

**3RD ORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE CAMEROON
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (CPDM)**

**OPENING AND GENERAL POLICY SPEECH BY
H.E. PAUL BIYA, HEAD OF STATE, CPDM
NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Yaounde Conference Centre, 15 September 2011

- Your Excellencies,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Dear Comrades,

First of all, I am very delighted to meet you once again, on the occasion of the 3rd Ordinary Congress of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, our great Party.

Upon my arrival here, you gave me – and continue to give me - an enthusiastic and warm welcome bearing all the hallmarks of CPDM militants. I am deeply touched and would like to thank you most sincerely.

I would like to thank the comrades of the Mfoundi and neighbouring sections for their extraordinary mobilization which testifies to the vitality and vigour of our great Party.

My very special thanks go to the President of the Mfoundi II Section, Comrade Luke Assamba, for his warm welcome and kind words.

I wish to recognize the presence amongst us of Heads of Diplomatic Mission and Representatives of International Organizations as well as observers, our distinguished guests and representatives of national and foreign political parties. We are honoured and delighted by their presence which reflects our good relations and the importance we mutually attach thereto.

- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me, first and foremost, to invite you to pay homage to our comrades who have passed on since our last reunion.

May we please rise and observe a minute of silence in their memory...

Thank you.

- Dear Comrades,

The CPDM has a prominent position and plays a key role in national political life.

Our militants and many of our citizens have placed their trust in us and it is our duty to render an account of how we have used that trust.

From its inception, the CPDM embraced modernization. Our present reunion provides an opportunity to strengthen our commitment to modernity and change, in a global environment marked by dramatic and complex upheavals.

Two major events have marked our political life since our last reunion, namely the establishment of ELECAM and the amendment in 2008 of certain provisions of our Constitution.

The establishment of ELECAM is a milestone in the modernization of our electoral system. The role

of political parties has been strengthened and civil society now participates in the management of the electoral process. Government services may lend support to ELECAM in the performance of its duties, and the judiciary may intervene in the early stages of the electoral process prior to any disputes.

ELECAM's independence and neutrality, the proper technical and practical organization of polling as well as the order and security of polling operations are guaranteed.

The revision of the Constitution following the March 2008 ordinary session of the National Assembly concerned two main points: lifting of the limitation of presidential terms and taking of measures to finalize the decentralization process.

Our aim in introducing this dual change was to fully restore the sovereign people's prerogatives in choosing their leaders and in shaping their destiny.

With the operationalization of ELECAM, the 2011 elections will be taking place in an entirely new context.

By empowering our party and me to take decisions and manage public affairs, the Cameroonian people have made the CPDM, its National President and vision they incarnate, the key guarantors of their aspirations, their destiny, and the future of our beautiful country.

What have we done with the hopes our compatriots pinned on us?

Without mincing words, I will simply answer that much has been done and that much has been achieved, despite obstacles, despite challenges and despite crises and their numerous consequences. I will add, at the risk of upsetting expert armchair critics, at the risk of hurting prophets of doom, at the risk of disappointing idle talkers, and distressing chaos mongers that we can, ... better still, that we should, take pride in the achievements made under such difficult conditions, for the good of Cameroon and the Cameroonian people.

Indeed, in an increasingly unpredictable world, we have stayed on course even as many nations, including the most advanced, struggle to do so.

Politically,

- We have pursued our policy of openness to other political parties and civil society. We have continued to uphold dialogue, consultation and collective reflection on the major challenges facing the Nation.
- We are at the early stage of implementing decentralization through the institution of Regions in place of Provinces as well as the transfer of the powers of the State to regional and local authorities to meet the aspirations of the people.

Concerning public morality,

- The following institutional mechanisms have been put in place to combat corruption:
 - The Audit Bench, which checks the regularity of accounts of government services and their branches, is now functional;
 - The National Anti-corruption Commission (CONAC) has moved from the educational and sensitization to an operational phase;
 - To these two structures should be added the action of the National Agency for Financial Investigation, the Supreme State Audit, the Public Contracts Regulatory Agency, ministerial anti-corruption units, tenders boards of public bodies and semi-public establishments, without forgetting the punitive role of traditional national courts.

Through this system, we have made major strides in fighting corruption and the embezzlement of public funds.

However, as you know, much remains to be done in this very sensitive domain.

Be it known, Ladies and Gentlemen and Dear Comrades that I am fully determined to eliminate this scourge and to step up the fight against corruption, without complacency, discrimination and irrespective of the social status or political leaning of those found guilty. Nobody will consider himself or herself to be above the law.

With regard to the economy,

During the 2004 presidential campaign, I announced a policy of "Greater Ambitions" to give fresh impetus to our economy.

The first phase of this programme was aimed at stabilizing public finance which was affected by the crisis and structural adjustment constraints. At present, our public finance is more stable thanks to the return to a tight fiscal policy and sacrifices made by the Cameroonian people.

On the other hand, the constraints imposed on the national economy by recovery imperatives have significantly weakened our investment capacity, preventing us from acting as we would have liked. Drawing lessons from this situation, I decided to implement a new Growth and Employment Strategy to make Cameroon an emerging country by 2035.

To successfully implement this policy, we must focus our efforts on accelerating growth based on good governance and optimum strategic management of public affairs.

Therefore, we must also continue to strengthen the rule of law so as to protect people and property, improve the business environment and the citizen's access to information.

We have embarked on the decentralization process to significantly increase the economic role of

Regions and promote the emergence of a genuine local public service free from the problems plaguing the national public service.

Indeed, our public service must be modernized. To do so, it must eschew wait-and-see, inertia and inaction so as to become more efficient and to adopt a code of ethics commensurate with the stakes and geared resolutely towards satisfying the public interest.

- Dear Comrades,

This vision of our future, that of Cameroon's as an emerging country, which we all aspire to, and which in 2004 was dubbed "Greater Ambitions", is becoming a reality. In fact, all studies concerning our "Greater Ambitions" programme have been conducted and financing obtained.

- Comrades, dear militants,

The "Greater Ambitions" of yesteryear will become "Major Accomplishments".

From January 2012, Cameroon will be transformed into a vast building site.

These "major accomplishments" will take shape with major structuring projects some of which are ongoing.

The said projects include:

In the energy sector:

- The Lom-Pangar, Memve'ele, Mekin, Nachtigal, and Song Ndockayo hydroelectric dams;
- The Kribi Gas-fired Power Plant;
- The Yassa Thermal Power Plant; and
- The Limbe Petroleum Yard.

In the transport domain:

- development of road infrastructure such as the second bridge over the Wouri River, port infrastructure such as the Kribi and Limbe Deep-sea Ports, and railway infrastructure to support the implementation of major growth-driving projects, as well as the resumption of business by a National Airline with the launching of "Camair Co".

- Dear Comrades,

Agriculture, and more generally all that concerns the rural world, is essential and vital to our country's development.

Although agriculture constitutes an important source of wealth for our country, its potential remains largely under-tapped.

The most paradoxical result is that in order to feed its population, our country has to import food that it can not only produce, but, also export, thus

obviously exacerbating our trade balance deficit instead of improving it.

This situation is intolerable. The new policy announced during the Ebolowa Agro-pastoral Show seeks to give a prime place to the primary sector among our exports.

To that end, one of our key concerns is to improve rural livelihoods, notably by intensifying rural drinking water and electricity supply programmes through optimum use of alternative sources of energy.

On the social front, special attention is being paid to the social housing, health and education sectors.

Concerning social housing, we launched a programme for the construction of 10 000 social housing units. Given the scale of needs, I think the programme is not advancing at the desired pace. I have therefore instructed the Prime Minister to revive it as soon as possible, in consultation with all the institutional sectors involved.

Regarding health, we will continue to implement the programme to increase outreach hospital facilities along with referral hospitals.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce the imminent commissioning of the Sangmelima Regional Referral Hospital and the launching of

studies for the construction of the Bamenda Referral Hospital.

Furthermore, we now need to modernize our social welfare and insurance system with a view to establishing a social security system for all.

In terms of education, we will continue to lay emphasis on improving access to basic education and the first cycles of secondary general or technical education.

The ultimate goal remains that of training youth who are ready to face the challenge of employment or access to higher education, which is itself being overhauled through increased professionalism.

- Dear Comrades,

The Cameroon we are striving to build is meant to provide a better life for the present, but also the future generations ... we are building for the present and for the future.

The youth constitute the present and the future.

Cameroonian youth are a reflection of youth throughout the world; they are anxious about the present and concerned about their future.

This is due to employment uncertainty.

There is no place in the world that has a magic wand to the problem of youth unemployment. Should we then throw in the towel and resign ourselves to some kind of fatality?

Of course NO!!!

We have already earmarked more than one-fifth of the State budget for training youths and, together, we must work out avenues for innovative solutions involving both the national community and the youths themselves.

For its part, the State will continue to play its role in fostering youth empowerment and, where necessary, by adopting special measures.

It is in this light that I directed the Prime Minister, Head of Government, to undertake a special recruitment of 25 000 young people into the civil service this year.

However, it should be understood that youth employment depends above all on our ability to create wealth. The quest for such prosperity cannot be left in the hands of the State alone. All the segments of the Nation are concerned, particularly the private sector, which creates the largest portion of the country's wealth and is a key partner in our fight against unemployment.

I will soon announce a concrete plan to create several thousands of jobs. The plan will be geared towards the provision of incentives for the creation

of enterprises of all sizes by the private sector, and notably by youths, in all sectors of the economy, from agriculture to arts, including industry and services.

We also intend to create favourable conditions for transforming the informal sector into a formal sector that is well structured and more consonant with to youth constraints.

The youths should increasingly get involved in rural areas, which are full of employment opportunities.

The cultural economy sector is also a promising sector for youth employment. Thanks to our exceptional diversity, Cameroon is a "tourist gold mine" and thus an excellent place for investing in the various cultural domains.

Sport is also a promising sector for creating wealth.

Information and communication technologies are opening new avenues for youths to express themselves and unlock their potential.

As you can see, there is a wealth of employment opportunities for youths, on condition that they contemplate life with determination, humility and probity, endurance and abnegation, intelligence and observation to be able to take advantage of the changes that are happening in the world.

It is not by waiting, or hoping that the State will provide everything, that they will find a solution. So I urge them to: INNOVATE, CREATE and, above all, DARE!

What we need today to ensure Cameroon's development is, of course, enterprising men and women with a sound cultural and technical background, but also courageous men and women with high ethical, moral and even spiritual values, profoundly attached to the ideals of integrity and justice, and respectful of public property.

It is on these conditions that our country could become an emerging country.

It is also in this perspective that I recently reactivated the National Civic Service for Participation in Development.

The establishment, in December 2009, of the National Youth Council clearly attests to their will to empower themselves, and that deserves to be encouraged and supported.

We must rekindle hope in our youths and that is why, in the process of renewing our party and in the management of public offices, we will further encourage the rejuvenation of management structures.

Giving youth pride of place is preparing them to take over, to take over from us.

That is why I am encouraging our youths to increasingly take part in political life and the first symbol of such commitment is to exercise their voting right responsibly during the forthcoming October presidential election.

At this juncture, I want to address Cameroonian women specifically, to let them know that our vision of development has always considered women's empowerment as a priority factor in our collective success.

Our vision for 2035 goes even further.

- We intend to reduce obstacles still inherent in some customs and traditions.
- We intend to strengthen measures aimed at empowering women intellectually and economically and in terms of family values.

At my instigation, the participation of women in decision making has improved significantly. We will empower women further, at the political, administrative and professional levels.

- Dear Comrades,

With the help of the great majority of Cameroonians and thanks to our Party, Cameroon is advancing.

A lot has been achieved, a lot is being done and much remains to be done, all leading to our well-being and social progress.

We intend to do more by giving fresh impetus to the life of the Nation.

However, to preserve our achievements and nurture hope, we must always build on our fundamental values, namely: Peace, Unity, Solidarity.

Peace, unity and solidarity are values for which there can be no compromise.

We shall always be unrelenting, unyielding and implacable in our refusal of violence and force advocated by some people as a means of expression or political claims in our country.

I repeat, Cameroon has a legal framework for the expression of fundamental freedoms: political freedom, freedom of association, freedom of worship, freedom of opinion, freedom of movement, freedom of the press, and so on, and so forth.

Faced with the challenges of a rapidly-changing world, we must pool our energies to ensure that beyond our differences, we can, all together, meet future challenges.

- My Dear Comrades,

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversaries of our country's independence and reunification afforded us an opportunity to rethink our present and future in the light of our past.

We learned from this exercise that the Cameroonian people are a people who jealously guard their independence, and it is in all independence that Cameroon nurtures relations with other countries in the world.

We also learned that Cameroonians are attached to the values of Peace, Equity, Solidarity which form the bedrock of our diplomatic action. We bear these values, as best we can, in a world plagued by unprecedented upheavals that are shattering balances and causing instability.

For instance, it is thanks to the common will of our two countries that a peaceful solution was found to the Bakassi border dispute. This clearly shows that there could be peace in the world, of course, on condition that the parties to the various conflicts demonstrate political will and have confidence in the international instruments freely adopted by States.

We are fighting for equity, to ensure a fair sharing of responsibilities between all continents at the level of international relations. Such is the purpose of the battle we are waging for a place for Africa in the United Nations Security Council.

Lastly, we are advocating for greater solidarity among peoples: solidarity in the fight against poverty and insecurity, solidarity in the face of new ecological constraints, solidarity in the face of threats to peace and, in particular, solidarity in the face of the terrorist threat.

We intend to first build such solidarity within the CEMAC zone whose integration process we must complete and stimulate.

We also intend to support solidarity within the African Union whose opinion must resonate on the global scene.

- Dear Comrades,

I have just outlined the major challenges of our plan to become an emerging society.

The Party is and must remain the main catalyst of this plan.

Cameroonians have put their trust in us and it is our duty to continue to deserve such trust.

We will deserve it through our example of rigour and moralization.

Militants of our Party must protect public property, fight against corruption and give priority to the general interest. CPDM Party cadres, ministers,

general managers and Members of Parliament must set the example.

Moreover, we must intensify our efforts to gain ground in order to dialogue, discuss, carry the message of peace, unity and development, explain our policy objectives and garner support.

We must also continue to encourage debate within our political family.

In fact, the CPDM must remain a forum wherein dialogue, tolerance, discussion and debate will continue to drive action.

To our comrades residing outside our borders, I want to recall that they must act as promoters and defenders of our ideals in their host countries, remain vigilant to counter any attempt to misinform or portray a negative image of our country.

Cameroon expects its diaspora to also participate in nation building. It is in a bid to fully involve the diaspora in the great republican drive that I promulgated, following adoption by Parliament, a law enabling them to exercise their right to vote.

- My Dear Comrades,

The upheavals rocking the world, the changes disrupting international balances, the ascendancy of emerging countries and numerous mass protests are

all signs of how much the world is changing, and hence the problems facing us.

We must arm ourselves with all the necessary tools to address them.

- To that end, the CPDM must remain a strong Party in a strong State;
- A modern Party in an increasingly changing world;
- An ambitious Party in an emerging country.

It is thanks to the strength of our convictions and the ardour of our militancy that we will muster the necessary energy to remain mobilized.

It is from this reservoir of ethical values that we must draw to sustain the Party over time.

Let us be fully aware of our responsibility before history and work together in that spirit to remain the greatest and leading party we are today.

This is my call to all of you on this special occasion.

It is on this note of such major commitment, which I urge you all to take, in unison and battle array, that I declare open the Third Ordinary Congress of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, the Congress of Fresh Impetus, for an ever strong CPDM at the service of the Cameroonian people.

Long live the CPDM, our great Party,

Long live Cameroon,

Thank you for your kind attention.