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WARNING ! SCAMS FROM CAMEROON

Our attention has been drawn to the existence of elaborate fraudulent schemes, by crooks in Cameroon, targeting unsuspecting businesspeople in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. These scams come in many varieties; ranging from simple appeals and calls for donations to good causes; strange invoices on the letterheads of non-existent companies and even departments of government. They sometimes offer children, from purported indigent families, for adoption, as well as exotic animal species for sale.

This notice hopes to put potential targets on their guard and offer the help of The High Commission to crosscheck the authenticity of offers of business deals (and other transactions) in Cameroon.

- **Business deals.**

The most popular of the scams, come by way of unsolicited e-mails, telephone calls and faxes, announcing big contracts for the supply of computers, CCTV cameras, hospital supplies, public toilets and several varieties of vegetable oils, to various arms of the Cameroon State. The usual catch is for a request for initial funds to meet a “government requirement” for all foreign companies, tendering for contracts, to have a locally ‘registered’ subsidiary. The usual sweetener or bait is that this contact person expects his British ‘partners’ to pay him a very modest part of the contract’s taking as “commission”. They advise their bidders to add £1.00 to quotations which will be skimmed off the deal for them.

The scammers usually claim to be some official of government or the governing party, the CPDM, who can help the foreign company smoothen the path to company 'registration', obtain all necessary licenses and can guarantee that his chosen company will win the contract. Many people have gone for this bait and driven by their own greed, gullibility or both, have sunk considerable funds in this pre-registration process. These fictitious officials always plead for money to be sent down by Western Union or Moneygram to safeguard their anonymity.

Cameroon's import/export trade is conducted through Letters of Credit issued by reputable banks whose credentials can be checked through the Central Bank at www.beac.int, or through the High Commission.

When the 'registration' funds are received additional requests follow for "unforeseen contingencies" like legal fees, airport tax, customs waivers and other imaginary fees. A new twist to these scams has surfaced. When the scammers notice they have been found out, they resurface as some kind of Cameroon Scotland Yard or FBI "on the trail of the fraudsters". These fake policemen then ask for a "refundable" fee to open case files for arrested scammers. There is no such police force in Cameroon. Please if you receive this type of appeal, contact the High Commission as soon as you can.

We are taking measures, which you will appreciate we cannot divulge here, to put these fictitious businessmen where they belong, so that genuine business can thrive. Your cooperation will be vital for effective action. Please contact us as shown hereunder, if and whenever you receive an e-mail or telephone call which you feel might be a scam.

Contact: Tel – 0207727 0771, Fax – 0207792 9353, e-mail: info@cameroonhighcommission.co.uk.

Nkwelle EKANEY
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