

**STATE VISIT TO TURKEY  
(25 March – 28 March 2013)**

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**Cameroon – Turkey Forum**

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**CLOSING SPEECH OF H.E. PAUL BIYA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

Istanbul, 27 March 2013

- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would, first of all, like to thank those who spoke before me for the kind and friendly words they said about my country.

Today, I am in Turkey, accompanied by a large delegation, at the invitation of the President of the Republic of this great country. We enjoy friendly and cooperation ties with Turkey which have been growing from strength to strength in recent years and my stay in Turkey is very pleasant.

At all levels, I held in-depth discussions with the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. One of the decisions taken during the discussions was to meet with the Turkish business community.

- **Mr President of the Confederation of Businesspeople and Industrialists of the Republic of Turkey,**
- **Presidents of the Consular Chambers of the Republic of Turkey,**
- **Business Leaders,**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to take the floor today, in this magnificent setting, at the end of the Cameroon-Turkey Economic Forum, in which you participated. Allow me to heartily thank you for the interest you have shown in Cameroon, which was obvious throughout your discussions with Members of the Government and the business leaders accompanying me.

- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you must have noticed during your discussions, Cameroon's economy has in recent years recorded remarkable performance, the complete opposite of the bleakness engendered by the international financial crisis that has been raging since 2008.

The growth rate estimated at 6 per cent this year has been constantly progressing. Compared to the 5.1 per cent growth rate in 2012, it is already almost better by one point. By the way, our objective is that this trend of a higher growth rate should continue in the coming years.

The prospecting and tapping of our oil and natural gas reserves, our emerging mining sector (iron, bauxite, cobalt and nickel), and a rise in domestic demand due to the start up of our major infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, dams, power stations, ports, airports, railways, etc.) will all contribute to the growth rate.

There are genuine opportunities on offer to support the supply of goods and services to various sub-sectors: agriculture, food industries, building and public works, telecommunications, energy, water, transport, to mention only a few.

There has also been improvement in public finance management, due to the combined effect of increasing internal revenue and recurrent public expenditure control, resulting in a budget tradeoff favourable to increased capital expenditure.

I would also like to reiterate the focus on governance, particularly in the economic sphere. This requires that we should sanitize the business environment by fighting corruption and abolishing bottlenecks and constraints which undermine doing business in Cameroon.

Since 2009, the Cameroon Business Forum has effectively been a government venue for dialogue between the public and private sectors. It is an appropriate framework for identifying and monitoring the implementation of reforms aimed at continuously improving the business environment. The reforms undertaken within this context have eased the creation of enterprises, settlement of invoices, tax exemptions, implementation of business contracts, promotion and protection of investments, and the development of cross-border trade.

There is room for Turkish investors in various sectors of Cameroon's economy. Our agro-pastoral and fisheries potential is very rich and varied, on account of the climatic and soil diversity. Arable land, which is about 85 per cent of the country's total surface area, is considerably underused, barely 20 per cent so far.

The full diversity of our agricultural production comprises subsistence and cash crop farming, including banana, cotton, cocoa, coffee, tea, sugarcane, natural rubber, cereals, fruits and vegetables, tubers, etc.

There are surely growth opportunities to develop, in like manner as the comparative advantage the Northern part and North-West of the Country have for cattle rearing in particular.

With its central position between the vast Nigerian market and that of the Central African and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Cameroon is located along a market potential of about 300 million consumers, if we include the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan.

The technical know-how of Turkish investors is also welcome to take full advantage of the 360 km of our maritime border, and the 17 million hectares of exploitable forests which make Cameroon the second forest area in Africa, home to close to 300 exploitable species, of which only about sixty are now exploited.

- Ladies and Gentlemen,

To develop that potential, Cameroon needs modern farms and food industries. We are sparing no effort so that all those who want to assist us should find investment and export incentives

Similarly, Cameroon which is “Africa in miniature”, has understood that it must develop its enormous tourist potentials.

Interested entrepreneurs will find, in our Growth Sectors Competitiveness Programme, the necessary incentives to invest in sea-side tourism, photo safaris, cultural tourism, mountain hiking, ecotourism and business tourism.

As I said on other occasions, notably during the banquet offered in our honour by my counterpart and friend, the President of the Republic of Turkey, our “Major Accomplishments” Programme, which revolves around a number of major projects in the energy, infrastructure, mining, and agricultural sectors aim to make Cameroon an emerging country by 2035.

The economic strengths and priorities I have just said we have are enhanced by social peace, political stability and solid institutions that Cameroon and its people strive to preserve.

Thus, Cameroon has always trusted its external partners, including Turkey, which has pride of place in many respects, and has the capacity and competence to meet our needs.

During discussions with the Prime Minister of your great country, I was pleased to note that we both think our trade must reach a floor value of 500 million dollars. I think we will achieve that target.

I would thus like to conclude by saying, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you are welcome to Cameroon, where you will find the hospitality, assistance and security necessary for your business to thrive.

Thank you for your kind attention.