

**MAJOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE
GRAND DIALOGUE NATIONAL**



**REPORT OF THE RAPPOREUR GENERAL OF THE
MAJOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE.**

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DIALOGUE NATIONAL.**

**4 OCTOBER 2019
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PALAIS DES CONGRES DE YAOUNDE**

REPORT OF THE RAPPORTEUR GENERAL OF THE MAJOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE

On the esteemed instructions of the Head of State, His Excellency President Paul Biya, Convening Authority, the Major National Dialogue held in the Yaounde Conference Centre, from 30th September to 4th October 2019, under the chairmanship of H.E. Chief Dr Dion NGUTE, Prime Minister, Head of Government.

As a prelude to the dialogue proper, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, held pre-dialogue consultations with the view to determining not only the most suitable framework for this Dialogue, but also to solicit contributions and opinions from a broad spectrum of Cameroonians including those who continue to perpetrate acts of violence and terror across the country, notably in the South West and North West Regions.

The public responded positively to the Head of State's call for National Dialogue and the restoration of peace as witnessed in the continuous stream of delegations

comprising lawyers, teachers, civil society actors, political leaders, religious authorities, trade union officials, student organisations and independent personalities who were received by the Prime Minister.

Concurrently, the Government dispatched renowned civil society personalities to meet with the Diaspora in an effort to engage them in the restoration of peace and security in the fatherland. These visits served to further demonstrate the great commitment of the Head of State. H.E President Paul BIYA to involve Cameroonians residing overseas in the search for a lasting solution to the raging crisis in the afflicted Regions.

Governors of the ten (10) Regions also engaged with inhabitants of their area of command to review all possible ways of making inputs to the process. For the Governors of the South West and North West Regions, the challenge was daunting for they had to contend

with displaced populations, ghost town operations and armed militia. The objective was to provide incentives for armed activists to cease insurgent operations and benefit from the government program on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration in the centres of their Region. Furthermore, it was hoped that through public sensitisation, communities, particularly the youth who had fled into the forest, could return to their villages and towns.

Cameroon's diplomatic missions likewise invited our compatriots for brainstorming sessions aimed at generating contributions which would enrich the deliberations in the Major National Dialogue.

Some of these contributions were only a few lines while others were in the hundreds of pages. A sociological breakdown of these contributions reveals that wide sections of the Cameroon population and stakeholders in conflict zones weighed in.

These contributions concerned losses suffered by students, parents, businessmen, medical and health

personnel, civilians military personnel as well as Cameroonians.

Worthy of note is the fact that recurrent themes in the contributions received by the Secretariat resonate in many ways with the content of the speech of the Head of State delivered on 10 September 2019.

From 30 September to 4 October 2019, 600 participants were invited by the Prime Minister, Head of Government, Chairperson of the Major National Dialogue, following the pre-dialogue consultations. Participants split into various Commissions which were generally composed of a bureau with a President, vice-presidents and rapporteurs. As instructed by the Chief Convenor, the Head of State, H.E Paul BIYA, two-thirds of the participants were drawn from the North West and South West Regions while about 5% came from the Diaspora.

The dialogue was, as per the guidelines contained in the Message of the Head of State of 10 September 2019

convening the Major National Dialogue, carried out in plenary and Commission breakout sessions.

The opening of the Major National Dialogue started with oecumenical prayers, led by:

Imam Cheikh Oumarou

Pasteur Gustave Ebai

Pasteur Alain Ruben NGWET

Monseigneur Jean MBARGA.

It was followed by a welcome address by the Government Delegate to the Yaounde City Council, Gilbert Tsimi EVOUNA, and messages from ex-combatants, from the DDR Centre, most prominent amongst which was that delivered by Kawa Kawa Yannick.

Thereafter, the Prime Minister, Head of Government and Chairperson of the Major National Dialogue:

- welcomed the holding of this Major National Dialogue ;

- According to him, the consultations he held prior to this Major Event enabled him to realise the ardent desire by Cameroonians from all walks of life, for a return to peace in our country, the recovery of economic activities in the two Regions and a generalised social appeasement.
- He urged participants to show proof of patriotism and responsibility throughout the duration of the Dialogue, given the myriad expectations of Cameroonians in this connection.
- He recalled that the social and security context in the North-West and South-West, as well as in other Regions, especially in the far-North Region, is affecting all aspects of the life of our country. Thus, and in his own words, this suffering and these difficulties have been affecting us all, and together shall we find solutions through dialogue.

Keynote speakers at the first plenary session that followed included:

H.E. Peter MAFANY MUSONGE

H.M NFON MUKETE

H.M. Rene ZE NGUELE

H.M. Boubakary ABDOULAYE

Chairman Ni John FRU NDI

H.M. Sadou BOUKAR

H.M. René EFFA

Madam Fadimatou IYAWA

Dr. Simon MUNZU

Sultan Ibrahim MBOMBO NJOYA

His Eminence Christian Cardinal TUMI

Madam Calixte BEYALA

Chief Dr. ATEM EBAKO

Most of the keynote speakers decried the senseless violence, killings kidnappings, destruction of public property and livelihoods, and called on the participants to set aside their differences and political party affiliations to work for peace and normalcy to return to our beloved fatherland.

In this regard, keynote speakers stressed the fact that we are sons and daughters of:

- a territory whose overall boundaries were set, not by us, but by foreign powers in treaties which we were not part of;
- a territory which was divided into two zones of unequal sizes, again under terms of treaties between foreign powers to which we were not parties;
- a territory in which two foreign cultures were grafted one on each of the two zones as delimited by foreign powers on existing indigenous cultures, with each foreign culture being raised to a national status.

The sons and daughters of these two parts could have remained definitely apart if the people of one part had not chosen, in February 1961, to forge a new nation with the people of the other.

This decision to come together and form a new nation was the single event in our history which we should be most proud of, because unlike the previous

other developments in the constitution of our nation, this one was not decided by foreign powers, but by us Cameroonians.

This explains the need to remain faithful to our initial intent to make our bilingual and bicultural heritage be of equal status, instead of an obstacle to our development.

Keynote speakers emphasised on organisational forms like decentralisation, federation and confederation. However, it was a common understanding that placing political science labels on the Cameroonian nation was not as vital as the content given to the form of power sharing with the Regions.

It was also a common view that the responsibility to address these issues was primarily that of the Cameroonian people even if the constructive support of our partners could be required at certain moments.

The common thread running through the general discourse was that, as Cameroonian minds, we need to collectively tone down the rhetoric and work towards

ending the suffering of our people and return normalcy to their lives and livelihoods.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, the participants brainstormed on Eight (8) main themes highlighted in the message delivered by the Head of State, namely:

- 1- *Bilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion***
- 2- *Educational System***
- 3- *Judicial System***
- 4- *The Return of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons***
- 5- *Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas***
- 6- *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Ex-Combattants***
- 7- *Role of the Diaspora in the Crisis and in the Country's Development***
- 8- *Decentralisation and Local Development.***

The enthusiasm for the Dialogue could be seen in the quality of participants – spanning actors of the political, administrative, religious, traditional, private and civil society sectors of our society as well as their effective presence from the beginning through the end of the process.

The dialogue process was free, fair, transparent and sometimes passionate- a reflection of the vitality and keen interest that Cameroonians have in addressing the plight that has befallen our country in its most recent history.

Participants within the Commissions largely determined their procedures for deliberations and the outcome was a true restitution of their concerns, preoccupations, anxieties and most importantly their hopes for a better future for all Cameroonians.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Participants,

At this juncture, permit me highlight some of the major Recommendations that emerged from proceedings of the various Commissions:

1- **BILINGUALISM, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION/BILINGUISM, DIVERSITÉ CULTURELLE ET COHÉSION SOCIALE**

- Enhancing the **practice of Bilingualism** in all segments of society through the creation and implementation of programs starting from pre-school ages;
- Enrooting **Cultural Diversity** through a strict implementation of regional balance and equitable access to public service and security forces;
- Conceive and implement a curriculum on Inter Community Fellowship, Rebuilding Fraternal Trust and Civic Engagement in an effort to strengthen **National Social Cohesion**.
- Pass legislation that spells out the equitable use of both official languages in all areas of national life;
- Develop and codify principles for social dialogue, social cohesion and living together.

2- **EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM/SYSTEM EDUCATIF**

- Ensure that educational reforms integrate the need to keep the two educational subsystems afloat,

buoyant and futuristic, recognising the unique strengths and specificities of each subsystem, building on the strengths of each one to train well rounded and excellent Cameroonian graduates who will excel wherever they go

- Ensure that Teachers' Trade Unions should work in collaboration with the Government
- Regulate the proliferation of Teachers Trade Unions and promote better organisation of the Trade Unions to ensure synergy from the regional to national level.

3- JUDICIAL SYSTEM/SYSTEME JUDICIAIRE

- translate all legal instruments into both official languages and ensure their simultaneous publication in both official languages;
- take into account the prerequisite of English language proficeincy and the mastery of the Common Law legal system when deploying judiciary staff to the North-West and South-West Regions;
- set up a Law School for training lawyers and all legal practitioners at large in Cameroon;
- upgrade the Common Law Section of the Supreme Court of Cameroon into a fully fledged Legal Bench

comprising all sections dealing with specific matters of the Common Law;

- improve mechanisms for legal cooperation in view of commencing proceedings to call to book those financing terrorism from foreign countries;

4- The Return of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

- The State should set up communication channels for a better deployment of the army and freer movement of the people, as well as take measures for the construction of decent homes for displaced persons;
- Take measures geared towards granting general amnesty to foster the return of refugees and internally displaced persons;
- proceed to the physical headcount of all displaced persons and come up with an estimate of their basic socio-economic needs (schools, health facilities, accommodation...);
- Provide 'resettlement and reintegration kits' to refugees and internally displaced persons;

5- Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas

To formulate a vast Programme for the Recovery, Reconstruction and Development of the North-West, South-West and Far-North regions, aimed at improving the living conditions of the populations and consolidating social cohesion and national unity, the following actions were recommended:

- The immediate resumption of projects whose works have been suspended over the past three years due to the crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions such as the Babajou-Bamenda road, the Loum-Tombel-Kumba Mundemba-Akwa Road etc;
- The rehabilitation of public facilities and public infrastructure destroyed or rendered obsolete as a result of lack of use because of the crises, particularly in the areas of education, health, transport, energy, water and communications infrastructure;
- The reconstruction of priority economic infrastructures in order to provide support or revive productive systems through revamping the public agro-industrial companies in the affected regions (CDC, PAMOL, UNVDA, SEMRY, SODECOTON);
- The compensation for losses suffered by private individuals, religious congregations, Chiefs' Palaces, communities and private production and service provision units as well as direct social assistance schemes for victims;

The voluntarist creation of sustainable jobs for young people and women with a special focus on those from the crisis-affected regions

6- Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Ex-Combattants/ Desarmement, Demobilisation et Reintegration des Ex- Combattants

- Elaborer et implémenter une stratégie holistique de communication qui met de l'emphase sur l'offre de paix que le Chef de l'Etat, Son Excellence Paul BIYA a bien voulu offrir aux jeunes combattants;
- Etablir des ponts entre ces jeunes, le CNDDR et les Forces de défense et de Sécurité et suspendre la fabrication des armes de fabrication artisanales et renforcer la lutte contre la dissémination d'armes légères ;
- Envisager le traitement des jeunes aussi bien aux plans spirituels, psychique que physiques à travers des programmes de désintoxication dus à la consommation excessive de drogue et à un endoctrinement intensif par des individus de la diaspora.
- Intégrer l'aspect Community Violence Reduction dans le programme DDR;

7- Role of the Diaspora in the Crisis and in the Country's Development/ Role de la Diaspora dans la Crise et sa Contribution au Développement du Cameroun

- The **revision-reform of the nationality code** such that dual or multiple nationality be authorised,
- The adoption of the **principle of parliamentary and governmental representation of the Diaspora** (A ministry dedicated to the Diaspora).
- The creation of a **High Council of the Diaspora** in the host countries with elected leaders, membership being conditioned by the possession of a consular card,
- The creation of a team responsible for mediation with radicalised members of our Diaspora and,
- The creation of a transnational investment and development agency for the Diaspora.

8- Decentralisation and Local Development/ Decentralisation et Développement Local.

- The endowment of the North West and South West Regions with a Special status in conformity with Section 62 Sub 2 of the Constitution which states that the law may take into consideration the specificities

of certain Regions with regards to their organization and functioning,

- The effective putting in place of Regions as soon as possible,
- The disbursement of special allocation to each of the Councils in the North West and South West to facilitate the effective resumption to certain agglomerations,
- The suppression of the provision for the appointment of Government Delegates provided for within the Special Regime applicable to certain agglomerations,
- A substantial reduction of the powers of the supervisory authority;
- In view of the reinforcement of the financial autonomy of local authorities, the Commission recommended the:

a-effective implementation of Section 32 Sub 2 of the Law on the orientation of Decentralisation which stipulates the finance law will determine, on the proposal of the government, the proportion of the State revenue dedicated to the Common Decentralization Fund. In this connection, the participants proposed that a margin of 10-15% of the State budget be allocated to the Councils,

b-the waiver of the principle on the single treasury account which delays the effective transfer of funds to local authorities.

It is noteworthy to mention that some of the Recommendations need to be specifically highlighted. These include the Recommendation to;

- Grant a special status to the North-West and South-West Regions, in conformity with Section 62 Sub 2 of the Constitution;
- Take specific measures to ensure equality of English and French in all aspects of national life;
- Reinforce the autonomy of Decentralised Local Entities;
- Improve upon the infrastructure of judicial services throughout the country;
- Strengthen the Humanitarian Assistance Program to better serve internally displaced persons;
- Institute a special plan to reconstruct the conflict-affected areas;
- Popularise the Head of State's offer of amnesty to combatants who drop their weapons and enter the reintegration process; **and,**
- Create a team responsible for mediation with radicalised members of our Diaspora.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a matter of fact, judging from the Opening Speech of H.E. Chief Dr. Joseph Dion NGUTE, Chairperson of the Major National Dialogue or the keynote speakers at the Opening ceremony, or again, during the general discussions in the first plenary session, many recurrent points came to the fore, such as :

- The overwhelming commitment of all participants to the oneness and indivisibility of Cameroon ;
- The unanimous determination and willingness of all to find, sooner than later, solutions that put a definitive end to the socio-political and security crises in the North-West and South-West Regions;
- The necessity for a pragmatic approach that gives pride of place to the content of concrete and realistic solutions that shall culminate in a greater devolution of powers;
- The spirit of reconciliation and compromise while demonstrating a high sense of creativity and willingness in the search for lasting solutions.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This frank, exhaustive dialogue, during which no topic was considered taboo, was an eloquent testimony to the fact that we all were, in our respective capacities, strongly determined to lift our country out of the spiral of violence in which the crisis of the three previous years had plunged it.

Our patriotism, coupled with our very high sense of the general interest could only but strengthen the spirit of compromise that characterised our proceedings.

The outcome should, I am confident, pave the way for peace to return to our battered Regions, thus facilitating reconstruction projects and a return to normalcy in the North-West and South-West Regions.

As I stated yesterday, no human endeavour is perfect. On behalf of the Technical Secretariat, I hereby reiterate my sincere apologies and crave your indulgence for any imperfections you may have observed during this Major Event.

In conclusion, I would like to record my sincere thanks to all participants for the multidimensional support they provided to the success of this event. I also owe a debt of gratitude to bureau members of the eight Commissions, technical support teams and all backroom staff whose contribution was vital to the results we have today.

Your Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen, the Chairperson of the Major national Dialogue, such is the nutshell of the work of all participants in the Major National Dialogue.

May I, once more, through you, Your Excellency the Prime Minister, Head of Government, with all deference, extend my heartfelt gratitude to the **HEAD OF STATE, H.E. PAUL BIYA** for the trust bestowed upon my humble person.

Thank you for your kind attention.