PIPE	Priority Investment Programme for Employment
PLWHA	Persons living with HIV/AIDS

PME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
PNRVA	National Agricultural Extension and Research Programme
PNSR	National Reproductive-Health Programme
PNVCA	National Popularisation and Agricultural Counselling Programme
PPCRD	Decentralized Rural Credit Project
PREPAFEN	Project on Poverty Reduction and Action on Behalf of Women in the Province of Extrême-Nord
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRODEC	Community Development Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	Food Security Programme
PSM	Minimum Health Package
PSSPC	Strategic plan for contraceptive safety
PTME	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
RESEN	Report on the state of the national education system
RGPH	General population and housing census
RIB	Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind
SAD	Douala Development Company
SBA	Skills-based approach
SDSS	Social Development Sector Strategy
SIC	Cameroon Real Estate Company
SNEC	National Water Company of Cameroon
SONEL	National Power Company of Cameroon
SONEU	Emergency neonatal and obstetric care
SOPECAM	Cameroon News and Publishing Corporation
SRA	Reproductive health of adolescent girls
SSE	Education sector strategy
SSS	Health sector strategy
SSSPF	Women's Advancement Subsector Strategy
TIC	Information and communication technologies
TPI	Court of first instance
UE	European Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
VAW	Violence against women
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
ZAC	Designated development zones
ZEP	Priority educational areas

I. Introduction

1. At its 41st, 42nd and 43rd meetings on 23 and 24 November 1999, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concluded the consideration of Cameroon's initial report, noting with satisfaction the following positive developments:

(a) Establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1997, with a special mandate to promote equality of women and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in all sectors of Cameroonian society.

(b) Increase in the growth rate of the State party's gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998 to 5 per cent and decrease in the rate of inflation to 1.6 per cent in the year ending June 1998 from 9.6 per cent a year earlier. These positive developments contribute to an environment conducive to more effective implementation of the rights under the Covenant.

(c) Recent 30 per cent increase in the salaries of Government employees and rehabilitation of the National Social Security Fund (CNPS) to ensure the payment of pension benefits.

2. While welcoming Cameroon's efforts, the Committee observed that a number of factors and difficulties still impeded the implementation of the Covenant. Inter alia, the Committee noted that:

(a) The repayment of Cameroon's external debt absorbed approximately two thirds of the country's export earnings, affecting the Government's ability to allocate sufficient funds to the social sector.

(b) The prevalence of certain traditions, customs and cultural practices in Cameroon continued to impede the full enjoyment of women's rights under the Covenant.

(c) While boosting the real GDP growth rate, the Government's economic reform programme for 1998-99, which implemented Cameroon's structural adjustment programme, approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the French Development Fund (CFD), had been prejudicial to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by leading to greater poverty, higher unemployment, a more unfair income distribution and the collapse of social services.

3. The Committee also raised various subjects of concern, in the legal, political, social, economic and cultural areas, regarding the actual exercise of the rights enshrined in the Covenant. In that connection, the Committee formulated suggestions and recommendations discussed *infra* (under section IV).

4. In view of these considerations and although this document amounts to its first and second periodic reports, Cameroon wishes to refer again to the presentation of the general framework for human rights promotion and protection, particularly regarding economic, social and cultural rights. Significant progress has in fact been achieved in Cameroon in comparison to the situation described in the initial report.

5. The strengthening of democracy and the rule of law through transparent elections, legal and judicial security and better governance have contributed to improvement in the conduct of public affairs.

6. The main goal of the turnaround of the country's economy through the adoption of budgetary measures to rationalize public finances has been to improve the living conditions of Cameroonians. In that context, the Government has focused on raising the quality of services offered in such social sectors as education, health and employment.

7. The effects of the measures taken are not yet felt by all population groups but the approach is largely progressive in character, as the Government considers it crucial that the various programmes and policies should be part of a strategic vision with short-, medium- and long-term components.

8. Accordingly, the method followed consists in a presentation of the legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights in Cameroon (section II), responses to every recommendation and suggestion of the Committee (section IV) and, lastly, a detailed assessment of the specific implementation of the individual articles of the Covenant through Cameroon's economic, social and cultural rights protection system (section V).

II. General presentation of the legal framework for the protection and promotion of human rights in Cameroon

9. By recommending "a concerted effort to ensure recognition of economic, social and cultural rights at the national, regional and international levels"¹, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, have constituted an important step in the economic, cultural and social rights (ESCR) promotion process.

10. The attention paid to ESCR within the United Nations has steadily increased; and, in accordance with its international commitments, Cameroon has enshrined those rights in its Constitution and in certain Acts and has established them in practice, as attested by the normative and institutional frameworks and the initiatives taken by the Government to stimulate the economy.

A. Normative framework

11. As all international instruments to which Cameroon has acceded, the Covenant is part of domestic law. Consequently, the Covenant is directly enforceable and may be relied upon before a court. The rights stipulated in the Covenant are part of human rights, by virtue of the indivisibility of which their enjoyment is also guaranteed by other international and national instruments.

International normative framework

12. Cameroon has made international commitments at the global, regional and sub-regional levels.

Global commitments of Cameroon

13. Cameroon is party to the following instruments:

- International Convention of 11 October 1933 on the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age (succession on 27 October 1961);
- International arrangement of 18 May 1904 to ensure effective protection against the criminal traffic known as the white slave trade, as amended on 4 May 1949 (succession on 3 November 1961);
- ILO Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, 1930 (ratification on 7 June 1960);

¹ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna on 25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/23), section II, paragraph 98.

- ILO Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1959 (ratification on 13 September 1962);
- ILO Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948 (ratification on 7 June 1960);
- ILO Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, 1951 (ratification on 15 May 1970);
- ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958 (ratification on 15 May 1988);
- Convention of 21 March 1950 for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (accession on 19 February 1982);
- Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees (ratification by succession of State on 23 June 1961);
- Protocol of 31 January 1967 relating to the Status of Refugees (accession on 19 September 1967);
- International Convention of 7 March 1967 on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratification on 24 June 1971);
- International Covenant of 16 December 1966 on Civil and Political Rights (accession on 27 June 1984);
- Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (accession on 27 June 1984);
- Convention of 26 November 1968 on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (accession on 6 October 1972);
- International Convention of 30 November 1973 on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (accession on 1 November 1976);
- ILO Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 1973 (acceptance on 13 August 2001);
- Convention of 10 December 1984 against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (accession on December 19 1986);
- Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (ratification on August 23 1994);
- Convention of 20 November 1989 on the Rights of the Child (signature on 27 September 1990 and ratification on January 11 1993);
- Organization of African Unity Convention of 10 September 1969 Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (ratification in 1985);
- International Convention of 18 December 1990 on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ratification in 2003);
- ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (acceptance on 15 June 2002);
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (accession on August 4 2006);

- United Nations Convention of 15 December 2000 against Transnational Organized Crime (ratification by Decree No. 2004/125 of 18 May 2004);
- Protocol of 15 December 2000 to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (ratification by Decree No. 2004/120 of March 18 2004);
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted in Palermo on 15 December 2000 (ratification by Decree No. 2004/121 of May 18 2004);
- United Nations Convention against Corruption, adopted at Mérida, Mexico, on 31 October 2003 (ratification by Decree No. 2004/124 of 18 May 2004);
- Optional Protocol of 6 October 1999 to the Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Regional and sub-regional commitments of Cameroon

14. Cameroon is party to the following instruments:

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted on 27 June 1981 (ratification on 21 October 1986);
- African Cultural Charter, adopted in June 1981 (ratification on 29 June 1981);
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, adopted on 21 November 1989 (ratification on 5 September 1997);
- African Union Non-aggression and Common Defence Pact.

15. At the sub-regional level, Cameroon signed on 19 July 2006 the Convention of 16 March 2006 on Cooperation and Mutual Legal Assistance between the Member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

16. Cameroon has ratified:

- The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC) agreement on judicial cooperation, adopted in Brazzaville on 28 January 2004 (Decree No. 2006/050 of 30 January 2006);
- The CAEMC extradition agreement, adopted in Brazzaville on 28 January 2004 (Decree No. 2006/048 of 30 January 2006);
- The CAEMC Accord on Non-aggression and Mutual Assistance in Defence, adopted in Brazzaville on 28 January 2004 (Decree No. 2006/049 of 30 January 2006);
- The Convention to Govern the CAEMC Parliament, adopted in Brazzaville on 28 January 2004 (Decree No. 2006/051 of January 30 2006).

Domestic normative framework

17. The economic, social and cultural rights are broadly recognized within the framework of Cameroon's domestic legal system. They are explicitly stipulated in the country's Constitution, as in many other Member States of the United Nations, and their elements are incorporated into numerous Acts.

18. The preamble² to the Constitution actually proclaims the Cameroonian people's commitment to the following universal values and principles:

- Equal rights and obligations for all
- Freedom and security guaranteed for every person
- Prohibition of arbitrary commands or orders
- Freedom of movement
- Inviolability of residence and correspondence
- Requirement that offences and penalties must be defined by law
- Security of the individual
- Requirement that the law may not have retrospective effect
- Every person's right to a fair hearing before the courts
- Freedom of opinion, religious belief, conscience and worship
- Freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly and association
- Union rights and the right to strike
- Right to a healthy environment
- Protection of the environment
- Protection of minorities
- Protection of indigenous peoples.

19. As part of the liberalization process experienced by Cameroon in the 1990s, many Acts and regulations have gradually been introduced to enhance the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution and the above international agreements. The following legislation is pertinent:

- Act No. 83/013 of 21 July 1983 on the protection of persons with disabilities and the related Implementing Decree No. 90/1516 of 16 November 1990
- Act No. 90/047 of 19 December 1990 on the state of emergency
- Act No. 90/052 of 19 December 1990 on the right to social communication, amended by Act No. 96/04 of 16 January 1996
- Act No. 90/053 of 19 December 1990 on the freedom of association
- Act No. 90/054 of 19 December 1990 on policing
- Act No. 90/055 of 19 December 1990 on public assembly and demonstrations
- Act No. 90/056 of 19 December 1990 on political parties
- Act No. 97/009 of 10 January 1997 inserting into the Criminal Code article 132 bis, entitled "Torture"
- Act No. 97/010 of 10 January 1997 amending and supplementing certain provisions of the Act governing extradition arrangements

² Under article 65 of the Constitution, the preamble is an integral part of the Constitution.

- Act No. 97/012 of 10 January 1997 governing the conditions of entry into, residence in and departure from Cameroon, and two related implementing decrees
- Act No. 99/14 of 22 December 1999 on NGOs
- Act No. 2000/016 of 19 December 2000 setting up the National Elections Observatory (ONEL)
- Act No. 2004/004 of 21 April 2004 on the organization and operation of the Constitutional Council
- Act No. 2004/005 of 21 April 2004 establishing the status of members of the Constitutional Council
- Act No. 2004/016 of 22 July 2004 on the establishment, organization and operation of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, and Implementing Decree No. 2005/254 of 7 July 2005
- Act No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on refugee status
- Act No. 2005/007 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code³
- Act No. 2005/015 of 29 December 2005 on trafficking and trading in children
- Act No. 2006/003 of 25 April 2006 on declaring property and assets
- Act No. 2006/011 of 29 December 2006 on the establishment, organization and functioning of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) and Implementing Decree No. 2008/372 of 11 November 2008
- Decree No. 91/287 of 21 June 1991 on the organization and operation of the National Communications Council
- Decree No. 2005/187 of 31 May 2005 on the organization and operation of the National Agency of Financial Investigation
- Decree No. 2006/008 of 11 March 2006 on the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC)⁴
- Decree No. 2006/275 of 6 September 2006 on the appointment of the Members of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF)⁵.

B. Institutional framework

20. The improvement of the institutional framework has consisted in the emergence of the Constitutional Council, the modernization of the judiciary, the creation of a national human rights institution with enhanced powers, the subordination of the penitentiary system to the Ministry of Justice, the creation of a Human Rights and International Cooperation Directorate within the Ministry of Justice and the establishment of a police oversight division.

³ The Code entered into force on 1 January 2007 pursuant to Act No. 2006/008 of 14 July 2006 amending and supplementing the provisions of article 747 of Act No. 2005/007 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code.

⁴ The members were designated by the President of the Republic in accordance with decrees Nos 016 and 017 of 15 March 2007 and were sworn in before the Supreme Court on 30 May 2007.

⁵ They were sworn in before the Plenary Assembly of the Supreme Court on 9 November 2006.

A nascent Constitutional Council

21. Under article 46 of the Constitution, "the Constitutional Council shall have jurisdiction in constitutional matters. It shall rule on the constitutionality of Acts. It shall be the organ regulating the functioning of the institutions".

22. According to the transitional provisions of the Constitution, the Supreme Court is to exercise the functions of the Constitutional Council until the latter has been set up. In that capacity, the Supreme Court has ruled on a number of cases involving electoral disputes. Judgement No. 81/CE/96-97 of 30 June 1997 rendering the election in one constituency null and void following the 17 May 1997 legislative elections is a prime example. According to that judgment, "since it causes unjustifiable and discriminatory interference with the equality of candidates and political groups before the electoral law, and with the freedom of citizens to choose their representatives, such behaviour (acts of violence against the leaders of an opposition party) constitutes a clear and deliberate violation of both the text of the above-mentioned Act and article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

23. The Supreme Court handled the dispute regarding the dual – legislative and municipal – elections of 22 July 2007 with independence and impartiality⁶.

24. The Constitutional Council is gradually being set up through the promulgation of Acts Nos 2004/004 and 2004/005 of 21 April 2004 on the organization and operation of the Constitutional Council and determining the status of its members. Its secretariat is organized in accordance with Decree No. 2005/253 of 30 June 2005. The expected appointment of the Council's members will be the last stage in bringing it effectively into operation.

Modernization of the judiciary

25. The 1996 Constitution defined the justice system, formerly referred to as the judicial authority⁷, as an independent judiciary (article 37 (2) of the Constitution), whose judicial power is exercised by the Supreme Court, the courts of appeal and the other courts.

26. The President of the Republic is the guarantor of the independence of the judiciary. The President appoints the judicial and legal officers after consultation with the Judicial Service Commission, an advisory body comprising judicial and legal officers, members of parliament and independent personalities.

27. The independence of the judiciary is clear in view of article 37 (2) of the Constitution, according to which judges, "in discharging their duties, shall be guided only by the law and their conscience".

The National Commission of Human Rights and Freedoms: a national human rights body with enhanced powers

28. In its general comment No. 10 on the role of national human rights institutions in the protection of economic, social and cultural rights, the Committee noted that such institutions "have a potentially crucial role to play in promoting and ensuring the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. Unfortunately, this role has too often either not been accorded to the institution or been neglected or given a low priority by it. It is therefore essential that full attention be paid to economic, social and cultural rights in all of the relevant activities of these institutions".

⁶ Cf. the Report by the Ministry of Justice on Human Rights in Cameroon in 2007.

⁷ Cf. article 31 of the Constitution of 2 June 1972.

29. Moreover, according to the Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, "promotional and monitoring bodies, such as national ombudsman institutions and human rights commissions, should address violations of economic, social and cultural rights as vigorously as they address violations of civil and political rights" (guideline 25).

30. In that context, the Paris Principles emphasize that the functions of a human rights institution include investigating alleged violations of human rights and advising the Government on activities relating to human rights issues.

31. In line with such international standards, the National Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms, set up by Decree No. 90/1459 of 8 November 1990, has been converted into the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF), established by Act No. 2004/016 of 22 July 2004.

32. This conversion aims at enhancing the capacities of the national body responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights.

33. Accordingly, the Commission is an independent body for consultation, monitoring, evaluation, dialogue, cooperation, promotion and protection with regard to human rights and freedoms.

"On that basis, the Commission:

- Receives all claims concerning violations of human rights and freedoms;
- Conducts all necessary inquiries and investigations into cases of violation of human rights and freedoms and, in that connection, reports to the President of the Republic;
- Refers the cases of violation of the human rights and freedoms to the appropriate authorities;
- Where necessary, visits detention facilities, police stations and gendarmerie units in the presence of the competent public procurator or his or her representative;
- Proposes to the authorities measures to be taken in the areas of human rights and freedoms;
- Where necessary, maintains contacts with the United Nations, international organizations, and foreign committees or associations pursuing similar goals".

Subordination of the penitentiary system to the Ministry of Justice

34. The penitentiary system, formerly attached to the Ministry of Regional Administration, has been subordinated to the Ministry of Justice by Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004 on Government organization⁸. This reform, recommended by the Committee against Torture, is expected to allow consistent monitoring of the post-sentencing phase.

Creation of a Human Rights and International Cooperation Directorate within the Ministry of Justice

35. The Human Rights and International Cooperation Directorate was created by Decree No. 2005/122 of 15 April 2005 on the organization of the Ministry of Justice⁹. The Directorate has the following responsibilities, inter alia:

- Monitoring human rights issues generally;

⁸ This decree appears in annex XII.

⁹ This decree appears in annex XIV.

- Monitoring the implementation of international treaties related to human rights;
- Informing judicial and penitentiary system staff about human rights protection rules and raising their awareness of such standards.

36. Among other activities undertaken since its creation, the Directorate has prepared three reports on human rights in Cameroon in 2005, 2006 and 2007, respectively¹⁰.

37. Through the Directorate, Cameroon specifically cooperates with Human Rights Council special rapporteurs on torture in order to strengthen international cooperation.

38. Further to correspondence G/SO 214 (53-21) of 4 September 2007 of Mr. Manfred Nowak, Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, which contained a number of recommendations and observations¹¹, the Government of Cameroon provided information regarding the extent to which the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment had been implemented within the Cameroonian legal system¹².

Establishment of a police oversight division

39. A Special Police Oversight Division, set up by Decree No. 2005-065 of 23 February 2005, ensures "policing of the police" (article 1 (2) of the decree).

This division "is responsible for:

- Conducting civil or administrative investigations and checks into the character of persons;
- Attending to the protection of secrecy and to the state of mind, morale and loyalty of National Security staff, public servants, and civilian employees of the State or public authorities
- Actively participating in combating corruption
- Contributing to the enhancement of discipline and respect for professional ethics within National Security units
- Carrying out administrative and judicial investigations concerning National Security staff.
- Without prejudice to the particular responsibilities of the individual heads of unit with regard to discipline, the Division is tasked with preventing and combating all forms of abuse of power and all instances of engaging in behaviour or acts contrary to legality, propriety, duty, honour or integrity while discharging or in connection with official responsibilities."

40. Since its creation, the Division has carried out numerous investigations having led to various administrative or criminal sanctions against officers in charge of police units¹³.

¹⁰ The documents in question are attached to this report.

¹¹ A copy of the correspondence in question is attached to this report.

¹² A copy of the Government's replies to the Special Rapporteur's recommendations and observations is attached to this report.

¹³ Cf. information provided infra with regard to judicial proceedings.

III. Government-encouraged processes for a closer regulation of economic, social and cultural rights

41. The processes in question are mainly progressive decentralization, attainment of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative completion point, privatization, restructuring and readjustment, improvement of agricultural and forestry policies and adoption of measures for the immediate amelioration of the population's living conditions.

Progressive decentralization

42. The following three important Acts were promulgated on 22 July 2004:

- Act No. 2004/017 on the orientation of decentralization;
- Act No. 2004/018 establishing the rules applicable to municipalities;
- Act No. 2004/019 establishing the rules applicable to regions.

43. The organization and operation of the Decentralization Board and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for local services established under Act No. 2004/017 were respectively specified by decrees Nos 2008/013 and 2008/014 of 17 January 2008. The administrative organization of the State was established by Decree No. 2008/376 of 12 November 2008. Decree No. 2008/377 determining the responsibilities of heads of administrative units and referring to the organization and function of such units was also signed on that date.

44. Decentralization consists is a mechanism for the devolution of State powers to the decentralized local councils with a view to ensuring that economic, social and cultural rights are effectively exercised. The responsibilities thus transferred are those aimed at the population's economic, social, health-related, educational and cultural development. The process involves intensive synergy between national and local development efforts and calls for the participation of the population in the formulation of policies and programmes reflecting the rights of the groups concerned.

Attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point

45. The attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point has been one of the crucial economic and social events of 2006 and a hopeful sign for improvement in the population's standard of living. In his 12 May 2006 address to the nation, the President of the Republic¹⁴ underscored that development, whose significance may be fully grasped only through a retrospective consideration of the 1980s.

46. Cameroon experienced a deep economic crisis, characterized by a decline in GDP, deterioration of the population's living conditions, and a foreign debt which reached unsustainable proportions in 1995.

47. Based on such economic indicators, Cameroon ranked among the world's poorest countries. In 1997, a programme addressing the problem of HIPC debt was launched by the international financial institutions and the G7¹⁵.

48. In particular, the programme in question aims at stimulating economic growth through a debt relief policy towards the countries concerned. In the long term, debt reduction was expected to provide these countries with, inter alia, the borrowing capacity

¹⁴ The address was published in the newspaper *Cameroon Tribune*, issue No. 8598/4797 of 15 May 2006.

¹⁵ "Manière de voir" ("Outlook"), *Le Monde diplomatique*, July-August 2000, p. 75.

necessary for financing new investment programmes conducive to growth and development¹⁶.

49. In order to attain the HIPC initiative completion point, Cameroon was obliged to meet various conditions imposed by the World Bank and IMF.

50. Cameroon's admission to the initiative through a drastic reduction in spending by the Government and the population allowed the country to benefit from additional debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

51. The effect of the HIPC and MDRI initiatives was a reduction in Cameroon's outstanding debt from US\$5.7 billion in 2005 to US\$525 million in 2006. The attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point offers Cameroon the following considerable advantages:

- Resumption of public investment, expected to accelerate private investment, the two being largely complementary;
- Encouragement of investment contributing to the process of diversification of the Cameroonian economy and of exports towards creation of added-value and technology-intensive products;
- Development of the financial sector;
- Strengthening of public-private partnerships;
- Improvement of the business environment.

52. It is premature to assess the impact of the attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point on the Cameroonians' standard of living.

Privatization

53. The privatization policy is generally aimed at channelling national and international private savings into investment, enhancing the offer and quality of services, ensuring the disengagement of the State from the productive sector by supporting the development of the private sector into a dynamic growth engine, and encouraging private initiative and technology transfer.

54. Over the past ten years, the State continued the application of the privatization programme, to most of the enterprises concerned, through, for instance:

- The National Water Company (SNEC) privatization process, which made significant progress with the creation of Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation (CAMWATER), an asset-holding enterprise set up to safeguard and consolidate the processing facilities and to ensure the leasing of the public service of drinking water supply;
- The Cameroon Airlines (CAMAIR) demerger-liquidation-privatization operation, followed by the creation of Cameroon Airlines Corporation (CAMAIR CO.), a publicly owned company, with plans to hand over the majority ownership of the new enterprise to a strategic private partner;
- The call for tenders for the privatization of Cameroon Telecommunications (CAMTEL), expected to lead to the transfer of the majority of company shares to a

¹⁶ Paul K. Fokam, *Misère Galopante du Sud, Complicité du Nord: Jeux, Enjeux, Solutions (Rampant destitution in the South, and the North's complicity: games, stakes, solutions)*, Maisonneuve et Larose, p. 38.

major telecommunications operator having the financial and technical capabilities necessary for the sector's modernization and for developing an appropriate strategy;

- The privatization, already begun, of the State's hotel enterprises.

Restructuring and readjustment of certain enterprises

55. As part of improving the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights in Cameroon, the Government took a number of restructuring measures designed to enhance the quality of the services provided. For instance, the creation of the Cameroon Postal Service (CAMPOST) is aimed at reorganizing the mail service to meet the population's need.

56. The restructuring of the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (FEICOM) enabled the Government to refocus that effective local-development tool on its initial role, namely to act as the decentralized local councils' main mechanism for local development support.

57. One of the structural measures taken has been the establishment of a one-stop service unit for foreign trade operations (GUCE) designed to shorten the length of customs clearance procedures for merchandise, reduce the related costs and simplify the procedures concerned.

Improvement of agricultural and forestry policies

58. The Government has made intensive efforts to build the capacities of the rural sector through appropriate agricultural and forestry policies. The following measures have been taken to that end:

- Creation of the National Agency for Forest Development (ANAFOR) through a restructuring of the National Forest Development Office (ONADEF). This measure reflects the resolve of the Head of State to ensure the sustainable development of the country's abundant forest resources (650 tree species, of which 300 are marketable).
- Protection of forest resources, preservation of biodiversity and prevention of all types of poaching;
- Creation of a Seeds Fund through Decree No. 2005/169 of 26 May 2005.
- Launching of a young farmers support programme.
- Creation of the Cocoa and Coffee Subsector Development Fund.
- Enhancement of access to rural credit through the Rural Credit Project.
- Creation of a Centre for the Promotion of Non-standard Types of Breeding.
- Construction of a laboratory for the analysis of livestock and fishing products for import or export.
- Enhancement of animal health coverage of the country's livestock in the amount of CFAF 2,057,000,000¹⁷.
- Establishment of two fishing training centres at Limbé and Douala and creation of a modern small-scale fishing centre at Kribi in the framework of cooperation with Japan;

¹⁷ Approximately € 3,140,459.

- Establishment of a national epidemiological monitoring network in the amount of CFAF 2,402,000,000¹⁸.
- Support for the development of fishing product processing chains in the amount of CFAF 13,527,672,000¹⁹ during the period 2002-2007.
- Improvement of State aquaculture facilities.

Adoption of measures for the immediate improvement of the living conditions of the population

59. In his general policy statement upon his election in 2004, President Paul BIYA affirmed inter alia that "the country's economic recovery is not an end in itself but serves to support us on our democratic course and to ensure our social progress".

60. Accordingly, the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights requires surveillance that is particularly effective and therefore, in the framework of the rule of law, presupposes the provision of appropriate social services. In that connection, one may note the activities described below:

Improvement of education services

61. For instance, in higher education, the following measures were taken in order to improve the working and living conditions of instructors and students:

- Construction, on the Yaoundé I campus, of two university residential complexes for boys and girls, each with a capacity of 200 two-bed rooms, in the amount of CFAF 1,500,000,000²⁰;
- Signature of a health insurance contract for instructors;
- Connection of State Universities to the Internet, in the amount of CFAF 555,000,000²¹;
- Launching of a interuniversity documentary resources pilot-centre;
- Travel allowances to 196 students, instructors and researchers, in the amount of CFAF 123,000,000²²;
- Study allowances to 4,704 students of six universities, in the amount of CFAF 345,000,000²³;
- International cooperation scholarship supplements, in the amount of CFAF 678,000,000²⁴;
- Signature of the order of 12 December 2006 capping, by category, the monthly rents paid by students in State University residences.

62. For measures taken with regard to other education subsectors, please see the information provided in connection with the right to education (section V, paragraphs 552-618).

¹⁸ Approximately € 3,667,176.

¹⁹ Approximately € 20,652,935.

²⁰ Approximately € 2,290,078.

²¹ Approximately € 847,329.

²² Approximately € 187,787.

²³ Approximately € 526,718.

²⁴ Approximately € 1,035,115.

Improvement of public health services

63. The following activities were carried out, over and above the adoption of a framework act and the formulation of a sectoral policy regarding public health:

- Continuation of the implementation of the expanded programme of immunization (EPI);
- Generalization of immunization against hepatitis B, whooping cough, diphtheria and tetanus, and poliomyelitis;
- Creation of 60 units for treating HIV/AIDS and opportunistic diseases; and free provision of tuberculosis treatment in public hospitals and of antiretroviral drugs;
- Improvement of treatment for malaria.

64. The following activities are some of the measures taken to enhance health care infrastructure:

- As part of Cameroonian-Chinese cooperation, construction in Yaoundé of a gynaecological, obstetric and paediatric hospital;
- Construction of 118 integrated health care centres;
- Improvement of 138 medical units, including 64 district hospitals, 23 local medical centres, 98 integrated health care centres, 10 provincial hospitals, 3 central hospitals and 4 referral hospitals;
- Construction of 99 staff-on-call facilities;
- Construction of 137 equipped boreholes in health care establishments.

65. For other related measures, please see the information provided in connection with the right to health (section V, paragraphs 491-551).

IV. Replies of the Government to the suggestions and recommendations of the Committee

66. In response to the suggestions and recommendations formulated by the Committee in its concluding observations (E/C.12/1/Add.40), it should be noted that Cameroon is engaged in setting up a framework for safeguarding and implementing the economic, social and cultural rights in accordance with its international commitments.

67. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 31.* The Government took a number of measures for the promotion of economic rights at the institutional and concrete policy levels.

Institutional reforms

68. With regard to institutional reforms, including the enactment of appropriate legislation, please refer to section II, paragraphs 20-40.

- Regarding in particular the participation of all Cameroonians in the realization of their economic, social and cultural rights, the State set up a structural framework conducive to the promotion of such rights by civil society, which consists of approximately 56,000 NGOs and associations. Their activities are taken into consideration in the National Governance Programme (NGP) in order to ensure their

participation in the formulation and implementation of development policies and strategies²⁵.

- The role of the private sector has been enhanced and an active dialogue has been established between the sector and the State through the following coordination bodies:
 - Inter-ministerial Committee enlarged to include the private sector, chaired by the Prime Minister;
 - Alliance for Africa's Industrialization Steering Committee;
 - Competitiveness Board;
 - Foreign Trade Facilitation Board.

Reforms related to policy

69. Policy-related reforms concern the economic and budgetary systems and, through the combat against social corruption and exclusion, the social system. Over the last 20 years, the liberalization of the economy has been a priority for the Government, which endeavours to eliminate tariff barriers, controlled pricing and excessive profit margins and tax privileges, and to continue the privatization of public and semi-public enterprises. In that connection, the State ensures that the private operators acquiring such firms are ready to guarantee a minimum level of service to the population and that the needs of service users are not neglected in favour of the operators' interests.

70. A review of the ordinance of 1962 on the financial structure of the State was launched in 2001 and led, in 2007, to the adoption of Act No. 2007/006 of 26 December 2007 on the new financial structure of the State.

71. The frame of reference for the country's economic development is the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), on which all economic and social reform measures are based.

72. Within the framework of the action plan for the improvement of public expenditure management, budget reforms have been undertaken since 1998 in order to establish good budgetary management practices. The following measures have been taken with a view to creating favourable conditions for the implementation of the NGP²⁶:

- Budgetary nomenclature reform, conducted with European Union, IMF and World Bank support and involving a classification at three levels, namely by function, by administrative unit in charge of the expenditure, and by economic character of the revenue or expenditure.
- Monitoring of the expenditure system by ensuring the security of fiduciary documents and streamlining their distribution; full computerization of the system; and definition of the roles of the actors participating in the relevant procedures;
- Establishment of an information system encompassing regional expenditure control units, and interconnection of the relevant actors, through cooperation with the European Union and IMF;

²⁵ Such NGOs are Africa Future Foundation, African Action on AIDS and the Chantal Biya Foundation.

²⁶ See Ministry of Justice Report, 2005, pp. 169-170, and 2006, p. 80.

- Simplification of budget execution procedures and streamlining of budget monitoring through inquiries, studies and advice by the Division of Budgetary Operations Controls created in 2003²⁷;
- Fight against corruption, a challenge in view of the perverse impact of that scourge on the economic, social and cultural rights.

73. Gradual progress has been noted in preventing and repressing corruption. In 2006, public awareness campaigns were organized countrywide, under the auspices of the Anti-Corruption Observatory (OLC)²⁸ and with the help of units set up in the various ministries, in order to sensitize the population to the impact of corruption on the country's standard of living and development prospects.

74. In that connection, the Government received support from various organizations, particularly NGOs, for instance *Transparency international*²⁹, international organizations, the World Bank³⁰, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Commonwealth. In 2006, the Commonwealth secretariat organized seminars for magistrates on the independence of justice and the fight against corruption in the courts.

75. The creation of CONAC boosted the fight against corruption as from 2007, particularly through the programme entitled "CHOC" ("Change habits – oppose corruption"), adopted in agreement with the development partners, both bilateral (Germany, Canada, the United States, France, Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and multilateral (the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Commission, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Network on Governance (GOVNET) and UNDP. The aim of the CHOC document, signed on 23 February 2007, is to support for three years the implementation of the anti-corruption component of the NGP.

76. The following priorities have been set:

- Formulating a national policy for combating corruption;
- Modernizing the relevant provisions of criminal law;
- Building the capacities of the institutions concerned, particularly by ensuring their independence and financial autonomy;
- Building civil society's capacity to play an effective role in combating corruption³¹.

77. UNDP support in the framework of the programme will consist in the provision of funding of the order of CFAF 1 billion³², made available by the donors, including AfDB.

78. In recent years, the repression of corruption has been a major goal of the Government. Prosecutions have led to heavy sentences³³. Regarding the protection of the rights of minorities and the fight against social exclusion, please see the information provided below, in reply to the points raised in paragraph 38.

²⁷ Under article 2(1) of Presidential Decree No. 2008/028 of 17 January 2008 on the organization and function of the Budgetary and Financial Discipline Board, "the Board is responsible for imposing sanctions on public agents, whether formally appointed or not, who are guilty of irregularities and management faults committed in the performance of their duties and prejudicial to public authority".

²⁸ CONAC, created under Decree No. 2006/088 of 11 March 2006, replaced. OLC on that date.

²⁹ Report by the Ministry of Justice on Human Rights in Cameroon in 2006, p. 88.

³⁰ *Cameroon Tribune*, issue No. 8612/4811 of 5 June 2006, p.3.

³¹ *Le Gouvernement en action* ("Government in action"), 2002-2007.

³² Approximately € 1,538,461.6.

³³ Cf. see the sanctions tabulation in the various reports on the human rights situation (2006, p. 92-100).

79. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 32.* Legislative and practical measures have been taken to address gender inequality and discrimination against women in Cameroon.

Practical measures

80. Women account for 51 per cent of the country's total population. This fact and the Government's commitment to women's integration into the development process led to the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs which, under the 2004 decree restructuring the Government, became the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Promotion. The situation of women remains a matter of concern to the Government in view of discrimination against them as a result of traditions which, in certain parts of the country, still confine women to their reproductive function and community-based social roles.

81. The Government has identified the emancipation of women and the improvement of their standard of living as key prerequisites for sustainable development. Accordingly, constant efforts are made to ensure that the gender approach is taken into account in the formulation of all Government policies. The resolve to establish gender equality in the law and in practice is enshrined in the Constitution³⁴ and is consonant with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women³⁵, the World Summit for Social Development, held in March 1995 in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held on 5 September 1995 in Beijing.

82. Since the Copenhagen summit, appreciable progress has been made at the national level with regard to gender equity and equality, in areas where disparities are often observed. In April 1997, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Promotion, assisted by its national and international partners, formulated and ensured the adoption of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Women in Development (PANIFD), which addresses seven of the 12 priority areas defined at the Beijing Conference and is aimed at:

- Improving woman's standard of living and legal status;
- Ensuring women's participation in decision making;
- Combating violence against women;
- Ensuring girls' education;
- Improving women's health;
- Improving women's living conditions;
- Improving the relevant institutional framework.

83. Two key documents³⁶ which, inter alia, assessed the situation of the country's women in 2000, provided early findings pointing to significant progress in promoting gender equality. In fact, the Social logbook (TBS) on the situation of women and children in Cameroon, July 2000, and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS, Cameroon, 2000) referred to women's increasing visibility in various areas of national life.

84. With regard to providing women with information and ongoing training, the number of women's advancement centres increased from approximately 27 in 1999, when 210 minutes of radio broadcasting time were devoted to women's issues, to 48 in 2008.

³⁴ According to the preamble to the Constitution, the nation "protects women".

³⁵ Ratified by Cameroon in August 1994.

³⁶ Social logbook (TBS) on the situation of women and children in Cameroon, July 2000; and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS, Cameroon, 2000).

85. With regard to access to social services and basic resources, school enrolment ratios among women in 1998 were 27.2 per cent for ages 16-20 and 11.4 per cent for ages 21-24, while women accounted for 25.5 and 43.7 per cent, respectively, of students attending the *grandes écoles* and universities (source: Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Promotion (MINPROFF)). Over the years, these rates clearly improved.

86. The trend in women's access to health care is noteworthy. In 1998, 60 per cent of women had received professional assistance at childbirth, 25 per cent stated that they used a contraceptive method, and two women out of three had benefited from prenatal visits.

87. With regard to representation in political bodies, women during the legislative period 1997-2002 accounted for 5.6 per cent of the National Assembly deputies and 10.7 per cent of municipal council members.

88. These non-exhaustive data suggest that women's integration into development no longer constitutes a full-scale problem in Cameroon. There is significant evidence of the Government's interest in the mainstreaming of the gender approach into all national policies. Strategy documents drawn up or under preparation during the period after the Millennium Declaration emphasize women's advancement and gender equality and equity.

89. The PRSP drawn up in 2003 and revised in 2005 refers to the Government's resolve to improve the living conditions of women, ensure respect for their rights, recognize specifically their contribution to development and promote their integration into income-generating economic activities.

90. Those goals are pursued through action in four primary areas, namely:

- Improvement of women's social and legal status by combating violence against women and other discriminatory practices;
- Improvement of women's standard of living by building their economic potential and facilitating their access to credit, information, education and health care;
- Promotion of gender equality and equity through the gender approach in all development projects;
- Strengthening the existing institutional structures and mechanisms

91. The Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS) and the Women's Advancement Subsector Strategy (SSSPF) paper, which are being drawn up, assess the situation of women at the political, economic and social levels. It is already clear that the efforts made must be strengthened with the mobilization of financing programmes aimed at women's integration into the various areas of the country's social, economic and political activities.

92. The information provided in annex I reveals significant progress with regard to women's participation in public life and decision making.

93. With regard to equal access to employment and civil service, women have, since 1998, accounted for approximately 28.7 per cent of workers and are particularly present in the social sectors (inter alia, education, health care, social affairs and women's advancement). Women accounted for 19.1 per cent of lawyers registered with the Bar in 1999 and for 23.13 per cent of magistrates in October 2008. In order to accelerate the integration of women, the Government endeavours to increase the number of its own female members and to support their candidatures in international institutions.

94. With regard to women's inadequate representation in national institutions, note should be made that, according to Ministry of Women's Affairs data provided in April 2004, elected municipal councillors consisted of 52 women and 308 men, while the respective figures for deputies were 19 and 161.

95. Figures regarding municipal authorities also reveal progress. In particular, women account for 3 per cent of mayors (of whom 10 are women and 327 men); 10.7 per cent of assistant mayors, first level (of whom 36 are women and 301 men); 23.7 per cent of assistant mayors, second level (of whom, 80 are women and 257 men); 15.7 per cent of assistant mayors, third level (of whom, 11 are women and 59 men); and 50 per cent of assistant mayors, fourth level.

96. In his 2007 address to the nation, the President of the Republic demanded a greater number of women candidates proposed by the political parties, greater resolve in women's involvement in politics, and more openness of mind in society as a whole. As a result, various NGOs and associations launched such campaigns as "More Women in Politics" with a view to achieving gender parity in the municipal authorities and Parliament. After the legislative and municipal elections of July 2007, the NGO in question organized systematic support for the elected women parliamentarians and mayors.

- **In the Government**

97. The Government of 7 September 2007 preserved the earlier achievements and includes five women ministers³⁷. Moreover, the State Secretary attached to the Minister of Secondary Education and the Rector of the country's main university, who has State Secretary rank, are women.

In diplomatic missions

98. Cameroon has one ambassadress (appointed to Netherlands) and 30 ambassadors.

- **In regional authorities**

99. Under Presidential Decree No. 2006/231 of 17 July 2006, two women were appointed sub-prefects (in the districts of Mfou, Mefou Afamba department, Province of Centre, and of Mengong, Mvila department, Province of Sud) for the first time in Cameroon. They both exercise the duties of a principal civil administrator. Under Decree No. 2008/335 of 18 September 2008, two more women were promoted to sub-prefects, with the same level of responsibility, in the districts of Ngoumou and Yaoundé IV.

- **In ministerial directorates**

100. According to a survey conducted in August 2006 by the Cameroon Women Managers Network on women's representation in certain ministries and semi-public enterprises, the Ministry of Health has four high ranking women officials, namely a general inspector of services (at the rank of secretary general), a director, a technical adviser and a head of division (at the rank of director). *Moreover, women hold two director's posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a technical adviser's post and a director's post in the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection, a technical adviser's post and a director's post in the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation, and two general inspector's posts, one inspector's post and two director's posts in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Promotion.*

101. Table 5 in annex I presents a classification of the ministries from a gender perspective in 2008.

102. One of the vice-presidents of the National Assembly is a woman; and so are the vice-president of the National Elections Observatory (ONEL) and the deputy coordinator of the NGP (source: MINPROFF).

³⁷ The Ministers of Basic Education, Social Affairs, Women's Affairs and Family Promotion, Scientific Research and Innovation, and Culture.

- **In the leadership of State enterprises**

103. The general managers of two State enterprises (the Cameroon News and Publishing Corporation (SOPECAM) and the Bureau for Population Census and Research (BUCREP)) and the deputy general managers of two further such entities (CNPS and the Cameroon Mortgage Bank (CFC)) are women.

Although these figures may appear insufficient with regard to gender parity, certain progress observed over the years foreshadows a more significant role for women in the decision-making processes.

104. In the area of female human resources development, UNDP supports the Government, in accordance with national priorities and the international community's concerns, in developing a policy for integrating the activities and promoting the role of women in the sustainable development process.

105. In that connection, UNDP has funded the following projects and initiatives:

- The "Women and Food Technology" project aimed at boosting the agricultural and household labour productivity of rural women through the dissemination of appropriate methods, and increasing their income. This umbrella project has served as a basis for financing six microprojects undertaken by women in the country's north and extreme north and has included training seminars for microprojects leaders on the management of initiatives and of savings and loan operations.
- The "Manioc Processing at Pouma" project, carried out by the AID-Cameroon women's NGO and aimed at the establishment of a small manioc treatment enterprise, job creation and improved living conditions through increased incomes. UNDP intervenes in all stages related to manioc production, namely harvest, processing, transport and marketing. The plant produces *gari*, *fufu*, starch and *fariga*. These products are appreciated by the population and are purchased by certain food processing companies for their personnel and for sale.
- In the framework of the Cameroon Environment Programme, gender issues are viewed as crucial to the strategy for the formulation of the National Environment Plan. Accordingly, women's active participation is required, solicited and achieved at the following two levels:
 - Provincial and national seminars organized in order to promote relevant discussion and information and raise awareness of the need to protect the environment;
 - Recruitment of female consultants for carrying out surveys in the provinces of Nord and Nord-Ouest and for the production of the background documents to be used as reference material in the various seminars.
- One objective of the Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME) Programme is to contribute to women's balanced and speedy integration into the SME promotion process by building their capacities for enterprise creation and management and by eliminating discrimination. The programme provides support for:
 - The activities of cooperatives and other groupings in rural areas;
 - Information and training activities aimed at raising the population's awareness of the specific rights of women and the family;
 - Activities undertaken by public or private institutions (such as MINPROFF and NGOs) with a view to eliminating discrimination against women on issues related to land law and access to financing;

- The development of programmes for the creation of enterprises specifically intended for women;
- The orientation of girls towards trades other, and more profitable, than those traditionally reserved to women;
- The implementation of programmes for facilitating household tasks and rural labour;
- The establishment of specific procedures enabling women to upgrade their activity from micro enterprise to SME level.

In the framework of the Human Development Programme (HDP), UNDP provided financial assistance for the organization, in May 1994, of a training course for women entrepreneurs in the town of Kumba (in the south-west).

Moreover, UNDP financed a study on women's place within the Cameroonian legal system. According to the findings, it is necessary to review that system and the specific provisions affecting or assisting women as mothers, wives, workers or citizens. Substantial improvement is proposed in respect of the law and procedures concerning, inter alia, women's rights to property, inheritance, marriage, and divorce. The study also recommends a rigorous application of the law on matters requiring a gender-based differentiation of approach, particularly to violence- and abuse-related cases with women as victims.

In preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNDP provided MINPROFF with financial assistance for organizing a seminar-workshop on "Women and Peace"; funded the publication of Cameroon's National Report on the Status of Women, which was presented at the Dakar regional conference; and covered other expenses related to the preparation in question.

The Comprehensive Programme for Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (PGAFEG) comprises the following main thrusts: supporting women's advancement and gender equality; building women's economic capacity in four pilot provinces (Adamaoua, Nord-Ouest, Ouest and Littoral); promoting women's participation in public administration; supporting gender mainstreaming into the media, communication and education; advocating consideration of gender-related matters in planning and drawing up development programmes and projects supported by the Government or the development partners.

106. The strategy for attaining these goals consists in addressing the following three areas: institutional support, capacity building and demonstration activities. The first area includes most of the activities designed to provide an environment conducive to gender equality and women's increased participation in decision making. The second area aims at acquiring efficient methods of human and financial resources management, and procedures and tools appropriate for achieving sustainable human development. The third area consists of demonstration activities at grass roots level and having an impact visible in the short term. They comprise rural radio broadcasts and microcredits, whose management and use by the population would allow assessing the progress of the gender approach. The objective of this line of action is to contribute primarily to the promotion of income-generating activities (IGA) and SMEs with a view to poverty reduction and sustainable development. The main steps taken under this project are as follows:

- A population survey for the identification of gender-related problems;
- Support for setting up a rural community FM radio station in the town of Mbalmayo, Province of Centre;
- Training of 35 gender-related communication specialists;

- Production and distribution of 6,000 leaflets on the "Women and Development" policy;
- Support for the institutional strengthening of NGOs FAWECAM and Association for Professional African Women in Communication (APAC);
- Cameroon's participation in the:
 - Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, held in Addis Ababa;
 - Twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing+5);
 - Forty-fourth and forty-fifth sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York;
- Meetings, organized by the African Centre for Gender and Development, of the Women and Development Committee of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

107. UNDP and other bodies of the United Nations system have subsequently backed the Government in various ways in the design and implementation of its gender policy. Joint action was undertaken in support to the Cameroon delegation and its participation in the review and evaluation of projects carried out as part of the implementation of the strategy for women's advancement in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action; in Beijing+5; in a Beijing+5 feedback workshop; and in a training workshop on drafting reports under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

108. At the social level, particularly with regard to education and the elimination of illiteracy, the adoption in 2002 of the Education Sector Strategy (SSE) contributed to facilitating the access of girls to education, through a number of specific programmes and projects, for instance the "Basic Education" project, comprising activities aimed at decreasing the repeat and drop-out rates among schoolgirls.

109. With a view to the advancement and protection of girls and women through the elimination of illiteracy and through non-school education, the number of women's advancement centres increased from 27 in 1998-2000 to 35 in 2000-2005 and 48 in 2006-2008 (source: MINPROFF). Act No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on educational objectives rendered public primary education compulsory and free of charge. In that framework, efforts are made to eliminate obstacles to the formal education of girls.

110. Reproductive health is viewed as a Health Sector Strategy (SSS) priority: the National Strategic Plan against HIV/AIDS, 2000-2005, was followed by an HIV/AIDS component concerning women. That component was adopted in March 2007 and implemented by MINPROFF, assisted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), by sensitizing women and training leaders of multilateral partners.

111. In 2007, MINPROFF made additional efforts to raise awareness of women's rights among the persons tasked with the PRSP follow-up. A workshop was thus organized in Yaoundé on 29 March 2007 on "Why gender should be mainstreamed into poverty reduction planning".

112. Building on the conclusions reached at the workshop, the PRSP implementation monitoring and evaluation committee recommended strengthening the gender approach in that document. This work is supported by such development partners as UNDP, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO, UNPF and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

113. Significant progress has therefore been made regarding the promotion of gender equality. However, a number of problems remain, including the following:

- Certain traditions which encourage practices that are discriminatory and violent towards women;
- Lack of an adequate national legal framework specifically designed for the protection of women;
- Women's economic quasi-dependence, due to limited purchasing power and access to land and credit;
- Lagging school-enrolment of girls in certain parts of the country;
- Insufficient budget allocations to programmes and projects of the women's advancement sub-sector and other cross-cutting sectors addressing women's needs.

114. Despite these difficulties, the Government's guidelines for the promotion of gender equality and women's autonomy give grounds for hope. The draft Code of the Person and the Family, currently being finalized, affirms gender equality and equity through provisions aligned on the CEDAW. The Government seeks the code's early adoption as a matter of priority.

Legislative measures

115. In response to a recommendation made by the Committee in view of Civil Code and Commercial Code provisions that were discriminatory against women, the Government took the steps described below.

116. At the civil level, the Government, supported by international organizations and NGOs, has, since 2006, promoted the creation of mechanisms facilitating women's access to land property³⁸. Relevant initiatives include the "Gender, equity and equality" project carried out with UNPF support; the Global Programme for Women's Advancement and Gender Equality, financed by UNDP; the Project on Poverty Reduction and Action on Behalf of Women in the Province of Extrême-Nord (PREPAFEN), financed by AfDB; income-generating microprojects for women, financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); assistance projects targeting needy women and families through women's advancement centres; and the women's networks' poverty-reduction capacity building project (LAREF), financed by the African Capacity Building Fund (ACBF).

117. In view of inequalities under Commercial Code provisions, a reform was carried out as a result of the ratification of the Treaty on the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHBLA Treaty) and, especially, of the entry into force of the OHBLA Uniform Act Relating to General Commercial Law in 1997 and of the OHBLA Uniform Act relating to Commercial Companies and Economic Interest Groups. All unfair provisions were repealed, since article 7 (2) of the first Act refers to the "spouse" in connection with organizing the exercise of a commercial activity. According to article 7, a married woman is a merchant if she engages in commerce in her personal capacity and regularly, separately from her husband's activity; while the capacity of "merchant" may not be imposed on her on the mere grounds that she has a business in common with her spouse³⁹.

³⁸ Cameroon's land property system is not discriminatory. Women's access to property is difficult because of practices and habits that the Government combats in order to ensure equal ESCR enjoyment by all citizens.

³⁹ Cf. note under article 6 in "OHBLA, Presentation of the Uniform Acts with comments and annotations", JURISCOPE, 2002, p.195.

118. The adoption of the OHBLA instruments gave considerable impetus to women's activity, coordinated in the framework of the Organization of Businesswomen of Cameroon (GFAC), whose dynamism reflects the women's acknowledged freedom to engage in business on an equal footing with men.

119. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 33.* The Cameroonian Government has combated violence against women (VAW) since the mid-1980s; and, in December 1998, adopted a National Plan for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), aimed at the following objectives:

- Conducting by 2002 a countrywide survey, particularly in the areas where the practices in question occur, in order to determine their typology, extent and frequency;
- Reducing by 60 per cent, by 2010, the proportion of young and adolescent girls and women victims of any form of FGM in the above areas;
- Encouraging the communities where progress is observed in order to increase their number and consolidate their achievements;
- Integrating medical and psychosocial care for FGM victims into health care training and into the existing intervention and social support structures;
- Determining the sociocultural foundations of FGM practices in order to identify, as from 2002, alternative approaches to eradicating that phenomenon;
- Preparing a trainers' training curriculum and a guide for community workers on FGM prevention strategies and on dealing with the effect of FGM on the health of the victims;
- Promoting a multi-disciplinary approach and intersectoral cooperation for the elimination of FGM at the community, national, regional and international levels;
- Ensuring the availability of the legal texts prohibiting FGM in Cameroon;
- Setting up mechanisms for protecting persons refusing or denouncing FGM.

120. The Government has signed the main international treaties and conventions on women's and children's rights. Although the Criminal Code does not specifically refer to it, FGM is punishable under various Criminal Code provisions⁴⁰. A draft Act on the repression of gender-based violence and discrimination which has been drawn up⁴¹ contains provisions prohibiting FGM.

121. Certain development partners estimated that approximately 20 per cent of women are subjected to FGM, still practiced in the provinces of Nord, Extrême-Nord, Sud-Ouest and Est. In view of the particularly harmful effects of FGM on the health of women, the Government has since endeavoured to raise the population's awareness of the need to eradicate that practice⁴².

122. Moreover, the Government enters into partnership with international organizations (UNPF, WHO and GTZ) and NGOs with a view to combating that scourge effectively. In that connection, a forum was organized in December 2006 to take stock of the situation and

⁴⁰ As assault (under article 277), as aggravated assault (under article 279) and, where FGM has caused the victim's death, as lethal assault or murder.

⁴¹ The examination of the draft has been completed but it seems judicious to await the Criminal Code reform already in progress in order to introduce the Act.

⁴² On 10 October 2008, in Kousséri, as a sign of renouncing these practices, 10 excision practitioners turned over their knives to the Minister of Women's Affairs and Family Promotion, who intends to retrain them in other occupations.

to inform the public about the legal consequences of FGM, which affects women's physical integrity and dignity.

123. GTZ has designed a project for supporting Government organizations and NGOs in establishing a political and legal framework for the eradication of FGM. Thus, in cooperation with the network of "Child- and teenage-mothers" associations (RENATA), GTZ launched a public awareness campaign on breast ironing, including the broadcast of radio and television advertisements, the distribution of leaflets and the publication of articles in the national and international press⁴³. The draft act on the repression of gender-based violence and discrimination also contains provisions against breast mutilation.

124. **Reply to the points raised in paragraph 34.** Although there is no specific Act on sexual harassment or domestic violence, action may be brought for such acts under various Labour Code and Criminal Code provisions.

125. The actual problem consists in informing women about their rights. The State attempts to provide such information through various programmes carried out with the international community's support.

126. Aware of the psychological and social effects that sexual harassment and domestic violence may have on women's capacity to produce and thrive at the work place, the Government intends to repress severely such unethical practices in the public and private sectors. The above draft Act also addresses sexual harassment and marital rape. Measures aimed at enhancing women's access to positions of responsibility, their participation in decision-making and their capacity to set up their own enterprises help to improve their protection, bolster their autonomy and reduce their subjection to any form of domination.

127. **Reply to the points raised in paragraph 35.** Monitoring the activity of rural plantation workers is currently difficult. Where such plantations are organized as a State or private company, their permanent and temporary personnel is subject to the various regimes provided for by the General Regulations of Civil Service and the Labour Code. However, such provisions do not apply to informal sector workers who, unfortunately, are more numerous. Abuses are frequent and call for appropriate measures by the State. Pending the design and establishment of an appropriate framework to that effect, the State encourages rural plantation workers to organize in trade unions with a view to a more effective oversight of working conditions.

128. **Reply to the points raised in paragraph 36.** Cameroon has assessed the extent and effects of poverty among its population and has identified the characteristics and determinants of that phenomenon. This diagnosis has served as a basis for the preparation of the PRSP, adopted in 2003⁴⁴.

129. A number of measures consonant with the Committee's recommendations were taken for the preparation of the PRSP.

130. In-depth quantitative analyses were carried out on the basis of the results of two major household surveys (ECAM I in 1996 and ECAM II in 2001)⁴⁵ and were complemented with a qualitative assessment of poverty, involving participatory consultations with the population throughout the national territory.

⁴³ Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) Macro, *Republic of Cameroon: Population and Health Survey, 2004*; WHO, *Country Health System Fact Sheet 2006 - Cameroon*; and GTZ, *Study on Breast Mutilation in Cameroon, 2006*

⁴⁴ The document in question is attached to this report.

⁴⁵ The figures of ECAM III revealed improvement.

131. The quantitative analysis showed that:
- (i) The monetary poverty rate was still high (40.2 per cent of the population in 2001), although significantly lower (by 13.1 points) compared to the 1996 level;
 - (ii) Poverty varies considerably among areas, averaging 22 per cent in urban areas and attaining 50 per cent in rural areas;
 - (iii) Poverty particularly affects farmers (57 per cent), "informal rural dependents" (54 per cent) and those of the informal sector, and unemployed urban workers (40.1 per cent).

132. The figures highlighted the importance of education and infrastructure services. One out of two poor persons lives in a household whose head lacks primary education. Access to basic social services (education, health, water and roads) is more difficult for the poor.

133. At the qualitative level, poverty in Cameroon is a multidimensional phenomenon whose main determinants vary from one area to another, taking the following forms:

- Simultaneous decline in incomes and consumption (food insecurity);
- Aggravation of unemployment (particularly among young persons);
- Difficult access of the low-income population to basic social services;
- Risk of exclusion of vulnerable social groups (the disabled, the elderly, women, and children);
- Degradation of the economic and social infrastructure;
- Destabilization of the ecological balance.

134. Analysis of the impact of poverty also revealed links, described below, between various aspects of the life of the population.

Urban versus rural poverty

135. Despite a decline in the urban poverty rate from 41.4 per cent in 1996 to 22.1 per cent in 2001, poverty in various city quarters is still synonymous with isolation, inadequate infrastructure, unemployment and underemployment, and affects especially the young. Economic recovery in recent years has clearly been more beneficial to the urban rather than rural population. Most of the urban poor engage in small trades in the informal sector. Money incomes are unstable and their inadequacy weakens the most vulnerable groups.

Living conditions of the population

136. The poverty profile, according to the monetary approach, confirms the precariousness of household living conditions, particularly with regard to access to basic social services (inter alia, education, health, housing, employment, water and power).

Education

137. Poverty profile analysis confirms a significant inverse correlation between schooling and poverty (cf. reply to the points raised in paragraph 43 on the right to education).

Health

138. Over and above general trends, poverty profile analysis reveals important differences between the poor and the non-poor in terms of health condition and access to health care. Formal health services are those mainly solicited in the event of disease. Of

the persons having declared themselves sick in 2001, three fourths had had access to a formal and one fourth to an informal medical structure⁴⁶.

Employment

139. Labour market analysis in connection with poverty shows that the reorganization of public and semi-public sector enterprises, the freeze on civil service recruitment and personnel reduction measures have caused a significant increase in unemployment, which in 2001 amounted to nearly 17 per cent (32 per cent in urban and 9 per cent in rural areas) but was expected to decrease considerably as a result of recruitment authorized by the President of the Republic in 2008.

Access of the population to water and power

140. The proportion of households with access to drinking water increased from 51 per cent in 2001 to 63 per cent in 2004, as part of a steady rise from the 1996 level (44 per cent). The organization of the water sector since the creation of CAMWATER by Decree No. 2005/492 of 31 December 2005 has resulted in a substantial and progressive improvement of the water supply. The power supply situation has been stable in the period 2001-2004, contrary to the period 1996-2001, characterized by an increase in the proportion of households using electricity for lighting.

Housing

141. Paving material purchases constitute the sole housing-related indicator for which a recent (2004) value is available. The overall proportion of households having used durable housing materials remains stable at approximately 50 per cent across all areas of residence and standard of living levels, in line with earlier findings.

Objectives and specific measures

142. Aware of the importance of the social well-being of its citizens as a major challenge, Cameroon resolutely undertook the implementation of a number of measures and structural reforms, which led to the attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point in October 2000.

143. The PRSP is implemented in parallel with the Third Structural Adjustment Credit (SAC III) concluded with the World Bank (and amounting to US\$182 million) and in the context of the third year of the triennial economic and financial programme under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) of IMF. These programmes have constituted the main pillars for the consolidation of the macroeconomic framework envisaged in the strategy.

144. The ultimate objective sought by means of the PRSP is a tangible and sustainable improvement of the living conditions of the population through action on the main determinants of poverty. Accordingly, Cameroon has implemented a policy of strong economic growth and poverty reduction compatible with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

⁴⁶ However, these findings have a relative value. Many of the medical structures visited by the patients operate on the fringe of the regulations and are therefore regarded by the Ministry Health as part of the informal sector. ECAM definitions, the Ministry also regards private consultations within the public medical structures as informal. This approach justifies the governance improvement measures under consideration in the framework of SSS.

145. This policy comprises the following main thrusts:

- Promotion of a stable macro-economic framework;
- Reinforcement of growth through the diversification of the economy;
- Stimulation of the private sector as a growth engine and partner in providing social services;
- Development of basic infrastructure, natural resources and environmental protection;
- Acceleration of integration within ECCAS;
- Human resources and social sector development and economic integration of disadvantaged groups;
- Improvement of the institutional framework for public administration and governance.

146. During the PRSP preparation in 2003 and review in 2005, the Government wished to align the document's objectives with the MDGs, to which it had subscribed. However, the attainment of the MDGs ran into the constraint of available resources. The gap between the targeted full achievement of the MDGs and the actually attainable levels was enormous. In the education and health sectors in particular, the difference between funding requirements and internal resources was estimated at, respectively, CFAF 44 and 29 billion p.a. Accordingly, the authorities worked out a second, more realistic scenario commensurate with available resources, and readjusted the PRSP objectives in the form of the following rationalized targets:

- Halving, between 1990 and 2015, the percentage of the population living below the poverty line;
- Halving, between 1990 and 2015, the percentage of the population suffering from the hunger;
- Enabling, by 2015, all of the country's children to complete primary education;
- Eliminating gender-disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015 and at all education levels in 2015 at the latest;
- Reducing by two fifths, between 1990 and 2015, the mortality rate for children under 5;
- Reducing by one fifth, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate;
- By 2015, stemming and reversing the trend of the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- By 2015, reducing the incidence of malaria and other major diseases to 8 per cent, reversing the current trends;
- Mainstreaming the principles of sustainable development into national policies and reversing the current trend towards loss of environmental resources;
- Halving, by 2015, the percentage of the population lacking sustainable access to drinking water;
- Significantly improving, by 2020, the housing situation;
- 16. Developing and implementing strategies enabling young persons to find decent and useful work;

- 17. Making essential medicines available and accessible to all persons who need them;
- 18. Ensuring that all may enjoy the advantages of communication and information technologies (ICTs).

147. A Report on Progress towards the MDGs at Province Level, drawn up by Cameroon in December 2003 and suggesting priority lines of action for the authorities and the donors in the individual provinces, will serve as a basis for the formulation of outlines for the development of local development plans.

148. To the same end, civil society is mobilized and the development partners support Government action aimed at significant poverty reduction in the most vulnerable population groups. The Government reorganization of 8 December 2004⁴⁷ included the creation of various ministries with social responsibilities, namely, inter alia, the Ministry for Social Affairs (MINAS), MINPROFF, and the Ministries of Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP), Labour and Social Security (MINTSS), and Youth (MINJEUN).

149. In the provinces, the Government is progressively launching, with donor support, targeted poverty reduction initiatives, such as an integrated project against poverty and measures in support of women in the province of Extrême-Nord. That project's main components are the distribution of productive microproject credits to the peasants (particularly women), steps for increasing agricultural production and productivity, and the building of basic economic infrastructure (rural roads and paths, bridges and warehousing and sales facilities). The project has also allowed the formulation of a "poverty reduction at the grass roots" subprogramme as part of cooperation with UNDP.

150. The authorities have implemented a number of programmes aimed at food self-sufficiency and income improvement, particularly in the rural areas, such as the Food Security Programme (PSA) and the National Agricultural Extension and Research Programme (PNRVA). Moreover, such support and financing schemes have been set up as the Community Development programme (PRODEC), the Community Agricultural Microprojects Investment Fund (FIMAC), the Maritime Artisanal Fishery Development Mission (MIDEPECAM), the Marine Fisheries Development Fund (CDPM), the Decentralized Rural Credit Project (PPCRD), various agricultural, savings and credit cooperatives and the Road Maintenance Fund.

151. As a poverty reduction measure for the rural areas, FAO launched in Cameroon in 1999 the "Téléfood" initiative, aimed at financing small development projects with funds collected during a broadcast organized in connection with the World Food Day on 16 October of every year. In the period 2000-2005, the total cost of projects thus funded amounted to approximately CFAF 77,530,000⁴⁸.

152. The following factors may reduce the effectiveness of the implementation of the PRSP, as a basis for action:

- Impact of negative shocks on the terms of trade. Cameroon's economy is highly dependent on a few exportable raw materials, the considerable instability of whose prices on the international market represents a risk for the producers and may cause national revenue to fluctuate⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Cf. Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004 on the organization of the Government.

⁴⁸ Approximately € 118,366.

⁴⁹ Increases in the prices of oil or such staple as rice or flour, and a fortiori the impact of such increases on the population's living conditions, are difficult to forecast. To avoid social tension, the

- A contraction of expected external resources. PRSP implementation requires the mobilization of internal and external resources, while the Government has already made considerable efforts to reduce residual financing needs.
- Insufficient absorption of resources. The development partners would not be inclined to provide further resources if their absorption is impeded by structural problems.
- Unpredictability of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

153. The above risk factors may occur simultaneously and interact in any combination, thereby undermining growth and the attainment of the PRSP objectives. The Government decided to draw up sectoral frameworks of action with a view to consolidating the public expenditure system and carrying out the measures provided for. This new approach is based on participatory and coordinated governance and aims at introducing sustainable solutions to the country's poverty-related problems. Accordingly, SDSS is currently in the finalization stage. In addition, terms of reference have been defined for the preparation of a social map. Lastly, following the PRSP review in June 2005, sectors of key importance to growth (employment and basic economic infrastructure in particular) have been integrated into the document.

154. The employment and informal sector survey, recent national accounts data, the third general population and housing census (RGPH) and ECAM-III, conducted in 2007, should allow a more precise assessment of poverty in the country and of the impact of the measures taken by the Government.

155. Since the attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point, structural reforms crucial to the consolidation of the macroeconomic framework used in the PRSP have been undertaken. They aim at orienting the economic policies towards a tangible and sustainable improvement of the population's standard of living by mainly addressing the economic and social aspects of the causes of poverty; and are expected to contribute to growth and, especially, to development.

156. Since the implementation of the lines of action of the PRSP depend on cooperation between Cameroon, the international financial institutions and the United Nations bodies specialized in development issues, Cameroon actively seeks useful partnerships with these organizations. Thus, a document entitled "Country analysis regarding development challenges in Cameroon: Common United Nations System assessment based on the PRSP of the Government of Cameroon" was drawn up through cooperation with agencies of the United Nations system and a participatory process ensuring the document's alignment with the national priorities contained in the PRSP, the NGP, SSE, SSH, the National Plan against HIV/AIDS, the National Environmental Management Plan, the National Population Policy Statement (DPNP) and various other sectoral strategies currently under preparation (inter alia, the policies on gender and on rural development, and the integrated programme of sustainable industrial development).

157. IMF and the World Bank monitor the implementation of the measures taken after the attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point and regularly assess the progress made⁵⁰. Lastly, through ongoing cooperation at the level of the Central Africa subregion, the poverty reduction strategies concerned are part of cooperation with international institutions.

Government endeavours to control the prices of such products on the market in order to meet the PRSP objectives.

⁵⁰ The latest mission organized by these institutions took place in September 2007.

158. The relation between the PRSP and the MDGs may be assessed in various areas, including the promotion of health care. The table in annex II illustrates that relation.

159. With regard to employment, a mission to Cameroon took place on 1-13 July 2007 at the request of MINEFOP and the Ministry of Planning, Development Programming and Regional Development (MINPLADAT). Its main objective was the contribution of ILO to the preparation of the second generation PRSP and especially the integration of the employment dimension into that document, in view of the need to re-place decent job creation at the heart of poverty reduction strategies. Thus, ILO, in cooperation with the Government, launched in March 2007 the employment and poverty reduction promotion support project.

160. The above mission also aimed at the integration of the employment dimension into the PRSP, a second objective of the project in question.

161. The main goals of the mission were to:

- Determine the starting points, orientation and time schedule of activities concerning the integration of employment issues into the PRSP;
- Immediately synchronize employment policy formulation with the PRSP review process in order to ensure the effective integration of the strategic main thrusts of the policy into the document.

162. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 37.* Cameroon's law on child maintenance takes into account the single mother status of workers and grants them social security benefits for the children in their charge. Article 5 of Act No. 67/LF/7 of 12 June 1967, referred to above, which establishes a family allowances code, is worded as follows:

"The right to family allowances is based, as a matter of priority, on the father's employment, or, failing this, on the mother's." (paragraph 1).

"In this last case, and if the mother is married, it is her responsibility to provide proof that her spouse is not, on any grounds, entitled to the benefits provided for herein ..." (paragraph 2).

163. Moreover, under article 17 (1), "a maternity benefit is granted to any salaried woman or spouse of a salaried worker, who gives birth, under medical control, to a viable infant". Article 9 (4) contains the following analogous provision:

"Under this Act, the right to family allowances is enjoyed for children actually in the charge of the beneficiary and belonging to one of the following categories:

...

Children of a salaried woman under the conditions stipulated in article 5 above".

164. Under article 15, on methods of payment, of Decree No. 007-MTLS-DPS of 14 March 1970 establishing conditions and procedures for the payment of the family allowances provided for in Act No. 67-LF-7 of 12 June 1967:

"The maternity benefit is paid in principle to the mother. If the mother dies from consequences of the childbirth, the allowance is paid to the person who effectively has charge of the child".

165. Accordingly, the person to whom the child of a deceased female wage-earner is entrusted receives the social security benefit in question regardless of that person's marital status. With regard to benefits payable to low-income families, the provisions on social security apply to all workers without distinction. However, positive discrimination measures may be taken under article 29 of Act No. 67/LF/7 of 12 June 1967, worded as follows:

"In addition to the benefits provided for in the preceding article, the CNPS budget line for medical, social and family action may cover the following operations:

...

- Acquisition, construction, rental, development and management of any establishment of a medical and social character which may be set up for workers' families;
- Encouragement and assistance for the construction and improvement of housing for workers' families".

166. Yet the legislation on social security should be improved in order to enable single workers of either sex to receive allowances once it is established that they are the father or mother of a child in their charge. Such is the spirit of Decree No. 2008/159/PM of 4 November 2008 on the creation of the advisory committee on the modernization of the social security system.

167. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 38.* The economic reforms undertaken by Cameroon aim at supporting development in all areas of the country. If past reforms seemed to focus on the urban areas, the rural areas have priority under the current development programmes, particularly with regard to health, food, agriculture and education. These issues are fully integrated into the PRSP because the Government is aware of the relative size of the rural population and of the need to facilitate and encourage their involvement in the development process at the domestic and Central Africa subregion levels.

168. This impetus gives rise to the ambition to integrate the vulnerable population groups, namely disabled children, the elderly and so-called marginal persons into the social and economic development process.

Children

169. The studies undertaken on the situation of children in 2000 revealed the existence of specific categories of children having particular protection needs. According to the data of the social instrument panel (TBS II 2003), there were seven such categories, namely:

- Children with disabilities;
- Children living or working in the street;
- Children in conflict with the law;
- Exploited children;
- Children separated from their parents;
- Abused children;
- Orphans and other vulnerable children (OVCs) whose plight is due to HIV/AIDS.

170. The vulnerability of such children, present across all age groups, is linked to the following factors:

- Particularly low school access, retention and course completion rates;
- High prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS (18 per cent), anaemia, abortions, early pregnancies and subsequent complications, and psychological and emotional disorders in adolescent drug-, alcohol- and nicotine-addicts;
- Increase in the number of young persons and adolescents in the street or detained, and spread of drugs among children and young persons;

- Growing exposure of young persons and adolescents to the worst forms of labour, trafficking, sexual exploitation (child prostitution) and sex tourism;
- Increase in the number of OVCs;
- Limited participation of young persons and adolescents in the decision making process;
- Insufficient listening, and provision of information, to adolescents;
- The adolescents' little interest in the effects of decisions basically taken by adults.

171. Since 2003, five surveys have been conducted in order to gain insights into the problems experienced by children belonging to four of the seven categories which may be defined on the basis of the above factors. The surveys concerned the following issues:

- Trafficking in children;
- Situation of women and children in 2000;
- Sexual exploitation of children;
- Children's involvement in the informal sector;
- Children in conflict with the law.

172. These studies revealed inter alia that:

- Children are exposed to various types of abuse, although such phenomena are barely alluded to and incipient;
- Preventive detention of minors in conflict with the law is still long;
- Child labour is a reality, more frequent in the informal sector.

173. The number of OVCs whose plight is due to HIV/AIDS has increased from 210,000 in 2002 to 240,000 in 2004⁵¹. They experience discrimination and stigmatization affecting adversely their emotional life and social integration, while their access to basic social services is problematic.

174. The Government takes the following measures in order to enhance special protection for this category of children:

- Reinforcing rehabilitation through the improvement of nine specialized centres for minors who are socially maladjusted or in conflict with the law.
- Building the capacities for the care of children in distress by establishing a second reception centre for such children in Garoua, in the north of the country.
- Ensuring the availability of reception or transit centres for the care of street children victims of various types of trafficking and exploitation through the establishment, in 2003, with the support of the Red Cross of Belgium and the European Union, of a counselling centre and a reception and reintegration centre for street children in Yaoundé.
- Taking charge of AIDS orphans in the framework of the "Bi-Multi" project with French Cooperation and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) support; the "Total Funds" project, supported by the World Bank; and the "Hope for African Children Initiative" (HACI) project, supported by such NGOs as African Synergy and Plan Cameroon. These projects, whose implementation began in January 2005, facilitated the access of 21,000 OVCs to health, education and protection.

⁵¹ USAID/WHO: Epidemiological Fact Sheet, 2004 Update.

- Improving social services for minors in conflict with the law by the adoption in 2005⁵² of a Criminal Procedure Code which provides for the participation of assessors in proceedings concerning minors; drawing up a draft Children's Protection Code; and building the capacities of approximately 150 actors involved in the care in question (welfare workers, magistrates, prison administration staff and police officers).
- Strengthening the units for special protection, deviant behaviour prevention and readjustment in non-institutional settings through the creation of 42 educational facilities covering the national territory and the enhancement of the capacity of Social Action Services to intervene in police stations, courts and prisons.

Elderly persons

175. According to United Nations statistics, the elderly (persons 60 years of age or older) account for 6 per cent of the population of developing countries. On that basis, the number of older persons in Cameroon is estimated at 917,520. Among Cameroon's elderly, rural inhabitants and women are more numerous than, respectively, urban inhabitants and men⁵³.

176. Earlier, the elderly enjoyed a privileged status in traditional society. They currently live in particularly difficult conditions as a result of the transformation of the social model and the strong propensity of young persons to settle in urban areas. The elderly mainly live in the countryside. The young persons' flight to the towns increases the older persons' vulnerability by reducing the support available to them in terms of specific health care and medicines, nutrition and psychological assistance and leaving them isolated from their family or society.

177. Accordingly, the Government has been considering appropriate action. In 1995, a sub-directorate for the welfare of the disabled and the elderly was set up in MINAS.

178. Various private charity organizations and associations support the action of the authorities in this area. Although recent, concern for the elderly is a central Government priority. The Government takes measures aimed at their protection and well-being in accordance with United Nations principles. The emphasis is placed on family and community support for this vulnerable group.

179. Social mobilization for the elderly is sought by sensitizing the communities to the need for more solidarity and justice towards them through information campaigns in the media on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons.

180. In order to improve the medical follow-up of the elderly, a geriatrics unit was set up in the Central Hospital of Yaoundé in 2001-2002. In parallel with various forms of assistance extended to the elderly, the Government created in certain rural localities, in the period 2000-2005, 20 "village groupings" and 20 "solidarity units" designed to support self-help initiatives for older persons, while other civil society and private projects are aimed at setting up reception and lodging centres for elderly who have been abandoned.

Persons with disabilities

181. The number of disabled persons in Cameroon, estimated at 700,000 in 1993 (SDSS 2004), probably currently exceeds one million on the basis of the WHO estimate of the proportion of persons with disabilities (10 per cent of the population).

⁵² Act No. 2005/007 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code.

⁵³ Source: MINAS.

182. Cameroon has adopted an appropriate legal framework and created certain care structures in order to address the main problems faced by the group in question, namely difficulties related to physical, mental or sensory disability, access to formal education and vocational training, and socio-economic integration.

183. The following measures for persons with disabilities aim at ensuring their autonomy through training and socio-professional integration, the reinforcement of multiform support activities and the development of partnerships:

- At the legal level, Act No. 83/013 of 21 July 1983 on the protection of persons with disabilities is under review. The draft currently examined aims at ensuring that the needs of the disabled and their protection against any form of discrimination are better taken into consideration. The preamble of the draft calls for consistency in the relevant legal provisions with the stated principles of equal opportunities, autonomy and participation.
- At the institutional level, the National Committee for the Rehabilitation and Socio-economic Reintegration of Disabled Persons (CONRHA) was created in 1996⁵⁴. In 2003-2004, organisational and institutional audits of the National Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities (CNRH) in Yaoundé and of the Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind (RIB) in Buea were conducted by the NGO "Handicap International", with French Cooperation support, in order to improve the operation of these bodies.

184. Three partnership agreements, signed in 2004 with international agencies specialized in support and training for disabled persons aim at:

- Building a subregional treatment and reintegration centre for mental patients. The Government tries to accelerate the project's implementation, which has not yet begun.
- Building and equipping, as a donation, a rehabilitation centre at Maroua, and training in Italy 16 young Cameroonian who will work at the centre.
- Facilitating the access of persons with disabilities to ICTs.

185. A partnership agreement is being concluded with a Swiss organization with a view to building the capacities of disabled persons in general, and cleansed lepers in particular.

186. The tables in annex III present the initiatives undertaken by the State in support of disabled or indigent persons⁵⁵.

187. The cases in question do not include special in- or out-patient rehabilitation or assistance sessions, whose costs are not covered by social insurance.

188. In May 2005, a partnership agreement was concluded between MINAS and the African Information Technology Institute (IAI - Cameroon) regarding training for the disabled, thereby increasing their access to ICTs, for other target groups and for the personnel of MINAS.

189. With regard to the education of disabled children with disabilities, MINAS and the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) issued on 14 August 2007 a circular referring to the identification of children with disabilities or born to poor disabled parents and specifying that "a report must be submitted on 15 October of every year, providing data on pupils attending examination classes and on any practical difficulties that they might

⁵⁴ The Committee is an advisory body attached to the Minister of Social Affairs and tasked with facilitating the efforts made in support of persons with disabilities.

⁵⁵ Source: MINAS Report 2004-2005, first semester.

encounter in connection with State examinations as a result of a deficiency". This survey, constituting a positive discrimination measure aimed at meeting the needs of disabled children, must be backed with adequate infrastructure and funds.

Marginal population groups

190. The groups in question consist of communities which are traditionally marginal (inter alia, Pygmies, Bororo, itinerant highlanders, nomadic Fulani, and landlocked border area groups) or "newly marginalized" (displaced population groups, refugees and various ethnic minorities) (SDSS 2004).

191. These groups number approximately one million persons and are strongly attached to their lifestyle and highly resistant to external influences. Because their values and culture are a key element of their identity and existence, the State is interested in their protection.

192. Newly marginalized groups are communities whose living conditions deteriorated as a result of a natural disaster (such is the case of the displaced population of Lake Nyos).

193. The groups in question face the following social problems:

- Precariousness of material and social living conditions in general;
- Weak civic awareness;
- Insufficient development initiative;
- Weak interaction and relations with nearby communities;
- Poor living conditions of women and children (with regard to education, health and food);
- Inadequate social infrastructure;
- Property-related problems;
- Weak economy.

194. In order to promote the integration of these groups and their sense of citizenship, the Government has taken the following initiatives in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution⁵⁶:

- Support project for the economic and social development of 7,000 Pygmies in the Djoum-Oveng-Mintom region (department of Dja and Lobo), implemented with the Belgian Government for 2004-2007.
- Project for improving the quality of life of the Pygmies of Lolodorf. This project is being implemented with the support of the NGO "Cameroon Biodiversity and Conservation Society" and affects 3,500 persons.
- Support project for issuing civil status certificates to Mbororo and Pygmy children in the provinces of Nord-Ouest and Est, with the active involvement of two NGOs, namely "Plan Cameroon" and the "Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association". The project is designed to support 7,000 children.
- Ongoing activities of the *Groupe d'Initiative Commune Alliance Cyrie et Mayos* (GICACYMA), set up in 2000 in the province of Est with ILO support, in order to promote employment and the rights of the Pygmies, particularly citizenship (including the issuing of computerized national identity cards and birth certificates,

⁵⁶ Preamble to the Constitution. See also the information related to article 1 of the Covenant in this report.

access to property, management of a cooperative and collective farms). The project currently supports nearly 30 Pygmy families comprising 438 individuals.

195. Care strategies for vulnerable groups encounter the following economy-related, structural and organizational main difficulties:

- Absence of reliable data and other information for the development of suitable strategies;
- Inadequacy of human, financial and infrastructure resources;
- Ageing of the equipment and buildings;
- Inadequacy of the coordination mechanism required in view of the cross-cutting character of action taken in this area.

196. The following priority activities in favour of vulnerable groups are planned for the period up to 2015:

- Legal reform, including in particular the review of the Act on the protection of disabled persons and the drafting of a child protection code;
- Finalization of the social affairs sector strategy;
- Reinforcement of rehabilitation through the revamping of institutions for the education of minors who are socially maladjusted or in conflict with the law;
- Reinforcement of the education of persons with disabilities;
- Expansion of preschool education facilities;
- Effective operation of the National Committee on Ageing (CNV);
- Finalization of the study on national solidarity, whose results, combined with the resolutions of the forum held in June 2005 on that issue, will allow developing better support strategies for the target groups.

197. These concerns are addressed in the PRSP and the SDSS and relate to the agricultural sector. In that area, the authorities have launched PSA, PNVRA and PRODEC with a view to improving the living conditions of the rural population, and particularly of the marginal groups living exclusively on agriculture.

198. The main financing and support instruments in place are FIMAC, MIDEPECAM, CDPM, PPCRD, the Road Maintenance Fund and various agricultural, savings and credit cooperatives.

199. In order to provide vulnerable groups with economic programmes guaranteeing their economic, social and cultural rights, the Government has set up mechanisms designed to eliminate the food availability imbalance between producers and the majority of the population in a number of areas, particularly in the northern part of the country, where recurring droughts frequently cause food insecurity and tension.

200. Since the attainment of the HIPC initiative completion point, vulnerable groups benefiting from projects launched or to be carried out on HIPC funds occupy an important place in economic reform programmes. Experience with structural adjustment policies underscores the significance of ESCR, especially for vulnerable groups facing, often more than others, social, economic and cultural problems.

201. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 39.* During the Conference on the Ecosystems of the Dense Rainforests of Central Africa (CEFDHAC) held in Yaoundé in May 2004, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban in 2001, and the Fifth World Parks Congress of the

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), it was recommended to States to review policies which could have a negative impact on the indigenous population. Cameroon's Baka Pygmies are concerned by this measure. Accordingly, the Government has taken steps to improve their legal status in relation to their right to an adequate standard of living. They constitute a community particularly attached to its lifestyle and its culture but smaller than other communities. As a result, they are one of the minorities protected by the Constitution. Moreover, as a group living in an area since long ago, they constitute an indigenous people, whose rights are also guaranteed by the Constitution⁵⁷.

202. Despite the proclamation of the rights of this vulnerable group⁵⁸, there are still many situations in which their social integration and the improvement of their living conditions are difficult. Hunting and gathering, on which they depend for food, make them highly mobile, difficult to locate in certain seasons, as their homes are not identified on maps, while themselves, although citizens, are often not recorded by the administrative services.

203. Such mobility and isolation has allowed them to preserve their way of life while radical adaptation was taking place among sedentary population groups. At the same time, Pygmies do not always have access to basic social services. They do not enrol their children in school and are not easily accessible to modern health care.

204. Accordingly, the Government initiated an economic and social development support project (PADES) for the Baka of the Djoum, Mintom and Oveng region to encourage them to establish relations with their Bantu neighbours and the local public services. Launched in 2005 for a three-year period, this project aims at establishing and safeguarding the civil rights of the Baka community.

205. PADES constitutes the main measure undertaken by the Government, with civil society partners, for the Baka Pygmies; is based on pilot activities in the areas of access to basic social services, citizenship, land security and political representation; and promotes dialogue between Baka, Bantu and State and non-State support units with a view to the Baka's full integration in the national community.

206. The early results of PADES consist in the recognition and promotion of the rights and fundamental duties of Baka population groups and nearby communities. Improving access to certain basic social services, strengthening the enjoyment of civil and political rights and establishing these groups' cultural identity, based on their relationship with the earth and the forest, are particular concerns of the project. Ultimately, the project is expected to build the capacities and organizational activity of the beneficiaries and the organizations which support them.

207. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 40.* In order to guarantee the population's access to drinking water, Cameroon, with the support of the donors (including Japan and AfDB) and of the social development partners (NGOs and religious organizations) has taken action in the areas of the rural water network and of water supply in secondary towns. Moreover, a billing system has been adopted, providing for reduced rate categories in order to facilitate the access of low-income population groups to drinking water. This issue was specifically handled as part of the privatization process of SNEC.

208. Mention should be made of the adoption of Act No. 98/005 of 14 April 1998 on the water system in Cameroon and the entry into force of national guidelines on the control, treatment and monitoring of water quality. However, considerable difficulties are still encountered at the structural and economic levels.

⁵⁷ Cf. section containing information in individual articles infra.

⁵⁸ Cf. reply to recommendation 38.

209. At the structural level, there is no body responsible for the coordination of the various operational actors. At the economic level, revenue-related difficulties and various structural adjustment constraints do not allow public or private enterprises to recruit the necessary personnel.

210. Water scarcity is particularly prejudicial. Accordingly, the Government takes measures to improve, as much as possible, the population's access to quality water, whose sufficient supply is essential to all, for personal and household uses and disease prevention. Greater attention is paid to the access of vulnerable groups to facilities and units which regularly provide a sufficient volume of salubrious water. Water supply points are set up at a reasonable distance from homes; and inexpensive water supply programmes aimed at protecting vulnerable and marginalized groups and preventing water-based diseases are implemented.

211. The supervision of water treatment facilities, crucial to the availability of water, is a Government priority. Treatment networks are being modernized. Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation CAMWATER, a public capital company, was set up, as part of food sector reform, by Decree No. 2005/492 of 31 December 2005, and was tasked with the management of the assets and rights related to the public service of drinking water supply in urban and semi-urban areas. Decree No. 2005/493 of 31 December 2005 lays down the terms for delegating that service and sanitation in the areas in question.

212. The expansion of the water distribution network is crucial to ensuring the population's proximity to the supply points and has been provided for by the above decrees; and so has the rational management of water resources, as a matter of good governance, in order to ensure their availability to the current and future generations in the face of potential depletion.

213. Despite significant ameliorations, the Government is aware of the need for further water-supply improvements. To that end, the population should become increasingly involved in water resources management. In that context, the Act adopted in 1998 will be reviewed in order to define in a specific manner the right of access to drinking water, crucial to the exercise of the right to life⁵⁹.

214. *Answer to the points raised in paragraph 41.*⁶⁰ Urban communities, particularly Yaoundé and Douala, have since 2006, as part of a process of making cities cleaner, expelled population groups from illegally occupied public spaces and hazardous terrains. Some of the demolitions led NGOs, which considered the occurrences as violations of the right to housing, to criticize the authorities. The evictions, however, although cause of confrontations between the population and the police, were always preceded by an injunction according to the law.

215. During 2007, the management of the demolitions perturbed the authorities and the population as a result of two events related to the right to housing in Douala and Yaoundé⁶¹, namely an illegal and anarchical occupation of urban space, followed by evictions (demolition and sanctions); and a legal occupation, to which the expropriation procedure was applied on public utility grounds. The Government dealt with the difficulties related to the evictions, demolitions and sanctions and ensured that support measures were taken for the expropriated groups.

⁵⁹ Cf. 2006 report, chapter on the right to an adequate standard of living, p.101-121.

⁶⁰ The issue has been referred to in Ministry of Justice Report, 2006, p. 108-110, and 2007, p.192-195.

⁶¹ The issue has been referred to in Ministry of Justice Report, 2006, p. 104-110, and 2007, p.192-197.

Difficulties related to evictions, demolitions and sanctions

216. Beginning on 15 November 2006 in the Etetak quarter in Yaoundé, evictions, demolitions and destructions were carried out in so-called "elevated no-construction zones" (containing slopes and marshes) which were private property of the State, and in the MAGZI (Industrial Zones Development and Management Authority) area.

217. Over and above the material aspects of such evictions, demolitions and destructions, the conflict between the State's prerogatives and respect for the citizens' social rights requires discussion. Basically, the State has a duty to ensure that the citizens comply with rules and that law and order are respected, mainly in the interests of security and public health. The competent authorities (the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MINDUH), the Ministry of Property and Land Affairs (MINDAF), and the urban communities) are expected to carry out evictions and demolitions, in the event of violations, without compensation.

218. The objective is to transform Yaoundé and Douala into agreeable cities and prevent construction in risk areas in order to avoid disasters (collapses) and in marshy areas to avoid flooding and diseases. Aware that towns and cities are civilization centres contributing to economic development and social, cultural and scientific progress, the Government must act to improve urban living conditions and prosperity, which it is expected to safeguard. This fundamental obligation implies the creation of viable facilities and especially the protection of the citizens from precarious housing.

219. Lastly, evictions pose the issue of the scope of Government obligations as regards human rights in general, and the right to decent housing in particular. This entitlement, such as it was presented at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)⁶², does not only consist in the right to have a roof over one's head, but also implies access to all systems essential to a healthy life in an urban environment, particularly safe water, sanitation and waste removal, schools, transport and other infrastructure essential to urban life⁶³. This United Nations guideline implies the State's obligation to ensure decent, safe and appropriately designed housing for the citizens.

220. Accordingly, the demolition and eviction operations constitute not negation but protection of the right to housing. Noting that the legal framework did not sufficiently protect non-holders of land ownership titles, the Government took corrective measures through Prime Minister Decree No. 2008/0738/PM of 23 April 2008 on the organization of land management procedures and methods.

Support measures for population groups affected by expropriation

221. Generally speaking, expropriation is any operation intended to deprive a landlord, against his or her will, of his or her real estate, namely to strip someone of his or her interest in real property⁶⁴. Thus defined, expropriation is directly related to the right to housing because, by thus losing his or her basic right to property, one may by the same token lose his or her right to housing. Accordingly, expropriation must be followed by support measures for the population groups affected.

222. The Urban Community of Yaoundé, which has undertaken construction mainly aimed at the embellishment of the city, acted in accordance with the requirements related to respect for the basic rights of the population, as the table in annex IV illustrates.

⁶² Habitat II is one of the latest United Nations world conferences which have forged the international community's agenda for the coming years ("The World Conferences: Developing Priorities for the 21st Century, a United Nations Briefing Paper, p.65.).

⁶³ *Idem.*

⁶⁴ G. Cornu, *Vocabulaire juridique*, Paris, PUF, 7th edition, 2005, p. 386.

223. The Urban Community of Douala paid CFAF 825,140,000 in compensations to all persons evicted within the framework of the implementation of the Douala Infrastructure Project (PID).

224. The compensation procedure for victims identified in the framework of the implementation of road construction financed with Debt Development Contract (C2D) resources is in the last stage. Moreover, the Urban Community of Douala has prepared a resettlement zone at the Nkolmbngo locality in Douala III district. This zone accommodated 600 evictees subsequent to the construction of the Douala-Yaoundé main highway and the Regional Fire-Safety School (ERSI).

225. In line with its policy on the promotion of the right to decent housing, the Government has committed itself to supporting social housing construction initiatives and, accordingly, sought in 2007 to promote the activities of real estate companies.

226. These companies are crucial actors in the process of ensuring the exercise of the right to decent housing. Mention must be made of, mainly, the Cameroon Real Estate Company (SIC), a state enterprise, and, secondarily, private companies, whose participation is increasingly encouraged⁶⁵. SIC is tasked with building social housing for low-income population groups, and developed considerable activity in 2007. The following two elements must be noted:

- Improvement of the lease management framework: Steps were taken for reformulating lease contracts in order to streamline the handling of State property by avoiding subleasing and restoring the authority of SIC over the residences through the monitoring of housing assignments⁶⁶. To that end, SIC identified all tenants in order to determine who was eligible for a new type lease. The number of tenants was estimated at approximately 1,500 and the total number of housing units at 2,300. These measures ensured consistency and transparency in the assignment of housing.
- Completion of new housing in Yaoundé: Investment, which had stopped in 1987, resumed under a three-year programme implemented in Yaoundé and Douala. On 1 October 2007, the Minister of Urban Development and Housing inaugurated the Mfandena district⁶⁷ buildings, which consist of 160 3-5 room apartments and were built under the new strategy that SIC plans to implement for population groups increasingly confronted with housing scarcity and high costs.

227. On the occasion of World Habitat Day, the Government expressed its intention to promote other investments in the area of social housing. Thus, it committed itself to supporting all initiatives aimed at the improvement of the supply of real estate. Accordingly, visits were organized to the housing construction sites of the Leboudi Real Estate Company, a corporate citizen initiative engaged in building 500 housing units at the rate of 50 units per year⁶⁸.

228. The Government also decided to set up a partnership framework in order to support the work of private developers in the area of social housing. Student housing is a delicate issue, to which the Government pays attention, especially since manifestations by students' associations in 2005. Measures have been taken to induce lessors to lower the rents to students and inspections are carried out regularly in order to verify compliance with rate schedules by the owners of developments bordering the campus⁶⁹. A State university

⁶⁵ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 8946/5145 of 2 October 2007, p.12.

⁶⁶ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 9001/5200 of 19 December 2007, p.9.

⁶⁷ In Yaoundé.

⁶⁸ Idem.

⁶⁹ The Government has taken into consideration the demands expressed by the Student Rights Defence Association and launched housing improvements in the university zones.

student rents squad, set up under Interministerial Decree No.0006/MINDUH/MINCOMMERCE/ MINDAF/ MINESUP of 30 June 2005 in order to follow up on the above measures, carried out in 2006 a number of inquiries in the various State universities and conducted an inventory of university zone residences in order to assess housing difficulties encountered by the students.

229. Thus, the above unit observed an inadequate housing supply, crowded facilities, non-compliance with construction standards, failure to delimit university areas, insalubrity and insecurity.

230. On 20 August 2008, the unit set out to create a solid partnership among all parties involved in the student housing issue, with a view to reducing the rents and improving residential, security and hygienic conditions⁷⁰. Therefore, evictions are aimed at the improvement of living, health, safety and sanitary conditions for the population, not at depriving it of its economic, social and cultural rights. The Government, however, must formulate a housing policy taking into account the population's financial problems and precarious situation in order to promote the enjoyment of the right to decent housing.

231. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 42.* Access to medical services, including a comprehensive and effective health care system and the availability of medical supplies, is a key element of the right to health⁷¹. Accordingly, the Government plans to pursue its "health for all" objective in line with the MDGs and has drawn up the SSS with a view to enhancing the level and quality of health care in the period 2001-2010 by attaining the following targets:

- Reduction of the morbidity and mortality rates among the most vulnerable population groups by one third;
- Establishment of a health system providing 90 per cent of the population with a Minimum Health Package (PSM) at one hour's walking distance;
- Construction of hospitals in the rural areas;
- Provision of medicines and vaccines for the population;
- Training for health workers;
- Prevention of the illegal sale of medicines;
- Reduction of the price, or free distribution, of generic medicines (for, inter alia, HIV/AIDS, malaria and onchocerciasis).

232. In view of the above objectives, measures have been taken for the recruitment of health administration personnel⁷², physicians⁷³ and nurses in order to modernize health sector management, strengthen the institutional framework and facilitate patient follow-up, especially in rural areas.

233. The Government's finalized SSS includes a programme, eligible for HIPC initiative funding, for the competitive recruitment of 1,200 professionals, broken down as follows:

234. Physicians:

- 50 public health physicians, holding a medicine doctorate and a public health diploma;

⁷⁰ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 9167/5366 of 22 August 2008, p.13.

⁷¹ Statement by Paul Hunt, Special Rapporteur on the right to health, 21 September 2006.

⁷² Special recruitment announcement No. D30-141/ARS/MSP/CAB.

⁷³ Two new medical schools were created in Douala and Buéa.

- 50 general practitioners, holding a medicine doctorate.
235. High-level health technicians:
- 50 high-level technicians in nursing or public health, holding a high-level technician's diploma and a baccalaureate or GCE-A Level.
236. Specialized nurses:
- 50 nurses holding a State diploma in anaesthesia and a baccalaureate, GCE-A Level, Probatoire or BEC-Ordinary Level;
 - 100 general nurses, holding a State diploma in childbirth care and a baccalaureate, GCE-A Level, Probatoire or BEC-Ordinary Level.
237. State diploma-holding nurses:
- 600 State-diploma holding nurses with a baccalaureate, GCE-A Level, Probatoire or BEC-Ordinary Level.
238. Certificate-holding nurses:
- 50 nurses holding a certificate in childbirth care and a BEPC or BEC-Ordinary Level;
 - 50 nurses holding a certificate in general care and a BEPC or BEC-Ordinary Level.
239. Assistant laboratory technicians:
- 50 holders of an assistant laboratory technician's diploma and a BEPC or BEC-Ordinary Level.
240. Nurse's aides:
- 50 nurse's aide diploma holders for general medicine, with a BEPC;
 - 50 nurse's aide diploma holders for laboratory work, with a BEPC.
241. Administrative workers:
- 50 administrative workers with a G1, G2 or D baccalaureate or a GCE-A Level.
242. The population's access to essential medicines is a key poverty reduction factor. The National Centre for the Supply of Essential Drugs and Medical Consumables (CENAME) was established in 1998, and provincial pharmaceutical supply centres (CAPP) were created, providing health care training in essential drugs. Moreover, a pricing policy was adopted in order to reduce the prices of medicines by, on average, 42 per cent in 2001 and 23 per cent in 2005. In 2007, such reduction attained 65 per cent for all drugs save for tuberculosis and antiretroviral medication (ARV), which is free.
243. The quality of drugs is guaranteed by the National Laboratory for Drug Quality Control and Expertise (LANACOME), set up in March 1996. Certain grey areas, however, undermine SSS. Some population groups, especially in the rural areas, sometimes prefer traditional medicine to the detriment of modern treatment. In general, this practice prevents the collection of reliable statistics regarding the access of the population, particularly the vulnerable groups, to health care. The Government actively encourages the development of traditional medicine, in which the scientific community is increasingly interested, and supports cooperation and coordination between modern and traditional medicine.
244. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 43.* Since 1996, primary education is free in Cameroon⁷⁴. Under Act No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on educational objectives, "the State

⁷⁴ In accordance with the preamble to the Constitution.

safeguards the child's right to education". Accordingly, the State guarantees to all equal opportunity of access to education, without discrimination based on gender, political, philosophical or religious views or social, cultural, linguistic or geographical origin. Finance Act No. 2000/08 of 30 June 2000 established the principle of a public primary education free of charge.

245. The Act on educational objectives, adopted after the 1995 national conference on education and the 1997 Forum on Technical Education, expressed the State's political resolve. It introduced the concept of "educational community"⁷⁵, which now plays a significant role in the development of the relevant policies (SSS), strategic planning (National Plan for Education for All) and in the implementation of programmes.

246. As a result of inadequate funding, the education system is confronted with significant shortages with regard to teachers, class equipment and documentation enabling the pupils to keep up with the courses.

247. The gross school enrolment ratio has been improving since 1999, particularly at the level of primary education, with a rate of access to elementary school of approximately 101 per cent in 2007, compared to 2002 rates of, respectively, 94.6 and 92.9 per cent in the French- and the English-speaking subsystems.

248. In view of the considerable quantitative and qualitative needs for teachers and their scarcity, the Government proceeded to integrate into the civil service approximately 8,000 term staff teachers in the priority educational areas (ZEP)⁷⁶.

249. In the face of an estimated 30,000 shortage in teachers in 2008, a new operation, necessary despite efforts made in 2005, was launched at primary education level. The new initiative aims at gradually implementing the "education for all" programme by 2015 through the recruitment of 2,000 community-appointed teachers and 3,525 holders of the nursery and elementary school teachers' training certificate (CAPIEMP) never having worked in a public school before.

250. In total, 5,525 teachers were recruited in 2008, complementing the 18,800 hired on a contractual basis in 2007. This operation will continue until the threshold of 37,200 teachers is attained in 2011⁷⁷.

251. Recruitment will take place on the basis of clearly identified requirements. Thus, a list of schools in need was made public and will be progressively updated until the ZEPs are fully covered.

252. The State's increasing contribution to education financing highlights the considerable size of education costs. Relatively low in 2001 (CFAF 182 billion)⁷⁸, it amounted in 2008 to CFAF 113 billion⁷⁹ for basic education and CFAF 168.1 billion⁸⁰ for secondary education.

253. The drafting of SSE 2000 led almost to the attainment of the following objectives:

- Enhanced access to education and correction of certain disparities in the provinces;
- Improvement of the quality of the education offered;

⁷⁵ Namely, parents of pupils and all other individuals or legal entities contributing to the functioning of the school system in general and the schools and other establishments in particular.

⁷⁶ Namely, the provinces of Adamaoua, North, the Extreme north and the East.

⁷⁷ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 9122/5321 of 19 June 2008, p.9.

⁷⁸ 15.7 per cent of public expenditure compared to 20 per cent of the fast-track initiative (FTI) indicative framework (IF) for education for all (EFA).

⁷⁹ Approximately € 172,519,083.

⁸⁰ Approximately € 256,641,200.

- Development of an effective partnership with the private sector and civil society and improvement of the management and governance of the education system, with priority given to the rural areas, in particular the east, north, and extreme north of the country. Between 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, the number of elementary education pupils increased by 4 per cent, attaining 2,906,732, of whom 49 per cent were girls and 50.3 per cent boys⁸¹.

254. Of the 55,226 elementary education teachers, 70.1 per cent work in public schools. Between 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, the number of teachers increased by 12.7 per cent.

255. Between 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, the number of schools increased by 4 per cent, attaining 10,913. Some of the initiatives undertaken over and above this infrastructure enlargement are the following:

- Revision of school programmes;
- Reform of the primary education certificate (CEP) and First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) evaluation system with a view to improving the earlier primary education programmes and providing pupils with basic vocational knowledge, tested through applied exams;
- Teachers' training in the new pedagogical approach (NAP), building on the Skills-based approach (SBA);
- Awareness-raising campaigns addressing target groups and carried out with UNICEF support through the "Basic Education" programme in response to educational demand. Such action took various forms, namely advocacy, community participation and social mobilization as part of a girls' education acceleration strategy launched at the national level as a result of Cameroon's commitment at Ouagadougou in relation to the 25/25 initiative for 2005.

256. The development partners undertook various activities and provided official assistance in order to improve the quality of education. The education offer is being enhanced and the communities' participation in school management is considerable, particularly in connection with the opening of private schools. The Government plans to upgrade educational performance by raising the enrolment ratio to 95 per cent in 2010 to ensure that more children enjoy free elementary education and by improving the quality of education. The following measures were taken in the framework of the Government's strategy:

- Creation of the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB);
- Steady increase of the basic education budget which, although still limited, is among the various ministries' highest⁸²;
- Creation and opening of 1,477 elementary schools;
- Distribution of textbooks to ZEP pupils and teachers in the amount of CFAF 2 billion p.a. or CFAF 8 billion⁸³ in four years;
- Recruitment of 10,857 term staff teachers in 2004;
- Integration of 1,700 term staff teachers in 2005;
- Operational budget allocations to the country's public elementary schools in the amount of CFAF 3.5 billion p.a. or CFAF 14 billion in 4 years (2000-2004);

⁸¹ Social Development Report, p.32.

⁸² CFAF 113 billion in 2008.

⁸³ Approximately € 12,213,740.

- Construction and outfitting of 3,918 classrooms with HIPC initiative funds, 779 classrooms in the framework of cooperation with Japan, 425 classrooms in the framework of the Education II project financed by AfDB with CFAF 8 billion, and 294 classrooms set up as part of a project with the Islamic Development Bank in the amount of CFAF 7.5 billion⁸⁴.

257. Multiple action has resulted in improving access to elementary education. The rate of access to the first grade increased from 98.1 per cent in 2001-2002 to 99.6 per cent in 2002-2003. The overall gender parity index also improved from 85 to 90 per cent. The rate of pupils having completed primary education increased from 57.9 per cent in 2004 to 75.28 per cent in 2007.

258. Yet many problems persist at the financial level because the State, in view of the country's level of economic development, is not always able to finance the costly investment required by the education system. Moreover, classroom construction and outfitting also run into problems related to the management of allocated funds and, as a result, ever more constraints are placed on the commitments made by public fund managers.

259. It is therefore necessary to increase the basic education budget, focus on the most urgent problems (investment and operation), and improve the teachers' working conditions. The new recruitment measures aim at resolving the working conditions issue insofar as they improve the teacher-pupil ratio. They are also expected to be of benefit to the rural and scholastically disadvantaged areas, enabling them to take advantage of newly built schools.

260. Efforts are also necessary with regard to teachers' training and the improvement of their status, fundamental issues still confronting the Government. Their resolution will make it possible to deal more effectively with the situation in the rural areas, where the level of education largely depends on the level of development and where the major challenge consists in raising the school enrolment ratio by approximately 25 points by 2015 and the literacy rate to 18 points⁸⁵.

261. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 44.*, The measures taken against gender-based discrimination and for gender equality in order to implement the provisions of the Covenant are analyzed in the third part of this report.

262. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 45.* The level of health in Cameroon is still below standards but many initiatives are taken to formulate a policy which would help to overcome the difficulties related to the population's access to health care, thereby improving the quality of the population's health. Policy development on preventive care and on reproductive health forms the two main lines of action in this area.

263. Preventive care policy focuses on combating pandemics and other major widespread diseases, such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, cardiovascular diseases, eye diseases and cancers⁸⁶. As in many other tropical countries, malaria poses the greatest number of problems when it comes to strategic action against its devastating effects. Endemic in Cameroon, it accounts for 45 per cent of patients having recourse to health care units and 35 per cent of mortality among children under 5⁸⁷.

264. The Government therefore developed a malaria prevention plan⁸⁸, and many impregnated mosquito nets were distributed, with priority given to households with a child under 5. Expectant mothers, the second targeted group, also receive intermittent preventive

⁸⁴ Social Development Report, p.30

⁸⁵ Social Development Report. p. 37-39.

⁸⁶ Cf. infra

⁸⁷ Social Development Report, p.21.

⁸⁸ Ministry of Justice Report, 2006, p. 129-130.

medication⁸⁹. Moreover, of the 2,445 relevant service providers, 2,316 were trained in the use of artemisinin therapies. Microscopes are regularly supplied to hospitals for laboratory tests. The Government encourages research on the effectiveness of malaria treatments and the sensitivity of malaria vectors.

265. Lastly, with support from WHO, the prices of generic medicines and drugs for malaria were considerably reduced in order to become accessible to all population groups⁹⁰.

266. Malaria is not yet fully under control. As a result of unmet financial, infrastructure and human-resources requirements, malaria still affects many areas of the country (source: Ministry of Health (MINSANTE)). The fight against HIV/AIDS is also a health-related Government priority⁹¹. Progress has been made through public awareness campaigns, and, as a direct result of the activities undertaken, the prevalence of that ailment in Cameroon has been considerably reduced⁹².

267. Various decentralized special programmes promoted by the Government allowed to:

- (a) Strengthen prevention campaigns to the benefit of young persons and women with condom distribution and mobile testing teams;
- (b) Strengthen tuberculosis screening and counselling units as a way of handling persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA);
- (c) Ensure appropriate care for PLWHA with antiretroviral drugs and treatment of opportunistic diseases;
- (d) Provide home-based and spaced out activities for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PTME) through a decentralized approach at the level of districts.

268. With regard to HIV/AIDS, 23 treatment and 65 care centres have been accredited and operationalized in order to offer antiretroviral treatment to 27,000 patients. Of the 28,500 PLWHA thus treated, 1,014 were children. Moreover, a health-sector operational plan for HIV/AIDS control during the period 2006-2010 was drawn up and was officially launched by the Prime Minister on 1 March 2006. The Global Fund's fifth round of funding⁹³ resources, provided by WHO, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and UNICEF, were made available for related activities.

269. HIPC initiative funds are also used to meet some of the considerable financial and human resources requirements of the policy on HIV/AIDS.

270. The Government has organized a special tuberculosis prevention programme, whose most tangible facet consists of 191 tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment centres covering the national territory and tasked with the free distribution of tuberculosis medication, patient follow-up, immunization with BCG and early detection. The current early-detection rate is 96 per cent, compared to an initial target of 70 per cent. The current rate of treatment of newly detected smear positive tuberculosis cases is 74 per cent, compared to an initial target of at least 85 per cent.

⁸⁹ Of the 610,000 mosquito nets purchased for pregnant women, approximately 250,000 have already been distributed, while 800,000 more are in the procurement stage. Of the 150,000 mosquito nets purchased for children under 5, 40,000 have already been distributed, while 1,100,000 more were in the process of being procured in 2008. Impregnated mosquito nets are distributed to these two categories of persons free of charge.

⁹⁰ Ministry of Justice Report, 2006, p. 128.

⁹¹ The fight against this pandemic is a PRSP priority.

⁹² The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is currently estimated at 5 per cent.

⁹³ Established in 2002 to prevent three of the world's most devastating diseases, namely HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

271. In 1997, tuberculosis treatment costs had been reduced to CFAF 5,000. The Government has rendered such treatment free of charge as from 1 October 2004. Public awareness campaigns and free screening are regularly organized for eye and cardiovascular diseases and cancer. However, the welfare coverage of these ailments is still marginal because of the high cost of their treatment and the State's limited capacity to finance related research and facilitate access to such treatment,

272. The reproductive health policy, formulated as part of the responsibilities of MINSANTE, MINPROFF and MINAS, comprises the prevention of early pregnancies, the reduction of maternal deaths, the promotion of family planning (FP) and the provision of women with information on contraception techniques.

273. Within the framework of the reproductive health programme, efforts have been made through the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) initiative and the immunization and maternal death reduction programmes, including the emergency neonatal and obstetric care (SONEU) module, which covers 4 out of 10 provinces with WHO, UNICEF and AWARE support. A roadmap for the reduction of infant mortality and a strategic plan for contraceptive safety (PSSPC) have been drawn up, validated and distributed. Moreover, training activities have been organized for physicians, a communicator's guide regarding sensitization methods in respect of SONEU has been produced, and community-based self-diagnosis actors have been trained.

274. Lastly, a manual on comprehensive training for SONEU providers, care for STDs and the revised ante-natal care (ACN) system and PTME, aimed at ensuring a better management of women's and children's health issues, has been prepared and is in the validation stage. For further details, cf. in the third part of this report, paragraphs 509-510.

275. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 46.* Administration civil servants have participated in seminars organized by United Nations bodies, in particular the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa⁹⁴, for training in drafting techniques to be used in preparing reports to treaty bodies. Such workshops, held in November 2007, allowed building the reporting capacities of staff involved in the collection and processing of information to be submitted in response to observations and recommendations formulated by such bodies with regard to human rights. The quest for such technical assistance bears witness to the Government's resolve to cooperate closely with international institutions towards the effective implementation of all human rights and democracy in Cameroon.

276. On 8-9 October 2008, the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms organized in Yaoundé a seminar on the same topic for its focal points.

277. Cooperation also takes place in connection with the validation of various reports with the participation of civil society organizations and such United Nations bodies as UNDP, and with the preparation of the action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights in Cameroon.

278. *Reply to the points raised in paragraph 47.* The national human-rights promotion bodies issue publications in line with the Committee's recommendation.

279. Every year, MINJUSTICE publishes a report on human rights in Cameroon. Although this report is generally intended for the national and international community, magistrates and prison system personnel are closely involved in the exercise and attend seminars on human rights issues.

⁹⁴ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 8984/5183 of 26 November 2007, p. 6.

280. MINJUSTICE has launched a project for the compilation of national and international texts on human rights protection in order to make them available to law and administration professionals and civil society organizations; and publishes since 2006 the review "Justicia", in which issues related to human rights are addressed.

281. In 2007, CNDHL drew up a quadrennial report on the exercise of human rights in Cameroon and the related progress and difficulties. In accordance with Act No. 2004/016 of 22 July 2004 on the creation, organization and operation of the National Commission on Human rights and Freedoms, CNDHL is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights and freedoms. Among other tasks, it disseminates, the human rights instruments among the population through any channel, including education, information activities, conferences and seminars⁹⁵, such as the training seminar on human rights and the administration of justice organized for magistrates, other justice personnel and police officers on 14-15 October 2008.

282. On 14-15 March 2010, the Commonwealth also organized, in Cameroon, a seminar on human rights and the administration of justice.

283. Such information activities, in which law professionals in general actively participate, contribute to the dissemination of the provisions of the Covenant across the various social groups and allow assessing the progress and pace of advancement of human rights, particularly ESCR, in the country.

284. The regular participation of Government organizations, such as MINJUSTICE, in training workshops and activities conducted by United Nations bodies, such as the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa⁹⁶, corroborates the wish to cooperate with the United Nations system.

285. In connection with the Committee's recommendation regarding the dissemination of the Covenant among the legal profession, a number of human rights education programmes are developed and implemented at the level of schools, universities⁹⁷ and judicial institutions in response to United Nations requests in the framework of the Decade for Human Rights Education. For instance, CNDHL, in cooperation with various agencies, undertook to draw up a human rights teaching programme for schools and universities.

286. Before and after the entry into force of the Criminal Procedure Code, which is guided by human rights considerations, the Government took measures for its dissemination among law professionals, namely magistrates, practicing lawyers and university professors⁹⁸.

287. CNDHL has initiated the preparation of a human rights promotion and protection plan which highlights the stakes, advances and, especially, challenges related to an enhanced dissemination and promotion of human rights in Cameroon.

288. Lastly, NGO action to sensitize and raise the awareness of all social groups is noteworthy. The Government attributes particular importance to national and international civil society actors integrated into the human rights dissemination strategy. It is difficult to determine the exact number of associations and NGOs working in the area of social, economic and cultural rights but any action taken by such human rights defenders helps the

⁹⁵ Cf. article 2 of Act No. 2004/016 of 22 July 2004.

⁹⁶ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 8984/5183 of 26 November 2007, on the training workshop on drafting reports to the treaty bodies.

⁹⁷ Human rights are included in the study programmes of law and political science faculties.

⁹⁸ See on this point the three Ministry of Justice reports on human rights in Cameroon.

development of Cameroon⁹⁹, which supports them and regularly participates in their activities because they contribute to poverty reduction.

V. Review of the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant (article by article)

289. This part, offering a detailed examination of actual compliance with the individual provisions of the Covenant within Cameroon's system for safeguarding economic, social and cultural rights, contains general considerations and the presentation of the specific rights.

A. General obligations under the Covenant

Article 1

290. Cameroon attained international sovereignty on 1 January 1960 and 1 October 1961 in its areas under, respectively, French and British control. The right of the Cameroonian people to self-determination is reaffirmed in the Constitution¹⁰⁰.

291. In order to be actually exercised, a people's right to self-determination presupposes the general recognition by the State of freedoms to take action in any area. In other words, the independence of a people is expressed through the admission of its sovereignty. Accordingly, the right to self-determination marks various Acts adopted in the 1990s, particular those on:

- Freedom to undertake any business activity, as a basis for economic freedom (Act No. 90/031);
- Freedom of association (Act No. 90/053);
- Public meetings and demonstrations (Act No. 90/055);
- Freedom to create a political party (Act No. 90/056);
- Freedom of social communication (Act No. 90/052).

292. In addition to these freedoms of action, mention must be made of the physical freedom of movement, enshrined in the Constitution and subject only to restrictions stipulated by the law.

Article 2

293. The State of Cameroon has accepted obligations of the following two types: Obligations of means, according to which the Government must make all efforts to strengthen the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights; and obligations of result, according to which the Government must achieve a specific outcome. All of these obligations are referred to in the first part, relating to the general framework for the protection and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

⁹⁹ Ministry of Justice Report, 2006, p. 27-38.

¹⁰⁰ The preamble to the Constitution forms an integral part thereof (under 65 of the Constitution). The current Constitution was amended by Act No. 2008/001 of 14 April 2008 amending and completing certain provisions of Act No. 96/06 of 18 January on the revision of the constitution of 2 June 1972. However, the modification was not extended to the preamble.

B. Specific obligations under the Covenant

Article 3

294. In Cameroon's legal system, gender is irrelevant to the acquisition of legal personality. The status of legal person, resulting from the acquisition of legal personality, implies that men and women have the same possibility to enjoy and exercise their rights. The concept of equality, on which the human rights enshrined in the Constitution are based, underlies the recognition of the rights of a legal person (fundamental rights).

295. In practice, however, various discriminatory acts and situations occur in Cameroonian society. This infringement of the equality recognized to all legal persons is a consequence of the phallogocentric pattern of a traditional society still robust in Cameroon, a sexist attitude attributing to women and girls an inferior place.

296. Because of their numerical superiority, however, women contribute decisively to society's development efforts and to nation-building. Under article 3 of the Covenant, the State must restore the precedence of law over sociological impediments, which justifies the adoption of measures against gender-based discrimination, the promotion of the gender approach and the debate on enshrining gender parity in the Constitution.

(a) Measures against gender-based discrimination

297. Such measures aim at reducing the gender gap in the enjoyment and exercise of rights and imply the development of policies and programmes, the adoption of legal instruments and the creation of institutions addressing issues related to women's rights, and the development of projects for the promotion of such rights.

Development of policies and programmes

298. This task falls within the competence of MINPROFF, responsible for the development and implementation of measures related to respect for women's rights in society, the elimination of all discrimination against women, the reinforcement of equality safeguards in the political, economic, social and cultural areas, and the implementation of national policy on the family.

Adoption of legal instruments

299. The following legal instruments are binding on Cameroon:

International legal standards

300. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of equality between men and women as follows: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

Cameroon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women on 23 August 1994 and acceded to its Optional Protocol of 6 October 1999 on 1 November 2004.

Domestic legal standards

Constitution

301. In its preamble, the Constitution lays down the principle of gender equality by stating that "the human person, without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights"; and provides that "all persons shall have equal

rights and obligations". The State guarantees to all citizens of either sex the rights and freedoms enumerated in the preamble to the Constitution.

Civil code

302. Under the law, legal personality is recognized to men and women. Under article 16 of the Civil Code, "a woman has full legal personality, whose exercise is limited only by the marriage contract and the law".

Criminal code

303. Article 1 of the Criminal Code lays down the principle of the equality of all before the law in the following terms: "Criminal law applies to all". There is no specific provision punishing FGM, which is generally repressed as assault or aggravated assault, namely an offence against a person's physical integrity that the Criminal Code specifies and punishes. To fill that gap, a draft Act on the repression of gender-based violence and discrimination has been prepared, with specific provisions against FGM and marital violence.

Labour code

304. At the social level, the Labour Code and other social security texts contain a number of provisions aimed at women's well-being and protection. For instance, article 84 (1) of the Labour Code allows a pregnant woman to break her employment contract without notice or the concomitant obligation to pay compensation, while the employer may not break such a contract on the ground's of the worker's pregnancy.

305. Under article 84 (2) of the Labour Code, a pregnant woman is entitled to a 14-week maternity leave, which may be extended by six weeks in the event of a duly diagnosed disease resulting from the pregnancy or the childbirth. Article 61 of the Labour Code lays down the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of sex, age or status¹⁰¹.

Decree no. 94/199 of 7 october 1994 on the general regulations of civil service (amended by decree no. 2000/287 of 12 october 2000)

306. Under articles 12 and 13 of the decree in question, access to the civil service is open, without discrimination, to any person of Cameroonian nationality meeting the relevant age criteria, namely at least 17 years of age, and at most 30 or 35 years of age for, respectively, category "C" and "D" or category "B" civil servants, subject to meeting physical ability and moral integrity requirements.

Electoral law¹⁰²

307. The electoral law deals with the capacity to vote and the conditions of eligibility for election. Thus, any Cameroonian national or naturalized Cameroonian, without distinction as to sex, may vote in elections, provided he or she has completed his or her twentieth year and is not disqualified by law. Moreover, any Cameroonian citizen, without distinction as to sex, may be enrolled on a list of candidates for election to the National Assembly, provided he or she has the right to vote, is duly enrolled on an electoral list, has completed his or her twenty-third year on polling day and can read and write French or English.

¹⁰¹ Women are assigned appropriate work, while tasks considered to be too hard or dangerous for their health are rigorously regulated by Decree No. 16/MTLS/DEGRE of 27 May 1969.

¹⁰² Act No. 91/020 of 16 December 1991 establishing conditions for the election of deputies to the National Assembly and Act No. 92/010 of 17 September 1992 laying down conditions for the election and temporary replacement of the President of the Republic.

(b) Promotion of the gender approach

308. Women account for 51 per cent of the country's total population. Despite this numerical superiority and the Government's resolve, borne out by the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1984, the situation of women gives grounds for concern inasmuch as, as a rule, they are confined to reproductive and household roles.

309. However, Cameroon has not remained unaffected by the international tendency, which began in the 1970s, to regard women's emancipation as an essential prerequisite for sustainable development. Accordingly, efforts to promote the gender approach in the development of Government policies resulted in the ratification of CEDAW and in the country's participation in the World Summit for Social Development, held in March 1995 in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in September 1995 in Beijing.

310. Since the Copenhagen summit, the introduction of gender equity and equality at the national level advanced significantly in the areas where gender disparities are particularly frequent, namely at the political, economic, social and cultural levels. MINPROFF, with the help of national and international partners has, since April 1997, drawn up and ensured the adoption of PANIFD, whose seven main thrusts reflect the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform, namely:

- Improving women's living conditions
- Improving women's legal status
- Utilizing female human resources in all sectors of development
- Ensuring women's participation in decision-making
- Promoting and protecting girls
- Combating violence against women
- Improving the institutional framework.

311. In addition, SDSS and the SSSPF paper under preparation contain a rigorous assessment of the situation of women at the political, economic and social levels. The findings point to appreciable achievements calling for further improvement. The following measures have been taken to that purpose:

- Institutionalization of the gender approach;
- Designation of gender focal points in public organizations;
- Adoption of the gender approach with regard to appointments (cf. paragraphs 95 101).

(c) Debate on the constitutionality of gender parity

312. Observation indicates that the principle of equality is not fully observed in practice. In order to reverse that trend, feminist movements decided to take advantage of the constitutional reform announced by the President of the Republic in his address to the nation on 31 December 2007, proposing to enshrine gender parity in the Constitution¹⁰³. That proposal, however, was not taken into consideration during the adoption of Act No. 2008/001 of 14 April 2008 amending and completing certain provisions of Act No. 96/06 of 18 January on the revision of the Constitution of 2 June 1972.

¹⁰³ Cf. the women's memorandum.

Article 4

313. The restrictions likely to be placed on the economic, social and cultural rights are subject to the principles of legality which guarantee respect for the rule of law. In order to restrict such a right, the State must ensure that State action has juridical status, is compatible with the law and authorized by existing provisions. This triple requirement reflects the principle of legality, on which Cameroon's legal system is based.

Article 5

314. Respect for the integrity of economic, social and cultural rights is a prerequisite for the legality and legitimacy of any restrictions that the Government may impose.

Article 6

315. As a party to eight key ILO conventions¹⁰⁴ and the Covenant, Cameroon is committed to promoting and protecting the right to work on its territory. This commitment was recently further put into effect with the launching of the "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work" Support Project (PAMODEC), the aim of which is to promote and protect people's rights at the workplace.

316. Decree No. 2004/320 of 8 December 2004 on Government organization created three ministries entrusted with addressing problems linked to employment and social security, namely MINEFOP, the Ministry of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Social Economy and Handicraft (MINPMEESA) and MINTSS¹⁰⁵.

317. The National Employment Fund (FNE), the National Monitoring Service for Employment and Vocational Training (NEFOP) and the National Consultative Commission on Labour were set up specifically to facilitate access to employment. The aim of these reforms undertaken by the Government is to resolve the problems arising from the economic crisis of the 1990s, which had serious consequences for employment. According to an analysis by MINEFOP, the economic recession caused an increase in the unemployment rate, particularly among young persons and women¹⁰⁶. In addition, economic activity in the informal sector declined, and employers became reluctant to observe health and safety requirements, grant leave to employees, encourage the creation of unions and promote the right to strike.¹⁰⁷

318. By Act No. 92/007 of 14 August 1992, the Government revised the Labour Code in order to revitalize the economy and reduce unemployment. It liberalized the private sector, created the export processing zone, professionalized the education system and liberalized the labour unions. In addition, and despite the effects of the crisis, the Government pursued a policy of promoting employment. Institutions for vocational training, such as the National School of Administration and the Judiciary, the Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, the École Normale Supérieure, the Cameroon Institute of International Relations, the Joint Forces Military College and the National Advanced School of the Post and Telecommunications (NASPT);, among others, continued to provide training for young persons.

319. This commitment to recruitment in the public sector result, in part, from the State's role, in developing countries, as the main employer, in contrast to developed countries, where the private sector is the pivot of economic growth, and this is directly reflected in

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of Justice Report, 2005, p. 159-160.

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of Justice Report, 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Justice Report, 2005, p. 164-167.

¹⁰⁷ Source: MINEFOP.

social policy on employment. The State endeavours to build its capacities as facilitator, taking measures to develop a favourable frame of action, accessible to the other actors and to the development partners.

320. The challenge is considerable in view of an unemployment rate of nearly 17 per cent (32 per cent in urban and 9 per cent in rural areas). The country's two largest cities present the highest unemployment rates, 25.6 per cent in Douala and 21.5 per cent in Yaoundé (ECAM II).

321. Some sociological consequences of unemployment and low incomes are the following:

- Problems encountered by non-professional degree holders;
- Critical situation of the unemployed of the modern sector;
- Limited integration of women into formal and informal employment;
- Population growth;
- Lack of job security in the informal sector.

322. The Government's objective is to support job creation in order to reduce unemployment. This is the reason for the adoption of measures promoting and facilitating the exercise of the right to work, and for the preparation of a draft National Employment Policy Statement (DPNE).

(a) Promotion and facilitation of employment

323. Action in this area consists of the development of sectoral projects, civil service recruitment and the national role of FNE.

Development of sectoral projects

324. The various problems arising from the prevailing weakness in the supply of paid jobs and from unemployment have prompted the Government to mount a range of programmes comprising the sectoral projects described below:

- In the field of employment, ONEFOP has been created to collect information on the labour market;
- In the field of primary and secondary legislation, the Government has:
 - Revised the Labour Code with a view to greater compliance with the State's international obligations and for more effective protection of the workers;
 - Promulgated the Investment Charter;
 - Created the export processing zones;
 - Adopted an Act on vocational guidance in schools which opens up broad opportunities for partnership between the private sector and the vocational education system;

At the structural level, FNE has continued its support programmes with the following results:

- 214,848 persons enrolled, counselled and assessed,
- 112,485 young persons placed in the productive economy,
- 46,651 young persons trained in various trades,
- 25,009 young persons financed and placed within micro-businesses, and

- 37,922 jobs created by various projects.

Other labour-intensive projects are in progress, such as the Priority Programme for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises (PPPP), which includes specific subprogrammes for young persons, women and persons with disabilities.

Civil service recruitment

325. The 2006 recruitment figures below, recorded by public services, reflect a strongly proactive Government policy on employment:

- 10,300 contracted teachers;
- 3,000 temporary teachers;
- 100 secondary-level technical teachers;
- 100 veterinary nurses;
- 10 computer engineers (Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reform (MINFOPRA));
- 20 eco-wardens;
- 19 researchers (Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation (MINRESI))¹⁰⁸.

326. The following statistics show the position on students admitted to advanced vocational schools during 2006-2007 with a view to employment in the civil service:

- **Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences**
 - Medicine: 90
 - Biomedical and public health studies:
 - Level 1 (Bachelor's degree): 20
 - Level 4 (Master's): 28
 - Specialized programme: 46
- **School of Public Works**
 - Advanced civil engineering technician: 99
 - Civil engineering project engineer: 635
 - Advanced agricultural engineering technician: 56
 - Agricultural engineer: 259
 - Advanced topographical technician: 117
- **National Institute for Youth and Sport**
 - Sports and physical education teacher: 60
 - Senior sports and youth counsellor: 44
 - Youth and leadership counsellor: 60
- **National Advanced School of Engineering (ENSP): 566**
- **NASPT: 566**
 - Programme for technical and communications staff: 50
 - Programme for postal operations staff: 50

¹⁰⁸ Describe the situation in 2007.

The role of FNE

327. In the period 2005-2006, FNE facilitated the employment of 13,470 job seekers, and trained 1,582 job seekers for self-employment and 276 young persons with a view to possible recruitment. It also financed 837 microprojects¹⁰⁹.

(b) Proposal to develop a national policy for employment

328. In 2006, MINEFOP prepared a draft DPNE. This was prompted by a socio-economic context characterized by high unemployment and a worrying level of underemployment, in which the lack of a coherent and well-articulated document on national policy on employment appeared to hamper the decisive deployment of resources in the interests of employment and better coordination of related activities.

329. This statement, which has already been approved at interministerial level and by the National Consultative Commission on Labour, sets out future national policy on employment, covering, inter alia:

- Its underlying principles;
- Its context and justification;
- Its objectives;
- The commitments that the Government intends to make;
- The strategy that the Government proposes to adopt;
- Arrangements for identifying key participants and providing monitoring and evaluation procedures for the National Policy on Employment (PNE).

330. Through DPNE, in accordance with ILO Convention No. 122 on Employment Policy, 1964, the Government is committing itself to developing PNE with a view to promoting full, productive and freely-chosen employment. Specifically, PNE will be designed among other things to:

- Stimulate growth and economic development;
- Raise the standard of living of the population;
- Develop human resources to meet manpower requirements;
- Resolve the problem of unemployment and underemployment.

331. Designed to promote productive investment which will generate decent jobs in all sectors and branches of the economy, the PNE strategy is based on strategic principles and themes and is guided by the following principles:

- The rate at which decent and rewarding jobs develop and are created is a performance indicator for the national economy, and thus good governance;
- Employment should be considered not only to be a result of economic growth, but also and above all a causal factor in that growth;
- The promotion of decent jobs for all is a key to poverty reduction and the elimination of exclusion, and an indispensable condition for harmonious and sustainable development which can guarantee social peace and social justice;
- The character and significance of employment, at once cross-cutting and central, should be taken into account in every question of social and economic policy.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

332. A number of projects are in place in relation to the promotion of employment for certain specific groups, including the young, for whom an employment plan has existed since late 2006. Other projects have been launched in relation to women, persons with disabilities, vulnerable groups and the long-term unemployed. Employment plans for these groups are in preparation, as is the Priority Investment Programme for Employment (PIPE). Support for the implementation of this programme consists in studies carried out in partnership by MINPLADAT and ILO in 2005 and in PNE, which is being updated.

333. Alongside relevant studies, the MINEFOP is continuing to promote employment in the informal economy through the integrated support project for participants in the informal sector (PIAASI) and some FNE programmes. Specifically in relation to this project, the number of applications for support from the country as a whole rose from 3,765 in 2005 to 4,000 in 2006, of which 2,020 came within the ambit of PIAASI, and sums of the order of CFAF 699 million¹¹⁰, or CFAF 71 million¹¹¹ per province, were allocated. The branches of the economy for which applications were made were, in decreasing order of popularity, agriculture, commerce, the clothing industry, craft skills and animal husbandry.

334. In parallel, through special MINEFOP finance, FNE succeeded in placing a number of young persons in the active economy under agreements signed with MINPMEESA and the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MINEFI). In the context of measures to combat unemployment, underemployment and poverty, the Fund thus placed 54 per cent of 12,000 job seekers in paid employment, funded 63 per cent of 1,375 project applications and set up in self-employment 64 per cent of 2,132 applicants. Its activities complement action by decentralized services in locations not served by the Fund's own activities. Through these channels, the Government has succeeded in placing individuals directly with about 1,000 small, medium-sized and large enterprises.

Article 7

335. The improvement of working conditions in accordance with article 7 of the Covenant implies an equitable minimum wage, guaranteed minimum conditions of safety and hygiene at the workplace, consideration of vocational training, and respect for the right to annual or other leave.

(a) Guaranteed equitable minimum wage

336. The general principle governing remuneration is the following: "Under equal conditions of work and occupational capabilities, payment of equal wages to all workers, regardless of origin, sex, views, age, status and religion"¹¹². Accordingly, remuneration is guaranteed to be non-discriminatory and equitable in view of the possibilities of the enterprises and the state of the nation's economy.

337. Article 1 of Decree No. 2008/2115/PM of 24 June 2008 establishes the guaranteed minimum inter-occupational wage (SMIG) at CFAF 28,216 per month. Under Decree No. 0021/MNTSS/DRP/SDCP of 30 June 2008 of the Minister of Labour and Social Security, the SMIG is the basic wage, possibly augmented with bonuses and contractual allowances payable to an unskilled worker.

338. In addition to the wage itself, workers may receive, on the basis of the law (Labour Code) and collective agreements, bonuses and allowances for regularity, performance, housing or transport, and various rewards. The Labour Code, the General Regulations of Civil Service and the collective agreements specify promotion conditions and procedures.

¹¹⁰ Approximately € 1,067,180.

¹¹¹ Approximately € 108,400.

¹¹² Article 62 (2) of Act No. 92/007 of 14 August 1992 on the Labour Code.

The principle governing promotion is that it should primarily be based on qualification, occupational capabilities and seniority in the enterprise. The Supreme Court has consistently invalidated decisions unjustifiably refusing a promotion. Thus, in the case *Boniface Tngosi v the State (MINFOPRA)*, final judgment No. 44/02-3 of 27 March 2003, after two years of training in the capacity of hospital executive assistant, Dr. Tngosi requested MINFOPRA to pay him an additional seniority allowance pursuant to Decree No. 76/362 of 21 August 1976 on the special status of health administration civil servants.

339. By decision No. 550/27/MFP of 11 May 1985, the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reform rejected the request. The applicant took the case to the Supreme Court, which invalidated the decision and ordered the payment of an additional seniority allowance, with all related legal consequences, to Dr. Tngosi.

340. The Labour Code determines the duration of work, which may not exceed 40 hours per week (article 80 (1)). It also provides for an obligatory weekly rest of at least 24 hours (article 88 (1)). Overtime is subject to the labour inspector's prior authorization and remunerated at a higher rate (article 80 (4)).

341. The Government is aware of the need for improving the level of wages in the country.

(b) Guaranteed minimum conditions of safety and hygiene

342. Occupational safety and hygiene are a permanent concern of the Government, which established, pursuant to the Labour Code, the National Commission on Health and Safety at the Workplace to conduct studies and provide advice in the areas of occupational medicine and the workers' safety and hygiene. All enterprises are obliged to organize for the workers a medical and sanitary unit, whose organization and operation are governed by Decree No. 79/015 of 15 October 1979 of the Minister of Labour and Social Security.

343. Promotion and monitoring of compliance with legal and regulatory procedures are ensured through a labour inspection system functioning under the authority of the Minister of Labour and Social Security. The safety and hygiene measures apply to all workers without discrimination. Difficulties are mainly related to personnel shortage and it is therefore necessary to promote appropriate training.

344. Moreover, PAMODEC aims at promoting and protecting the rights of persons at the workplace.

345. In 2006, occupational hygiene and safety committees were set up in many enterprises, of which 15 in Douala in the province of Littoral, 5 in Bertoua in the province of Est, 01 in Yaoundé in the province of Centre, 2 in Figuil in the province of Nord, 3 in the province of Ouest and two 2 in Kribi-Niète in the province of Sud. These committees were tasked with hygiene and safety promotion in the enterprise in order to prevent accidents and occupational diseases.

346. With State funding, the fight against HIV/AIDS was intensified in certain enterprises¹¹³, on the insight that HIV/AIDS affects not only the worker's environment, but also, especially, his or her basic right to health. Committees against HIV/AIDS were created in certain public services. The Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) was the first to participate in that combat, and was followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX), MINFOPRA, MINEFI and others in 2006 and by MINJUSTICE in 2008.

¹¹³ Source: MINTSS contribution entitled "Preparation of the report on the situation of human rights in Cameroon", document No. 2561/MINTSS/SG/IG/13 of 29 December 2006.

347. In 2007, care for PLWHA intensified with the decentralization of the relevant structures. In that connection:

- 111 care units, compared to 65 in 2006, and 141 accredited treatment centres were set up for PLWHA;
- ARV costs were reduced from CFAF 600,000 in 2001 to 0 CFAF¹¹⁴. Free ARV treatment is available in CAPPs since 1 May 2007. By the end of September 2007, 41,788 PLWHA were under ARV, compared to 28,000 in 2006;
- The HIV/AIDS test is subsidized and, in February 2007, its cost was reduced to CFAF 3,000;
- The treatment and prevention of opportunistic infections in health care units are also subsidized;
- Units responsible for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission provided free advice and voluntarily taken tests to 97,000 pregnant women and 188,000 persons through 12 mobile testing and health care units. In total, approximately 32,300 new HIV/AIDS cases were diagnosed;
- With regard to contraception, approximately 23 million male condoms were distributed, while 300,000 female condoms were subsidized by MINPROFF at the rate of CFAF 100 apiece and made available to women's associations.

348. The adoption of a Mutual Insurance Code is expected to broaden the scope of social security to cover all Cameroonians. An advisory committee on the modernization of the social security system was created by Decree No. 2008/159/PM of 4 November 2008.

(c) Consideration of vocational training

349. The positive trend in Cameroon's economic performance during the decade 1995-2005 failed to translate into any significant increase in job opportunities or poverty reduction for most of the population. Accordingly, SSE, adopted in June 2006, stipulates that, by 2015, vocational training must absorb at least 50 per cent of primary, secondary and higher education leavers, expected to acquire trade skills, thereby improving the outward effectiveness of the education system.

350. An assessment of Cameroon's vocational training system reveals the following four main problems:

- Inadequacy of the institutional and regulatory framework;
- Qualitative as quantitative inadequacy of supply compared to demand;
- Insufficiency of financial resources;
- Non-optimization of human and material resources.

351. These problems are due to the factors described below.

352. Inadequacy of the institutional and regulatory framework:

- Lack of a vocational training policy;
- Lack of an appropriate legal and regulatory framework.

353. Qualitative and quantitative inadequacy of supply:

- Unsuitable training programmes;

¹¹⁴ Source: MINSANTE.

- Insufficient vocational training and information centres;
 - Insufficient and obsolete infrastructure and equipment;
 - Insufficient vocational training structures;
 - Qualitative and quantitative inadequacy of human resources;
 - Underutilization of the vocational guidance system.
354. Insufficiency of financial resources:
- Absence of a suitable policy of financing of professional training;
 - Weakness of vocational training financing by other partners (households and enterprises);
 - Inadequate budget allocations for vocational training.
355. Non-optimization of human and material resources:
- Lack of strategic planning regarding the resources allocated to vocational training;
 - Inadequate institutional capacity of the sector's various actors.
356. This insight into the causes of the problems enables the Government to gradually identify solutions with a view to effectively reducing unemployment among the young.

(d) Respect for the right to annual or other leave

357. Under article 89 of the Labour Code, "unless a collective agreement or individual employment contract contains more favourable provisions, the worker acquires the right to vacation paid by the employer, at the rate of one and a half working day per month of actual work". Compensatory payments in lieu of leave are strictly prohibited.

358. Article 90 of the Labour Code contains more favourable leave provisions for workers under 18 and working mothers and is worded as follows:

"(1) Workers under 18 shall be entitled to two and a half working days, instead of one and a half, per month of actual work.

(2) Working mothers shall be entitled to a leave increment either of two working days per child under 6 on the first day of leave who is recorded in the population register and lives in the household, or of one such day if the main leave does not exceed six days".

359. A leave or an authorized absence may not lead to suspension of the employment contract (article 32 of the Labour Code) and an employee using either facility is remunerated and covered against the same risks as during periods of work. The Supreme Court confirmed this position in judgement No. -148/S of March 28 2002 in the case of CNPS v Moïse Njila, victim of a traffic accident which occurred while he was on authorized absence. CNPS had refused to pay him any compensation on the grounds that "the employment contract was suspended at the time of occurrence of the accident". Mr. Njila had addressed himself to the court, which had granted his request for compensation and that decision had been confirmed by the Court of Appeal of the province of Centre. CNPS took the case to the Supreme Court, which found that a short authorized absence was not among the grounds for employment contract suspension enumerated in article 32 of the Labour Code and "that an accident occurring during a short authorized absence constitutes an accident occurring during work".

360. Act No. 73/5 of 7 December 1973 on statutory holidays provides for a wage supplement for work carried out on official legal, civil or religious holidays, regardless of

whether they are shutdown days or not. Labour inspectors monitor compliance with the provisions on the duration of work and rest.

361. Pregnant and breastfeeding women are subject to provisions adapted to their condition (articles 16-19 of the Decree of 27 May 1969).

Article 8

362. The specific rights linked to trade union rights are the right to form and join trade unions and the right to strike.

(a) Exercise of the right to form and join trade unions

363. The freedom to form and join trade unions is guaranteed by the Constitution. Parameters for the exercise of this freedom are set by the Labour Code and by Act No. 68/LF/19 of 18 November 1968. Under the Labour Code, workers and employers have the right, without restrictions of any sort and without prior authorization, to set up unions and join them. The 1968 Act recognizes the same right on the part of personnel coming within the scope of the General Regulations of Civil Service.

364. The State ensures that heads of enterprises respect the freedom to establish and join unions and do not interfere with union affairs. In the event of conflict between tendencies within a union, the State remains neutral. In this context, promotional activity takes the form of social dialogue instigated by the head of the ministerial departmental and advice provided to the social partners by labour inspectors. Activities to protect the rights of organization and collective bargaining take also the form of the revision of certain collective bargaining agreements under the auspices of MINTSS.

365. The legal recognition which confers civil capacity on unions is subject only to the formal requirement of registration by the registrar of unions for those unions coming under the Labour Code, and approval by the Minister of Regional Administration and Decentralization for civil service unions, sole restriction applicable to the police, armed forces and judiciary.

366. Unions have the right to form federations or confederations and to join international union organizations. Subject to current law, union organizations have the right to make administrative rules based on their governing documents, to choose their representatives freely and to organize their own management without interference from the public authorities.

367. The freedom to form and join unions is protected in all its aspects. Employers are expressly forbidden to take union activity into account to dismiss an employee. Where this prohibition is breached, the dismissal is declared unlawful. This is illustrated in the case of Isaac Mboa v the State (MPTS), Supreme Court Judgement No. 64/04/04-05 of 23 March 2005. The person concerned had worked at the Sofitel Hotel, Mount Féré, Yaoundé, for 12 years before being elected staff representative. In the course of union activity, he called for an investigation into the staff insurance fund. Annoyed by this attitude, his employer applied to the employment inspector for authority to dismiss him but the inspectorate refused. By Decision No. 6675/MTPS/SG/SIOP of 22 December 1989, the Minister of Labour and Social Security authorized Mr. Mboa's dismissal for insubordination. Mr. Mboa took the case to the Supreme Court, which overturned the ministerial decision.

368. In 2006, an increase in union activity saw the creation of 46 new unions in 2006 and 27 in 2007. The tables in appendix V illustrate this progress.

(b) Right to strike

369. The right to strike is enshrined in the Constitution. Article 157 (4) of the Labour Code defines the strike as "the collective and coordinated refusal by all or part of the workers of an establishment to comply with the normal rules of work in order to compel the employer to satisfy their claims or demands". Attempts to settle any collective disagreement envisaged in articles 157-165 of the Labour Code are made through conciliation and arbitration procedures. Where such procedures fail, a strike or lockout¹¹⁵ is legitimate.

370. In an enterprise, union delegates are tasked with presenting to the employer all individual or collective claims and are generally the first targets attacked by an employer attempting to destabilize a strike. The Cameroonian legislator, therefore, considered that effective protection of the right to strike presupposes the protection of union delegates. Their transfer or dismissal is subject to authorization by the labour inspector. If this procedure is not respected, the dismissal is annulled and the union delegate reinstated in the enterprise. The case of Marcel Haman v the National Power Company of Cameroon (SONEL), Supreme Court judgement No. 68/S of 20 December 2001, is an example in point. Mr. Haman, union delegate, had been laid off by SONEL without authorization from the labour inspector, who took this decision to the court. The judge declared the dismissal null and void but refused to order the employee's reinstatement on the grounds that this request had not been the object of a compromise procedure. The Court of Appeal confirmed this decision, but the Supreme Court, taking the opposite view, overturned it, stating that "a dismissal declared null and void, as in the case at hand, is supposed to have never existed and the employee is reinstated in his employment without further formalities".

371. The exercise of the right to strike is attenuated and regulated by the provision for minimum service in certain vital sectors, such as, inter alia, health care and public transport.

372. In the period 2006-2008, for instance, a number of strikes were organized by certain professional and workers' unions whose members were dissatisfied with their working conditions. Such unions were the National Union of Truck Drivers¹¹⁶, the Urban Drivers (taxi drivers), CAMPOST¹¹⁷, STEEL-WORKS workers, and the Temporary Teachers, among others. The Government handled these strikes in a manner showing its resolve to promote peaceful coexistence within the social structure¹¹⁸.

373. The Government paid particular attention to disturbances which occurred in February 2008 and were partly related to rising cost of living. Through positive measures taken by the Head of State, a response was provided progressively, in particular with regard to everyday consumption products.

374. The Government made numerous concessions to ensure the settlement of the strikes. For instance, it granted the requests of taxi drivers, who demanded a reduction in the number of police checkpoints in the cities and lower fuel prices; and of certain teachers in internship who, considering that their trial period had elapsed, wished to be integrated into the civil service, by recruiting more than 10,000 contractual teachers.

Article 9

375. All workers covered by the Labour Code are entitled to social security. The system in place is based on redistribution and is funded through employer and employee contributions. In recent years, reforms have been introduced in this area.

¹¹⁵ In article 151 (3) of the Labour Code, a lockout is defined as "the closing of an establishment by the employer in order to exert pressure on workers on strike or threatening to strike".

¹¹⁶ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 8514/4713 of 13 January 2006.

¹¹⁷ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 8733/4932 of 24 November 2006.

¹¹⁸ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 8519/4718 of 20 January 2006.

376. The Government has set up an extensive programme of reforms to improve social security. In seeking ways and means to restore the major elements of macroeconomic equilibrium and to regulate the social security sector, Cameroon has decided, together with the donors, to upgrade the CNPS in the short term and to reform the social security system.

377. A steering committee tasked with upgrading certain aspects of the CNPS and reforming the social security system was set up back in 1998, and the strategy of reforming the social security system was approved by the President of the Republic in December 1999, with the objective of:

- Making the social security funds secure;
- Ensuring separate branch management;
- Defining the State's role;
- Extending the scope of the social security system in terms of finance, staffing and occupational groups covered;
- Combating poverty and social exclusion.

378. To that end, about ten studies were commissioned to provide input into the decisions to be taken, concerning:

- The role of the State;
- Updating of the studies carried out by the CNPS;
- The extension of social security cover to the informal sector and population groups which have not previously been covered;
- The management of the transition;
- A review of sickness insurance;
- The reviewing of the health care and social welfare activities of the CNPS;
- The use to be made of the assets of the CNPS;
- Social security for civil service staff;
- The legal and institutional architecture of the social security system;
- Financing for the funds.

379. The Government adopted Act No. 2001/17 improving the procedures for the collection of social security contributions in order to improve such collection and approved a partnership between the CNPS and the tax authority.

380. The following projects have been undertaken in relation to technical cooperation and harmonization:

- Precise identification of the domains requiring codification;
- Definition of economic indicators and prudential ratios;
- Application of Inter-African Conference on Social Security (CIPRES) accounting systems by the CNPS, providing an accurate picture of this structure;
- Definition of a CIPRES training programme and overhaul of training centres in CIPRES member States.

381. As regards the extension of social security to sections of the population that had not previously benefited from cover, the approach is, generally, to draw up a draft Mutual Insurance Code, and, more specifically, a preliminary draft Act on mutual health insurance

enterprises. Draft Acts on social welfare policy have been in the pipeline since 2005. Other legislation on the organization of the various social security structures has also been prepared and concerns:

- The National Social Welfare Fund (FNPS) which will allow to overhaul the existing CNPS;
- The National Civil Servants' Fund (FNPF) which will be reserved for State employees and employees of similar status;
- The National Fund for Personal Health Insurance (FNAM);
- The social security agencies responsible for registration, collection, and the regulation and supervision of social security bodies;
- Unemployment insurance;
- The Wage Arrears Guarantee Fund.

Article 10

382. Under the Covenant, the widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society. Such protection, however, should also extend to children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

(a) Family protection measures

383. Cameroon's general policy on family protection is based on the need for respect for human dignity and aims at the consolidation of family bonds, the reinforcement of intrafamily solidarity, the promotion of the rights of family members and the improvement of the living conditions of the family as fundamental unit of society¹¹⁹. Family protection measures may be distinguished into general and specific.

General family-protection measures

384. The Government, with the international community's support, has been carrying out over the last ten years an extensive programme for the well-being of the family, including inter alia the following activities:

- Enhanced immunization programme against epidemic and endemic diseases;
- Creation of free testing units and care centres for PLWHA;
- Implementation of FP;
- Donation of foodstuffs to poor families or natural disaster victims;
- Creation of boreholes and drinking water supply points;
- Provision of family allowances.

385. As an example of practical measures, MINPROFF and MINAS have intervened in a number of family conflicts, which they have managed to resolve, for instance in the case of group marriage celebrations, an issue whose situation in 2007 is presented in the table shown in annex XII.

¹¹⁹ According to the preamble to the Constitution, "the nation protects and encourages the family, which is the natural basis of human society".

Specific family-protection measures

386. In order to promote the actual integration of all families, including those of marginal groups, the Government has developed many projects and actions referred to above (cf. paragraph 194).

387. The courts contribute effectively to the promotion of the family. There is abundant jurisprudence on the repression of offences against the family. The following cases are recent examples in point:

- Judgment No. 3200/COR of 9 March 2005 of the administrative district court of Yaoundé, Centre, condemning Edward Ambassa Mbassi for trespassing and offences against property to three months of immediate imprisonment;
- Judgment No. 4490/COR of 4 August 2004, handed down by the same court, condemning lady Julienne Edima for abandonment of the conjugal home to six months of imprisonment and a CFAF 50,000 fine;
- The case of Jean Odjo v Justine Varaja, Jean Paul Baille and Elisabeth Haidamai (judgment No. 4504/COR of 4 August 2004), in which the above court condemned the defendants to seven months of imprisonment and a CFAF 50,000 fine each for desertion of the family home, adultery and complicity in those offences. Justine Varaja had voluntarily failed to meet her marriage obligations through adultery and by deserting the matrimonial home and the children born of the marriage.

388. The case of Benjamin Ombe Eloumdou v Jean Koa, still pending before the Court of Appeal of the province of Centre, involves incest and the practice of sorcery. Family protection is therefore tangible, and woman, mainstay of that social unit, enjoys special protection.

(b) Measures for the protection of children, older persons and persons with disabilities

Protection of the child

389. In view of his or her incapacity, immaturity and, especially, significance for the future of society, the child must enjoy special conditions conducive to his or her development. As a victim of family disintegration and the breakdown of traditional community-based solidarity in an urban environment, the child is vulnerable to risks of the street, epidemic and other health hazards, physical or psychological violence, and various types of abuse and exploitation.

390. Cameroon is a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, whose implementation calls for legislative and practical measures safeguarding children's rights. Accordingly, society acknowledges that the child enjoys inalienable rights requiring particular protection and care (cf. paragraphs 169-174 above).

391. Of the various necessary measures envisaged with a view to the implementation of the rights of the child, mention should be made of the creation of the committees referred to below.

392. By Decree No. 068/MINTSS of 28 November 2005, the Minister of Labour and Social Security created a national committee to carry out the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)¹²⁰. The membership of the committee (CDNIPEC) consists of representatives of various technical ministries, employers' and workers' organizations and NGOs cooperating with international bodies.

¹²⁰ National Steering Committee for the Implementation of IPEC (CDNIPEC).

393. By decision No. 1/MINTSS/SG/DINGIT/CCT/CEA of 26 January 2006, the Minister of Labour and Social Security created an advisory technical committee for organizing the activities of the IPEC/LUTRENA Project. The members of the committee have been appointed. They are representatives of various ministries, employers' and workers' organizations, municipalities, NGOs and associations, who, as skilled technicians, are called upon to assist CDNIPEC with guidance and feedback in relation to measures taken against trafficking in children, in cooperation with LUTRENA and other United Nations bodies.

394. By decision No. 00785/DGSN/CAB of 2 December 2005, the Director of the National Security Department established, within the INTERPOL National Centre Bureau (NCB), a Special Morals Brigade, with the mission to combat trafficking in human beings in general and women and children in particular, and to eliminate violence and sexual abuse suffered by women and children¹²¹.

Raising awareness of the rights of the child

395. In 2006, MINAS focused on the following missions:

- Prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency and social imbalances;
- Rehabilitation of children and prevention of social exclusion.

396. The celebration of the International Children's Day on 16 June on the initiative of MINAS offers an opportunity to sensitize the population to the rights of the child. The "Children's Parliament" meets on that occasion to enable children to describe the difficulties they experience.

397. In 2006, the celebration focused on the topic "Right to protection: Stop violence against children".

398. The Catholic Church resolutely opposes the exploitation of children. In order to draw attention to abuse of the rights of the child, Cardinal Christian Tumi, former Archbishop of Douala, celebrated masses in Douala, Bamenda and Yaoundé, during which he called for measures against the exploitation of children.

399. Certain workers' unions, such as the National Federation of Decentralized Local Councils Trade Unions of Cameroon (FENTEDCAM) and the National Federation of Commerce and Services Trade Unions of Cameroon (FESCOSCAM) launched a public awareness campaign against the exploitation of children and child labour.

400. The projects and programmes supported by the Government in 2006 helped to achieve the following results:

- 358 street children taken care of;
- 203 abandoned children identified and taken care of;
- 130 street children placed in specialized institutions for training in such trades as, inter alia, joinery, dressmaking and hairdressing;
- 626 sentenced and imprisoned minors morally and materially supported;
- 65 orphans enrolled in various education establishments;
- 39 children reintegrated into their families of origin¹²².

¹²¹ IPEC-LUTRENA, TRAFFIC NEWS, p. 13.

¹²² MINAS contribution to the Report on Human rights in Cameroon, 2006, transmitted under reference 2006/10/60/1/MINS/SG/CJ, réf. V/L, of 13 November 2006.

401. In its action in support of minors, the State mainly seeks cooperation with strategic partners.

402. On 18 May 2006, a partnership agreement was signed between the Government and 42 effective NGOs and associations in the framework of the National Programme for OVC Support. The Government provides these organizations with financial assistance to enable them to identify OVCs through, for instance, the recruitment of 67 temporary social workers. Of the 150,000 OVCs identified in the national territory, 10,000 received educational, nutritional and medical support in 2006. A patronage system is under development with a view to improving care for OVCs through a comprehensive approach to their well-being.

403. In 2006, six campaigns were organized against the scarring of children in the province of Nord-Ouest, where child abuse is frequent as a result of traditional attitudes. Committees have been set up to monitor and eliminate child abuse.

404. With the assistance of Plan Cameroon, 150 birth certificates were established for certain orphans and 300 particularly vulnerable children received training with a view to their financial independence, while 160 orphans and street children were placed under care, and 500 girls were sensitized to the dangers of moral depravity.

405. MINAS plans to take the following measures in order to improve the conditions faced by persons sharing homes:

- Capacity-building for NGOs specialized in the rights of the child;
- Ongoing recruitment of social workers trained in the local language used in their area of work;
- Expansion of the services offered by social workers at department and district level for easier access to the population;
- Cooperation with authorities and traditional local chieftainships in order to disseminate the rights of the child among the rural population;
- Broadcast of radio programmes on the rights of the child;
- Partnership with NGOs in order to develop a human rights curriculum for elementary schools¹²³;
- Building of infrastructure.

406. In 2006, rebuilding work began in various rehabilitation centres for children. The Bépanda-Douala centre was refurbished and provided with a capacity of 120 places for the reception of vulnerable children. The goal of this investment is to transform this unit into a regional centre, similar to units operating in other parts of the country, for training children in need of special protection measures.

407. In 2006, MINAS assigned 28 abandoned children to the Shelter for Children in Distress (CAED) in Nkomo, Yaoundé, where they received psychological care and appropriate training. Cases of violence are reported from time to time. For instance:

- On 4 May 2006, a 3-year old girl died at the University Hospital (CHU) from sexual abuse (rape and sodomy by an unknown person). The case has been referred to the public prosecutor at the regional court of Mfoundi, Yaoundé, by letter No. 06/307/L/MINAS/CAB/CT2 of 5 May 2006. Proceedings are in progress.

¹²³ MINAS is to join forces with CNDHL, which has already developed relevant teaching material.

- In March 2006, violence against a 29-month old girl by her father, who works at the Presidential Guard camp in Yaoundé, was reported to MINAS. The offender was questioned and turned out to be a psychopath and an alcohol and drug addict. As an administrative measure, it was suggested to the Minister of Defence to order the accused to attend to the child's health, education and nutritional and other material needs.

408. It was also recommended to the Minister to assign the accused to a unit where he would not be exposed to alcohol, without prejudice to any other administrative or treatment measures. The file was transmitted to the public prosecutor of the administrative district court Yaoundé, Centre, for appropriate action. The Government provided material and psychosocial support to the victim's family.

409. Considerable reluctance is expressed, particularly at the level of traditional chieftainships, about the full enjoyment of children's rights. The Government, however, is determined to overcome such attitudes.

Protection of older persons

410. The Act on the creation of the National Committee on Ageing (CONAVI)¹²⁴ is being drawn up. This multidimensional body will aim to promote the rights of the elderly, their re-mobilization and their reintegration into the nation building process.

411. An international seminar was held at the Palais des Congrès in Yaoundé on 11-13 September 2006 under the patronage of the Prime Minister. It was co-organized by HelpAge International, the Regional Centre for the Well Being of Older Persons (CEREBEPA) and the Government, with the support of the African Union in order to mobilize the national and international communities and raise their awareness of the rights of the elderly, particularly with regard to health, social security and the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

412. Cameroon participated in the Consultative Meeting on the Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing at the National Level, held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 28 November – 1 December 2006.

413. However, protection of the rights of the elderly still faces the following difficulties:

- The majority of aged Cameroonians live in rural areas, often accessible with difficulty;
- More than two thirds of the elderly receive no social security benefits or pension;
- Limited financial resources hamper the implementation of reforms in social security for the elderly;
- Availability of few or no experts on the rights of the disabled and the elderly;
- Existence of very few institutions dealing with the elderly and the disabled;
- The elderly persons' attachment to their rites and traditions to the detriment of modern medicine.

¹²⁴ National Committee on Ageing (CONAVI)

Protection of persons with disabilities

Improvement of the legal framework

414. At the international level, Cameroon participated, on 14-25 August 2006 in New York, in the preparation of a draft International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, which safeguards and promotes the economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights of the disabled and was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2006.

415. At the national level, the joint circular letter No. 34/06/LC signed on 2 August 2006 by the Ministers of Secondary Education and Social Affairs aims at facilitating the enrolment of children with disabilities or born to poor disabled persons in public secondary schools and exempts these children from the payment of registration fees in such establishments, whether general or technical, and of parents' association (APE) fees.

416. This practical measure is based on the constitutional provisions on free elementary education. Moreover, the Government, in line with the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs and the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, gradually sets up integrated educational establishments conducive to promoting the disabled persons' right to education and their scholastic and social integration.

417. The well-being of persons with disabilities is further pursued through cooperation between the Government and various bodies on the basis of agreements and resolutions, as follows:

- On 22 March 2006, the Minister of Social Affairs and the Director of CNPS signed an agreement aimed at improving assistance to disabled persons and victims of industrial accidents. The agreement was actually also implemented within CNPS, which provided its disabled staff members with special vehicles to facilitate their transport to work;
- On 4 September 2006, a partnership agreement was signed between the Minister of Social Affairs and the National Director of FNE on facilitating the integration of vulnerable persons into training programmes and gainful employment in order to help persons with disabilities to economic and social independence;
- A meeting between the Ministers of Higher Education and Social Affairs on 13 March 2006 led to the signature of a joint circular letter aimed at improving the conditions encountered by disabled and vulnerable students by providing them with accommodations, integrating them into University "work-study programmes" and finding vacation internships for them;
- On 10 April 2006, a meeting was held between the Ministers of Social Affairs and Public Works in order to ensure the effective application of the 1983 Act on disabled persons' access to public buildings and of the related implementation Decree No. 90/1516 of 26 November 1990;
- A meeting between the Ministers of Social Affairs and Health on 20 October 2006 laid the basis for discussion on facilitating the access of vulnerable persons to medication and health care;

- On 29 October 2006, the participation of disabled persons in elections and their access to polling stations in order to vote were examined in a meeting between the Ministers of Social Affairs and Regional Administration and Decentralization¹²⁵.

Measures of support for persons with disabilities

418. The Government made the following efforts to improve the enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities:

- 26 disabled persons were trained in ICTs by IAI in the framework of a partnership agreement between MINAS and IAI-Cameroon;
- Sponsored by the Government, 20 persons with sight disabilities were enrolled in the *Collège de la Retraite*¹²⁶ (9 and 11 persons in, respectively, school years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007);
- Financial, material and technical assistance was offered to schools for persons with disabilities in various parts of the country; and sewing machines and television sets were donated;
- In the framework of a partnership with MINAS, the Circle of Friends of Cameroon (CERAC) offered social and economic assistance to disabled women in Yaoundé and in the provinces of the Extrême-Nord, Nord and Adamaoua;
- The Government facilitated the issue of small shopkeeper's licenses to disabled persons;
- The Government encouraged solidarity gestures by the public towards persons with disabilities. As a result, two sewing machines were obtained and given out to disabled persons.

419. In order to enhance mobility for the disabled, circular No. 003/CAB/PM of 18 April 2008 on compliance with procurement and Government contract control rules stipulates adopting the "disabilities approach" in the construction plans for buildings, public facilities and roads, particularly by providing for their accessibility to the disabled.

420. In that connection, disabled persons living in various provinces were provided with the following equipment:

- 63 crutches;
- 45 tricycles;
- 2 electric wheelchairs;
- 4 mechanical wheelchairs and
- 5 hearing aids.

421. The celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities offers an opportunity to sensitize the population to the rights of the disabled and to enable them to voice their complaints. In 2006, the topic of the event was "Access of persons with disabilities to ICTs: Stakes and challenges". Medical consultations were organized for the disabled and the elderly and the population was encouraged to assist them whenever necessary.

¹²⁵ MINREX, Fourth Session of the Human Rights Council, Aide Memoire, Geneva, 12 March - 6 April 2007.

¹²⁶ A religious establishment, distinguished for the high quality of the education that it offers.

422. MINAS observed that the applications of certain persons with sight disabilities for admission to the *École Normale Supérieure* had been rejected, and opened a dialogue with the Ministry of Higher Education to find a solution to that problem.

Article 11

423. Cameroon, which, alone, accounts for more than 70 per cent of the trade of the Central Africa subregion, is favourable to regional integration in order to enlarge its market, enhance investment opportunities and face the globalization challenges more effectively. First, however, it is crucial to remove such obstacles to the acceleration of the integration process as those relating to, inter alia, the creation of a regional market, the transport and communications infrastructure and the free movement of persons.

424. Although the Government endeavours to improve the population's living conditions, the social indicators remain at alarming levels. In the sector of education, the dropout rate in primary education is high, and, because of the households' persistent poverty, only one child out of two finishes elementary school. The health situation is deteriorating slowly but steadily among the population in general and children and women of childbearing age in particular. Generally speaking, young persons and diploma holders find it difficult to integrate into the job market with dignity, as unemployment and underemployment in the urban and rural areas are soaring (to 62 and 75.8 per cent, respectively). This situation, prompted by governance-related and economic problems which limit the effectiveness of Government action, is compounded by a strong social demand resulting from a population growth rate estimated at 2.8 per cent p.a.

425. Inadequacies in public affairs management, low participation of non-State actors in that process, inertia with regard to the decentralization of State administration, and rule-of-law weakness slow down the improvement of governance in the country. Such difficulties create challenges in relation to respect for the rights of Cameroonians, particularly when it comes to access to resources, the quality of public services and a decent standard of living (in terms of, inter alia, work, health, education and housing).

426. The agencies of the United Nations system may no doubt provide crucial support to the Government in its poverty reduction efforts. To that end, the United Nations Country Team undertook to present a comprehensive outline of the roles and specific mandates of these agencies, their programmes and their current coordination-related challenges.

427. In view of the stakes involved and the Covenant's provisions in relation to article 11, the State has an obligation to safeguard the rights to adequate food, decent housing and drinking water.

(a) Guarantee of the right to adequate food

428. The strategy formulated by the authorities on promoting the right to adequate food has consisted mainly in the development of an agricultural policy aimed at food security and in special measures adopted by the Head of State in order to achieve a reduction in the prices of certain staples.

Development of agricultural programmes

429. During a ceremony organized in the locality of Batoké in the province of Sud-Ouest on 4 April 2006, the Minister of Agriculture launched an agricultural campaign for that year. The State earmarked CFAF 400 million¹²⁷ for certain microfinance networks active in rural areas for the financing of agricultural SMEs.

¹²⁷ Approximately € 610,687.

430. On 27 February 2006, the amount of CFAF 11 billion¹²⁸ was disbursed, as part of a Government programme, to finance a pilot project for young farmers in the province of Adamaoua.

431. In order to ensure the implementation of the Government's agricultural programme, the Prime Minister held, on July 6 2006, a meeting on the revitalization of agricultural production, the formulation of a plan for the mechanization of cultivation of high-potential crops, the operationalization of the cocoa and coffee production promotion fund, the acceleration of the studies related to the plan to create an agricultural bank, and the promotion of irrigation techniques.

432. Various programmes, including the following, were drawn up with a view to developing agriculture and improving nutrition:

- Farm development programme;
- Inputs supply development programme;
- Agricultural and food product competitiveness enhancement programme;
- Agricultural professional organizations development programme;
- National agricultural information dissemination and advice programme;
- Agricultural land management programme;
- Agricultural water-management programme;
- Community development and living-framework improvement programme;
- Agricultural sector financing support programme;
- Agricultural vocational training reform and development programme;
- Young farmers' establishment support programme;
- National food-insecurity risk management programme;
- Strategy implementation capacity building programme;
- Legal and regulatory environment promotion programme.

433. Mention should be made of the intensification of agricultural production and the counselling provided to the rural population. Agricultural production is intensified through the distribution of quality plants and the creation of 2,500 hectares of oil palm plantations, 4,400 hectares of new plantations of plantain and 4,000 hectares of new fields to produce 10,000 tons of plantains and 16 000 tons of corn.

434. The mechanization of the arable land of peasants' associations has been launched on an experimental basis, with the distribution of agricultural machinery, tractors and motorized cultivators by the Agricultural Mechanization Study and Experimentation Centre (CENEEMA)¹²⁹ to more than 60 groups of farmers. As part of the seeds dissemination programme, the authorities distributed one million improved manioc cuttings, 0.7 tons of corn seed, 30 tons of potato cuttings and 200,000 cocoa pods.

435. The rural population is effectively counselled by National Popularisation and Agricultural Counselling Programme (PNVCA) monitors working in rural areas.

¹²⁸ Approximately € 16,793,893.

¹²⁹ CENEEMA: Agricultural Mechanization Study and Experimentation Centre.

Food security measures

436. Food availability is a function of the quality, quantity and accessibility of nutrition. According to the findings of the "new HIPC projects"¹³⁰, the energy consumption of Cameroonians in 2006 was equal to 2,500 kcal/day.

437. Other factors made it possible to improve food security. Food assistance is one. Indeed, the Government, the World Food Programme (WFP) and bilateral partners ensured the distribution of such aid in the most vulnerable zones of the provinces of Adamaoua, Nord and Extrême-Nord.

438. However, despite the efforts made to ensure food security in the country, pockets of food insecurity persist. Food availability imbalance between producers and the majority of the population in a number of areas, such as the Logone and Chari department (province of Extrême-Nord), the increasing demand of adjoining countries, the declining purchasing power of a substantial portion of the population, and the avian flu epidemic considerably affected food security in 2006.

439. The avian flu epizootic upset considerably the Cameroonians' nutrition habits and had significant negative socio-economic consequences. On 4 April 2006, for instance, 132,000 spoiled eggs were destroyed in Bafoussam. The financial losses are estimated by the president of the poultry professional association (IPAVIC) at more than CFAF 2.5 billion (approximately €3,816,793). The effects of epizootic are no longer visible and the producers resumed their normal activities in June 2006. The Government took counselling and monitoring measures to prevent possible contamination.

440. The Government launched an intensive awareness-raising campaign concerning the epidemic, stressing that chicken and eggs were safe to eat, provided they were thoroughly cooked.

Reduction of the prices of certain products

441. Presidential Order No. 2006/001 of 28 September 2006 reduced the common external tariff (CET) on certain imported staples (particularly frozen fish; semi-white, white, polished or glazed rice; corn flour; oil cakes and other solid corn-sprout extraction residues, even ground or agglomerated in the shape of pellets; and unprocessed, unrefined and non-iodized salt), setting it at 5 per cent compared to the general CET rate which ranges up to 58 per cent.

442. The authorities introduced the new tariff without delay, and, on 13 October 2006, three agreements were signed between the Government and the importers, reducing with immediate effect the prices of the above products to the consumer. The Government and the firms concerned agreed to continue, through ongoing dialogue, the price reduction process thus started; and, as a matter of principle, to organize joint missions to the producing countries in order to negotiate purchase terms at the source instead of going through intermediaries based abroad, as is currently the case.

443. These Government efforts tend to be neutralized by the merchants' lack of civic spirit. The Government knows that only through the constant vigilance of the responsible Ministry of Commerce officials will the Cameroonians feel that the State can effectively protect their right to healthy food.

¹³⁰ A structure thus designated in the report of the Directorate of Research and Statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER).

(b) Guarantee of the right to a decent housing

444. A vital feature of the right to adequate housing, that is to say that it should be economically accessible, requires that the financial cost of housing for individuals or households should be "at such a level that the attainment and satisfaction of other basic needs are not threatened or compromised".¹³¹

445. The Government has embarked on the implementation of an extensive programme for the construction of social housing. The general objective is to enable disadvantaged sections of the population to have access to decent housing as part of the State's campaign to combat poverty. In 2006, MINDUH, under the policy of social housing for young persons in difficulty, built guided support centres at Nkomkana (Yaoundé) and Fouban¹³². Another centre is in the process of construction at Nanga-Eboko. In addition, to ensure that its programme is effective, the Government is aiming to achieve the following results:

- Completing the pilot phase of the programme through the construction by SIC of 1,000 housing units in Yaoundé (Olembé) and Douala (Mbanga, Bakoko and Logbessou TV) and the development of 5,000 plots of land;
- Increasing the housing supply through the construction by a Chinese partner of 15,000 social housing units in six cities (Yaoundé, Douala, Bafoussam, Bamenda, Limb and Sangmélima);
- Creating jobs and promoting SMEs;
- Cutting housing costs by:
 - Using local building materials,
 - Providing state assistance in building infrastructure,
 - Ensuring that housing can be upgraded.

446. To that end, the Prime Minister's department carried out in 2006 a study, which produced the following recommendations:

- Implementation of a special programme for the construction of 10,000 housing units and the creation of 50,000 spaces;
- Establishment of a framework for consultation for all players in an effort to achieve better synergy;
- Involvement of the municipalities and civil society in housing policy;
- Setting up of a National Housing Council (CNH).

447. Urban regeneration contracts were signed, on 3 March 2006, between the urban communities of Yaoundé and Douala on the one hand and the Government on the other. The contracts enable these local authorities to undertake house-building. Cameroon's *Crédit foncier* has been called upon to help resolve the housing crisis, and its director-general has announced the funding of 50,000 housing units.¹³³

¹³¹ General Comment No. 4 (1991) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, para 8 (c).

¹³² Guided support centres for young persons in difficulty are units created by MINDUH in order to support young persons without employment or steady residence in the cities by training them in small trades and ensuring their integration into the economy.

¹³³ Cameroon Tribune, issue No. 8679/4878 of 8 September 2006, p. 16-17.

448. However, the implementation of this measure has led to a number of problems in terms of reliably establishing the criteria necessary for carrying out the social housing programme. To resolve these difficulties, the Government set social housing standards by Decree No. 009/E/MINDUH of 21 April 2008. In addition, the terms governing the trades of real estate agent and property developer were laid down in, respectively, Decrees No. 2007/1138/PM of 3 September 2007 and No. 2007/1419/PM of 2 November 2007.

449. The Limbé Oil Yard project, implemented by the Cameroon Shipyard and Industrial Engineering Ltd (CNIC), a semi-public company in which the State is the majority shareholder, comprises:

- An industrial component encompassing ship-building and repair, the refurbishment of oil platforms and industrial engineering projects;
- A social component consisting in the construction of 2,500 housing units for the personnel. It will be accompanied by major work on infrastructure and facilities, at both local and regional level.

450. This project is designed to generate 3,500 direct jobs, approximately 1,000 subcontracting jobs and a comparable increment of induced employment in, inter alia, hotels, restaurants and transport. Of the 2,500 housing units of the social component, a first batch of 350 units, initially scheduled to be ready in June 2006, has been rescheduled for delivery in June 2007.

451. The Urban Community of Douala has created the Douala Development Company (SAD) and launched the Sawa Beach Project. SAD is tasked with creating cleaned up land plots through designated development zones (ZAC) set up in partnership with the customary land owners and including the ZAC of the Douala III major land development zone, of Bonamatoumbé at Douala IV and of the Lendi project, with surface areas of, respectively, 168, 300 and 360 hectares. Moreover, SAD builds housing units for all social strata. In 2007, it completed a programme of 500 social housing units.

452. The objective of the Sawa Beach Project, whose advisability is being assessed by a commission chaired by MINDUH, is the construction of 10,000 housing units, of which 40 per cent will be designed for extremely poor persons.

453. The "student housing" issue has been the focus of studies launched in 2006. To meet the concerns of this significant section of the population, university accommodation comprising 400 units that meet standard requirements are in the process of construction, and, in addition, a State university student rents squad was set up by Interministerial Decree No. 0006/MINDUH/MINCOMMERCE/MINDAF/

MINESUP of 30 June 2005. The team's composition was established by the MINDUH Decree No. 000010/ MINDUH of 7 July 2005 of the Minister of Urban Development and Housing.

454. During 2006, the squad's operations took the form of:

- Several site inspections in Soa and Ngoa-Ekellé for the universities of Yaoundé II and Yaoundé I, the ESSEC and Ndogbong campuses for Douala university and Moliko campus for Buea university;
- Surveys, and the recruitment and training of surveyors;
- Inquiries carried out simultaneously in Soa and Ngoa-Ekellé;¹³⁴

¹³⁴ The inspections began in September 2005.

455. This activity revealed a number of problems concerning student accommodation, including:

- A shortfall in supply;
- High rents;
- Opposition from the owners of mini halls of residence;
- Growth of shanty towns in university residential zones, as a result of, inter alia, a lack of infrastructure, crowding, buildings too densely packed together, and absence of rules and standards;
- Failure to delimit university property;
- Existence of dilapidated accommodation unfit for habitation and dangerous for the occupants;
- Insecurity.

456. Standard prices for student housing units have been improving since 2007.

(c) Guaranteed access to drinking water and increase in the supply of energy

Drinking water supply objectives

457. In order to upgrade the population's living conditions and, in particular, increase the energy and water supply, the Ministry of Water and Energy (MINEE) committed itself to a general enhancement of its facilities.

458. In the water sector, MINEE decided to take affirmative measures based on good governance in order to improve the population's access to water. In view of the substantive issues related to the right to water and referred to by the Committee in general comment No. 15, MINEE has made considerable efforts to enhance its role as ultimate guarantor of the right of access to drinking water.

459. Special attention has been paid to access to an adequate quantity of salubrious water for personal and household uses. The long process of the privatization of SNEC has aimed at the creation of a dual structure, consisting of the public asset-holding company CAMWATER, responsible for infrastructure investment, and the concessionaire Cameroon Water Company (CDE), constituting the new interface with customers.

460. Instructions were given to ensure that this privatization should respect human rights (the right to work in particular). They were scrupulously followed, and the privatization process resulted in no dismissals, thereby preserving the personnel's confidence.

461. Although admittedly the population's needs are not yet fully satisfied, drinking water production and distribution certainly increased. In Douala, for instance, production, measured in m³/day, increased from 65,000 in 2002 to 100,000 in 2006 and 115,000 in 2007.

462. The Government has launched procedures for attaining the level of 300,000 m³/day necessary for meeting the demand of the inhabitants of Douala. In the privatization process, the priority of CAMWATER has been to expand the drinking water supply network in the urban and semi-urban areas all over the national territory. The Prime Minister has considered a drinking-water supply reinforcement and improvement project consisting in the construction of a water processing plant with a 50,000 m³/day capacity.

463. Other projects envisaged concern in particular the construction of boreholes in town outskirts and the overhaul of some of the equipment of the Japoma and Massoumbou processing plants. Such investment is expected to raise production to the approximately

300,000 m³/day level necessary for bridging the current deficit of the country's economic metropolis.

464. Cameroon has followed the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and endorsed the MDGs. The Government intends to continue the reforms for a better management of water resources and the implementation of programmes to enhance the drinking water supply. This resolve to promote the country's economic and social development through access to drinking water and adequate sanitation services is expressed in the PRSP of April 2003.

465. The following activities have been carried out in accordance with the strategy on sanitation:

- Finalization, and implementation in cooperation with decentralized local councils, of master plans;
- Overhaul of existing collective systems;
- Promotion of low-cost sanitation techniques;
- Implementation of agreements of liquid waste removal management between the authorities and the companies designated by the public drinking-water distribution services;
- Reinforcement of the collection of revenue on the sector's resources (user fees and levies).

466. The Central State administration has proven to be the main structure capable of performing, on behalf of the nation, the sector's essential functions, as the tables in annex VI show.

467. These projects have been carried out within an improved institutional and legal framework and in conformity with the fundamental human rights and freedoms. A project currently in progress consists in considering the formulation of sanitation standards in developing a new legal and regulatory framework for the sector, a task nearly completed.

Implementation of strategies for a sustainable management of resources

468. An agreement signed between Cameroon and the World Bank for enhancing the access of the population of vulnerable areas to water includes the following main thrusts:

- Building of approximately 70,000 community connections and 1,200 fountains;
- Overhaul of the water supply and distribution facilities in Yaoundé and Douala;
- Building of the capacities of public partners in investment follow-up, regulation and planning.

469. A framework agreement concluded between Cameroon and China with a view to reducing the drinking water supply deficit in Douala provides for a preferential loan of approximately CFAF 11 billion and, especially, for the finalization of the SNEC privatization process.

470. The services to be provided to CAMWATER in the framework of the financing granted by China will include new quality infrastructure capable of increasing the water supply capacity at Yato from 150,000 to 170,000 m³.

471. Bilateral and multilateral agreements are expected to allow the implementation of a project for expanding the drinking water supply to Douala and the implementation of the drinking water component of the urban development programme. During 2007, the selection of the National Drinking Water Agency of Morocco to head a consortium as

concessionaire of the facilities formerly managed by SNEC marked the creation of CDE. The Kaélé water supply system has been inaugurated and the first phase of the Japanese water supply programme of 100 successful drillings has been carried out.

472. An assessment of water sector activities may be drawn up as at 30 May 2007 (see table in annex VII).

473. Clearly, therefore, the promotion of human rights, particularly the right to equal access to water, constitutes an important, relevant, sustainable and strategically well defined task.

474. The entry into force of Act No. 2004 /18 of 22 July 2004 on the rules applicable to communities and of Act No. 2004/19 of the same date on the rules applicable to regions allowed involving the decentralized local councils in the management and use of water in rural and urban areas. These instruments define a new legal framework for drinking water exploitation, treatment, distribution and management and allow expanding the distribution network in the cities.

475. Pursuant to the WSSD recommendations formulated in Johannesburg¹³⁵, Cameroon has complied with the Dublin principle, according to which all nations should have a national integrated water resources management (IWRM) plan (PANGIRE), which is being prepared. Moreover, action has been taken in the framework of institutional power sector reforms and of the privatization of SONEL.

476. Pursuant to one of the recommendations formulated by the Energy Steering Committee, the Electricity Development Corporation (EDC) was created to provide a financial basis for expertise, action and management of State interests in the power sector; and will conduct, on behalf of the State, hydroelectric project studies and promotion, the implementation and possibly exploitation of certain projects of national or regional interest assigned to it by the Government, and the accounts and financial management of public power-sector assets. Two of the first tasks of EDC will be to ensure the preparation and, subsequently, the construction of the Lom Pangar dam, for which it will be the deputy building sponsor and concessionaire; and the exploitation of the regulating dams withdrawn from the AES SONEL concession upon revision. In 1998, the power sector was liberalized in order to promote private investment in the sector and improve the sector's contribution to the country's economic growth.

477. The following two new organizations were created in the framework of this reform:

- The Electricity Regulatory Agency (ARSEL), responsible for ensuring the efficient operation of the power sector, preserving its economic and financial viability, and protecting the interests of the consumers and the operators;
- The Rural Electrification Agency, tasked with promoting the development of power supply in the rural areas.

478. When SONEL was privatized in 2001, a public limited company under private law was created in partnership with the AES Corporation group. Over and above these reform initiatives, the Government undertook to enhance the power production capacity.

479. The following energy supply enhancement projects were carried out in order to cover the country's power production deficit:

- Since 2001, construction, at various points of the southern interconnected grid, of diesel thermoelectric plants having an overall capacity of 48 MW;

¹³⁵ In June 2002.

- Since 2004, construction of a heavy fuel oil thermoelectric plant of 85 MW at Limbé and of a 90 kV power line for the transport of energy to the Limbé station.

480. These projects permitted an increase of the total installed capacity of the AES SONEL concession from 812 MW before the privatization of SONEL to 945 MW.

481. A study regarding the Power Sector Development Programme (PDSE) for the period up to 2030 was carried out in order to provide the basis for ensuring the country's power-supply security. In the power sector, this study reflects the wish expressed in the Head of State's electoral platform as "getting Cameroon out of underdevelopment".

482. The PDSE 2030 goal consists in promoting the emergence of a sufficiently strong demand and economic growth, while ensuring the development of a minimum-cost power supply presenting an acceptable risk level.

483. PDSE 2030 takes into account the development of the demand of the public sector and of industry, particularly the aluminum sector, which currently accounts for 40 per cent of the country's total power demand.

484. With regard to production, PDSE 2030 defines, for various demand scenarios, the investment plan in production facilities optimal for the country, taking advantage of the country's hydroelectric potential (115 TWh, of which 80 per cent is located in the Sanaga basin) and abundant natural gas reserves. It also analyzes the possibilities of interconnection with the adjoining countries on the basis of existing hydroelectric projects, and in particular the Nigerian Inga-Calabar grid.

485. The following production facilities envisaged in PDSE 2030 are being prepared for implementation in the near future:

- Lom Pangar dam and reservoir with a capacity of 7 billion m³ ;
- In Kribi, a gas power plant of 150 MW combined with a 225 kV power line, at a cost of CFAF 85 billion;
- Nachtigal hydroelectric plant of 230 MW at a cost of approximately CFAF 250 billion¹³⁶ in the framework of the enlargement of the Cameroon Aluminum Company (ALUCAM) aluminum plant at Edéa;
- Memve'élé-upon-Ntem hydroelectric plant with an installed capacity of 201 MW at a cost of approximately CFAF 145 billion¹³⁷;
- Colomines-upon-Kadey hydroelectric plant with a capacity of 6 MW extensible to 12 MW and of a 30 kV power line for the transport of energy to Bertoua.

486. The following activities are planned for implementation with support from international partners:

- Installation of hydroelectric mini-plants in administrative zones far away from the interconnected network¹³⁸.
- Electrification operations in border area communities¹³⁹.
- Formulation of an energy development plan offering a strategic vision of the development objectives of the power sector and correlating supply and demand as a function of the country's industrial development. Meeting the demand of the bauxite-

¹³⁶ Approximately € 381,679,390.

¹³⁷ Approximately € 221,374,045.

¹³⁸ Cooperation with Belgium.

¹³⁹ Cooperation with Spain.

aluminum programme through 2015 and the enlargement of the ALUCAM plant at Edéa is a priority objective of the plan.

- Construction at the Nachtigal hydroelectric dam in order to double its capacity;
- Conduct of a feasibility study regarding the recovery of CO₂ from the lakes Nyos and Monoun and search for an industrial partner for its exploitation;
- Development of all types of renewable energy, giving priority to decentralized options, with a view to servicing the most disadvantaged groups, possibly by developing processes based on electric minerals (or, inter alia, small-scale hydroelectric energy, biomass, solar photovoltaic energy and wind electricity).

487. As a result of a CFAF 7,582 billion¹⁴⁰ total investment in various electrification programmes, the number of communities supplied with power increased by approximately 310, from 2,100 in 2003 to roughly 2,500 in 2006. The National Energy Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (PANERP), drawn up with support from the donors in the framework of MDG implementation, aims at the improvement of access to modern energy services in the priority sectors, from a poverty reduction perspective.

Article 12

488. The Government's social policy focuses on the health sector with a view to sustainable poverty reduction. The implementation of the national policy on health is based on major reforms officially adopted in 1992 via a health sector policy statement, and the 1993 primary health care reorganization statement. These preparatory stages led to the drafting of a framework Act on the health sector.

489. In 1975, Cameroon adopted a policy of organizing basic health services on the basis of health districts (DSs), and has progressively increased the number of such districts in order to improve network coverage across the country. At present, there are 172 DSs.

490. SSS has been developed through a participative approach and PRSP guidance, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the country's health system. Adopted in 2001, SSS avoids all complacency in its analysis of the weaknesses of the sector, including those related to traditional medicine, and sets the following major objectives:

- (i) To reduce overall morbidity and mortality in the most vulnerable population groups, by at least a third;
- (ii) To put in place, within an hour's journey on foot and for 90 per cent of the population, a health centre delivering the minimum healthcare package;
- (iii) To put effective and efficient management of resources into practice in 90 per cent of health centres and public and private health services, at the various levels in the delivery structure.

491. SSS divides action to be taken in the period to 2010 into 8 programmes, subdivided into 29 sub-programmes directed towards the needs of the population as a whole, the goal being a significant and rapid improvement in the leading public health indicators and the achievement of progress in the nation's health.

492. At the institutional level, the Ministry of Health was reorganized, in August 2002, to strengthen the structural mechanisms for public action on health. This new framework provides for a better response to public expectations, and for the nation to benefit from an effective and modern health service. Despite these major advances, providing full access for the population to health services and healthcare remains a major challenge.

¹⁴⁰ Approximately € 11,575 572.579.

493. The epidemiological profile of Cameroon, like that of most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, is dominated by infectious and parasitical diseases. The increasing trend in the prevalence of certain conditions such as arterial hypertension, diabetes mellitus and cancers also gives grounds for concern.

494. Some illnesses which had been in marked retreat, including tuberculosis, are again on the increase. Malaria remains the leading cause of illness within all sections of the population. Of the patients attending a health centre, 45 per cent are seeking a consultation for malaria. Moreover, the epidemiological situation is aggravated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, characterized by a national infection rate currently of 5.5 per cent.¹⁴¹

495. The health situation for mothers and infants continues to give cause for concern (see annex IV).

496. Distinctions must be drawn between children's health, mothers' health, the monitoring of certain health programmes and the improvement of access to medication. The State endeavours to improve the health system with regard to these various points.

(a) Safeguarding the health of children

497. The implementation of the IMCI strategy is continuing, the objective being to reduce morbidity and mortality due to common child illnesses, in particular acute respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases, malaria and malnutrition.

498. Vaccination coverage has improved, thanks to the increased capacities of the EPI and the free distribution, since 2003, of vaccines and syringes at public health units. The following developments are worth noting:

- The DPT 3 vaccination coverage rose from 43 per cent in 2001 to 72 per cent in December 2004.
- Measles morbidity has been reduced by 90 per cent, and measles mortality by 98 per cent.
- Very significant progress has been made towards attaining the global objective of eradicating polio. Cameroon has not registered any cases of wild poliovirus since 1999, and reached the pre-certification stage of eradication in 2002 after three consecutive years without any case being reported. Unfortunately, this process was interrupted in 2003, when two cases of wild poliovirus originating in a neighbouring country were registered. This resurgence continued in 2004, with 13 new cases. Efforts to attain the objective of eradication are being intensified.

499. New antigens, hepatitis B and yellow fever, have been included in the EPI.

500. Infants between 6 and 59 months of age regularly receive vitamin A supplements. Cameroon has made significant progress towards eradicating illnesses associated with iodine insufficiency by introducing universal iodination of cooking salt. This has eliminated these illnesses as a public health problem, thereby protecting children. More than 90 per cent of households use iodized salt, and the prevalence of goitre has declined sharply.

501. A slight improvement has been noted in the mortality rate of children under 5, which fell from 150.7 per thousand in 1998 to 142.0 per thousand in 2004. The mortality rate for children under the age of 1 declined from 77.0 per thousand to 74.0 per thousand over the same period.

502. The initiatives described below aim at enhancing the guarantee of the health of children.

¹⁴¹ Source: MINSANTE.

Improvement of birth registration for better monitoring and more reliable statistics.

503. Within the framework of PADES-Baka, 500 birth certificates were issued in 2006 with the support of Belgian cooperation, to Baka pygmy children in Djoum, province of Sud. About 10,000 birth certificates were established with support from Plan Cameroon and UNICEF. Of the births registered, 85 per cent occurred in urban areas, compared to 57 per cent in rural areas. The province of Sud-Ouest had the lowest birth registration, 36 per cent. The provinces of Extrême-Nord, Nord and Adamawa registered 58 per cent, 62 per cent and 55 per cent of births respectively, while the province of Est registered 56 per cent of births¹⁴².

Improvement of the protection of the health of the child

504. Health care for children has improved since 2006, with 7 children out of 10 vaccinated¹⁴³. Approximately 27 per cent children were offered mosquito nets. Hygiene and salubriousness also improved. The number of children sleeping under mosquito nets increased from 12 per cent in 2004 to 27 per cent in 2006, while 69 per cent of children have access to drinking water. However, the chronic malnutrition rate has fluctuated from 29 per cent in 2000 to 32 per cent in 2004 and 28 per cent in 2006.

505. Regression is observed in some areas. For instance, the rate of treatment of children under 5 for malaria declined from 66 per cent in 2000 to 53 per cent in 2004 and 36 per cent in 2006.

506. For the implementation of initiatives in this area, the Government has received support from various international and national partners (UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, European Union, UNFPA, FAO, WFP, African Synergy, AWARE, USAID, CARE, MSP, HKI, GTZ, Rotary International, Plan Cameroon, CIDA, FOREDEN, ADAMS, AAPEC, AUPAES, Chantal Biya Foundation and Cameroon Red Cross). NGOs, associations and traditional chiefs also contributed to mobilizing the population for participation in informal educational discussions.

507. In relation to IMCI, the national working group ensured implementation in four provinces, namely five DSs in the province of Centre, four in the province of Est, four in the province of Nord-Ouest and four in the province of Adamaoua. Support was provided steadily in these provinces by WHO, UNICEF and especially Cameroon Plan. Moreover, an IMCI extension strategic plan and a module for training community contact persons in PCLMEC were drawn up.

508. The following results were achieved:

- 17 DSs develop the IMCI strategy, providing a national coverage estimated at 10 per cent;
- The four provinces have a pool of IMCI trainers and supervisors;
- 35 per cent of providers in the targeted DSs received training;
- All providers trained in IMCI received at least one follow-up visit;
- The quality of care for diseased children improved, with a 5 per cent error margin.

¹⁴² MICS-3. 2006 survey by the National Institute of Statistics (INS), Preliminary Report, September 2006, p. 16.

¹⁴³ MINREX, Fourth Session of the Human Rights Council, Aide Memoire, Geneva, 12 March - 6 April 2007, p. 17.

509. The immunization sub-programme has been strengthened through logistics, regular supply of vaccines and other inputs in all provinces and updated service provision norms and standards. This made it possible to achieve a 78.4 per cent DTC-Hep B3 immunization coverage of children up to 11 months of age in September 2006 (compared to the target 80 per cent planned for the end of December 2006) and a 101 per cent Vitamin A coverage of 6-11 month olds, and to ensure an appropriate response to outbreaks of poliomyelitis, measles and yellow fever, with an epidemiological surveillance rate of 86 per cent in 2006. The coverage of two outbreaks of wild poliovirus in 2006 illustrates the efficiency of the surveillance system. Control of maternal and neonatal tetanus through integrated immunization and Vitamin A supplementation were initiated. The immunization coverage of other antigens stands as follows:

- 97 per cent immunization coverage against measles in the three northern provinces
- Local Immunization Days, Polio: 98.9 per cent (1,497,582 children) in the first round and 101.7 per cent (1,540,053 children) in the second round
- Immunization against tetanus: 80 per cent in the first and 81 per cent in the second round
- Immunization against yellow fever and measles: 97.76 per cent (498,421 children).

510. Cameroon has been admitted to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) to strengthen the health system. As a result, the capacities of 266 social workers and 1,300 community contact persons in IMCI were enhanced, and there are plans for extending this exercise to the rest of the country.

511. Immunization efforts continued with a view to improving the national coverage through large-scale vaccination campaigns and the reinforcement of routine vaccination.

512. Between January and September 2007, the coverage reached 78 per cent, compared to an annual objective of 82 per cent (80 per cent in 2006). No case of poliomyelitis was recorded. Measles is under control and the number of related deaths was reduced by 95 per cent compared to the 2001 situation. Maternal and neonatal tetanus has decreased, and yellow fever is under control.

513. Approximately 1,739,825 and 1,010,945 children were vaccinated against, respectively, measles and polio.

Assistance during birth

514. Assistance provided by trained medical staff during childbirth can greatly reduce infant and maternal mortality. In 2006, approximately 59 per cent of deliveries were carried out by qualified personnel. Although considerably improved in urban areas, this rate remains limited in rural areas. In Yaoundé, 97 per cent of deliveries were carried out by trained personnel compared to 19 per cent in the province of Extrême-Nord. An increasing number of educated and well off families have recourse to qualified personnel for the deliveries.

515. Generally speaking, it is observed that:

- 33 per cent of deliveries in 2006 were carried out with the assistance of trained personnel.
- Approximately 43 per cent of deliveries took place in health centres.
- In Douala and Yaoundé 85 and 86 per cent of births, respectively, were registered.

516. However, the percentage of women who deliver at home is still very high in Cameroon, especially in the province of Nord with 34 per cent, province of Adamawa with 43 per cent and the province of Extrême-Nord with 47 per cent.¹⁴⁴

(b) Protection of maternal health

517. Maternal health is a priority area of action in the health sector. The operationalization of the National Reproductive-Health Programme (PNSR) and the expansion of emergency obstetric and neonatal care currently in progress in certain health care establishments are effective measures expected to improve in the medium term the health of this target group.

518. The proportion of childbirths assisted by qualified medical personnel increased from 54.3 per cent in 1998 to 59.0 per cent in 2004 and, in the same period, the proportion of women having undergone antenatal examinations increased from 78.8 to 83.3 per cent.

(c) Monitoring of certain health programmes

519. The health programmes concerned consist in combating pandemic and endemic diseases.

Combat against diseases

520. The combat against diseases has been reorganized and reinforced through communication strategies aimed at attitude change, prevention and treatment with funds from the HIPC and the development partners. In that framework, the programmes against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and onchocerciasis and the EPI were restructured and made more dynamic. New programmes, aiming at blindness, schistosomiasis and intestinal worms, cancer, hypertension and diabetes are in the process of operationalization.

HIV/AIDS

521. This pandemic has been viewed not merely as a public health issue, but as a problem calling into question the entire development strategy. Accordingly, the combat against HIV/AIDS is a PRSP priority.

522. At the operational level, the National Anti-AIDS Council (CNLS) was created, and a national plan against the disease was developed in 1986. Various plans for combating HIV/AIDS have since been implemented. In view of the alarming spread of the scourge, the combat against HIV/AIDS has been declared a national challenge.

523. In that context, the Government launched a national multisector strategic plan for the period 2000-2005. The assessment of the implementation of that plan served as a basis for a new such plan for the period 2006-2010¹⁴⁵.

524. In the period 2001-2004, Cameroon achieved considerable progress, in terms of improving access to treatment and intensifying prevention of new infections, towards reversing the course of the epidemic.

525. With regard to prevention policy, special attention has been paid to the development of local and community initiatives in order to involve the population at grass roots level in the urban and rural areas. To that end, the programme to combat the disease was structured and decentralized into provincial, communal and local units. Approximately 6,400 local councils operate with CNLS support.

¹⁴⁴ INS, MICS, 2006.

¹⁴⁵ Results of the assessment and main thrusts of the new plan (MINSANTE).

526. This community approach mobilizes also the PLWHA associations, and school and university health preservation clubs. Approximately 300 large communities participate in the effort through partnerships with enterprises, religious organizations and traditional chieftainships.

527. With regard to the workplace, CNLS formed partnerships with enterprises employing thousands, in order to boost prevention and eliminate discrimination. In 2007, 44 such agreements were being implemented as part of an action plan cofinanced by the Government and enterprises.

528. As a result, 98.5 per cent of Cameroonians currently state that they have heard of HIV/AIDS and 87 per cent are aware of at least one means of prevention. In general, the prevention policy focuses on advocacy for voluntary testing and the decentralization of care structures.

529. In the context of a comprehensive and consistent approach to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, ever more women have recourse to such services, and an average of 63 per cent of the women asked are willing to undergo testing. Nevirapine is distributed free of charge to HIV-positive women and for their new-borns.

530. With regard to care for HIV/AIDS cases, the Government's option since 1999 has been universal access to treatment. The accessibility of treatment has been enhanced, mainly thanks to State subsidies totalling approximately CFAF one billion¹⁴⁶ p.a. and to contributions from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. ARV drugs used to cost CFAF 3,000-7,000 (US \$ 5-12) per month according to the adopted treatment protocol but, since May 2007, are distributed free of charge to all patients by accredited treatment centres. Access to ARV treatment progressed from 600 patients in 2001 to approximately 18,000 patients in 2005 and to 50,500 patients at the end of March 2008, accounting for 54.7 per cent of eligible patients according to tables I-V in annex IX of this report.

531. Information on HIV/AIDS has been enriched with the findings of the third Population and Health Survey (EDS) carried out in 2004. Those results clearly indicate a 5.5 per cent prevalence at the national level that year, broken down into 6.8 per cent for women and 4.1 per cent for men and therefore characterized by a female: male ratio of 1.7. Seroprevalence among women peaks at 8 per cent in the 20-24 age group and 10.3 per cent in the 25-29 age group.

Malaria

532. Malaria is endemic in the country and accounts for 45 per cent of patients having recourse to health care units and 35 per cent of mortality among children under 5.

533. On 25 April 2000, at the Abuja Special Summit, the Heads of State or Government of 46 African countries undertook to take appropriate measures to halve the incidence of malaria by 2010. Pursuant to this regional commitment, the Government launched an anti-malaria strategy reform, as part of which a national strategic plan against malaria was adopted for the period 2002-2006. The implementation of the plan focuses on prevention by means of impregnated mosquito nets, with special attention and free nets given to the two most vulnerable groups targeted by the strategy, namely pregnant women and children under 5.

¹⁴⁶ Approximately € 1,526,718.

534. To this date:

- Approximately 250,000 mosquito nets have been distributed, and 800,000 more are being procured in the current year, for pregnant women;
- 40,000 mosquito nets have been distributed, and 1,100,000 more are being procured in the current year, for children under 5.

535. In order to improve the access of the rest of the population to impregnated mosquito nets, their selling price was reduced in 2004 from CFAF 5,000 (US\$9) to CFAF 3,500 (US\$6). In order to improve access to treatment, the Government has since 2007 subsidized malaria medication available to patients in public health care establishments. Although they have not yet led to a clear regression of the disease, these measures allow hope that malaria will be under control in the near future.

Tuberculosis

536. Tuberculosis has developed as a result of the straitened circumstances in which a large proportion of the population lives and of the spread of HIV/AIDS, of which tuberculosis constitutes the main opportunist infection. The national programme against tuberculosis includes 173 treatment and diagnostic centres covering the entire territory.

537. The Government reduced the cost of treatment for tuberculosis to CFAF 5,000 in 1997, and on 1 October 2004 decided to make such treatment available free of charge.

538. Activities against tuberculosis have been revitalized, with 24,879 new cases detected and treated compared to 21,000 such cases in 2006. The rate of recovery exceeds 74 per cent as a result of:

- The opening of 197 treatment and diagnostic centres;
- The acquisition of 68 microscopes for diagnosis;
- The rehabilitation of 40 hospital rooms.

Onchocerciasis

539. The results of the fight against onchocerciasis, to which a significant proportion of the population is exposed, are quite promising. The Mectizan coverage of this target group increased from an estimated 52 per cent in 1999 to 73 per cent in 2004. If a rate of at least 65 per cent is maintained during at least 15 years, onchocerciasis may be eliminated as a public health issue in Cameroon.

Reproductive health monitoring

540. Within the framework of PNSR, innovative efforts have been made through the component of adolescent girls' health, IMCI, and the vaccination and maternal death reduction subprogramme. Only vaccination subprogramme activities are implemented at a national scale.

541. The component of adolescent girls' and older persons' health has been an operational part of PNSR and of the Family Life Education (FLE) programme with UNPF support, and of the Reproductive health of adolescent girls (SRA) in the school and non-school environment with UNICEF support. However, the older persons' health component remains to be developed. Significant improvement has been made with regard to IMCI¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁷ Ministry of Justice Report, 2006 joint, chapter on the protection of certain vulnerable groups.

542. With WHO, UNICEF and, since 2005, AWARE support, maternal mortality reduction and SONEU activities cover 4 provinces out of 10. Moreover, a strategy against obstetric fistulas has been developed and a feedback workshop related to research on obstetric fistulas has been organized in two northern provinces. In December 2006, a theoretical and practical training workshop was held at Garoua (province of Nord) with UNPF assistance. In that year, 84 women were operated for obstetric fistulas.

543. In 2006, a Roadmap for Maternal and Neonatal Mortality Reduction and the PSSPC were prepared, validated and distributed. Training activities have been organized for the staff, a communicator's guide regarding sensitization methods in respect of SONEU has been produced, and community-based self-diagnosis actors have been trained. An integrated training manual for SONEU, FP, STD care, refocused prenatal care (CPN) and PTME service providers has been drafted and awaits validation.

544. In 2007, the contraceptives provision systems were consolidated and the training of social workers strengthened in order to readjust the FP process, and 105 service providers and 80 community association members were trained in obstetric and neonatal medical emergencies. In collaboration with UNPF and UNICEF, equipment was secured for approximately thirty maternity units.

(d) Improvement of the population's access to essential medicines

545. The accessibility of essential medication to the population is a major poverty reduction concern. CENAME began to operate in 1998 and CAPPs were set up. In the ensuing period, the availability and accessibility of essential drugs at moderate prices, including in the rural areas, has become a reality. Subsequent to the adoption of an appropriate pricing policy, a significant decrease, by 42 per cent on average in 2001 and 23 per cent on average in 2005, was achieved in the prices of essential drugs thanks to State subsidies.

546. The quality of drugs is guaranteed by LANACOME, set up in March 1996. Measures taken to enhance access to quality medication include the 2006 reduction of the price of insulin to CFAF 3,000¹⁴⁸, the increase in ARV stocks and rapid HIV/AIDS tests, the withdrawal of single-drug oral therapy products against simple malaria from the national market in order to avoid the development of resistance to plasmodium, the introduction of artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACT), the development of the first edition of the table of essential medicine equivalences, and the free ARV provision to all patients.

547. Other significant measures include the creation of 107 new pharmacy sites throughout the national territory, the training of the first class of 25 pharmacists to receive the Inter-University Diploma in Pharmacy and Public Health, and the training of 22 medication managers for accredited treatment centres and care units responsible for the provinces of Adamaoua, Nord and Extrême-Nord.

548. At the regulatory level, the following initiatives have been developed since 2006:

- Solidarity-based management of essential drugs at province level (CAPP and pharmacies of public health units);
- Preparation of a draft decree, initiated in cooperation with the Provincial Health Directorate (DPS) and laying down marketing methods for food supplements;
- Preparation of a draft decree making WHO good practices for the manufacture, storage and distribution of medicinal products enforceable in Cameroon;

¹⁴⁸ Approximately € 4.60.

- Preparation of a draft decree on the creation, organization and operation of CAPPs;
- Launching of the work of a group of experts tasked with organizing a forum on the development of the local manufacture of drugs;
- Publication of vaccine batch release methods;
- Preparation of a draft decree establishing drug monitoring procedures.

549. In sum, the measures taken by the State in cooperation with various partners for increasing transparency of the health system and ever better care for the population.

Article 13

550. The State's political resolve is expressed in the Constitution, which provides for free and obligatory primary education, and Act No. 98/004 of 4 April 1998 on educational objectives. That Act, adopted after the 1995 national conference on education and the 1997 Forum on Technical Education, expressed the State's political resolve, introduced the concept of "educational community", which now plays a significant role in the development of the relevant policies (SSS), strategic planning (National Plan for Education for All) and the implementation of programmes, particularly in relation to the HIPC initiative.

551. The Copenhagen commitments and the MDGs refer to the following five areas:

- Educational infrastructure and facilities;
- Pedagogy;
- Governance;
- Gender-related issues;
- Financing.

Please refer to the table contained in annex X.

Access to education and equity

552. Beginning in school year 2000-2001, the number of learners increased considerably as a result of the abolition of elementary school registration fees. However, a number of regional disparities may be observed, particularly in the extreme north and the east of the country. Special programmes initiated with bilateral partners in order to bridge gaps between regions have achieved significant results.

553. Cameroon's population grows steadily, placing considerable pressure on the demand for primary education. School enrolment is expected to increase, from 2.6 million in 2000 to 3.4 million in 2015 (namely by 34 per cent). In 2005, the shortage of sitting places in secondary education was 1.6 million, while in higher education there were first-year places for less than one third of the number of new high school graduates. The system's financing problems are prompted by extensive needs related to infrastructure, human resources and the operating budget.

554. Consequently, the number of pupils aged 6-15 increased by 15 per cent between 2000 and 2005 but by only 12.6 per cent between 2005 and 2010, and is expected to increase by merely 7.6 per cent between 2010 and 2015 (source: MINEDUB).

555. Since 1999, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) has improved remarkably, especially in primary education, attaining 101.81 per cent in 2007.

556. Access to the primary education in 2002 is estimated at 94.6 per cent in the French-speaking subsystem and at 92.9 per cent in the English-speaking subsystem (source: MINEDUB).

Teaching staff

557. In the period 1990-2000, despite inequalities, coverage by the education system stagnated at all levels of learning, save for higher education students, whose number per 100,000 inhabitants nearly doubled.

558. Unmet quantitative and qualitative needs with regard to teachers are a constant, even though more than 3,000 primary education term-contract teachers recruited in the ZEP were integrated into civil service in order to reduce the teaching staff shortage.

Internal effectiveness of the education system

559. The rate of programme completion, although low, progresses year by year. In 2002, this rate was estimated at 56 and 74 per cent, respectively, in the French- and English-speaking subsystems, while the respective repeat ratios were 27 and 16. Grade repetition has a significant negative impact on the retention ratio (Source: MINEDUB).

560. A number of factors negatively affect school enrolment in general and among girls in particular, and include, notably, considerable family demands on the children and the weight of tradition.

561. The factors in question have an unfavourable effect on access to, and retention in, the schools for pupils as a whole but especially for girls.

562. The overall retention ratio is low, averaging (from the start of primary through secondary education) 12.7 per cent in the French-speaking subsystem and 14.5 per cent in the English-speaking subsystem. The effectiveness index for the first 6 grades, namely primary education, is, respectively 61 and 72 per cent (source: MINEDUB).

563. In secondary education, there is a reversal, with the two subsystems scoring, respectively, 85 and 77.2 per cent in the first cycle and 98.3 and 59 per cent in the second cycle (source: MINESEC).

564. The observation of the children's school career confirms the doubts expressed about the effectiveness of repeats. The objective now is to make repeats the exception.

Outward effectiveness of the system

565. The labour market in Cameroon is split into a modern, more or less structured sector and an unstructured, so-called informal sector. Agriculture belongs to the second sector.

566. The degree of employment is inversely proportional to the educational level, ranging from 75 per cent among young persons with an elementary school education to 43 per cent among those with one or two years of university studies. This low level correlates with an unemployment rate reaching 39 per cent.

567. With regard to technical education, the rate of integration of secondary school graduates into the economy is suboptimal. In the modern sector, that rate is low, while in the informal sector the earnings are modest in view of the skill level of trades involved. Persons aged 25-34 account for 74 per cent of informal sector workers.

568. A significant proportion of diploma holders having a job are underemployed. It is therefore necessary to diversify the training offered in higher education, adapting it to employment opportunities.

Financing of education

569. The State's contribution to education financing is relatively low. In 2001, it amounted to CFAF 182 billion (15.7 per cent of public expenditure compared to 20 per cent under the fast-track initiative (FTI) indicative framework (IF) for education for all (EFA)).

On the other hand, the parents' contribution is considerable, amounting in 2001 to CFAF 239 billion or 57.3 per cent compared to the State's 43.3 per cent.

570. Public education receipts in 2001 and 2002 accounted for 20 per cent of GDP.

571. Funds are mainly allocated to secondary education, the EFA-FTI-IF target being 50 per cent.

- An examination of growth and inequalities through the Growth Incidence Curve reveals that, at the national level, growth has been beneficial to the poor in primary education and slightly to those in the first cycle of secondary education;
- In the urban areas, growth has clearly been pro-poor, contrary to the rural areas, where inequalities favoured the wealthier households. The inequalities also favoured boys over girls.

572. To ensure financial consistency between sectoral strategies and the State budget, the Government drew up a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) to allow to quantify the budgetary implications of the sectoral strategies and to reconcile their financing needs with the resources generated by growth (own resources) or coming from external support.

573. The literacy rate increased from 82.3 per cent in 2000 to 95 per cent in 2004. In 2001, it exceeded 90 per cent in all agricultural and environmental zones save for the "rural savannah" (in the northernmost provinces), where it amounted to only 39.3 per cent. The development of SSE in 2000 allowed broadening access to education, correcting certain provincial disparities, raising the quality of the education offered, developing an effective partnership with the private sector and civil society, and improving the management and governance of the education system.

574. In order to improve the quality of educational services, the Government, in 2004, completed the Report on the state of the national education system (RESEN), which identifies relevant issues related to supply and demand, thereby providing guidance for education policies, with international cooperation support.

Preschool and primary education

575. Demand for preschool education is steadily increasing. In 2003-2004, the number of primary education pupils was 2,906,732, 4 per cent higher than in 2002-2003, and broken down into 49 per cent girls and 50.3 per cent boys. In 2006-2007, that number increased to 3,100,351, as shown in table II of annex XI.

576. However, the above increase far from exhausts potential demand. The relevant GER remains low, having increased from 16.38 per cent in 2004 to 17.41 per cent in 2007, as shown in table I of annex XI.

577. The primary education GER was 100.14 per cent in 2003-2004 and was estimated at 101.81 per cent for 2006-2007. In 2003-2004, this GER was broken down into 108.14 per cent for boys and 92.05 per cent for girls. In 2006-2007, GER among girls amounted to 96.37 per cent, as shown in table II of annex XI.

578. Of the 10,857 preschool term-contract teachers recruited up to 2004, 1,700 were integrated into civil service in 2005.

579. Of the 55,226 primary education teachers, 70.1 per cent work in the public sector. In school year 2003-2004, the number of teachers increased by 12.7 per cent compared to 2002-2003.

580. In 2007, the Government fulfilled its commitments regarding ongoing teacher recruitment. Supported by its technical and financial development partners, the Government increased the number of teachers all over the territory. In addition to 18,800 teachers

recruited at the end of 2007, there are plans to recruit 18,400 new teachers over the next three years, thereby raising the total number of teachers to approximately 37,200 in 2011.

581. With regard to infrastructure, the number of schools identified in 2003-2004 (10,913) is clearly greater than in earlier years. Moreover, 2,294 classrooms were built in 2007 and the construction of 1,485 more is scheduled for fiscal year 2008.

582. Other action undertaken by the Government includes the following initiatives:

- Revision of school programmes;
- Implementation of a grade-repeating reduction strategy in elementary school through the introduction of compensatory education;
- Reform of the CEP and the FSLC;
- Teachers' training in NAP and SBA;
- Awareness-raising campaigns addressing target groups and carried out with UNICEF support through the "Basic Education" programme in response to education sector demand. Such action took various forms, namely advocacy, community participation and social mobilization as part of a girls' education acceleration strategy launched at the national level in view of Cameroon's commitment at Ouagadougou in relation to the 25/25 initiative for 2005.
- Various activities undertaken and official development assistance provided in order to improve the quality of education. The education offer is being enhanced and the communities' participation in school management is considerable, particularly in connection with the opening of private schools.

Secondary education

583. It is estimated that the number of general secondary education students in 2003-2004 was 762,056, up by 14 per cent compared to the 2002-2003 level, and distributed over 1,230 establishments. These students are educated by 23,682 teachers, of whom 30 per cent are women and 65 per cent work in the public sector. The average general secondary education GER is 35.3 per cent in the first cycle and 19.8 per cent in the second cycle.

584. The 2003-2004 number of technical education students was 139,717. These students were taught by 7,280 teachers. According to the Ministry, 2,802 more teachers were necessary. There were of 2,267 classrooms, distributed over 345 establishments.

Teacher training

585. All teachers are trained in teacher training colleges (ENIEG) or technical teacher training colleges (ENIET). ENIEG training is provided to 5,068 students taught by 2,766 instructors in 58 establishments comprising 409 classrooms. ENIET training is provided to 1,905 students in establishments comprising 29 classrooms.

Higher education

586. The Government is engaged in ongoing efforts for improving the quality of higher education; and focused, in 2003-2004, on academic governance, institutional capacity building and management methods modernization.

587. Special attention has been paid to private education which, in 2003-2004, was subsidized with CFAF 100 million. In the same academic year, 138 additional instructors were recruited and placed. The improvement of the working conditions of higher education instructors has been closely monitored in the framework of the conference of the Advisory Committee of University Institutions, held twice in 2003-2004.

588. Since 2004, the Government has been engaged in extensive works aimed at bringing about and guaranteeing to every Cameroonian access to quality higher education meeting modern requirements and the general public's needs. Through the new BA/MA/PhD system, the programme in question aims at overcoming the following challenges, which confront the country's university system:

- Exponential increase in the number of students (10,000 in 1981, 20,000 in 1986, 42,000 in 1991, approximately 140,000 in 2006 and more than 300,000 by 2015);
- Little diversity in the supply of training;
- Limited and inadequate development of scientific and technological professional training;
- Insufficient internal effectiveness of the establishments in view of the sacrifices made;
- Non-rigorous and centralizing management of resources.

589. Mention should be made of the following related measures:

- Creation of a seventh State University at Maroua;
- Creation of new departments in existing universities, in particular the medical and pharmaceutical faculties recently established in the Universities of Douala and Buéa;
- Diversification of the supply of training through the establishment of new areas of specialization in the majority of university establishments.

590. As part of its student assistance policy, the Government extended support in the amount of CFAF 174.000.000¹⁴⁹ to 2,000 students broken down as follows:

- 1,350 students supported for excellence;
- 250 girls excelling in science;
- 400 students with disabilities.

591. In his 10 February 2007 message to the nation, the President of the Republic insisted on a new paradigm for organization and mobilization aimed at building competences enhancing the social relevance of higher education, namely a new university governance which, along with other innovations, will help to deal with the problems referred to.

592. At the academic level, 2007 has been marked by the finalization of the BA/MA/PhD system, succeeding the 1993 reform, which had included the establishment of several State universities, particularly in Douala and Buéa, but had unfortunately been slowed down by the economic crisis. Based on the Anglo-Saxon system, the new approach focuses on the operational value of higher education products, increasing the transparency of the heterogeneous schemes encountered in the country, and bringing the academic levels and courses in line with international standards applicable to university institutions.

593. By decision No. 06/0321/MINESUP/CAB/IGA/CJ of 16 May 2006, the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP) created operational units for the implementation of the BA/MA/PhD system starting in the academic year 2007-2008.

594. The main objectives of the BA/MA/PhD system include the following goals:

- Development through better awareness of the nation's economy and through the promotion of the employment of university graduates;

¹⁴⁹ Approximately € 265,649.

- Social, cultural and human development through the formation of a new generation of managers with solid training in citizenship and capable of tackling the millennium challenges at the level of the nation and the subregion of Central Africa;
- Promotion of research-based and research-focused training as a factor conducive to development in partnership with the business and labour sectors;
- Greater transparency of the levels of training and occupational integration for all stakeholders (students, parents, professionals and employers);
- Creation of a new generation of multiple-aptitude graduates possessing knowledge, know-how and/or experience enabling them to adapt to the changing international context;
- Establishment of a training system characterized by flexibility and international compatibility;
- Reform of teaching programmes and diversification of training courses towards high-potential occupations;
- Creation of flexible and efficient academic and applied-training courses offering students, at all levels, occupational integration possibilities;
- Student mobility at the national, subregional and international levels;
- Easy determination of the equivalence of degrees;
- Promotion of the acquisition of cross-cutting skills, particularly modern languages and ICTs;
- Development of innovative teaching methods using ICTs, distance learning and alternating classroom/ workplace training.

595. In view of these objectives and its effective introduction in 2007, the students have adjusted to the BA/MA/PhD system. Accordingly, students and instructors formed an academic partnership, requiring their permanent and systematic participation in all stages of academic decision-making and all academic services.

596. The introduction of the BA/MA/PhD system has contributed significantly to the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

Non-school education

597. This type of education targets in particular those young persons who feel lost in the formal education system.

598. MINJEUN operates training structures designed to ensure the moral, civic, intellectual and vocational education of such persons, namely the units formerly known as Youth and Activities Centres, which currently (since Decree No. 2005/151 of 4 May 2005 on the organization of the Ministry of Youth) are called Multi-function Youth-Promotion Centres.

599. Of the 317 such centres created so far throughout the national territory; only 100 are operational and train every year rural and urban young persons with a view to their economic integration.

Article 14

600. Pursuant to this article, the State has committed itself to, inter alia, enhancing the scope of the education offered, reforming secondary education and readjusting higher education.

(a) Enhancing the scope of the education offered

601. The free public primary education decided by the Head of State as part of "Education for All" attracts many children to the public elementary schools. Despite certain persisting obstacles, particularly the insistence of certain public elementary school directors to require payment of parents' association fees, supposed to be optional, many parents prefer sending their children to public elementary schools rather than private ones, which are often expensive.

602. With the assistance of the Cameroon Association for the Promotion of Nursery Schools (ACAPPEM), recognized as a public service body under Decree No. 2006/235 of 25 July 2006, the Government has made considerable efforts to promote preschool education..

603. In 2006, activities were carried out on the basis of a partnership among MINPROFF, UNICEF, FAO/WFP, UNFPA¹⁵⁰, MINEDUB and MINAS in order to eliminate disparities between boys and girls. Such activities vary among the formal, non-formal and specialized education system.

Measures taken in the formal education system in order to reduce gender disparities focus on:

- Implementing SSE guidelines, which reflect concerns related to gender equality;
- Considerably improving the formal and non-formal education offered;
- Eliminating obligatory fees in public elementary schools with a view to free primary education and continued provision of minimum school kits¹⁵¹;
- Implementing a scholarship award policy with a mandatory quota of 40 per cent for girls;
- Producing a pedagogical innovation documentation set on the education of girls;
- Establishing a Textbook and Teaching Material Authorizing Committee tasked with, inter alia, identifying discriminatory stereotypes;
- Implementing the "fast-track girl's education" programme;
- Extending scholarship grants to female candidates with the highest scores in official examinations, with a view to promoting excellence among women;
- Providing support for families;
- Ensuring advocacy for girls' schooling.

Measures taken in the non-formal education system focus on:

- Counselling for women through women's advancement centres;
- Creation and rehabilitation of training and counselling centres for female primary education dropouts and support for vulnerable families and communities;
- Training and counselling for girls in youth and activity centres and homes;
- Training for girls with disabilities in production centres and home workshops;
- Training for persons with disabilities in rehabilitation and reintegration centres;

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Population Fund.

¹⁵¹ The distribution of minimum school kits in primary education establishments began in 2001.

- Various activities in fast-track vocational training centres for white- and blue-collar workers.

(b) Reforming secondary education

604. The national conference on education had noted weaknesses that the State gradually tries to remedy. A study for an appropriate reform of secondary education was conducted in 2006 under the guidance of a committee set up by the Prime Minister. The Government has also supported positive discrimination in favour of the disabled, the protection children at school and the expansion of school infrastructure.

605. Created by Prime Minister Decree No. 063/PM of 20 June 2006, the above committee is responsible for ensuring:

- The implementation of the programme and all activities related to the development of primary education, the upgrading of general secondary education and the improvement of governance in the education system;
- The validation of budgeted action programmes by component and activity for the following year or semester; of implementation reports on the past six months; and of any possible reorientation acceptable to the partners.

606. The composition of the committee calls for improvement because it includes no civil society representatives, particularly students or students' parents, who may offer valuable inputs on secondary education.

607. Relevant discussions held in MINESEC since November 2006 focus on the:

- Restructuring of study cycles into three sub-cycles, namely an observation, an orientation and a determination sub-cycle;
- Redefinition of areas of study;
- Reform of programmes and evaluation methods.

608. However, reform implementation is made difficult by the country's dual education systems and strongly contrasting views held by supporters of the English- and French-speaking subsectors.

609. The reform is partly carried out in the framework of component II of the Education Sector Reform Support Programme (PARE). That component provides for:

- Building the managerial capacities of general inspectors and school principals;
- Thorough professional counselling for new teachers.

(c) Readjusting higher education

610. The State's response to problems related to matching training and employment is part of SSE implementation.

611. One approach consists in the establishment of a professional license, crucial to the professionalization of higher education. Decree No. 06/0014/MINESUP/DDES of 2 February 2006 introduced study and evaluation procedures for such a license in State universities and private higher education institutions. The license constitutes a notable innovation inasmuch as it allows training in a professional environment; aims at supplementing academic training with practical experience and necessary skills; makes it

possible to acquire progressively such capabilities, necessary for employment, as rationality, appropriate attitudes and behaviour and sense of responsibility¹⁵².

612. Various other studies were launched in 2006, including a study on the implementation of a programme for the generalized use of ICTs in higher education (CFAF 20 million/ Public Investment Budget (PIB)); a study of the standardization and certification of the data-processing centres of State Universities (CFAF 10 million/PIB); and a study on the development of innovative forms of education (e-learning and distance learning) (CFAF 40 million/PIB). In that connection, note should be taken of the:

- Creation and organization of the Inter-University Documentary Resources Centre (CIRD) by Decree No. 06/0070/MINESUP/CAB of 19 June 2006;
- Creation and organization of the Inter-University Communication and Information Technologies Centre (CITI) by Decree No. 06/0071/MINESUP of 19 June 2006;
- Finalization of provisions on the establishment of the Research and Professionalization Support Fund (FARP) and the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN).

613. The establishment of the mechanisms of the education system support programme (PASE) / Higher education component (GDLN, CITI, FARP and CIRD) and of the higher education viable-initiatives management and professionalization support project (AGIR-PPTE/ENSP) has continued with World Bank support.

614. The "Coordination and modernization of higher education technological establishments" project (COMETES) launched by French Cooperation is an effective catalyst in higher education reform.

615. In the programmes leading to a Master's degree, an Advanced Studies Diploma (DEA) and a Specialized Higher Education Diploma (DESS), human rights teaching¹⁵³ has been strengthened with courses on human rights protection mechanisms.

616. Master's degrees in human rights and humanitarian law have been organized in various public and private higher education institutions; and so have specialized teaching modules available to students of economics, management, basic science, philosophy and social science.

Article 15

617. In view of their collective character, cultural rights reinforce the exercise of the other individual rights enshrined in the Covenant; and are in particular related to respect for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (article 4).

618. The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress poses no particular problem and may be applied in the fields of, inter alia, development and health. In this area, mention must be made of the improvement of the institutional framework and other action taken by the State (article 2).

¹⁵² Other pertinent responses include, in particular, the study on the introduction of the BA/MA/PhD system (CFAF 70 million/ Public Investment Budget (PIB)/ Studies) starting in 2008. This seminal study will lead to the formulation and development of an institutional and regulatory framework for curriculum reform focused on the student's possibility to plan his or her career development, on skill acquisition and the professionalization of education in ECCAS

¹⁵³ Courses on civil freedoms and human rights will shortly also be included in the first and third year curriculum of legal and political science faculties in order to raise the students' awareness and to provide them with solid basic knowledge in this area.

619. The economic crisis and the liberalization of the economy led the State to assign a major role to the financing of culture by the private sector.

620. Following the creation of the Ministry of Culture (MINCULT) in 1992 (decree supra), the Government earmarked substantial allocations, under budget lines entitled "assistance to artists and cultural organizations", to the MINCULT budget for the implementation of cultural projects. Moreover, a creativity support fund was set up to finance the writing of scenarios.

621. The State has improved the legal and institutional framework and taken various other measures with a view to ensuring the enjoyment of cultural rights (article 1), creating encouraging prospects in this area.

1. Cultural rights

(a) Improvement of the legal and institutional framework

622. Cameroon has adopted the following instruments, which constitute the legal basis for actions undertaken in order to protect cultural rights:

- Act No. 2000/005 of 17 April 2000 on legal deposit. This Act is designed to secure and reinforce protection of the cultural and intellectual heritage against the illegal use and counterfeiting which may be facilitated as a result of the new information and communication technologies (NICTs).
- Act No. 2000/010 of 11 December regulating the archives, which makes it possible to strengthen the instruments for the protection and development of cultural knowledge.
- Act No. 2000/011 of 19 December 2000 on royalties and related rights, which established a fund to support cultural policy and the pluralist nature of collective management companies.
- Act No. 2003/0130 of 22 December 2003 on patronage and sponsorship, designed to encourage further involvement of the economic operators in financing cultural activities.
- Decree No. 2001/950/PM of 1 November 2001 laying down the procedures for implementing Act No. 2000/11 of 19 December 2000 on royalties and related rights. The decree terminates the existence of the former copyright association, which is replaced by four professional associations, each of which represents a specific field of the arts (music, literature and the dramatic arts, audiovisual arts and photography and the plastic arts). The decree also sanctions openness, by encouraging creativity, among other things.
- Decree No. 2001/38/PM of 5 December 2001, establishing an account ringfenced for the support of cultural policy. In point of fact, the recent creation of the Committee for the Selection of Cultural Projects, in May 2003, should boost the supply of and demand for cultural products with immediate effects on job creation, the creation of wealth, and poverty reduction. That legal framework is producing specific measures.

(b) Activities launched

623. The specific responsibilities of MINCULT include defining and implementing cultural policy, getting culture to a wider audience and safeguarding and enhancing the cultural heritage.¹⁵⁴

624. As a member of UNESCO, Cameroon, plays a significant role in opening up a national culture whose impact reaches beyond national boundaries, in the form of football, the activities of Cameroon's musicians and its traditional festivals.

625. To promote the protection of culture, the State has adopted measures to safeguard the proprietary and non-pecuniary interests of authors, as well as of other persons involved in literary creativity, such as writers and performers, radio and television companies and the producers of sound or video recordings.

626. Some of the other relevant measures are the following:

- Preparatory activities for the construction and maintenance of roads, designed to secure the establishment of "village highway committees" whose responsibilities include ensuring the protection of sites that form part of the cultural heritage and taking account of local circumstances and sensitivities.
- Successful operation of the National Museum as a showcase for Cameroon's rich cultural heritage, the national archives and the national library.
- Increase in the number of local authority public libraries.
- Completion of the arts centre in the province of Sud and its inauguration; laying the foundation stones for the arts centres in the provinces of Ouest and Sud-Ouest, as part of the extensive programme to establish arts centres in all provincial capitals.

627. The aim here is to provide cultured individuals with an appropriate framework for their further development that will facilitate the dissemination of cultural achievements and enable specific cultural identities to be shared, in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Covenant.

628. Pursuant to Decree No. 98/003 of 8 January 1998 on the organization of the Ministry of Culture, the following specialized cultural institutions have been attached to MINCULT:

- National Library;
- Public Records;
- National institute of Arts and Culture;
- Palais des Congrès;
- Central Public Library;
- National Museum;
- The National Film Library.

629. Some of the structures in question are already operational.

2. Right to benefit from scientific progresses

The institutional framework has been improved and various actions have been carried out.

¹⁵⁴ According to the earlier mentioned decree on the organization of the Government.

(a) Improvement of the institutional framework

630. A country's development depends on progress in scientific research. The researchers' perspicacity and know-how are the key to all of the scientific and technological achievements of developed countries. Research is the basis for all economic and social advancement and all progress. Aware of this crucial fact, the United Nations has requested Member States to earmark 0.50 per cent of their GNP for scientific research. The African Union has recommended to its member States to earmark 1 per cent of their GNP to the development of science and technology.

631. Accordingly, Cameroon has over the years set up a number of relevant institutions, including, most recently, MINRESI, in charge of various research organizations and agencies, whose activities are based on a robust programme of research.

(b) Activities launched

632. MINRESI organized the first Days for Research Excellence and Innovation in Cameroon (JERSIC) and has created provincial research centres to disseminate research results at province level¹⁵⁵. A number of poverty reduction initiatives targeting the rural population have included the dissemination results obtained by research organizations and institutes.

Organization of the first JERSIC in 2007

633. The first JERSIC held in Yaoundé on 3-5 October 2007 were the most important research-related occurrence in that year. The organization of this open house event was justified by the general public's unawareness of advances in scientific research. Other research and related dissemination programmes supplemented the event.

634. The event's philosophy and basic lines of action were outlined. The main objective was to make research results accessible to the general public, which, rightly or wrongly, had always believed that any research findings stay in the laboratories. In order to motivate Cameroonian researchers, the President of the Republic offered a special CFAF 20 million prize¹⁵⁶ for the foremost researcher, designated on the basis of predefined criteria. The award contributed to the success of JERSIC 2007. The winner was Doctor Charles The, who had identified corn varieties adaptable to all of the country's ecosystems. As a result of his research, corn may be sown and harvested within 80 days.

635. The basic lines of action formulated through the work accomplished during JERSIC included the promotion of:

- Strategic planning and scientific research;
- Intellectual property and technological innovation;
- Partnerships and cooperation arrangements;
- Scientific information and its exploitation.

Recommended objectives related to strategic planning and scientific research

- Establishment of habitual audits, scientific in particular;
- Development of a critical mass of high-quality researchers as a matter of priority;

¹⁵⁵ The construction of three research centres at Ebolowa, Maroua and Douala is scheduled for 2008.

¹⁵⁶ Approximately € 30,769.23.

- Updating of the status of researchers in order to improve their living and working conditions;
- Stocktaking of the scientific diaspora's research and innovation capabilities.

Intellectual property and technological innovation

636. Recommended objectives:

- Creation of an encouraging framework (through, inter alia, tax measures, business incubators and promotion funds) facilitating interactions between the private and the public sectors with a view to ensuring substantial funding for public research and innovation;
- Encouragement of researchers by MINRESI through such institutionalized events as prize awards and invention exhibits.

Partnerships and cooperation

637. Recommended objectives:

- Linkages between the partners' capabilities and cooperation contract negotiations;
- Implementation by MINRESI of financing strategies proposed by international organizations.

Scientific information and its exploitation

638. Recommended objectives:

- Granting of tax incentives to enterprises exploiting research results;
- Establishment of an interface between decision makers, researchers and research results users;
- Implementation of multifaceted programmes by MINRESI.

Action in favour of the rural population

639. Such action included the training of Baka Pygmies at Mindourou and Mayos in the province of Est in the use of earth bricks to build their dwellings. Another instance of research results exploitation occurred in the department of Upper Sanaga, where women were trained in breeding chickens, particularly by interbreeding farm and traditional varieties, thereby obtaining up to 12 kg heavy crossbreds.

Dissemination of specific research results

640. In the following research centres, research findings of the types indicated were made available to the general public:

- Nkolbisson and Foumbot, research on corn and potatoes;
- Njombe, research on plantain and other fruits;
- Ekona, research on cassava and yam;
- Nkoevone, research on coffee and cocoa;
- Wakwa, research on livestock.

Action carried out by supervised organizations and units

641. Action carried out by organizations and units under MINRESI supervision has aimed at the development of sectoral programmes and partnership-based initiatives. Such bodies include the Local Materials Promotion Office (MIPROMALO), the National Centre for Education (CNE), the National Institute of Cartography (INC), the Institute for Medical Research and the Study of Medicinal Plants (IMPM), the Food and Nutrition Research Centre (CRAN), the Institute for Geological and Mining Research (IRGM) and the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD).

Counselling and training activities carried out by supervised organizations

MIPROMALO

642. MIPROMALO has carried out various activities which contributed to improved access to decent housing at lower costs in all of the provinces. An urban planning support project for the greater suburban zone of Yaoundé was carried out in 2007.

643. Pilot workshops have been built for the manufacture of such local construction materials as baked bricks, compressed earth blocks, microconcrete floor and wall tiles, dried wood, ceramic objects, and cut facade stones. These workshops have offered practical training to university, training-centre, *grande école* and technical secondary education trainees and to unemployed young persons.

644. Mobile equipment facilities have been made available to the population for the manual and semi-automatic manufacture of compressed earth blocks for construction with local materials. In the processing and use of these materials, 1,300 persons were trained in workshops or pilot building sites in all provinces. An engineering office was set up with partner support in response to requests from the population to reduce imported equipment use, which increases the price of local materials. A raw material study laboratory has been created to provide the population with technical and scientific information allowing the exploitation of the materials in question.

CNE

645. CNE identified a number of street children in the framework of the study aimed at the reintegration of such minors, and took measures to promote their psychological stability, return them to their families and, subsequently, seek their socio-professional integration.

646. During feedback meetings on study results, CNE offered a minimum support package to the NGOs ASSEJA in Yaoundé, "Emmanuel Children" and CAMWALP in Bamenda, and KAWTAL and "BELLEL Étoile" in Maroua.

INC

647. INC actively participated in standardizing and consolidating the professionalization of teaching in State and private universities. In that connection, a number of young students attended training courses in such areas as computer-assisted mapping (CAM).

IMPM

648. IMPM established a health-research ethics committee whose main task is to evaluate independently, before and during implementation, the compliance of all research projects involving human subjects with ethical standards. This procedure was decided shortly after the TENOFOVIR tests, conducted in a disorderly manner on prostitutes in Douala as part

of experimental immunization against HIV/AIDS. The committee ensures that research projects abide by the following principles:

- All-round respect for the person, particularly through the protection of vulnerable groups (inter alia, illiterates, the poor, women and children);
- Usefulness of research at the individual and community levels;
- Special protection measures for vulnerable groups.

CRAN

649. CRAN has carried out research and development programmes aimed at a better knowledge and use of local foodstuffs with a view to improving the nutrition of the population.

650. Positive results were obtained in food processing and conservation by means of appropriate and inexpensive techniques with a view to reducing post-harvest waste, increasing food availability and enhancing food security.

651. Epidemiological and nutritional surveys carried out in certain communities located in Cameroon's five ecological zones allowed to:

- Determine the nutritional habits of the population;
- Identify areas of high malnutrition and its causes in order to remedy the situation.

652. A study on local foodstuffs available in the various ecological zones and the determination of their food value led to the following outcomes:

- Contribution to the establishment of a table of foodstuff composition;
- Determination of contributions in terms of nutrients and trace elements, including bioavailable iron;
- Identification of contaminants in fish and seafood from the Cameroonian coasts;
- Acquisition of basic information on the bacteriological quality of ready-to-eat food processed in the informal sector.

653. New product standards were developed, including for:

- Composite flour for bread and pastry making;
- Composite-flour-based infants' food meeting the nutritional needs of children;
- Supplements enriched with micronutrients for malnourished children and PLWHA.

IRGM

654. This organization took action in the areas of environmental protection and access to drinking water.

Environmental protection

655. Two major operations were carried out, namely monitoring of the activity of the Mount Cameroon, and degassing of lakes Nyos and Monoun.

Monitoring of the activity at Mount Cameroon

656. In 2007, the overhauled network of seismographs indicated relatively little earthquake activity around the Mount Cameroon, save for a 2.5 magnitude surface tremor, with epicentre in the area of Massoumba in Bonépoupa near Douala, on 22 October 2007.

657. In order to foresee disasters and ensure the security of persons and property in the vicinity of the volcano, 17 geodetic and levelling benchmarks were set up around Mount Cameroon.

Degassing of lakes Nyos and Monoun

658. After the 1984 and 1986 disasters resulting from CO₂ emissions from lakes Nyos and Monoun and causing numerous casualties, the Government decided to have these lakes degassed. The project is aimed at the controlled and almost complete extraction of CO₂ dissolved in the water in a concentrated form, in order to make the areas concerned secure and enable the displaced population to return.

659. Scientific data collection and analysis at the two lakes indicate that layer subsidence continues normally, without notable stratification.

660. After the degassing, the water in Lake Monoun has been reoxygenated, as the progressive return of fish and water clarification indicate. Gas concentration in the water has considerably diminished and the lake may now be regarded as safe.

661. Similar results are observed in Lake Nyos. It is, however, urgent to accelerate the process by the installation of more degassing tubes as the population is currently beginning to resettle in the valleys where they lived before the 1986 disaster.

Access to drinking water

662. Ensuring water security for the large built-up areas has been the main concern in respect of access to drinking water. Such areas face many problems related to water resources. The drinking water supply, sanitation and the management of users rarely attain 60 per cent. As a result, the incidence of water-related diseases is increasing, particularly among the low-income population. The main objective of this project is the identification of alternative options, other than that of a single drinking-water supply source. The first part of this project has been carried out in Yaoundé and the surrounding area, and has consisted in:

- Identifying and mapping of the various fountains and other water supply points in the area concerned;
- Calibrating the various flow gauging stations installed;
- Determining certain physicochemical and organoleptic parameters of the identified sources and other water supply points identified.

MIPROMALO

663. A number of experimental building sites have been used as know-how models for the population. The following are some examples:

- Construction of an elementary school with six classrooms and a residence for the director at Afane-Mabe, Kribi;
- Construction of a technical, industrial and commercial junior high school (CETIC) with two classrooms and a residence for the director at Melondo by Mvengue;
- Construction of a women's centre at Baba I by Bamenda;
- Construction of various residences in Yaoundé;
- Technical assistance to the Mutual Benefit Society for Land Property (MUPROF) for the construction of low-cost residences.

664. A national partnership with a number of structures of local materials promotion units, such as, for instance, the Bafoussam Craftsmen Promotion Centre (CEPAB) and SERCCADE, Bertoua, in the province of Est, made it possible to target a wide range of population groups.

665. MIPROMALO has developed an HIPC project entitled "Promotion of technologies for exploiting local materials towards the improvement of living conditions for the population", one of whose components consists in the establishment of 50 technology transfer centres in all provinces, and of a fund for assisting local materials promotion initiatives. The project was found to be eligible and the related financing is in progress.

General conclusion

666. Much remains to be done in Cameroon in order to meet all of the criteria established by the Committee with regard to the full exercise of economic, social and cultural rights. The extent to which these criteria are fulfilled by the measures taken or the services provided by the Government is unclear, especially in view of the lack of a system for compiling reliable statistics in order to assess the actual impact of such initiatives.

667. However, these inadequacies should not hide the efforts made by the Government, in a difficult economic context, with the international community's unflagging support, to attain a minimum level of realization of the rights in question.

668. External national debt relief, the measures taken by the Head of State in support of the most disadvantaged strata, the strategies launched and the mobilization of the various components of civil society justify the hope that the economic, social and cultural rights will ultimately be adequately implemented.
