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**DEPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I**

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**POST-GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR  
SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL  
SCIENCES**

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**DOCTORAL RESEARCH UNIT FOR  
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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**THE PLACE OF THE CAMEROON  
PARLIAMENT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS: A  
Historical analysis from 1992-2020.**

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**Specialty: History of International Relations**

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To my parents and foster parents  
David Achuo Kang, Geraldine Nzuh Anang  
and  
Francisca Komm Uguoh, Thomas Nyoh (late)

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**ABSTRACT**

This study is entitled “The place of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs from 1992-2020: A historical analysis”. The objective of this study is generally to examine the role of the parliament in international relations and how it has transmuted its diplomacy from 1992-2020. In a specific way, it is to trace the historical background and structure of the Cameroon parliament, examine the structures, functions of parliament in matters of foreign affairs and reasons of involvement. Also to look at the diplomacy of Cameroon in foreign parliament, the challenges it faces and also propose some perspectives that can ensure a better implication. In order to attain these objectives, traditional channels of research in history were used which were primary and secondary sources. We consulted documents on matters of parliamentary diplomacy from the National archives Yaoundé, the national archives Buea, the archives of the national assembly and academic documents. We also carried out interviews with persons that were either partially or fully informed on matters of parliamentary diplomacy in Cameroon. The different sources consulted permitted us to gather enough information on the involvement of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs. It was noticed that the parliament involves in foreign affairs due to legal dispositions or laws previewed by the constitution, to strengthen the policies of the executive and enhance democracy and also due to lobby reasons. Support services at the national assembly such as the Department of coordination of international relations and the committee of foreign affairs facilitate the activities of parliament at the international scene. To better understand the implication of the parliament in foreign affairs, the activities of Cameroon in multilateral parliaments were observed which were the CEMAC Parliament, the Pan African Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Even though the participation was not without challenges like limited finances and limited technical knowledge by parliamentarians, it resulted to the reinforcement of Cameroon’s diplomacy of presence or effectiveness by promoting human rights, regional integration, and also ensured the affirmation of Cameroon’s sovereignty at the international level. Also it has influenced national policy through gender equality and promotion of education among others.

## RÉSUMÉ

*Cette étude est intitulée « La place du parlement Camerounais dans les affaires étrangères de 1992-2020 : Une analyse historique ». L'objectif Général de ce travail est d'analyser le rôle du parlement Camerounais dans les relations internationales et comment il a impacté la transmutation de sa diplomatie de 1992-2020. Plus précisément il s'agit de retracer l'histoire et la structuration du parlement Camerounais, examiner les structures et les fonctions en matières des relations internationales et les raisons de son engagement. Aussi d'examiner la diplomatie du parlement Camerounais dans les parlements multilatéraux. Afin d'atteindre ces objectifs, les voies traditionnelles de recherche en histoire que sont les sources primaires et secondaires ont été utilisées. Nous avons consulté les documents relatifs à la diplomatie parlementaire dans les archives nationales de Yaoundé et Buea, les archives de l'assemblée nationale et de nombreux documents à caractères académiques. Nous avons également interviewé les personnes spécialisées sur la diplomatie parlementaire au Cameroun dans la réalisation de cette étude. Les différentes sources consultées nous ont permis d'assembler assez d'informations sur l'implication du parlement dans les relations internationales. On est arrivé à la conclusion selon laquelle l'implication du parlement est permit par les dispositions légales prévues par la constitution, pour accompagner les politiques de l'exécutif et la promotion de la démocratie. La commission des affaires étrangères et les services de soutien à l'assemblée nationale come la division de coordination des relations internationales facilitent les activités du parlement sur la scène internationale. Pour mieux comprendre la participation du parlement dans les relations internationales, les activités du parlement Camerounais dans trois parlements multilatéraux ont été observé c'est à dire le parlement CEMAC, Parlement Pan Africaine et l'union interparlementaire. Malgré le fait que le parlement rencontre les difficultés comme la manque des moyens financières et les limites des capacités techniques, la participation des parlementaires dans les relations internationales a conduit au renforcement de la diplomatie de la présence effective à travers la promotion des droits de l'homme et l'intégration régionale, l'assurance de la souveraineté du Cameroun sur la scène internationale. Cette participation a également influencée la politique nationale surtout l'éducation et l'égalité du genre.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

<b>ALCAM</b>	: <i>Assemblée Législative du Cameroun</i>
<b>ALCAMOC</b>	: <i>Assemblée Législative du Cameroun Occidental</i>
<b>ALCAMOR</b>	: <i>Assemblée Législative du Cameroun Oriental</i>
<b>AN</b>	: <i>Assemblée Nationale</i>
<b>ANC</b>	: <i>Assemblée Nationale du Cameroun</i>
<b>ANY</b>	: <i>Archives Nationales de Yaoundé</i>
<b>ARCAM</b>	: <i>Assemblée Représentative du Cameroun</i>
<b>ATCAM</b>	: <i>Assemblée Territoriale du Cameroun</i>
<b>AU</b>	: African Union
<b>APU</b>	: African Parliamentary Union
<b>BDC</b>	: <i>Bloc Démocratique Camerounaise</i>
<b>CDC</b>	: Cameroon Development Cooperation
<b>CEMAC</b>	: <i>Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l’Afrique Centrale</i>
<b>CFA</b>	: Committee of Foreign Affairs
<b>CPDM</b>	: Cameroon People’s Democratic Party
<b>CWU</b>	: Cameroon Welfare Union
<b>CYL</b>	: Cameroon Youth League
<b>DC</b>	: <i>Démocrates Camerounais</i>
<b>DCIR</b>	: Department of Coordination of International Relations
<b>ENRHA</b>	: Eastern Nigerian Regional House of Assembly
<b>EU</b>	: European Union
<b>FAC</b>	: Foreign Affairs Committee
<b>FALSS</b>	: Faculty of Arts Letters and Social Sciences
<b>GANC</b>	: <i>Groupe d’Action Nationale du Cameroun</i>
<b>HIPC</b>	: Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
<b>HLPF</b>	: High-Level Political Forum

<b>HR</b>	: House of Representatives
<b>ICT</b>	: Information and Communication Technology
<b>IPU</b>	: Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>IRIC</b>	: International Relations Institute of Cameroon
<b>JEUCAFRA</b>	: <i>Jeunesse Camerounaise Française</i>
<b>KNC</b>	: Kamerun National Congress
<b>KNDP</b>	: Kamerun National Democratic Party
<b>KPP</b>	: Kamerun People Party
<b>KUNC</b>	: Kamerun United National Congress
<b>MP</b>	: Member of Parliament
<b>NA</b>	: Native Authority
<b>NAB</b>	: National Archives Buea
<b>NCNC</b>	: National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons
<b>NFA</b>	: National Federal Assembly
<b>NGO</b>	: Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NIP</b>	: National Independent Party
<b>NUDP</b>	: National Union for Democracy and Progress
<b>PAP</b>	: Pan African Parliament
<b>PI</b>	: <i>Paysans Indépendants</i>
<b>RACAM</b>	: <i>Rassemblement Camerounais</i>
<b>SCR</b>	: Southern Cameroons Representatives
<b>SCHA</b>	: Southern Cameroons House of Assembly
<b>SDF</b>	: Social Democratic Front
<b>SDG</b>	: Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UC</b>	: <i>Union Camerounaise</i>
<b>UDEAC</b>	: <i>Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale</i>
<b>UK</b>	: United Kingdom

<b>UN</b>	: United Nations
<b><i>UNICAFRA</i></b>	: <i>Union Camerounaise Française</i>
<b><i>UPC</i></b>	: <i>Union des Populations du Cameroun</i>
<b>USA</b>	: United States of America
<b>WCHC</b>	: West Cameroon House of Chiefs

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

## 1-Historical Context

**Parliamentary activities are not a new phenomenon but rather dating as far back as the ancient Greek period. It might have gotten different appellations around the world but its functions were just the same. For example, in Ancient Greece, parliament was known as *La gérousia*, in Rome it was called the Senate and in England we can talk of the House of Lords<sup>1</sup>. This same role in the ancient African society was played by the council of notables.**

The original role of parliamentarians was usually to advise the kings by identifying major problems or demands of their subjects while also proposing solutions to some of these problems. In short it was the difficulty faced by the aristocratic authorities that led to the introduction of advisers who later played the legislative role. Most of those selected to legislate were those considered to be among the wise and one of their activities was to write customary laws in order to better inform the public. They also carried out reforms that were meant to establish social peace<sup>2</sup>.

In 1790, the French established a special committee in charge of studying international treaties and external relations on behalf of the French national assembly. In this light all international treaties related to commerce, international cooperation, and peace could not be applied without the consultation of the parliament. This ideology on parliamentary diplomacy was amplified in 1889 when the first ever international parliamentary institution, the Inter-Parliamentary Union was created, through the initiative of a French Frederic Passy and a British William Randal<sup>3</sup>. The creation of the United Nations Organization in 1945 only came to amplify the international activities of parliaments and parliamentarians. This was because the organization accorded much autonomy to several states and other actors which included national parliaments<sup>4</sup>.

The cold war also brought division around the world into the Western bloc supporting capitalism and the Eastern bloc supporting communism. State actors during this period failed

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<sup>1</sup>S. Efoua Mbozo'o, « Guide du Sénateur », Yaoundé, March, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>F. Zeh Zeh, «La diplomatie parlementaire en Afrique Centrale : Cas du parlement de la CEMAC 2000-2019 », Masters Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, July 2021, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>J. N. Meyolo, «La diplomatie parlementaire Camerounaise en marche : Le cas de l'Union Parlementaire Africaine (1976-2000) ». Masters thesis in history, University of Yaounde I, 2006. p. 1.

to seek solutions to lasting peace and the failure of traditional diplomatic channels brought in the population in the management of state affairs especially at the international level. One of the channels used was the parliament. Apart from this, the advent of globalization has led to an evolution in international relations which has seen many other actors getting involved in diplomatic affairs. One of these new actors in international relations is the parliament through the activities of parliamentarians<sup>5</sup>.

In the context of Africa, parliamentary activities in foreign affairs became intensified in 1976 with the creation of the African Parliamentary Union in Abidjan (Cote D'Ivoire), and the transformation of the institution into the Pan African Parliament in 2004. This was because parliamentary institutions were seen as a possible booster in accompanying the executive in the process of implementing regional integration and other policies which have appeared to be complicated. This state of affairs also favored the creation of a CEMAC parliament in 2010<sup>6</sup>.

In this regard, Cameroon authorities could not remain impartial to the developments around the world. Consequently, it has been necessary to involve the people in the management of international relations through their representatives in parliament. These parliamentarians seek to assist the state in promoting international peace and security, promotion of human rights and gender equality, sustainable development among others by participating in different parliamentary forums around the globe.

## **2-Motivations**

Several aspects motivated us to engage into this research work and for better understanding, these motivations were classified into socio-political, personal and scientific reasons as explained respectively below.

### **a- Socio-political reason**

It has been observed that when people talk of the parliament, much concentration is done on the internal activities of the institution. That is how the parliament votes laws, how the parliament questions the government ministers during sessions, voting of budget annually, developmental projects in various constituencies. When it comes to international affairs, focus is centered on the president of the republic and the ministry of external relations

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<sup>5</sup>Zeh Zeh, «La diplomatie parlementaire ... », p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.



(executive arm of the state) there by ignoring the parliament. People seem not to realize the fact that the Cameroon parliament is fully involved in foreign affairs. For example, the foreign affairs committee is one of the organs of the parliament which is in charge of the foreign affairs of the parliament. The Cameroon parliament also has links with the Pan African parliament, the CEMAC Parliament and the Inter Parliamentary Union. With all of these, it is pertinent to look at the involvement of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs.

#### **b- Personal reason**

My early contact with an uncle who is a parliamentarian and his endless efforts to develop his constituency and better conditions of life for his people made me to develop interest in politics and has also pushed me to valorize parliamentary activities. More to this, understanding the importance of the parliament in Cameroon as a teacher of citizenship education in secondary school also motivated me to choose this topic and given the fact that I am a student of the history of international relations observed that it was important to bring out a study on the parliament but linked to international affairs, thereby projecting the parliament as a paradigm in Cameroon's diplomatic activities.

#### **c- Scientific reason**

From my observation, much research and studies have also been carried out on the role of the parliament with the country for example the parliamentary organization or structure, the parliament and legislative elections, the parliament and the law making process, the parliament and the political evolution of the Cameroon state, the interaction of the parliament with other arms of government that exercise power. But very little has been done to bring light to the activities of the Cameroon parliament at the international level whereas it has actually contributed much to the evolution of Cameroon diplomacy. It was therefore necessary to choose this topic so as to work on the parliament and its foreign activities.

### **3-Conceptual frame work**

In order to avoid confusion and ensure a better understanding of this subject matter, some words or major concepts have been used in the course of this study and they need clarifications. These words are; parliament, parliamentary diplomacy, diplomacy, parliamentarian. For better understanding, the following aspects maybe observed (etymology,

definition with specialized dictionary, other observations about the word, the appropriation of the concept), as seen below.

## **1-Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is born from a Greek word known as *diploma* which was composed of documents and texts of ancient Greek officials who had carried out visits to foreign countries<sup>7</sup>. There are several definitions of diplomacy for example; it can be defined as the peaceful interactions that occur among political entities and help to solve international problems without involving violence. It can also be seen as the act of promoting the interest of nations through the continuous exchange of information between the people of the nations with the aim of shaping the attitudes of the different states in approaching certain international issues. It can also be seen as a situation where by diplomats carry out peaceful or violent activities with other nations for the interest of their home governments. Diplomatic activities grew from the 18<sup>th</sup> century especially after the French revolution of 1789, but talking of Cameroon diplomacy, it mostly became effective from the 1950s shortly before independence

## **2-Parliament**

The word parliament originates from a Latin word *parabolare*. It signifies a place where a selected group of persons gather to discuss pertinent issues concerning or affecting the nation or state. It should be noted that these debates are usually directed towards the political domain<sup>8</sup>. Parliamentary activities are usually engaged in order to ensure the smooth functioning of government activities. There are usually three major aspects that demonstrate the efficiency of a parliament which are; the structure or organ of the parliament, the representatives elected or appointed into the parliament and then the deliberative strength of the parliament. The Cameroon parliament is bi-cameral that is, it is made up of two parliamentary houses which are the senate (upper house) and the national assembly (lower house). According to article 14 of the Cameroon constitution, the parliament is the legislative arm of government that exercises power by controlling government actions and also voting laws. This goes in line with the idea of the separation of powers. The parliament may have several appellations but this depends on the country where it is found.

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<sup>7</sup>Cordellier, *Le dictionnaire historique et géopolitique du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, éditions la Decouverte, 2002.

<sup>8</sup>F. Guemi Njanjou, « Les présidents de l'assemblée nationale du Cameroun dans la diplomatie parlementaire : cas de Salomon Tandeng Muna et Lawrence Fonka Shang 1973-1992 », masters thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, December 2018.

### **3-Parliamentary diplomacy**

According to Daniel Hays<sup>9</sup>, parliamentary diplomacy can be seen as a process whereby parliaments and parliamentarians whether at individual or collective levels (assemblies or parliamentary associations) do involve in foreign affairs. As for Joel Narcise Meyolo, parliamentary diplomacy is the displacement of the representatives of the people at the international scene through the creation of different parliamentary networks in order to carry out an efficient diplomatic action<sup>10</sup>. This activity in recent times do consolidates the role of parliamentarians in reinforcing regular diplomatic activities from state actors. There are two major types of parliamentary diplomacy which are inter-state (bilateral) parliamentary diplomacy, involving the interactions of the parliament or parliamentarians of two states and intra-state (multilateral) parliamentary diplomacy which involves international parliamentary organizations. Parliamentary diplomacy is an old phenomenon which dates back to the activities of the ancient Greek and Roman states and with the growth of activities of globalization, parliamentary diplomacy has become more visible in recent years as it has promoted international peace and stability.

### **4-Parliamentarian**

According to the universal dictionary, the word parliamentarian is born from another word, parliament and simply means the person who is a member of one of the parliamentary houses, either the senate or the national assembly. A parliamentarian can also be defined as a representative of the people who democratically is part of the assembly. Parliamentarians are usually voted and installed for a particular period of time usually known as a mandate. A parliamentarian can also be seen as a person who is elected into an assembly to represent or defend the general interest of the nation and in particular to defend the interest of the people of his area<sup>11</sup>. It should be noted that all parliamentarians are highly accountable to people who voted them (the electorate). In Cameroon, parliamentarians participate in national and foreign affairs. Their actions are coordinated by both the speaker of the national assembly and the president of the senate who are considered as the highest authorities of both the lower and upper houses of parliament respectively. The international action of parliamentarians has been surfacing firmly in recent years especially on current issues.

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<sup>9</sup> He was the President of the Canadian Senate from 2001-2006 but has been a Parliamentarian since 1984.

<sup>10</sup>J. N. Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire Camerounaise 1962-2007 », thèse de doctorat Ph.D en histoire, Université de Maroua, 2014.

<sup>11</sup>Njanjou, « Les présidents de ... », p. 7.

## **5-The chronological boundary of the work**

To talk about the geographical situation of this work, it should be noted that all states and its people whether small or large are found within a defined territory which is nationally and internationally recognized. In the same light, this work is centered on Cameroon Parlomacy (the diplomatic activities of the Cameroon parliament) which is an institution of the state of Cameroon. Cameroon has an estimated surface area of about 475442 square kilometers<sup>12</sup> and it is within this limits that the Cameroon parliament operates in its activities through elected representatives. These activities may be within the territory which can be national or out of the territory which is international.

This topic was also chosen within a particular time frame that is THE PLACE OF THE CAMEROON PARLIAMENT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS: 1992 -2020. A historical analysis. The date of 1992 marks the holding of the first ever multi party legislative elections after the reintroduction of multi-party politics in Cameroon in 1990. It should be noted that the last time multi-party elections were held in Cameroon was in 1964 and for a long time from 1966, the Cameroon parliament was controlled by the CNU from its creation in 1966 and then the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM) from 1985<sup>13</sup>. But in 1990<sup>14</sup>, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), was forcefully launched and the government later legalized the creation of other political parties. Consequently, parties like the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP), the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU) among others were created and they participated in the 1992 multi-party legislative elections, this evidently led to the establishment of a multi-party parliament. The date of 2020 marks the holding of the last legislative elections in Cameroon.

## **6-Objectives of the study**

The general objective of this study is to find out the role the Cameroon parliament (senate and national assembly) play in foreign affairs and how this has impacted the transmutation of her diplomacy from 1992 to 2020. In other words, this study is to critically examine the contributions of the Cameroon parliament to the evolution of Cameroon's foreign affairs, not forgetting to bring out the perspectives to ensure a better parliamentary diplomacy for the nearest and far future.

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<sup>12</sup> Njanjou, « Les Presidents de ... », p.18.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Chu Eric Kangha, Aged 34, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University of Buea, 27/08/2021.

<sup>14</sup> R. Atu and M. Mubang, *New Success in Cameroon History*, Bamenda, Unic printers, 2013.

Specifically, the study seeks or envisages to:

- Trace the historical background and structure of the Cameroon parliament.
- Examine the organization, functions and motives of the Cameroon Parliament in matters of foreign affairs
- Look at the diplomacy and position of Cameroon in foreign parliaments.
- Give a critical appraisal of the place of the Cameroon Parliament in foreign affairs.

## **7-Literature Review**

In order to better handle this topic on the place of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs from 1992-2020: a historical analysis , we have found it necessary to present some of the scientific works that we consulted which are related to the topic in question. They have been written by researchers from all fields of life including history, geography, diplomats, among others. This permitted us to avoid a situation of inventing or narrating baseless historical events or repetition of topic.

Amaazee in trying to elaborate on the contribution of the eastern regional crisis that occurred in Nigeria in 1953 and their contributions to the political evolution of British Southern Cameroons brings out the provisions of the Macpherson constitution of 1951 that granted 13 seats to Southern Cameroons in the Eastern Nigerian Regional Assembly. He also identifies the various legislators that were elected and elaborates on their activities in the assembly and the legislative council in Lagos. He proceeds to describe the formation of the Benevolent Neutrality during the eastern regional crisis that later spear-headed the separation of Southern Cameroons from Nigeria. Amaazee also gives a description of the process of the establishment of the first independent Southern Cameroons Assembly and an Executive Council in 1954 which was permitted by the introduction of the Littleton constitution that granted a quasi-regional status to Southern Cameroons. He equally does not ignore the activities of the assembly and other subsequent parliamentary elections that took place in British Southern Cameroons before independence and reunification in 1961<sup>15</sup>.

Nyuydine analyses the role of parliamentarians in democracy in Cameroon between 1946 and 1961. Her analysis covers both the French and British spheres of Cameroon. She

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<sup>15</sup> V. Bong Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Regional Crisis and the Destiny of British Southern Cameroons, 1953-1954*, Yaounde, Press Universitaires, 2000.

brings out the evolution of democracy and also demonstrates the non-effectiveness of the doctrine of the separation of powers. According her, the executive has often dominated the legislative arm of the state especially in decision making. She also looks at parliamentary diplomacy during the United Nations trusteeship period in Cameroon. This study rather is interested in the diplomatic activities of the parliament in a post independent Cameroon from 1992-2020<sup>16</sup>.

Efoua Mbozo'o also carries out a deep analysis on the evolution of the Cameroon parliament from 1946, where he brings out all the various transformations that were witnessed by the assembly in its early days and how the institution has gradually but firmly emerged to its modern and present phase. He brings out the structure of the national assembly and the legal status quo of the institution to carry out all its activities both nationally and internationally. Efoua Mbozo'o also demonstrates the fact that the Cameroon parliament actively involves in foreign affairs with inter-parliamentary visits, and the insertion of Cameroon parliamentarians in other parliamentary associations or organization across the globe. He insists on the fact that for Cameroon parliamentarians must work harder for their actions to be more realistic and visible at the international level<sup>17</sup>.

Meyolo takes a critical view on the Cameroon parliamentary diplomacy. He analysis the multi-lateral and bi-lateral interactions of the Cameroon parliament with other parliaments around the world. For example, he details out the activities of Cameroon representatives with the pan African parliament, and also gives the various reasons that push the Cameroon parliament to get involved in foreign affairs. Meyolo has also carefully described the various mechanisms that can guide the Cameroon parliament during their involvement in foreign affairs, especially in international parliamentary associations. He backs his arguments with the activities of prominent parliamentarians like Right Hon S.T. Muna<sup>18</sup>.

Fiott examines the role of parliamentary diplomacy as a compliment to the traditional or usual state diplomacy. He clearly explains what is meant by parliamentary diplomacy and describes the various parliamentary actors that carry out parliamentary diplomacy. Fiott clearly states that parliamentary diplomacy can never supersede the formal diplomatic

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<sup>16</sup>E. Ngalim Nyuydine, "Parliamentary Democracy in Eastern and Southern Cameroons:1945-1961", Masters Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, 2012.

<sup>17</sup>S. Efoua Mbozo'o, *L'Assemblée Nationale du Cameroun a la Croisée des Chemins*, Yaoundé, Hérodote, 1994.

<sup>18</sup>Meyolo, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire ... »

channels. He tries to elaborate on the benefits and shortcomings of parliamentary diplomacy in the world of today where non state actors are becoming more and more active or influential at the international scene. According to Fiott, there are certain aspects that can be considered for parliamentary diplomacy to be more effective. For example, the size, expertise of parliamentarians, institutional and financial capacity of the parliament. He also proposes that in order to valorize parliamentary diplomacy and make it more successful, then three factors must be considered which are; timing, interest, and communication<sup>19</sup>.

Nebeu examines the diplomatic activities of the Cameroon parliament. He centers his analysis on the parliament and the fight against trans-national crimes like piracy, terrorism, highway robbery among others. He explains how the parliament at the national level has voted laws that target the fight against trans-national crimes between 1990 and 2012. It also permitted the president of the republic to promulgate national laws and ratify international agreements to fight this phenomenon, and at the international level, he demonstrates how the parliament has been sitting in inter parliamentary institutions such as the inter parliamentary union, the CEMAC parliamentary commission, and the commonwealth parliamentary group where it continues to fight trans-national crimes. He also proposes that the Cameroon parliament should carry out innovative actions, ensure a strong legislation and maintain effective parliamentary diplomacy<sup>20</sup>.

Njanjou on his part tries to look at parliamentary diplomacy in another dimension. He highlights the role of parliamentarians in foreign affairs. More specifically, he describes the activities of two prominent speakers of the Cameroon national assembly, the Right Hon S.T. Muna and the Right Hon Lawrence Fonka Shang in parliamentary diplomacy. He clearly explains that the speaker of the national assembly has two major roles in foreign affairs which are, being a dynamic figure in Cameroon foreign affairs and also representing the country in international parliamentary organizations. He analyzes how these two speakers animated the parliamentary diplomacy by participating in international parliamentary associations like the international parliamentary Union and also paying several diplomatic missions abroad, not forgetting the reception of different diplomatic agents in their parliamentary chambers and these actions greatly shaped the Cameroonian foreign policy in a

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<sup>19</sup>D. Fiott, *On the value of parliamentary diplomacy*, Madariaga-College of Europe Foundation, 2011.

<sup>20</sup>J. D. Nebeu, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire Camerounaise à l'Epreuve de la Criminalité Transnationale 1990-2012: Approche Historique », Mémoire en Histoire, Université de Yaounde I, 2015.

positive direction. But he also does not neglect the fact that the two state men also faced some difficulties while carrying out their adventure<sup>21</sup>.

Mouelle Kombi In his general view of the Cameroon's foreign policy does not ignore the Cameroon parliament. In a global manner, he talks about the diplomatic role of the national assembly as a complementary aspect to the activities of the executive arm of the state abroad. According to Mouelle, the national assembly controls government actions in foreign affairs, takes parts in international parliaments and also carries out parliamentary exchanges. He also brings out the judicial establishments (laws) that permit the Cameroon parliament to involve in foreign affairs<sup>22</sup>.

Bahoken also edifices on the process of electing parliamentarians in Cameroon though with much focus on the Mbam Area. His work looks at how parliamentary elections are carried out in Cameroon and the activities of these elected parliamentarians after their elections and how these activities contribute to the evolution of the nation and also for the wellbeing of the population that they represent. He also makes us understand the criteria for selecting parliamentarians in Cameroon and what is expected of a parliamentarian after his or her election. He also clarifies on the measures adopted by parliamentarians to satisfy the needs of their electorate<sup>23</sup>.

Ebobola analyses the different stages of the birth and growth of the Cameroon parliament. He brings out the evolution of the parliament in French Cameroon from ARCAM to ALCAM. He also explains on the role of parliamentarians in the nationalist struggle and the liberation of Cameroon from the colonialists. In the context of our study, his work does not only permit us to understand the origin of the Cameroon parliament but also to discover the early efforts made by Cameroon parliamentarians in parliamentary diplomacy through their activities with the United Nations<sup>24</sup>.

Zeh Zeh mostly centers his work on the modern Cameroon parliament. He elaborates on the reasons for of the involvement of the parliament in foreign affairs and the various principles that guide the participation of the parliament in foreign affairs. Apart from this, he

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<sup>21</sup>Njanjou, « *Les Présidents de ...* »

<sup>22</sup>N. Mouelle Kombi, *La Politique Etrangère du Cameroun*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 1996.

<sup>23</sup>H. Bakoken Bekona, « Les Elections Parlementaires dans la Region du Mbam au Cameroun : Essai d'Analyse Historique, de 1946 à 1992 », Masters Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, 2016.

<sup>24</sup>G Biyo'o Bi Ebobola « Le parlement Camerounais et L'ONU face aux problèmes politiques relatifs l'indépendance du Cameroun Sous l'administration Française(1957-1960), Masters Thesis , University of Yaounde I, 2005.



looks at the Cameroon parliament in parliamentary diplomacy where he focuses on the activities of the parliament within the CEMAC Parliament. He is able to demonstrate how Cameroon representatives within the CEMAC parliament have contributed to the establishment of the parliament and how their participation has helped Cameroon in particular and the sub region in general in aspects like regional integration and the free movement of persons and goods<sup>25</sup>.

### **8-Statement of problem**

From the colonial period, Cameroon was introduced to the modern parliamentary system. French Cameroon had a parliamentary system that evolved differently from that which was established in British Cameroons. But from 1961, these two parliamentary systems were merged after independence and reunification. This could be evident with the establishment of the federal assembly which became the national assembly by 1972. By 1992, the parliament became multi party in representation once again. From this period, the Cameroon parliament has been involved in several activities both at the national and especially at the international level. But despite this involvement, the efforts of the parliament in foreign affairs are hardly noticed except that of the president of the republic, the ministry of external relations and other ministerial departments (executive arm of the state) who are all traditional actors in foreign affairs. From the above problems, it is therefore pertinent to put forward the following questions: Why does the Cameroon parliament involve in foreign affairs? What are the internal and external activities of this parliament in foreign affairs? What are the challenges faced by the parliament in foreign affairs? And finally what are some of the perspectives that can be brought in to ameliorate the situation and ensure a better implication of Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs? Generally, How does the Cameroon parliament get involved in foreign affairs and how has this involvement influenced the transmutation of her diplomacy between 1992 and 2020? This scientific work sets out to answer these questions and more.

### **9-Sources and Methodology**

To make this work more valid, we consulted several sources which could either be primary or secondary. For example we consulted the National Archives Yaounde (NAY), the archives of the national assembly and that of the senate, private archives and libraries such as;

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<sup>25</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire...»

the library of the ministry of external relations,(MINREX), that of the International Relations Institute of Cameroon(IRIC), the FALSS( Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences)library, the library of the History department of the University of Yaounde I, not forgetting the library of the ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation(MINRESI), private libraries among others. Important information was also gotten from journals, official reports, annals, and minutes of meetings produced by groups or individuals related to activities concerning the parliament. There were also interviews on the field of persons who fully or partially master activities about the Cameroon parliament and parlomacy (parliamentary diplomacy).

Also quantitative and qualitative research methodology was used to obtain adequate information required for this work. Quantitatively, questionnaires were distributed to groups of persons and the various responses by the later were critically analyzed. As concerns the qualitative methods, persons who are directly or indirectly involved in parliamentary activities or parlomacy (parliamentary diplomacy), and those who are living eye witnesses to certain important parliamentary events were interviewed. We also prepared a question guide which permitted us to obtain valuable information. These answers that were obtained obviously gave us the opportunity to validate our hypothesis.

### **10-Challenges encountered**

The realization of this work could not be done without difficulties which is very normal with every scientific work. We noticed that information on the international activities of the Cameroon parliament was very rare in archives. This was especially concerning the time frame that had been chosen (1992-2020). The most reliable and available archives was that of the national assembly but the process of obtaining authorization to consult the archives was also very complicated and this delayed the smooth evolution of the research. In the process of research, we also realized that the senate did not really have fixed structures which made the consultation of senate officials very complicated. Additionally to this, the research went on at a time when the national assembly site was under construction and it was not easy to meet with some of the officials or even have access to some of its services since they were scattered around town.

It was also a very difficult task to have access to the informants that were selected especially the parliamentarians. Some of them refused to reveal certain information even when we explained why the information was needed. Others gave rendezvous which they

never respected while some simply refused to grant interviews with us. In other cases, the information collected was not accurate as different informants gave contradictory information. It was also realized that most of the documents consulted to realize this project were mostly in French given the fact that many English speaking Cameroonians had not written concerning the field of studies. Therefore faced with these difficulties, we were forced at times to read more books and articles to realize the project. We also had to consult bilingual dictionaries in order to improve our level of understanding French documents. In having access to the archives of the national assembly we have to insist until we were finally given the authorization to visit the archives.

## **11-Structure of the work**

This research work is divided into four chapters. The general introduction first of all gives a background study of the work and looks at the motivations to this scientific study. This is then followed by the conceptual frame work, the chronological boundary of the study, objectives of the study, literature review, statement of problem, sources and methodology that have been used, the structure of the work and not forgetting the difficulties encountered in the process of realization of the study.

Chapter one is entitled “Historical background of the study”. This chapter brings out the history of the Cameroon parliaments under the French and British colonial administration, the evolution of the parliament from independence and reunification (1960-1961) right up to 2013 with the establishment of the upper house of parliament that is the senate. This chapter also brings out the organization, functions and missions of the parliament since 1992. Here, the chapter looks at the conditions to become a parliamentarian in Cameroon, the organization and functions of the Cameroon parliament and the various missions effected by the parliament at home, not forgetting the reasons for the involvement of the parliament in foreign affairs where it looks at institutional and legal reasons, political and lobby reasons.

Chapter two is entitled “Parliamentary Structures and their Actions towards Parlomacy”. Here the chapter examines parliamentary organs in charge of foreign affairs, with their objectives and actions and much attention is focused or paid to the committee of foreign affairs of the parliament. The chapter also observes the support services of the Cameroon parliament and their role in foreign affairs with focus on the department of the coordination of international relations which is further broken down into the sub-directorate of communication, ceremonies and missions and the sub-directorate of international relations. It

also looks at external activities of the parliament, where it observes the representation of the head of state by the speaker of the national assembly and also examines the representation of Cameroonians in other parliaments with focus on parliamentary and non-parliamentary actors.

Chapter three is entitled “The Diplomacy and Position of Cameroon in Foreign Parliaments.” This chapter elaborates the role Cameroon has played in foreign parliaments like the CEMAC parliament, the Pan African Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. With the CEMAC parliament, the chapter first of all observes the part played by Cameroon in the creation of the parliament, analyses the activities of Cameroon representatives in the parliament and how Cameroon has influenced the development of the sub regional parliament. While observing the Pan African Parliament, this chapter looks at Cameroon’s adherence into the parliament, how Cameroon parliamentarians have contributed to the development of the parliament and the chapter also looks at how the presence of Cameroon in this parliament has influenced the evolution of Cameroon’s diplomacy. The chapter goes ahead to examine the structure of the Inter Parliamentary Union, the role of Cameroon in the parliamentary association and of course the impact of the IPU in Cameroon’s parlomacy in particular and foreign affairs in general.

Chapter four is entitled “Critical Appraisal of the Place of the Cameroon Parliament in Foreign Affairs”. Talking about the critical appraisal of Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs, the chapter looks at the impact of Cameroon Parliament in foreign affairs or diplomacy. In this light, it examines the reinforcement of the diplomacy of presence or effectiveness, the affirmation of Cameroon’s sovereignty at the international level and further look at its influence on national policy. This chapter also examines challenges or constraints faced by the parliament as a result of its implication in foreign affairs. Under this aspect, the chapter examines the limitations in legislative powers, absence of elections into foreign parliaments and deficit in the technical domain. The chapter also goes ahead to bring out the perspectives for a better or real implication of Cameroon in parlomacy in particular and foreign affairs in general, thereby proposing aspects like government’s support to the parliament and parliamentarians, the revision of Cameroon law and the formation or training of parliamentarians in foreign affairs or parlomatic activities, government support to parliamentarians and the revision of Cameroon law on parliamentary diplomacy.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Given the fact that the Cameroon parliament is a whole institution of the state which genuinely carries out several activities including its implication in foreign affairs, which is our point of focus, it is necessary that before we engage an in-depth study of parliamentary activities in foreign affairs, we should be able to understand how the Cameroon parliament has evolved throughout these years to its present status. This chapter therefore seeks to bring out the evolution of the parliament from the period of British and French trusteeship administration, through independence and reunification right up to 2013 when the senate (upper house of parliament) was set up. Then the chapter also looks at the structure of the parliament and the reasons for which the institution may implicate in foreign affairs.

#### **A-The history of the Cameroon parliament**

In order to better elaborate on the history and evolution of the Cameroon parliament, we have implored three aspects. That is the history and evolution of the parliament in British Southern Cameroons from 1922 with the implementation of the Clifford's constitution right up to independence and reunification in 1961, then we have also looked at the history and evolution of the parliament in French Cameroon from 1946 with the introduction of the first assembly, *Assemblée Représentative du Cameroun* (ARCAM) right to independence in 1960 and reunification in 1961. The last aspect in part is the history and evolution of the parliament of Cameroon in the post independent era that is from 1961 with the institution of the Federal Parliament of Cameroon, right up 2013 when the first ever elections were organized into the Cameroon's Senate (Upper House of Parliament).

#### **1-The Cameroon Parliament under the British Administration**

The evolution of the parliament in Southern Cameroons goes alongside the constitutional amendments or changes that occurred in the territory between 1922 and 1957. In other words, the evolution of parliament or legislative activities in Southern Cameroon cannot be visible or clear without observing the various constitutions that were drawn up in Nigeria that directly affected the territory of Southern Cameroons. It should be noted that parliamentary changes often occurred with the introduction of a new constitution. Some of these constitutions were; the Clifford's constitution of 1922, the Richard's constitution of 1946, the Macpherson's constitution of 1951 and the Lyttleton's constitution of 1954.

The Clifford's constitution provided a legislative council in Lagos which was to legislate for Nigeria and Southern Cameroons but unfortunately, there was no representative from Southern Cameroons which as at this time had been designed the Cameroon Province by Clifford's constitution. Many Southern Cameroonian scholars and youths were dissatisfied with the new constitutional provisions given the fact that Southern Cameroons had the full right for its people to be represented in a legislative council that decided on the activities of the territory. The activities of this legislative council were officially launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 1922 and it was made up of 30 members. 3 of these members were nominated while 27 of them were (ex-officios). Certain conditions were put in place to elect members of this council. For example, a person needed at least an annual income of £10 averagely. Those that were nominated were; representatives of British trading companies in Nigeria, a representative from the chambers of commerce, and another from the banking and shipping interest. The British also nominated representatives from districts and villages which were not empowered with the right of franchise, especially the southern provinces<sup>26</sup>.

It should be noted that this legislative council was not designed uniquely for Southern Cameroons but since the territory was administered as an integral part of Eastern Nigeria, the council therefore legislated on the affairs of the territory. As a result, Southern Cameroons' youths and elites fought so hard and tirelessly for their territory to be represented in the council. In order to make their claims more visible and legitimate, the first ever pressure group called the Cameroon Welfare Union (CWU) was created in Victoria, 1939 by a veteran teacher called, G. J. Mbene. The major objective of this pressure group was to advocate for Southern Cameroons to be represented in the legislative council. On behalf of the CWU, G. J. Mbene largely criticized the Clifford's constitution for ignoring the wishes and aspirations of Southern Cameroons. The pressure group went ahead to officially request for the inclusion of Southern Cameroons in the legislative council but their demands were first ignored by the governor general<sup>27</sup>.

Finally, there was breakthrough in the legislative life of Southern Cameroons when Chief Manga Williams was appointed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1942 to represent the Cameroon Province in the legislative council in Lagos by the Governor General<sup>28</sup>. This was partially a solution provided for the large criticisms against the Clifford's constitution. Even though it

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<sup>26</sup>N. N. Mbile, *Cameroon Political Story*, Limbe, Presbook, 1999, p. 67.

<sup>27</sup>E. Sevidzem. Sunjo, "Constitutional Conflicts and Political Changes in the Cameroons. A Historical Perspective, 1884-1961", Master's Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, 2013, p. 49.

<sup>28</sup>R. Atu, *New Success in...*, p. 66.

was not really enough, it was still regarded as a debut in the parliamentary evolution of Southern Cameroons. This was because it was the very first time Southern Cameroons found herself in a purely legislative environment. Southern Cameroonians did not relent their efforts but continued to press for more constitutional reforms especially in the domain of the legislature.

Efforts were not reduced to criticize the Clifford's constitution even after the appointment of Chief Manga Williams to the legislative council. This time around, the fight to press for better legislative conditions for Southern Cameroons was now spear-headed by another pressure group known as the Cameroon Youth League (CYL) of Emmanuel Lifafe Endeley. Even though this pressure group was not represented in the Legislative Council, the C.Y.L. prepared a memorandum which demanded that British Southern Cameroons which was at this moment administered as an integral part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria to be reunited with British Northern Cameroons which was also administered as an integral part of the Northern Region of Nigeria<sup>29</sup>. The memorandum also demanded for the creation of a separate region for British Cameroons governed by a High Commissioner and this region was to have its own assembly which will prepare its own budget. This assembly was also to choose representatives of the territory within the Legislative Council in Lagos Nigeria. The pressure group was strongly against a single representative appointed from Southern Cameroons<sup>30</sup>.

The C.Y.L. also argued that the Cameroons after been administered by Germany before the British administration had specific issues that could not be jointly identified with the Nigerians who had never been administered by any other European power except Britain. They also argued that the Cameroons were not comfortable with the Nigerian way of life and therefore firmly requested for new political institutions that were separated from Nigeria.

Several conferences both official and unofficial were held between 1942 and 1945 which resulted to the emergence of a new constitution known as the Richard's constitution<sup>31</sup>. The constitution brought about regionalism in Nigeria but never really brought any significant change for the Cameroons, especially Southern Cameroons. The constitution was promulgated in 1946. Just like the Clifford's constitution, the Richard's constitution

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<sup>29</sup>Sunjo, "Constitutional Conflicts and... ", p. 50.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>Derived from the name of the Governor General of Nigeria and the Cameroons, Sir Arthur Richard who replaced Governor Clifford and was highly influential in the drawing of this constitution.

undermined the aspirations or wishes of Southern Cameroonians. For example, the British maintained their stance to administer British Cameroons as a part of Nigeria despite several demands for a separate region.

Even though the Richard's constitution did not provide any separate assembly for Southern Cameroons, it still created three assemblies in the three administrative regions of Nigeria, and a house of chiefs was created in Northern Nigeria. In this constitution, Southern Cameroons was provided with two seats in the Eastern Nigerian Assembly and these seats were to be occupied by Native Authorities appointed by the British colonial administrators. Consequently, Fon Galega II of Bali Nyonga and Chief Manga William of Victoria were appointed to represent Southern Cameroons in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly in Enugu<sup>32</sup>. It should be noted that these regional assemblies that were newly created were mainly having the powers of advisory and consultative bodies without any legislative powers. Each of these assemblies had three main roles which were as follows;

1-Examine and recommend the annual estimate of revenue and expenditure in their respective regions and this was to be approved by the governor.

2- Consider all proposed legislation except for the appropriation of bills and other urgent measures before they could be enacted by the legislative council.

3- The appointment of members to represent them in the legislative council in Lagos<sup>33</sup>.

According to the Richard's constitution, the Legislative Council had an unofficial membership of 24 persons. These were mainly Africans either appointed from regional assemblies or by the governors while 4 members were elected from the Lagos and Calabar municipalities. It should be noted that these persons were to be permanently resident in Nigeria. The other 16 members were officials of the British colonial Nigerian government<sup>34</sup>. Unlike the Regional assemblies, the Legislative Council was more of law making institution that governed the whole of Nigeria and the Cameroons<sup>35</sup>. Most of the laws that were voted and enacted by the Legislative Council originated from the government but individual

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<sup>32</sup>Interview with Buh Ngum George, Aged 40, Secondary School History Teacher, Yaounde, 13/08/2021.

<sup>33</sup>H. Enonchong, *Cameroon's Constitutional Law; Federalism in a mixed Common law and Civil Law*, p. 58.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>Sunjo, "Constitutional conflicts and ...", p. 53.



members also had the right to introduce or propose any bill within the council<sup>36</sup>. The governor general had the reserved right to directly enact any bill or law which the Legislative Council failed to pass<sup>37</sup>. Just like the Clifford's constitution, the Richard's constitution was largely criticized in Southern Cameroons for not giving any direct representation to the territory in the Legislative Council.

In order to officially protest against the Richard's constitution, the major political party in Eastern Nigeria, the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C), sent a delegation to London and among the delegates was P.M. Kale who was representing Southern Cameroons<sup>38</sup>. The British rejected this protest and argued that Southern Cameroons was a trust territory which was already a big problem to Britain and therefore could only be administered as an integral part of Nigeria. But none the less, this move led to the replacement of Sir Arthur Richard by Sir John Macpherson as governor general of Nigeria in 1948. Sir Macpherson requested that Nigerians and the people of the Cameroons should work and provide draft constitutional proposals that could be used to revise the Richard's constitution. In reaction, there was a meeting in Mamfe on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1949 and another one in Victoria later in the same year. The major outcome of these meetings was the request of a separate region and a separate house of assembly by Southern Cameroonians and a High Commissioner who was directly answerable to the Trusteeship Council<sup>39</sup>.

After several consultations throughout Nigeria and the Cameroons, proposals were forwarded to the regional conferences which were further transferred to the drafting committee in Lagos. A general conference was held in Ibadan from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1950 to discuss about the draft constitution and this constitutional draft was later forwarded to the Legislative Council, the governor general and the British secretary for colonies who was based in London<sup>40</sup>. The Macpherson constitution it should be noted did not grant Southern Cameroons any separate region or legislative house. Instead, the constitution provided for the joint administration of the Cameroons with Nigeria which was in accordance

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<sup>36</sup>Sunjo, "Constitutional conflicts and ...", p. 53.

<sup>37</sup>Enonchong, *Cameroon Constitutional Law...*p. 58.

<sup>38</sup> NAB, File No.2, Vc /A(1955), Constitutional Reform : Representation and Electoral Procedure-Cameroon Province, 1955, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup>NAB, File No.4, Vc/A, Views For Future Constitution: Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cameroon Provincial Meeting held at Mamfe on 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> June 1949, pp. 1-14.

<sup>40</sup>Sunjo, "Constitutional Conflicts and ...", p. 57.

with article 5 of the trusteeship agreement. Both were to share common Legislative and judicial powers<sup>41</sup>. The Macpherson constitution was officially promulgated in 1951.

The Macpherson constitution provided a central executive council and a central legislative council which had powers over the entire colony (Nigeria and the Cameroons). The central legislative council which was also known as the House of Representatives consisted of a president, six ex-officio members who were; the chief secretary, lieutenant governors from the western, eastern and northern regions respectively, the attorney general and the financial secretary. There were 136 representatives in the central legislative council from the three regions which were distributed as follows; 34 members from the eastern regional assembly, 34 members from the western regional assembly and 68 members from the northern regional assembly, and six special members. Each of the three regions was also dotted with a regional legislative house and an executive council<sup>42</sup>.

The Eastern Nigerian Regional Assembly had eighty (80) seats. Within the 80 seats, 13 seats were allocated to Southern Cameroons. At this level, the Macpherson constitution made special provisions for Southern Cameroons where by 4 out of the 13 representatives elected into the eastern regional assembly were to be sent to the legislative assembly in Lagos and out of this, one of them was to be appointed as a minister in the central administration or federal government in Lagos. Evidently, British Northern Cameroons did not receive similar constitutional treatment<sup>43</sup>.

For the first time, this new constitution provided an atmosphere for democratic elections into these assemblies which were to be carried out in several stages. There was the use of electoral colleges. Primary elections to place at the level of districts within Native Authorities, then the winners further contested at the divisional level and those who succeeded at the level of divisions went to the final stage of elections at the provincial level where the winners were ultimate representatives at the regional houses of assembly. In the case of Southern Cameroons, the representatives elected at the divisional level (Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda, Nkambe and Wum) were further elected and the level of the Cameroon and Bamenda provinces. Members of the central legislative council or the House of Representatives were delegated from the various regional assemblies. First ever elections

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<sup>41</sup>Sunjo, "Constitutional Conflicts and ...", p. 57.

<sup>42</sup> Enonchong, *Cameroon Constitutional Law*...p. 60.

<sup>43</sup>Sunjo, "Constitutional Conflicts and ...", p. 58.

according to the Macpherson's constitution were held in December 1951<sup>44</sup> and the representatives on the table below were elected into the eastern regional assembly.

**Table 1: Cameroon Representatives Elected into the ENRHA in December 1951**

Province	Division	Member of Parliament or Representative
Cameroon	Victoria	Dr E.M.L. Endeley
		P.N. Motomby Woleta
	Kumba	N.N. Mbile
		R.N. Charley
	Mamfe	S.A. George
		M.N. Forju
Bamenda	Bamenda	S.T. Muna
		V.T. Lainjo
		J.N. Foncha
	Wum	Rev J.C. Kangsen
		Prince S. Ndi
	Nkambe	J.T. Ndze
		A. T. Ngala

Source: Mbile N.N., *Cameroon Political Story*, Limbe, Pressbook, 1999, pp.40-41.

The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 provided 13 seats for Southern Cameroons in the Eastern Nigerian Regional House of Assembly. Subsequently, the above representatives were elected in December 1951 the six divisions to represent the territory.

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<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*

**Plate 1: Three of 13 representatives elected from the then Bamenda Division in 1951**



**Source:** National Archives Buea, consulted on 09/02/21.

The above plate shows the three representatives elected from the then Bamenda Division out of the 13 representatives of Southern Cameroons to represent the territory in the ENRHA in December 1951. From right to left we have V.T. Lainjo, S.T. Muna, and J.N. Foncha.

After their elections, the 13 representatives from Southern Cameroons had a meeting in Mamfe, in January 1952 where they designated the future four representatives that were to be sent to Lagos to the House of Representatives as stipulated by the Macpherson constitution. Amongst the designated representatives were; E.M.L. Endeley from the Victoria division, S.A. George from Mamfe, S.T. Muna from Bamenda and J.T. Ndze from Nkambe<sup>45</sup>. It should be noted that these were just pre designations which could either be confirmed or rejected in Nigeria. Upon arrival at the Eastern Regional Assembly, the all the Southern Cameroons representatives joined the NCNC which had a majority of all the seats that is 75seats out of 80seats while the remaining five seats were occupied by the National Independent Party (N.I.P.). The decision of Southern Cameroons representatives was of great advantage. This was because the party officials made a crucial decision that all the 29 divisions of the Eastern

<sup>45</sup>Mbile, *Cameroon Political Story...*, p. 41.

Region which included the six divisions of Southern Cameroons were to each have a representative among the 34 delegates that were to be sent to the House of Representatives in Lagos. Consequently, the number of Southern Cameroonians in the House of Representatives in Lagos increased from the official four to six as demonstrated in the table below. The constitution also stipulated that one of the 13 representatives from Southern Cameroons who were in the Eastern Regional Assembly should belong to the Eastern Regional Executive Council and also be appointed a minister, while amongst the 4 representatives in the Lagos House of Representatives; one should be part of the federal government. Consequently, S.T. Muna from the Bamenda province was appointed a member of the Eastern Regional Executive Council and minister in charge of works, while E.M.L. Endeley from the Cameroon province was appointed minister without portfolio in the Federal Council of Ministers in Lagos<sup>46</sup>.

**Table 2: SCR sent from ENRHA in Enugu to the HR in Lagos**

Province	Division	Name of Parliamentarian or Representative
Cameroon	Victoria	Dr E.M.L. Endeley
	Kumba	N.N. Mbile
	Mamfe	S.A. George
Bamenda	Bamenda	V.T. Lainjo
	Wum	Rev J.C. Kangsen
	Nkambe	J.T. Ndze

**Source:** N.N. Mbile, *Cameroon Political Story*, Limbe, Pressbook, 1999. pp.40-41.

The same constitution provided four seats for Southern Cameroons in the Legislative Council in Lagos out of the 34 seats from Eastern Nigeria but the party officials made a crucial decision that all the 29 divisions of the Eastern Region which included the six divisions of Southern Cameroons were to each have a representative among the 34 delegates that were to be sent to the House of Representatives in Lagos. Consequently, the number of Southern Cameroonians in the House of Representatives in Lagos increased from the official four to six as demonstrated above.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with George Buh Ngum, aged 40, history teacher, Angel Michael Bilingual College, Yaoundé, 13/08/2021.

### **a. The eastern Nigerian regional crisis and parliamentary evolution of Southern Cameroons**

Shortly after the election of the 13 Southern Cameroon representatives in the Eastern Regional Assembly, a political squabble broke out within the NCNC, which was the party with the majority of seats in the regional assembly and automatically the ruling party in the Eastern Region. This political squabble was christened the Eastern Nigerian Regional Crisis. The crisis began in 1952 but actually reached its peak by May 1953. On the forefront, the outbreak of the crisis was blamed on the shortcoming of the Macpherson's constitution whereas in reality it was a political battle between two political dons of the NCNC that is Eyo Ita, who was the lead of the Eastern Regional Assembly and vice chair of the NCNC and Nnamdi Azikiwe who was the National chair of the NCNC<sup>47</sup>. A member of the Eastern Regional Assembly even uttered that "... *our leader is leader of the government and not leader of the party. We have two masters to serve...*"<sup>48</sup>. This statement clearly shows that the Eastern Regional Crisis was a political tussle between two major NCNC leaders who were; Eyo Ita and Azikiwe but which turn to affective not just the Southern Cameroon Representatives in the Eastern House but also a turning point to the political evolution of the Southern Cameroons. One could even say the crisis was a blessing to the territory in the executive and especially legislative domains. Southern Cameroon representatives had long stood for a separate region from Nigeria with an independent executive council and a house of assembly. At the beginning of the by 1952, Azikiwe and the NCNC out rightly stood against the Macpherson constitution and some of its dispositions. He and his party demanded for a constitutional amendment.

During the Jos convention of December 1952, the NCNC, demanded for the immediate abrogation of the 1951 constitution. To make this effective, the party requested for the NCNC members of the House of Representatives and those in the Regional Assembly to resign from their seats. Southern Cameroon Representatives created the Cameroon Bloc and on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1953, declared their support to Azikiwe and his activities with the belief that he was in line with the Cameroon dream of having separate legislative and judicial organs. Even though E.M.L. Endeley supported the Cameroon Bloc and declared his loyalty to the NCNC, he refused to meddle in the squabbles within the party, stating that the problems didn't really concern his mission in Enugu which was to represent his people. Consequently, he distant

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<sup>47</sup> Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis* ..., p. 42.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

himself from the Cameroon Bloc for some time. Throughout the period of the crisis, Southern Cameroons representatives mostly functioned in blocs. Eyo Ita's camp criticized the Cameroon blocs with claims that they were working against unity and progress. But he was indirectly creating his own bloc to oppose the NCNC. On the other side, The West African Pilot of Azikiwe praised *the* bloc for being an instrument of peace, and fighting against lies, evil, opportunism and deceit.

### **b. The establishment of the Benevolent Neutrality Bloc**

Southern Cameroon representatives started realizing that their firm support to the NCNC was putting them at the losing side. Consequently they decided to transform the Cameroon Bloc to a Benevolent Neutrality which was more specific in its objectives. They took a stand to steer clear from Nigerian politics with a slogan "Nigerian politics for Nigerians and Cameroon politics for Cameroonians". The first step towards the establishment of this benevolent neutrality bloc was made by S.A. George who was representing the Mamfe division. He wrote an open letter to the National Secretary of the NCNC on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1953<sup>49</sup>. In this letter he detailed the difficulties faced by Southern Cameroonians as a result of the formation of the Cameroon Bloc and gave reasons why he thought it was time for Cameroonians to take a more decisive decision which was to boycott all future Nigerian political activities. Other members of the Cameroon Bloc like S.T. Muna of the Bamenda division and A.T. Ngala of the Nkambe division declared their full support of the action taken by S.A. George.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1953, members of the Cameroon Bloc excluding N.N. Mbile held a meeting in Lagos at the 3 Wakeman street Yaba<sup>50</sup>. In this meeting, the generally supported the letter of S.A. George and affirmed that the bloc should reconsider its stand in the crisis. It should be noted that 9 out of the 13 representatives stood for the Benevolent Neutrality. They were as illustrated in the table below. The leader of the Benevolent Neutrality was E.M.L. Endeley and he was assisted by S.A. George.

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<sup>49</sup>Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis ...*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

**Table 3: SCR to ENRHA who signed the Benevolent Neutrality Declaration**

<b>NAMES</b>	<b>DIVISION</b>
E.M.L. Endeley	Victoria
S.T. Muna	Bamenda
J.N. Foncha	Bamenda
V.T. Lainjo	Bamenda
S.A. George	Mamfe
M.N. Forju	Mamfe
Rev J.C. Kangsen	Wum
J.T. Ndze	Nkambe
A.T. Ngala	Nkambe

**Source:** Table conceived by the author after reading on the activities of the Southern Cameroon Representatives during the Eastern Regional Crisis.

A political crisis broke out in the Eastern Region of Nigeria in 1953 and Southern Cameroon Representatives realized that their place was not really guaranteed within Nigeria. Consequently, the above nine representatives led by EML Endeley created a Benevolent Neutrality Bloc with the main aim of non-intervention in the politics.

**Table 4: SCR to ENRHA who opposed the Benevolent Neutrality Declaration**

<b>REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>DIVISION</b>
N.N. Mbile	Kumba
S. C. Ndi	Wum
P.N. Motomby Woleta	Victoria
R.N. Charley	Kumba

**Source:** Table conceived by the author after a reading on the activities of the Southern Cameroon Representatives during the Eastern Regional Crisis

The benevolent neutrality took a firm stand and henceforth refused to interfere in any political problem concerning Nigerian politicians but the above table shows members of a new bloc of 4 representatives who openly opposed the benevolent neutrality and all it stood for. This bloc was led by N.N. Mbile.

As the crisis intensified, major politicians in Nigeria began to openly declare their support for the course of neutrality adopted by the Cameroons. This greatly encouraged



members of the Benevolent Neutrality. For example on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1953<sup>51</sup>, Azikiwe said:

The N.C.N.C. recognizes the peculiar position of the Cameroons as a trust territory and supports the Cameroon people's demand for a separate Regional Status including a separate Legislative Assembly for the Cameroons with full budgetary autonomy... The National Council shall include in its general program the issues raised in this statement and shall dedicate itself towards their attainment. The council shall work jointly and in close co-operation with indigenous Cameroons Organizations that shall demonstrate the desire to work in full mutual understanding with, and shall themselves respect and support the deals and aspirations of the N.C.N.C. in so far as these are not in variance with the interest of the Cameroons peoples<sup>52</sup>.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1953<sup>53</sup>, Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Action Group made favorable statements for the Cameroons:

...We are not indifferent to the aspirations of the people of the Cameroons. The Action Group supports the demand of Cameroons people for separate Legislature and a right of self-determination to remain in or outside Nigeria. It is an insult for a country like the Cameroons to remain perpetually against her will, a trust territory... We of the Action Group regard ourselves as allies of the nationalists of the Cameroons. The wisest policy which the people of the Cameroons should adopt is to ally themselves actively with forces of liberation being unleashed in Nigeria. The light for freedom in Nigeria is of momentous importance and its success will have tremendous effect on the aspirations of the Cameroons<sup>54</sup>.

### **c. The dissolution of the Eastern Regional Assembly and the secession of Southern Cameroon Representatives from the Eastern Region of Nigeria**

The Eastern Regional crisis reached its peak on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1953<sup>55</sup>. During parliamentary session of the Eastern Regional Assembly held on this same day, the Southern Cameroon representatives requested for S.T. Muna to be reinstated to his post of Minister in the Eastern Executive Council but the assembly rejected their request by voting 45 votes against 32. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1953, members of the Benevolent Neutrality led by E.M.L. Endeley refused to take their usual seats and preferred to sit among the crowd. The tension that had existed for three months had aggravated and in reaction, the Lieutenant Governor of the Eastern Region on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1953, officially dissolved the Eastern Regional Assembly.

With the evolution of events, it was now crystal clear to the benevolent neutrals that their future was not within Nigerian politics but in an environment of a pure Cameroonian

<sup>51</sup>Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis...*, p. 77.

<sup>52</sup>P. M. Kale, *Political evolution in the Cameroons*, Buea, 1967, p. 38.

<sup>53</sup>Amaazee, *The eastern Nigerian crisis...* p. 78.

<sup>54</sup>Kale, *Political evolution in...*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>55</sup>Amaazee, *The eastern Nigerian crisis...* p. 79.

political atmosphere. Consequently, all nine members of the Benevolent Neutrality Bloc (see table above) addressed a memorandum to the Southern Cameroon population. In this memorandum, they explained their ordeal in Nigeria and why they had made the bold decision to break away. They equally called for an immediate All Cameroon Conference to be held in Mamfe from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1953<sup>56</sup>. The communique read as thus:

Yesterday, representatives of the people of the Eastern Region by 45 votes to 32, rejected Cameroons representation in the Executive Council when they turned down the request of the Cameroons people to reinstate the Cameroons minister to the Regional Executive. We your elected representatives consider this act to be a deliberate disregard for the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Cameroons. We have therefore broken our connection with the Eastern Region because we believe that as a minority, we are unable to make the wishes of the Cameroons people respected... We strongly advise all Cameroonians to boycott any future elections to the Eastern House of Assembly. We your representatives have decided to boycott the next elections to the Eastern House and to remain at home until we are granted a Cameroons House of Assembly... In order to reveal our position and to evolve the details of our positive plans, all Native Authorities, tribal organizations, chiefs and people of every village are required to send two representatives each to a conference to be held in Mamfe on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1953<sup>57</sup>.

The Mamfe conference was successful as planned and sponsored by the Southern Cameroons Representatives. There were two major achievements of this conference that is the petition written to the British secretary for colonies who was based in London, requesting for a separate region and house of assembly from Nigeria (quotation) and another achievement was the creation of the first indigenous political party in Southern Cameroons non as the Kamerun National Congress (KNC), which was placed under the leadership of Dr E.M.L. Endeley. N.N. Mbile who had been earlier dismissed from the K.U.N.C., could not be part of the new political party so he also decided to mobilize and create another political party by June 1954.

After the Mamfe conference, Endeley left for London by the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1953, to attend a meeting of board of directors for the Cameroon Development Coperation (CDC). He seized this opportunity to forward the petition from the Mamfe conference to the British Secretary for colonies. From Endeley's opinion, the Secretary responded positively and the Southern Cameroons dream of having a separate legislature and region was becoming a reality. After the London conference of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1953 and the Lagos conference of January 1954, the

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<sup>56</sup> Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis*..., p. 80.

<sup>57</sup> Kale, *Political Evolution in...*, pp. 79-80.

British agreed to amend the 1951 constitution and also look into the situation of the Cameroons<sup>58</sup>.

**Table 5: SCR to the ENRHA in the 1953/1954 Elections**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Political Party</b>
Bamenda	S.T. Muna	KNC
	V.T. Lainjo	KNC
	J.N. Foncha	KNC
Nkambe	J. Nsame	KNC
	J.T. Ndze	KNC
Wum	Rev J.C. Kangsen	KNC
	J.N. Nkwain	KNC
Mamfe	S.A. George	KNC
	S.E. Ncha	KPP
Kumba	J.M. Bokwe	KNC
	F.A. Sone	KNC
Victoria	Dr E.M.L. Endeley	KNC
	E. K. Martin	KNC

Source:Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis...*, p.96

There were prospects of granting a separate legislation for Southern Cameroons but this was to be determined by the results of the elections that were to be soon held in Southern Cameroons. In an election that was carried out between late 1953 and early 1954, the K.N.C, first agreed to boycott but later changed its strategy to run for the elections in order not to allow some individuals to seize the opportunity to represent Southern Cameroons in the Eastern Regional Assembly. The K.N.C. of Endeley had an overwhelming victory by winning 12 seats out of 13 seats that Southern Cameroons had in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly as seen in the above table.

It should be noted that all of the KNC representatives elected in 1954 from Southern Cameroons did not take their seats in the Eastern Regional assembly but rather they preferred to stay in their territory until Britain granted them a separate legislature. Following the brilliant performance of Endeley's KNC in the election, the Lagos conference of January 1954 considered the granting of quasi autonomy to Southern Cameroons in the new constitution that was to be produced. From the decision of the Lagos conference, Southern Cameroons was to cease to be part of the Eastern Region but still to remain part of the Nigerian federation.

<sup>58</sup>Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis...*, p. 84.

#### **d. The Lyttleton constitution and the provision of the Southern Cameroons legislature**

This constitution that was promulgated in 1954 granted a Quasi-Regional status, with an executive council and a house of assembly with 13 seats. But the federal legislature and executive were still to have jurisdiction in the territory. The constitution also granted the position of a leader of government business which was occupied by E.M.L. Endeley. The Southern Cameroons Assembly was composed of the commissioner of the Cameroons (president), 13 elected members, 6 representatives of Native Authorities, 2 representatives of communities not adequately represented and 3 ex-officios who were the deputy commissioner, the legal secretary and the financial and development secretary<sup>59</sup>.

Concerning the competences of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly, it had the powers to make laws on the concurrent list and residential matters, to raise revenue from sources that were opened to a regional legislature, to consider an annual budget and to pass an appropriation bill based on that budget, but unlike the other regions, the bills were to receive the assent of the Governor-General.

As earlier mentioned, the 12 representatives of the KNC elected during the late 1953 elections, did not take their seats in the Eastern Regional Assembly. They waited until the new constitution was introduced and they automatically emerged as the party with majority seats in the new Southern Cameroons Assembly. The inaugural session of this new assembly was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1954<sup>60</sup>. The assembly immediately designated an Executive Council which was as follows;

President: The Commissioner of the Cameroons

Ex-officios: The deputy commissioner, the legal secretary and the financial and development secretary

Unofficial members: Dr Endeley, S.T. Muna, Rev J.C. Kangsen and S.A. George

All the unofficial members of the executive council came from the ruling KNDP and were all allocated government departments for management. For example; Endeley became leader of government business, in charge of land and survey, local development, economic development. Rev J.C. Kangsen was in charge of Social services like education, health. S.A.

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<sup>59</sup> Kalu Ezera, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria*, Cambridge, O.U.P., 1964, cited in Bong Amaazee's *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis and the Destiny of the British Southern Cameroons, 1953-1954*, p. 99.

<sup>60</sup> Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis...*, p.100.

George was in charge of natural resources and agriculture. S.T. Muna was in charge of works and transport. Apart from this, the Assembly also passed laws establishing the Southern Cameroons Marketing Board and the Southern Cameroons Development Board. The session ended on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1954<sup>61</sup>.

**Table 6: SCR to the house of representatives in Lagos in 1954**

<b>DIVISION</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>POLITICAL PARTY</b>
Bamenda	L.S. Fonka	KNC
Nkambe	J. Mbonyam	KNC
Wum	L.A. Ning	KNC
Mamfe	P.A. Ayuk	KNC
Kumba	V.E. Mukete	KNC
Victoria	F. Ngale	KNC

**Source:** Table Developed by the author after Research on Political Developments in Southern Cameroons

**Table 7: Representatives of NAs to the SCHA in December 1954**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Native Authority</b>	<b>Political Party</b>
Bamenda	M.T. Monju	KNC
Nkambe	Chief Nformi	KNC
Wum	A.N. Jua	KNC
Mamfe	S. Asongna Foto	KNC
Kumba	Mulango	KNC
Victoria	Chief J. Manga Williams	KNC

**Source:** Table Developed by the author after Research of Political Developments in Southern Cameroons

By December 1954, there were general elections in Southern Cameroons to choose 6 members of the House of Representatives in Lagos and to choose representatives of Native Authorities in the new Southern Cameroons Assembly as stipulated by the constitution<sup>62</sup>. Primaries were conducted at district and village levels and an electoral college was obtained which voted the representatives in secret balloting. The above results in tables 6 and 7 were obtained.

By January 1955, Southern Cameroonians had fully engaged in their political life which had nothing to do with that of Eastern Nigeria. But diverse political ideologies started

<sup>61</sup> Cameroons Report for 1954 p.15, cited in Amaazee's Eastern Nigerian Crisis..., p. 100.

<sup>62</sup> Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis*..., p. 103.

developing with the KNC which later influenced the evolution of affairs in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly and could determine the fate of Southern Cameroons. Endeley started changing his political view to go back to Nigeria (integration) and this further led to the emergence of ideologies like Secession and reunification. Consequently, J.N. Foncha left the KNC and established a new political party in 1955 known as the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP).

**Table 8: List of elected representatives into the SCHA in 1957**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Electoral District</b>	<b>Political Party</b>
E.M.L. Endeley	Victoria North	KNC
P.N. Motomby Woleta	Victoria South	KPP
F.N. Ajebe Sone	Kumba East	KNC
N.N. Mbile	Kumba West	KPP
A. Fonge	Mamfe South-West	KNDP
S.A. Arrey	Mamfe North-East	KNC
V.T. Lainjo	Bamenda East	KNC
S.T. Muna	Bamenda West	KNC
J.N. Foncha	Bamenda Central	KNDP
A. N. Jua	Wum South	KNDP
P.A. Mua	Wum North	KNDP
A. Shey	Nkambe North-East	KNC
J. N. Nsame	Nkambe South-East	KNDP

**Source :** Njanjou, *“Les présidents de l’assemblée nationale...”*, p. 51.

In 1956, the Lyttleton constitution provided a full regional status for Southern Cameroons and new elections were organized in March 1957 into the Southern Cameroons Assembly. Even though faced with two opposition parties, the KNC of Endeley still emerged victorious with 6 seats, the KNDP of Foncha had 5 seats and the KPP of Mbile had 2 seats<sup>63</sup> as demonstrated in the above table.

Southern Cameroonians largely criticized the Lyttleton constitution and consequently, the British organized a constitutional conference in London from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May to the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1957. This conference was presided by the British Secretary for colonies, Alan Lennox Boyd and 8 delegates from Southern Cameroons were in attendance. These delegates were; 4 for the KNC (E.M.L. Endeley, V.T. Lainjo, Fon Galega II and A. She), 2 for the KNDP (J.N. Foncha and S.T. Muna) 2 for the KPP (N.N. Mbile and P.M. Kale)<sup>64</sup>. The

<sup>63</sup>Njanjou, « Les présidents de l’assemblée nationale... », p. 51.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*

conference decided on some of the following for Southern Cameroons; A full regional status that was compared to other regions of Nigeria, and Executive Council of Ministers to be led by a Premier, an increase in the number of seats in the Southern Cameroons Assembly from 13 to 26, and the creation of a House of chiefs. The changes were to take effect from 1958. By February 1958, the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly resolved that the territory shall become a full region after the 1959 election.

**Table 9: Some members of parliament of the SCHA in 1959**

PARLIAMENTARIAN	FUNCTION OR POLITICAL PARTY
<b>EX-OFFICIOS</b>	
E.H Sainsbury	President
H. Milner	Lieutenant Commissioner for the Cameroons
R. Robson	Attorney General and Finance Secretary
<b>ELECTED MEMBERS</b>	
J.N. Foncha	KNDP
S.T. Muna	KNDP
W.S. Fonyongo	KNDP
S. Mofor	KNDP
H. Nganje	KNDP
V.T. Lainjo	KNC
N. Nji	KNDP
A.N. Jua	KNDP
J.M Boja	KNDP
Rev J.C. Kangsen	KNC
S.A. She	KNC
D. Nyangangsi	KNC
S.N. Tamfu	KNC
W.N.O. Effiom	KNC
S.E. Ncha	KPP
E.M.L. Endeley	KNC
N.N. Mbile	KPP

**Source:** Njanjou “Les Présidents de l’Assemblée Nationale ...”, p. 52.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1959, elections were organized into the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly and out of the 26 seats, the KNDP of Foncha secured 14 seats, the KNC of Endeley won 10 seats and the KPP of Mbile won 2 seats<sup>65</sup>. The elections brought about the composition of the above Assembly.

With a simple majority in the Southern Cameroons Assembly, Foncha and his KNDP party were asked to form a government. Foncha emerged as the New Premier of Southern

<sup>65</sup>Njanjou, “Les présidents de l’assemblée nationale...”, p. 52.

Cameroons, replacing Endeley<sup>66</sup>. There were new political developments in the House of Assembly where the ideology of reunification supported by the KNDP and that of integration supported by the KNC and KPP. The common ideology of integration with Nigeria between the KNC and KPP resulted to a KNC-KPP alliance and this gave the alliance 12 seats against 14 for the KNDP. Shortly after the elections, one of the MPs from Wum, J.M. Boja crossed the carpet by joining the KNC-KPP alliance. This further complicated politics in the House of Assembly as the number of seats became 13 against 13<sup>67</sup>. It was partially due to this complication that the Assembly could not decide on the future of the territory and hence the plebiscite of February 1961<sup>68</sup>.

## 2. The evolution of the Cameroon under the French administration

Just like in British Cameroons, the evolution of parliament in French Cameroon was also a process whose origin can be traced from the Brazzaville conference of 1944. From the 30<sup>th</sup> January to 8<sup>th</sup> February 1944, Gen Charles De Gaulle organised a Franco-African conference in Brazzaville to thank French colonial officials for mobilising Africans who fought under the Free French Movement that liberated France during the Second World War<sup>69</sup>. As a way of showing appreciation to Africans, the French decided to emancipate Africans in their colonies in several domains among which was the constitutional change of 1945. This new constitution authorized the creation of representative assemblies in French colonial Africa of which French Cameroon was included. The French also authorized the representation of Africans in the French parliament and consequently, Alexander Duala Manga Bell one of the first French Cameroonians that was elected into the French assembly in 1945 and he participated in the establishment of the constitution of 1945<sup>70</sup>. Apart from the aforementioned circumstance, other circumstances also contributed to the founding of the legislature in French Cameroon.

During the French mandate, the French committed several atrocities against French Cameroonians like the introduction of forced labour, exploitative taxation, land

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<sup>66</sup>Ngoh, *Constitutional developments in Southern Cameroons*, pp. 108-113, cited in Frédéric Nguemi Njanjou's "*Les présidents de l'assemblée nationale...*", p. 52.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Therenice Kefih Kai, Aged 32, History Teacher in Pharaohs Bilingual College Mimboman , Yaounde 17/08/21.

<sup>68</sup> Atu, *New Success in...*, p.106.

<sup>69</sup>S. Guifa Wouafo, "Les Parlementaires de la Menoua et le développement de leur localité : Le cas de Penka Michel(1965-2007), masters thesis in History, Univerty of Yaoundé I, 2010, p. 54.

<sup>70</sup> A Sentence taken from class notes in an Avanced Level Cameroon History notes dispensed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 at Angel Michael Bilingual College, Essos Yaounde.



expropriation, loss of the middle man monopoly of trade, among others and consequently, several tribes resisted against French rule. They further demanded for autonomous indigenous institutions that were political in nature where they could genuinely and freely fight for their rights<sup>71</sup>.

There were also traditional associations that were very influential in the socio-political lives of Cameroonians like the Ngondo and the Nkumze. These associations either regrouped regions or tribes and their activities served as a starting point for some pressure groups and political parties in French Cameroon. Pressure groups such as Jeunesse Camerounaise Française (JEUCAFRA) created in 1938, Union Camerounaise Française (UNICAFRA) created in 1946 and the Rassemblement Camerounaise (RACAM) created in 1947, among others. They were socio-political associations with main objective to defend the interest of the population<sup>72</sup>. These pressure groups also produced the first political leaders that later animated the parliamentary scene in French Cameroon. We can mention cases of radical politicians like Um Nyobe or conservative politicians like André Marie Mbida. These pressure groups played a very vital role in the establishment of the first assembly in French Cameroon.

#### **a.The various assemblies that existed in French Cameroon before independence**

Before gaining independence on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1960, French Cameroon had three major assemblies that contributed immensely to the socio-political evolution of the territory. Among these assemblies were the Representative Assembly of Cameroon (ARCAM), the Territorial Assembly of Cameroon (ATCAM) and the Legislative Assembly of Cameroon (ALCAM). It should be noted that these assembly had their competences which were evolving as the assemblies were successively put in place but none the less, they were under the general supervision of the French colonial administration in Cameroon.

#### **b.The Representative Assembly of Cameroon or Assemblée Représentative du Cameroun (ARCAM)**

This happens to be the first ever parliamentary structure officially put in place in French Cameroon. The French constitution of 1945 as earlier mentioned provided the creation of representative assemblies in all French African territory including French Cameroon.

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<sup>71</sup>Guifa, “Les Parlementaires de...”, p. 53.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid*, p. 54.

Consequently, the French colonial administration passed a decree on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1946<sup>73</sup>, creating the representative assembly of Cameroon. This assembly was allocated 40 seats which were composed of 16 members of the upper or first college made up assimilated Europeans resident in Cameroon and 24 members of the lower or second college made up of Cameroonian indigenes. The members of this assembly were called “Delegates”. Elections into this assembly were held respectively on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1946 and 19<sup>th</sup> January 1947 for the respective electoral colleges and they effectively started work in February 1947<sup>74</sup>. Concerning their competence, it should be noted that ARCAM was just a consultative assembly which did not have anything to do with the political affairs of French Cameroon.

### **c.The Territorial Assembly of Cameroon or Assemblée Territoriale du Cameroun (ATCAM)**

This assembly was created on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1952 with 50 seats which was a little above the 40 in ARCAM<sup>75</sup>. The members of ATCAM were called “Councillors”. Just like the previous assembly, it was made up of two electoral colleges that 18 members for the first or upper college who were elected French citizens and 32 members for the second or lower college who were Cameroonians that had not been assimilated or were almost not classified. Elections into this assembly were held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1952<sup>76</sup>. Concerning the competence of this assembly, it was similar to that of ARCAM. ATCAM was a consultative assembly on socio-economic affairs of the territory. They could also at times be consulted on general matters concerning the population but their point of view had very little or no influence on the activities of the French colonial government. It should be noted that politics in French Cameroon was never to be in any form the business of ATCAM. The first president of ATCAM was Louis Paul Aujoulat who was an assimilated French settler from Algeria as seen in the plate below. The electoral difference of ATCAM with ARCAM was that most of the members were elected from political parties like *Bloc Démocratique Camerounaise (BDC)* of Aujoulat among others.

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<sup>73</sup> Decree n°46-2376 of 25<sup>th</sup> October 1946, creating the representative assembly of Cameroon (ALCAM)

<sup>74</sup> Guifa, “Les Parlementaires de...”, p. 55.

<sup>75</sup> Law n°52-130 of 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1952 authorising the creation of group assemblies, and local assemblies of West Africa and Togo, for French Equatorial Africa and for Cameroon and Madagascar.

<sup>76</sup> Guifa, “Les Parlementaires de ...”, p. 55.

**Plate 2: Louis Paul Aujoulat, first president of ATCAM**



**Source:** Archives of the National Assembly, 26/08/22.

An assembly known as ATCAM was created on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1952 with 50 seats which was a little above the 40 in ARCAM. The first president of ATCAM was Louis Paul Aujoulat who was an assimilated French settler from Algeria. The electoral difference of ATCAM with ARCAM was that most of the members were elected from political parties like *Bloc Démocratique Camerounaise (BDC)* of Aujoulat among others.

**d. The Legislative Assembly of Cameroon or Assemblée Législative du Cameroon (ALCAM)**

The enabling law (*la loi cadre*) drafted by the French constituent assembly greatly emancipated French African colonies including French Cameroon which as at this time was a trust territory of the UNO under the French. The law transformed French Cameroon from a trust territory (*térritoire tutelle*) to a trust state (*état tutelle*) with more internal political autonomy. This move brought several innovations among which were the establishment of a legislative assembly, formation of an internal government among others. Consequently, the French government by law n° 56/1147 of 15<sup>th</sup> November 1956, officially created the Legislative Assembly of Cameroon (ALCAM)<sup>77</sup>. It was to be a single Electoral College legislative assembly made up of only Cameroonians which had 70 seats. Its members were to be called “Parliamentarians” or “*Députés*” and had more legislative powers. A multi-party

<sup>77</sup>Guifa, “Les parlementaires de...”, p. 55.

election into this new assembly was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1956 and produced the results demonstrated on the table below.

**Table 10: Results of elections into ATCAM held in 1956**

<b>POLITICAL PARTY</b>	<b>SEATS WON</b>	<b>LEADER</b>
Union Camerounaise (UC)	30	Ahmadou Ahidjo
Democrat Camerounais (DC)	20	André Marie Mbida
Paysans Indépendants (PI)	09	Paul Soppo Priso
Groupe d'Action Nationale du Cameroun (GANC)	08	Charles Asalle
Independent Candidates	03	/
Total Number of Seats	70	

**Source:** Table constructed by the author after consultation of documents

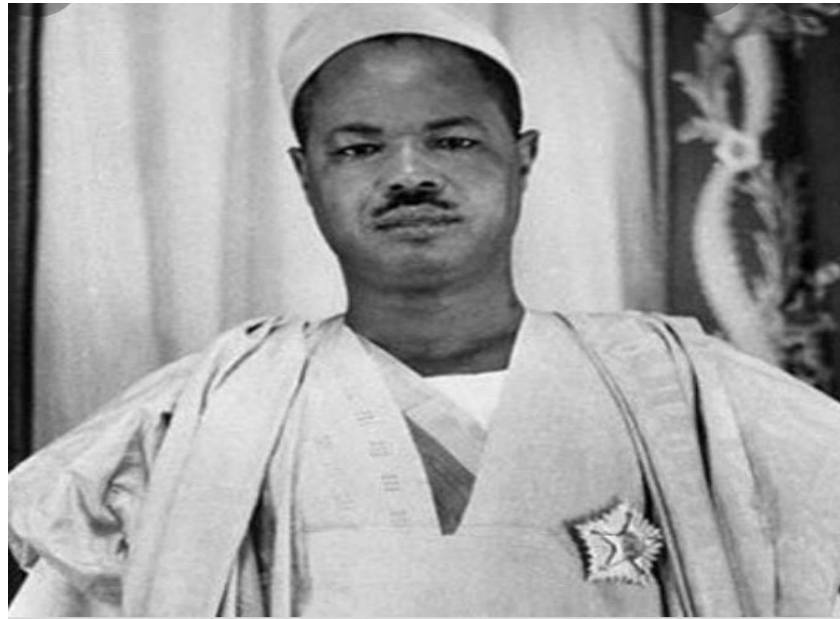
In 1956, the French through the passing of the *Loi Cadre* created a new assembly known as the Legislative Assembly of Cameroon (ALCAM). This assembly was to have 70 seats and it was given more legislative powers. A multi-party election into this new assembly was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1956 and produced the results in the above table.

The elected parliamentarians were sworn in February 1957 still as members of ATCAM but on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1957, the assembly took the title ALCAM. Concerning its competence, ALCAM had full legislative powers but which were limited at the internal level. The management of foreign affairs still remained in the hands of French colonial administrators. The assembly to also form an internal government and was to work towards the full independence of French Cameroon in the nearest future. Consequently, André Marie Mbida whose party, *Démocrates Camerounaise (DC)* had 20 seats (second in simple majority) was appointed first Prime Minister of French Cameroon and Ahmadou Ahidjo whose political party *Union Camerounaise (UC)* had 30 seats (simple majority) emerged as the President of ALCAM and vice Prime Minister and minister of interior for French Cameroon. ALCAM equally carried out remarkable political innovations in 1957 when the assembly adopted a flag, an anthem and other important national symbols for French Cameroon. This was a lead way to future self-governance. Ahidjo's simple majority in ALCAM partially contributed to his replacement of Mbida as Prime Minister of French Cameroon by February 1958<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with Therenca Kefih Kai, Aged 32, History Teacher in Pharaohs Bilingual College Mimboan, Yaounde 17/08/21.

**Plate 3: Ahmadou Ahidjo, first president of ALCAM in 1957**



**Source:** Archives of the National Assembly, 26/08/22.

The above plate is an image of Ahmadou Ahidjo whose political party *Union Camerounaise (UC)* had 30 seats (simple majority) during the elections into ALCAM in 1956 and he later emerged as the President of ALCAM and vice Prime Minister and minister of interior for French Cameroon.

### **3. The evolution of the parliament from 1960-2013**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1960, French Cameroon gained her full independence from France and became a sovereign state with the name *La république du Cameroun* (Republic of Cameroon). The first constitution was promulgated in March 1960. This constitution allocated 100 seats to the Cameroon Parliament and also accorded the parliament *plein pouvoirs* (full powers) to legislate and control government action just like any other sovereign parliaments of independent states around the world.

First ever legislative elections into the *Assemblée Nationale du Cameroun (ANC)* or National Assembly of Cameroon were conducted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1960<sup>79</sup>. The first session of the assembly took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1960<sup>80</sup>. The ANC voted many bills and outstanding among these bills was the constitutional revision and adoption of 1<sup>st</sup> September 1961 which gave birth to the Federal Republic of Cameroon. But note should be

<sup>79</sup>Guifa, “Les Parlementaires de...” p. 56.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

taken that due to the creation of the federal republic and subsequently the federal assembly, the ANC existed just for a period of about 2 years.

The federal constitution of September 1<sup>st</sup> 1960 provided a National Federal Assembly (NFA) with 50 seats that is 40 seats for representatives from East Cameroon former Republic of Cameroon) and 10 seats for West Cameroon (former Southern Cameroons). The NFA was to legislate over federal structures including the control of the activities of the two other federated assemblies that were also provided for West and East Cameroons. The first session of this Federal Assembly took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1962 its members were not elected but delegated from the assemblies of West and East Cameroons. But elections into the NFA later took place in 1964 and 1970 respectively. A remarkable activity of the NFA was the voting of the bill that authorized the organization of a referendum on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1972 that saw the abolition of the federal constitution and the introduction of the unitary constitution. The NFA was directly assisted by two federated assemblies as earlier mentioned which were the West Cameroon Assembly that had 37 seats and the *Assemblée Législative du Cameroun Oriental (ALCAMOR)* or East Cameroon Assembly which had 100 seats. There was also a West Cameroon House of Chiefs (WCHC) with 22 seats that was part of the West Cameroon legislature. It should be noted that the Federal Assembly and the Federated Assemblies had full or real legislative powers but their activities were highly influenced by a strong or powerful federal executive.

The Unitary Constitution was promulgated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1972<sup>81</sup>. This constitution replaced several federal structures with unitary structures with unitary structures. Among these newly introduced political structures was the introduction a new assembly known as the National Assembly or *Assemblée Nationale*. The national assembly had 120 in 1972 the number of seats were subsequently increased to 150 on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 1983 and to 180 on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1988, following constitutional modifications. Members of the Assembly were called “Members of Parliament” or “*Les Députés*” and were to be elected through a direct and secrete universal suffrage. The Unitary Constitution also provided the National Assembly with a strategic position of Speaker of the National Assembly who was the constitutional heir to the president of the republic, following the abolition of the post of the Vice President. This post was occupied for the first time by Solomon Tandeng Muna between 1973 and 1988<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup>Atu, *New Success in...*, p. 112.

<sup>82</sup>Guifa, “Les Parlementaires de...”, p. 56.

In 1991<sup>83</sup>, there was another innovation within the Cameroon National Assembly which was the introduction of supplant parliamentarians. Hence, the parliament was to have “Titular or Ultimate Parliamentarians” and “Supplant parliamentarians”. The supplant parliamentarian was to replace the titular parliamentarian in case of vacancy except death. But it should be noted that these supplant parliamentarians did not have full powers or advantages like the titular parliamentarians and are not part of the national assembly.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January 1996, a new constitution was promulgated in Cameroon. This constitution redesigned the Cameroon parliament by introducing a Bi-cameral parliamentary system. In this bicameralism, Cameroon was to have two houses of parliament that is an upper house of parliament called the “Senate” with 100 members. 70 of these 100 senators were to be elected by an electoral college comprised of regional and local councillors while the remaining 30 were to be appointed by a presidential decree and each region was to be represented by ten senators<sup>84</sup>. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013, President Paul Biya called for the first ever electoral college to elect senators in Cameroon<sup>85</sup>. These elections were to take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

## **B. Organization, functions and missions of the Cameroon parliament since 1992**

In this part of chapter one, we are to elaborate on the administrative structure or organization of the parliament, where we observe the parliamentary bureau, the conference of chairpersons and parliamentary groups, not forgetting parliamentary committees. The part will also talk on the functions or activities of parliamentarians and the mission of parliament in Cameroon or in other words the domestic activities of the Cameroon parliament.

### **1. Types and conditions to become a parliamentarian in Cameroon**

There are two types of parliamentarians in Cameroon who belong to the two respective chambers of parliament in the country. The members of the upper chamber of parliament are called Senators while the members of the lower chambers of parliament are mostly referred to as MPs (Members of parliament) or *Les Députés* in the French language.

As concerns senators, the Cameroon senate comprises of 100 senators. Each region in Cameroon is entitled to 10 Senators. 7 out of the 10 Senators regional and municipal

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<sup>83</sup> Law n°91-020 of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1991 laying down conditions for the elections of parliamentarians into the National Assembly.

<sup>84</sup> Article 20 of the Cameroon Constitution of 1996.

<sup>85</sup> Decree n°2013/056 of 27 February 2013, which put in place the first ever Senate in Cameroon.

councillors while 3 are appointed by the president of the republic through a presidential degree. A person must be at least 40 years old before being eligible to be elected or appointed as a senator in Cameroon. The election of senators is through indirect universal suffrage and they represent local decentralized territorial collectives<sup>86</sup>. The president of the senate is the constitutional heir of the president of the republic. Senators are elected or appointed in Cameroon for a mandate of 5 years<sup>87</sup>.

The Cameroon National Assembly is composed of 180 members. Members of the national assembly are elected through a direct universal suffrage with secret balloting for a mandate of five years. Members of the national assembly according to the constitution are representatives of the entire nation<sup>88</sup> even though they come from particular constituencies<sup>89</sup>. Any one contesting to be a member of the national assembly must be at least 23 years old<sup>90</sup> and should have been confirmed as a candidate representing a particular political party.

Other conditions of eligibility for parliamentarians in Cameroon are as follows: The candidate must be of Cameroonian nationality, he or she should have never served a jailed term, should pay a particular sum of money as registration for elections. That is 500.000FCFA for members of the national assembly and 1000000FCFA for Senators. The person must be educated and able to read and write at least one of the official languages of the country which are English and French and the candidature must be endorsed by the executive of a legalized political party<sup>91</sup>.

## **2. The administrative structure or organization of the parliament**

The administrative structures of the parliament are the bureau of the parliament, the conference of chairmen, parliamentary committees and groups which all have their various activities.

### **a. The bureau of the parliament (senate and national assembly)**

Before engaging to talk about the bureau of the parliament, it is pertinent to have a look at the bureau of age. It is a sub administrative organ that presides over the inaugural session

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<sup>86</sup> Article 20 of the Cameroon Constitution of 18 January 1996.

<sup>87</sup> L. Tazanu Mangula, *Ordinary level Brighter Citizenship*, Bamenda, Emengu International, 2014, p. 221.

<sup>88</sup> Article 15 of the Cameroon constitution of 18 January 1996.

<sup>89</sup> NAY, Decree n°60/50 of 4th March 1960 Relating to the Partition of Constituencies and the Mode of Electing Members of the National Assembly for the Parliamentary Elections of 10<sup>th</sup> March 1960.

<sup>90</sup> Bekona, "Les Elections Parlementaires...", p. 65.

<sup>91</sup> Mangula, *Ordinary Level Brighter...*, p. 222.



of the parliament before the election of the bureau is done. This bureau is usually composed of the oldest parliamentarian or dean of age and two youngest parliamentarians<sup>92</sup>. It should be noted that members of the bureau of age may not contest in the elections of bureau members. The attributions of the members of the bureau of age are well defined by the internal regulations of the parliament be it senate or national assembly. For example, in June 2013, the first ever inaugural session of the Cameroon Senate was chaired by Senator Victor Mfon Mukete who by then was 95 years and the oldest senator. He was assisted by two other youngest senators with one of them being Mbella Moki Charles<sup>93</sup>.

As per article 11 sub 1 of the internal regulations of the Cameroon National Assembly, the Bureau of the Parliament is made up of 23 members that is a speaker, a first vice president, 5 vice presidents, 4 questors and 12 secretaries. The member of this bureau are elected usually during the ordinary sessions or at the beginning of a legislative year for a mandate of one year and their main task is to coordinate the activities of the national assembly<sup>94</sup>. The Secretary General of the national assembly is an ex-officio of the bureau of the National Assembly and is more like a collegial authority<sup>95</sup>. This same scenario occurs in the Cameroon Senate. The bureau of parliament in Cameroon is also in charge of organising all services of the institution and representing the parliament in public ceremonies. It has all the full powers to preside over parliamentary deliberations<sup>96</sup>. It is important that in a situation where the parliament meets in congress (senate and national assembly meeting at the same time and place), it is the bureau of the National assembly that presides over the parliamentary session<sup>97</sup>.

Apart from the collective or collegial function of the bureau, the bureau members all exercise individual activities. For example the speaker of the national assembly or the president of the senate coordinates parliamentary debates and essentially participates in the organization of parliamentary works. He also convokes and presides over the conference of chairmen and ensures the respect of parliamentary procedures and maintenance of discipline during sessions. He may also sanction or recommend the sanction of parliamentarians. The

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<sup>92</sup>Njanjou, « Les Présidents de... », p. 39.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with David Wallang Akwo, Aged 68 and first ever Senator from Menchum Division Elected in 2013, Yaounde, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Fidelis Nji Muziah, Aged 71, Former Parliamentarian from Menchum North Constituency and Questor of the National Assembly in the 2007-2013 Cegislature, Yaounde, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021.

<sup>95</sup>Njanjou, « Les Presidents de... », p. 39.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>97</sup> Article 14 sub 4 of the Cameroon Constitution of 02 June 1972, Revised in January 1996.

first vice president and other vice presidents assist the speaker or president of senate in case of absence, vacancy or when he is confirmed incapacitated. The secretaries are in charge of counting voting with show of hands and could also bring out the procès-verbal of plenary sittings. As for the questers, they control the financial and administrative services of the parliament and could also take part in the conference of presidents<sup>98</sup>. They may also have a say in the expenditure of the parliament.

### **b. The chairmen's conference**

The conference of chairmen may not really be considered as an administrative organ of the Cameroon parliament, it is actually a new parliamentary organ created with inspiration from the French parliament but it has evolved to suit the parliamentary scene in Cameroon. It is constituted of bureau members of the parliament, presidents of parliamentary commissions and presidents of parliamentary groups and members of government. Articles 18 and 23 of the Cameroon constitution gives the conference of the chairmen the competence of preparing the agenda of the National Assembly and Senate and could also design bills but this must be in accordance with article 26 of the Cameroon constitution which gives the parliament the right to pass bills. The above articles also describe the composition of the conference of chairpersons<sup>99</sup>. The internal regulations of the national assembly also gives right to only the presidents of the general commissions to take part in its activities which is a bit contradictory to the constitution of Cameroon which gives rooms to presidents of special commissions created by the Assembly to be part of the conference. The internal regulations also give rights to the president of the assembly bureau who is also the speaker to preside over meetings of the conference.<sup>100</sup>

### **c. Parliamentary groups**

The Cameroon constitution does not really evoke parliamentary groups but it gives right to political parties to take part in elections into the parliament in strict respect of the law<sup>101</sup>. Once voted into parliament, the representatives of these political parties can now proceed to form parliamentary groups. Only political parties with up to 15 representatives and above are authorized to form parliamentary groups<sup>102</sup>. The groups are composed of a president, vice,

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<sup>98</sup>Efoua. Mbozo'o, *Pratiques et Procédures Parlementaire...*, pp. 17-21.

<sup>99</sup>Articles 18 and 23 of the Cameroon Constitution of 18 January 1996 , Revised in April 2008.

<sup>100</sup>Article 27 sub 2 of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly of 2002.

<sup>101</sup>Article 3 of the Cameroon Constitution.

<sup>102</sup>Article 15 of the Standing Order of the National Assembly of 02<sup>nd</sup> December 2002.

and a secretary. They are equally allowed to participate in parliamentary commissions. After constituting a parliamentary group, the list is submitted to the bureau of the parliament. Parliamentary group animates the political scene in parliament by voting and controlling laws and also animating parliamentary debates. They also participate in the election of bureau members into their different functions. They also control the constitutionality of laws by controlling government action and also convoking the constitutional judge<sup>103</sup>. Parliamentary groups may also have the essential mandate to pursue the interest and policies of their political formation within the parliament and any attempts to under rate this usually lead to boycotts of parliamentary sessions<sup>104</sup>.

#### **d. Parliamentary committees**

The parliament is composed of different categories of committees among which are general committees, special committees and ad hoc committees. But focus here is laid on general or major committees that make up the parliament. The Cameroon parliament has nine general committees among which we have the committee on constitutional law, committee on finance and budget, committee on foreign affairs, national defence and security committee, economic affairs committee, planning and regional development, committee on education, vocational training and youth affairs, committee on cultural, social and family affairs, production and trade committee and the committee on resolutions and petitions. Bills tabled to the parliament during sessions are scrutinised by members of the respective committees depending on the nature of the bill. The elections of committee members in the senate is in accordance with section 25 sub 1 law N°2013/006 of June 10 2013, relating to the standing order of the senate<sup>105</sup>. The law clearly states that each year after the election of the bureau of the senate, nine committees shall be set up for consideration of matters referred to them. Each committee shall comprise at least 10 members and it is headed by a president, vice president and a rapporteur<sup>106</sup>.

#### **e. Relations between the senate and the national assembly**

As earlier mentioned, the Cameroon parliament is bicameral that is two houses of parliament with the national assembly being the lower house and the senate being the upper

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<sup>103</sup>Njanjou, "Les Présidents de l'Assemblée Nationale... ", p. 41.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Fidelis Nji Muziah, Aged 71, Former Parliamentarian from Menchum North Constituency, 2007-2013 Legislature, Yaounde, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021.

<sup>105</sup> [www.cameroontribune.cm/en/html](http://www.cameroontribune.cm/en/html), consulted on August 29, 2021 at 6pm.

<sup>106</sup> Law N°2013/006 of 10th June 2013 Relating to the Setting up and Functioning of General Committees in the Senate.

house. These two parliamentary houses might vary in composition and competences, both houses adjudicate in several areas. The Cameroon constitution in clearly elaborates on the joint activities of the senate and national assembly. According to article 30 of the constitution, bills passed by the National assembly are forwarded to the president of the senate by the speaker of the National Assembly and the president of the senate immediately after receiving the bill submits to the senate for consideration. The senate has ten days from the day of reception to study the bill. If it is adopted, the bill will be sent back to the Speaker National Assembly by the senate president who in tend has to forward it to the president of the republic within 48hours for enactment. But is this bill is amended, it will still be transmitted to the speaker of the National Assembly by the senate president for reconsideration.

It should be noted that the amendment of a bill must be approved by a majority of the senators and the amended bill can be passed or rejected by a simple majority of the members of the national assembly. The adopted bill will still be forwarded to the president of the republic for enactment. In situations where the absolute majority cannot be reach on deliberations for a rejected bill, the president of the republic may convene a meeting of a joint commission comprising of the two houses for approval<sup>107</sup>. Apart from deliberating and passing bills, both houses may also be called to congress for the installation of the president elect of the country and for the installation of any member of the constitutional council<sup>108</sup>.

### **3. Missions or Activities of Parliament in Cameroon**

Constitutionally, the Cameroon parliament has several missions. Articles 15 to 18 of the constitution describe the activities of the national assembly while articles 20 to 23 also describe the missions of the senate. The parliament shall meet three times a year as of right in ordinary sessions under conditions laid down by the law, a parliamentarian during his or her mandate must attend all of these sessions and actively participate in all the deliberations. Each parliamentarian shall also present his or her views in any issue raised but it should be in strict respect of the standing orders of the respective parliamentary houses. The parliamentarians also deliberate and pass bills or adopt bills which are later forwarded to the president of the republic for enactment. The Bureaux and Commissions are also created at the

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<sup>107</sup> Article 30 of the Cameroon constitution of the 18th January 1996.

<sup>108</sup>Mangula, *Ordinary level Brighter...*

beginning of each legislative year to permit parliamentarians work with their peers on text, bills, or preparing financial laws.<sup>109</sup>

The parliament also has a connection with the population in several ways since it is a representative institution of the people. The parliamentarians prepare micro projects from their various constituencies which are funded with money from the parliament. Such projects may include building of schools, hospitals, farm to market roads<sup>110</sup>. Parliamentarians also have the duty to inform the population of their constituency on the parliamentary discussions that are of interest to the local people. This reinforces the bond between the parliament and those who elected them<sup>111</sup>.

### **C. Reasons for parliamentary involvement in parlomacy or parliamentary diplomacy**

This part examines the reasons for the implication of the Cameroon parliament in parlomacy. To elaborate on this aspect, we will look at the institutional and legal backings that permit the parliament to venture into parlomacy, the political reasons and also throw more light on the lobby and individual reasons of parliamentary involvement in foreign affairs.

#### **1. Institutional and legal reasons or motives**

The navigation of the parliament at the international level is strongly backed by judicial texts such as the constitution and the standing orders of the respective parliamentary houses. The parliament according to law is supposed to check the international activities of the executive and this activity can only be effectively carried out through two major aspects which are legislation and control of government action<sup>112</sup> and these are the main and oldest functions of the Cameroon parliament<sup>113</sup>. We can say that they are bedrock of parliamentary activities in Cameroon. Therefore back by the constitution, the parliament of Cameroon fully involves in international relations to control the activities of the executive at the international scene. The commission of foreign affairs is at the centre of activities of the parliament at the international level and this commission is among the 9 general commissions created by the standing order of the parliament. For example, article 38 of the standing order of the National

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<sup>109</sup> Articles 15-23 of the Cameroon Constitution of 18 January 1996.

<sup>110</sup> Mangula, *Ordinary Level Brighter Citizenship...*, p. 219.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Article 14 sub 2 of the Constitution of 18 January 1996 which Stipulates that the Parliament shall Legislate and Control government action.

<sup>113</sup> Efoua Mbozo'o, *Pratiques et Procédures Parlementaires...*, p. 14.

Assembly stipulates that “No text or bill can be submitted to the Assembly for examination, deliberations, and or vote without first of all being given to the committee to examine and further write a an official report to the assembly”<sup>114</sup>. With this legal disposition, all texts coming from the Ministry of foreign affairs or the presidency of the republic are by right supposed to be examined by the committee of foreign affairs of the parliament.

The parliament is the legislative arm of the state and practically in the theory of separation of powers as portrayed by John Locke, the legislative is supposed to design and prescribe rules for the executive to simply implement<sup>115</sup>. As far as Cameroon laws are concerned, the Parliament happened to be the organ that gives the green light or go ahead for the executive to pursue her foreign policy. As earlier mentioned, this great task is granted by the Cameroon constitution which permits the parliament to approve and ratify international accords and treaties submitted to her by the executive. But it should be noted that the powers of the parliament are given by the citizens of the country who through legal elections choose their representatives.

The fundamental law of Cameroon in its article 35, empowers the parliament to control government activities through oral or written questions and also through the formation of special committees of inquiry to treat specific issues<sup>116</sup>.

The parliament shall control government action through oral or written questions and by setting up committees of inquiry with specific terms of reference. The government shall, subject to the imperatives of national defence, the security of the state or the secrecy of criminal investigation, furnish any explanations and information to parliament. During each ordinary session, a special sitting shall be set aside each week for question time<sup>117</sup>.

The constitution also gives more competence to the parliament on the question of international agreements and treaties where article 43 stipulates as such:

The president of the republic shall negotiate and ratify treaties and international agreements. Treaties and international agreements falling within the area of competence of the legislative power as defined in article 26 above shall be submitted to parliament for authorization to ratify.<sup>118</sup>

It should be noted that the parliament is not being put on the same scale with or even above the president of the republic on matters of policy designation especially at the

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<sup>114</sup>Njanjou, « Les Présidents de l’Assemblée Nationale... », p. 30.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>116</sup>Meyolo, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 11.

<sup>117</sup>Article 35 of the Cameroon Constitution of 18th January 1996, whose Details Describe the control of the Executive by the Parliament.

<sup>118</sup>Article 43 of the Cameroon Constitution of 18 January 1996 which gives the Parliament the Competence to Ratify Treaties and International Agreements.

international level because it is clear that the executive arm of power remains the traditional channel of policy making in Cameroon both at the national and international level.

The parliamentary control according to Samuel Efoua Mbozo'o<sup>119</sup> could be explained in three categories which are: control by sanction, control by follow-up and control of influence. Joel Narcisse Meyolo<sup>120</sup> takes out time to explain these aforementioned mechanisms of control on the executive by the parliament. According to him, the parliament can question the government activity or action by passing votes of no confidence on the programs or policies presented by the prime minister during sessions. This is referenced in the constitution, article 34 sub 2 which states that "the Prime Minister may, after the deliberations of the council of ministers, commit the responsibility of the government before the national assembly on a programme or, as the case maybe on a general policy statement." Sub 5 of this article 34 proceeds to state that "where the National Assembly adopts a motion of censure or passes a vote of no confidence, the prime minister shall tender the resignation of government to the president of the republic"<sup>121</sup>. But Joel Narcisse Meyolo reiterates that such constitutional dispositions are not applicable in the case of Cameroon with the existence of a semi presidential system and the domination of the ruling political party even after the reintroduction of multiparty system in 1990.

The follow-up control system may also operate in three forms that is individual control techniques where the parliamentarians pose individual questions to government officials, collective in a situation where the parliament is given information from the documents and reports from government and the third aspect is that of mixed control through which the parliament composes itself into committees to study the texts and reports submitted by the government or the executive.

With the third mechanism of control which is control of influence, the parliament strives to put itself at the centre of decision making especially in matters of foreign policy. Though this initiative may face difficulties, it is possible. Parliamentarians even though found in an uncomfortable position, pay international visits and also involve in inter parliamentary activities like friendly groups and inter parliamentary organisations but it should be noted that for this to be successful, the parliament depends on its administrative structures.<sup>122</sup>With all of

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<sup>119</sup>Efoua Mbozo'o, *Pratiques et Procédures Parlementaires*, p.84.

<sup>120</sup>Meyolo, "La diplomatie parlementaire...", pp. 12-16.

<sup>121</sup>Article 34 sub 2 and 5 of the Cameroon Constitution of 18th January 1996.

<sup>122</sup>Meyolo, "La diplomatie parlementaire...", p. 16.

these legal and institutional backings, the Cameroon parliament is as of right permitted to venture into parliamacy but this is not enough as other reasons may also provoke parliamentary activities at the international level.

## **2. Political reasons**

Parliaments have traditionally been actors of domestic politics as representatives of the people. However, lately, they have come to develop a different role as concerns international politics. This could be done either to influence the foreign policy of the nation, to conduct parallel diplomatic relations or to empower themselves by involving in sub regional and regional organisations. From this view, it could be deduced that the Cameroon parliament involves in foreign affairs to promote democracy, strengthen the executive, build regional integration, solve problems of conflicts and defend human rights, not forgetting the fact that it is also enticed by the growing trend of globalisation. This is better developed below.

### **a. The influence of foreign policies of the state**

Parliament are not and may never become the most important actors in foreign policy rather, they only complement the activities of the executive who are the heart of foreign policy activities. But despite this, they are not exclusive in the diplomatic evolution of the state. Their activities may be more visible in areas like policy designation, security and defence. For instance, a majority of republican parliamentarians in the US Congress in 2009, greatly influenced the decision of the then US president Barack Obama to send additional troops to Afghanistan<sup>123</sup>

This shows that the parliament can vote laws which will favour the intervention of the military abroad either by increasing the number of existing forces or even favouring new missions like the intervention of Cameroon forces in Central African Republic could be possibly increased or terminated with the intervention of the parliament. Most parliaments around the world are aware of their new role in world politics. Foreign policy to the parliament in recent times could be viewed just as another form of national or public policy. Since the end of the cold war, most parliaments have extended their activities beyond the domestic dimension by debating foreign policy issues, defence and security and this has greatly influence the evolution of foreign policy.

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<sup>123</sup>Malamud and De Sousa, *Parliaments and Parliamentarians as International Actors*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008, p. 101.



### **b. Promotion or enhancement of democracy**

Politics around the world today has become more of democratic and consequently, it has become an international affair than domestic as was the case in the past. Democratic states therefore strive to expand the reach or influence of their parliamentarians and parliaments in world affairs. Having achieved higher level of knowledge, access to information and active participation in democratic activities, the modern Cameroon parliament possesses the means to exercise democratic accountability in most public and foreign policy spheres. According to Laursen<sup>124</sup>, any democratic doctrine requires the involvement of the parliament in foreign affairs. Which means that for the Cameroon parliament to better perform in democracy within the country, it must involve in parliamacy. This could also be backed by the fact that globalization has made many domestic public policies to have an external dimension as global issues like terrorism, financial crisis directly affect citizens. All of these make politics to become more and more democratic thereby by attracting parliamentary intervention.

### **c. Strengthen the activities of the executive**

The Parliament does not need to challenge the executive in matters of foreign affairs indeed it does strengthen activities of the executive. For instance, the French National Assembly issued a detailed report on how to construct the Mediterranean Union just a few month, after the then presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy, mentioned it in 2007<sup>125</sup>. According to Cutler, parliamacy represents an important middle ground between the traditional level of interstate diplomacy and the new level of transnational cooperation amongst grassroots non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In this light, the parliament may involve in foreign affairs in order to ensure a smooth operation of traditional state actors in diplomatic affairs none the less without overriding their central position.

### **d. Enhancement of regional integration**

At first, parliaments did not have enough opportunity to control and have a say in various foreign, security and defence policy areas. But after the cold war, there has been a “parliamentarization” of politics in several public policy areas especially in the domain of parliamacy. The emergence, consolidation and proliferation of regional and other inter

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<sup>124</sup> Malamud, *Parliaments and Parliamentarians as International Actors...*, p. 102.

<sup>125</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy was one of the Presidential Candidates in the French Presidential Elections who emerged victorious and was president of France between 2007 and 2012 but was defeated by Francois Holland in the 2012 Presidential Elections in France.

parliamentary assemblies is another good reason for parliament to involve in parliomacy. Regional integration processes have facilitated the parliamentarization of world politics. This is because parliaments across the globe including the Cameroon parliament seek to form sub regional and regional block to commonly handle emerging world issues.

### **3. Lobby reasons**

Parliaments do have several advantages when they engage into foreign affairs due to lobby reasons. When parliamentarians are involved in elections monitoring missions, it helps them to gain experience in democratic issues. In some cases, parliamentarians from less developed or emerging democracies could interact with their counterparts from well-developed democracies in order to benefit from best practiced experience. This aspect could manifest through friendship groups or visits, regular meetings among parliamentarians. It should be noted that in this situation, parliamentarians from less developed or emerging democracies seek to gain or benefit by “rubbing shoulders with those from advanced democracies, not forgetting the fact that these elected representatives of the people may also want to share their cultural riches and diversity to the rest of the world<sup>126</sup>. Parliaments may also want to involve in foreign affairs in order to provide peaceful resolutions to conflicts around the world especially in areas where the traditional diplomatic channels of the executive seem to be insufficient.

Parliament may also get involved in foreign affairs to fight against the violation of human rights across the world. To better succeed in this international mission, they collaborate with human rights activists around the globe and also protest during parliamentary sessions. For instance the headquarters of the EU parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg are regular venues of regular protests against human right violations. This activity gradually or progressively designs national parliaments as internal actors with the growing trend of human right violations around the world.

Some parliaments or parliamentarians might also want to act as moral guides or beacons in world political affairs. They engage in activities that may transcend traditional range of power politics. Through special or regular committees, parliaments act as “moral tribunes” in international affairs where they protect the people against international dangers or vices. For example, the EU parliament in 2006 decided to carryout investigations on “CIA flights in

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<sup>126</sup> Interview with Fidelis Nji Muziah, Aged 71 and former Parliamentarian from Menchum North Constituency and questor of the National Assembly in the 2007-2013 Legislature, Yaounde, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021.

Europe”<sup>127</sup> which was suspected of gross human right abuses. The French National Assembly in 2008<sup>128</sup> published a report in the edition of *Le Monde* of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008, which heavily criticised French foreign policy towards Africa, not forgetting the UK House of Commons foreign affairs committee that scrutinized British policy on export on arms in 2009<sup>129</sup>. The Cameroon parliament also involves in foreign affairs to follow this good example of protecting its population whom they duly represent.

Conclusively, this chapter which is titled the Historical background of the Cameroon parliament and it reasons for involvement in foreign affairs has revealed that the Cameroon parliament has gone a long way to fine itself in the status it is today. The parliament under the British started within Nigeria but due to the eastern regional crisis of 1953, southern Cameroons was granted a quasi-region in 1954 with an assembly of 13 representatives, later increased to 26 by 1957. It also revealed the evolution of the parliament under the French starting with the establishment of ARCAM in 1946 through ATCAM in 1952 to ALCAM in 1957. A federal assembly was established by 1961 after reunification with two federated assemblies and by 1972, A national assembly was created which finally became bicameral in 2013 following the establishment of the Cameroon senate. The chapter equally explains the structure of the parliament like the bureau, general committees among others and missions of the parliament in the Cameroon, not forgetting reasons for the involvement of the parliament in foreign affairs which could either be institutional or lobby reasons.

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<sup>127</sup> A temporal committee was set up by the EU parliament to look into the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the Illegal Transportation of Prisoners

<sup>128</sup> Malamud, *Parliaments and Parliamentarians...*, p. 106.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PARLIAMENTARY STRUCTURES AND THEIR ACTIONS TOWARDS PARLOMACY

This chapter seeks to examine the generalities of the involvement of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs both internal and external activities which occur through a variety of channels both at the level of the senate and the national assembly. But note should be taken that parliamentary destiny is not centered on parloMACY but rather, there are specific organs or structures that are in charge of handling international relations within the parliament. Consequently, this chapter examines the various structures within the parliament that conduct foreign activities. For better analysis therefore, the chapter first starts by observing the committee of foreign affairs and its activities, followed by administrative structures like the division of coordination and international relations, the sub office for communication, ceremonies and missions and that of international relations. The chapter ends up by talking about the external activities of the parliament in foreign affairs.

#### **A-The parliamentary organ in charge of foreign affairs (Committee of Foreign Affairs)**

Parliamentary committees are major organs of parliament who examine legislative texts submitted to the parliament and also ensure that the parliament has a good knowledge or information on these texts before any parliamentary deliberation is carryout publicly<sup>1</sup>. The parliament in Cameroon is made up 9 committees which work endlessly to see the success of parliamentary activities. Their activities do occur as a preparatory phase before normal parliamentary sessions. Note should be taken that committees first carryout the essential amendments on laws or bills submitted to the parliament and general sessions mostly base their activities or deliberations from the already final works of committees. Among these committees is the committee of foreign affairs which is the point of focus here. The foreign affairs committee of the parliament is in charge of handling the all activities concerning international relations. In this part, we are going to look at the committee as a parliamentary organ, its competences and activities.

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<sup>1</sup>Turk, *Les Commissions Parlementaires Permanents et le Renouveau du Parlement sur le Cinquième République*, Paris, Dalloz, 2005, p.764.

## 1. The description of the committee

As earlier mentioned, the foreign affairs committee of the Cameroon parliament is one of the 9 parliamentary committees. It may not really be popular like other committees for example the committee of finance but it plays a very influential role in foreign policy as concerns the parliament.

The foreign affairs committee came into existence in the Cameroon parliament in 1962<sup>2</sup>, following the establishment of the first constituent assembly of the republic of Cameroon after French Cameroon gained independence in January 1960. But it should be noted that before the above date, French Cameroon assemblies like ARCAM, ATCAM, and ALCAM had parliamentary committees which were created to discuss on specific issues but there was no foreign affairs committee among them.

The simple fact that these assemblies were created in a time when French Cameroon was under French trusteeship and therefore the foreign policy of Cameroon was controlled by Britain and France<sup>3</sup> and in most cases, this was done without the consultation of the colonial people. But after independence and reunification of Cameroon, the committee of foreign affairs has existed through the parliamentary evolution in Cameroon and exists till date.

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<sup>2</sup>Etoundi Mveng, "La Commission des Affaires Etrangères de l'Assemblée Nationale du Cameroun 1992-1998" Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées en Relations Internationales, Yaounde, IRIC, December 1998, p1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

**Table 11: Members of the FAC of the national assembly of the 10<sup>th</sup> legislature**

Name of Parliamentarian	Political Party	Function
1. Emmanuel Ndigha Banmi	CPDM	Chairperson
2. Marie Suzanne N'nolo	CPDM	Vice-Chairperson
3.Haman Tchiouto	CPDM	Secretary
4. Ibrahima Bobbo	NUDP	Secretary
5. Moumini Oumarou	NUDP	Member
6. Abe Margaza Alaou I	CPDM	Member
7. Harouna Abdoulaye(late)	CPDM	Member
8. Gladys Etombi Ikome	CPDM	Member
9. Laurentine Koa Mfegue	CPDM	Member
10. Pierre Sime	CPDM	Member
11. Marius Yaya Doumba	CPDM	Member
12. Yakouba Yaya	CPDM	Member
13.Eku Tanyi Teku	CPDM	Member
14. Gabriel Koah Songo	CPDM	Member
15. Louis Henri Ngantcha	CPDM	Member
16. Berthe Nanga Mefant	CPDM	Member
17. Clement Dongho	CPDM	Member
18. Frank Eric Ndzie	CPDM	Member
19. Josue Mbeyo'o	CPDM	Member
20. Joshua Osih	SDF	Member

**Source:** Table constructed by the author after an interview with a member of the committee of foreign affairs 09/09/2021

The committee of foreign affairs just like any other parliamentary committee comprises of carefully selected members following criteria prescribed by the internal rules and regulations of the national assembly and senate. It is composed of a chairperson, a vice chairperson, two secretaries and members<sup>4</sup>. The committee of foreign affairs for the 10<sup>th</sup> legislature which was elected in March 2020 is made up of 20 members as seen in above.

It should be noted that a committee is not just an organ which is in charge of preparing for working sessions of the parliament but there are legislative and political committees. Legislative committees are confined to their role of preparing text for working sessions of parliament while political committees are more opened. For example, the committee of foreign affairs plays a legislative function where it authorizes the president of the republic to ratify international treaties and at the same time, it is an organ of control in which it has a certain influence over international conventions that are submitted under it for examinations<sup>5</sup>. But this is more of a formality because foreign policy in Cameroon is “a thing of the

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Joshua Osih, aged 53, SDF Member of Parliament and member of the committee of foreign affairs for the 10th legislature, Yaounde, Hotel des Deputés, 09/09/2021.

<sup>5</sup>Etoundi Mveng, « La Commission des... », p. 2.

president of the republic” which is backed by article 5(2) of the Cameroon constitution of 1996 which clearly says that the president of the republic shall define the policy of the nation.

As earlier mentioned, there are certain criteria taken into consideration for the selection of members of the committee of foreign affairs in the Cameroon parliament. Some of these criteria are competence, seniority or experience in the parliament, and at times the charismatic nature of the parliamentarian. Talking about competence, it is but normal to verify whether the people’s representative expected to be part of the foreign affairs committee has any knowledge or experience in questions of international relations or any similar field especially with the complex nature of international relations where world politics is in constant change. But it is clear that the Cameroon parliament is not a technical institution therefore parliamentarians must not be specialists in international relations to be part of the committee of foreign affairs. This is supported by Prof. Samuel Efoua Mbozo’o, who is also a former Secretary General of the Cameroon National Assembly and a specialist in parliamentary history in general and parlomacy in particular:

*Le député n’a pas besoin d’être un spécialiste du droit ou de la finance etc, pour légiférer en ces domaines. Il a besoin surtout d’être éclairé pour apprécier si le texte soumis à son examen milite en faveur d’un mieux-être de son électorat ou non*<sup>6</sup>

Another criterion could be by considering the personal wish of some of the parliamentarians especially with the fact that opportunity is usually given for parties to provide a certain number of seats to a committee. When faced with this situation, academic and professional background of the person is studied. For example in the 6<sup>th</sup> legislature, Hon Ntsimi Antoine who was a former minister of finance in Cameroon could have been more appropriate for the finance committee but he ended up as a member of the foreign affairs committee<sup>7</sup>. This was not totally a wrong decision because there are also international conventions, submitted to the FAC which are directed to the economic domain.

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<sup>6</sup>Efoua Mbozo’o, « *In Parlement Camerounais* », n°9, Novembre 1991, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup>Etoundi Mveng, « *La commission des...* », p. 22.

**Table 12: The foreign affairs committee of the 6<sup>th</sup> legislature elected in 1997**

Name of MP	Function	Occupation	Constituency	Party
Ngollo Ngama	President	Cadre contractuel	Moungo-North	CPDM
Nzuobon Tane Ngabe	Vice President	PLEG	Kupe Manenguba	CPDM
Abba Boukar	Secretary	Nurse	Mayo Sava	CPDM
Ndobegang Mbapn	Secretary	Senior Lecturer	Lebialem	SDF
André Theodore Abbo	Member	Vetinary Nurse	Mbere	NUDP
Abdoulaye Bougue	Member	Lamido	Mayo Louti	CPDM
Akonteh Bengkuh	Member	Politician	Mezam	SDF
Gaston Anoke	Member	Trader	Moungo-South	CPDM
Michael Banseka	Member	Coperative inspector	Bui	SDF
Marie Assombang Biwongo	Member	Teacher	Mvila	CPDM
Emmanuel Chia Ngam	Member	Teacher	Boyo	SDF
Yvette Kenmogne	Member	Cadre contractuel	Mfoundi	CPDM
Peter Fonso Choo	Member	PLEG	Momo	SDF
Hamadou Sali	Member	Adm Secretary	Diamare-North	CPDM
Rigobert Kalvoksou	Member	Conseiller princi.	Mayo Danay-Est	CPDM
Mandeng Ambassa	Member	Former minister	Mbam and Inoubou	CPDM
Mbarga Mvondo	Member	PLEG	Mvila	CPDM
Abel Mukete	Member	Farmer	Kumba-Center	CPDM
Mvondo Assam	Member	Retired Military	Dja and Lobo	CPDM
Jean Ngoung	Member	Retired Gendarme	Kadey	CPDM
Chrisogone Noah	Member	Cadre Maetur	Mfoundi	CPDM
Antoine Ntsimi	Member	Former Minister	Lékié	CPDM
Ousmanou Toumba	Member	Sanitary Assistant	Mayo Tsanaga	CPDM
Robert Penne	Member	Sports Teacher	Upper-Nyong	CPDM
Saly Abdourraman	Member	Administrative Assistant	Benoué-West	NUDP
Tsomilou Jean	Member	Farmer	Bamboutos	SDF
Emmanuel Yoyo Kah	Member	Police Officer	Ngo-Ketunja North	SDF

**Source:** Etoundi Mveng, « *La Commission des Affaires Etrangères de l'Assemblée Nationale du Cameroun 1992-1998* », Mémoire de DESS, IRIC , Yaounde, 1998, p.25.

In the parliamentary systems of other countries around the world, longevity may play a very important role in selecting members of the committee of foreign affairs and other parliamentary committees or to an extent, selecting those to pilot the affairs of the committees. For example in France where a person can remain a parliamentarian for life and in the USA where the congress practices the “Seniority System”, only those who have been long in parliament can gain access to certain positions in parliamentary committees like



chairpersons of these committees among others<sup>8</sup>. The situation is different in the Cameroon parliamentary system this is because many parliamentarians hardly succeed to maintain many mandates during the different legislative elections. With the idea of longevity being unpopular, focus is now centered on the charismatic nature of the individual which may be judged on the previous positions he or she has occupied before being elected into the parliament on the position the person occupies in his or her political party. For example in the foreign affairs committee of the 6<sup>th</sup> legislature, of 1997-1998, there was Antoine Ntsimi who by then was a former minister of Finance and in the present committee of foreign affairs of the 10<sup>th</sup> legislature, there is an influential political figure like Joshua Osih who is the vice chairperson of the SDF, one of the leading opposition political parties in Cameroon and also a former candidate of the 2018 presidential elections in Cameroon for the same political party. Concerning the age of the committee members, it is often advantageous to select members between the ages of 30 and 65 who are matured in political affairs and reasoning.

The bureau of the committee of foreign affairs plays a leading role in overseeing the activities of the committee. It is comprised of a chairperson, a vice chairperson and two secretaries. It designs a plan of activities for the committee apart from the program designed by the chairperson's conference and equally appoints a rapporteur each time there are examinations of bills by the commission. The bureau is organized as such

#### **a. The chairperson**

Talking about the chairperson of the committee of foreign affairs, he or she is selected based on some three aspects which maybe; the political party of origin, personal sympathy and the competence of the person concerned. Consequently, the chairmanship of the committee of foreign affairs is usually dominated by members of the ruling CPDM and may mostly be through appointment. The chairman of the committee plays a vital role in the organization and functioning of the parliament as a whole and equally is very influential during the chairman's conference. The major function of the chairman is to coordinate debates of the committee. He also convenes the committee sessions and determines its agenda. The chairperson plays an important role during working sessions of the committee and is the one to equally request for the minister of external relations to be audited. He or she

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<sup>8</sup>Mveng, « La commission des... », p.26.

can also defend the report submitted to the parliament by the committee during ordinary sessions of the parliament.<sup>9</sup>

### **b. The vice chairperson and secretaries**

The main role of the vice chairperson is to assume the role of the chairperson. The vice can also represent the chairperson during ordinary sessions or in the chairman's conference<sup>10</sup>. He or she can also coordinate working sessions of the committee in case the chairperson is absent. As for what concerns the secretaries of the committee, they are usually two in number as earlier mentioned and these secretaries are designed mostly to facilitate the much work that awaits the committee and at times can also be a strategy of satisfying certain political parties by giving them at least a position within the bureau of the committee. They count votes during working sessions of the committee and at times can also represent the chairperson of the committee if need be.

## **2. Activities of the committee of foreign affairs**

The committee of foreign affairs of the Cameroon parliament has much to do apart from what the general public may know. In order to understand the activities of the committee foreign affairs, certain aspects are taken in to consideration. These aspects are; the competence of the committee, information, control and legislative role. These four aspects will be individually examined below in order to bring much clarification.

### **a. The competence of the committee**

The committee of foreign affairs according to article 16<sup>11</sup> of the standing orders of the national assembly has the following competences; the reception examination of international conventions or treaties, which is more visible in foreign policy, ratification of international conventions cooperation and the budget. This can better be analyzed below.

### **b. Competence in foreign policy**

It can be complicated or simply difficult to actually analyze the competence of the committee in the domain of foreign policy but when observed that international treaties and

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<sup>9</sup>Mveng, « La commission des... », p. 38.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Article 16 of the standing orders of the national assembly quoted by Etoundi Mveng in his DESS memoire, tittled « La commission des affaires étrangères de l'assemblée nationale du Cameroun 1997-1998 », IRIC, Yaounde, 1998, p. 39.

conventions signed by Cameroon are part of foreign policy and that the parliament generally exercise competence on these aspects, then we can humbly analyze the competence of this committee in relation to foreign policy. Bills which are intended to ratify international treaties and conventions, in which Cameroon is involved, pass through the committee of foreign affairs and are totally scrutinized before presentations during the ordinary sessions of the parliament. But it should be noted that the competence is limited as the Cameroon parliament can only ratify international conventions signed by Cameroon unlike in the USA where the Congress has full control over foreign affairs, in Cameroon foreign policy is controlled by the executive power under the leadership of the head of state<sup>12</sup>.

### **c. Ratification of international treaties and conventions**

International treaties and conventions stand out to be the area that shows the veritable competence of the committee of foreign affairs in international relations. Effectively, all international treaties and conventions signed by the government of Cameroon cannot be ratified or promulgated into law without the due authorization of the Legislative and all of these bills are first examined by the committee of foreign affairs of the parliament. This makes it a very important competence for the committee. But note should be taken that this may be a mere formality because the parliament and government in Cameroon maintain a very cordial relationship and the aspect of the separation of powers may not really be effective given the fact that both arms of the state are dominated by the ruling CPDM party. Consequently for a long time, it has been rare if not inexistent that the Cameroon parliament be it the senate or the national assembly rejects a bill tabled by the government<sup>13</sup>.

### **d. Competence on cooperation and budget**

Traditionally, international or diplomatic cooperation is an activity of the executive arm of the state. Nevertheless, the parliament mostly through the members of the committee of foreign affairs participates in international cooperation in different ways or channels among which we have taking part in inter parliamentary associations, maintaining network bilateral friendship and receiving some important foreign personalities. Talking about participating in international organizations, the Cameroon parliament or parliamentarians find themselves in parliamentary associations like the CEMAC parliament, the Pan African parliament, the Inter

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<sup>12</sup>Interview with Osih Joshua, aged 52, SDF Member of Parliament and member of the committee of foreign affairs for the 10th legislature, Yaounde, Hotel des Deputés, 09/09/2021.

<sup>13</sup>Mveng, « La commission des ... », p.40.

Parliamentary Union, the Common Wealth Parliamentary Association, just to name a few<sup>14</sup>. The committee also accompanies the speaker of the national assembly or the president of the senate during the reception of foreign personalities especially when it concerns issues of bilateral relationship. It should also be noted that major decisions are not taken at this stage but it greatly helps in the creation of awareness or the sensitization of parliamentarians on matters of foreign policy. We cannot also forget the maintenance of bilateral friendship which most of the times involves many parliamentarians who pay friendship visits to foreign parliaments. Even though these visits are approved by the parliamentary bureau, the committee of foreign affairs still exercises little influence.

Concerning competence on budget, this cannot really be elaborate given the fact that budgetary issues of the parliament are handled by the finance committee of the parliament but nevertheless, the foreign affairs committee from time to time can look at the budget of the ministry of external relations during auditing. And in this domain, the committee may not also really have any influence of in the budget but just interested in bringing clarifications on how it is executed<sup>15</sup>.

#### **e. The search for information by the committee**

In order to be sure of their activities in controlling government action and also carrying out better legislation, the committee involves in the quest for information through the use of varied channels which are; auditing, written and oral questions, inquiry, and exchanges with the external relations minister and diplomats. These are elaborated as follows;

As concerns auditing, the committee of foreign affairs plays a very vital role in this domain. Here, the members of the committee listen to top personalities in order to gather enough valid information. The two major set of personalities that the committee can audit are the minister of external relations and top civil servants in international relations for example ambassadors. As concerns the minister of external relations, he or she is the most reliable that can provide the committee of foreign affairs with adequate information about Cameroon's foreign policy. There are two procedures or methods to audit a minister. The commission can organize a parliamentary hearing in closed doors with the minister and the chairperson of the committee can also send a letter to the speaker of national assembly or president of senate requesting for auditing. This demand is further transmitted to the prime minister and the

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<sup>14</sup>Efoua Mbozo'o, *La Participation de ...*, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup>Mveng, « La commission des ... », pp. 41-42..

minister of external relations. But note should be taken that the minister in Cameroon is not up large to honor such invitations or provide all information to the committee especially given the heavy and influential nature of the executive in Cameroon. But it should not be forgotten that the activity of parliamentary auditing in Cameroon is very timid as compared to what happens in other parts of the world. Auditing other senior civil servants or military authorities can only be possible with the authorization of the minister involved. This is because the commission is supposed to audit the government not the administration. But not should be taken that the auditing process is very important because it facilitates the committee to have information that helps to profit effective legislative control of the executive<sup>16</sup>.

The foreign affairs committee can also decide to carry out missions of information abroad. In this situation, they visit diplomatic representations in other countries and interrogate ambassadors who will tell them their difficulties in carrying out their diplomatic activities. This can now permit the parliament through the committee of foreign affairs to know the reality of things on the ground. Consequently, during budgetary sessions, the parliament may better know how to allocate budget to the ministry of external relations. Unfortunately, the exercise is not really effective in Cameroon because the parliament may not have enough financial power to carry out the missions.

A committee of inquiry according to Simplicie Atanga, is an organ set up by the assembly which contains some of its members. It has as goal to gather important information on a particular issue which has been determined by the assembly in order to permit better control and a report is expected at the end so that a concrete decision can be taken<sup>17</sup>. According article 67<sup>18</sup> of the standing order of the national assembly, the committee of foreign affairs can set up committee of inquiry which can be charged with the mission to find out a specific aspect of information. But this should be authorized by a majority of the parliamentarians. After searching out the information, the results or report is submitted to the commission or general assembly for assessment. The committee usually ceases to exist immediately its mission is accomplished.

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<sup>16</sup> Mveng, « La commission des ... », p. 44.

<sup>17</sup> S. Atanga, "Le processus de prise de décision de la Politique Etrangère au Cameroun", Thèse, IRIC, 1991, cited by Etoundi Mveng in his DESS mémoire, titled "La commission des affaires étrangères de l'assemblée nationale du Cameroun 1997-1998", IRIC, Yaounde, 1998, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> Article 67 of the standing orders of the national assembly cited by Etoundi Mveng in his DESS mémoire, titled "La commission des affaires étrangères de l'assemblée nationale du Cameroun 1997-1998", IRIC, Yaounde, 1998, p. 48.

### **f. The aspect of control**

The Cameroon parliament through the committee of foreign affairs controls the foreign policy of the nation using different methods or forms some of which are sanction, written and oral questions, among others.

### **g. Control by sanction**

This aspect generally relies on the laws of the country where the parliament can depend to sanction members of government where need arises. For example, Article 11<sup>19</sup> of the Cameroon constitution gives the responsibilities of the government to the national assembly but the conditions or procedures are clearly explained in article 34 of the same constitution which says and I quote;

...the national assembly may question the responsibility of the government through a motion of censure. Such motion may be admissible only when it is signed by at least one-third of the members of the national assembly...where the national assembly adopts a motion of censure or passes a vote of no confidence, the prime minister shall tender the resignation of the government to the president of the republic...<sup>20</sup>

It is through this legal backing that the committee of foreign affairs of the parliament excels to sanction or control the activities of the government in matters of foreign policy.

The committee also uses oral questions during working sessions and written questions addressed to government officials on foreign policy issues and questioning is a traditional method of parliamentary control in Cameroon and elsewhere in the world.

The committee of foreign affairs in the Cameroon parliament may not really have any great influence on the executive as may be the case in advanced democracies; it can rely on the influence of the voting of the budget that is used in running the foreign policy activities of the state.

### **h. Legislative action**

Just like the aspect of control, the legislative action is also an important function of the committee of foreign affairs. The committee has as major activity to study all the bills or texts submitted to it by the government through the bureau of the parliament. The committee after receiving the bill from the bureau of parliament takes a deeper study of the bill but

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<sup>19</sup> Article 11 of the constitution of the republic of Cameroon promulgated on the 18th of January 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Article 34 of the constitution of the republic of Cameroon.

cannot propose any changes in the bill. After a careful analysis of a bill, the committee can suggest modalities on its application. A rapporteur is designed by the committee to give detail report on the deliberations of the committee on a particular bill. This activity is very important because it permits the parliament during plenary sittings to have concrete knowledge about a bill before authorizing the president of the republic to ratify the international treaty or convention<sup>21</sup>.

### **3. Limitations or shortcoming of the committee of foreign affairs**

The committee carries out activities in several domains as seen above but these activities are often limited or may witness some shortcomings especially in the actions of control, information and even the legislative action of the committee. These shortcomings are analyzed in the following paragraphs;

#### **a. Shortcomings in the domain of information**

The committee of foreign affairs faces some difficulties in its search for information. For example, the committee in most cases is provided with information that is very dense or of much quantity and consequently, the committee members do not really study the information and this is a shortcoming because when the committee may not have enough time to exploit much once their working sessions are over. More to this, the committee members do not share the same strength in having access to information. The bureau members of the committee maybe well informed than other members and in other situations, members of the ruling CPDM have access to official and valid sources of information and this may really be frustrating to other members of the committee. But this should not be encouraged because parliamentarians usually represent the population before representing their political parties. Not forgetting the fact that the committee at times during auditioning limits its activities only to ministers and other top civil servants who may not be able to give the exact information needed. And in the idea of protecting the confidentiality of and the supreme interest of the state or better still the fact that the parliament cannot audition military officials who carry out activities to defend the integrity of the state is also a great shortcoming for the committee of foreign affairs.

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<sup>21</sup>Etoundi Mveng, « La commission des... », pp. 50-58.

## **b. Limitations in the domain of control**

The committee of foreign affairs also faces difficulties while controlling the activities of government. For example in the constitutional domain, the Cameroon constitution does not give the parliament the right to declare war as this remains the priority of the head of state. More to this the parliament is also limited in the domain of budget. For example article 16(b) of the constitution permits the parliament to vote and adopt a state budget but if this fails to happen, the president of the republic can still as per the constitution extend the budget of the previous financial year. Article 18(a) also further makes the parliament powerless by stipulating that any private member bill and amendment that reduce public funds or increase charges for the government will be inadmissible if it does not reduce other expenditures or provide new sources of funds<sup>22</sup>. This completely make the committee very powerless in the controlling the state budget.

In the domain of foreign policy itself, not should be taken that the designation and pursuance of foreign policy in Cameroon is entirely in the hands of the president of the republic. He negotiates and signs all international conventions without consulting the parliament. Rather the parliament is only brought in to authorize the president to ratify an international treaty or accord which had long been signed. In some cases, treaties even go into force before the authorization of the parliament through the committee of foreign affairs<sup>23</sup>. Not forgetting the fact that the parliamentarians themselves also show less interest in foreign policy because the electorate may present other worries like roads , electricity, schools and therefore parliamentarians turn to satisfy more of the demands of their voters to secure a win in future elections and in so doing, they neglect foreign policy. Most often, members of the committee of foreign affairs are not specialists or technicians in the domain of foreign affairs and this greatly limits their interventions in the domain as most of them may lack the power and knowledge of debate.

The committee is also limited in the domain of sanction on government. The president of the republic who defines the policy of the nation but at home and abroad<sup>24</sup> is elected by a universal suffrage and therefore he is responsible to the population whereas he appoints the members of government who apply this policy and are responsible to the parliament. This

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<sup>22</sup> Articles 16(b) and 18(a) of the constitution of the republic of Cameroon promulgated on the 18th of January 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Etoundi Mveng, « La commission des... », p. 68.

<sup>24</sup> Article 5 of the constitution of the republic of Cameroon.



makes the parliament to depend only on motions of censure which at times are not too effective. Members of government during auditions do more of explaining the activities of the head in foreign policy and the members of the foreign affairs committee can merely give a contradictory view.

### **c. Limits in the legislative function of the committee.**

The legislative action of the committee is limited in three aspects such as the competence of parliamentarians, nature of sessions and the non-respect of the standing orders of the parliament. Even though it was earlier mentioned that a parliamentarian does not need to be a specialist in order to carry out his or her activities, there are situations where competence or professionalism is highly required. Especially during deliberative working sessions, members of the various committees should know what to say or do. In this situation, a specialist in the domain of foreign affairs is usually needed with the case of the committee of foreign affairs, to help the committee members better perform in executing their functions. But this is not usually the case. The committee of foreign affairs within the Cameroon parliament lacks international expertise in most instances. This makes the executive which is surrounded by specialist to permanently be at the top of Cameroon foreign policy.

The limited time for parliamentary sessions is also a hindrance to the evolution of the activities of the committee. The parliament normally meets only three times a year (March, June and November) in plenary sittings<sup>25</sup>. These sessions are not to exceed a period of two weeks. More to this, the November session is mostly centered on the adoption of the budget. It is only during this period that committees, including that of foreign affairs are supposed to carry out their working sessions. This gives them limited time to effectively deliberate on bills.

Another important shortcoming of the committee is that of the non-respect the standing orders of the parliament in terms of oral questions. Normally, during parliamentary plenary sittings, a session is reserved every week for the chairmen's conference specifically for questioning<sup>26</sup>. But unfortunately, this tradition is seldom respected. At times, parliamentary sessions may even go through without the questioning exercise carried out. But this is at times due to the fact that many parliamentarians are often new and may know very little about the standing orders of the national assembly or the senate. All of the above mentioned

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<sup>25</sup> Article 16 of the standing order of the national assembly.

<sup>26</sup> Article 61 of the standing order of the national assembly.

difficulties or shortcomings have slowed down but not halted the influential role of the committee of foreign affairs within the Cameroon parliament.

## **B. Support services in parliament and their place towards foreign affairs**

The parliament is a legislative body that equally controls government action. The Cameroon parliament meets three times a year in plenary sittings. Many may think that immediately after the parliamentary sessions, the doors of the institution close up but this affirmation is far from being the truth. The activities of the parliament be it the senate or the national assembly go on a daily basis<sup>27</sup>. There is a general secretariat of the parliament which is well organized. This secretariat ensures the smooth functioning of parliamentary activities and the application of the policies of the parliament. It is under the leadership of an executive secretary general. The administration of the national assembly had several diversified services that facilitates its activities. Among these services is the Department of the Coordination of International Relations (DCIR), which is the point of focus for this work since it has to do with parlomacy (Parliamentary diplomacy). Apart from the DCIR, we also have the sub directorate of international relations and the sub directorate of communication, ceremonies and missions. The organization and functioning of these structures are detailed out below.

### **1. The department of coordination of international relations (DCIR)**

For a parliament to be organized, then a well-structured administrative body is required. This is authorized by well-defined dispositions. In this regard, *arête* 2009/001/AB/AN of the National Assembly passed on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009<sup>28</sup>, based on the organization of the administrative services of the national assembly, gives the general secretariat the legitimacy to coordinate and prepare the important works of parliamentary activities and inter parliamentary relations. Consequently, the general secretariat of the national assembly therefore has divided the services of the functioning of parliament by putting in place the department of the coordination of international relations which is specifically in charge of controlling parlomacy. In this light, the department puts in place good strategies that can permit a better handling of foreign affairs by the Cameroon parliament<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup>N. Azang, *Lumière sur l'administration de l'assemblée nationale du Cameroun*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Law n°2009/001/AB/AN of 08th January 2009.

<sup>29</sup>Meyolo, "La diplomatie parlementaire...", p. 16.

The DCIR has a number of functions or missions that it carries out which are well defined by article 5 of the standing order of the national assembly which are as follows; the centralization of documents submitted to the speaker and the secretary general of the national assembly, follow-up on international relations while informing the parliament, directing the parliamentarians on their activities at the international level among others<sup>30</sup>. To succeed in its activities, the department also needs organization or structuring.

The DCIR is structured in to five sub organs which can be put into two categories. These sub organs have specific functions but their major objectives remain the better management of foreign affairs within the framework of the parliament. The first three sub organs are; the sub directorate of coordination, the sub directorate of ICT and technical services and the parliamentary secretariat which also has the status of a sub directorate. These three sub organs are more in charge of the internal affairs but which have an impact in the management foreign affairs within the DCIR. The other remaining two sub organs are in charge of the external affairs of the DCIR and they are; the sub directorate of communications, ceremonies and missions and the sub directorate of international relations. They assume and better organize the activities of the parliament out of the country. It will be important in the upcoming paragraphs to give a detail view of the activities of these two sub organs so as to have a better understanding of Cameroon parlomacy since they seem to be the brain of this parlomacy<sup>31</sup>.

All contemporary parliaments around the world find it very necessary to take into account certain details in their process of coordinating external affairs in order to ensure the proper management of international relations. This is due to the complex nature of international relations in recent times and more to this, a greater percentage of those elected into parliament are usually not specialists in international relations. Consequently, they are supposed to be guided by those who are specialists in the domain in order to avoid errors in their management of foreign affairs. This function within the Cameroon parliament is therefore assumed by the sub directorate of communications, ceremonies and the sub directorate of international relations<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Article 5 of the Standing Order of the National Assembly

<sup>31</sup> Meyolo, "La diplomatie parlementaire...", p.17.

<sup>32</sup> « *Guide pratique de la communication parlementaire* », service des relations internationales, Janvier 2008, p. 8, cited by Zeh Zeh in « La diplomatie parlementaire... »

## 2. The sub directorate of communication, ceremonies and missions

This sub directorate operates through two major services with about five sub offices or branches. There is the communication service which is comprised of three offices which are; the office of the press, sound and image and the public relations office. There is also the service for ceremonies and missions. The sub directorate of communication, ceremonies and missions greatly participate to ensure the effective execution of palomacy. It organizes the missions of parliamentarians but at home and abroad and this is done both in the material and financial domains, not forgetting the preparation for the welcoming of high personalities especially by the speaker of the national assembly or the president of the senate. But this is done in close collaboration with the cabinet of the speaker of the national assembly<sup>33</sup>.

It is also in charge of examining the organizational problems and methods of solving them in relation to the smooth functioning of the services of the general secretariat of the national assembly. It also prepares audiences of the speaker and other activities that he is involved, not forgetting the preparation of meetings presided by the latter. It also takes charge of the media action of the National Assembly and public relation activities with the institution. All of these sub organs greatly contribute to the efficient participation of the Cameroon parliament in the international scene<sup>34</sup>. It also coordinates the position of the national assembly on questions of international issues and directs the vision of the parliament in parliamentary and inter parliamentary cooperation.

There is there bureau of the press which is in charge of consulting and exploiting current news on the political, economic and socio-cultural domain both at the national and international level. Its activities are complemented by the office or bureau of personal mails. The bureau of personal mails takes charge of the reception and registration of mails and all dispatches the mails of all the services of the national assembly. It also diffuses official activities of the national assembly to the public and ensures that the parliament and parliamentarians are brought to the lime light. The sub directorate of communication, ceremonies and missions, also prepares the missions of parliamentarians abroad. It establishes the authorization of missions and ensures the allocation of transportation charges, and also acquires visas for parliamentarians<sup>35</sup>. The sub directorate of communications, ceremonies and missions plays a very influential or vital role in the evolution of parlomacy

<sup>33</sup>Njanjou, « Les présidents de l'assemblée nationale ... », p. 42.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p.42.

<sup>35</sup>Azang, *Lumière sur l'admistration ...* , p. 18.

but its activities cannot be complete without the support services of the sub directorate of international relations.

### 3. The sub directorate of international relations

The sub directorate of international relations happens to be a springboard or umbilical cord as far as the coordination of international affairs within the parliament is concerned. According to article 30 of law n°95/006//AB/AN of 9 march 1995, the responsibilities of this service are clearly spelt out as follows; the sub directorate of international relations is in charge of activities related to international cooperation with two sub services in charge of the inter parliamentary cooperation and the cooperation with other international organizations<sup>36</sup>.

The office of the inter-parliamentary cooperation occupies itself with a follow up of issues related to the participation of the Cameroon parliament within parliamentary associations across the world. It ensures the wellbeing and functioning of Cameroonian delegations within these parliamentary bodies, and its cooperation with other national parliaments. This is realistic thanks to the activities of two sub organs that is the service of bilateral relations and that of multilateral relations and each of them has a well-defined function<sup>37</sup>. It should be noted that the office of inter-parliamentary cooperation came into existence on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1982 through law n°19/AB/AN/82, which instituted secretaries for delegations of the Cameroon national assemblies within inter-parliamentary association<sup>38</sup>. These secretaries had the functions to carryout intellectual and material preparations during inter-parliamentary sittings for administrative purposes<sup>39</sup>. In December 1982<sup>40</sup>, another law was passed which clearly spelt out the conditions surrounding the displacements of parliamentarians and other state personalities for missions abroad. This law elaborately insisted on the collaboration that exists between the executive and the legislative in the management of international relations in the country especially in their activities within inter-parliamentary associations. In June 1986<sup>41</sup>, another law instituted with the parliament, an organ in charge of the relations of the national assembly with other inter-parliamentary

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<sup>36</sup> Law n°95/006//AB/AN of 9 march 1995, cited by Meyolo in his Masters Thesis « *La diplomatie parlementaire...* », p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> Law n°95/006//AB/AN of 9 March 1995.

<sup>38</sup> Law n°19/AB/AN/82 of 23rd June 1982, which instituted Secretaries for Cameroon in Parliamentary Associations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Union of African parliaments and *L'Assemblée Internationale des Parlements de Langue Francophone*.

<sup>39</sup> Law n°19/AB/AN/82 of 23rd June 1982

<sup>40</sup> Law n°67/AB/AN/82 of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1982.

<sup>41</sup> Law n°002/AB/AN/86 of 20th June 1986.

organizations and other friendly parliament. It also for the first time introduced officially the idea of friendship groups within the national assembly. Note should be taken that the activities of the organ of bilateral cooperation and that of the inter-parliamentary relations are more of complimentary and not contradictory.

From its name, the bureau of bilateral cooperation is in charge of follow-up of friendship groups and relationships that exist between parliaments in the context of bilateral inter-parliamentary cooperation. In clear terms, the bureau follows up friendship groups and relations between one parliament of a country and another. For example: the Cameroon parliament and the parliament of Nigeria. This cooperation mostly participates in reinforcing the relationship between Cameroon and her friendly nations.

The bureau of multilateral cooperation on its part is in charge of handling issues concerning the involvement of the Cameroon parliament in other inter-parliamentary organizations. Some of these inter-parliamentary associations are; the Inter-parliamentary Union, the Pan African Parliament, the CEMAC Parliament, the Common Wealth Parliamentary Association among others<sup>42</sup>.

As for what concerns the organ of international organizations, it is influential both at the national and at the international level. At the international level, the organ follows up relations between national and international organizations that are not parliamentary. At the national level, it collaborates with administrative structures which are orientated towards the domain of international relations. To achieve its objectives, the organ is structured into the bureau of public organizations and the bureau of Non-Governmental Organizations. As for the bureau of public organizations, it centers its activities more precisely on issues concerning international organizations with political, economic or socio-cultural objectives. The bureau of non-governmental organizations handles relations with NGOs<sup>43</sup>.

### **C-External activities of the parliament in foreign affairs**

This part examines the activities of the parliament or parliamentarians out of the country in relation to foreign affairs. These activities can be reflected in foreign parliamentary organizations and parliaments of other nations around the world. In this situation, We classify

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<sup>42</sup>Meyolo, "La diplomatie parlementaire...", p. 18.

<sup>43</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 45.

them as actors<sup>44</sup> in parliamentary diplomacy. It should be noted that Cameroon actors in parliamentary diplomacy are classified into two categories. There are parliamentary actors who are those carefully selected parliamentarians by the speaker of the national assembly depending on the political representation in the assembly and the non-parliamentary actors who are administrators or civil servants within the national assembly<sup>45</sup>. The part will specifically examine the role of the speaker of the national assembly, the activities of parliamentary actors and the activities of non-parliamentary actors.

### **1. The representation of the head of state by the speaker of the national assembly**

It should be signaled that the constitution of Cameroon does not give any powers for the speaker of the national assembly to control foreign. It is the exclusive role of the president of the republic who remains the maestro of Cameroon foreign policy. But as a political figure, the speaker of the national assembly who is one of the legislative heads in Cameroon alongside the president of the Senate had been traditionally involved in executing foreign policy of Cameroon, where he is in strict representation of the head of state. These representations are often frequent and also been at the center of media attention. In the 1990s for example the speaker of the Cameroon national assembly carried out some frequent visit out of the country where he represented the president of the republic in some high profile events or ceremonies some of which were;

-In 1992, the speaker of the national assembly was in Lagos to trace the boundary of Cameroon with Nigeria.

-In 1994, another mission was carried out to Lagos but this time around to discuss about the Bakassi Island

-From the 05th to the 12th of August 1996, He represented the head of state during the swearing in ceremony of President Idriss Deby of Chad, first ever democratically elected president of Chad.

-From the 03rd -09th September 1998, he represented once again the president of the republic during the funeral ceremony and burial of Nigerian president Sani Abacha

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<sup>44</sup> *“Toute autorité, tout organisme et même à la limite toute personne susceptible de jouer un rôle dans le champ social en espèce sur la scène internationale”*. Cited by Meyolo in his Masters Thesis, titled “La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 43.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

-Still in 1998, he made an economic tour around Arab countries of the Persian Gulf in the Middle East.

-In 1999, the speaker of the national assembly once again represented the president of the republic in Lagos Nigeria on the occasion of swearing in of Olusegun Obasanjo, democratically elected president of Nigerian<sup>46</sup>.

The end of the cold war actually revealed the victory of democracy over totalitarianism across the world<sup>47</sup>. Liberal democracy was therefore progressively imposed among nations of the world including Cameroon. This was promoted especially by the western world towards African states as conditions to acquire a financial aid or debt. In this light, the activities of the executive at the international level were also extended to the parliament there by making the speaker of the national assembly to constantly be involved in foreign activities where he has been representing the head of state in full capacity. But this was almost impossible before the liberalism period. This has projected a harmonious or seducing between the state institutions (the executive and the legislative) of Cameroon and presents a very healthy image of Cameroon's practice of democracy to the world. The speaker of the national assembly has also been according audiences to several foreign or diplomatic personalities that have visited Cameroon. These meetings are usually broadcasted by the state media

It should be noted that the sovereignty or independence of Cameroon and the legitimacy of the government are all indicative attributes of democracy that facilitate the involvement of the nation in the international system. According to EFOUA MBOZO'O, the participation of Cameroon in inter-parliamentary organizations across the world is more of a necessity in Cameroon's process of international relations as it constitutes a real confirmation of Cameroon's democracy<sup>48</sup>. From this, it can therefore be assessed that the implication of the speaker of the national assembly in foreign affairs empowers the legitimacy of Cameroon in the international scene.

It has been observed that most of the countries visited by the speaker of the national assembly were either fully or semi Islamic states. It will not be strange to affirm that this is strongly motivated by the Islamic religious background of the speaker. It should be noted that

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<sup>46</sup> Mougna, « L.'Activité internationale du président de l'assemblée nationale du Cameroun », academic report in view of obtaining the *DESS (Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées)* in International Relations, Yaounde, IRIC, 2000, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

<sup>48</sup> Efova Mbozo'o, « *La participation du Cameroun aux organisations interparlementaires: Nécessité ou futilité* » *In le Parlement*, no 7, 1989.



religion and culture determinant factors in the designation and execution of foreign policy. His religious background must have greatly facilitated negotiations especially during his economic tours in the Arabic countries of the Persian Gulf.

More to this, before the institution of the senate in 2013, the speaker of the national assembly by then was the constitutional heir to the president of the republic and second state personality and it was only but normal that he should receive delegated powers to represent the president of the republic at international levels. But it should not be neglected that these factors could only mostly apply when the state modifies their strategies of activity at the international scene that turn to favor the participation of the speaker of the national assembly at the international level.

In the process of executing parlmacy, the speaker of the national assembly relatively enjoys certain autonomy in his activities without necessarily considering the patronage of the president of the republic. This is because parlmacy is the perfect environment of the evolution of the speaker of the national assembly at the international scene. In this prism, the speaker coordinates activities of friendship groups in bilateral parlmacy and activities of international conferences in multilateral parlmacy. He coordinates these activities without necessarily involving the executive but this does not certify the fact that the executive can no longer control his activities. On the contrary, the international activities of the speaker of the national assembly are not autonomous in Cameroon but they are determined by the president of the republic who is the head of the executive<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Mougna, « L.'activité internationale du..., p. 38.

**Plate 4: Cavaye Yeguie Djibril, actual speaker of the national assembly since 1992**



**Source:** assnat.cm, consulted on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 8:30pm

Cavaye Yeguie Djibril is the Speaker of the Cameroon National Assembly. He was first elected in 1992 and since then, he has been re-elected in that position every legislative year. He is actively involved in parliamentary diplomacy throughout his stay in office.

## **2. Parliamentary actors in parliamentary diplomacy (Parlomacy)**

These are well experienced or high profiled parliamentarians who represent the Cameroon parliament in other foreign parliaments (The CEMAC parliament, Pan African Parliament, among others. The delegation of these parliamentarians is usually led by the speak of the house of assembly or the senate president when it concerns the upper house and in case of absence or non-availability, the delegation is led by the most experienced parliamentarian among the delegates<sup>50</sup>. The Cameroon delegations to foreign parliaments usually respect the multiparty nature of the parliament especially the national assembly by choosing delegates from different political parties even though in most cases, the delegates are dominated by parliamentarians of the ruling party.

Looking at some of the delegations of Cameroon to these parliaments especially since 1992, it was realized they have been constituted by members of parties represented in the assembly for example: In 2010, the delegation of Cameroon to the first legislature of the CEMAC parliament comprised of the following delegates; Hilarion Etong, Alioum Fadi,

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<sup>50</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 101.

Jean Georges Sop, Haman Tchiouto who were all from the ruling CPDM and then Joseph Mbah Ndam from SDF<sup>51</sup>. Cameroon expertise was recognized in this parliament as the delegates from Cameroon had occupied strategic functions that is; Hon. Hliarion Etong was elected one of the vice presidents and Joseph Mbah Ndam was one of the secretary of the Bureau of the parliament. In 2015, the delegation from Cameroon was slightly modified with the inclusion of the first female delegate, Ada Owono épouse Marie Rose Nguini Effa who replaced Jean Georges Sop. This was a bold step especially towards the promotion of gender equality.

**Plate 5: Joseph Mbah Ndam, one of the Cameroon Parliamentary Delegates to the CEMAC Parliament**



**Source:** [assnat.cm](http://assnat.cm), consulted on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 8:20pm

In 2010, the delegation of Cameroon to the first legislature of the CEMAC Parliament comprised of the following delegates: Hilarion Etong, Alioum Fadil, Jean Georges Sop, Haman Tchiouto who were all from the ruling CPDM and then Joseph Mbah Ndam from SDF<sup>52</sup>. Joseph Mbah Ndam was a member of the Cameroon delegation to the CEMAC Parliament until his demise in 2020.

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<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>Zeh Zeh, « *La diplomatie parlementaire Camerounaise...* », p. 101.

**Table 13: Cameroon delegation to the workshop of the APU in 1992**

<b>Name of Parliamentarian</b>	<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Job Description</b>
Cavaye Yeguié Djibril	CPDM	Civil Servant
Charles Oma Betow	UPC	Civil Servant
Rindandi Djonkamla	CPDM	Civil Servant
Abba Boukar	CPDM	Civil Servant

**Source:** Meyolo, « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire Camerounaise...* », p.46.

**Table 14: Cameroon delegation to the workshop of the APU in 1999**

<b>Name of Parliamentarian</b>	<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Job Description</b>
Nana Hamadou	NUDP	Civil Servant
Emmanuel Yoyo	SDF	Civil Servant
Etouki Mankoue Gerald	CPDM	Civil Servant
Abba Boukar	CPDM	Civil Servant

**Source:** Meyolo, « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire Camerounaise...* », p.46.

Before 1992, parliamentary delegations from Cameroon were made up of uniquely members of the single party that is the Cameroon National Union (CNU) and later followed by the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) from 1985. This was due to the existence of the mono party system practiced in the country. But by 1990, multi-party politics was re-introduced in Cameroon and this consequently led to the holding of multi-party elections in March 1992. This saw the entry of opposition parties into the parliament and subsequently delegations to foreign parliaments henceforth were comprised of representatives from more than one political party as seen above with the Cameroon Delegations to the African Parliamentary Union now called the Pan African Parliament.

These delegations have created impact in different ways and domains during their participations in foreign parliament especially on the aspect of human rights and democracy. For example; during the workshop of the conference of the AUP, held in Tunis, on 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1993, which was aimed at encouraging parliamentarians in the promotion of the democratic process in Africa, Cameroon parliamentarians had the opportunity to show case their democratic maturity and respect for human rights. This was backed by the fact that Cameroon was just from having a multi-party parliamentary election in March 1992 which was very successful. Cameroon representatives insisted on the fact that democracy which is the basic foundation of modern political life could not be implemented without some courageous or radical reforms. Their arguments took example on the revision of the standing

orders of the parliament. They called on African countries to follow the part of democracy for a more stable Africa<sup>53</sup>.

Apart from this, the Cameroon parliamentarians in foreign parliaments have often benefitted huge responsibilities thanks to their rich experience and influence in parliamentary diplomacy (parlomacy) across the globe. For example, on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Roger Nkodo Ndang was elected as the president of the Pan African Parliament which is based in Midrand South Africa by obtaining 85 votes. He succeeded the Nigerian former president Bethel Nnaemeka Amadi<sup>54</sup>.

**Plate 6: Roger Nkodo Dang, elected president of the Pan African Parliament in 2015**



Source: assnat.cm, consulted on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 8:00pm

On the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Roger Nkodo Ndang was elected as the president of the Pan African Parliament which is based in Midrand South Africa by obtaining 85 votes. He succeeded the Nigerian former president Bethel Nnaemeka Amadi from Nigeria<sup>55</sup>. He represented the African Regional Bloc within Central the Pan African Parliament.

Also, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2019, Hon. Hilarion Etong, Vice Speaker of the Cameroon National assembly and leader of the Cameroon's delegation to the CEMAC parliament was

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<sup>53</sup>Meyolo, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 53.

<sup>54</sup> “Pan African Parliament gets New President”, CRTV news read on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 7:30pm Cameroon time but retrieved from the archives on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

elected president of the CEMAC Parliament<sup>56</sup>. According to article 32 sub 3 of the convention of the CEMAC Parliament, it stipulates and I quote “The presidency of the parliament is held by a parliamentarian or Deputy from the country which is currently holding the presidency of the conference of heads of state of the CEMAC zone”<sup>57</sup>. It was on this note that Hilarion Etong was elected in 2019, following the assumption of the chairmanship of the conference of heads of state by President Paul Biya of Cameroon.

**Plate 7: Hilarion Etong, elected president of the CEMAC parliament in 2019**



**Source:** assnat.cm, consulted on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 at 8:30pm

Hilarion Etong on the above plate was elected in 2019 as the president of the CEMAC Parliament, following the assumption of the chairmanship of the conference of heads of state of CEMAC by President Paul Biya of Cameroon.

This heavy responsibility given to Cameroonian representatives in these foreign parliaments is a clear indication of acknowledgement of the much experience of the country or expertise and the incessant role of Cameroonians in fighting for the growth of the various Parliaments.

For the activities of these parliamentary actors to be visible in the foreign parliaments, they are accompanied by technical teams made up of civil servants within the parliament and

<sup>56</sup> News Bulletin of the CEMAC Parliament, n° 010 of June 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Article 32 sub 3 of the Convention of the CEMAC Parliament cited by Zeh Zeh in his Master's Thesis « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 98.

other specialists in the domain from ministries who can be classified as non-parliamentary actors

### **3. Non parliamentary actors in parliamentary diplomacy**

Non parliamentary actors are civil servants working at the national assembly and others from ministries and other administrative services who have direct concern on some topics inserted into the parliamentary debates or foreign missions at a particular time. But in most cases, only civil servants working within the parliaments carry out foreign missions which are usually comprised of an official from the parliamentary secretariat who serves as an adviser and in most cases it is usually the deputy secretary general, and another who plays the role of an administrative secretary.

The personnel or non-parliamentary actors play a very vital or significant role in parliamentary diplomatic missions. For example; the administrative secretary carries out an intellectual preparation on the various parliamentary encounters by giving technical and administrative assistances to the Deputies. He or she also prepares official reports after the sessions of parliament and these reports are forwarded to the speaker of the national assembly<sup>58</sup>. After scrutiny and eventual approval, these reports are forwarded to the general secretariat of any of the multilateral parliaments be it the IPU, PAP, or the CEMAC parliament. In order to ensure that these non-parliamentary actors carry out their tasks judiciously, they are carefully selected according to their academic or intellectual specialties<sup>59</sup>. For example, non-parliamentary actors representing Cameroon in the CEMAC Parliament are appointed by the chairpersons' conference of the Cameroon national assembly and others are directly appointed by the CEMAC chairperson. According to article 8 of the convention of the CEMAC Parliament, the parliament is under the authority of a secretary general who is appointed by the conference of the heads of state<sup>60</sup>. In this light, a Cameroonian, Parfait Abena Etong was appointed on the 06<sup>th</sup> May 2015<sup>61</sup> as secretary general of the CEMAC parliament by the conference of the heads of state of the CEMAC zone, a position which he has occupied till date. Consequently, he has been the administrative engine of the parliament. Together with members of his secretariat, he prepares all

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<sup>58</sup>Meyolo, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 47.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.47.

<sup>60</sup> Article 8 of the Convention of the CEMAC Parliament cited by Zeh Zeh in his Master's Thesis « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p.103.

<sup>61</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 103.

parliamentary sittings; he also is in charge of the technical and administrative stability of the parliament as the chief administrative officer of the parliament. He ensures the smooth holding of parliamentary sessions and ensures that every sanction taken against a deputy within the parliament is applied and strict follow-up on the deliberations of the parliamentary sessions. It should be noted that this is the very first administrative structure of the CEMAC Parliament ever set up and the supreme responsibility was placed on a Cameroonian by the conference of the heads of state of the CEMAC zone. It once again demonstrates the dynamism of Cameroonians and their expertise or influential role in foreign parliaments.

**Plate 8: Parfait Etong Abena, Secretary General of the CEMAC Parliament since 2015**



**Source:** Archives of the National Assembly, 26/08/22.

A Cameroonian Parfait Abena Etong was appointed on the 06<sup>th</sup> May 2015<sup>62</sup> as Secretary General of the CEMAC parliament by the conference of the heads of state of the CEMAC zone, a position which he has occupied till date. He has been the administrative engine of the parliament.

In a similar situation, another Cameroonian has been the Secretary General of the IPU. Martin Chungong is the first non-European and first African to be elected as secretary general of the IPU in its creation in 1889. He assumed his function on the 01<sup>st</sup> July 2014<sup>63</sup> and was re-

<sup>62</sup> Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 103.

<sup>63</sup> Jeune Afrique «Cameroun : Martin Chungong, l'apôtre des parlements du monde », published on 12th December 2014.



elected in Dhaka in 2017<sup>64</sup>. As head of the IPU<sup>65</sup>, he has worked enormously to develop programs that help parliaments to become stronger and gender-sensitive and representative. Since joining the IPU in 1993 from the administration of the Cameroon National Assembly, Chungong has been outstanding in working for the achievement of sustainable development goals through global parliamentary cooperation, governments, multilateral organizations and even the civil society. He has also worked for the promotion of human rights and democracy especially when he served as the secretary general of the standing committee of the IPU on human rights and democracy. His efforts have been relentless in fighting for the promotion and implementation of gender equality across the globe through parliamentary influence

**Photo 9: Chungong Martin, Secretary General of IPU since 2014**



Source: ipu.cm, consulted on 02<sup>nd</sup> May 2022.

This is another Cameroonian who has been the Secretary General of the IPU. Martin Chungong is the first non-European and first African to be elected as Secretary General of the IPU in its creation in 1889. He assumed his function on the 01<sup>st</sup> July 2014 and was re-elected in Dhaka in 2017.

Conclusively from the above analysis, this chapter was destined to bring out clarity on how Cameroonians participate in parlomacy. Elaborations were made on the role of the speaker of the national assembly when representing the head of state and then parliamentary and non-parliamentary actors were also analyzed. It was discovered that the speaker of the national assembly though not being the ultimate person in Cameroon's foreign policy has

<sup>64</sup> Xinhua "Martin Chungong, re-elected as IPU secretary general", published on 05<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union "Setting Standards", published on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

actually achieved much in the process of pursuing diplomacy for Cameroon. Parliamentary actors on their part have carried the flag of Cameroon very high in all their representations in multilateral parliaments either by actively participating in deliberations or by occupying influential and prestigious positions. Non parliamentary actors on their part have also been super active in different capacities in the various parliaments where they have represented Cameroon. For example, the activities of two Cameroonians who have occupied posts of secretary general both in the CEMAC parliament and the IPU were examined. All of these are proves that Cameroonians have a rich background in diplomacy and has greatly influenced the evolution of this aspect through their rich expertise and active participation.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**THE DIPLOMACY AND POSITION OF CAMEROON IN  
FOREIGN PARLIAMENTS**

This chapter seeks to demonstrate how Cameroon pursues its policies through the multilateral parliamentary diplomacy (parlomacy). The Cameroon parliament since its existence has been actively involved in multilateral parlomacy by being represented in foreign parliaments like the Common Wealth parliamentary Association, La Francophonie Parliamentary Group, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Pan-African Parliament and the CEMAC Parliament, just to name a few. While participating in these parliaments, Cameroon pursues its foreign policy interest through its various activities by Cameroon parliamentary representatives. To better understand this phenomenon, three multilateral parliamentary institutions are observed. They are the CEMAC Parliament, the Pan African parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The activities and position of Cameroon in these parliaments are carefully examined.

**A-Cameroon in the CEMAC parliament**

The CEMAC parliament is a tribute of representation for the people of the central African sub region<sup>66</sup>. It stands out as a symbol of representative democracy in the sub region. This clearly is in accordance with article 2, sub 1 of the Cameroon constitution which stipulates that “National sovereignty belongs to the people... and this is exercised either through the president of the republic, the parliament who are intermediaries or through a referendum”. By putting in place this parliamentary institution, the executive intended to bring together the people of the CEMAC sub region and adequately engaging them in the process of decision making<sup>67</sup>. This part of chapter three therefore starts by examining the influence of Cameroon or the role Cameroon played in the establishment of the sub regional parliament the 2000s, then the part further goes to look at some of the Cameroon parliamentarians that have represented the country within the parliaments and their evolution or activities in the parliament, and then it end up by looking at the role or contributions of Cameroon in the development of the CEMAC Parliament.

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<sup>66</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 79.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

## 1-Role of Cameroon in the Creation of the Parliament

Cameroon just like any other African country especially south of the Sahara since after their acquisition of independence or sovereignty have nursed and built the desire to promote sub regional and regional integration. For example shortly after independence, Central African states established a sub-regional organization known as UDEAC ( *Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale* ), which was later transformed to CEMAC ( *Communautaire Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale* ) in June 1994. It should be noted that Cameroon has been fully engaged in ensuring the smooth and effective function of these organizations<sup>68</sup>.

Taking into consideration that the CEMAC sub-region has been constantly facing problems of insecurity, slow or ineffective process of regional integration, and rivalries among member states, it was therefore necessary to put in place a new form of an organization that regrouped states in the CEMAC zone. Apart from the afore mentioned challenges, the member countries of CEMAC were also conscious of the fact that all its institutions were to be reviewed in order to develop all the human and natural resources of member states and making them to serve a purpose for the well-being of the population, the determination to ensure effective regional integration within the Central African sub region especially through the harmonization of the policies and laws of member states. The necessity of establishing a powerful sub regional organization with well-defined powers or competences was inevitable<sup>69</sup>. Among the five institutions put in place was the CEMAC Parliament which happens to be the youngest organ of CEMAC that has been established.

It should be noted that the creation of the CEMAC Parliament is the manifestation of the desire of the leaders of the CEMAC zone to promote or facilitate the effective regional integration within the sub-region, while also involving the people in the decision making process. The birth of this parliament was realized thanks to the effective engagement of member countries. On its own part, Cameroon participated in the creation of the CEMAC Parliament through activities of its executive and parliamentarians.

The Cameroon government or executive actively involved in the creation of the CEMAC Parliament in several dimensions. This implication is demonstrated where the

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Chu Eric Kangha, Aged 34, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University of Buea, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

<sup>69</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 91.

president of the republic of Cameroon and head of state Paul Biya has participated in all the preparatory meetings or forums towards the establishment of the CEMAC Parliament. Three instances or dates stand out to demonstrate the wish of the Cameroon government to ensure the creation of this parliament which date back to 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2000, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, and the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2010<sup>70</sup>.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2000 marks the installation of the members of the inter-parliamentary committee put in place to work towards the creation of the parliament. Through his representative, the president of Cameroon urged the Cameroon parliamentary group to serve with honor and dignity and to preserve the interest of the community and also use their expertise to build a solid parliamentary institution that responds to the expectations of the community<sup>71</sup>. The date of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008 marks two major events. The first one was the ratification of the convention of the CEMAC Parliament by the state of Cameroon and the second event was the putting in place of the CEMAC Parliament and also the end of the activities of the inter-parliamentary committee that was setup to handle the preparatory phase of the parliament and had worked for eight years (2000-2008)<sup>72</sup>.

Cameroon actually delayed the ratification or signing of the convention of the CEMAC parliament because they were not in accordance with its article 32 which gave equal seats to all member states whereas Cameroon happens to be the most populated country of the sub region. But the state of Cameroon finally decided to accept the article on the number of seats so as to open way for the launching of activities of the CEMAC Parliament because according them, the issue had been dragged for too long. Evident by the affirmation below;

*Cette question a longuement perturbé le démarrage des activités du parlement communauté. Car vous voyez bien qu'il s'agit là des députés et non les sénateurs. Et par conséquent, il faut tenir compte de la population des Etats. C'est donc pour résoudre le problème que le président de la république du Cameroun dans un souci de permettre le démarrage de cette institution a accepté que tous les pays désignent les mêmes membres des députés ...*<sup>73</sup>

The ratification of the convention creating the CEMAC Parliament only showed a sign of humility and goodwill by the Cameroon government to ensure that the parliament went operational. It was also a means to give an opportunity to parliamentarians with the Central African sub region to accompany the CEMAC commission in attaining its objectives. The

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<sup>70</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 92.

<sup>71</sup>Boudzanga, « *Intégration et décentralisation entravée en Afrique Centrale* », Université of de Rabat, 2014, cited by Zeh Zeh in his Masters Thesis « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... ».

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>Belibi, « *Parlement de la CEMAC : Investiture comme mode de désignation* », *Mutations*, Bulletin n°54485, Published on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2010, p. 4.

15<sup>th</sup> April 2010, marks the day the Cameroon head of state travelled his counterparts in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea to officially launch or inaugurate activities marking the beginning of the CEMAC Parliament<sup>74</sup>. The numerous actions of the head of state are a clear prove of the desire and implication of Cameroon to ensure the successful implementation of the sub regional parliament and a vibrant sub region. It should be noted that the contribution of the executive were accompanied by the parliamentarians who took part in the inter-parliamentary committee together with parliamentarians from other countries and their presence in the CEMAC Parliament. This materialized the contribution of Cameroon in the creation of the Parliament<sup>75</sup>.

The realization of the creation of the CEMAC Parliament can also be thanks to the efforts of the parliamentarians of the Cameroon group within the inter-parliamentary committee. Their actions were very instrumental in the putting in place of this parliamentary institution, especially through the inter-parliamentary committee which had as main objective to put in place all necessary conditions favorable for the establishment of the parliament. The Cameroon parliamentary group did not relend their efforts in executing the instructions of the conference of the heads of state who had wished to see the parliament a reality within the shortest possible time<sup>76</sup>. The impact of the Cameroon group was very visible in the designation of the various texts that would define the mode of function of the parliament. Due to the rich Cameroon expertise in parliamentary affairs, the head of the Cameroon delegation and the first vice speaker of the Cameroon National Assembly, Hon. Hilarion Etong, was appointed to supervise the activities of the inter-parliamentary committee until the texts were officially adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008 by the conference of the heads of state<sup>77</sup>.

## **2-Cameroon parliamentarians within the parliament**

As a member country of CEMAC, Cameroon is entitled to five seats within the CEMAC parliament just like any other member state. This provision is accorded by the convention of the CEMAC parliament<sup>78</sup>. Cameroon parliamentarians can therefore be noticed in different

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<sup>74</sup>Zeh Zeh, « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire Camerounaise...* », p. 93.

<sup>75</sup> Article 60 of the convention of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa(CEMAC), revised on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> The Cameroon Journal, Published on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010, by Camer presse p. 13, cited by ZEH ZEH his master's thesis « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire...* », p. 93.

<sup>78</sup> Article 32 sub 2 of the Convention of the CEMAC Parliament which accords 5 seats each within the Parliament to all the Six Member-States in the CEMAC Zone.

activities as they strive to render services within the parliament. The Cameroon national group within the CEMAC parliament has shown a remarkable difference by participating regularly in the CEMAC parliamentary sessions that have been organized twice every year. The first session takes place every first Monday of February and the main objective is to very annual reports and also to examine activities within the CEMAC zone. The second session takes place during the second Monday of the month of October and is intended to adopt their annual program of activities and vote a functional budget<sup>79</sup>.

It should be noted most importantly that the Cameroon delegation has not been able to register even a single absence for the first 23 ordinary sessions that that the CEMAC Parliament has organized in its years of existence, and this same strength is noticed even during extraordinary sessions of the parliament<sup>80</sup>. This clearly symbolizes that Cameroon holds the parliamentary institution in high esteem. Apart from valorizing the CEMAC parliament, Cameroon representatives also regularly attend the parliamentary sessions in other to give their maximum contributions to the deliberations and adoption of resolutions that go a long way to strengthen the effectiveness of the CEMAC zone. Note should also be taken that the effective presence of the Cameroon national group within the community parliament is encouraged by the Cameroon executive who does not only desire to make the parliament a very influential institution but is also highly determined to involve the people in decision making on important matters affecting the CEMAC zone through the parliamentary institution.

The participation of Cameroon parliamentarians is also noticed in the various external activities of the CEMAC Parliament some of which are international parliamentary seminars. For example, the CEMAC parliament took part in the 26<sup>th</sup> regional assembly of Africa organized in Cabo Verde By the La Francophonie parliamentary Association from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. Before this, the parliament had previous participated in the African regional assembly of the La Francophonie parliamentary assembly which was held from the 09<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> May 2013 among others<sup>81</sup>. Though these forums, Cameroon parliamentarians benefit from the acquisition of maximum experience from matured parliamentary institutions that can be used to better build the newly created CEMAC Parliamentary institution is still struggling to stamp its position within the CEMAC sub region, by making it an exemplary

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, Article 9

<sup>80</sup> Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 95.

<sup>81</sup> The News Bulletin of the CEMAC Parliament n°09 of June 2018, p .4.

and dependable parliamentary institution that can readily respond to the need of people within the CEMAC zone.

Apart from taking part in the various parliamentary sittings, the participation of Cameroon can also be noticed through the occupation of influential positions within the community parliament. Since the creation of the CEMAC Parliament, Cameroon parliamentarians and other non-parliamentary actors from Cameroon have risen to top positions within the parliament such as president of the parliament, secretary general among others. According article 8 of the convention of the CEMAC Parliament, The parliament has a general secretariat which is placed under a secretary general. The secretary general is appointed by the conference of the heads of state of CEMAC for a period of four years which is non-renewable<sup>82</sup>. In this light, an experienced parliamentary civil servant Parfait Etong Abena was appointed as the first ever secretary general of the CEMAC Parliament on the 06<sup>th</sup> May 2015. He was appointed by the conference of the heads of state for the CEMAC zone during their 12<sup>th</sup> ordinary session which was destined for the appointment of a secretary general for the community parliament<sup>83</sup>. Note should be taken that prior to his appointment as secretary general of the community parliament, Parfait Etong Abena had served as the deputy director of legislative affairs at the Cameroon national assembly for a period of approximately 30years and was therefore very rich in experience as concerns parliamentary administration. His expertise was a necessity for the establishment and evolution of the CEMAC Parliament as demonstrated in his speech shortly after his appointment.

*C'est une structure d'accompagnement des députés dans leur travail que je serai chargé d'animer. Je souhaiterai d'abord bâtir une administration parlementaire digne de ce nom...En tant que technicien, nous devons apporter tout notre savoir*<sup>84</sup>

The technical knowhow of this senior parliamentary administrator has greatly contributed to the evolution of the CEMAC parliament and increased the morale of Cameroon parlomacy within the parliament.

The Cameroon parliamentary representatives within the CEMAC Parliament have worked brilliantly to distinguish themselves in the parliamentary institution. They have been occupying influential positions within the parliament. For instance Hon. Hilarion Etong has occupied the post of the president of the parliament since 2019. Apart from this, Hon. Allioum Fadil is the secretary for the bureau of age, Hon. Haman Tchiouto is currently the

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<sup>82</sup> Article 8 of the Convention of the CEMAC Parliament.

<sup>83</sup> Cameroon Journal, published on the 08<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 12:00 and consulted on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*



vice president of the committee in charge of sectorial policies within the parliament and before his death in 2020, Hon. Joseph Mbah Ndam was one of the two secretaries of the parliamentary bureau<sup>85</sup>. In their various capacities, they have fought and worked enormously to bring the CEMAC parliament to the limelight.

On the 03<sup>rd</sup> May 2019, Hon. Hilarion Etong was elected as president of the CEMAC Parliament during an extraordinary session of the parliament at its headquarters in Malabo<sup>86</sup>. This was in strict application of the provisions of the convention of the CEMAC parliament which stipulates that “the presidency of the CEMAC Parliament is handled by a parliamentarian from the country of the current chairperson of the heads of state conference”<sup>87</sup>. Hon. Hilarion Etong could be qualified as a square peg in a square hole due to his rich parliamentary experience and expertise. Prior to his election, he was the vice president of the CEMAC Parliament, he had also occupied the functions of the chairperson of the inter-parliamentary committee that was established to prepare the setting up of the parliament, he had also been in the Cameroon National Assembly since 1992 and is currently the first vice speaker of the Cameroon National Assembly and the head of the Cameroon delegation to the CEMAC Parliament<sup>88</sup>. This rich parliamentary carrier obviously would have a lot to contribute to the smooth evolution and progress of the CEMAC parliament.

### **3-The role of Cameroon in the achievements of the sub regional parliament**

The contributions of Cameroon parliamentarians to the success of the CEMAC Parliament are visible through collective efforts with parliamentarians from other countries within the sub region. Therefore it should be noted that Cameroon representatives together with other representatives in the parliament have worked enormously through their actions and resolutions to ameliorate the conditions of life for people within the CEMAC zone. These achievements are noticeable in domains like free circulation of persons and goods, harmonization of common policies especially in health, education and the assimilation of economic activities.

Parliamentarians usually intervene to speak only during working sessions where they are evaluating the activities of the CEMAC commission or when the commission is presenting its

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<sup>85</sup>Zeh Zeh, « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire...* », p. 97.

<sup>86</sup> The News Bulletin of the CEMAC Parliament, n°010 of June 2019, p .2.

<sup>87</sup> Article 32 sub 3 of the Convention of the CEMAC Parliament.

<sup>88</sup> The News Bulletin of the CEMAC Parliament..., p. 1.

plan of activities<sup>89</sup>. Here the parliamentarians are allowed to either give recommendations or take resolutions on some of the activities of the commission within the sub region. Some provisions of the convention of the parliament also obligate the commission to consult the parliament before certain decisions or actions are taken especially in aspects like the budget of the commission, free circulation of goods, persons and services, taxation and sectorial policies<sup>90</sup>. It is through these legal dispositions that we observe the full implication of the CEMAC Parliament in the success or wellbeing of persons with the CEMAC sub region.

#### **a. Free movement of persons, goods and services**

The issue of free movement of persons, goods and services with the CEMAC region has been a great challenge to the leaders of the sub region from the days of UDEAC right up to the establishment of CEMAC in 1994 whereas laws have been adopted to allow people and goods from countries within the sub region to be able to circulate freely<sup>91</sup>. But this has not been a reality. But the establishment of the CEMAC Parliament has greatly accelerated the process of free circulation which in the past had seemed impossible with the CEMAC commission or leaders. One of the major challenges of the first legislature of the CEMAC Parliament was to make the free movement of persons, goods and services a top priority on their agenda of activities. To attain this objective, the Cameroon parliamentarians together with other parliamentarians in the CEMAC Parliament worked hard to accompany the commission and political leaders of the community. This was done by sensitizing all political leaders and other non-state actors on the importance of this initiative. Note should be taken that that their activities seemed to have gradually succeeded<sup>92</sup>.

The activities of these parliamentarians greatly influence certain decisions of the conference of heads of state for the CEMAC zone. For example on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013, the conference of the heads of state for CEMAC, adopted law n°01/13-CEMAC-070 U-CCE of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013 which stipulated that “all persons from the CEMAC zone were to move freely without using visas so long as they owned valid CEMAC passports”<sup>93</sup>. Even though this decision did not really help since most persons had no passports, it was a bold step towards the process of guaranteeing free movement. This was one out of many majors taken on the same issue. The actions did not limit and ensuring free movement but also influenced the re

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<sup>89</sup> Article 15 of the CEMAC Parliament Convention.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, Article 25.

<sup>91</sup> Law n°1/72-UDEAC-70-A of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1972.

<sup>92</sup> Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire Camerounaise... », p. 109.

<sup>93</sup> Resolution of the conference of the heads of state held in Malabo on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

start of activities within the sub region like the CEMAC football competition that had been suspended since 2010 due to financial difficulties and also the celebration of the CEMAC day every 16<sup>th</sup> March to commemorate the creation of CEMAC on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1994<sup>94</sup>. All of these have greatly contributed to an increase in sub regional integration.

#### **b. Economic contribution or role**

In the economic domain, CEAMC parliamentarians have also worked hard to ensure efficiency in domains like agriculture, food production, trade and custom duties, among others. Since its creation, the parliament has wished to see progress in the boost of agriculture and a harmony in fiscal and custom laws within the sub region. In the domain of agriculture, the parliamentarians have constantly solicited the CEMAC commission and the conference of the heads of state to introduce reforms which will bring about a more powerful and competitive agricultural system with the CEMAC sub region. Consequently, the commission reacted by taken a certain number of measures to improve on agricultural productivity among which was the harmonized development of the sectors of animal husbandry, fishing and aquaculture within the CEMAC zone<sup>95</sup>.

It should be noted that much was also done within the community as concerns reforms on custom laws. In her usual manner of proposing to the commission, the CEMAC Parliament indicated that there should be a revision of new custom laws and the harmonization of the “external common tariffs”, with the objective of reinforcing the custom union<sup>96</sup>. This domain has also been one of the priorities of the parliament since its creation. In order to facilitate the circulation of goods and capital within the CEMAC region, the parliament adopted a reform on custom laws known as the “external common tariffs” which aimed at applying the custom union within the CEMAC zone whereby goods coming from member countries were supposed to be levied the same tariffs<sup>97</sup>. Consequently, the setting up of a custom union ignited member states of the community to adopt an identical statistic tariff system on the one hand and on the other hand, the application of similar tariffs (custom and port duties) on goods coming from third world countries<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> The news bulletin of the CEMAC parliament ... p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 118.

<sup>96</sup> Pende, « Intégration sous régionale en CEMAC à l'épreuve de la liberté de circulation des biens et des personnes », Master's thesis in governance and public policy, Catholic University of Central Africa, 2010, p. 26.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

<sup>98</sup> Pende, « Intégration sous régionale... », p. 40.

In the March 2015 ordinary session of the parliament, parliamentarians expressed their desire to see a common market within CEMAC member countries without any obstacles. This was supported with the revision of the CEMAC custom laws which was a favorable asset for the acceleration of the process of regional integration<sup>99</sup>. It should be noted that this important document on custom laws had not really been effective since 2001, whereas the harmonized system on the codification of goods had greatly evolved. According to parliamentarians of the sub region, it was therefore necessary to revise and actualize the laws on custom duties<sup>100</sup>.

### **c. The adoption and harmonization of common health and educational policies**

In their quest to ensure the-wellbeing of the population of the sub region, parliamentarians met and unanimously adopted certain dispositions presented by the CEMAC commission towards the adoption of common policies especially in the domain of health and education, not neglecting strict follow up activities<sup>101</sup>.

### **d. The harmonization of common health policies**

In order to ensure an efficient sub region, it is necessary to put in place common health policies which are capable of satisfying the needs of the population because it is also the priority of the community parliament to see a population in good health conditions. This would obviously ensure effectiveness in constricting a strong and powerful sub region in all domains of life. The implication of parliamentarians in the harmonization of health activities could be noticed in the fight against diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, Ebola, among other neglected tropical diseases.

As concerns the fight against HIV/AIDS, the CEMAC Parliament since its inauguration in 2010 has fought tirelessly to contain the disease. They have carried out activities of sensitization, free distribution of condoms, mass voluntary testing, educating people on the methods of prevention, and taking care of those tested positive of the virus especially between 2010 and 2016<sup>102</sup>. Malaria has also been a major challenge to the population of the sub region. And to fight against this disease, it was resolved during the March 2013 ordinary session that the parliamentarians will accompany the CEMAC commission and their

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<sup>99</sup> The march 2015 ordinary session of the CEMAC Parliament.

<sup>100</sup> Report presented on the revision of laws on custom duties, march 2015.

<sup>101</sup> Resolutions of the ordinary session of march 2013.

<sup>102</sup> Report presented on the activities of the parliament within the CEMAC region.

respective states to ensure the adoption of common policies. Consequently, a partnership was reached between the CEMAC commission and the Yaounde institute of research which permitted amelioration on the activities of research on malaria. And a team was set up to work on this<sup>103</sup>.

The spread of the Ebola disease especially in Congo also pushed the parliament to call for the intervention of the commission by assisting the victims of the disease. Consequently, an emergency sub regional plan was adopted which was aimed at coordinating activities on the fight against the Ebola epidemics. This emergency plan greatly contributed to the halting of the disease from spreading to the rest of the CEMAC sub region<sup>104</sup>.

#### **e. Harmonization of educational and training programs within the sub region.**

The CEMAC parliament has also accompanied the commission in putting in place common policies of training thereby encouraging political leaders to put in place policies in favour of the training of young persons within the community. It should be noted that it was important to take youth training serious because it is the “bedrock of community development”. This can only guarantee of a powerful and autonomous sub region especially when they are trained in highly competitive fields. The parliament was able to accompany the commission in putting in place these training institutions<sup>105</sup>.

As for what concerns continuous training and retraining, several sessions were held to the advantage of the populations of the community by the different administrations of CEMAC countries. This greatly contributed to the reinforcement of professional aptitudes among youths. These efforts were duly compensated by the African Union which congratulated the sub region on statistical training and this was accompanied by a prize of excellence to ISSEA (*Institut Sous regional de Statistique et d’Economie Appliquée*) as the best school in central Africa concerning statistical training<sup>106</sup>.

It should be noted that Cameroon parliamentarians in synergy with other parliamentarians of the sub region have greatly impacted the evolution of the CEMAC sub region and most especially have brought more light to the pursuance of Cameroon diplomacy in the CEMAC

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<sup>103</sup> The Partnership signed between the Institute of Research and the Commission, cited by Zeh Zeh in his « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 115.

<sup>104</sup> Emergency Plan adopted by the CEMAC Commission to fight against the Ebola Disease.

<sup>105</sup> CEMAC Vision n°4, p. 14.

<sup>106</sup> Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 117.

zone. But this is not enough as we are also tempted to look at Cameroon parmoacy in other multilateral parliaments especially the Pan African Parliament.

## **B. Cameroon diplomacy in the Pan African Parliament**

After the independence of African countries several African in the 1960s, most of them participated in the already existing inter-parliamentary institutions for example the Inter-parliamentary Union. Their participation in this parliamentary institution and later other institutions like the International Association of Parliamentarians of the French Language among others was not really cohesive. Consequently, there was the necessity for the establishment of a similar parliamentary institution in the African continent which was able to regroup Africans<sup>107</sup>.

As a result, parliamentarians from Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Congo, Zaire, Gabon, Mauritania, Cameroon and the Minister of Agriculture for the Mauritius Islands made in Abidjan on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1975 and Adopted the "Abidjan declaration" in reference to the "Lome I convention" which clearly announced the creation of the African Parliamentary Union<sup>108</sup>. Other African states like Burundi, Mali, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Rwanda later joint the parliament. UPA gradually transformed itself into an active organ of African states, with objective of promoting democracy through Parliamentarians, and arriving at certain decisions to resolve African problems.

The UPA was very limited in most of its activities especially given the fact that in was more of a consultative institution. Consequently, there was the need to redefine the parliamentary institution by creating a parliamentary body that was apt enough to realize projects and not limit at the level of propositions. It is from there that the Pan African Parliament was created. This part of the chapter therefore seeks to examine how the Pan African Parliament was established, the contributions of Cameroonians in the evolution and development of the parliament and how Cameroon's participation in the PAP has influence the evolution of Cameroon diplomacy.

### **1-The establishment and structure of the Pan African Parliament**

The Pan African Parliament which is also known as the African Parliament is the relative body of the African Union which held its inaugural session on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

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<sup>107</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 31.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

This parliament is fruit of a long process that started in 1991 with the adoption of the Abuja treaty on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1991. This treaty in its article 14 envisaged the creation of a Pan African Parliament by the year 2000<sup>109</sup>. The Sirte declaration of 1999 also called for formation a Pan African Parliament. It listed the PAP among the organs of the AU and stated, “In order to ensure that the peoples of Africa are fully involved in the economic development and integration of the continent, there shall be established a Pan African Parliament. The composition, functions, powers and organization of the Pan African Parliament shall be defined in a protocol providing thereof”<sup>110</sup>. This was clearly spelt out in the constitutive act of the African Union and the protocol establishing the African Economic Community in relation with the Pan African Parliament.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2000, a protocol establishing the Pan African Parliament was adopted during the OAU submits in Lomé (Togo)<sup>111</sup>. Article 17 of the constitutive act of the African Union envisaged the existence of a Pan African Parliament<sup>112</sup>. Article 22 of the PAP protocol stipulated that the protocol itself can only enter into force after deposit of the instruments of ratification by a simple majority of the member states<sup>113</sup>. Initially, the seat of the PAP was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, but it was later moved to Midrand, Johannesburg in South Africa. The main goal of establishing this parliament was to create a space where people from states of Africa could meet, deliberate and pass some policies on issues affect the entire continent of African continent<sup>114</sup>. Apart from this, some of the objectives of the PAP were also to:

- Cultivate human rights and democracy in Africa and implement the policies and objectives of the African Union.
- Make sure member states adhere to good governance, transparency and accountability.
- Create cooperation among regional economic communities and their members in parliament.

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<sup>109</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 61.

<sup>110</sup> En.m.wikipedia.org, Pan African Parliament, consulted on the 14/07/2022.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 61.

<sup>113</sup>“Pan African Parliament”, taken from a website www.international democracywatch.org, retrieved on 08/04/2022.

<sup>114</sup>Yusuf, Abdulqawi , “The Pan African Parliament”, *The African Union: Legal and institutional framework: A manual on the Pan African Organization*, Brill/Nijhoff, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

-Promote self-reliance and economic recovery so as to lead to a more prosperous future for the people of Africa<sup>115</sup>.

The Parliament is composed of five parliamentarians per member state that has ratified the protocol establishing it. These five members must include at least a woman. These members are selected by their member states and their domestic legislatures. The overall goal of the PAP is to be an institution with full legislative powers whose members are elected through universal suffrage, as stated by the former South African president Jacob Zuma in his opening speech to the first ordinary session of the second legislature of the PAP on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009<sup>116</sup>.

Structurally, the Pan African Parliament is composed of three major sections which are the plenary which is the deliberation section of the parliament, the bureau that is the executive section elected by the plenary, and the secretariat, which is the organizational body of the parliament.

#### **a.The plenary**

This is the decision-making organ of the PAP. It consists of delegates from member states and it is chaired by a president. It is the body which passes resolutions. The PAP has 235 representatives that come from the legislatures of 47 out of the 54 AU states. Each member state sends a delegation of 5 parliamentarians and one of them must be a woman and the composition of the delegation must also take into consideration the political diversity of the parliament of the member state<sup>117</sup>.

#### **b.The bureau**

The bureau is the leadership group of the parliament and consists of a president and four vice presidents. Each member of the bureau represents a different region of Africa. It should be noted that the current bureau of the PAP was not complete after the elections of 2021 which ended in total disagreement and ballots were not probably registered therefore, only an acting president was elected in the person of Bouras Djamel from Algeria, representing the

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<sup>115</sup> En.m.wikipedia.org, Pan African Parliament, consulted on the 14/07/2022.

<sup>116</sup> “ The Pan African Parliament/African Union”, *au.int.*, retrieved on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

<sup>117</sup> “About PAP”, Pan African Parliament, archived from the original on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018, consulted on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022.



region of North Africa<sup>118</sup>. It should be noted that a Cameroonian, Hon Roger Nkodo Dang has held this prestigious post of the president of PAP officially between 2015 and 2020<sup>119</sup>.

### **c. The secretariat**

The secretariat assists in the day to day running of the parliament, undertaking duties such as taking minutes of meetings, organizing elections for the parliament and managing staff. The secretariat consists of a clerk and two deputy clerks, one of whom leads the Legislative Business Department and the other leading the Finance, Administration and Human Resources. The clerks of the parliament are also supported by other staff and functionaries when needed. The current members of the PAP secretariat are; Clerk: Vipya Harawa from Malawi, deputy clerk in charge of Legislative Business: Gali Massa Harou from Chad, deputy clerk in charge of Finance, Administration and Human Resources: Charlotte Marck from Zimbabwe<sup>120</sup>.

There are also 10 permanent committees which were created to help coordinate efforts in dealing with issues from different sectors of life in Africa. These committees are; the committee on rural economy, agriculture, natural resources and environment, which is in charge of assisting the parliament in harmonizing the policies for rural and agricultural development, and promoting the development policy and the implementation of programs of the union relating to natural resources and the environment.

Another committee is that on cooperation, international relations and conflict resolutions, which is in charge of considering the issues relating to the development of an efficient policy in matters of cooperation and international relations of the parliament and the AU. It also considers the conventions and protocols linking the parliament with regional and international institutions and reports to the parliament, carries out examinations on the revision of protocols and treaties of the Union and assists the parliament in its efforts of conflict resolution and prevention.

Other committees of the PAP are the committee of monetary and financial affairs, the committee of trade, customs and immigration matters, committee of transport, industry, Communications Energy, Science and Technology, committee of health, labor and social affairs, committee on education, culture, tourism, and human resources, committee on

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<sup>118</sup> ISSAfrica .org. “*AU Steps in to try and fix the Pan African Parliament*”, Retrieved on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Joshua Osih, Aged 53 and Parliamentarian, Yaounde, 09/09/2021.

<sup>120</sup> En.m.Wikipedia.org, Pan African Parliament, consulted on the 15/07/2022.

gender, family, youths and people with disabilities, committee on justice and human rights, committee on rules, privileges and discipline, among others<sup>121</sup>.

As concerns the legislative powers of the Pan African Parliament, it was considered a very powerless institution in Africa and even qualified as a “toothless bold dog” by some schools of thought across the continent<sup>122</sup>. But this situation changed in 2017. Changes were made that saw the parliament been transformed into a full legislative body representing the African Union. The parliament was granted the ability to draft and pass model laws for its member states to adopt; it receives, considers, and submits opinions on draft legal instruments, treaties and other international agreements. Furthermore, the PAP in accordance with financial rules and regulations set by the African Union also has powers such that they can control their own fund-raising activities through legislative action. But all legislature proposed by the parliament must be submitted to the AU Assembly for its final ratification and approval<sup>123</sup>.

After looking at the process of establishment and the structure of the Pan African Parliament, it is also necessary to look at how the Cameroon parliament has been instrumental in the development of the parliament.

## **2-Contributions of the Cameroon parliament to the development of the parliament**

The parliament of Cameroon through its different parliamentary actors has contributed a lot to the development or evolution of the PAP. In order to better understand this contribution, it will be important to examine some of the activities of the PAP throughout these years. The PAP as earlier mention is an institution consisting of parliamentarians from AU member states who have ratified the protocol of the parliament. Cameroon parliamentarians are also represented in this institution and together with other parliamentarians carry out various activities that have influenced to the development of the PAP. In recent years, the Pan African Parliament has worked so hard to ensure sustainable development across the African continent in several aspects some of which are; ensuring the welfare of youth, promotion of gender equality and the girl child, management of mineral resources and agriculture and food security.

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Fagbayibo, Babatunde, “Toothless Pan African Parliament could have meaningful powers. here’s how”, *The conversation*, retrieved on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Consulted on the 15/07/2022.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

### **a. Ensuring the welfare of youths**

The conference of heads of state of the African Union dedicated the year 2017 to the African youths under the theme “Taking full advantage of the demographic dividend by investing in youths”. In accordance with the laws in place, the Pan African Parliament has the responsibility to implement the decisions of the summit of the AU. Consequently, the PAP puts in several efforts or initiatives to ensure the welfare of youth across Africa. For example during the session of permanent committees in August 2017, the PAP, organized the annual conference of heads of parliaments across Africa and their center of discussion was youth welfare. This was aimed at ensuring that national parliaments should include youth empowerment in their activities while taking into consideration the political atmosphere of their individual states<sup>124</sup>.

Also, the PAP in collaboration with national parliaments organized in Khartoum (Sudan) from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017, which was intended to reinforce the capacity of young parliamentarians on issues of good governance, peace and security which are values promoted by the African Union and also indispensable conditions for economic growth and development<sup>125</sup>.

Apart from this, there is also a youth caucus within the PAP which is a platform put in place to reflect and follow up the implementation of programs earlier initiated to favor youths for example; youth participation in politics, creation of employment opportunities and making available expertise for self-employment and the creation of small and medium size enterprises.

The PAP president Roger Nkodo Dang in 2017 also suggested that for African countries to effectively carry out their activities, they needed to ensure the transfer of technology and stopped depending much only on raw materials. He further insisted that this action alone would limit migrations out of the African continent as several jobs will be created. He also

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<sup>124</sup> An exposé on the role of the Pan African Parliament and other National Parliament in the Implementation of the African Agenda on Sustainable Development, presented by Roger Nkodo Dang, President of the Pan African Parliament on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>125</sup> On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2018, Moussa Faki Mahamat, President of the African Union Commission thanked the Pan African Parliament for Organizing a Conference in Khartoum on Youths in his Speech during the Ceremony of the Installation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislature in Midrand South Africa.

proposed that youths should be implicated in the fight against climate change by financing their projects especially those on recycling and renewable energies<sup>126</sup>.

### **b. The promotion of gender equality and the girl child**

The PAP has also put in many efforts in promoting gender equality and the welfare of the girl child. For example, in October 2017 during the fifth ordinary session of the parliament, the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the conference of women in the Pan African Parliament was held under the theme “The role of parliamentarians in the promotion of international and regional laws related to human rights, particularly those on youths, peace and security, female genital mutilations, in order to fully involve in the demographic dividend”<sup>127</sup>.

This edition of the conference was very special because among those who took part were members of the civil society, influential women, women that have either occupied or were currently occupying posts of responsibility, not forgetting female parliamentarians of national parliaments across Africa. Following the policy of the PAP on female representation where out of the five parliamentarians representing a member state, at least one of them should be a woman, this female parliamentarians were to serve as focal points between their national parliaments and the PAP, by ensuring the resolutions of this conference were adequately implemented<sup>128</sup>.

Apart from ensuring the ratification of legal instruments, the PAP has also been fighting to guarantee the welfare of the woman and the girl child in their day to day activities by ensuring the respect of their fundamental rights especially in their countries of origin. For example; fight against barbaric practices like female circumcision which have been closely followed up and has not only be the plight of the caucus of women affairs but also the committee of health in the parliament.

### **c. The management of mineral resources**

The Pan African Parliament in collaboration with other partners in development has launched a program on the implementation of new developmental approaches on the management of mineral resources which has direct and beneficial effect on aspects like transparency, good governance and the respect of human rights, not forgetting the

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<sup>126</sup> An Exposé on ..., November 2017.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>128</sup> An Exposé on ..., November 2017.

involvement of the local population in the management of the ecosystem and their benefits from the development of infrastructure among others.

This interesting program was launched in South Africa in May 2017 and it was later developed in a conference at a continental level which was organized by the PAP in Yaoundé in August 2017. Those present during the conference were developmental partners, representatives of regional and national parliaments, and regional economic communities. Yaoundé was therefore the ideal environment for discussions between parliamentarians and other parties involved. It was also realized that a successful implementation of this project was the best way to guarantee principles of democracy, peace and security across the continent and a powerful method of fighting against the recruitment of child soldiers by terrorist groups. The PAP also decided to hold a similar conference in the economic regions of North Africa, East, South and West Africa<sup>129</sup>.

#### **d. Agriculture and food security**

Among the major partners of the Pan African Parliament are specialized agencies of the UN such as the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). After establishing a partnership with the PAP in the domain of agriculture and food provision, FAO has greatly contributed considerably in the activities of the parliament across the continent especially in achieving its objectives in areas like; an increase in productivity, sharing best agricultural techniques, and most especially making Africans best elevators and farmers<sup>130</sup>.

These among others are the activities of the Pan African parliament which were realized with the help of Parliamentarians from different countries in Africa including Cameroon. For example, Roger Nkodo Dang among others. This clearly shows the contribution of Cameroon to the development and evolution of the Pan African Parliament.

### **3-The influence of Cameroon's presence in the P.A.P. in the evolution of Cameroon's diplomacy**

The presence and participation of Cameroon delegations in the Pan African Parliament has in one way or the other influenced the designation and progress of Cameroon's diplomacy. Cameroon parliamentarians as a result of their interaction with other parliament both within and beyond the African continent automatically enjoy them to benefit from new

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<sup>129</sup> An Exposé on ... November 2017.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

continental and global issues such as sustainable development, democracy, good governance and transparency, and helped to trace Cameroon's part in accompanying other African countries in attaining the African Union 2063 Agenda or development program, among others.

Preoccupied with the evolution of the socio-political atmosphere in many African countries which have jeopardized the efforts put in place to fight against HIV/AIDS, considering the fact that many do not have access to drugs, quality tests, administration of vaccines, and the fact that investment and mobilization of financial resources at the national level for the financing of the health sectors have not been realistic, especially in the objectives of the engagement taken during the Abuja declaration of 2001 which stipulated that 15 percent of the national budget should be allocated to the sector;

Considering the fact that African leaders had decided to put up a strong fight so as to eliminate HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in Africa by 2030 with well-defined objectives and methods, by stressing the financial and political engagement of the state and guaranteeing equal access to medical services for vulnerable populations and supervising mechanisms to fight against these diseases;

By also considering the global objective of the United Nations to completely wipe out the transfer of AIDS from mother to child during birth and ensuring the identification and treatment of children with HIV, the political declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted in 2016 by the general assembly of the UN in view of accelerating towards the complete eradication of the disease by 2030 in line with the sustainable development goals, especial the SDG 3 which is based on good health and well-being<sup>131</sup>;

The Pan African parliament resolved to promote the attainment or realization of the objectives of the Abuja declaration and sustainable investments in the health sector so as to realize the catalytic framework of the AU. To promote the sustainable development goals (SDG) 2, 3, 5, 9 and 17 and the 2063 AU Agenda, forgetting the rapid treatment and eradication of the transmission of the HIV from mother to child. The parliament also resolved that national parliaments in Africa will be encourage to ratify conventions and treaties related to human rights and health, including the Maputo protocol.

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<sup>131</sup> Resolution n°PAP.4/PLN/RES/01/MAY.18 on "The role of parliamentarians on the realization of the rights on health and the attainment of health objectives in Africa", Midrand, 17/05/2018.

These and many other articles of the resolution influenced member states of the AU with Cameroon inclusive to review their approach towards fighting the HIV/AIDS. Most of them were able to adopt mechanisms efficient control and ensuring that government closely collaborated with their parliaments, and the civil society also collaborating with parliaments in fighting against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria<sup>132</sup>.

The Pan African Parliament has also been an eye opener to many African states concerning the issue of illegal migration of youths out of the continent to seek greener pastures. The parliament through its president Roger Nkodo Dang tried to explain the links between the phenomenon of migration and developmental policies. He clearly stated that states in Africa should put in place participative developmental policies and adopt social justice and equality for all. This according to him would bring out increase revenue and prevent African youths from massively leaving the continent. This action motivated African states including Cameroon to adopt foreign policies directed towards regional cooperation in ensuring that migrations across the Mediterranean were dignified and carried out through appropriate methods<sup>133</sup>. It should be noted that the state of Cameroon throughout the years has been fighting against illegal migration in all its forms.

Also as a result of her participation in the PAP, Cameroon has been constantly reminded and much active in the follow up of the “2063 Agenda of African Union”<sup>134</sup>. Consequently, developmental policies in Cameroon have been designed in reflection to these 2063 Agenda. It should be noted that the Agenda serves as a point of reference for Cameroon and other African nations to elaborate and implement their policies on sustainable development and the agenda is also in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development goals of the UN<sup>135</sup>.

From the above elaborations, Cameroon has actively been involved the Pan African Parliament since its establishment in 2004 and has worked enormous for the evolution of this parliament through its representative within the parliament and the activities of the parliament has also influenced the evolution of Cameroon foreign policy throughout the years. But note should be taken that apart from the PAP, Cameroon has also pursued its parlomacy in other

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<sup>132</sup>. Resolution n°PAP.4/PLN/RES/01/MAY.18 on “The role of parliamentarians on the realization of the rights on health and the attainment of health objectives in Africa”, Midrand, 17/05/2018.

<sup>133</sup> An Exposé on ..., 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>134</sup> The 2063 African Union Agenda is a group of 7 aspirations which places Sustainable Development at the Center of Activities across the African Continent. Some of these Aspects are; Good Governance, Peace and Security, Cultural Identity, the Inclusion of the Less Privileged and the Vulnerable in the Process of Development.

<sup>135</sup> An Exposé on ..., 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

multilateral parliamentary institutions out of the continent one of which is the Inter-parliamentary Union.

### **C. Cameroon and the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

The Inter-parliamentary Union is a forum of mutual understanding and multilateral parolomacy between the legislators of political systems across the world. It reunites representatives from all countries across the world and their different political tendencies. The IPU was created in 1889 and happened to be the very first forum of multilateral political negotiations with the intension of promoting peace and security, among others<sup>136</sup>. The parliamentary organization through representatives from different countries including Cameroon has carried out activities that have in one way or the other impacted the international relations and the life of the world's population. The activities of Cameroon within the IPU are examined below.

#### **1-The structure of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

As aforementioned, the IPU is an international organization created in 1889 by Frédéric Passy of France and William Randal Cremer of the United Kingdom. It reunites all national parliaments and regional parliamentary associations around the world<sup>137</sup>. Membership into the all parliaments around the world which are constituted in conformity with the laws of a sovereign state whose population they represent and whose territory they function might have requested affiliation to the IPU and the decision of admission is confirmed by the governing council. Regional parliaments maybe admitted into the parliament as associate members. The headquarters of the IPU is found in Geneva (Switzerland)<sup>138</sup>.

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<sup>136</sup>Nebeu, « *La diplomatie parlementaire Camerounaise...* », p.85.

<sup>137</sup> [Interparliamentary union.en.m.wikipedia.org](http://Interparliamentary%20union.en.m.wikipedia.org).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*



**Plate 10: The IPU Building in Geneva in 2010**

**Source:** <http://www.ipu.org.>, consulted on 24/07/2022

Upon its creation, the IPU had several objectives to pursue around the globe and in order to effectively carry out its activities to attain these objectives, the organization is structured into organs such as the assembly, the governing council, executive committee and the secretariat as elaborated below.

**a. The assembly**

The assembly of the IPU is a biannual meeting composed of parliamentarians designated as delegates by member states. It is assisted in its works by standing committees, whose number and term of reference are determined by the governing council. Standing committees prepare reports and draft resolutions for the assembly. No one delegate in the assembly is allowed to region more than ten votes during parliamentary deliberations in the Assembly<sup>139</sup>.

**b. The governing council**

The Governing Council normally holds two sessions a year. It is composed of three representatives from each member state. The term of office of members last from one assembly to the next and all members of the Governing Council must be sitting members of the parliament. The council elects the president of the IPU for a period of three years. It also

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<sup>139</sup> <http://www.ipu.org.>, consulted on 24/07/2022.

elects the members of the members of the executive committee and appoints a secretary general for the IPU<sup>140</sup>.

### **c. The executive committee**

The executive committee is composed of the president of the IPU, 15 members belonging to different parliaments who are elected by the governing council and at least 12 of them do come from the governing council itself and the president of the coordinating committee of the meeting of women parliamentarians. The 15 elected seats are assigned to the geopolitical groups. Only parliamentarians from states where women have both the right to vote and the right of standing for elections are eligible for the executive committee. The executive committee is the administrative organ of the IPU. In 2017, Gabriela Cuevas Barron from Mexico was elected as the president of the executive committee of the IPU<sup>141</sup>.

### **d. The secretariat**

The secretariat of the IPU constitutes the totality of the staff of the organization which is under the direction of a Secretary General. The secretaries general of the IPU have often served as consultative bodies of the Parliamentary institution. The present secretary general is Martin Chungong from Cameroon first elected in 2014<sup>142</sup>. These organs or structure have ensured the effective function or operation of the IPU through its existence.

## **2-The role of Cameroon in the IPU**

Cameroon has been very influential in the IPU through its representatives who can either be parliamentary or non-parliamentary actors. In this case, our analysis may focus mostly on the activities of these actors especially Martin Chungong of Cameroonian nationality who is the executive Secretary General of the IPU since 2014<sup>143</sup>. To understand the role of Cameroon in the IPU, then it will be necessary to examine the activities of the IPU around the world. It should be noted that IPU activities are centered on aspects like; sustainable development, promoting human rights, international peace and security, ensuring the participation of women in politics and promoting a representative democracy<sup>144</sup>.

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> "Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union" (PDF), retrieved on 16/02/21.

<sup>142</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Secretary General", Retrieved on 25/08/2020.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.ipu.org>, consulted on the 23/07/22.

<sup>144</sup> [archives.ipu.org](http://archives.ipu.org), consulted on the 23/07/22.

The IPU has been strong and efficient in being critical to democracy. The parliamentary organization has worked so hard to ensure that national parliaments are effective in fulfilling their government oversight and legislative roles especially in guaranteeing rights and liberties and in securing peace and development. For instance, while on invitation by the speaker of the parliament of Benin Hon Houngbédji, Martin Chungong commended Benin's vibrant democracy and called upon the country's parliamentarians to build a stronger and more effective parliament while working in partnership with the executive. According to him, "freedom of expression, alternation power, good governance, greater political representation of women, the smooth functioning of institutions in accordance with the rule of law, accountable and a dynamic civil society are essential for democracy to take roots and flourish. These are finding fertile grounds in Benin through the efforts of political actors driven by a sense of responsibility and working for the common good. This is a secret to the vitality of democracy in Benin and the success of the recent electoral consultation is a good example"<sup>145</sup>. This speech alone is a morale booster on democracy not just to Benin alone but to all of Africa and the world at large. It also went a long way to strengthen democracy in the country.

As far as sustainable development is concerned, parliaments have played a critical role in social and economic development. The IPU has supported parliaments on key international development goals, by making development aids more effective and also strengthening the action of parliament on climate change. From the 10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017, a High-Level Political Forum was organized in New York on sustainable development and this saw the participation of MPs from over 36 different parliaments across the globe<sup>146</sup>. This forum is a platform where government, parliaments and other stake holders can monitor progress on the SDGs. In his address during the forum, the IPU secretary general Mr Chungong Martin stated that what is needed most urgently to eradicate poverty is a proactive effort at redistribution of wealth and power. According to him, this could only happen when parliaments and indeed all other decision making centers at national and global levels represent more effectively all people in our societies including the poor and the marginalized<sup>147</sup>. During the forum, the IPU organized side event for parliamentarians attaining the HLPEF, whose main aim was to review parliamentary action on the SDGs and exchange experiences on oversight practices and

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<sup>145</sup>Speech presented by Martin Chungong, secretary general of the IPU on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 during his visit to the Beninese parliament, retrieved from [archives.ipu.org](http://archives.ipu.org), consulted on the 23/07/22.

<sup>146</sup> [archives.ipu.org](http://archives.ipu.org).

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

legislation. The discussions revealed growing awareness of the SDGs in parliaments worldwide.

The IPU has also been active in the promotion of international peace and security. The institution has given priority to preventing and eliminating conflicts through political dialogue. It has often responded to crises which affect world or regional security and monitors certain conflict situations. On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017, The Yemeni Vice prime minister and minister of foreign affairs Abdel Malik Al-Mikhlaifi visited the headquarters of the IPU to discuss the conflict situation in Yemen, especially its effect on the vulnerable population. He was received by the IPU Secretary General Mr Chungong Martin. The SG briefed him on the organization's efforts to mobilize more resources for humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people. He equally said that the organization was also working to promote dialogue within the Yemeni parliament to help it forge a unified response to the challenges facing Yemen. Mr Al-Mikhlaifi appreciated the efforts of some parliaments in pressuring their governments to increase humanitarian assistance in Yemen. He further pledged his government's commitment to allowing humanitarian access to all Yemenis irrespective of their political allegiance<sup>148</sup>.

The IPU has also been working tirelessly in ensuring that women who are have of the world's population should be fully involved in politics. This is part of its democratic agenda where all voices are supposed to be heard. Its unique research and data on women's political participation has been a widely used barometer on progress. For instance when the IPU secretary general addressed the Beninese parliament in 2016 during his visit, he insisted in his speech that all efforts should be put in to ensure that the women representation in the parliament which was presently at 7% should be drastically improved upon in the nearest future. In addition to this, the IPU also organized capacity building activities in 2017 Nairobi (Kenya) on gender participation in parliamentary activities<sup>149</sup>.

### **3-The impact of the IPU in Cameroon foreign affairs**

The participation of Cameroon in the IPU has influenced the nation's foreign affairs in different ways. Some of the duties of delegates to the IPU is to submit the resolutions of the IPU within their respective parliaments in the most appropriate form, to communicate them to the government, stimulate their implementation and inform the IPU secretariat as often and

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<sup>148</sup> archives.ipu.org.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

fully as possible as to the steps taken and the results obtained. This is done through their annual reports<sup>150</sup>.

In this regards; the delegates from Cameroon have mostly center their activities on the objectives of the IPU such as the promotion of good governance, maintenance of peace and security, pursuing the SDGs through poverty alleviation activities, the promotion of political activities for women, action on climate change among others. Resolutions taken by the IPU on these aspects have been felt in several sectors in Cameroon after their submission to the government by Cameroon delegates and a strict follow up. These aspects have already been elaborated in previous parts above.

Apart from this, the IPU has also impacted the expertise of Cameroon parliamentary and non-parliamentary actors that has been felt around the world through these years. In April 1996 during the Istanbul general assembly of the IPU in Turkey, the Cameroon national Michel Meva'a M'Eboutou, presented an elaborate report to the general assembly which was centered on assistance provided for individual members in respect of allowances, equipment and staff. This report was a summery on the answers to mini-questionnaires on the assistance provided for individual members in connection with their parliamentary duties<sup>151</sup>. Involving in such vital and sensitive reports only demonstrated the level of expertise possessed by this senior Cameroonian parliamentary actor at the IPU.

Also, Cameroon was once again favored in 2014 when a well experience Cameroonian parliamentary functionary Martin was elected as the executive secretary of the IPU. He is the first non-European and only African to have ever occupied this prestigious position in the parliamentary organization. This was a great diplomatic success for Cameroon. He took office on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014<sup>152</sup>. Due to his outstanding performance the organization renewed their confidence by re-electing him in Dhaka for a second during the IPU general assembly that took place in 2017<sup>153</sup>.

Conclusively from the above, the parlomacy of Cameroon within the Inter-Parliamentary Union has revealed to us that parliament is capable of succeeding in international affairs especially in areas where regular or traditional diplomatic channels

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<sup>150</sup> [Interparliamentaryunion.en.m.wikipedia.org](http://Interparliamentaryunion.en.m.wikipedia.org).

<sup>151</sup> Report presented by Mr Seppe Tiitinen, on the Role of Parliament in the conduct of Foreign Affairs, Finland, September 1996, pp.72-83.

<sup>152</sup> Jeune Afrique(12 December 2014), « Cameroun : Martin Chungong, L'apôtre du parlements du monde », retrieved 24/08/2018.

<sup>153</sup> Xinhua(5 April 2017) "Martin Chungong, re-elected as IPU secretary general", retrieved on 24/08/2018.

couldn't succeed. This is because Cameroon representatives within the IPU were able to create contacts and interact with parliamentarians from other countries. This favored the sharing of experiences in some in bringing lasting solutions to some problems faced by the various member states. Through these contacts Cameroon equally benefitted from experience that they came back to help their population in the country. Generally, the participation Cameroon in the IPU has only strengthened the influence of the nation at the international stage.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF THE PLACE OF THE CAMEROON PARLIAMENT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

This research work has revealed the activities of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs in the previous chapters of the work. But it is very pertinent to do a general retrospection of Cameroon parliamentary activities in foreign affairs by understanding how this implication of Cameroon has contributed in the evolution of the state and see whether the implication was with any hitches while striving to ensure a better involvement of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs.

In other to do this, the chapter is split into three parts where we will examine the impact created by the involvement of Cameroon in foreign affairs, then the constraints or difficulties faced by Cameroon as a result of her involvement in parlomacy, then were end the chapter by proposing perspectives that can maybe ensure a real involvement of Cameroon in parlomacy.

#### **A-Impact of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs**

The participation of the parliament in foreign affairs has created impact in several domains. It has made Cameroon visible at the international scene in several aspects. It is therefore pertinent to evaluate on how the participation of the Cameroon parliament has impacted international relations through its effective role whether at home or abroad. This will be evaluated through aspects like the reinforcement of the diplomacy of presence, the affirmation of Cameroon's position at the international stage and the impact in national policy formation.

#### **1-Reinforcement of the diplomacy of presence or effectiveness**

The involvement of the Cameroon in foreign affairs is evaluated through its effective participation in bilateral and multilateral parliamentary activities around the globe. While taking part in parliamentary deliberations and concluding resolutions, the effectiveness of in foreign parliament is felt in several aspects among which we have the promotion of democracy and human right, regulation of foreign debts, regional integration, among others.

### **a. The promotion of democracy and human rights**

Before 1990, the concepts of democracy and human rights were far-fetched in Cameroon in particular and Africa in general. But in 1990, there appeared a powerful speech of Baule presented by the French president Françoise Mitterrand where French aid to Africa was determined by the application of democracy. This brought a revolutionary change across the continent and Cameroon as an active member of the then African Parliamentary Union put in a lot of efforts to ensure the promotion of democracy throughout the continent<sup>1</sup>.

After a successful organization of multi-party legislative elections in 1992, Cameroon had proven to Africa that the concept of democracy could possibly succeed in the continent. This made Cameroon a reference point in parliamentary activities geared towards consolidating democracy. For example, the Cameroon delegation to the APU in Tunisia in October 1993 performed brilliantly by drilling parliamentarians on how to apply the principle of democracy especially during elections<sup>2</sup>. The Cameroon parliamentary delegation made the rest of Africa to understand that effective democracy could only be implementing with occurrence of courageous reforms in their respective countries, through the revision of their political systems. Their example was taken from the amendment of the standing orders of the Cameroon National Assembly before the legislative elections. They also called on all African countries to follow this good example. The APU insisted that states should be fully involved in the implementation of democracy so as to ensure a peaceful and stable Africa.

### **b. On the situation of foreign debts**

Cameroon parliamentarians had earlier realized that a better means of ameliorating the conditions of life for many African countries was by looking for adequate solutions to the heavy foreign debts of these countries. Cameroonian parliamentarians insisted on aspects like the increase of financial aids from industrialized nations to African countries and a reduction of the interest rate of these debts from 5% to 10% and a review of the rates of reimbursing these debts. Unfortunately, these propositions were not really considered and in reaction, the Cameroon delegation further proposed that African nations should do a proper management of their resources and depend less on foreign aid which are sources of indebtedness. Cameroon equally played a significant role during the 22<sup>nd</sup> ordinary session of the APU held in 1999 Luanda (Angola). This conference was mainly aimed at looking for solutions to

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<sup>1</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



problems faced by African countries. Consequently the initiative on Heavily Indebted Poor Countries was adopted. Cameroon on its part wrote a letter to the institutions of Bretton Wood to be voted as a HIPC<sup>3</sup>.

Apart from the above aspects, the parliament of Cameroon has also influenced the educational evolution of several African countries through its activities in the APU congress held in Tunis in 1993, Parliamentarians from the continent including Cameroon decided to examine the situation of illiteracy in Africa and it was realized that the rate of education was very low. It was resolved that all efforts will be put in to ensure an increase the rate of education across the continent. To realize this, measures were taken to ensure free education across Africa. Cameroon took the lead in this by encouraging that basic or elementary education made free in most African countries<sup>4</sup>.

### **c. The promotion of regional integration**

The involvement of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs has also influenced the promotion of regional integration especially within the CEMAC sub region. This is as a result of their effective participation in the CEMAC parliament. This integration is noticeable in domains like free movement of goods and persons, the harmonization of educational and health policies among others.

One of the major challenges of Cameroon parliamentarians within the CEMAC parliament was to prioritize the free movement of persons and goods. It is in the pursuits of this objective that they accompany the CEMAC commission in its activities of regional integration. In collaboration with other representatives in the parliament, the Cameroon delegation sensitized the population and political actors on the importance of regional integration and the consequence was the immediate reaction of the executive within the CEMAC zone. In 2013, a resolution was passed by the conference of the heads of state for CEMAC on the free movement of persons with passports with the CEMAC zone without any visa consideration<sup>5</sup>. This giant step by CEMAC leaders was thanks to the positive pressure mounted on them by the CEMAC parliament spearheaded by delegates of the Cameroon bloc.

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<sup>3</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> Law n°01/13-CEMAC-070 U-CCE of 25/06/2013, on the Prescription of the Cancellation of Visas for Persons Circulating with the CEMAC zone.

Cameroon parliamentarians under the canopy of the CEMAC parliament have also encouraged the adoption of common policies in the domain of health, especially the fight against diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Ebola. Parliamentarians have promoted the organization of free tests, sensitization campaigns, free distribution of condoms and also putting efforts to ensure that people infected with AIDS are well taken care of. Generally, parliamentarians have unanimously worked together to ensure the adoption of common health policies within CEMAC.

## **2-The affirmation of Cameroon sovereignty at the international level**

Shortly after independence and reunification, the main objective of Cameroon foreign policy was to ensure the preservation or affirmation of her independence and sovereignty at the international scene and all her external activities were tilted towards this direction. Any engagements of diplomatic relations with nations around the world were based on the respect of Cameroon as an independent and sovereign power. This ideology was projected by three principles which are non-intervention, non-alignment and international cooperation.

According to Meyolo, “non-intervention in the internal affairs of Cameroon by other states is considered sacrosanct”<sup>6</sup>. That is to say it cannot be negotiated. This non-intervention policy was initiated by President Ahmadou Ahidjo who clearly said;

*Précisons-le tout de suite les nations du monde avec lesquelles nous souhaitons entrer en relations doivent nous considérer en partenaire égale et respecter notre souveraineté...Le Cameroun est ouvert à tout pays qui entend nouer des relations avec lui sur la base de l'égalité, de la réciprocité, du respect mutuel des souverainetés*<sup>7</sup>

This position was also adopted by President Paul Biya who reiterated that “we insist particularly on the respect of the sovereignty of states”<sup>8</sup>.

From the above, it should be noted that Cameroon intervention in foreign affairs is aimed at maintain this policy for the longest possible time and parliamentary activities in foreign affairs have worked successfully in affirming Cameroon’s sovereignty especially in inter-parliamentary associations. In most of their speeches, Cameroon parliamentary actors have joint hands with the state authorities to remind their partners to stay out of the internal affairs of Cameroon. In order to ensure the success of this principle, the Cameroon state also decided to join the Non Align Movement.

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<sup>6</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>A. Ahidjo, *Contributions à la construction nationale*, Paris Présence Africaine, 1964, pp. 47-49.

<sup>8</sup>P. Biya, *Pour le libéralisme communautaire*, Lausanne, Pierre-Marcel Favre, 1987, p. 20.

The Non Align Movement was adopted in 1955 Afro-Asian countries during the Bandung conference in Indonesia. But Cameroon joined the movement shortly after her independence in 1960<sup>9</sup>. According to Mouelle Kombi, “it is a particular behavioral pattern adopted by a state in its activities at the international stage”<sup>10</sup>. According to President Paul Biya, the non-align movement is neither to stop any state from interacting with Cameroon nor to block Cameroon from interacting with other states but simple a strategy prevent Cameroon from engaging into international accords that may block her from interacting with other states at the internal level<sup>11</sup>. This policy has pushed the Cameroon parliament to diversify its activities at the international level by engaging into bilateral and multilateral parlomacy without any limitations or constraints. This action contributes enormously in building the foreign policy of Cameroon.

One cannot talk of the international activities of a nation without taking about international cooperation. This cooperation operates in two dimensions that are bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation. Bilateral cooperation is a situation where a state maintains relations with another state while multilateral cooperation is the involvement of states in international organizations<sup>12</sup>. This cooperation helps to build the developmental strategies of Cameroon within the country.

In the context of this research work, international cooperation can be observed in two ways which are; bilateral parlomacy which is the collaboration of the Cameroon Parliament and other national parliaments across the world for example the relations between the Cameroon National assembly and the National Assembly of Chad. The second one is multilateral parlomacy which is the participation of the Cameroon parliament in inter-parliamentary institutions across the world such as the CEMAC parliament, Pan African Parliament among others<sup>13</sup>.

Though international cooperation, Cameroon has been able to sell it cultural values, and maintained a cordial relationship with other state. Cameroon parlomacy where in bilateral or multilateral forms have been able to exploit diplomatic channels where regular diplomatic actors were limited. But this is not without the help of policies designed by the head of state.

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<sup>9</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 64.

<sup>10</sup>Mouelle Kombi, *La politique étrangère...*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>11</sup>Biya, *Pour le liberalim...*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Jane Takang, aged 76, retired civil servant and adviser at the prime minister's office, Yoaunde, 07/02/22.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Joshua Osih, aged 53, member of the committee of foreign affairs of the national assemble, Yaounde, 09/09/21.

Most importantly, the sovereignty of Cameroon has been respected with the occupation of strategic positions by Cameroon parliamentary and non-parliamentary actors in foreign parliaments for example, Martin Chungong is the Secretary General of the IPU since 2014, while Roger Nkodo Dang was elected President of the PAP in 2015, and Hilarion Etong has been the president of the CEMAC Parliament Since 2019<sup>14</sup>.

### **3-The influence of the national policy**

The participation of the Cameroon parliament has also influenced the evolution of the national policy of the country in several aspects. The domestic policies of a state in some cases are reflected on what happens at the international level. Beneficial domestic policies may only occur when states have a good adoption and application of their foreign policies<sup>15</sup>. The parliament in this regard has consistently been an actor in international relations in recent years and its activities have also greatly had an influence in the designation and evolution of the national policies.

AS afore mentioned the challenges of education were evoked in 1993<sup>16</sup> during a conference of the APU held in Tunis. During this conference, it was resolved that much efforts will be put in to reduce the high rate of illiteracy in most parts of Africa. Cameroon was not exempted from this because from early 2000s, primary education was completely declared free of charge in Cameroon and apart from this; several schools were opened in suburbs to ensure that all children in the country had access to education. There has also been a constant increase in the training and recruitment of teachers to boost the primary education sector in Cameroon<sup>17</sup>. The government has also authorized the opening of schools by missionary bodies and private individuals and has often carried out pedagogic inspections in these schools to ensure quality education of the children<sup>18</sup>.

Apart from education, efforts were also made to emancipate women and youth in the Africa society. In 1999, a resolution was adopted by the APU on gender equality and the representation of women in major decision making institutions across the African continent. Cameroon was so much in favor of this resolution that immediate reaction was seen in the rapid increase of the number of women representatives in the Cameroon parliament. Today,

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<sup>14</sup>Interview with Joshua Osih, Aged 53, Member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the National Assemblée, Yaounde, 09/09/21.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with David Wallang Akwo, Aged 68, Former Senator, Yaounde 22/08/21.

<sup>16</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 57.

<sup>17</sup>Interview with Lucy Kome, Aged 65, Retired Teacher, Yaounde, 15/10/21.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

the Cameroon parliament can boast of approximately 36% of women representatives both at the senate and the national assembly<sup>19</sup>.

Apart from this, several other efforts have been made to ensure better conditions of life for women and the girl child. The appointment of women into ministerial and other senior government positions, the introduction of gender studies into the school curriculum, fighting against the circumcision of female children and promoting the education of the girl child especially in the northern part of Cameroon and of course the celebration of the international day of the woman where Cameroon remains one of the few countries around the world where women day celebrations are carried out with grandeur<sup>20</sup>. In 2011, two gallant women (Edith Kahbang Walla and Dang Esther) contested as candidates in the presidential elections with Edith Kahbang Walla being among the first five positions while representing the Cameroon People's Party<sup>21</sup>.

The AU declared the year 2017 as the year of the youth and to accompany the AU commission, the PAP enumerated several activities that African can carry out in order to discourage youths from massively migrating out of the country in search of greener pastures for example, creating job opportunities or self-employment activities<sup>22</sup>.

In relation to this, several initiatives on youth empowerment have been intensified across the country. Some of them are the sponsorship of agricultural projects, PAJE U and by the ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education<sup>23</sup>.

From the above analysis, one can really be marveled with the impact created by the parliament of Cameroon in its efforts to participate in foreign affairs by reinforcing Cameroon's effective presence at the international stage, battling to maintain Cameroon's sovereignty and influencing the evolution of the national policy but despite all of this brilliant result, it should be noted that the implication of the Cameroon parliament in international affairs is marked with some constraints as seen below.

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<sup>19</sup>Meyolo, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire... », p. 57.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with Fabiola Akwo, Aged 62, Politician, Yaounde, 07/02/2022.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Patrick Nchia Akwo, aged 55, Politician and PLEG, Yaounde, 24/03/22.

<sup>22</sup> An Exposé on ..., 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Ivo Asafor Ndikum, Aged about 35, Youth Leader and Animator, in MINJEC, Yaounde, 20/06/22.

## **B-The constraints of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs**

Given the fact that there is no intense activity without any challenges, the Cameroon parliament in its pursuance of parplomacy has also been facing some constraints. This part of the chapter is therefore to carefully examine some of the difficulties that have been faced by the parliament which have actually influenced the activities the parliament in parplomacy. Some of these difficulties are; Limitations in legislative powers, absence of elections in the process of selecting parliamentary delegations and deficit in the technical domain of the parliament.

### **1-Limitations in legislative Powers by Parliamentarians**

In a purely democratic political system, three arms can be identified that is the executive, the judiciary and the legislative arm of government. These are the three arms of the state that exercise powers of governance. This classical phenomenon has been respected in the constitution of Cameroon<sup>24</sup> and even in the various parliamentary institutions in which Cameroon takes part<sup>25</sup>. Even with the CEMAC Parliament, its convention clearly states that “the parliament is in charge of the democratic control of specialized organs or institutions of CEMAC. It participates in the decision-making process of the community under conditions laid down by the CEMAC convention”<sup>26</sup>. But when it comes to the system of the separation of powers, the parliament in reality may hardly exercise the legal powers destined to the institution.

Etymologically, legislate emanates from a Greek word *legifer* which means the capacity to make laws. In this regard, the process of making and promulgating laws and other legal text which are normal for a parliament of any state<sup>27</sup>. In the process of the separation of powers, it is the exclusive duty of the legislative organ to make laws that is by elaborating and prescribing general regulations of the state especially between the state authorities and citizens. From this explanation, it is clear that a parliament is an institution charged with the

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<sup>24</sup> Article 4 of the Cameroon constitution, revised in 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Here reference is made to the CEMAC parliament, the Pan African Parliament and the Inter-parliamentary Union. For example; Article 5 of the CEMAC convention previews a commission, court of justice and a parliament.

<sup>26</sup> Article 14 of the convention of the CEMAC parliament.

<sup>27</sup> Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire ... », p. 126.

duty to design laws that will ensure the wellbeing of the local population which happens to be its electorate<sup>28</sup>.

Despite all of these, Cameroon parliamentarians as legislators do not fully exercise their powers whether at the national or multilateral parliaments. They hardly legislate on laws within these parliaments. This was even the case of the Pan African Parliament till 2017 which mostly played an observant role without any legislative powers on the activities of the AU<sup>29</sup>. The incapability of the parliament or parliamentarian to exercise full legislative powers poses a problem in the smooth implementation of resolutions for example the CEMAC Parliament cannot fully implement her policies of regional integration. This explains why at times parliamentarians often have much information about laws but which cannot be put into practice. Consequently, instead of preserving the interest of the electorate which happens to be the primordial reason of their elections, parliamentarian have resulted to being at the service of the executive at the level of the country and at the mercy of the CEMAC or AU commissions at the sub regional and continental levels respectively.

According to Alioum Fadil<sup>30</sup>, it is very complicated to talk about a parliament which is autonomous in its decisions especially in the case of Africa in general and CEMAC in particular. This is because financial partners will always interfere and influence the decisions of the parliamentarians in the financing of projects. With all of these, the parliament is forced to submit to the propositions of the executive and has been reduced to a transitional institution where the executive present laws to be observed with very limited or no time for examination or debate on them. This is so because parliamentarians cannot legislate on laws which they are made to obey by the executive. Having a non-legislative parliament is highly detrimental to the activities of parliamentarians where at home or at the international scene and it gives more or double powers to the executive which is that of proposing and adopting laws<sup>31</sup>. According to Caroline Sagesser cited by ZEH ZEH, “it is not good that the person who makes laws should also execute them”<sup>32</sup>. In this regard, it is recommendable that the executive to grant prerogatives to parliamentarians to make laws that satisfy the needs of the

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Richard Wallang Eboa, Aged 52 and MP Menchum South Constituency, Yaounde, 25/08/2021.

<sup>29</sup>Fagbayibo, Babatunde, “Toothless Pan African Parliament could have meaningful powers. Here’s how”, *The Conversation*, retrieved on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

<sup>30</sup> Alioum Fadil is a Member of the Cameroon Parliamentary Group in the CEMAC Parliament and is cited by Zeh Zeh in his Master’s Thesis « La Diplomatie Parlementaire ... », p. 126.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Fidelis Nji Muziah, aged 71, Former MP of Menchum North Constituency and Questor at the National Assembly (2007-2013), Yaounde, 22/08/21.

<sup>32</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La Diplomatie Parlementaire ... », p. 127.

population they are elected to represent. For example within the CEMAC parliament, parliamentarians are sometimes influenced by powers of the commission to vote certain bills without seeking for their opinion. This is why some parliamentarians think that a parliament that cannot legislate fully can always push parliamentarians to take decisions out of their will and in most cases will fail to take decisions that truly represent the will of their electorate<sup>33</sup>.

Another factor that has killed the legislative powers of parliamentarians in Cameroon both in domestic and foreign policies is the existence of the presidential system of administration. Shortly after independence and reunification, the former president of the republic Ahmadou Ahidjo put in place a one party system by creating a single party known as the CNU in September 1966. This made the state and the party inseparable especially in the designation of policies of governance<sup>34</sup>. Far from the constitution of the nation, policies were dictated by the party and consequently it is through this system that the president of the republic has made himself a demi-god in state activities<sup>35</sup>. As head of state and party chairperson, he appoints ministers and also designate candidates to run for legislative elections. Consequently, it is the will of the president for many parliamentarians to find themselves in the legislative house whether the senate or the national assembly.

Given the fact that the constitution of Cameroon also gives the president powers to appoint 30 percent of Senators in Cameroon<sup>36</sup>, this has made some parliamentarians to permanently remain indebted to the president and this has drastically reduced their legislative powers. Pressure and political sanctions from the party at times serve as a destroying sword to deputies and kills them from practicing their legislative activities. Trapped in this situation, parliamentarians are subjected to obeying the executive without very little or no intension of going against their decisions and this has directly weakened the influence of the parliament in foreign affairs. This is because some pertinent articles of the 1996 Cameroon constitution are more of a formality than practical.

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<sup>33</sup>Zeh Zeh, « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire...* », p.127.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with George Buh Ngum, Aged 40, Teacher in Angel Michael Bilingual College Essos, Yaounde, 13/08/2021.

<sup>35</sup>Ndinda Ndinda, *Député de la brousse : Regards sur les faiblesses du système parlementaire Camerounaise*, Paris, Harmattan, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Article 20 sub 2 of the Cameroon Constitution, revised in 2008.



## 2- The absence of elections in the process of selecting parliamentary delegations

Hermann Bahoken Bekona defines an election as a system practiced in democracies which is aimed at choosing a person or group of people or even a political party in an official process with the of defending the general or collective interest of the electorate (the population)<sup>37</sup>. In this situation, we can say that parliamentary elections are held in order to give the local population the opportunity to choose persons who can represent their collective interest both at the national and international level. But this ideology in most cases has often contracted the reality of things in a situation where you find elected parliamentarians and public officials who exercise sovereign power.

In a country, citizens are supposed to exercise power in three major channels which are through the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. But in reality, the situation appears to be more complex or almost impossible when it comes to its application or implementation. In this case, the citizens who hold the national sovereign power are called upon to choose their leaders through the ballot box. In such a situation, people worthy enough to represent the people are elected. Those that are elected do no longer speak for themselves but rather for the people who elected them<sup>38</sup>.

In the context of this work, we are talking about legislative elections where representatives from different constituencies to represent their people in the parliament. In the case of Cameroon, legislative elections are either through a direct secret universal suffrage which is the election of deputies into the national assembly<sup>39</sup> for a period of 5 years or an indirect universal suffrage or Electoral College of territorial collectivities who vote senators for a period of 5years<sup>40</sup>. But it comes to multilateral parliament like the CEMAC Parliament, PAP, among others, representatives are chosen from the national parliament and sent to represent the people which is not appropriate in a purely democratic society. This is because such parliamentary delegates mostly turn to serve the interest of those who appointed them than protect the interest of those they are representing. For example, the convention of the CEMAC Parliament stipulates that members of the institution will be elected through a direct universal suffrage by the population of the sub region for a mandate of 5years, according to

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<sup>37</sup> Bekona, « *Les Elections Parlementaires...* », p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Article 20 sub 2 of the Cameroon Constitution

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

an electoral procedure laid down by the conference of the heads of state<sup>41</sup>. But since the establishment of the parliament, member states have continued to delegate parliamentarians to represent their countries within the parliament.

Several efforts have been made within the parliament and at the level of the conference of the heads of state to organize these CEMAC Parliamentary elections but the efforts were all futile. It is through that some parliamentarians like Allioum Fadil and Hamann Tchioto<sup>42</sup> that they delay can partially be blamed on political crisis in some countries of the sub region who cannot even successfully organize their own parliamentary elections. Even with the PAP, five representatives including at least one woman are selected from among national parliament. The institution still has it as an objective to have future elected representatives as reiterated the South African President Jacob Zuma in 2009<sup>43</sup>.

The absence of elections into these multilateral parliamentary institutions have made them to constantly face difficulties of gaining autonomy in legislative activities. It also makes it difficult for parliamentarians within the parliaments to design and implement certain objectives. For example; appointed or delegated parliamentarians can only work with the instructions of their home parliamentary institution and may not have the liberty to engage individual solutions to the problems of the parliament. Also, the parliamentarians come to the parliament not with laws design to help the institution but with project which protect the interest of their home parliament. In this situation, the parliaments are viewed as areas of gatherings where everyone comes to defend the interest of their states who have appointed them<sup>44</sup>.

The parliaments are also noticed not to be responsible to the population which they represent because from the onset, the representatives made no political campaigns or promises to them. But they are rather answerable to their parliaments and the executive who mandated them. This in real sense is no parliamentary democracy as compared to what happens with parliamentary institutions like the European Union Parliament, where all

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<sup>41</sup>Article 5 of the Convention of the CEMAC Parliament.

<sup>42</sup>Allioum Fadil and Hamann Tchioto are members of the Cameroon group to the CEMAC Parliament, cited by Zeh Zeh in « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire ...* », p. 124.

<sup>43</sup>En.m.Wikipedia.org, Pan African Parliament

<sup>44</sup>Interview with Joshua Osih, aged 53, member of the committee of foreign affairs at the national assembly of Cameroon, Yaounde 09/09/21.

representative are elected by a direct and secret universal suffrage from all member states and these representatives are very much independent from their national parliaments<sup>45</sup>.

It should be noted that a parliament that is not represented by an elective body does not permit the parliamentarians to adopt laws that can favor the population which they are supposed to represent. It also allows the parliamentarians to double functions as national parliamentarians and those of the parliament in question which cannot really be effectively carried out. More to this, the convention of the CEMAC parliament does not permit the accumulation of parliamentary functions by any member of the CEMAC parliament<sup>46</sup>.

### **3-Limitations or deficit in the technical domain of the parliament**

During legislative elections, people from all walks of life are elected into the parliament without considering their domain of train or even level of education. But once in parliament, these same people are called to carry out legislative functions at all levels both nationally and at the international level. Unfortunately, these parliamentarians in most cases have very little or no technical knowledge in parliamentary issues, not forgetting the fact that most of them do not even serve more than one or two mandates within the parliament. Efoa Mbozo'o openly blames the parliament for its numerous technical and institutional lapses due to the lack of adequate human resources<sup>47</sup>.

One of the major weaknesses of the Cameroon parliament that has constantly frozen the international activities of the parliamentarians is the lack of qualified parliamentary personnel. The management of modern foreign policy is very complex that only specialists in the domain can better understand. In this case, most parliamentarians involved in diplomacy do not really master their activities due to lack of technical knowledge. Consequently, good resolutions are usually arrived at in foreign parliaments but their implementation in Cameroon becomes very complicated due to the lack of a qualified personnel. The laxity of the administrative organs of the parliament has often worsened the situation since they are unable to assist the parliamentarians in their working sessions. This ties with the affirmations of Catherine Haglund, cited by Efoa Mbozo'o who says " A greater number of parliamentary assemblies in sub-Saharan Africa suffers a lack of qualified personnel to

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<sup>45</sup>Interview with Joshua Osih, Aged 53, Member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Questor at the National Assembly of Cameroon, Yaounde 09/09/21.

<sup>46</sup> Article 13 sub 7 of the Convention of the CEMAC Parliament.

<sup>47</sup>Efoa Mbozo'o, *Le contrôle parlementaire de l'action gouvernementale*, Yaounde Editions Clé, 2015, p. 25.

accomplish their activities at the the international level and this have often attracted the intervention of the foreign affairs ministries to intervene due to its rich intellectual capacity<sup>48</sup>.

The mistakes realized at times with some parliamentarians during their missions abroad especially with they are to write report or give feedback on their activities are usually alarming to the extent that they distort diplomatic regulations in parliamentary laws. This makes it difficult for parliamentary authorities who sign and validate these reports and may not be too presentable for Cameroon's image abroad. This is caused by intellectual incompetency of most Deputies<sup>49</sup>. It also handicaps the smooth evolution of Cameroon parlomacy.

Also we are living in a computer world were the knowledge on ICT is has become a necessity in our daily activities. But unfortunately, many parliamentarians have very little or no knowledge of ICT or even the basics. Most of these parliamentarians happen to be the ones that are usually deployed to represent Cameroon at the international level. Their incapability to adapt to this new world order of globalization has often been a setback to the evolution of Cameroon parlomacy. Apart from this, it also makes the treatment of administrative documents very difficult given the fact that the multimedia documentary center put in place by the administrative body of the parliament has not been adequately exploited<sup>50</sup>.

This problem does not limit with the parliamentarians because even the sub directorate in charge of international relations at the secretariat of the national assembly in most cases may also face difficulties in exploiting computers. Consequently, the activities of the sub director of international relations who is supposed to receive reports on missions and activities of the different national groups in inter parliamentary organizations also become ineffective. This is not also too advantageous for future research as the systematic account in the registration of information is absent<sup>51</sup>.

Another difficulty is the criteria for choosing parliamentarians to represent Cameroon at in inter parliamentary institutions or paying courtesy visits abroad. The process of selection is and exclusive duty of parliamentary groups. In certain cases there is usually the lack of comprehension among the parliamentarians that it goes to the extent of a raffle draw by some

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<sup>48</sup>Efoua Mbozo'o, *Le contrôle parlementaire...*p. 25.

<sup>49</sup>Njanjou, «Les présidents de l'assemblée nationale ... », p. 145.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>Njanjou, «Les présidents de l'assemblée nationale », p. 146.

parliamentary group and consequently, the best or qualified parliamentarians may not be selected. Worse is that the parliamentarians do not even produce reports on their activities abroad whether to the parliamentary groups or to the bureau of the parliament. Consequently, very little or no value is usually attributed to the activities of parliamentarians abroad<sup>52</sup>.

It should be noted that these difficulties or constraints faced by the parliament as a result of their venture in international affairs have actually slowed down their effective participation even though the parliamentarians have been able to carry on with parliomacy in the midst these setbacks. Reason we have thought it necessary to propose some perspectives which can ensure a better implication or involvement of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs.

### **C-Perspectives for a better implication of Cameroon in foreign affairs**

The major objective of this entire research work has been to bring much light the activities of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs. Subsequently, we were able to discover the intense involvement of the parliament, not forgetting its strength and weakness in the process. But in order to ensure a continuous and even better implication of the parliament in foreign affairs, we bring forth the following perspectives.

#### **1-Government's support to parliament and parliamentarians**

The Cameroon government should be able to understand that contrary to the traditional diplomatic channels, the executive is no longer the sole actor involved in foreign affairs this is due to the alarming and growing strength of the parliament in international relations. Consequently, the state should be able to give a supportive hand to the parliament so as to ensure a better performance at the international scene given the fact that the new world order makes parliomacy almost inevitable.

The state should sensitize parliamentarians on the role they play in international relations. They should be made to understand the delicate nature of their activities and why they must attach some importance to it. Different political parties represented at the National Assembly or Senate should be able to collaborate to protect the general interest of the people they represent especially when it comes to matters of international relations. By doing this, the executive should also be able to establish a frank and complementary collaboration with

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<sup>52</sup>Njanjou, «Les Présidents de l'assemblée nationale... », p. 146.

the parliament in matters of managing foreign policy and avoid imposing their activities on the legislative<sup>53</sup>.

The government is supposed to ensure that each time parliamentary authorities are engaging into foreign missions concerning international relations they should be accompanied by a special adviser in parlomatic affairs as it is the case with most modern parliaments. The parliament should be able to design a specific agenda on their international activities but this can be efficient only when the state empowers the sub directorate of international relations of the parliament with appropriate legal powers to rationalize the various missions of parliamentarians abroad.

The speaker of the national assembly or the president of the Senate should insist on the provision of reports on foreign missions by parliamentarians. In short the submission of reports should be made mandatory. In this sense, the library of the parliament will be enriched with documents containing the activities of the parliament abroad. In this light, the rich experience of Cameroon parliamentarians especially in multilateral parliaments will be preserved in these libraries and can also facilitate future research and vulgarization of parliamentary activities<sup>54</sup>

The state of Cameroon should invest in the press sector by sponsoring the TV and radio coverage of the parliamentary activities at the international level. This can create awareness in the minds of the population on the diplomatic role of the parliament in the country. It may also push the parliamentarians to be more efficient, rational and transparent in their parlomatic activities. In doing this, the parliament also wins the confidence of their electorate and prepares future victories that can permit parliamentary consistency<sup>55</sup>. This is because many people in the country do not really know much about parliamentary activities especially at the international level and so may obviously never be interested in knowing which is not healthy for the political life of the nation.

The government should ensure that access to parliamentary information and its understanding should be facilitated to all citizens. This will encourage many to understand how the institution functions and may also make them to participate fully in the democratic

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<sup>53</sup>Njanjou, «Les Présidents de l'assemblée nationale... », p.148.

<sup>54</sup>Interview with Jane Takang, aged 76, retired civil servant and former adviser at the prime minister's office, Yaounde, 07/02/22.

<sup>55</sup>Interview with Esther Kima, aged around 45, journalist and senior political analyst at CRTV in charge of parliamentary coverage, Yaounde , 08/03/2022.

process of the country. This can also lead to a cordial relationship between the deputies and the population and therefore, parliamentary activities especially at the international level can gain more credibility.

The government can also advise the parliament to organize orientations where they can be able to sensitize the population on the importance of parliamentary activities in the political life of the country. By doing this, they can equally seize the opportunity to inform the population about their activities in multilateral parliaments and how this has helped in the positive influence of Cameroon foreign policy. The orientation can make the parliament more visible to the public in their activities especially at the international level. In this light, the parliamentarians can be able to know the impression of the people about the parliament and also make them participate in parliamentary life. Moreover it can permit the parliament to clear their doubts directly in some areas of difficulties by interrogating the population. But this should be coordinated by specialists in the domain. But for the parliament to succeed in all these areas, it needs a proper financial backing in sponsoring their activities<sup>56</sup>

The government of Cameroon should also be able to allow the parliament have financial autonomy that is it should be able to manage its own budget. This will make the parliament more active in its engagements both at home and abroad. It can also establish a sincere relationship between the legislative and the executive who may not have to right the latter due to its financial power. According to Lahaou Touré;

*Conformément au fondamental principe de séparation des pouvoirs, le budget interne du parlement doit être établi sous la seule responsabilité du parlement et transmis à l'exécutif pour être intégré dans le budget de l'état. L'exécutif ne doit pas être juge de l'opportunité des moyens donc le parlement a besoin pour l'exercice de sa mission<sup>57</sup>.*

Taking into consideration this extract, it will be of utmost permit the parliament elaborate on its budget which will ensure a smooth evolution of the institution and may also be an opportunity for parliamentarians to accomplish their mission and attain their objectives at the international level without any difficulties. Financial autonomy of the parliament could also bring more visibility to its activities especially in parliamentary diplomacy<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup>Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire ... », p. 132.

<sup>57</sup> General report presented by Mr Lahaou Touré, Bamako, November 2001, cited by Zeh Zeh in « La diplomatie parlementaire ... », p. 132.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2-The revision of Cameroon law

The activities of Cameroon parliament at the international level are sometimes cut short by the legal dispositions of the country. International politics evolve with time and the laws adopted during the era of independence in the 1960s may not really be helping the involvement of Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs. More to this, the constitution of Cameroon has been repeatedly amended with major amendments in 1972, and 1996<sup>59</sup>. These new developments in the legal domain automatically impose a review on the legal dispositions describing the activities of the parliament and parliamentarians both at home and abroad<sup>60</sup>.

According to article 34 of the French constitution revised in 2008, “assemblies, can vote resolutions under conditions laid down by the law”. And the implementation of these resolutions is not limited. It can either contribute to the development of national or foreign policy of the state<sup>61</sup>. Several constitutions in the post independent which were designed mostly on the French constitution of 1958, avoided this constitutional provision whereas they could bring success to the decisions and actions of the government<sup>62</sup>. This was because the constitutions were much in favor of a presidential system of administration without excluding that of Cameroon.

But with the re-introduction of multiparty politics, the Cameroon parliamentary muted from a hand clapping institution to a veritable actor in state affairs especially with the voting of new political parties into the national assembly during the 1992 multi-party legislative elections which reinforced the parliamentary system in the Cameroon<sup>63</sup>. It will be good for multilateral parliaments in which Cameroon is represented like the, PAP, CEMAC parliament among others be transformed into veritable legislative institutions which are efficient enough and capable of imposing their resolutions just like the case of the security council of the UN<sup>64</sup>.

The law on the ratification of international treaties and conventions should also be reviewed. The constitution stipulates that international treaties can only be ratified after the

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<sup>59</sup>Interview with Aka Amuam, aged 76, former MP Menchum South constituency (1997-2007), Yaounde, 16/04/22.

<sup>60</sup>*Idem*.

<sup>61</sup>Chaigneau, *Enjeux diplomatique et stratégiques 2014*, Paris, ECONOMICA, 2014.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Chu Eric Kangha, aged 34, senior lecturer University of Buea, Yaounde, 27/08/21

<sup>64</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 60.



consultation and deliberation of the parliament but the power of signing or negotiating these treaties remains in the hands of the executive and most specifically the president of the republic<sup>65</sup>. The parliament may only react through parliamentary debates or questions which is not really realistic because in a long while, the Cameroon parliament has seldom rejected the ratification of any bill. The only action has been to delay the inclusion of such bills in their agenda, which is not enough. In this light, laws should be redesigned where the executive to an extent may be able to consult the legislative before signing or engaging certain international treaties or conventions, especially those falling within the competence of the legislative<sup>66</sup>.

One of the first criteria of a democratic parliament is that it must be representative whereby all its members are elected by the population to represent them and their interest. Without adequate or transparent elections, the Cameroon parliaments may not really fulfill its representative mission. Consequently, it will be good for the state of Cameroon to ensure the establishment of strong and powerful electoral laws regarding legislative elections in Cameroon<sup>67</sup>.

More to this, dispositions should be established whereby Cameroonian representatives in foreign parliaments should be elected by a direct universal suffrage instead of the usual selection of members from the national parliament. The efforts of multilateral parliaments in trying to ensure true representative assemblies should be encouraged. For example, the convention of the CEMAC parliament stipulates that parliamentarians within the institution should be elected not appointed<sup>68</sup>. This disposition should be respected by the Cameroon parliamentary group within the parliament. Also, Cameroon parliamentary group to the PAP should fight to ensure that the protocol of PAP which recommends the appointment of representatives from national parliaments<sup>69</sup> to be appointed should be modified such that these representatives should be democratically elected. This will give more liberty and competence to Cameroon parliamentarians in multilateral parliaments where they will be able to serve the populations that elected them by bring solutions to some of the problems they encounter.

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<sup>65</sup> Article 43 of the constitution of Cameroon amended on the 18/01/1996.

<sup>66</sup> Article 26 of the Cameroon constitution. This article clearly enlists the duties of the legislative both at the national and international levels.

<sup>67</sup> Zeh Zeh, « La diplomatie parlementaire ... », p. 129.

<sup>68</sup> Article 5 of the convention of the CEMAC parliament.

<sup>69</sup> En.m.wikipedia.org, Pan African Parliament, consulted on the 14/O7/2022.

### **3-The review of the process of designation and capacity building of Cameroon parliamentarians in foreign affairs**

While observing the Cameroon parliament group to foreign parliaments, one realizes that the profile of the parliamentarians found in these delegations happens to be very low in terms of political, educational and especially in issues of international relations. The participation of Cameroon in multilateral parliaments like the CEMAC parliament and the Pan African Parliament is supposed to be in the hands of persons with outstanding political and or intellectual profile so that their activities within these parliaments should be credible. This will ensure that the activities of these parliaments do not outweigh the parliamentarians chosen within the Cameroon bloc<sup>70</sup>.

The Department of Coordination of International relations should also be empowered to do its activities. That is by coordinating the policies of parliamentary intervention in foreign affairs. This administrative department should be made to fulfill their duties as prescribed by the law organizing the general secretariat of the national assembly. Subsequently, the DCIR should be added to the process of selecting parliamentarians to represent the parliament in its participation in foreign affairs. The DCIR will be able to constitute enough information that can go a long way to help in taking decisions on the choice of these representatives<sup>71</sup>. Apart from reviewing the process of designation of parliamentarians, it is also pertinent to look at their capacity building.

Activities should be set forth with the aim of pursuing efforts made to improve the technical capacity of parliamentarians and the support personnel of the parliament especially in matters of international relations. This can generally be done through planning and organizing of training courses. For example, parliamentarians can be trained on the capacity of law drafting and analysis especially at international parliament. Consequently, these parliamentarians will be able to understand exactly their role in drafting laws or analyzing them. Also in each legislative year, parliamentarians should carryout attached study visits to foreign parliament with a long tradition of law drafting and analysis. This will make them to have varied and adequate experience in the process of law drafting and analysis and also ensure quality parliamentary laws.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Meyolo, « La diplomatie parlementaire... », p. 58.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>72</sup>“Parliament Strategic Plan2011-2015”, Parliament of the Republic of Rwanda, Final Version, April 2011.

The use of ICT facilities is one of the concerns of the modern parliament and achievements made in this area are highly commendable. The parliament should have modern computers that enable parliamentarians to keep in contact among them and also to interact with the support personnel of the parliament. It is through such computers that they receive electronic messages and documents related to parliamentary activities especially at the international level.

However, it was noted that information and communication techniques are not being used to enable the population contribute in an efficient manner to parliament activities. Also, the computerization of the archives and library of the Cameroon is yet to be effected which will facilitate access by users. To improve in the area of Information and Communication Technology, the parliament needs to regularly organize training not only for parliamentarians but also for the support personnel and also constantly update their computer equipment, while installing an efficient and dependable internet system<sup>73</sup>. It is worthy of noting that stability in the electronic activities (a good mastery of the computer and exploitation of the internet connection) of the parliament can directly boost the performance of the institution in foreign affairs which will enhance Cameroon parlomacy since there is rapid spread of information.

Also, the new order of international relations qualifies deputies as “parliamentary diplomats”. In order to avoid severe mistakes or shortcomings in parliamentary activities at the international stage, the Cameroon ministry of external relations should work hand in gloves with the department of the coordination of international relations of the parliament. They should constantly organize activities of training and retraining so as to reinforce the capacity of parliamentarians in matters of international relations<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup>“Parliament Strategic Plan 2011-2015”, Parliament of the Republic of Rwanda, Final Version, April 2011.

<sup>74</sup>Njanjou, «Les présidents de... », p. 149.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

At the end of this research work, it is important to recall that the choice of the topic “the place of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs from 1992 -2020: A Historical analysis”, was motivated by some specific objectives. The first one was the necessity to respond to academic exigencies in relation to the acquisition of a Master’s degree in history. The second objective was that of bringing our own contribution to the edification of the history of Cameroon in general and most particularly on Cameroon parliamacy. In this effect, we first of all took an elaborate presentation of the evolution of the Cameroon parliament both in British and French Cameroon. That is starting with the election of Cameroon representatives into assemblies in Nigeria, through to the various assemblies in French Cameroon, right up to the establishment of the bicameral parliamentary system in Cameroon. This was then followed by the elaboration of parliamentary structures that are involved in foreign affairs and the different parliamentary actors and non-actors involved, not forgetting the impact of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affair.

As a result of this research work, we realized that the participation of the Cameroon parliament at the international scene is enabled strongly by the collaboration of the executive arm of government which is the traditional channel of foreign affairs and also the high quality or profiled parliamentarians who have been working relentlessly to accompany the Cameroon government in bringing solutions to some of the several challenges faced by its population. In order to better understand our course, our research work was centered on three inter-parliamentary institutions which were the CEMAC Parliament, the Pan African Parliament and the Inter-parliamentary Union. It was discovered that the involvement of Cameroon in these parliaments is for reasons like promoting democratic values, gender equality, actualizing regional integration and joining the rest of the globe to face problems or challenges of common interest.

In order to ensure the achievement of these multiple goals, the Cameroon parliament has send out representatives to the various inter-parliamentary institutions who actively participate in the activities of the parliaments. These representatives or parliamentary flag bearers of Cameroon in the foreign parliaments are in two categories. That is parliamentary actors who are duly elected parliamentarians in Cameroon sent out as delegates to represent

the parliament and the non-parliamentary actors who are civil servants working within the parliament or those who have rich experience or expertise in parliamentary affairs.

Cameroon's active participation in parliamentary diplomacy dates back to 1960 when Cameroon (French Cameroon) gained independence. But the interest of our research work starts from 1992 which is the date that marks the putting in place of the first multi-party parliament after the introduction of multiparty politics in 1990. Cameroon has actively participated in these parliaments in different dimensions. For instance Cameroon has been represented at the CEMAC Parliament since its creation in the year 2000 and Cameroon representatives have occupied influential positions of secretary general, like Etong Abena and president of the parliament like Hon Hilarion Etong. Through these positions, Cameroonians have been able to use their expertise and contribute to the smooth evolution of the CEMAC sub region. The presence of Cameroon representatives at the level of the PAP has also created some impact since the days of the African Parliamentary Union when Cameroon parliamentarians showcased their democratic know how and fight for the protection of human rights especially during working sessions in Tunis in 1992. A Cameroonian, Roger Nkodo Dang was also elected president of the Pan African Parliament in 2015. Even at the global level, Cameroon has stood out brilliantly with the presence of Martin Chungong as the secretary general of the IPU since 2014. And he has fought relentlessly for the promotion of women in politics since his presence at the IPU in 1993.

From the data collected throughout this research period, we can fully say that Cameroon's expertise in parliamentary diplomacy has been alarmingly noticed through the dynamism of elected parliamentarians and civil servants or functionaries working within the national assembly of Cameroon who have represented the country in foreign parliaments. Consequently, we can say that Cameroon parliament is a driving force through its experience in foreign parliaments especially in the emancipation of the CEMAC parliament, the PAP and the IPU. This can be backed by the heavy presence and full involvement of Cameroon's representations in foreign parliaments whether as parliamentary or non-parliamentary actors. This engagement somehow demonstrates the realistic vision of the Cameroon authorities who have come to understand that the Cameroon foreign policy objectives cannot be fully attained without the involvement or promotion of Cameroon parliament. For example, Cameroon's presence in the CEMAC Parliament has greatly accelerated the process of regional integration and also the improvement of the conditions of life for the populations of the

CEMAC sub region. This is also assured by the combat of Cameroon parliamentarians within the parliament in different domains to ensure the harmonization of development policies.

It was also realized through our research that the Cameroon parliament has been fully fitting itself in multilateral parliaments through its vibrant representatives who might be permanent or temporal. This has been done through the pursuance of the diplomacy of effective presence in these parliaments with motivation by a high zeal of affirmation. Consequently, this research work revealed that the Cameroon parliament has over the years succeeded to reinforce Cameroon foreign policy abroad and project the image of the country at home and abroad not forgetting the affirmation of Cameroon at the international scene. The evidence is clearly seen with the active participation of Cameroon in foreign parliament and of course the influential positions handled by Cameroon parliamentary and non-parliamentary actors in these multilateral parliaments.

But we also discovered that the Cameroon parliament though very vital or instrumental in Cameroon's diplomatic affairs, remains a supportive organ since the traditional pivot of foreign policy in Cameroon is the president of the republic who is the head of the executive arm of government. In this regard, the activities of the parliament in parliamentary diplomacy are sometimes designed or influenced by the executive which makes the parliament semi-autonomous and is a times a handicap to the smooth evolution of parlomacy in Cameroon. Apart from this, the parliament also faces other challenges like limited finances to fully carryout their international duties, the fact that most of the parliamentarians sent to represent Cameroon abroad may not really be specialist in the domain of foreign policy, not forgetting the fact that there is no direct election into this foreign parliament like in happens elsewhere in the European Union Parliament. Therefore, the ruling party may still have its interest to pursue due to its majority which in certain cases does not represent the will of the general population which the parliamentarians represent.

Nonetheless, in order to ensure a real implication of the Cameroon parliament in parlomacy, the parliament needs ideological and most especially material and financial support or accompaniment from the government of Cameroon. Apart from this, there should be a revision of the laws of the state to favor Cameroon parlomatic activities and workshops should be carried out constantly to train parliamentarians or build their capacity in foreign affairs and better prepare them to face bigger challenges especially when participating in inter-parliamentary activities abroad. It is pertinent to note that parlomacy is an important

perspective and alternative form of diplomacy which has developed lately with the increasing role of parliaments and parliamentarians in foreign affairs or international relations issues. While not ignoring the President of the republic as the maestro of foreign policy or the competence of the minister of external relations and ambassadors, it should be noted that the Cameroon parliament remains a paradigm in the country's foreign affairs even though not widely studied for the time being.

**APPENDICES**



## **Appendix 1:**

### **Interview Guide**

This questionnaire is addressed to informants within the framework of a research to write a master's thesis in the History of International Relations on the topic: THE PLACE OF THE CAMEROON PARLIAMENT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS FROM 1992-2020: A historical analysis.

Name of Student: ACHUO TERENCE TEM

NB: The information gathered from the various interviewees is treated with high confidentiality and can only be used in the context of this thesis or research work.

#### **Identification of the Informant**

Name and surname(s)..... Age.....

Profession.....Date.....

Place of Interview..... Telephone.....

#### **A-General Questions**

- 1- According to you, what is parliamentary diplomacy?
- 2- Why do you think the Cameroon parliament gets involved in foreign affairs?
- 3- Can you identify some ways in which the Cameroon parliament involves in foreign affairs?
- 4- Cite some foreign multi-lateral parliaments in which Cameroon is a member.
- 5- What are the activities of the Cameroon parliamentarians within these parliaments?
- 6-How do these activities influence the evolution of Cameroon foreign policy?
- 7-What are some internal activities of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs?
- 8-What can you say about the committee of foreign affairs of the parliament?

9- How do the president of the senate and the speaker of the national assembly represent the president of the republic abroad?

### **B- Questions of Specialisation or Expertise**

1- How can you describe the real implication (actions) of the Cameroon parliament in multi-lateral parliaments such as the CEMAC Parliament, the Pan African Parliament and the Inter-parliamentary Union?

2- How does the presence of Cameroon in these parliamentary institutions influence the evolution of the parliaments?

3- What are the mechanisms taken by the Cameroon parliament to ensure the diplomacy of effective presence abroad?

4- According to you, what can be done by the Cameroon government to ensure a better implication of the Cameroon parliament in foreign affairs?

5- Do you think it is necessary for the Cameroon parliament to fully involve in parliamentary diplomacy? And why?

**Thanks for your kind collaboration and contribution in the realisation of this research work.**

Source: Developed by the author for the purpose of this research work

## Appendix 2

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
 PAIX-TRAVAIL-PATRIE  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDE I  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET  
 SCIENCES HUMAINES  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 DEPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE  
 \*\*\*\*\*



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
 PEACE-WORK-FATHERLAND  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND  
 SOCIAL SCIENCES  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
 \*\*\*\*\*

Siège : Bâtiment Annexe FALSH-UYI, à côté AUF

## ATTESTATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, Professeur **BOKAGNE BETOBO Edouard**, Chef de Département d'Histoire de la Faculté des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Yaoundé I, atteste que l'étudiant **ACHUO TERENCE TEM**, matricule **10K114**, est inscrit en Master II dans ledit Département, option Histoire des Relations Internationales. Il mène, sous la direction du **Pr. Faustin KENNE** (Maître de Conférences), une recherche universitaire sur le thème : « *The involvement of the Cameroon Parliament in foreign affairs from 1992-2019. A historical analysis* ».

Nous le recommandons aux responsables des administrations, des centres de documentations, d'archives et toutes autres institutions nationales ou internationales, en vue de lui faciliter la recherche.

**En foi de quoi, la présente autorisation lui est délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit**

Fait à Yaoundé le... **23 JUL 2021** .....

**Le Chef de Département**  
  
**Bokagne Betobo Edouard**  
 Maître de Conférences

## Appendix 3

**REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN**

Paix – Travail – Patrie

**ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE**10<sup>ème</sup> LEGISLATURESession ordinaire de plein droit  
(Mars 2020)**REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

Peace - Work - Fatherland

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**10<sup>th</sup> LEGISLATIVE PERIODStatutory Ordinary session  
(March 2020)**COMMISSION DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES****FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE****PRESIDENT:** Hon. BANMI Emmanuel DINGHA  
CHAIRPERSON**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Hon. N'NOLO Marie Suzanne Épse ONOBIONO  
VICE-CHAIRMAN**SECRETAIRES:** Hon. HAMAN TCHIOUTO  
SECRETARIES Hon. IBRAHIMA BOBBO

1	Hon.	MARGAZA ALAOU Abel Maggi	RDPC
2	Hon.	HAROUNA ABDOULAYE	RDPC
3*	Hon.	* BANMI Emmanuel DINGHA	RDPC
4	Hon.	* HAMAN TCHIOUTO ✓	RDPC
5	Hon.	ETOMBI IKOME Gladys	RDPC
6	Hon.	KOAH MFEGUE Laurentine Épse MBEDE	RDPC
7	Hon.	* N'NOLO Marie Suzanne Épse ONOBIONO	RDPC
8	Hon.	SIME Pierre	RDPC
9	Hon.	YAYA DOUMBA Marius	RDPC
10	Hon.	YAKOUBA YAYA	RDPC
11	Hon.	TEKU TANYI TEKU	RDPC
12	Hon.	KOAH SONGO Gabriel	RDPC
13	Hon.	NGANTCHA Louis Henri	RDPC
14	Hon.	NANGA MEFANT Berthe Épse OWONO	RDPC
15	Hon.	DONGHO Clément	RDPC
16	Hon.	NDZIE Frank Eric	RDPC
17	Hon.	MBEYO'O Josué ✓	RDPC
18	Hon.	MOUMINI OUMAROU	UNDP
19	Hon.	OSIH JOSHUA ✓	SDF
20	Hon.	* IBRAHIMA BOBBO	UNDP

Source: Archives of the National Assembly

## Appendix 4:

### The Standing Orders of the African Parliamentary Union, adopted in November 2000 during the Conference of Addis Ababa

Adopté par la 23<sup>ème</sup> Conférence à Addis-Abéba, Novembre 2000

Chapitre I : DE LA CONFERENCE

Chapitre II : DU BUREAU

Chapitre III : DU COMITE EXECUTIF

Chapitre VI : DU SECRETARIAT GENERAL

Chapitre V : DISPOSITIONS GENERALES

#### DISPOSITIONS PRELIMINAIRES

**Article 1 :** Le Présent Règlement Intérieur régit la structure et le fonctionnement des organes de l'Union Parlementaire Africaine, à savoir : la Conférence des Présidents d'Assemblées Parlementaires Nationales, le Comité Exécutif et le Secrétariat Général.

#### CHAPITRE I : LA CONFERENCE

##### *Section 1 : Composition*

**Article 2 :** La Conférence est composée des Présidents d'Assemblées Parlementaires Nationales ou de leurs représentants, accompagnés de parlementaires qui assistent en tant que délégués à la Conférence conformément à l'article 8 des Statuts.

La présence des femmes parlementaires parmi les délégués à la Conférence doit être assurée conformément aux dispositions de l'article 8 des Statuts.

**Article 3 :** Des représentants de pays africains non membres de l'Union dotés ou non d'Institutions Parlementaires ainsi que des Organisations Régionales, Inter-Régionales et Internationales peuvent être invités par le Comité Exécutif à suivre les travaux de la Conférence à titre d'observateurs.

Les observateurs peuvent être invités par le Président à prendre la parole.

##### *Section 2 : Session*

**Article 4 :** La Conférence se réunit chaque année en session ordinaire. Elle peut être convoquée en session extraordinaire soit sur proposition du Comité Exécutif, soit à la demande des 2/3 des Groupes Nationaux.

Les convocations à une session ordinaire sont adressées par le Président du Comité Exécutif aux Groupes Nationaux au moins deux ( 2 ) mois avant l'ouverture de la Conférence, et au moins un ( 1 ) mois en cas de session extraordinaire.

Toute convocation en session ordinaire comme en session extraordinaire doit contenir l'ordre du jour de cette session.

**Article 5 :** La charge de l'organisation matérielle d'une Conférence incombe à l'Union et au Groupe National du pays où elle se tient. Un accord est conclu avec le Secrétariat Général, agissant au nom de l'Union.

**Article 6 :** La séance inaugurale de la Conférence est ouverte par le Président de l'Assemblée Parlementaire Nationale du pays hôte conformément aux dispositions de l'article 11 des Statuts.

**Article 7 :** Le bureau de la Conférence est composé du Président de la Conférence, des dix Vice-Présidents élus conformément à l'article 11 des Statuts et du Président du Comité Exécutif.

Le bureau, assisté du Secrétaire Général, veille au bon déroulement des travaux de la Conférence

**Article 8 :** Les travaux sont dirigés par le Président de la Conférence. En cas d'absence ou d'empêchement, le Président du bureau de la Conférence désigne un des dix Vice-Présidents.

### *Section 3 : Séances*

**Article 9 :** Les séances de la Conférence sont publiques, sauf décision contraire prise par les 2/3 des délégués présents à la Conférence.

**Article 10 :** Le Président de la Conférence ouvre, suspend, lève les séances et dirige les débats.

Il fait observer le règlement, donne la parole, met les questions aux voix, proclame les résultats du scrutin et prononce la clôture de la Conférence.

Il a la police des séances.

### *Section 4 : Ordre du Jour et débats*

**Article 11 :** La Conférence se réunit sur la base d'un ordre du jour proposé par le Comité Exécutif. Elle est close sitôt l'ordre du jour épuisé.

Le Secrétaire Général communique aux Groupes Nationaux l'ordre du jour trois ( 3 ) mois au moins avant l'ouverture de la Conférence.

**Article 12 :** Tout Groupe National peut demander l'inscription d'un point supplémentaire à l'ordre du jour. Cette demande, pour être recevable, doit être déposée deux ( 2 ) mois au moins avant la session et recueillir en sa faveur la majorité simple des membres présents.

Toutefois, aucune condition de délai n'est exigée pour une demande d'un point dont le caractère urgent et exceptionnel est justifié ; une telle demande pour être recevable, doit recueillir en sa faveur les 2/3 des suffrages exprimés.

La Conférence entend, au préalable, l'auteur de la demande d'un point supplémentaire ainsi qu'une opinion contraire.

**Article 13 :** Tout Groupe National peut présenter un mémoire, une motion ou un projet de résolution sur une question figurant à l'ordre du jour.

**Article 14 :** Tout point de l'ordre du jour devant faire l'objet d'une résolution est renvoyé à la Commission compétente.

La Conférence peut décider de débattre d'un point de l'ordre du jour au préalable en séance plénière avant d'en saisir la Commission compétente.

Tout point supplémentaire à l'ordre du jour peut-être renvoyé, sans débat, en séance plénière à la Commission compétente.

**Article 15 :** Aucun orateur ne peut prendre la parole sans l'autorisation du Président. Le temps de parole de chaque orateur ne peut excéder 10 minutes.

Toutefois, les rapporteurs qui font l'exposé de la question qui leur est confiée ne sont pas soumis à cette limitation de temps.

Les autres orateurs interviennent dans l'ordre d'inscription. Le Président peut rappeler à l'ordre l'orateur qui s'écarte de la question en discussion et, au besoin, lui retirer la parole.

L'auteur d'une motion sera invité par le Président à la justifier brièvement. Il sera statué tout de suite et sans débat, sauf décision contraire de la Conférence.

Les discussions ne peuvent porter que sur les points inscrits à l'ordre du jour.

**Article 16 :** Les projets de résolution et les amendements relatifs aux questions inscrites à l'ordre du jour doivent être mis à la disposition des délégués à la Conférence sans délai, de manière à permettre la discussion lors de la séance consacrée aux questions auxquelles ils se rapportent.

**Article 17 :** Lorsqu'une question inscrite à l'ordre du jour a déjà fait l'objet d'examen par la Commission compétente, le débat portera sur le texte présenté par celle-ci.

#### *Section 5 : Amendements*

**Article 18 :** Les amendements doivent s'appliquer effectivement au texte auquel ils se rapportent.

**Article 19 :** Dans la discussion des amendements et des motions de procédure, sauf décision contraire du Président, seuls sont entendus l'auteur de l'initiative, le Rapporteur de la Commission et, le cas échéant, un orateur d'opinion contraire.

Aucune explication de vote n'est admise sur les motions de procédure.

**Article 20 :** Si deux ou plusieurs amendements dont le vote est requis en séance plénière s'appliquent aux mêmes mots d'un projet de texte, celui qui s'écarte le plus du texte visé a priorité sur les autres : il est mis aux voix le premier.

Si deux ou plusieurs amendements s'excluent mutuellement, l'adoption du premier entraîne le rejet du ou des autres amendements portant sur les mêmes mots. Si le premier amendement est rejeté, l'amendement suivant l'ordre de priorité est mis aux voix et, ainsi de suite, pour chacun des autres amendements.

En cas de doute sur la priorité, le Président décide.



**Article 14 :** Tout point de l'ordre du jour devant faire l'objet d'une résolution est renvoyé à la Commission compétente.

La Conférence peut décider de débattre d'un point de l'ordre du jour au préalable en séance plénière avant d'en saisir la Commission compétente.

Tout point supplémentaire à l'ordre du jour peut-être renvoyé, sans débat, en séance plénière à la Commission compétente.

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Toutefois, les rapporteurs qui font l'exposé de la question qui leur est confiée ne sont pas soumis à cette limitation de temps.

Les autres orateurs interviennent dans l'ordre d'inscription. Le Président peut rappeler à l'ordre l'orateur qui s'écarte de la question en discussion et, au besoin, lui retirer la parole.

L'auteur d'une motion sera invité par le Président à la justifier brièvement. Il sera statué tout de suite et sans débat, sauf décision contraire de la Conférence.

Les discussions ne peuvent porter que sur les points inscrits à l'ordre du jour.

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En cas de doute sur la priorité, le Président décide.

### *Section 6 : Votes*

**Article 21 :** Chaque Groupe National dispose d'une voix. Il ne peut être procédé à aucun vote si le nombre de Groupes Nationaux présents est inférieur à la majorité absolue des Groupes Nationaux représentés à la Conférence.

**Article 22 :** Sauf disposition contraire, les décisions de la Conférence sont prises à la majorité absolue des suffrages exprimés.

**Article 23 :** Les votes ont lieu soit par appel nominal, soit à mains levées, soit par acclamation.

Toutefois, pour le choix des personnes, le vote doit avoir lieu au scrutin secret. Les votes peuvent avoir lieu au scrutin secret si la majorité des Groupes Nationaux représentés le demande.

### *Section 7 : Commissions d'études*

**Article 24 :** En application de l'article 10 des Statuts, la Conférence institue en son sein des commissions d'études permanentes ou temporaires. Les Groupes Nationaux participant à la Conférence sont représentés au sein des commissions.

**Article 25 :** Des représentants de pays africains non membres de l'Union dotés ou non d'Institutions Parlementaires ainsi que des Organisations Internationales peuvent être invités par le bureau de la Conférence à suivre les travaux des commissions à titre d'observateurs. Ils ne peuvent prendre la parole qu'avec l'autorisation du Président de la Commission.

**Article 26 :** Les Commissions élisent à chaque Conférence sur une base régionale tournante le bureau composé d'un Président et d'un Rapporteur.

Un Groupe National ne peut occuper simultanément plus d'un siège de Président ou de Rapporteur au sein des Commissions.

**Article 27 :** Le Président ouvre, suspend et lève les séances ; il dirige les travaux de la Commission, fait observer le Règlement Intérieur, donne la parole, met les questions aux voix, proclame les résultats des scrutins et déclare les sessions ouvertes et closes. Les décisions relatives à ces questions sont définitives et doivent être acceptées sans débat. Il appartient au Président de trancher tous les cas qui ne seraient pas prévus au présent chapitre en s'inspirant des règles générales de procédure contenues dans le présent Règlement.

**Article 28 :** A l'occasion de l'examen des questions soumises à leurs délibérations, les Commissions peuvent se faire assister ou demander l'avis des personnes ou d'organismes extraparlimentaires capables de les éclairer sur les sujets en discussion.

**Article 29 :** Les Commissions préparent des rapports et/ou des projets de résolutions sur les questions dont elles sont saisies par la Conférence.

**Article 30 :** La Commission procède à la rédaction d'un projet de texte sans ouvrir un débat sur le fond de la question qui a déjà fait l'objet d'un débat en séance plénière de la Conférence.

**Article 31 :** Pour la rédaction finale d'un projet de texte, la Commission crée en son sein un Comité de rédaction composé au plus de six membres. Cette composition doit être faite selon une répartition géographique équitable.

#### *Section 8 : Compte-Rendu des travaux et résultats de la Conférence*

**Article 32 :** Le Compte-rendu des travaux est publié dans les six mois qui suivent la Conférence.

**Article 33 :** Lors de la clôture de la Conférence, le Président énumère les différentes résolutions ou recommandations prises par la Conférence.

**Article 34 :** Les Groupes Nationaux prendront toutes les dispositions utiles en vue de la mise en œuvre effective des résolutions ou recommandations prises aux cours des assises de l'Union et en informeront le Secrétaire Général.

## **CHAPITRE II : DU BUREAU**

### *Section 1 : Composition du Bureau*

**Article 26 :**

Le Bureau de l'Union se compose du Président de l'Union et des Vice-Présidents.

### *Section 2 : Sessions du Bureau*

**Article 27 :** Le Bureau se réunit sur convocation de son Président. Il se réunit obligatoirement à la veille de toutes les sessions de la Conférence. Il peut se réunir également si les 2/3 de ses membres le demandent.

**Article 28 :** Les convocations aux réunions du Bureau doivent indiquer le lieu, la date et la durée de la réunion ainsi que son ordre du jour.

### *Section 3 : Séances du Bureau*

**Article 29 :** Les réunions du Bureau de l'Union sont présidées par le Président de l'Union et, à défaut, par le Vice-Président issu du Groupe National du pays où se tient la réunion. Le Secrétaire Général assiste aux réunions du Bureau et en assure le secrétariat.

**Article 30 :** Les débats du Bureau de l'Union se déroulent à huis clos.

Un procès-verbal des débats est dressé par le Secrétaire Général et communiqué aux membres du Bureau.

**Article 31 :** Le Président dirige les débats et assure la police des séances.

**Article 31** : Pour la rédaction finale d'un projet de texte, la Commission crée en son sein un Comité de rédaction composé au plus de six membres. Cette composition doit être faite selon une répartition géographique équitale.

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Source: J.N. Meyolo, « *La Diplomatie Parlementaire en Marche: Cas de L'Union Parlementaire Africaine (1976-2000)*, Masters Thesis in History, Yaounde 1, 2006, pp.67-74.

**Appendix 5 :**

**Convention Establishing the CEMAC Parliament**

*Annexe 2 : Convention régissant le parlement communautaire*

COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET MONÉTAIRE DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE



**CONVENTION RÉGISSANT LE PARLEMENT  
COMMUNAUTAIRE**

*IDENTIFICATION PARAFES*

CAMEROUN	CENTRAFRIQUE	CONGO	GABON	GUINÉE ÉQUAT.	TCHAD



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## CONVENTION RÉGISSANT LE PARLEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE

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### PRÉAMBULE

Le Gouvernement de la République du Cameroun;

Le Gouvernement de la République Centrafricaine;

Le Gouvernement de la République du Congo;

Le Gouvernement de la République Gabonaise;

Le Gouvernement de la République de Guinée Equatoriale;

Le Gouvernement de la République du Tchad;

Vu le Traité de la Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale;

Fidèles aux objectifs de la Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale, de l'Union Africaine et de la Communauté Economique Africaine;

Convaincus que le Parlement Communautaire, représentant de l'ensemble des populations des Etats membres de la Communauté, constitue un instrument d'intégration, de promotion de la démocratie, de l'Etat de droit, des libertés et des droits fondamentaux;

Convaincus par conséquent que la mise en place du Parlement Communautaire contribuera à renforcer la solidarité entre les peuples des Etats membres de la CEMAC et donnera une nouvelle impulsion au processus d'intégration de la CEMAC par une plus large participation des populations de la Communauté audit processus ;



Sont convenus des dispositions ci-après :

## TITRE I DISPOSITIONS GÉNÉRALES

### Article 1.-

Au sens de la présente Convention, on entend par:

- Communauté ou CEMAC : la Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale;
- Conférence ou Conférence des Chefs d'Etat : la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat de la CEMAC;
- Comité Ministériel : le Comité Ministériel de l'Union Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale ;
- Conseil des Ministres : le Conseil des Ministres de l'Union Economique de l'Afrique Centrale;
- Commission : la Commission de la CEMAC;
- Comité ou Comité Permanent de Concertation : le Comité Permanent de Concertation de la CEMAC ;
- Député : le Député au Parlement de la CEMAC ;
- Parlement : le Parlement de la CEMAC.

### Article 2.-

Le Parlement de la CEMAC est l'Assemblée élue conformément aux dispositions de la présente Convention.

### Article 3.-

Le siège du Parlement est fixé à Malabo, en Guinée Equatoriale. Le Parlement peut toutefois, en cas de nécessité impérieuse, siéger et exercer ses fonctions en tout autre lieu du Territoire abritant le siège ou dans celui de tout Etat membre de la CEMAC.

Les langues officielles de travail du Parlement sont celles prévues à l'article 59 du Traité de la CEMAC.



**Article 4.-**

Les membres du Parlement portent le titre de Député au Parlement de la CEMAC.

**Article 5.-**

Les Députés sont élus au suffrage universel direct, pour une durée de cinq (5) ans, selon une procédure électorale qui est déterminée par un Acte Additionnel de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat, après consultation du Parlement. Cet Acte Additionnel fixe également le nombre des Députés par Etat membre, leurs indemnités, le régime d'éligibilité ainsi que celui des incompatibilités.

Tout mandat impératif est nul.

**Article 6.-**

La législature coïncide avec le mandat des Députés. Tout Député au Parlement de la CEMAC demeure en fonction jusqu'à l'ouverture de la première séance de la législature suivante.

Outre le terme normal de la législature, le mandat du Député au Parlement de la CEMAC prend fin en cas de démission, de décès ou de déchéance.

Il prend également fin en cas de dissolution du Parlement prononcée en application des dispositions de l'article 20 de la présente Convention.

**Article 7.-**

Le Parlement élit, parmi ses membres, son Président et les autres membres du Bureau pour une durée d'un (1) an.

Le Parlement constitue des commissions permanentes et des commissions ad hoc.

**Article 8.-**

Le Parlement est doté d'un Secrétariat Général, placé sous l'autorité d'un Secrétaire Général nommé par la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat.

Le Secrétaire Général est nommé pour un mandat de quatre (4) ans non renouvelable.

**Article 9.-**

Le Parlement se réunit en deux (2) sessions ordinaires par an sur convocation de son Président

La première session s'ouvre le premier lundi du mois de février.

La deuxième session, dite budgétaire, s'ouvre le deuxième lundi du mois d'octobre.

Le Parlement peut se réunir en session extraordinaire, sur un ordre du jour précis, sur convocation de son Président, soit à la demande du Président du Conseil des Ministres ou de celui du Comité Ministériel, soit à la demande des deux tiers (2/3) des Députés au moins, après information du Président du Conseil des Ministres ou du Comité Ministériel.

La durée des sessions ordinaires et la durée maximale des sessions extraordinaires sont fixées par Acte Additionnel de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat.

Les sessions extraordinaires sont closes sitôt l'ordre du jour épuisé.

**Article 10.-**

Les membres du Conseil des Ministres, du Comité Ministériel et de la Commission peuvent être invités aux séances plénières du Parlement et aux réunions des commissions.

Ils peuvent se faire assister de leurs collaborateurs.

**Article 11.-**

Les Députés jouissent de l'immunité parlementaire sur le territoire de chaque Etat membre.

Aucun Député ne peut être recherché, poursuivi, arrêté, détenu ou jugé du fait des opinions ou votes émis par lui dans l'exercice de ses fonctions.

Aucun Député ne peut, pendant la durée des sessions, être poursuivi ou arrêté en matière criminelle ou correctionnelle sans l'autorisation du Parlement, sauf cas de flagrant délit.

Aucun Député ne peut, hors session, être arrêté sans l'autorisation du Bureau du Parlement, sauf cas de flagrant délit ou de condamnation définitive.

En outre, les Députés jouissent des privilèges et immunités accordés à la CEMAC.

**Article 12.-**

L'immunité d'un Député de la CEMAC peut être levée à la demande d'un Etat membre adressé au Président du Parlement.

Le Président se conforme alors à la procédure prévue au Règlement intérieur du Parlement.

**Article 13.-**

La fonction de député est incompatible avec celles de :

- Membre de Gouvernement, Membre des Cours et tribunaux des Etats membres ;
- Juge et Greffier de la Cour de Justice de la CEMAC ;
- Juge et Greffier de la Cour des Comptes de la CEMAC ;
- Membre d'une Institution ou d'un Organe de la CEMAC ;
- Fonctionnaire ou Agent en activité des Institutions ou Organes de la CEMAC ou toute autre fonction auprès d'un organisme international ;
- Fonctionnaire ou Agent en activité des Etats membres ;
- Députés des Parlements nationaux.

L'accession à l'une des fonctions susvisées entraîne la vacance du poste de député au sens de l'article 6 alinéa 2 de la présente Convention.

**TITRE II  
DES POUVOIRS ET DES COMPÉTENCES DU PARLEMENT**

**Article 14.-**

Le Parlement est chargé du contrôle démocratique des organes et institutions spécialisées de la CEMAC. Il participe au processus décisionnel de la Communauté dans les conditions fixées par la présente Convention.

## CHAPITRE I DU CONTRÔLE DÉMOCRATIQUE

### Article 15.-

A la session ordinaire qui suit sa nomination, le Président de la Commission présente au Parlement, réuni en séance plénière, le programme d'actions de la Commission.

La présentation du programme d'actions est suivie de débats. A l'issue des débats, le Parlement peut émettre des recommandations par voie de résolution.

### Article 16.-

Chaque année, le Président de la Commission soumet au Parlement, pour examen, un rapport général sur le fonctionnement et l'évolution de la Communauté.

### Article 17.-

Les Députés peuvent poser des questions écrites ou orales au Conseil des Ministres, au Comité Ministériel et à la Commission.

### Article 18.-

Lorsque le Parlement relève des dysfonctionnements dans l'accomplissement des missions dévolues à la Commission par le Traité de la CEMAC, il peut, de façon graduelle :

- saisir le Conseil des Ministres ;
- interpellier la Commission ;
- voter une motion de censure contre la Commission ou saisir la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat.

### Article 19.-

La motion de censure n'est recevable que si elle est déposée par au moins un tiers (1/3) des Députés composant le Parlement.

Le Parlement ne peut délibérer valablement sur une motion de censure que si les deux tiers (2/3) des Députés composant le Parlement sont présents.

La motion de censure est transmise à la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat qui peut inviter la Commission à lui présenter sa démission.



**Article 20.-**

La Conférence des Chefs d'Etat peut, après consultation du Bureau du Parlement et du Conseil des Ministres, dissoudre le Parlement.

Un nouveau Parlement est élu dans les quatre-vingt-dix (90) jours suivant la dissolution.

Il ne peut être procédé à une nouvelle dissolution du Parlement dans l'année qui suit les élections organisées en application de l'alinéa précédent.

**Article 21.-**

Le Parlement est saisi du rapport annuel de la Cour des Comptes de la Communauté et des Cours ou Chambres des Comptes des Etats membres sur l'évaluation de systèmes de contrôle des comptes en vigueur dans la CEMAC.

Le rapport de la Cour des Comptes de la CEMAC sur l'exécution du budget de la Communauté est communiqué au Parlement pour information.

**Article 22.-**

Le Parlement peut constituer des commissions temporaires d'enquête, à la demande du quart (1/4) des Députés.

La décision est prise à la majorité absolue des Députés composant le Parlement.

**Article 23.-**

Le Parlement peut, à son initiative ou à leur demande, entendre :

- Le Président du Conseil des Ministres ou du Comité Ministériel;
- Le Président et les membres de la Commission ;
- Les responsables des Organes et des Institutions spécialisées de la CEMAC.

**Article 24.-**

Dans le cadre du contrôle démocratique, le Parlement exprime ses vues sous forme de résolutions ou de rapports.



## CHAPITRE II DE LA PARTICIPATION AU PROCESSUS DÉCISIONNEL

### Article 25.-

Le Parlement peut être consulté sur les projets d'Actes Additionnels, de règlements et de directives.

Cette consultation est obligatoire dans les domaines suivants :

- l'adhésion de nouveaux Etats membres ;
- les accords d'association avec les Etats tiers ;
- le budget de la Communauté ;
- les politiques sectorielles communes ;
- le droit d'établissement et la libre circulation des personnes, des biens et des services ;
- la procédure d'élection des membres du Parlement de la CEMAC ;
- les impôts, taxes et tous prélèvements communautaires.

L'avis conforme du Parlement est requis pour l'adhésion de nouveaux membres, les accords d'association avec les Etats tiers, le droit d'établissement et la libre circulation des personnes, des biens et des services.

### Article 26.-

Dans le cadre de la participation au processus décisionnel, le Parlement exprime ses vues sous forme de recommandations, d'avis simples ou conformes ou de propositions d'amendements.

### Article 27.-

Le Parlement peut inviter la Commission à développer ou à infléchir les politiques existantes ou à initier de nouvelles.

### Article 28.-

Chaque année, la Commission transmet le projet de budget de la Communauté arrêté par le Conseil des Ministres au Parlement, au plus tard trente (30) jours avant le début de la deuxième session ordinaire visée à l'article 9 de la présente Convention.

### Article 29.-

Le Parlement peut proposer des amendements au projet de budget.



Il renvoie alors le projet de budget à la Commission, dans un délai de dix (10) jours à compter de la fin de la deuxième session.

Le projet de budget accompagné des éventuels amendements du Parlement est transmis au Conseil des Ministres par la Commission pour adoption.

Lorsque le Conseil des Ministres rejette un amendement du Parlement, le Comité Permanent de Concertation est saisi.

### TITRE III DU COMITÉ PERMANENT DE CONCERTATION

#### Article 30.-

Il est créé un Comité Permanent de Concertation chargé de faciliter le dialogue entre le Parlement, le Conseil des Ministres, le Comité Ministériel et la Commission.

La composition, l'organisation et le fonctionnement dudit Comité font l'objet d'un règlement conjoint du Parlement, du Conseil des Ministres et du Comité Ministériel.

### TITRE IV DU RÈGLEMENT INTÉRIEUR DU PARLEMENT

#### Article 31.-

Le Règlement intérieur du Parlement de la CEMAC contient toutes dispositions nécessaires en vue d'appliquer et de compléter la présente Convention, en tant que de besoin.

Dès la session inaugurale, le Parlement procède à l'adoption de son Règlement intérieur et à la mise en place de ses structures.

Le Règlement intérieur, les résolutions, les recommandations et les avis simples ou conformes du Parlement sont publiés au Bulletin officiel de la Communauté.

Il en est de même des rapports que le Parlement décide de publier.

## TITRE V DES DISPOSITIONS TRANSITOIRES, FINANCIÈRES ET FINALES

### Article 32.-

Dans l'attente de l'élection des Députés de la CEMAC au suffrage universel direct et par dérogation aux articles 5 et 13 de la présente Convention:

- les Députés au Parlement sont désignés par l'Assemblée nationale de chaque Etat membre ;
- le nombre de Députés est fixé à cinq (5) par Etat membre ;
- la présidence du Parlement est exercée par un Député ressortissant de l'Etat qui assure la présidence de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat.

### Article 33.-

Le budget du Parlement est incorporé au budget de la Communauté. Le Parlement jouit d'une autonomie de gestion.

### Article 34.-

La présente Convention peut être amendée à l'initiative d'un Etat membre qui adresse à cet effet une demande écrite au Président de la Commission. La Conférence peut approuver le projet d'amendement lorsque tous les Etats membres en auront été dûment avisés, et après avis de la Cour de Justice de la CEMAC.

Le Parlement peut également, s'il le juge nécessaire, par l'intermédiaire du Président de la Commission, proposer des amendements à la présente Convention.

L'amendement entre en vigueur pour chaque Etat qui l'aura accepté trente (30) jours après la notification de cette acceptation au Président de la Commission.

### Article 35.-

La présente Convention sera ratifiée par les Etats membres en conformité avec leurs règles constitutionnelles respectives.

**Article 36.-**

La présente Convention entre en vigueur après sa signature par les Etats membres et soixante (60) jours après le dépôt de l'instrument de ratification auprès de la République du Tchad qui en informera les Etats membres signataires et leur en délivrera copies certifiées conformes.

**Article 37.-**

La présente Convention sera enregistrée, après ratification, auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies et de l'Union Africaine.

En foi de quoi, ont apposé leur signature au bas de la présente Convention,

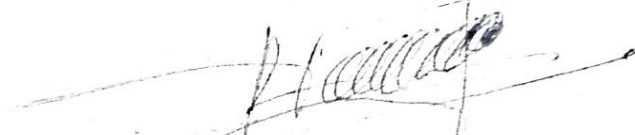
Fait à Yaoundé, le

Pour la République du Cameroun




**S.E. Paul BIYA**  
*Président de la République*

Pour la République Centrafricaine



**S.E. François BOZIZE YANGOUVOND**  
*Président de la République*

Pour la République du Congo

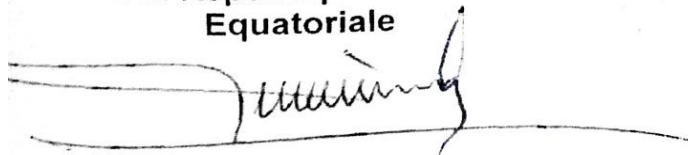


**S.E. Denis SASSOU NGUESSO**  
*Président de la République*  
Pour la République de Guinée  
Equatoriale

Pour la République Gabonaise



**S.E. OMAR BONGO ONDIMBA**  
*Président de la République*  
Pour la République du Tchad



**S.E. OBIANG NGUEMA MBASOGO**  
*Président de la République*



**S.E. Youssouf Saleh ABBAS**  
*Premier Ministre*

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02	Aka Amuam	76	Former MP Menchum South Constituency	Yaounde	16/04/22
03	Akwo Fabiola	62	Former Deputy Mayor Wum Council	Yaounde	07/02/22
04	Buh Christopher Mua	47	History Teacher Government High School Wum	Wum	11/01/22
05	Buh George Ngum	40	Teacher Angel Michael Bilingual College Essos	Yaounde	13/08/21
06	Buh Suleh Tegha	69	Senator Menchum	Yaounde	23/05/22
07	Chu Eric Kangha	34	Lecturer in the History Department of the University of Buea	Yaounde	27/08/21
08	Diaghambong Anthony	52	Mayor Wum Council	Wum	11/01/22
09	Efoua Mbozo'o Samuel	63	University Professor and specialist in Parliamentary History	Yaounde	18/08/21
10	Enjema Irene	45	Teacher Government Technical High School Nkolbisson	Yaounde	15/10/21
11	Essomba Marie Elise	61	Municipal Councilor Yaounde 3 Council	Yaounde	12/07/21
12	Kefih Therence Kai	32	Teacher Pharaohs Bilingual College Mimboman	Yaounde	17/08/21
13	Kibang Augustine	71	Retired Primary School Teacher	Buea	08/04/22
14	Kima Esther	45	Journalist CRTV	Yaounde	08/03/22
15	Kome Lucy	65	Retired Primary School Teacher	Yaounde	15/10/21
16	Kum Ignatius Waffo	45	History Teacher and Vice Principal Honor Bilingual Comprehensive College	Yaounde	22/06/22
17	Malla Linda	43	History Teacher Golden Bilingual College Nkolmesseng	Yaounde	17/06/22
18	Meyolo Joel Narcisse	40	Associate Professor in the University of Yaounde I and specialist in Parliamentary History	Yaounde	18/07/22
19	Nah Charles	53	Senior Lecturer Department of Modern Letters University of Yaounde I	Yaounde	20/11/21
20	Nchia Patrick Akwo	55	Politician and PLET	Yaounde	24/03/22
21	Nfaimboh Richard	40	Teacher Government High School Mimboman	Yaounde	16/04/22
22	Nji Fidelis Muziah	71	Former MP, Menchum North Constituency	Yaounde	22/08/21
23	Nono Immaculate	44	Teacher Government High School Mimboman	Yaounde	16/04/22
24	Osih Joshua	53	MP and Member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs	Yaounde	09/09/21
25	Piuple Rodrigue	38	Part Time Lecturer University of Yaounde	Yaounde	16/07/22
26	Sunjo Elvis Sevidzem	35	Teacher Government High School Mimboman	Yaounde	16/05/22
27	Takang Jane	76	Retired Civil Servant	Yaounde	07/02/22
28	Teng Sylvester Enah	56	Menchum Former Section President of the CPDM	Wum	11/01/22
29	Toukam André	55	Garbage Collector	Yaounde	08/07/22
30	Wallang David Akwo	68	Former Senator Menchum	Yaounde	22/08/21
31	Wallang Richard Ebua	52	MP Menchum South Constituency	Yaounde	25/08/21

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Decree n°2013/056 of 27 February 2013, which put in place the first ever Senate in Cameroon.

Law n°52-130 of 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1952 authorizing the creation of Group Assemblies, and local assemblies of West Africa and Togo, for French Equatorial Africa and for Cameroon and Madagascar.

Law n°91-020 of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1991 laying down conditions for the Elections of Parliamentarians into the National Assembly.

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