

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

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



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace – Work – Fatherland

Presidency of the Republic

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**Official presentation ceremony of
*Cameroon's 2021 Anti-Corruption Status Report***

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
THE CHAIRMAN OF CONAC**



Mont Fébé Htel, Yaoundé, 10th November, 2022

**The President of the Senate,
The Speaker of the National Assembly,
The President of the Constitutional Council,
The President of the Economic and Social Council,
Honourable Prime Minister, Head of Government,
Excellencies, Members of Government,
The First President of the Supreme Court,
The Attorney General of the Supreme Court,
Ambassadors and Representatives of Diplomatic Missions,
Representatives of Development Partners,
General Managers of Public Establishments as well as Public and semi-public companies,
Presidents of Regional Councils,
City Mayors,
Presidents of Professional Chambers, Orders and Organisations,
Representatives of Religious Communities,
Representatives of Political Parties,
Representatives of Civil Society Organisations,
Chairpersons of Anti-Corruption Units,
Representatives of Media Organs,
Distinguished guests in your respective capacities and ranks,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In compliance with Article 24 of its constitutive decree, the National Anti-Corruption Commission is today publishing the **Report on the anti-corruption drive in Cameroon in 2021**.

Therefore, we would like to welcome you to this Hall in the Mont Fébé Hotel, and thank you for accepting CONAC's invitation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Report, which is being published today, is the eleventh edition. The Report follows the new configuration recommended by the Coordination Committee of CONAC.

Before the report was drafted, various administrations were requested to forward their contributions to CONAC. They were thus asked, in addition to the activities carried out, to report on the difficulties encountered and the prospects in the fight against corruption.

This report, which summarises these contributions, as well as those of CONAC, is structured in three main parts.

The first part is devoted to the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

The second part deals with the repression of acts of corruption.

The third part focuses on cooperation in the fight against corruption.

While the volume of the 2021 Report is smaller than all previous editions, it is based on 96 contributions from external sources, compared to 67 in the previous edition. This represents an increase of 31 contributions.

One of the innovations is that 06 private enterprises in the mining sector provided input to the report.

The involvement of Regional and Local Authorities, specifically City and Local Councils, is also commendable, given that 13 of them submitted contributions.

We are also pleased to note that 28 Public Enterprises submitted their contributions for this Report. Only 17 did so for the 2020 edition.

Moreover, **Cameroon's 2021 Anti-Corruption Status Report** received input from 27 Ministries, 10 Courts, 07 Civil Society Organisations, 03 Audit Institutions, 02 Regulatory Bodies and 01 Religious Group.

Even though we are pleased with the substantial increase in the number of contributions, it is lamentable that some administrations did not respond to the requests for information sent to them. They include the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of State Property, Surveys and Land Tenure, the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development and the Ministry of Secondary Education.

The major finding of **the 2021 Report** is that the National Anti-Corruption Strategy is being effectively implemented in most of our Administrations and Regions, through Prevention, Education, Conditions, Incentives and Sanctions, as set out in the PrECIS tool.

Generally speaking, the contributions received from administrations show that measures have been taken to simplify procedures and reduce the time taken to process files.

In addition, many public officials have benefited from capacity building, and existing legal instruments have been provided to the public.

In some administrations, efforts have been made to improve the living conditions and working environment of staff.

Incentives include the awarding of various distinctions, bonuses to meritorious staff and gender promotion.

The National Anti-Corruption Strategy was also implemented in Regions through Regional Action Plans. This activity was evaluated in Regions, except for the North West, for insecurity reasons, The mid-term evaluation shows that 42.09% of the plans have been implemented. The East Region recorded the highest implementation rate with **57.11%**, whereas the South West Region scored the lowest implementation rate of **31.66%**. Compared to 2020, these results remain constant.

CONAC has been active in the areas of prevention, education, condition, incentives and sanctions.

In the area of sensitisation, we note the participation of CONAC in the special plenary session devoted to the fight against corruption at the National Assembly, on the 11th of July 2021.

CONAC also conducted nationwide sensitisation campaigns on the need for public involvement in the fight against corruption, on specific occasions such as the

African Nations Football Championship (CHAN) and the corruption-free 2021 back-to-school year.

The campaign to affix boards bearing anti-corruption messages on the front walls of public buildings also continued in the Adamawa, Centre, North, West and South Regions.

Similarly, Integrity Clubs were set up and installed in some higher education institutions. This activity was carried out at the University of Buea, the University of Yaoundé II-Soa, the FOMIC Polytechnic University Institute of Buea and the Higher School of Commerce and Business Management of Yaoundé.

In the area of training, CONAC provided capacity building opportunities for members of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Parishes of the Obala Diocese and the Anti-Corruption Units of the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure, the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family, the Port Authority of Douala (PAD), the Public Contracts Regulation Board (ARMP), Cameroon Water Utilities (CAMWATER), Cameroon Telecommunications (CAMTEL) and the Cameroon Real Estate Company (SIC).

CONAC continued to produce the “SPACE CONAC” micro-programme, broadcast on CRTV and other partner radio and television stations. The same applies to the “CONAC NEWSLETTER” magazine.

CONAC received a total of **6,705 reports** of acts and practices of corruption in 2021. In 2020, it received 16, 067. 3,879 (three thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine) of these complaints were lodged through administrative mail, 2,694 (two thousand six hundred and ninety-four) through calls on the CONAC hotline, 1517, 77 (seventy-seven) through e-mail and 55 (fifty-five) through messages on the WhatsApp number, 658 262 682.

Based on all these complaints, one can conclude that corruption is particularly rife in eleven sectors of activity, listed here in alphabetical order:

- Education
- Finance (Customs, Taxation, Treasury)
- Forces of Law and Order;
- Forestry and Wildlife
- Health;
- Justice
- Regional and Local Authorities;
- Road Transport;
- State Property and Land Tenure;
- Territorial Administration;
- Trade

The most frequently decried practices include:

- the payment of money for the signatures of some administrative and municipal authorities;
- undue demand in the sale of State private land;
- the issuance of fraudulent land certificates;
- scamming of automobile drivers;

- corruption during entrance examinations to some higher education institutions;
- corruption during enrolment in some government schools;
- embezzlement of funds in some Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs);
- the demand for 'percentages' for the payment of invoices;
- the illegal exploitation of forest and wildlife resources;
- the partiality in the rulings of some magistrates;
- fraud and corruption in most driving licence examinations;
- ransoming and diversion of some patients;
- the illicit sale of medicines in some government hospitals;
- the defrauding of users for the issuance of medical certificates.

It should be noted that several actions are taken based on the complaints received at CONAC. In some cases, they are forwarded to the relevant or competent administrations.

In most cases, **CONAC conducts investigations** through Missions led by members of the Coordination Committee or Rapid Intervention Actions (RIAs) intended to catch the alleged perpetrators of corruption red-handed.

The results of investigations presented in **the 2021 Report** relate to:

- allegations of misappropriation of public funds at the Divisional Delegation of Housing and Urban Development of Dja and Lobo;
- allegations of misappropriation of Parent-Teacher Association (APEE) funds at Lycée Scientifique, Bertoua;
- allegations of irregularities at the Cameroon Debt Recovery Company (SRC);
- allegations of irregularities in the transfer of 207 ha 20 a 00 ca of land to the rightful owners of Land Certificate No. 440/Moungo in Moungo Division, Littoral Region;
- the prospective investigation mission to Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire in connection with the reorganisation of the Cameroon maritime sector;
- the management of the State Private Land in Buea.

Sixteen field visits were carried out through Rapid Intervention Actions in reaction to reports of:

- extortion of funds at the Edéa Prison;
- usurpation of the qualification of Chairman of CONAC;
- extortion of a detainee at the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Military Court of Bafoussam;
- use of a fake certificate at the General Delegation for National Security;
- irregular absence and undue collection of salary at the Maroua Senior Divisional Office;
- impersonation and corruption in administrative competitive examinations at the Ministry of Defence;
- demand for bribes from newly-recruited teachers for the payment of their salary arrears;
- irregular absence and forgery at the Government Technical, Industrial and Commercial College (CETIC) of Nden in the Dja and Lobo Division;
- illegal logging in Mintaba village in Bot Makak Subdivision, Nyong and Kelle Division;

- usurpation of qualification and demand for bribe for the signature of the Sub-Divisional Officer of Yaoundé IV;
- the attempted extortion of a parent and forgery of a document at Government Bilingual High School, Mimboman;
- demand for money for the production of National Identity Cards at the National Centre for the Production of Identification Documents;
- refusal of service at the Mbam and Inoubou Land Registry;
- embezzlement of PTA fees at the Bayalong II Government Primary School, Ombessa, Mbam and Inoubou Division; and
- attempted extortion of funds and forgery at the Douala Territorial Gendarmerie Group.

At the end of these RIAs, 13 of the 16 complaints received by CONAC were substantiated. The suspects thereto were referred to Court for legal proceedings.

The financial losses incurred by the State of Cameroon, as assessed by the investigations carried out by CONAC in 2021, stand at **CFA 24,801,575,471 (twenty-four billion eight hundred and one million five hundred and seventy-five thousand four hundred and seventy-one) francs**, of which CFA F24,249,045,479 (twenty-four billion two hundred and forty-nine million forty-five thousand four hundred and seventy-nine) francs are related to the irregularities observed at the SRC.

Contrary to popular belief, the 2021 Report demonstrates that acts and practices of corruption are sanctioned in our country. Such measures are taken in the form of administrative sanctions on the one hand and court rulings on the other.

Administrative sanctions were imposed on 865 public officials serving in Ministries and Public Enterprises. These sanctions range from warnings to dismissals.

The case of Cameroon Postal Services (CAMPOST) where 14 workers were charged a total of CFA 10,049,947 (ten million forty-nine thousand nine hundred and forty-seven) francs is particularly worthy of note.

Another example is the 499 public servants who were dismissed or revoked by the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms for irregular absence, following the completion of the Physical Counting of Public Servants (COPPE).

Another commendable achievement is that the Minister of Public Contracts signed a decision excluding, for a period of two years, 40 companies for various irregularities noted in the execution of contracts that had been awarded to them.

The 2021 report noted that the Budgetary and Finance Disciplinary Council (CDBF) issued a total of 24 decisions, compared to 27 in 2020. These decisions concern officials or former officials of 09 public administrations.

Out of the 24 persons implicated, 08 were found guilty of various management offences. Special fines of a total amount of **CFA 8,800,000 (eight million eight hundred thousand) francs** were imposed on them, in compliance with the regulations in force.

Some of these officials were ordered to pay a total amount of **CFA 600,844,610 (six hundred million eight hundred and forty-four thousand six hundred and ten) francs**, representing the financial loss incurred by the State of Cameroon in these cases.

With regard to the Courts, **the 2021 Report** records the decisions taken in cases pertaining to corruption and related offences by:

- the Court of First Instance of Poli;
- the High Courts of Benue, Mayo-Rey, Moungo and Wouri;
- the Court of Appeal of the North;
- the Special Criminal Court (SCC);
- the Supreme Court, through the Specialised Section and the Criminal Section of the Judicial Bench.

The major aspects of these decisions are that in 2021, the Special Criminal Court rendered 17 final judgments in cases involving 54 (fifty-four) indicted persons.

At the behest of the Attorney General of the Special Criminal Court, the proceedings against 08 (eight) of these defendants were discontinued, after the corpus delicti was recovered.

Nine (09) other defendants were acquitted for the benefit of the doubt.

On the other hand, 37 (thirty-seven) defendants were found guilty and sentenced to prison terms ranging from three years to life imprisonment.

The total amount of financial damage incurred by the State of Cameroon in these cases is estimated at **CFA 18 545 374 057 (eighteen billion five hundred and forty-five million three hundred and seventy-four thousand and fifty-seven) francs**.

Eight (08) appeals for annulment were lodged with the Supreme Court at the end of these trials.

The Specialised Section of the Supreme Court issued six (06) decisions on appeals to quash judgments relating to the misappropriation of public funds issued by the Special Criminal Court.

The examination of the merits of these appeals resulted in the annulment of two (02) judgments.

For its part, the Criminal Section of the Supreme Court rendered two (02) decisions following appeals for the annulment of judgments emanating from the High Court of Mbam and Inoubou and Lom and Djerem, concerning the misappropriation of public funds.

Although judged admissible in form, these appeals were all rejected on the merits.

On the basis of the activities carried out by Control Institutions and Courts in 2021, it is clear that corruption and related offences continue to cause enormous damage to our country, thereby jeopardising our efforts to achieve development. The total amount of this damage is **CFA 43,947,794,138 (forty-three billion nine hundred and forty-seven million seven hundred and ninety-four thousand one hundred and thirty-eight) francs**, according to the investigations carried out by CONAC as well as the decisions of the Budgetary and Finance Disciplinary Council and the Special Criminal Court. It was CFA 17 611 274 184 (seventeen billion six hundred and eleven million two hundred and seventy-four thousand one hundred and eighty-four) francs in 2020, an increase of CFA 26 336 519 954 (twenty-six billion three hundred and thirty-six million five hundred and nineteen thousand nine hundred and fifty-four) francs.

In accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Cameroon has made cooperation one of the pillars of its strategy to combat this scourge. **Cooperation** is effective both at the national and international levels.

At the national level, cooperation involves public institutions, religious institutions, civil society and the private sector.

The 2021 Report highlights the fruitful collaboration between CONAC and some public institutions such as the National Agency for Financial Investigation (NAFI) and the National Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (ANTIC) in the fight against corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism as well as cybercrime.

We use this opportunity to respond to the numerous concerns echoed by the press on specific issues.

With regard to the allegations of corruption involving a multinational company operating in the Extractive Industries Sector and officials of some of our Public Enterprises, we should say that this complaint is being handled in the same way we handle all the others. The results of the investigation will be published in due course, in accordance with the provisions of CONAC's constitutive text.

On the allegations of misappropriation of funds intended for the fight against Covid-19, CONAC did not deem it necessary to carry out investigations, given that the Audit Bench had already carried out an audit thereto.

Among the activities of religious institutions, we note the training and sensitisation workshops organised by the National Service for Justice and Peace of the National Episcopal Council of Cameroon in the Douala and Garoua Archdioceses, as well as in the Bafoussam and Obala Dioceses.

As far as Civil Society is concerned, **the 2021 Report** presents the activities of seven (07) member associations of the National Anti-Corruption Coalition set up by CONAC, in terms of prevention, education and handling of complaints. These are:

- Association des Amoureux du Livre (ASSOAL) ;
- Rights of the Child: A Book for Every Child (DELICE);
- Face à la Santé ;
- National Organisation for Social Rehabilitation (ONARES);
- Action Against Corruption (A2C);
- Jeunesse Sans Corruption (JSC);
- Federation of Cameroonian Consumer Organisations (FECOC).

As far as the private sector is concerned, the Cameroon Inter-Professional Union (GICAM) stood out for its prevention and training activities.

On the international level, anti-corruption cooperation activities were carried out within the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the African Union and the Action Group against Money Laundering in Central Africa (GABAC).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2021 Report illustrates that the anti-corruption drive in Cameroon is being implemented effectively through the mechanism put in place by the government and the actions of stakeholders. However, we must admit that this scourge still persists with considerable severity, hence the need to step up the ongoing efforts.

In terms of prospects, the contributions received from the various administrations suggest the need to increase the resources allocated to institutions and structures in charge of fighting corruption in our country.

The process of internalising the international legal instruments ratified by Cameroon should also be pursued by enacting an anti-corruption law.

At the structural level, appropriate measures should be taken to strengthen e-governance, notably through the digitisation of some procedures and electronic payments.

Furthermore, there is need to consolidate the integration and effective implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy in public and private administrations, in the civil society, as well as in the Regional and Local Authorities. This gives us the opportunity to restate the wish to see CONAC equipped with regional offices in order to effectively support the decentralisation process.

Nevertheless, we must state that many shortcomings were identified in the contributions we received for the compilation of this Report. Some of these contributions have not been taken into account. Others have been trimmed or rewritten.

We will discuss this in more detail at the workshop that CONAC will be organising in the upcoming days for Chairpersons of Anti-Corruption Units.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

We present to you **Cameroon's 2021 Anti-Corruption Status Report** in English and French.

We would like to thank all those who, in one way or another, contributed to the drafting of this Report. We particularly mention the heads of public and private administrative bodies, Chairpersons and Members of the Anti-Corruption Units, the Judicial authorities, the Private Sector Organisations and the Civil Society who sent us their contributions.

We also extend our gratitude to the members of the Reflection, Drafting, Proofreading and Translation Committees of **Cameroon's Anti-Corruption Annual Reports**, as well as to all those who participated in the organisation of this ceremony.

Thank you for your kind attention!