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**Commission Nationale Anti-Corruption
(CONAC)**



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

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Presidency of the Republic

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**OFFICIAL PRESENTATION OF
CAMEROON'S 2020 ANTI-CORRUPTION STATUS REPORT**

SPEECH OF THE CHAIRMAN OF CONAC

Yaounde Conference Centre, September 23, 2021

Honourable President of the Senate,
Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,
The President of the Constitutional Council,
The President of the Economic and Social Council,
Your Excellency the Prime Minister, Head of Government,
Members of Government,
The First President of the Supreme Court,
The Public Prosecutor at the said Court,
Ambassadors and Representatives of Diplomatic Missions,
Representatives of Partners in Development,
Directors General of Public and Semi-Public Enterprises,
Lord City Mayors,
Presidents of Chambers, Orders and Professional Organisations,
Representatives of Religious Communities,
Representatives of Political Parties,
Representatives of Civil Society Organisations,
Chairpersons of Anti-Corruption Units,
Representatives of the media,
Distinguished guests in your respective ranks,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the Report on the anti-corruption status drive in Cameroon in 2020 is being published, in accordance with Article 24 of the instrument constituting the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

We seize this opportunity to extend a heart-felt welcome to you present in this Hall of the Yaounde Conference Centre.

Before we proceed, we would like to ask you to rise and observe a minute's silence in memory of our colleague **Honourable Chief Norbert MBILE NANGIYA**, Member of the CONAC Coordinating Committee and Chairman of the Translation into English and Proofreading Committee of *Cameroon's Annual Anti-Corruption Status Reports*, whom the Lord called to glory on May 4, 2021.

This minute of silence also covers all the victims of the various crises our country is currently facing.

May his soul rest in peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2020, which is the focus of the Report that is being published today, has been a difficult year for the world, given the COVID-19 pandemic. As we know, the devastating effects of this pandemic in our country include social distancing and the slow-down of Government activities.

This situation no doubt explains the decline in the number of contributions received for the preparation of this report. In fact, compared with the 2019 edition, CONAC received a total of 98 contributions from external sources, but this number dropped to 65 in 2020, representing a decrease of 33 contributions in absolute terms and 33.67% in relative terms.

This decrease applies to some Courts, some Ministries, some public enterprises and civil society.

With regard to Courts, there has been a reduction from 19 contributions in 2019 to 11 in 2020.

Similarly, 25 Ministries forwarded their activity reports to CONAC, compared to 31 for the 2019 Report. In addition to the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of State Property, Surveys and Land Tenure, whose contributions were not included in the previous report, we regret that this Report is void of the activity Reports of the following Ministries: Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, Ministry of Water Resources and Energy, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Secondary Education and Ministry of Higher Education.

CONAC received 17 contributions from public enterprises, compared to 27 in the 2019 report, a gap of 10.

For the Civil Society, contributions went from 09 to 08, that is. a shortfall of one Association.

Just as in the 2019 Report, no contribution was received from any of the Regional and Local Authorities. The progressive setting up of Regional Councils and the election of new Mayors probably account for this situation. We are delighted that many Mayors have sent to us the instruments setting up anti-corruption units in their Councils or Municipalities.

Similarly, we welcome the fact that Religious Denominations that have not been contributing for some years have been actively involved in the fight against corruption in 2020. This report presents the activities of the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions of the National Episcopal Council of Cameroon and the Integrity Club of the Protestant University of Central Africa (UPAC).

However, the fact that the majority of the mainstream Churches as well as the Islamic Community are still weak in the fight against corruption in our country is a call for concern.

The Report on the Anti-Corruption Status drive in Cameroon in 2020 is presented in five parts, just like in the previous editions:

- Part I: Anti-corruption activities carried out by Control Institutions;
- Part II: Anti-corruption activities carried out by Courts;
- Part III: Anti-corruption activities carried out by Ministries;
- Part IV: Anti-corruption activities carried out by Public and Semi-public Institutions;
- Part V: Anti-corruption activities carried out by the Private Sector and Civil Society.

So what do we have to keep in mind?

In 2020, CONAC carried out prevention, communication, training, cooperation and investigation activities.

In prevention, CONAC drew up a Code of Ethics and revamped Integrity Clubs in State Universities and some twenty Private Higher Education Institutes.

In addition, as in previous years, CONAC conducted public awareness campaigns during important national events such as school resumption, the cocoa season, the Legislative and Municipal Elections of 9 February 2020 and the Regional Elections of 6 December 2020.

In the same vein, anti- corruption notices were displayed on the front walls of administrative buildings throughout the country.

As regards communication, the relevant services of CONAC continued to produce the micro programme ESPACE CONAC, broadcast on CRTV and other partner television stations. The magazine CONAC NEWSLETTER was also distributed free of charge.

In terms of training and cooperation, CONAC organised a seminar for officials of the General Inspectorate of the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family and participated, from 7 to 9 September 2020, in the Commonwealth Virtual Conference for Anti-Corruption Institutions in Africa.

Data on complaints received on CONAC's toll-free number, 1517, show that 12 675 calls were received in 2020, compared to 17 350 in 2019, representing a relative drop of 26.94% and 4 675 in absolute terms.

Out of the 2,470 calls having a direct link with corruption, 17% concern the Road Transport sub-sector, which is therefore the most decried. The next most deplored sub-sector is Land Administration (14.60%), followed by Law and Order (13.60%), Finance (12.60%) and Justice (11.30%).

Several complaints were investigated through missions led by members of the Coordination Committee or through Rapid Intervention Actions (RIAs).

The investigations relate to cases of:

- corruption in the selection of candidates for Moroccan scholarships, at the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training;
- Desertion of duty and undue collection of salaries by some teachers at the Government High School Elig-Essonno in the Mfoundi Division;
- corruption at the Medium-Sized Enterprises Taxation Centre in Ngaoundere;
- corruption in the monitoring of the execution of the contract for the rehabilitation of the residence of the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in charge of the Supreme State Control Office;
- financial malpractices in the rehabilitation works of some infrastructures of the Garoua International Airport;

- financial malpractices at the Ebolowa Technical Teachers' Training College.

As part of Rapid Intervention Actions, 19 field operations were carried out in 2020, compared to 15 in 2019, to establish flagrant corruption offences being committed, following reports involving officials on duty at the:

- Government Primary School, Bobog I, Bot-Makak Subdivision, Nyong and Kelle Division;
- Office of the Sub-Divisional Officer for Yaounde IV, Mfoundi Division;
- Yaounde City Council;
- Regional Delegation of Public Service and Administrative Reform for the Centre;
- Regional Delegation of Transport for the Adamaoua;
- Cameroon *Office du Baccalauréat*;
- Yaounde II Council;
- Yaounde VII Council;
- Littoral I Customs Sector;
- National Centre for the Development of Information Technology (CENADI);
- Government Bilingual High School Obala, Lekie Division;
- Government High School Ombessa, Mbam and Inoubou Division;
- Gynaeco-Obstetric and Paediatric Hospital, Douala;
- Ministry of Water Resources and Energy;
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Development;
- Ministry of Basic Education;
- Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training;
- Ministry of Transport.

At the end of these field investigations, 17 of the 19 complaints received by CONAC were confirmed and the suspects were referred to Court for legal action. We would like to thank the Minister Delegate at the Presidency of the Republic in charge of Defence, the Secretary of State for Defence in charge of the Gendarmerie and the Delegate General for National Security for their frank collaboration in handling these cases.

The financial damage suffered by the State in the investigations conducted by CONAC in 2020 is estimated at **CFA 480 769 386 (four hundred and eighty million seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand three hundred and eighty-six) francs.**

As in 2019, the other control and regulatory institutions whose activities are presented in the 2020 Report are: the Supreme State Audit Office (CONSUPE), the National Agency for Financial Investigation (NAFI), the National Communication Council (NCC), the Electricity Sector Regulatory Agency (ARSEL) and the Public Contracts Regulatory Board (ARMP).

The activities of the Supreme State Audit Office were carried out by its Anti-Corruption Unit and the Budget and Finance Disciplinary Council (CDBF), under its authority.

In 2020, the CDBF issued a total of twenty-seven Decisions compared to twenty-six in 2019. These Decisions concerned officials or former officials of 13 public administrations.

Out of the 27 accused persons, 12 were found guilty of various management errors. Special fines totalling **CFA 7,900,000 (seven million nine hundred thousand) francs** were imposed on them accordingly. Some of these officials were debited for a total amount of **CFA 147,666,435 (one hundred and forty-seven million six hundred and sixty-six thousand four hundred and thirty-five) francs**.

On its part, in 2020, the National Agency for Financial Investigation (NAFI) recorded a total number of 785 Suspicious Transaction Reports from reporting entities like Banks, Micro-Finance Institutions, Money Transfer Companies, Insurance Companies and Lawyers.

It should be recalled that NAFI received 635 Suspicious Transaction Reports in 2019. Thus, there was an increase of 150 Suspicious Transaction Reports, that is, a rate of 23.62%.

These Suspicious Transactions Reports have been treated and 232 Reports sent to Courts and relevant Authorities. The financial flows identified in these files amounted to **CFA 124 197 558 836 (one hundred and twenty-four billion one hundred and ninety-seven million five hundred and fifty-eight thousand eight hundred and thirty-six) francs**. In 2019, these flows amounted to **CFA 413 697 728 677 (four hundred and thirteen billion six hundred and ninety-seven million seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand six hundred and seventy-seven) francs**.

Corruption, embezzlement of public property, scamming, forgery, various forms of trafficking, financing of terrorism, swindling and various forms of fraud are, in order of importance, the underlying offences suspected in these cases.

The National Communication Council (NCC) issued five decisions in 2020 following its monitoring activities, compared with 30 in 2019.

According to these Decisions, 04 Publishers and 04 Journalists were temporarily suspended from practicing their profession or given a warning.

The activities of the Public Contracts Regulation Board, the Electricity Sector Regulation Agency, Ministries and Public Enterprises are, as has been the tradition since 2017, presented following a framework inspired by the PrECIS tool developed in line with the National Anti-Corruption Strategy.

With regard to Courts, the 2020 Report presents the decisions taken in cases of corruption and related offences by:

- the Courts of First Instance of Yaounde Administrative Centre, Yaounde-Ekounou, Douala-Bonanjo, Edea, Yokadouma, Fundong, Mbengwi and Bamenda;
- the High Court of Mvila;
- the Special Criminal Court (SCC);
- the Supreme Court, through the Specialised Section of the Judicial Bench.

The major features of these decisions are that the Special Criminal Court rendered 21 final judgments in cases involving:

- the Ministry of Finance (MINFI);
- the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT)
- the Ministry of Public Works (MINTP)
- the Ministry of State Property, Surveys and Land Tenure (MINDCAF);
- the Autonomous Port of Douala (PAD);
- the National Social Insurance Fund (NSIF);
- the Cameroon Shipyard and Industrial Engineering Ltd (CNIC);
- the Electricity Development Corporation (EDC);
- Aéroports du Cameroun (ADC);
- Cameroon Water Utilities (CAMWATER);
- the National Procurement Centre for Essential Medicines and Medical Consumables (CENAME);
- the University of Douala;
- the Douala I, Yaounde I, Yaounde IV, Ambam and Bamusso Councils;
- the former Ngaoundere City Council.

There were 145 indicted persons in these cases. Forty-six of them were found guilty and sentenced to prison terms ranging from ten years to life imprisonment.

The total amount of financial loss suffered by the State of Cameroon in these cases is estimated at **CFA 16,982,838,363 (sixteen billion nine hundred and eighty-two million eight hundred and thirty-eight thousand three hundred and sixty-three) francs.**

Over the same year, the Specialised Section of the Supreme Court rendered four decisions on appeals for the annulment of judgments passed by the Special Criminal Court and relating to the misappropriation of public property.

The examination of the merits of these appeals, judged admissible in form, led to the quashing of three judgments and the confirmation of one judgment.

In accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the private sector and civil society were strongly involved in the fight against corruption in 2020.

We are pleased to note that the Cameroon Employers' Union (GICAM) has adopted a Code of Ethics for its members. It has also set up a Commission in charge of Corporate Governance, Ethics and Responsibility.

The Civil Society has been active in the areas of prevention, education and whistleblowing. As was the case in previous editions, the 2020 Report covers the activities carried out by member associations of the National Anti-Corruption Coalition, created by CONAC. These particularly include:

- Action Against Corruption (A2C);

- Approches Locales pour le Développement Durable (ALDED)
- Droits de l'Enfant: un Livre pour chaque Enfant (DELICE);
- Jeunesse Sans Corruption (JSC);
- Organisation Nationale pour la Réinsertion Sociale (ONARES);
- Horizons Femmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Report on the State of the Fight against Corruption in Cameroon in 2020 shows that notwithstanding the very difficult social context, violations on public property and governance have not reduced in our country. The number of complaints received by CONAC is a clear indicator of this reality: 16,067 in total!

As we point out every year, these offences impede the development of our country. As a matter of fact, the financial damage suffered by the State of Cameroon as a result of corruption and related offences, according to reports of investigations conducted by CONAC and the decisions rendered by the CDBF and the SCC in 2020, is estimated at a total of **CFA 17,611,274,184 (seventeen billion six hundred and eleven million two hundred and seventy-four thousand one hundred and eighty-four) francs.**

Despite this, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya, has remained steadfast in his determination to fight the scourge of corruption. This was demonstrated by the signing, on 1 April 2020, of the decree ratifying the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, adopted in Maputo, Mozambique on 11 July 2003.

It should be noted that by ratifying this Convention, our country has reinforced its legal framework in the fight against corruption, particularly with regard to illicit enrichment. At the same time, it reaffirms to the international community its determination to overcome this scourge.

Article 8 of this Convention states that *“State Parties undertake to adopt necessary measures to establish under their laws an offence of illicit enrichment”*.

The 2020 Report portrays our country as having many actors who are resolutely committed to this fight within the administration, the judiciary, the private sector and civil society. We hereby commend them for their efforts, as we know that the task is far from being easy.

We equally appreciate the progressive setting up of Anti-Corruption Units within Regional and Local Administrations (RLAs). To their leaders, we remind them that CONAC is ready to work with them in the performance of their duties.

We are also pleased that efforts were made at the level of the Regions to implement the 2020 anti-corruption plans, although the implementation rates are still low. Our assessment this year shows that 42.09% of the plans were implemented nationwide, with the exception of the North West Region. The East Region recorded the highest implementation rate with 57.11%. The South West Region, on the contrary, had the lowest implementation rate of 31.66%.

Data collected during the evaluation of these Action Plans was also used to develop a Corruption Perception Index for Cameroon (CPI-CAM). Based on the data collected, the average score obtained in the nine regions evaluated is 5.95/10.

In comparison, in the 2020 ranking by the NGO Transparency International, Cameroon's Corruption Perception Index is 25%, which places us 149th on the global scale.

It should be noted that in this ranking, the higher the Index, the lower the level of corruption in the country concerned and the lower the Index, the higher the level of corruption. This is not the case for the CPI-CAM, which is designed to measure the level of corruption on a scale ranging from 1 to 10.

The major finding of the CONAC study is that the Corruption Perception Index is inversely proportional to the rate of implementation of the Regional Anti-Corruption Action Plans. In other words, the more activities are carried out to eradicate corruption, the less the population feels the effects of this scourge.

As a matter of fact, the East Region, which has the best implementation rate of its Anti-Corruption Action Plan, has a Corruption Perception Index of 5.84/10. The South West Region, which has the lowest Action Plan implementation rate, has a Corruption Perception Index of 6.02/10.

We see this as a sign of encouragement for all those who work daily to eradicate corruption in our country.

Since the 2020 Report does not include the evaluation of the Regional Anti-Corruption Action Plans, we will address this in due course.

Considering the findings in the anti-corruption drive in 2020, CONAC recommends the further improvement of the legal framework in this area through the adoption of an anti-corruption law and the setting up of institutions to manage stolen assets.

We also urge all public and semi-public administrations, as well as all parents, schools, professions, political parties and associations to strive for the effective implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and to ensure that integrity education is recognized as an essential human value for the construction of a corruption-free society, based on the religious pillars of our churches and mosques.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the compilation of the Report presented to you today, CONAC discussed the format and content of Cameroon's Anti-Corruption Annual Reports, and focused on the need to fine-tune the evaluation of the fight against corruption in Cameroon, so as to better highlight the impact of corruption on the country's economy.

A Committee has been set up to beef up discussions on this. Given that these reports stem from a collective effort, some of you may be asked to contribute when the time comes. We trust that you will collaborate as usual to ensure quality results worthy of our country's name.

This is the content of *Cameroon's 2020 Anti-Corruption Status Report*, produced in English and French.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to its compilation in whatever way. We particularly thank Chairpersons and Members of Anti-Corruption Units, as well as heads of Courts, Private Sector and Civil Society organizations, who forwarded their contributions to us.

Our gratitude also goes to members of the Drafting, Translation and Proofreading Committees of Cameroon's anti-corruption Reports, as well as to all those involved in organizing this ceremony.

We would like to seize this opportunity to announce that the CONAC website is active again. The link to access it remains the same: www.conac.cm. This redesigned site will give you access to our Annual Reports, to our ESPACE CONAC radio, TV and Alert broadcasts and to photographs that you can freely download.

Let us all learn and teach our children this maxim: **"what is not yours, do not touch" or "what is not ours, we should not touch"**.

Thank you for your kind attention!