

# **SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF STATE**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **In Response to the Presentation of New Year Wishes by the Diplomatic Corps**

Yaounde, 9 January 2020

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,

I would, first of all, like to thank you for the kind and encouraging words you have just spoken about my country.

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

The decade that has just ended, like the past year, was marked by serious threats to international peace and security. Faced with the huge challenges posed to humanity as a whole, namely terrorism, climate change, migratory movements, the rise of populism, etc., the international community made multiple efforts to find solutions. However, much remains to be done.

Even though the fight against terrorism is recording some success in Syria and Iraq, there is concern that without genuine and sincere solidarity among States, this scourge could spread to other parts of the world and intensify. I am thinking particularly of Africa, especially the Sahel region where Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad are already affected.

Cameroon has not been spared.

This affords me the opportunity to commend the G5 Sahel Member States which are making considerable efforts to neutralize terrorists. I also pay tribute to France whose troops are participating courageously in the fight against jihadists, under Operation Barkhane.

Cameroon, for its part, is working together with all the neighbouring countries of the Lake Chad basin and international partners of goodwill to neutralize the Boko Haram sect's capacity to wreak havoc.

Such solidarity is all the more necessary as our developing States need increased financial resources to build road, rail, port, energy and industrial infrastructure for their development. Such facilities foster the creation of many jobs that can dissuade our youths from venturing into other continents, thus sparing us the unfortunate incidents that have turned the Mediterranean Sea into a vast, hideous cemetery at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

The international community is also duty-bound to seek solutions to the trade tensions existing between major powers, which do not only limit global trade, but also undermine the development opportunities of our States.

Similarly, special attention must be paid to the increasingly obvious risk of challenging multilateralism which has so far spared the human community another global conflict.

This challenge is unfortunately accompanied by the advent, in some countries, of "populist governments" that favour national solutions to global and common problems.

It is hoped that there will be a collective awareness that environmental, climate, development and migration issues sufficiently demonstrate the interdependence of States and the need to act in a spirit of solidarity to find appropriate solutions to them.

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

During the year just ended, Cameroon redoubled its efforts to maintain peace and security across its territory.

Thus, in the Far-North Region, we beefed up the presence of our Defence and Security Forces in order to curb or even prevent incursions by terrorists of the Boko Haram sect who, unfortunately, continue to cause human and material losses.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to make a fraternal appeal to all the affected countries of the Lake Chad basin to remobilize and redouble their efforts in order to permanently neutralize these terrorists.

Regarding the problems in our North-West and South-West Regions, various measures have been taken to objectively anticipate a return to lasting peace in the short term.

The Major National Dialogue afforded an opportunity to make recommendations, some of which are being implemented, with laws recently passed by Parliament. Thus, our two regions of the North-West and South-West have been granted, within the framework of our Republic, a special status which largely meets the aspirations of our fellow citizens living there.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to friendly countries and international organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the African Union for their understanding, assistance and support in the management of this sensitive problem.

Regarding the economy, Cameroon intends to resolutely continue its march towards emergence, despite difficulties and pitfalls. Its National Development Strategy for the period 2020-2030 aims to achieve that goal.

Our country also welcomes the coming into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area which, it hopes, will offer new prospects for intra-African trade.

On the diplomatic front, Cameroon played host to many high-ranking foreign dignitaries and heads of international organizations in 2019. With all these guests, I shared the viewpoint of our country which needs peace and security, conditions conducive to sustainable development to which all our compatriots legitimately aspire.

This is the reason why I participated in the Peace Forum held last November in Paris.

Because of my country's firm resolve to eradicate the pandemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, I attended the Sixth Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund devoted to the fight against these diseases.

At that conference, Cameroon made a substantial contribution commensurate with its level of resources and development. Once more, I would like to commend the efforts made by France which mobilized the international community to ensure that the Global Fund to fight these pandemics receives the requisite resources for its work.

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

In my opinion, the international community still has to answer the following question: can the world continue to evolve in a context of “trade war”, mistrust between States and misunderstanding between the citizens and those who govern them?

If, as one would imagine, the answer is negative, I believe that only an international conference at the highest level could lay the groundwork for “Act II of globalization”, to borrow from an eminent political scientist<sup>1</sup>, that is, globalization that places man and his environment at the centre of any economic activity.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

I would now like to request you to kindly convey my best wishes for the New Year to the high authorities you represent.

I also extend to you and your families my most sincere wishes for happiness, health and success in 2020

Long live international cooperation!  
Long live international solidarity!

Thank you for your attention.

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bertrand Badie (Sciences Po – Paris).