



76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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General Debate

(From 21 to 27 September 2021)

Theme: "Building Resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations"

STATEMENT BY H.E. PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

*Delivered by the Minister of External Relations
of the Republic of Cameroon*

New York, 25 September 2021

- Mr President,

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of this session and assure you of the support and full collaboration of the Cameroonian delegation. Without any doubt, your rich experience will help to ensure the success of our proceedings.

Furthermore, I would like to commend the remarkable work done by your predecessor, Mr VOLKAN BOZKIR, and to appreciate the positive outcomes recorded during his stewardship, against the backdrop of major challenges compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to extend my hearty and warm congratulations to Mr Antonio GUTERRES on his re-election to the helm of the United Nations General Secretariat for a second term. He will thus have the opportunity to keep up the outstanding progress achieved during his previous tenure, notably in terms of reforms and, more specifically, with regard to the repositioning of the United Nations Development System.

Also, I would like to assure him of my country's commitment to supporting him in strengthening the United Nations and implementing a global agenda for peace and sustainable development.

- Mr President,
- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with conviction that, on Cameroon's behalf, I am taking the floor in this general debate on the theme: *"Building Resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations"*

I find this theme very apt at a time when mankind is confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic. Its devastating social and economic effects are calling into question the progress achieved in poverty reduction, and jeopardizing the achievement of our 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

A strong appeal should now be launched for a renewed impetus to be given to human solidarity in order to take our "common destiny" into our hands.

To secure "the future we want", we cannot afford to continue shying away from the multiple significant commitments made during recent conferences on environment and climate change, in particular the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for sustainable development.

The COVID-19 pandemic affords us the opportunity to provide concerted, lasting and comprehensive solutions to the multiple threats and global and complex challenges facing our planet and humanity.

- Mr President,

It is important to urgently catch up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a delay stemming from non-fulfilment of the commitments made and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To that end, our political will should remain steadfast.

We need to strengthen multilateralism through the resolute practice of solidarity and by providing the Secretary-General and the United Nations System with the wherewithal and adequate and predictable resources to manage our "common home".

In that regard, I believe the reform of the Security Council remains topical. Africa should be represented therein, with two permanent seats and all the associated rights, and two additional non-permanent seats, as claimed by our Continent in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

- Mr President,
- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a need to move from promises to firm commitments in order to actualize equal access to COVID-19 vaccines, and support low-income countries on the path of science and technology, thus enabling them to address the multiple challenges they face.

Let us swing into action to reform the global economic system and ensure fairer trade.

My country seizes this opportunity to hail the proposal for a global minimum tax rate on multinational companies, in the hope that it will come into effect as soon as possible.

- Mr President,
- Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Humanity is currently plagued by the following scourges:

- climate change,
- multiple conflicts the world over,
- growing terrorism,
- cybercrime,
- sea and ocean pollution,
- non-peaceful uses of space, including outer space,
- social media misuse,
- forest ecosystems degradation,
- biodiversity damage,
- maritime piracy, and
- migrant tragedy.

My country welcomes the upcoming COP26 and the Stockholm+50 Conference. We will lend our support towards ensuring the success of these events. Our bilateral and multilateral partners should deliver on their commitments to provide developing countries with the requisite financial and technological resources to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes.

No one can be safe in today's increasingly globalized world, unless appropriate measures are taken to ensure security. Let me recall that my country is still waging a war against Boko Haram terrorism in its northern part, and enhancing cooperation with other Lake Chad Basin countries.

By contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations, Cameroon is demonstrating its steadfast commitment to international peace and security.

We are keeping up efforts in our North-West and South-West regions to end the socio-political tensions fuelled by armed groups. In this regard, we have set up a comprehensive mechanism comprising:

- a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme,
- a humanitarian assistance plan,
- a reconstruction plan for these two regions,
- a national commission on the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism,
- a special status conferring on the two regions in question:
 - o a regional assembly,
 - o a House of Chiefs,
 - o a regional executive board, and
 - o Public Independent Conciliators.

These strides have been possible thanks to the Major National Dialogue that we organized.

The Government's action is already yielding tangible results with a gradual return to peace. Despite some sporadic acts of banditry perpetrated by armed gangs, the situation is improving as the days go by. Our Defence and Security Forces have been deployed on the ground to protect the population and their property with professionalism and respect for human rights.

Cameroon has embarked on an extensive programme of reforms aimed at achieving emergence by 2035 in keeping with the United Nations Sustainable Development Programme and the African Union Agenda 2063.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank our bilateral and multilateral partners for their assistance in this endeavour.

- Mr President,
- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are going through a period marked by multiple challenges, but also multiple opportunities. It behoves us to learn all the lessons, and to work together towards building a world of peace, security and well-being for each and every one.

Such is the path Cameroon has resolutely embarked upon.

Thank you for your kind attention.