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**COMPILATION PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 15(B) OF  
THE ANNEX TO HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 5/1**

**Cameroon**

The present report is a compilation of the information contained in the reports of treaty bodies, special procedures, including observations and comments by the State concerned, and other relevant official United Nations documents. It does not contain any opinions, views or suggestions on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), other than those contained in public reports issued by OHCHR. It follows the structure of the general guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council. Information included herein has been systematically referenced in endnotes. The report has been prepared taking into consideration the four-year periodicity of the first cycle of the review. In the absence of recent information, the latest available reports and documents have been taken into consideration, unless they are outdated. Since this report only compiles information contained in official United Nations documents, lack of information or focus on specific issues may be due to non-ratification of a treaty and/or to a low level of interaction or cooperation with international human rights mechanisms.

## I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

### A. Scope of international obligations<sup>1</sup>

<i>Core universal human rights treaties<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>
ICERD	24 June 1971	None	Individual complaints (art. 14): Yes
ICESCR	27 June 1984	None	-
ICCPR	27 June 1984	None	Inter-State complaints (art. 41): No
ICCPR-OP 1	27 June 1984	None	Yes
CEDAW	23 August 1994	None	-
OP-CEDAW	7 January 2005	None	Inquiry procedure (arts. 8 and 9): Yes
CAT	19 December 1986	None	Inter-State complaints (art. 21): Yes Individual complaints (art. 22): Yes Inquiry procedure (art. 20): Yes
CRC	11 January 1993	None	-
<i>Core treaties to which Cameroon is not a party: ICCPR-OP2, OP-CAT, OP-CRC-AC (signature only, 2001), OP-CRC-SC (signature only, 2001), ICRMW, CPD, CPD-OP, CED (signature only, 2007).</i>			
<i>Other main relevant international instruments</i>			<i>Ratification, accession or succession</i>
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide			No
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court			No
Palermo Protocol <sup>3</sup>			Yes
Refugees and stateless persons <sup>4</sup>			Yes, except 1954 and 1961 Conventions
Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocols thereto <sup>5</sup>			Yes, except Additional Protocol III
ILO fundamental conventions <sup>6</sup>			Yes
UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education			No

1. In 2001, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) encouraged Cameroon to ratify and implement the OP-CRC-SC and OP-CRC-AC.<sup>7</sup> In 2003, the Committee against Torture (CAT) recommended that Cameroon ratify the OP-CAT.<sup>8</sup>

### B. Constitutional and legislative framework

2. In 2001, while noting the process taken up by Cameroon to harmonize existing legislation with the Convention, CRC remained concerned about the domestic legislation, including customary law, which was very fragmented and partly unsuitable, outdated and not in conformity with the Convention, and expressed concern about the continued existence of customs and traditions which impede children from fully enjoying their rights.<sup>9</sup>

### C. Institutional and human rights infrastructure

3. The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) of Cameroon was given a “B” status by the ICC in 2006.<sup>10</sup> In 2003, CAT took note with satisfaction of the proposed restructuring of the NCHRF to make it more independent of the executive and give it greater prominence. It recommended that the Cameroonian authorities reform the NCHRF with a view to achieving conformity with the Paris Principles.<sup>11</sup> In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts noted the setting up of the NCHRF and of a National Labour Advisory Commission

(NLAC). The Committee requested the Government to keep it informed on the activities planned or undertaken by the NCHRF and NLAC to promote the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (No. 111).<sup>12</sup>

#### D. Policy measures

4. In 2008, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Committee of Experts commented on the lack of a national policy to promote equality of opportunities and treatment in respect of employment and occupation. The Committee recommended that the Government elaborate a policy which should include the adoption and implementation of specific proactive measures, such as educational and awareness-raising programmes, aimed at promoting equality in employment and occupation with respect to all seven grounds listed in ILO Convention No. 111.<sup>13</sup>

5. OHCHR noted that, as reported by the Government, on 10 November 2006, a Committee for the Elaboration and Implementation of the Plan of Action for Human Rights was created, to integrate human rights education into the primary school system. The Plan of Action for 2007-2008 envisages the effective teaching of human rights education to begin in primary schools at the beginning of the school year 2008/2009.<sup>14</sup> A 2004 UNDP report noted that teacher training programmes on human rights include courses on tolerance and international understanding. Subjects like ethics and civics have become compulsory in primary and secondary education.<sup>15</sup>

## II. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE GROUND

### A. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

#### 1. Cooperation with treaty bodies

<i>Treaty body<sup>16</sup></i>	<i>Latest report submitted and considered</i>	<i>Latest concluding observations</i>	<i>Follow-up response</i>	<i>Reporting status</i>
CERD	1997	March 1998	-	Fifteenth to nineteenth reports overdue from 2000 to 2008 and submitted in November 2008
CESCR	1997	December 1999	-	Second and third reports overdue since 2001 and 2003 respectively and submitted in November 2008
HR Committee	1997	November 1999	-	Fourth report overdue since 2003 and submitted in November 2008
CEDAW	1999	June 2000	-	Third report submitted in 2007 and scheduled for consideration in 2009
CAT	2002	November 2003	-	Fourth report overdue since 2004 and submitted in November 2008
CRC	2000	October 2001	-	Second report scheduled for consideration in 2009

6. The Human Rights Committee (HR Committee) has adopted Views on five individual communications where the responsibility of State agents was established, finding, inter alia, violations of the right to life, freedom of expression, freedom from torture, arbitrary arrest and detention. In all cases, the HR Committee requested Cameroon to provide the victims with an effective remedy. Cameroon provided a follow-up response in one case, which in its Annual Report the Committee found to be satisfactory.<sup>17</sup> To date, Cameroon has not responded to the Committee on the other four cases.

## 2. Cooperation with special procedures

<i>Standing invitation issued</i>	No
<i>Latest visits or mission reports</i>	The Special Rapporteur on the question of torture in 1999 <sup>18</sup>
<i>Visits agreed upon in principle</i>	-
<i>Visits requested and not yet agreed upon</i>	The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (requested 2008)
<i>Facilitation/cooperation during missions</i>	The Special Rapporteur on the question of torture expressed appreciation to the Government for the invitation and the full cooperation extended to him during the mission. <sup>19</sup>
<i>Follow-up to visits</i>	-
<i>Responses to letters of allegations and urgent appeals</i>	A total of 14 communications were sent during the period under review. In addition to communications sent for particular groups, 14 individuals, including 3 women, were covered by these communications. During the period under review, the Government replied to 5 communications, representing replies to 35 per cent of communications sent.
<i>Responses to questionnaires on thematic issues</i> <sup>20</sup>	Cameroon responded to none of the 13 questionnaires sent by special procedures mandate holders during the period under review, <sup>21</sup> within the deadlines.

## 3. Cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

7. The United Nations Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa was established in 2001 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/55 A to strengthen security, stability and development in Central Africa by promoting respect for human rights and democracy.<sup>22</sup> The Centre, which operates under the auspices of OHCHR, is based in Yaoundé and functions as a regional documentation and training facility, as well as a platform for OHCHR's engagement with Cameroon and other countries in the region.<sup>23</sup> In its resolution 62/221, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction the support provided for the establishment of the Centre by the host country.

8. In collaboration with civil society organizations the Centre launched, on 27 January 2005, the United Nations campaign for the dissemination of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in police stations of Cameroon.<sup>24</sup> In November 2005, the Ministry of Justice of Cameroon, in collaboration with the Centre, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross organized a subregional seminar on human rights in prisons in Central Africa, in Douala, Cameroon.<sup>25</sup> The Centre and UNDP assisted the Ministry of Justice in the preparation and publication of the first governmental report on the situation of human rights in Cameroon in 2005.<sup>26</sup> A major conference, the first of its kind, took place in Yaoundé in December 2006 under the theme: "Transitional justice in the Francophone world: current status".<sup>27</sup> On 26 June 2007, with other partners, the Centre organized a conference in Cameroon during which the issue of the Government's responsibility under international human rights law was extensively discussed.<sup>28</sup>

9. In 2008-2009, the Centre will continue its activities concerning Cameroon, aimed at strengthening the capacity of parliamentarians to develop broad participation of the population in democratic processes. The Centre will also address the issues of impunity, discrimination, torture and administration of justice. As part of its efforts to help alleviate poverty, the Centre will foster cooperation with the United Nations Country Team to address gender-based violence and promote women's rights and the right to education.<sup>29</sup>
10. Cameroon made a voluntary contribution to support OHCHR's work in 2008.<sup>30</sup>

## **B. Implementation of international human rights obligations**

### **1. Equality and non-discrimination**

11. In 2000, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) noted the persistence of cultural practices and deep-rooted stereotypes relating to the roles and responsibilities of women and men in all areas of life, and urged Cameroon to adopt legislation to prohibit discriminatory cultural practices, in particular those relating to female genital mutilation (FGM), levirate marriage, inheritance, early and forced marriage and polygamy. It also urged Cameroon to carry out further public-awareness, information and training programmes targeting community leaders and the general public, so as to change ways of thinking and the stereotyped perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of women and men.<sup>31</sup>
12. In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts noted the concerns expressed both by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)<sup>32</sup> and the HR Committee<sup>33</sup> with respect to the unequal legal status of women regarding the right to own property, the laws on credit and bankruptcy, and the right of husbands to seek a court order to prevent their wives from engaging in certain occupations. The Committee recommended that the Government take all the necessary steps to review the legislation in question so that it finally gives full effect to the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation.<sup>34</sup>
13. In 1998, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) recommended, as highlighted also by UNHCR,<sup>35</sup> that Cameroon take all appropriate measures provided for by the ICERD to prevent and eliminate acts of racial discrimination against foreigners and guarantee all persons within its territory, irrespective of race, colour or ethnic origin, enjoyment of the right to security.<sup>36</sup>
14. In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts noted that for a number of years, the Committee has expressed its concern that the 1992 Labour Code does not prohibit discrimination on grounds of race, colour or national extraction, as required by article 1 (1)(a) of the ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (No. 111).<sup>37</sup>
15. In 2001, CRC expressed concern at the persistence of discrimination in Cameroon, in particular at the disparities in the enjoyment of rights experienced by children from rural areas, least developed provinces, Batwa children and children from other marginalized population groups. It recommended inter alia that Cameroon make greater efforts to ensure that all children enjoy all the rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child without discrimination; and prioritize and target social services to children belonging to the marginalized and most vulnerable groups.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

16. In line with the concluding observations of the HR Committee in 1999,<sup>39</sup> CRC was in 2001 concerned that children are victims of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, sometimes constituting torture, committed notably at police stations, in detention places and in prisons. It was also concerned at some instances of forced disappearance and extrajudicial execution of children. It recommended, inter alia, that Cameroon address the causes and incidence of these phenomena; establish an independent mechanism to investigate reports of torture, forced disappearance and extrajudicial execution of children and to bring to justice the persons responsible; adopt legislative measures for the fullest compensation and rehabilitation of child victims of torture; and systematically train the police force, prison staff and the judiciary on the human rights of children.<sup>40</sup> CRC also recommended, as highlighted by UNHCR,<sup>41</sup> that measures be taken to ensure that detained children are provided access to food, health, education services, and that the conditions in detention meet the needs of the children and are compatible with their rights under the Convention.<sup>42</sup>

17. In 2003, CAT recommended, inter alia, that Cameroon immediately end torture in police and gendarmerie stations and in prisons, as well as torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary detention perpetrated under the responsibility of the traditional chiefs in the north;<sup>43</sup> increase its efforts to end the impunity of perpetrators of acts of torture; establish an independent body with the authority to receive and investigate all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment; ensure the protection of victims and witnesses against any intimidation or ill-treatment; inform the public of their rights; and adopt and ensure the practical enforcement of a law making evidence obtained under torture inadmissible in all proceedings.<sup>44</sup>

18. CAT was also concerned that the Criminal Code permitted the exemption from punishment of a rapist if he subsequently marries the victim; it recommended that the State revise its legislation to end this exemption.<sup>45</sup>

19. In 2001, CRC was concerned at the use of FGM and at the lack of legal prohibition or national strategy of its prevention. It recommended that Cameroon adopt legislation prohibiting the practice of FGM and implement programmes to sensitize the population about the harmful effects of this practice.<sup>46</sup> On the same issue, CEDAW in 2000 recommended inter alia that Cameroon provide access to legal remedies and medical services, establish counselling services for victims, train legal, health and police personnel, and launch public-awareness campaigns in order to achieve zero tolerance with regard to all forms of violence against women and girls,<sup>47</sup> including domestic violence against women, which was still regarded as culturally acceptable by certain sectors of society.<sup>48</sup> A 2007 UNIFEM report noted that it has supported the introduction and strengthening of legislation against gender-based violence, including laws against domestic violence and rape and family law provisions.<sup>49</sup>

20. In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts noted that the Penal Code adopted in 1990 no longer exempted from forced labour persons sentenced to imprisonment for political offences. The Committee reminded the Government that, under the ILO Convention concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour (No. 105), persons who express, without using or inciting to violence, political views or views that are ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic order, may not be subjected to imprisonment involving compulsory labour, whatever the form of such labour.<sup>50</sup> In this context, the Committee also reminded the Government that for many years, it has been requesting that necessary measures be taken to supplement the legislation with regard to the prison system by a provision requiring the formal

consent of detainees who are hired by private individuals, companies or associations, and ensuring conditions which approximate a free labour relationship, in terms of remuneration and occupational safety and health.<sup>51</sup> The Committee further noted that under the Labour Code of 1992, the term “forced or compulsory labour” does not include any work or service in the general interest forming part of the civic obligations of citizens as defined by the laws and regulations. The Committee requested the Government to specify the nature of the work or services which might be considered as work or services in the general interest which form part of normal civic obligations.<sup>52</sup>

21. In 2001, CRC was concerned at the large number of children sold by their parents and subsequently exploited in the labour market, and about the increasing number of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution and pornography, especially among those engaged in child labour and street children. It recommended inter alia that Cameroon take measures to prevent and combat the sale and trafficking of children, including an awareness-raising campaign and educational programmes, particularly for parents; facilitate the reunification of child victims with their families and provide adequate care and rehabilitation for them and ratify the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.<sup>53</sup>

### **3. Administration of justice, including impunity and the rule of law**

22. Following his visit to Cameroon in May 1999, the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture issued recommendations to the Government concerning, inter alia: overcrowding of places of detention; use of prisoners to discipline other prisoners; independent monitoring of places of detention; access by detainees to family and lawyers; medical examination; public condemnation of torture and ill-treatment by the highest officials; specialized independent investigative personnel for acts of torture; a request to issue invitations to the Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and on the independence of judges and lawyers; and ratification of OP-CAT and establishment of an independent and effective national preventive mechanism.<sup>54</sup>

23. In 2003, CAT expressed concern about the jurisdiction given to military courts to try civilians for violations of the laws on military weapons and weapons assimilated thereto and recommended that the Cameroonian authorities restrict the jurisdiction of the military courts to military offences only.<sup>55</sup>

24. A 2008 International Monetary Fund report noted that a priority action plan to reform the judicial system is being implemented, including consolidation of judicial independence, stronger anti-corruption measures in the field of justice, and better application of laws, court decisions and penalties. For this purpose, the 2007 Code of Criminal Procedure would better safeguard the rights of individuals during proceedings and prevent the many abuses observed hitherto.<sup>56</sup>

### **4. Right to privacy, marriage and family life**

25. In 2001, CRC was concerned at the difference between the minimum legal ages for marriage of boys (18 years) and that of girls (15 years), which allows for the practice of early marriage and that a child below the age of 18 years might be recruited into the armed forces with parental consent. It recommended that the State raise the minimum age for marriage to 18 for both boys and girls, develop sensitization programmes to curb the practice of early marriage; set a minimum and upper age limit for compulsory education; set a minimum age of 18 years for

recruitment into the armed forces, without any possibility of recruitment below that age, even with parental consent; set a minimum age for medical counselling without parental consent, to make access to health services possible for adolescents.<sup>57</sup>

26. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention requested in 2005 the Government to consider the possibility of amending domestic law regarding homosexuality to bring it into line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other relevant international standards accepted by the State.<sup>58</sup>

### **5. Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and right to participate in public and political life**

27. Entre 2005<sup>59</sup> et 2006,<sup>60</sup> la Représentante Spéciale du Secrétaire général concernant la situation des défenseurs des droits de l'homme a envoyé huit communications au Gouvernement dont une conjointement avec le Rapporteur Spécial sur la promotion et la protection du droit à la liberté d'opinion et d'expression,<sup>61</sup> portant sur quinze défenseurs des droits de l'homme, parmi lesquels des membres du Mouvement pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme et des Libertés (MDDHL).<sup>62</sup> La plupart de ces personnes auraient fait l'objet de diverses formes d'intimidation et de harcèlement de la part des forces de l'ordre. En particulier, certaines auraient été arrêtées sans mandat, d'autres auraient été interrogées et dans un cas les forces de l'ordre auraient procédé à une perquisition sans mandat. La Représentante Spéciale a regretté que le Gouvernement n'ait pas répondu à toutes ses communications. Elle a déploré le cadre juridique confus régulant la liberté d'association ainsi que l'apparente absence de reconnaissance officielle du travail des défenseurs. Elle a également noté les informations provenant de sources non gouvernementales faisant état de restrictions à leur liberté d'expression, et de refus d'accorder l'accès des défenseurs à certains lieux de détention.

28. A 2007 UNDP/UNFPA report noted that women have limited access to financial and technical resources and are poorly represented in national decision-making institutions.<sup>63</sup> A 2008 United Nations Statistics Division source indicated that the proportion of seats held by women in the national Parliament increased from 16 per cent in 2004 to 25 per cent in 2008.<sup>64</sup>

### **6. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work**

29. In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts noted that the Labour Code does not fully reflect the principle of equal remuneration for men and women as set forth in the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (No. 111). The Committee asked the Government to take all the necessary steps to give full legislative expression to the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value and to provide information on any progress made in this regard.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of sexual harassment in employment and occupation and the impact thereof, and considering that no item of Cameroonian legislation deals specifically with sexual harassment, the Committee drew the Government's attention to the need to prohibit sexual harassment explicitly in law.<sup>66</sup>

### **7. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living**

30. In 2001, CRC recommended that Cameroon, inter alia, reinforce its efforts to provide support and material assistance to economically disadvantaged families and to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes to improve the health situation of children, particularly in rural areas; pay particular attention to the rights and needs of children in the



Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and in all programmes intended to improve the standard of living in the country; reform the social security system, with a view to broadening its coverage.<sup>67</sup>

31. CEDAW noted in 2000 the high rate of fertility and repeated pregnancy, the high mortality rate among mothers and children and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Cameroon. It recommended that Cameroon, inter alia, review the abortion laws, undertake to increase the use of contraceptives, develop programmes to protect mothers and children, and strengthen its awareness campaigns to make women aware of the risks and effects of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.<sup>68</sup> A 2006 UNAIDS report mentioned that at the country level, Cameroon has integrated AIDS and gender into the budgets of 26 ministerial departments.<sup>69</sup>

32. In 1999, CESCR urged Cameroon to implement laws and policies to combat forced evictions.<sup>70</sup> En 2007, le Rapporteur Spécial sur le logement convenable en tant qu'élément du droit à un niveau de vie suffisant a envoyé un appel urgent au sujet d'expulsions forcées qui se déroulaient dans plusieurs régions du Cameroun, y compris Yaoundé et Douala, et de nombreuses personnes se seraient trouvées sans logement puisqu'aucune zone de réinstallation n'avait été prévue et aucune compensation fournie. Le Rapporteur Spécial a regretté que le Gouvernement n'ait pas répondu à sa communication.<sup>71</sup>

### **8. Right to education and to participate in the cultural life of the community**

33. In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts noted that in its previous comments, the Committee expressed its concern at the fact that, under Act No. 98/004 on education policy, Cameroon guarantees equal access to education without any distinction as to sex, but that the same Act does not guarantee free primary education, which considerably reduces access to such education, particularly for girls. The Government stated in its report that access to primary education is free. Moreover, the Committee noted that the survey on employment and the informal sector in Cameroon in 2005 reveals that, regardless of age, more men than women have attended school. The survey also indicated that gender-based inequalities in access to education are particularly severe in the regions of the North and Far North. As a result, women entering the labour market are concentrated in jobs having a low level of qualification and in occupations traditionally performed by women.<sup>72</sup>

34. A 2006 UNICEF report noted that participatory hygiene education and safe, gender-segregated facilities have been included in national education guidelines.<sup>73</sup>

35. A 2008 IMF report noted that a global strategy for the education sector was approved on 6 June 2006. This made Cameroon eligible, in September 2006, for financing under the G-8 "Fast-track initiative" for achieving Education for All.<sup>74</sup>

### **9. Minorities and indigenous peoples**

36. En 2007, le Rapporteur Spécial sur l'indépendance des juges et des avocats a envoyé au Gouvernement, conjointement avec le Rapporteur Spécial sur la situation des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales des populations autochtones et la Représentante Spéciale du Secrétaire général concernant la situation des défenseurs des droits de l'homme, un appel urgent sur la situation des élèves Mbororos Fulanis dans la province du Nord-Ouest du Cameroun, situation caractérisée par des violations des droits des Mbororos suite à la dépossession de leurs terres traditionnelles au profit d'un entrepreneur privé. Le Gouvernement a répondu à cet appel. Tout en remerciant le Gouvernement pour sa réponse, le Rapporteur Spécial a invité le

Gouvernement à lui transmettre au plus tôt des informations plus précises et détaillées, notamment concernant l'enquête menée par la commission ministérielle.<sup>75</sup>

37. A 2007 ILO report noted that participatory research undertaken by the ILO in 2004 and 2005 with indigenous representatives and communities revealed that in many areas, the so-called "Pygmy" communities, or individuals or specific families within these communities, are considered the property of their neighbours. "Pygmy" communities are not officially recognized in the administrative structures of Cameroon, and only exist in so far as they constitute attachments to neighbouring and officially recognized (non-indigenous) villages. This has a direct impact on their ability to own land and participate in decision-making processes. Most of the land and forest areas traditionally used by the "Pygmy" communities for subsistence purposes have been expropriated, sold, or converted into protected areas. As a result, these traditionally nomadic, hunter-gatherer communities have been relying increasingly on wage labour and sedentary agriculture in neighbouring communities. Bonded labour and the underpayment of indigenous peoples compared to workers from a different ethnic background were found to be widespread.<sup>76</sup>

38. In 2008, an ILO Committee of Experts noted that the Government's report merely states that efforts have been made by the authorities and by NGOs to provide education and vocational training for indigenous peoples. The Committee requested the Government to supply full information, disaggregated by sex, on the measures taken to improve the conditions of life and work of indigenous peoples, especially in terms of equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, as well as on their participation in education and vocational training.<sup>77</sup>

### **10. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers**

39. A 2007 UNHCR report noted that the repatriation of 10,000 Nigerian refugees from Cameroon was completed in 2006 following the signing of a tripartite agreement in April 2005 between UNHCR and the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria.<sup>78</sup>

40. While acknowledging the efforts made to ameliorate the situation of child refugees, CRC recommended that Cameroon inter alia set up a system for the registration of refugee children; and consider ratifying the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on statelessness.<sup>79</sup>

### **III. ACHIEVEMENTS, BEST PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS**

41. A 2008 IMF report noted that recent achievements in implementing the education strategy have included the strengthening of decentralized management, finalization of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and its use in preparing the 2007 budget, strengthening teacher training, and investments in school infrastructure (classrooms, fences, latrines, water wells).<sup>80</sup>

### **IV. KEY NATIONAL PRIORITIES, INITIATIVES AND COMMITMENTS**

#### **A. Pledges by the State**

42. In its voluntary pledge submitted on 19 April 2006 in support of its candidacy to the membership of the Human Rights Council (HRC), Cameroon committed, inter alia, to fully cooperate with the United Nations Member States and, particularly, with the member States of the HRC in order to help the Council to efficiently fulfil its functions, in full respect of the

principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity; and to combine its efforts with the regional States and the United Nations Member States in order to accelerate the achievement of a society in which the individuals and their rights are respected.<sup>81</sup>

### B. Specific recommendations for follow-up

43. In 2003, CAT requested Cameroon to provide, within one year, information on its response to the Committee's recommendations regarding: an investigation into deaths at Douala central prison; the adoption of urgent measures to reduce overcrowding in prisons; the assurance that detention in custody under the Act on states of emergency conforms to international human rights standards; the use of registers in all places of detention; the removal of all restrictions on the prosecution of gendarmes. It wished in particular to be given information about any prosecutions of traditional chiefs and its results as well as a detailed account of the situation at Douala central prison.<sup>82</sup>

44. Since his visit to Cameroon in May 1999, and although conditions in detention and impunity for torture and ill-treatment remain a matter of concern, the Special Rapporteur on torture has noted with satisfaction the detailed and regular information provided by the Government on follow-up to the above recommendations, in particular a number of positive developments, such as the strengthening of measures to protect detainees' rights; the transfer of the authority of penitentiary administration to the Ministry of Justice; the investments in prison infrastructure; as well as the work of the NCHRF regarding prison visits.<sup>83</sup>

## V. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

45. A 2007 UNIFEM report noted that efforts to train police and to set up or strengthen specialized police units to intervene in cases of violence against women were supported in Cameroon, among other countries.<sup>84</sup> The 2008-2012 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) noted that the five priorities of United Nations activities in Cameroon throughout the period 2008-2012 are the following: growth, social development, governance, crisis prevention and environment.<sup>85</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, the status of ratifications of instruments listed in the table may be found in *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General: Status as at 31 December 2006* (ST/LEG/SER.E.25), supplemented by the official website of the United Nations Treaty Collection database, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, <http://untreaty.un.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations have been used for this document:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT

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CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CPD	Optional Protocol to Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

<sup>3</sup> Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

<sup>4</sup> 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, 1954 Convention relating to the status of Stateless Persons and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

<sup>5</sup> Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (First Convention); Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (Second Convention); Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (Third Convention); Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Convention); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II); Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III). For the official status of ratifications, see Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, at [www.eda.admin.ch/eda/fr/home/topics/intla/intrea/chdep/warvic.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/fr/home/topics/intla/intrea/chdep/warvic.html).

<sup>6</sup> International Labour Organization Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour; Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize; Convention No. 98 concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organize and to Bargain Collectively; Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value; Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation; Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment; Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

<sup>7</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.164, para. 72.

<sup>8</sup> CAT/C/CR/31/6, para. 11(e).

<sup>9</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> For the list of national human rights institutions with accreditation status granted by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC), see A/HRC/7/69, annex VIII, and A/HRC/7/70, annex I.

<sup>11</sup> CAT/C/CR/31/6, paras. 3(f) and 11 (a).

<sup>12</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 092008CMR111, para. 8.

<sup>13</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, Doc. No. 062008CMR111, para. 2.

<sup>14</sup> See [www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/Summary-national-initiatives2005-2009.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/Summary-national-initiatives2005-2009.htm).

<sup>15</sup> UNDP, *Cultural liberty in today's world*, New York 2004, p. 84, available at [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr04\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr04_complete.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> The following abbreviations have been used for this document:

CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
HR Committee	Human Rights Committee
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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CAT                      Committee against Torture  
CRC                      Committee on the Rights of the Child

<sup>17</sup> A/59/40, vols. I and II.

<sup>18</sup> E/CN.4/2000/9/Add. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 3.

<sup>20</sup> The questionnaires included in this section are those which have been reflected in an official report by a special procedure mandate-holder.

<sup>21</sup> See (a) report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (A/HRC/4/29), questionnaire on the right to education of persons with disabilities sent in 2006; (b) report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (A/HRC/4/24), questionnaire on the impact of certain laws and administrative measures on migrants sent in 2006; (c) report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children (A/HRC/4/23), questionnaire on issues related to forced marriages and trafficking in persons sent in 2006; (d) report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders (E/CN.4/2006/95 and Add.5), questionnaire on the implementation of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms sent in June 2005; (e) report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people (A/HRC/6/15), questionnaire on the human rights of indigenous people sent in August 2007; (f) report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children (E/CN.4/2006/62) and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (E/CN.4/2006/67), joint questionnaire on the relationship between trafficking and the sent in July 2005; (g) report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (E/CN.4/2006/45), questionnaire on the right to education for girls sent in 2005; (h) report of the Working Group on mercenaries (A/61/341), questionnaire concerning its mandate and activities sent in November 2005; (i) report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (A/HRC/4/31), questionnaire on the sale of children's organs, sent on July 2006; (j) report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (E/CN.4/2005/78), questionnaire on child pornography on the Internet, sent in July 2004; (k) report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (A/HRC/7/8), questionnaire on assistance and rehabilitation programmes for child victims of sexual exploitation sent in July 2007; (l) report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (A/HRC/4/35/Add.3), questionnaire on human rights policies and management practices; (m) report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (A/HRC/8/10), questionnaire on the right to education in emergency situations sent in 2007.

<sup>22</sup> OHCHR Strategic Management Plan 2008-2009, p. 51.

<sup>23</sup> OHCHR 2006 annual report, p. 52.

<sup>24</sup> A/60/353, para. 10.

<sup>25</sup> A/61/352, para. 6a.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 8.

<sup>27</sup> A/62/317, para. 33.

<sup>28</sup> A/62/317, p. 8, para. 24.

<sup>29</sup> OHCHR Strategic Management Plan 2008-2009, p. 52.

<sup>30</sup> OHCHR 2008 Report on activities and results (Forthcoming).

<sup>31</sup> A/55/38, part two, paras. 30-36 and 53-54.

<sup>32</sup> E/C.12/1/Add. 40.

<sup>33</sup> See CCPR/C/79/Add.116.

<sup>34</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 092008CMR111, para. 1.

<sup>35</sup> UNHCR submission to the UPR on Cameroon, p. 1, citing CERD/C/304/Add. 53, paras. 18-19.

<sup>36</sup> CERD/C/304/Add. 53, paras. 18-19.

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<sup>37</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 062008CMR111, para. 2.

<sup>38</sup> CRC/C/15/Add. 164, paras. 7, 25 and 26.

<sup>39</sup> See A/55/40 (vol. I), paras. 184-227.

<sup>40</sup> CRC/C/15/Add. 164, paras. 34-35. See also, for CAT, A/56/44, paras. 60-66.

<sup>41</sup> UNHCR submission to the UPR on Cameroon, p. 2, citing CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 28-29, available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR>.

<sup>42</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 28-29.

<sup>43</sup> CAT/C/CR/31/6, paras. 4 and 8; A/56/44, para. 65(a).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., paras. 6 and 10.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., paras. 7(c) and 11(d).

<sup>46</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 48-49.

<sup>47</sup> A/55/38, part two, paras. 30-36 and 49-50.

<sup>48</sup> See also, for CESCR, E/C.12/1/Add. 40, paras. 16 and 33.

<sup>49</sup> A/HRC/7/53-E/CN.6/2008/9, p. 11; see [www.unifem.org/attachments/products/VAWTrustFundReport2007\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/VAWTrustFundReport2007_eng.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 062008CMR105, first and sixth paragraphs.

<sup>51</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 062008CMR029, second paragraph.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., first paragraph.

<sup>53</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 60-61 and 64-65.

<sup>54</sup> E/CN.4/2000/9/Add.2, para. 78.

<sup>55</sup> CAT/C/CR/31/6, paras. 7(a) and 11(b).

<sup>56</sup> IMF Country Report 2008, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – Progress Report, Washington, 2007, p. vi; see [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr0801.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr0801.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 23-24.

<sup>58</sup> A/HRC/4/40/Add.1, Opinion No. 22 (Cameroon), paras 6-8, 10-11 and 23.

<sup>59</sup> E/CN.4/2005/101/Add.1, paras. 96-97.

<sup>60</sup> E/CN.4/2006/95/Add. 5, paras 303-305.

<sup>61</sup> A/HRC/4/37/Add. 1, para. 114.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., para. 115.

<sup>63</sup> UNDP/UNFPA, Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund – “Country programme document for Cameroon”, DP/FPA/CPD/CMR/5 of 23 July 2007, p. 2; see [www.unfpa.org/exbrd/2007/secondsession/final/dpfpa\\_cpd\\_cmr\\_5.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/exbrd/2007/secondsession/final/dpfpa_cpd_cmr_5.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> United Nations Statistics Division coordinated data and analyses, available at: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>.

<sup>65</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 092008CMR100, para. 1.

<sup>66</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 092008CMR111, para. 1.

<sup>67</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 52-53.

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<sup>68</sup> A/55/38, part two, paras. 30-36 and 59-60.

<sup>69</sup> UNAIDS, *Making the money work*, Geneva, 2006, p. 31; see [http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2007/2006\\_unaids\\_annual\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2007/2006_unaids_annual_report_en.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> E/C.12/1/Add.40, para. 41.

<sup>71</sup> A/HRC/7/16/Add.1, paras. 29-30.

<sup>72</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 092008CMR111, para. 4.

<sup>73</sup> UNICEF, Annual Report 2006, p. 14; see [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Annual\\_Report\\_2006.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Annual_Report_2006.pdf).

<sup>74</sup> IMF Country Report 2008, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – Progress Report, Washington, 2007, p. 26; see [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr0801.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr0801.pdf).

<sup>75</sup> A/HRC/8/4/Add.1, paras. 64-66.

<sup>76</sup> ILO, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, Geneva, 2007, p. 30, see [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---webdev/documents/publication/wcms\\_082607.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---webdev/documents/publication/wcms_082607.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, 2008, Geneva, doc. no. (ILOLEX) 092008CMR111, para. 7.

<sup>78</sup> UNHCR, Global Appeal 2007, Geneva, 2007, p. 147; see [www.unhcr.org/static/publ/ga2007/ga2007toc.htm](http://www.unhcr.org/static/publ/ga2007/ga2007toc.htm).

<sup>79</sup> See CRC/C/15/Add.164, paras. 56-57.

<sup>80</sup> IMF Country Report 2008, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – Progress Report, Washington, 2007, p. 27; see [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr0801.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr0801.pdf).

<sup>81</sup> Pledges and commitments undertaken by Cameroon before the Human Rights Council, as contained in the letter dated April 2006 sent by the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly; see [www.un.org/ga/60/elect/hrc/cameroun.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/60/elect/hrc/cameroun.pdf).

<sup>82</sup> CAT/C/CR/31/6, para. 14.

<sup>83</sup> See A/HRC/7/3/Add.2, paras. 34-64; A/HRC/4/33/Add. 2, paras. 35-59; and E/CN.4/2006/6/Add. 2, paras. 57-120.

<sup>84</sup> UNIFEM, Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women 2007, A/HRC/7/53-E/CN.6/2008/9, p. 13; see [www.unifem.org/attachments/products/VAWTrustFundReport2007\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/VAWTrustFundReport2007_eng.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> See UNDAF for Cameroon, Plan cadre d'assistance des Nations Unies avec le gouvernement du Cameroon (UNDAF) 2008-2012, Yaoundé, 2007, p.4; [www.undg.org/docs/7227/UNDAF%202008-12%20version%20finale.pdf](http://www.undg.org/docs/7227/UNDAF%202008-12%20version%20finale.pdf).