



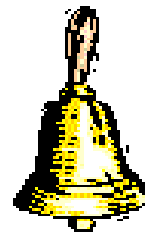
**OSIWA**

# THE BELL

WORKING FOR A JUST AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON

A Monthly Publication of FIDA, GNGG, HELP OUT and MUDEC

Sponsored by The Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA)



May 2006

## Labour Day 2006

A TRADE UNION MESSAGE DELIVERED BY MR. VEWESSE C.P.N.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE CAMEROON CONFEDERATION OF AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNIONS (CCATU), ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2006 LABOUR DAY MANIFESTATIONS IN FAKO DIVISION

Honorable Parliamentarians for Fako Constituencies,  
Leaders of various Political Parties,  
The Division Delegate of Labour and Social Security,  
The Government Delegate, Limbe Urban Council  
The Lord Mayors of the Limbe, Buea, Tiko, Muyuka,  
and Idenau Rural Councils,  
Your Royal Highnesses,  
Honorable invitees,  
Fellow workers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006 is the worker's traditional holiday which is celebrated as "Labour Day" and the 116<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of this day as a public holiday for working men and women by the Socialist International in commemoration of those workers who died in 1886 fighting for better wages and better working and living conditions. After the **Chicago Riots of 1886** in which several workers were killed, the International Socialist took four years of debate and consultation to arrive at a consensus to proclaim first of May which is the beginning of spring in Europe as a public holiday throughout the socialist world.

The first Labour Day, was celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1890. In the United States of America "Labour Day" is celebrated on the 6<sup>th</sup> September and not 1<sup>st</sup> May, on this day we as workers have to come out and march in protest of the ills in our society and publicly manifest our grievance to our employers and the public authorities. Let me briefly touch on the evolution of the Labour Day in Cameroon up to today's occasion.

During the period of colonial occupation, 1<sup>st</sup> May, each year was simply observed as a public holiday in honoring of working men and women.

After independence up to the early seventies when by provision of Decree N° 72/610 of 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1972, the then single Trade Union Centre became appendage to the then single political party. Labour Day celebration was being organized by Trade Unions, up to the year 2003, when the organization of Labour Day became the preoccupation of public administration who are today the hosts and the Trade Unions, mere invitees to this workers' traditional day occasion. It is for this reason that as invitees, the Trade



**C.P.N. Vewesse**

Unions cannot make a welcome address as they did in the past when they hosted the occasion. Being that this day is a special day for working men and women, I will like to take this opportunity to say a few words on this important occasion marking, the 116<sup>th</sup> to take anniversary since the 1890 proclamation of this day.

Let me start with the Trade Union movement because that is where we all as workers belong and that is where we must start our objective self-criticism, because I believe that charity begins at home.

The Trade Union movement in Cameroon has come to mean different things to different people rather than a social organization of the workers, by the worker and for the workers. This may be due to the fact that for a long time during the one party era the single Trade Union centre was an appendage to the single political party and this seems to have created the impression that Trade Unions are set up to lend support to political parties and management of state enterprises and parastatals. Basic Divisional Trade Unions should be concerned with individual and collective workers' grievances and the demands they make of private sector employers. Thus, the role of the Basic Divisional Trade Union is set out in Section 3 of the Law N° 92/007 of 14<sup>th</sup> August 1992 and the role is to defend and protect the interest of workers particularly those of an economic, social, cultural and the moral advancement of their members. The unions to which the worker belongs is that in his occupation. A worker cannot therefore be a member of a confederation.

In playing this role, Basic Unions have the responsibility of ensuring that their members increase their productivity and by so doing, they will be contributing to the profitability of their enterprises. For workers to become professionally conscious and committed to work, they need to be given recognition as human beings, they need to be rewarded and their complaints and grievances need be given prompt attention by employers.

In order for the Basic Divisional Trade Union to be coherent when bargaining for Sectorial National Collective Agreement, they are authorized by the provisions of Prime Ministerial Decree n° -93/574 of 15 /07/93 to set up National Federations of the workers occupational Trade Union and Confederations. The Structures of Trade Unions are therefore different from political party structure.

A Federation of Trade Union is constituted by the coming of Sectorial Division Basic Unions in a particular economic sector, and a Confederation is constituted by National Trade Unions and National Federation of Trade Unions affiliated to it. Depending on their constitutions National Trade Unions have different roles to play and for the four years that remain for us to arrive at the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are presently facing the kind of problem which need that we should be speaking with one Voice and not several Voices, that we should act in concert in finding solutions to many problems confronting us as workers and other people in our societies. We confront a host of problems, which require not first aids, but fundamental solutions, to the political system, which is marred by collusion between politicians, bureaucrats, and business and the fact that a majority of voters no longer support any particular party and the falling voters, turn out. Structural Adjustment changes forced upon us by the World Bank devoid of any stable future vision be the concern of trade unions.

Trade Unions cannot afford to take a purely passive response to these changes that are affecting Cameroon workers and turning social labour into slavery in the private sector

# The Open Society Institute & The Soros Foundations Network

The Open Society Institute (OSI) is a private operating and grant-making foundation based in New York City that serves as the hub of the Soros Foundations Network, a group of autonomous foundations and organisations in more than 50 countries. OSI and the network implement a range of initiatives that aim to promote open societies by shaping government policy and supporting education, media, public health, and human and women's rights, as well as social, legal, and economic reform.

To diminish and prevent the negative



### George Soros extends support to Africa

consequences of globalisation, OSI seeks to foster global open society by increasing collaboration with other nongovernmental

organisations, governments, and international institutions.

OSI was founded in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established starting in 1984, to help former communist countries in their transition to democracy. The Soros Foundations network has expanded its geographic reach to include foundations and initiatives in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Mongolia, Southeast Asia, Turkey, and the United

## The Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA)

The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) is dedicated to supporting the creation of open societies in West Africa, marked by functioning democracy, good governance, the rule of law, basic freedoms, and widespread civic participation. OSIWA believes that it best serves by sustaining catalytic and innovative initiatives that add value to the efforts of West Africa's civil society. OSIWA seeks to collaborate with advocacy groups, like-minded foundations, governments and donors.



Abdul Tejan Cole  
Chair of OSIWA's Board of Directors



Mrs. Nana Tanko  
Executive Director, OSIWA

OSIWA further recognises the importance of incorporating global developments in building open societies and seeks a greater commitment to the region by rich nations.

OSIWA serves 15 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as Cameroon, Chad, and Mauritania. The ECOWAS members are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

OSIWA is based in Dakar, Senegal. The foundation also maintains an office in Abuja, Nigeria, which focuses on good governance and human rights programs in Nigeria.

## EDITORIAL

Workers all over the world once more gathered on May 1 to celebrate and ask for respect, consideration, social security and better working conditions from their employers.

In a mad rush for profit maximisation, employers have transformed their workers into slaves. They want to be glorified for every sporadic action that they take in the favour of their employees even when the latter are rightfully entitled to. Some employers shamelessly resort to the employment of children who work long hours for little or no pay. Workers grumble in silence for fear of dismissals, replacements etc. Workers remain powerless because they are so divided. Trade Unionists did complain on May 1 in Cameroon. Their situation would have been better if their employers respected ethical principles of Good Corporate Governance, and strived to create a more open society. However, workers can still make ends meet by carrying out other income-generating activities.

Dear Readers, our Coalition continues with activities within the PCMODS-SWP Project. More civic education manuals have been distributed; human rights clubs have also been created in schools while THE BELL continues its journey as your favourite noise-maker.

Enjoy your reading!



By George Mbella

## WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY



Information is all around us. With the proliferation of so-called new media, new technologies and new ways of distributing content, information has become more accessible. It is also becoming more diverse. Mainstream media reporting, for example is being supplemented by "participatory media" such as blogs.

But as media and journalists evolve, certain bedrock principles remain paramount. On World Press Freedom Day, I again declare my firm support for the universal right to freedom of expression. Many members of the press have been killed, maimed, detained or targeted in other ways for pursuing the right in good conscience. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 47 were killed in 2005, and 11 have lost lives so far this year. It is tragic and unacceptable that the number of journalists killed in the line of duty has become a barometer for measuring press freedom. I urge all governments to reaffirm their commitment to the "right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers", as set out in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...

On World Press Freedom Day, let us recognise that national and global media not only report on change, but are themselves agents of change. We should all be grateful for the work and imagination of the press. I trust old and new media alike will be able to continue their work, unencumbered by threats, fear or other constraint.

By Kofi Annan

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# LABOUR DAY 2006

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of the economy. Just like in the political arena, Trade Unions are being defanged and rendered important and just like in a political arena, Trade Unions are being set up on political and tribal lines to serve particular interest groups, rather than being social organization of workers. These emerging perfidious political surrogate Trade Unions cannot be the vehicle by which we can bring change in our enterprises and in our society. Freedom of association does not mean the destruction of existing Trade Unions, whereas there are many enterprises, public collectives and services enterprises where there are no Trade Unions, and where the presence of Trade Unions is badly needed.

Workers have to be vigilant and not allow themselves to be deceived by tribal charlatans who are stooges in the service of some employers or sectional group interest, as such Unions can never be at the service of the suffering masses. True Trade Unions will have to and must take up the challenges presented to them creatively and actively, in a way appropriate to Trade unions.

Mr. Senior Divisional Officer, Ladies and Gentlemen. Having said this let me identify some of the challenges the workers will be facing in the days and months ahead. First, we have the imminent privatization of the rubber crop and the oil palm sectors of the Agro-industrial Corporation, CDC. We all are witnesses to what happened to the Tea Crop Privatization in October 2002, and how the workers were made to lose their past services with their former employer CDC and how they have been transformed from social Labour to slave Labour by the new owners. The Union and the workers will never accept any further privatization without the payment of the workers' rights under their present contracts.

If today government has listed CDC for privatization, it is thanks to the tremendous financial sacrifices the staff and employees of CDC made from 1990 to 1994, which in monetary terms amounted to some 4.5 billion of francs CFA. Without the financial sacrifices, the CDC risked liquidation as in the case of Cameroon Bank and the National Produce Marketing Board. This 4.5 billion interest free loan the workers made to CDC to keep CDC in business enabled government to list CDC for privatization as an ongoing business concern, makes it only necessary but imperative for government Bureaucrats and the Management of CDC to have consulted the tea crop workers and their Trade Unions before the final decision was taken to privatize the Tea Sector to the famous CTE. In keeping with the saying that prevention is better than cure, the Fako Agricultural Worker's Union had forwarded to the Management of CDC and Board of Directors a comprehensive memorandum in which amongst other demands was the demand for CDC to pay-off the workers before privatization as set out in the Labour Code. This Memorandum is dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002, two years seven months before the Tea privatization in October 2002. If the interest of workers

was never given any attention neither in the privatization convention nor in any other document on the privatization, it is not because the workers and their Union did not make the demand.

In other to avoid a repetition of the Tea crop scenario, I will like to take this opportunity to call on the Management of CDC to go back to the privatization drawing board, and be guided by the demand of the workers as contained in the F.A.W.U.'s 2000 Memorandum on the imminent privatization of CDC as concerns the privatization of the remaining crops, that is, Rubber, Oil Palms and Bananas. Non-payment of past benefits will mean no privatization platitudes this time around.

## SOCIAL INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

July 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 will make the National Social Insurance Fund's Family Allowance Scheme, 33 years and Old Age, invalidity and Survivor's pension scheme, 32 years both having been established in 1973 and 1974 respectively. The transitional period it gave itself of twenty (20) years have since come and gone. The National Social Insurance Fund comprises of four independent schemes namely: the family allowance scheme, the old age pension scheme, the invalidity pension scheme and survivor's pension scheme. The N.S.I.F is financed through contributions by employers and workers of the private sector of the economy. The workers' contribution is deducted from his/her wages by the employer and paid to the NSIF as required by the rules and regulations in force. Non-payment or late payment of the contributions by the employer who is usually penalized by the imposition of a penalty should not be cause for processing applications for pension benefits for those CTE workers who have been associated with the NSIF for the required numbers of years and have completed the required insurance premiums. If there has been any time that these CTE former CDC workers need social security to come to their aid, it is now or never. I am therefore calling on the authority of the National Social Insurance Fund to come to the rescue of these unfortunate CTE workers for the purpose of social security in the true sense and meaning of the words, "SOCIAL SECURITY". Nowhere is it stated in the NSIF legislation that late contribution or non-contribution by employers will be reason to penalize the insured by not paying his/her benefits and the employer at the same time. This is illegal and must be stopped.

## UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been around with us for almost two decades during which time their conditionalities and recommendations have been implemented by the government to the letter and without any reservation. This blind adherence in carrying out the Bretton Woods prescription for our economy have turned out to be a "DISASTER" and has been responsible for many of our economic and moral problems today. The implementation of the Bretton Woods Institutions policies, have only worsened the unemployment situation especially youths' unemployment. Let us take a look at how the IMF and World Bank policies have systematically destroyed our economic and social coherence.

First, Structural Adjustment Programme brought with it the liquidation of some state enterprise and Lay-offs of workers in those enterprises. Then came the promulgation of Law N° 92/007 of 14<sup>th</sup> August 1992, instituting the new Labour Code, which provides for the total and complete exploitation of Cameroonian workers and casualisation of employment. The simplified Labour Code has not attracted foreign investors as we were made to believe. And this was

closely followed by a draconian salary cut in the Civil Service in 1993. The Bretton Woods recommended draconian salary cuts in 1993, has resulted only in making a bad situation worsen by:

- 1- Imposing corruption in society and embezzlement of public funds by civil servants;
- 2- Generalized and institutionalized corruption in society, which has in turn imposed poverty on a majority of Cameroonian. For reason, we are proud to become a Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) instead of being ashamed of our economic mortal sins, which are the root causes generalized poverty amongst Cameroonians.

It is for these reasons that the Cameroon Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions will have to take the initiative of inviting the other Trade Unions for the purpose of speaking with one voice in preparing and forwarding to government a comprehensive memorandum that will form the basis of our engagement in Collective Bargaining with the government with a view addressing the issues of:

- 1- The reinstatement of the pre-1993 civil servants salaries as the first step in the fight against corruption and embezzlement;
- 2- The repatriation of more than 8.000 billion of francs CFA stashed away in foreign banks by unpatriotic Cameroonians;
- 3- The review of the fiscal policy with a view of reducing personal income tax for workers, a reduction of corporate taxes and a reduction of prices for petroleum products;
- 4- Review of the present minimum wage of 23.514 FCFA to 32.919 FCFA as a means of combating the present very high cost of living for ordinary Cameroonians.
- 5- Complete review of the present Labour Code which was deregulated as a means of attracting foreign investors but which has only facilitated the dismissals and termination of workers, making the unemployment situation hopeless.

Mr. Senior Divisional officer, Honourable Invitees, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I move to my conclusion I dare say here that a nation which has forgotten the quality of rigour and moralization which was supposed to be the guiding principle in public life of the political leadership, is not likely to insist upon or reward that quality in its civil servants. Today, we are remembering that the proponent of rigour and moralization, the political leadership of the New Deal is beginning to implement what it should have implemented a long time ago, that is the fight against corruption and looting of the national treasuries. The Trade Union, that is the Cameroonian Confederation of Autonomous Trade Union, which is free from any political party entanglement, welcomes the Head of State initiatives in the fight against looting and sleaze, and the trade union's willingness to lend support to the Head of State initiatives on the proviso that priority be given to the reinstatement of Civil Servants' pre-1993 salaries as a prelude to the fight against corruption and embezzlement as the 1993 salary cuts was a violation of ILO convention N° 95 of 1949 on protection of wages. This will be the beginning of our struggle to bring social justice and industrial democracy to the working men and women of this nation. While thanking you for your kind attention, I wish all of you a happy "Labour Day".

LONG LIVE CAMEROON CONFEDERATION OF AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNIONS,  
LONG LIVE CAMEROON TRADE UNIONISM,  
LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON.

# PRINCIPLES OF GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

After the Industrial Revolution, the 'corporation' became the preferred mechanism for organising human and resources, to produce goods and services. Among its principal winning characteristics were the **Limited Liability** of its owners, and its **easy access to capital markets**.

From the beginning and until this day, the **Corporate Objective** has always been

"...the conduct of business activities with a view toward enhancing corporate profit and shareholder gain."

The **Corporate Function** has remained that of coordinating the flow of goods and services through production and distribution processes.

## What is Corporate Governance?

Corporate Governance is the system by which companies are directed and controlled. It comprises of the mechanisms through which managers are selected, monitored, compensated and held to their tasks by the Board of Directors on behalf of the owners (the shareholders).

Every effective corporate system will require a system of checks and balances designed to permit the appropriate scope of authority (power) and limit the abuse of that authority (accountability)

## The New Challenge of Corporate Governance

The new challenge of Corporate Governance is to seek ways of maximising wealth creation over time, in a manner that does not impose inappropriate costs on employees, third parties or on the society as a whole. Production policies should be designed with full consideration for the respect of the rights of workers to good working conditions, good salaries and social security (access to healthcare, paid holidays, freedom to associate, overtime allowances, in house training, family benefits etc). The community living around the area where a company operates must benefit from social amenities (electricity, schools, water, jobs, less pollution, assistance etc). Efficiency and Accountability of the staff must be coupled with shrewdness, foresight and flexibility of management to meet Corporate Goals. Emerging concepts like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Corporate Ethics have become measuring standards for a company's performance and positive image.

## Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the commitment of a company to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life, in ways that are

both good for the company and good for development.

## Corporate Ethics

Corporate Ethics should be broadly understood as the application of ethics to corporate affairs. This means that the corporate mission, objectives, strategies, programmes and all its operations are formulated and undertaken within the realm of ethics. Every decision, judgement or action is only taken or performed when it is ethical to do so. Ethical consideration should be given in all business policies and actions whether they relate to consumers, employees, creditors, the environment and the Government.

Irrespective of laws and guidelines, the question of ethics in business depends a lot on individual conscience, pride and responsibility. It deals with what is morally right and wrong and what is morally good and evil. It concerns our judgements, beliefs and values pertaining to all aspects of life, be it social, economic, political or even cultural.

Unfortunately, in the case of a corporation, it is the beliefs and values of the directors and management of the corporation. Most managers don't see anything wrong in abusing the rights of their employees to good working conditions, good salaries, social security coverage and benefits, employment contracts etc. This behaviour is encouraged by the 'get rich quick' mentality that some businessmen and company directors have developed. Studies have showed that a majority of corporate failures in recent times were predominantly dominated by one individual, occupying a position of trust, who apart from losing large amounts of money also commits illegal acts.

There has been national and international reactions to the unholy behaviours of some businessmen vis-à-vis their employees, particularly.

## GICAM Code of Ethics

The National Association of Cameroonian Businessmen (GICAM) has published a Code of Ethics for companies in Cameroon. Unfortunately very little sensitisation has so far been done. No disciplinary sanctions have been applied to check excesses of some corporate heads.

## The Global Compact

Internationally, the UNO has also been militating in favour of an ethical approach to the management of companies. A UN initiative called the 'GLOBAL COMPACT' was presented by Secretary General, Kofi Annan, during the 1999 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The 'Global Compact' is aimed at guaranteeing ethical business practices worldwide. It also seeks to encourage companies to respect human rights, en-

sure proper standards and protect the natural environment.

Ethical behaviour is therefore not a new trend in management. The larger role of the private sector has not only increased opportunities for economic development but also growing consumer consciousness. Customers, employees, human rights associations, trade unions, the media and consumer rights organisations are all demanding that companies need to do more.

Non-ethical behaviours such as corruption, swindling, abusive layoffs, non-payment of benefits, no social security obligations etc are far more harmful than competition from other companies. Effective ethics programmes benefit a company because they create a positive image, minimise cases of theft, corruption and fraud as well as reduce conflicts of interest thereby increasing the trust between employees, contracting parties and clients.

The introduction of social responsibility in management practices may significantly help the economy maintain international standards and consequently enable companies remain in the local and global market.

Managers and personnel of companies need to be informed and educated on different dimensions of ethics and social responsibility and be made to imagine the consequences of any unethical behaviour or opaque management practices in business.

## Guidelines For Good Corporate Governance

Every company must lay much emphasis on the business and social values of Good Corporate Governance. This goes with the clear definition of the roles of those in-charge of decision making and implementation at all levels of the company.

## The Role of the Board of Directors in Corporate Governance

The Board of Directors is made up of persons elected by the shareholders to make sure that the company achieves its objectives. Once elected, they are referred to as 'company directors'. Company directors are primarily responsible for the governance of their companies. A proper and efficient system of Corporate Governance should be able to regulate directors' duties and restrain them from abusing their powers. It should also be able to ensure that company directors act in the best interests of their companies as well as enduring the observance and compliance with all laws, regulations, codes of conduct and best practices.

Directors should familiarise themselves with the provisions and the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of their companies, together with other laws (e.g. OHADA) and requirements relevant to the operations of their companies

# PRINCIPLES OF GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

and observe them strictly. They should seek for the removal of unscrupulous managers if the need arises. They must ensure that they are regularly provided with sufficient financial and non-financial information about the company.

## The Role of Shareholders in Good Corporate Governance

Shareholders invest their money in the company for gain/profit and thus are 'owners' of the company. However, as shareholders, they are not involved in the day-to-day management of the company's business. They exercise their rights in the company through their vote in the general assembly meetings of the company.

Shareholders are the most interested party in the affairs of the company and should, therefore, ensure at all times that the affairs of the company are properly governed. To be able to exercise their rights effectively, during each general meeting, shareholders must insist that they be provided with full relevant information pertaining to affairs of the company. If they detect any malpractice or non-compliance to the law by the management that requires action to be taken, they have the right to call for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the company without having to wait for the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

## The Role of Managers & Employees in Corporate Governance

What makes one corporation a winner and another one a loser is not simply its capital or its physical resources, but its ability to organise itself, administer itself, take risks, be innovative, produce and distribute efficiently. Such ability resides in management, or particularly, Managers.

Managers and employees actually steer the company from one direction to another based on whatever decision made by the Board of Directors. They are the actual 'implementers' of all plans and projects undertaken by the company. So they have their role to play in order to maintain good corporate governance. As officers of the company, managers and senior staff must at all times act honestly and use reasonable diligence in the discharge of their duties for the interest of the company.

Some expert opinions hold that, Managers require freedom to pursue their indispensable control function in the corporation. This is because, the managers provide the corporation with flexibility and risk taking in an ever-changing competitive environment by their ability to take decisive actions as necessary.

However true this might be, managers' control must be exercised with some restraint. In other words, their actions must be

directed at fairly enhancing profit and gain.

## The Role of Company Secretaries in Corporate Governance

Many company directors and managers do not know what their responsibilities are, under the law. They basically are technocrats or simply, people with good business acumen. Many of them still run companies as though the latter are their private businesses, not taking into consideration the interests of others involved in the companies. It is therefore in their best interest to seek advice and guidance from professionals.

Some legislations especially in Anglo-saxon countries, have recognised this need and have introduced a requirement for every company to appoint a qualified Company Secretary. The Company Secretary has a key role to play in ensuring that all relevant laws, regulations and requirements are strictly followed and there is compliance with the correct procedures. It is in the best interest of directors themselves to ensure that a suitably qualified person is appointed as company secretary to guide and advise them.

The company secretary should play the very important role as the "keeper of the company's conscience". In playing this role, there is need for the company secretary to have a wider perception of the company's obligations to all stakeholders and be steadfast in giving advice and guidance to the Board of Directors.

The position of company secretary and profession of company secretaryship should be made as an indispensable repository of effective corporate governance. Whilst responsibility for setting in place strategies for good corporate governance does not rest with the company secretary alone, he must nevertheless provide critical assistance to the Board by heightening their awareness on the principles of Good Corporate Governance.

## The Role of Auditors

Article 376 of the OHADA Uniform Act relating to business enterprises and economic interest groups, specifies that every Private Limited Company (SARL), whose share capital is above 10 million FCFA, and permanently employs more than 50 persons, must appoint at least one auditor.

Article 702 of the same Act provides that, Public Limited Companies (SA) that do not publicly subscribe for share capital, should appoint one auditor and a substitute. Public Limited Companies that publicly subscribe for share capital, should appoint at least two auditors and two substitutes.

Basically, auditors are appointed by the shareholders during an annual general meeting and thus are answerable to the shareholders, not to the directors. The auditor is under a duty to examine the books and accounts of the company. He has to report to

the General Assembly on those accounts and give his opinion about their exactness. His report must also give particulars of assets and liabilities, profits and dividends included in the prospectus issued by the company.

It is the duty of the auditor to form an opinion regarding the number of matters and state in his report, particulars of deficiencies, failures or shortcomings in these matters. Thus the company auditor plays a role in maintaining Good Corporate Governance. Through his report the shareholders/members of the company will be able to know the detail management of the company.

## The Role of the Regulatory Authorities in Corporate Governance

As stated earlier, 'Corporate Governance' is the system by which companies are directed and controlled.

Besides internal factors (as discussed above), corporate governance is also determined by rules and regulations established by the Parliament, the Government, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development, etc. Consequently, these regulatory authorities do have their role to play in assisting companies achieve good corporate governance.

Legal infrastructure such as rules and regulations must be in place to facilitate corporate development. If need arises, new rules must be enacted and obsolete ones be amended accordingly. In order to keep pace with the latest development in the corporate sector, rules and regulations must take into consideration the numerous comments and suggestions from the various associations representing the corporate and the private sector, like GI-CAM in Cameroon.

Proper enforcement mechanisms must be in place so that laws be adequate to protect the interest of the investing public and at the same time must not cause undue hardship or inconvenience to the company, its directors and promoters.

The personnel of the judiciary should be trained regularly on new laws so that they also keep the pace with new developments in the corporate sector.

Regulatory authorities must also be professional, competent, and fast with dealing with the corporate sector. Come corporate dealings and restructuring need prior approval of the relevant regulatory authorities. Bureaucratic delays and the malpractice of corruption by those authorities will obviously cause serious damages to the companies concerned and may lead to poor corporate governance. So, all relevant regulatory authorities must 'co-operate' and give their fullest support, sincere assistance and support to the corporate sector for immediate economic recovery.

The burden to create Good Corporate Governance in companies, lies in all parties interested either directly or indirectly. As the Private Sector begins to play the key role in wealth creation in our country, it is expected that persons who are given the responsibility to ensure corporate governance, do so with respect for the rights of their employees, principles of corporate social responsibility while attaining the corporate goals of maximising profits.

*The Global Network for Good Governance (GNGG)*

## Child Labour and Child Trafficking

Child Labour and Child Trafficking in the South West Province have become a cause for concern in the South West Province. Children (below 18) are trafficked from the poor rural areas, into booming towns like Kumba, Tiko, Buea and Limbe. The rate is becoming alarming.

These children are made to work for very long hours with little or no pay under inhuman working conditions. They could be seen in our homes, farms, markets, eating houses, shops and motor parks, working tirelessly during school hours. Some have simply become slaves, enduring insults, degrading and inhuman punishments involving the worst corporal and mental abuses.

Opinions blame the rise of the phenomenon on poverty, ignorance and misrepresentation.

Most of these children come from very poor families back in the rural areas where people live for less than 5 fcfa a day. They are usually trafficked to the big towns by intermediaries, usually relatives, who promise jobs, professional training, school and money to the Parents.

Once in town, these children are trafficked to work as house helps, street vendors, eating-house servants and worst of all, as prostitutes. Their presence in these places during school hours is not a cause for concern for many Cameroonians since most households are guilty in this matter.

Around the world, pressure has been mounted for so many years by the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** for a halt to Child Labour, in all its forms.

**Human Rights Watch** has defined Child Trafficking as *the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purposes of sexual or labour exploitation, forced labour or slavery*. This international NGO has also described child trafficking as a human rights tragedy especially in West Africa where girls are trafficked into domestic and market work while boys are trafficked into agricultural work. They are recruited on false promises of education, professional training and paid unemployment, transported within and across national borders under sometimes threatening conditions; ordered into hazardous, exploitative labour, subjected to physical or mental abuse by their employers. Boys work on the farms 7 days a week, for long hours. Girls come to town under conditions of child trafficking and are forced into sex work after escaping or being abandoned. Thus many children who are victims of physical and emotional abuse, often escape to live in the street.

Studies have revealed that Cameroon is a destination country for Nigerian children trafficked and exploited in commercial agriculture, prostitution and street vending, or in small shops. Cameroon is also a transit state for Togolese, Nigerian and Benin's children heading to Gabon. In 2001, a ship with



250 children destined for slave labour was turned away from the Douala seaport. In 2003, a boat ferrying hundreds of trafficked girls sank off the coast of Cameroon, killing nine.

For many years International opinion was very hard on Cameroon's role in child trafficking.

An **ILO Study** conducted in 2000 in Yaounde, Douala and one other town revealed that trafficking accounted 84% of child labourers. In most cases, the report continued, intermediaries presented themselves as businessmen, approaching parents with large families or custodians of orphans and promising to assist the child with education or professional training. The intermediary paid parents an average of 16000 FCFA before transporting the child to a city where the intermediary would subject the child to forced labour with little remuneration.

In 2004, News reached home from Michigan in the USA, where a Cameroonian couple (names withheld) was indicted on a human trafficking charge. The couple was charged with forcing a juvenile Cameroonian girl into 'involuntary servitude for financial gain'. According to the 3 count indictment, the couple had violated US Federal Law by fraudulently bringing a 14 year old Cameroonian into the United States and using her as an unpaid domestic servant in their Michigan home for almost 4 years. The wife was accused of forcing the girl to cook, clean and take care of her young children for no pay, beginning when the girl was only 11, and beat the girl. In defence, the woman's lawyer claimed that her actions were in keeping with cultural norms of her native Cameroon.

The **US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report** published in June 2005 described Cameroon as *'... a source, transit and destination country for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour'*. The report went further to describe that besides trafficking young girls to Europe, principally, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for commercial sexual exploitation using fraudulent marriage proposals, girls are also trafficked internally from Anglophone areas to Francophone cities such as Douala and Yaounde to work in exploitative conditions as domestics, eating-house servants, street vendors, or prostitutes. The report confirmed that children are also trafficked for forced labour on cocoa plantations.

The **US 2005 Human Rights Country Report** also revealed the same findings showing evidence of a woman caught transporting young girls to Gabon. It also cited the case

of a network of nationals and foreigners who had gathered small boys to take them to football clubs in Europe with the hidden aim of introducing these children into homosexual prostitution rings.

The **June 2005 US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report** had criticised Cameroon for its failure to show evidence of increasing efforts to fight trafficking, particularly in the area of law enforcement. The Report advised Cameroon to coordinate national efforts, develop a system to collect case data, and educate officials and communities about the signs and dangers and dangers of trafficking.

This advice did not fall on deaf ears as the Cameroonian Government decided to take bold initiatives to combat the phenomenon. During the launching of the **2006 ILO Global Report on Child Labour and Child Trafficking** in Yaounde on May 5 2006, the Prime Minister, H.E. Chief Inoni Ephraim reiterated Government's total condemnation of the phenomenon and outlined government strategy to fight it. Government policy initiated by the Head of State and executed by Government heavily leaned on the reinforcement of the institutional framework. That had started way back in 2001 with the ratification of **Convention C138** on the minimum working age and did same in 2002 with ILO's similar convention related to the worst forms of child labour. In 2002 Cameroon participated at the launching of the sub-regional project for the fight against child trafficking for exploitation in Central and West Africa, called **LUTRENA**, and in 2003 with **WACAP** (West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Project). With these two projects, the Prime Minister noted that much progress had been made. 1109 children working in cocoa farms had been taken off and 379 of them were readmitted to schools and vocational training centres. He added an **Anti-Child Trafficking Law** was promulgated into Law on December 29 2005 by the Head of State, H.E. Paul Biya.

After stating that a child as any person aged less than 18 years, this Law defines Child Trafficking as the act of facilitating or ensuring movement of a child within and out of Cameroon in order to reap, directly or indirectly, a financial, material or other advantage. Child Labour is also defined as the recruitment, transfer, lodging or receipt of children for exploitation, by threats, by force or other form of constraint, by kidnapping, fraud, misrepresentation or profiting from a situation of vulnerability, by offer, or acceptance of advantage in order to obtain the consent of any person having authority over a child.

Article 4 punishes anybody involved, even occasionally, in child trafficking or child labour with imprisonment of 10 to 20 years and a fine of between 50000 to 1 million francs.

By **George Mbella**  
GNNG



# Cameroon is far from being an Open Society

An x-ray of the Cameroon social, cultural, economical and political scene itinerate a very sick country that has been rendered helpless by employees of the State. If you were to use indicators of corruption you would readily discover that government functionaries at national, provincial and divisional levels are the biggest beneficiaries. If corruption/bribery relates to ill gotten wealth, then one need not look far enough to identify the number of houses, businesses, cars and landed interests owned by government functionaries.

The mere lack of openness in Cameroon is further entrenching by the fact that people refuse to speak out! (*Let their voices be heard*). Cameroonians spend time discussing people and events than ideas. (*Little minds discuss people and events*). In Cameroon government functionaries are said to take the "command baton". One wonders whether this is a military country and who is commanding who! Basic management encourages leaders and not bosses. In open societies leaders take an "oath of service to the people " not "Commandant of the people"

Open societies do not exclusively train leaders in a professional school and make them Mini " gods" upon graduation. Open societies require that there is legitimacy, responsiveness and accountability to the owners (the people).

How many administrators render accounts? Why should administrators not give account of their stewardship? With no mandate, no fixed duration, no performance contract, no expected results, government functionaries only respect hierarchy (*the one that put me there*). Can hierarchy exist when there are no masses? Cameroonians are quick to send motions of support when a sibling is ap-

"When you mix achu, eru and boboloh, you must purge".

pointed! If that sibling merits it why send a motion of support? Cameroonians believe in titles; delegates, chef, patron, inspecteur, Honourable. Eh?

In Cameroon the relationship between the governed and the governing is too poor to say the least. Most functionaries are appointed by hierarchy therefore lack legitimacy which is better when it comes from the people. (*The base*). When there is no legitimacy there cannot be responsiveness, and accountability become difficult.

Some African countries are moving on towards greater governance. In Mali the position of D.O has been scrapped as it duplicates the functions of an elected mayor. In Nigeria, all permanent secretaries/treasurers of local council are indigenes. Police officers work throughout their careers within a council area. "When you mix achu, eru and boboloh, you must purge". When people do not have a sense of belonging they are prone to being corrupt; they extort and abuse the rights of others.

In their current status, schools like ENAM, ENAP, CEFAM are breeding grounds for corruption and this will not stop until there is a total overhaul of their modus operandi. Corruption will persist if the current system is maintained. Government must release the brakes on

decentralization. People should work as close as possible in their areas of origin.

Cameroonians prefer to reduce their ages, rewrite general exams and concours only to get into the public service. The entrepreneurial culture is almost absent. People are not creative and productive. They aspire (at all costs) towards lifetime employment which only the Cameroon government can assure. There are civil servants in Europe, in prisons and some who have absconded their jobs but still receive salaries!! People are called over the radio to resume work that they've abandoned!! Cameroon is a state/nation with about 240 ethnic groups having different aspirations. How then can we pretend that we are the same with similar needs? When you mix people at local levels the result is bribery, corruption and mediocrity in terms of service delivery. Cameroon should learn lessons from Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone. We should stop manipulating the destiny of a people for personal and immediate gains. There is too much greed in Cameroon and more so in the Public Service.

You cannot fool the people all the time. Cameroonians need to be sensitized out of the total ignorance that is so evident. People should stop spending days on end talking about trivial things (*football, alcohol and social life*). Civil Society Organizations especially CBOs and FBO should step up the campaign against institutionalized corruption. We should not only admire people's wealth but question also the sources. The 1996 constitution requires people to declare their assets. Committed leaders should take the lead.

By **Charlie Mbonteh**  
Team Leader  
MUDEC GROUP



## MUDEC's Labour Day Message to Council Workers

Ladies /Gentlemen,  
Greetings on Labour Day 2006!

As we collectively celebrate on this workers day, I will like us to reflect on the theme relating to the aspect of social security. If the Secretary General (as head of the staff within the Council) understood the relationship between a healthy local economy and the pension/ social security of the council workers, then we would have cemented the bases for continued happiness for Councils workers.

As decentralization takes hold in Cameroon Council's workers will be required to be more proactive through encouraging local economic development efforts as well as quality service delivery to the population.

MUDEC Group advises the S.G to hold periodic meetings with Council staff and: -

- a) Sensitize them on the need to educate the population on their civic rights and obligations;
- b) Sensitize the population on the need to invest within the municipality;
- c) Sensitize the population to request that Councilors take a deliberation to institutionalize an annual Public Hearing (plan and budget for it).

The above measures will certainly improve the revenue collection and allocation base for the Councils. This will subsequently assure that Council staff receive regular salaries and also their social security /retirement benefits. When the population is sufficiently sensitized to participate in municipal affairs, there will be increased levels of legitimacy, responsiveness and accountability.

The Council is your career base and its smooth functioning should be your priority number one.

Do you want to let go, sit back and do most of the complaining *OR* do you want to take center stage and proactively contribute towards a better working environment within your Municipality?

At MUDEC Group, we have a program for Municipal Human Resource Development. We can assist Council staff in several ways! Our services are demand-driven. The ball is in your court.

Sincerely!

Charlie Mbonteh

# Holding Appointed Public Officials Accountable

**A**ccountability and transparency are some of the principles on which good governance is hinged. It is therefore expected that public officials, be they appointed or elected, render account of their stewardship from time to time to the public.

In this context appointed officials would include administrators, provincial divisional and sub-divisional delegates of various ministerial departments as well as office holders on the different ranks of the decision ladder. Public officials ought to render account for the following reasons:

They hold authority by delegation from the executive, which itself is delegated by the electorate for a given period. The delegate by election is based on promises that have to be regularly assessed.

They are vote holders, engaging expenditure and managing public resource and property. They are justifying periodically such expenditure and their management options.

Citizens have a right to public information subject to regulations on security, public decency and protection of some state personalities and the privacy of individual. To deny the public access to information is to deny it the right to make informed choices in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres. It is also well known that to get the citizens to positively and effectively participate in the development effort at all levels, they must have the information required to ensure their commitment.

Some mechanisms have been created to ensure that appointed officials give

**“Accountability and transparency are some of the principles on which good governance is hinged. It is therefore expected that public officials, be they appointed or elected, renders account of their stewardship from time to time to the public.”**

account of their service delivery. In the education department, for instance, school management boards have been set up to oversee school administration.

In the department of health, committees, beginning from village, through district to provincial levels have been created to play the same role. But these examples are few and it is doubtful if they are effective. Most people do not know about these structures. Public officials on their part do not really feel bound to render account to them. They are only responsible to the 'hierarchy' that appointed them.

The most guilty of this practice however are the administration, the "chef terres" the men of the "commandment" who hold power of life and death over the citizenry with arbitrary powers to detain people for "15 days renewable" without charge. They feel and argue that their obligation is to the omniscient and unreachable hierarchy. The press is non-grata; even parliamentarians are ignored. No channels exist for the giving and receiving feedbacks

from the ruled. Instructions are sent down the administrative chain by way of order. Yet these officials have much to account for. Take for instance that the Governor or SDO presides over Tender Boards awarding contracts. Was the procedure respected? Were the contracts executed? What percentage of contract inputs was locally sourced? Etc. These are just some of the questions these administrators ought to answer from time to time.

In the absence of legislation requiring appointed officials to render account to the public, the media and civil society should pressure on them to open up and talk to the people. Shouldn't the Governor and the SDO have a 'face the press' at least once every six months? The press should develop strategy for achieving this. Civil society on its part, should, through its various platform engage appointed officials through meetings, shadow reports etc.

In the end, government itself must take action to ensure that its appointees give the public information on their activities.

Without public access to information from appointed officials, the fight against corruption and authoritarianism will remain largely ineffective.

By Anu Vincent  
Nkong Hill Top  
Common Initiative Group



# Teaching Human Rights as a Core Subject

**H**uman Rights can be part of all educational activities and can permeate the whole student's learning experience as such. Eventhough some educators suggest teaching human rights is less exam-oriented than other subjects. Others' perception make it clear that teaching human rights in schools is a 'line' running through all normal subjects taught. Despite the questions asked by educators on this issue i.e. How will it be? How will it look like?, some educators started teaching human rights as a separate subject.

Some put it within their specialised subject, and others jointly plan with colleagues to involve the students in projects that involve several core subjects.

In history, human rights can be introduced around traditional subject matters. Historical events such as war, slavery, colonisation and Nazism can be studied with special attention to their violation of human rights. Recent facts like apartheid in South Africa, civil war in Liberia, genocide in Rwanda, and the abuse of children's rights in Northern Uganda, provides a lot of opportunities to talk about human rights.

The link between environmental degradation and ill health, the effects of investment and trade on standards in living, population studies, poverty and famine are also aspects that affect people's

**“In history, human rights can be introduced around traditional subject matters. Historical events such as war, slavery, colonisation and Nazism can be studied with special attention to their violation of human rights.”**

human rights in geography per se.

Government and Civics is another avenue to teach students about their rights as wells as responsibilities. Teaching the structure and processes of government can emphasise the role of individual citizens which are of course aspects of human rights.

In social studies, a study of how societies deal with dissent can be particularly useful for bringing up issues of human rights, such as freedom of expression, movement, association and assembly. Social inequalities can be examined, like xenophobia, poverty, ethnic and religious discrimination.

Literature books and poems are excellent resources for vivid accounts of human rights. Literature teachers should bring human rights teaching in the subject by directing students to write poems and role-plays on issues of human rights.

Health issues are a good way to introduce

human rights teaching in Science. An HIV/AIDS patient for example has the right to confidentiality of their status after a laboratory test is done; children have the right to healthcare, but also the responsibility to respect their own and other peoples' health. A Biology lesson examining myths about racial or ethnic superiority can inform the learners to make better judgements in a parallel study of racism in history.

Mathematics and Physics are subjects dealing with statistics. Statistics can be used to study interesting current themes used to hide or reveal human rights abuses. Teaching human rights in mathematics can also help students to critically interpret figures, which appear in newspapers.

The knowledge of foreign languages is an avenue for human rights teaching. Human rights teaching in foreign languages consecrates skills to study interesting current themes from other countries. Human Rights teaching should be merged in core subjects in Schools.

By Ofe Valentine  
HELP OUT, Buea





# GNGG introduces Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance to Students in Limbe

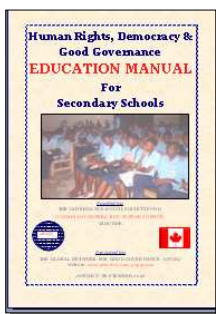
The Global Network For Good Governance (GNGG), a Limbe-based NGO, has been introducing over 10, 000 students in 25 Secondary Schools in and around the Limbe Municipality on contemporary concepts like Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance.

The Programme targets youths because, as future leaders only the Youths of this country can reverse poor moral situation and inertia in which our beloved country finds itself today, if they are allowed, at an early age, to have knowledge and a good mastery of contemporary issues that affect the well being of the population.

The formidable and very talented GNGG team of trainers crisscrossed the Limbe Municipality teaching the students that: we can enjoy a peaceful and prosperous country only when the rights of our fellow countrymen are promoted and respected; when every citizen exercises his duty to participate in the democratisation process of the country; and when public affairs are managed with more transparency, participation, accountability, respect for the rule of law, gender balance, efficiency and less corruption.



Students of Collège de l'Excellence Limbe listening to the GNGG trainers



The Training Manual

questions and give their opinions as to the state of affairs in the country. What marvelled the trainers was the students' ability to contextualise the teachings they had received to events in their homes, school, residential areas and country. This very much revealed their quest for understanding and willingness to take Cameroon where it ought to go as soon as they become active citizens. Many promised to become mayors, senators, ministers, ambassadors, and even Presidents in this beloved country.

GNGG distributed flyers to the students and donated training manuals to the Principals for the School libraries. Seeing the enthusiasm of their students, most of the Princi-

pals extended their invitations to the GNGG trainers to come back to their schools more often for more educative talks.

The GNGG Secretariat has been heralded by the population and the media for innovating so efficiently and displaying so much mastery of the topics that were under review. They have requested for the education talks to be extended to churches, socio-professional groups and associations. They have also requested for copies of the rich Training Manual that is used for the exercise, to be produced in large quantities and distributed widely.

The Education Programme was funded by The Governance and Civil Society Fund at the Canadian Support Office in Yaounde. This Fund, it should be disclosed, is also funding a trip by GNGG's Secretary General to Canada to participate in meetings scheduled with the Canadian Civil Society for eventual partnerships, networking and joint research.

By Mabe Christiane  
Economic Governance Department,  
GNGG



GNGG's Raymond Wung (left) donates Manuals to the Bursar of GSS Idenau

Overwhelmed by the quality of knowledge received and the novelty of the exercise, the students in most of the schools engaged the trainers into very heated debates. They were glad to ask very pertinent



GNGG Staff, working for the promotion of Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance in Cameroon



Government Technical College, Limbe



St. Paul's College Bojongo



Government Secondary School Bojongo

### HELP OUT Forms Human Rights Clubs In Schools

"To the Glory of God and by the powers conferred on me by my colleagues and Open Society Initiative for West Africa the funders of this activity, the Human Rights Club of Borstal Institute is hereby installed".

These were the words of the Executive Director of HELP OUT Clarkson Obasi when he installed the first ever Human Rights Club at Borstal Institute, Buea April, 2006. With the same words the following Human Rights Clubs were also installed - Inter Comprehensive High School, Baptist High School, Presbyterian Comprehensive Secondary School, Franksfils Comprehensive College, Government Secondary School, Bwiyuku and Bilingual Grammar School, Molyko, Buea.



Executive Members of Inter-Comprehensive High School Human Rights Club

At each of the installations, a pledge is read out loud by the club members as a sign of upholding the ideals of human rights.

### HUMAN RIGHTS CLUB PLEDGE

I pledge from this day onward to do my best to interrupt prejudice and to stop those who, because of hate, would hurt, harass or violate the civil rights of anyone.

I will try at all times to be aware of my own biases against people who are different from myself.

I will ask questions about cultures, religions and races that I don't understand.

I will speak out against anyone who mocks, seeks to intimidate or actually hurts someone of a different race, religion, ethnic group, or sexual orientation.

I will reach out to support those who are targets of harassment.

I will think about specific ways my community can promote respect for people and create a prejudice-free zone.

I firmly believe that one person can make a difference and that no person can be an "innocent bystander" when it comes to opposing hate.

By signing this pledge, I recognise that respect for individual dignity, achieving equality and opposing anti-semitism, racism, ethnic bigotry, homophobia, or any other form of hatred is a non-negotiable responsibility of all people.

.....  
My signature Date

### National Day Celebrations!



HELP-OUT Staff, Emade, admires a Placard



Inter-Comprehensive College Human Rights



Borstal Institute Human Rights Club

Members of all the Human Rights Clubs actively participated during the National Day Celebrations May 20 proudly marching in their well-designed tee-shirts and carrying placards.

### MUDEC Distributes Civic Education Manuals to Trade Unions on Labour Day



Several trade unions and civil society actors in the South West Province benefited from OSIWA-funded civic education manuals. These manuals that were distributed in all six divisional capitals were executed within the framework of the Project to Create More Open Democratic Societies in the South West Province.

In Menji (Lebialem) Mr. Peter Nkezie of Nkong Hill Top Common Initiative Group did the distributed of the manuals. In Bangem (Kupe Mwanenguba) Mr. Jacob Mbonteh of CARDEV common initiative group distributed the manuals while in Mamfe (Manyu) Mr. Ashu Tambe Dickson of ELENA NGO was on hand to do the distribution. In Kumba (Meme) Mr. Larry Esong of Ocean City Radio distributed manuals. And in Mundemba (Ndian) Mr. Ken-

neth Nanji gave out more than 50 manuals. In Limbe (Fako) Miss Ule Eyakwe and Mr. Eugene Atem gave out more than 70 Manuals to trade unionist who hailed the initiative. Complaints generally hinged around the few numbers and the need for a French version. These activities on May Day were given wide publicity by several radio stations including Ocean City Radio and Lakeside Radio in Kumba, Voice Of Manyu in Mamfe and Mount Cameroon FM in Buea

By Atem Eugene  
MUDEC Group, BUEA



### MUDEC GROUP distributes Hundreds of EDEN Newspapers on International Day of the Family 15 May 2006

Hundreds of EDEN Newspaper N° 075 of 15-17 May 2006 and THE BELL Newsletters were distributed to several Governmental institutions and organisations within the South West Province.

The EDEN Newspapers contain a detailed interview and action-packed pictures of the first phase of activities realised within the framework of the Project to Create More Open Democratic Societies in the South West Province.

THE BELL Newsletters for the months of April were also distributed. The distribution strategy involves local councils and civil society networks within the Province.

By Ule Eyakwe  
MUDEC Group, Buea



South West Civil Society Network (SWECSO) GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING Scheduled for June 17 2006 in Buea Agenda: EXCO Elections

# Letters to the Editor

Sir,  
I read through the Manual and think that you should produce more copies and sell them for a minimal cost or recovery fee.

Linda Munang  
Ekondo Titi

*Selling the manuals will be contrary to our objectives because those who will not be able to buy will be excluded. Just read and pass it on!*

Dear Editor,  
Your March 2006 Edition that was dedicated to women issues was a great novelty. Are you open to more articles that can empower the girl child?

Eposi Joan  
University of Buea

*The girl child remains by far the greatest victim of human rights abuses, child labour, discrimination, poverty and governance. The July 2006 edition of THE BELL will be dedicated to the plights and tears of the Cameroonian girl child. Your articles will be welcome.*

Sir,  
We have seen too many initiatives fade after one year. What plans are you making to ensure the sustainability of THE BELL?

Johnny Tarh  
Buea

*Your question will help us convince our donors to continue the production of THE BELL, since the PCMODS-SWP project has a one-year lifespan.*

Editor,  
The South West is rich with cases of Child Labour and Child Trafficking, when will you address these issues in THE BELL.

Epee Tambe  
Tombel

*This edition has started addressing the issue. We hope to continue in July 2006. If you have any article to share with us, don't hesitate!*

Sir,  
Given that THE BELL is a joint initiative, could you tell your readers what types of problems/difficulties you encounter working together and how you resolve them.

Ekinde Peter  
Ndian

*Each of the four organisations (FIDA Cameroon, GNGG, HELP OUT and MUDEC) is represented at the Editorial Board. Mutual respect, tolerance, friendship, good faith, selflessness, tirelessness, professionalism, efficiency, creativity, permanent communication and the desire to contribute strongly to the development of our dear South West Province, have been our major strengths. For the very first time, a group of Southwesterners and lovers of the South West Province from different tribal, academic and professional horizons are working together for change and achieving the best results. This we know is new in a province plagued by jealousy, greed, selfishness, intrigues, blackmail, empty pride, suspicion, laziness and oversabi. We must learn that working together will do us more good than harm!*

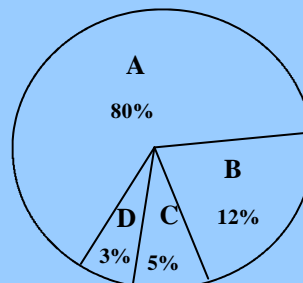
Mr. Editor,  
THE BELL is coming at the right time. Wish you many more years of publications.

Mrs. Emma Njie  
Buea



*Thanks. This publication will stand the test of time only if you contribute articles. Is your village out of poverty? If No, tell our readers what is wrong and how you think it could be solved. This is the true meaning of democracy that we are trying to bring down to the people. It is your right to complain, constructively, about whosoever is intentionally or unknowingly holding this province behind. THE BELL will ring it around. OK?*

## MUDEC OPINION SURVEY OF 500 CAMEROONIANS

**“Motions of Support Constitute Village Manners!”**



- A: Yes, it is a self-centred and unproductive act.
- B: Yes, it is bad and should be frowned against
- C: Yes, it is political patronage/Cronysm
- D: People have a right to their opinion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pay your taxes on time</li> <li>- Use your vote wisely</li> </ul>	<b>Your Obligation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demand your dues</li> <li>- Demand Redress</li> </ul>	<b>Your Right</b>



**MEMORABLE SPEECH**

**A WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF BUEA ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> BATCH OF CYCLE I AND 16<sup>TH</sup> BATCH OF CYCLE II STUDENTS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINING CENTRE (CEFAM) BUEA**

HIS EXCELLENCY, THE MINISTER DELEGATE IN CHARGE OF DE-CENTRALISATION AT THE MINISTRY OF TERRITOTIAL ADMINISTRATION AND DECENTRALISATION

THE GOVERNOR, SOUTH WEST PROVINCE

THE SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICER, FAKO

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE, MUNICIPAL, RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

It is with much delight that I take my place at this podium to welcome you all to this very significant ceremony marking the graduation of the fourth batch of Cycle I and Sixteenth Batch of Cycle II students of the Local Government Training Centre (CEFAM), Buea.

Although the Buea Municipality is accustomed to hosting ceremonies of such magnitude, it is with renewed enthusiasm that I wish to acknowledge your cherished presence to our beautiful and historic municipality, the birth place of the sole training ground for our local government authorities.

On behalf of the multicultural population of Buea, I wish to extend our warm feelings of joy and gratitude to you all and most especially to His Excellency, Emmanuel Edou, Minister Delegate in charge of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation for taking time off state duties to be present at this ceremony.

Your Excellency, your remarkable presence in Buea today eloquently demonstrates the valuable concern you have for the development and enhancement of Government's process of modernising its administrative machinery and strengthening its democratic models as propounded and directed by our Head of State and President of the Republic, His Excellency President Paul Biya.

Your Excellency, we desire through you, to extend our salutations and hand of fellowship to the Honourable Minister of State in charge of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, His Excellency Marafa Hamidou Yaya for his constant touch with the people of Buea. We are greatly indebted to you all for the special interest you have towards the growth of our municipality and the Council Institution in Cameroon in general.

CEFAM has today covered much ground in addressing the capacity building needs of our respective local councils. Permit me extend our heartfelt thanks to the management of this centre for their wonderful contribution towards the modernisation of the local government institution. Mr. Director, your tireless efforts towards our cause will not go unrewarded as our country moves towards the path of decentralised local government systems, as a collective entity charged with contributing effectively and putting in place a network to adequately en-

sure the provision of basic services to our populations and communities.

**Your Excellency,**

Let me use this occasion to register some of the concerns of our councils in the South West Province with regards to this Institution.

While we also contribute immensely towards the running of CEFAM, our employees have been of late deprived of the opportunity to be admitted into CEFAM after competitive entrance examinations. Our councils are worried about the imbalance in the intake as CEFAM is about to absorb the next batch of trainees.

Secondly, I am sure it will surprise the Honourable Minister that, the Buea Council which is host to CEFAM and regularly places its facilities and resources to its students is absent on the Board of this institution. We pray the Honourable Minister of State, the Supervisory Authority will look into the above worries.

**Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**"While we also contribute immensely towards the running of CEFAM, our employees have been of late deprived of the opportunity to be admitted into CEFAM after competitive entrance examinations. Our councils are worried about the imbalance in the intake as CEFAM is about to absorb the next batch of trainees."**

To the graduating students, we do recognise the challenges that lie ahead of you. We therefore pray you shall jealously uphold the skills and savoir-faire gained from CEFAM for the upgrading and enhancement of our local government systems at a time that the Council Institution in our country is undergoing significant reforms. We are within a time frame that requires enormous sacrifice and commitment in addressing the needs of our communities in a way that can cause the feel good effect of our country's positive socio-economic indicators to trickle down to the grassroot population. Dear Graduating Students, we can only achieve this successfully with change agents like you, who are well versed with knowledge gained from CEFAM.

Congratulations, for a job well done but remember this exercise is only the beginning of a greater sojourn. We are certain that you will make true ambassadors of our community and this institution wherever you shall be called to serve. By the Grace of God and the wishes of a people of goodwill, we shall meet again.

Finally Your Excellency, while in Buea, you shall discover the unique atmosphere under which these students pursued their courses, an atmosphere with a variety of features and a hospitable people. We wish you a most pleasant stay in our municipality and we hope that you stay longer with us.

Thank you for your kind attention.

LONG LIVE THE LOCAL COUNCIL INSTITUTION

LONG LIVE THE MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION AND DECENTRALISATION

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

GOD BLESS YOU ALL!