

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace-Work-Fatherland

***MINISTRY OF THE ECONOMY, PLANNING AND REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT***

WORLD POPULATION DAY

11 JULY 2022

LIMBE

**ADDRESS BY MR ALAMINE OUSMANE MEY, MINISTER OF THE ECONOMY,
PLANNING AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY

Members of Government,
The Representative of the United Nations Population Fund,
The Governor of the South-West Region,
The Senior Divisional Officer of the Fako Division,
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,
The Mayor of Limbe City Council,
Administrative, religious, traditional, civil and military authorities,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen, in your respective ranks and capacity,

This 11 July, like every year, Cameroon celebrates, together with the international community, the World Population Day. This year, the Fako Division, especially the city of Limbe, was chosen to host this great international celebration. It is therefore an honour and a renewed pleasure for me to be among you.

Allow me at the outset to extend sincere thanks to the Mayor of the Limbe City Council for his kind words of welcome to me and to all the personalities present here.

Finally, to all of you, the people of the Fako in general and those of Limbe in particular, all the members of Government, through me, thank you for your massive presence and very warm welcome, despite the current social and health context.

How else could it be when we know the legendary and secular tradition of the dynamic populations of this Division. Your massive presence here, beyond the hospitality that we know you have, shows not only the obvious interest that you have in the commemoration of this World Population Day, but also and above all, your commitment to the institutions of the Republic, and I am grateful to you for this.

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

World Population Day is celebrated this year under the theme "**A world of 8 billion: Towards a resilient future, harnessing opportunities and ensuring rights and choices for all**".

This theme is challenging in many ways, as it highlights the relationship between population growth, economic growth and access to basic social services. It requires us to stop and think about the future of the population and how to ensure its resilient future in the face of the many related challenges. Indeed, the world's population is growing faster than its resources. In 1987, the world had 5 billion inhabitants, 6 billion in 1999, 7 billion in 2011 and the world

population will reach 8 billion in November 2022. This evolution of the world's population, while being a potential wealth, can also create many challenges. Meeting these challenges means exploiting all the opportunities available to ensure resilience, finding effective strategies and adequate means to offer, at both the individual and community levels, a quality life marked by equitable access for all sections of the population to social services, particularly those related to reproductive health, social justice and a better distribution of the benefits of growth. And to achieve this, we must invest primarily in youth and women.

**Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the time when the world population will reach 8 billion, Cameroon will have about 26 million inhabitants, 2/3 of whom are under 25 years of age, representing nearly 64% of the total population, as against 5% for people over 60 years of age. This diagnosis allows us to understand why the theme of this year's World Population Day is so timely, given the weight of the dependent population. It is indeed a question of asking ourselves about the possibility for our economic and social system to ensure decent living conditions for the 26 million Cameroonians.

Although a large population is an essential factor, a driving force for development, consisting of a large dependent population, it puts pressure on basic social services such as health, education, to name a few. The reduction of this pressure requires ever greater levies on the productive sectors. The Government of Cameroon must therefore do everything possible to satisfy the needs of these 26 million inhabitants and you can imagine how enormous these needs are. That is why the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya, in one of his addresses to the nation, said, and I quote: ***"As long as a Cameroonian does not have enough to eat, does not have access to education, does not receive the quality care to which they are entitled, our task will not be completed"*** end of quote. It is therefore a question of transforming this population, mainly young people, into solid human capital, capable of supporting economic growth, as emphasised by our NDS30, inspired by the President of the Republic and implemented by the Government with the support of its development partners. This strategy, which is full of hope, sets out the ways and means of achieving emergence in 2035 for the decade 2020-2030. I cannot go back over all that the Government is being doing for the benefit of the population, but I would like to dwell on other elements that are just as relevant in terms of respect and equitable access to human rights and those relating to reproductive health.

**Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

You will agree with me that investment in health and respect for the rights of all, especially women and young girls, appears to be an ideal solution to avoid

the adverse effects of the vertiginous growth of the population and to serenely continue the march towards emergence.

Aware of the fact that women have a crucial role to play in the development of our country, the Government has always worked for the promotion and respect for their rights, mainly their rights in terms of health, including reproductive health, even in emergency situations. In this regard, family planning is of great interest as an effective means of: (i) Fighting maternal mortality; for it is not normal for a woman to lose her life in giving birth; (ii) Controlling fertility; (iii) Avoiding deaths related to unintended, early, unwanted, unspaced and late pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (HIV/AIDS); and (iv) Improving the well-being of the family, the prosperity of the nation and the world. Ultimately, the right to family planning enables to take full advantage of all other human rights.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is in this perspective that the development partners, first and foremost the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), support the Government's efforts to enable every individual to have access to information; to Comprehensive Sexuality Education; and to a wide range of quality health care services, in order to promote the well-being of the population. The objectives are to ensure respect for reproductive rights, increase the use of modern contraceptive methods among women of reproductive age and young girls. Improving the health status of the population is both a social development and an economic growth objective.

To continue with the actions undertaken by the Government, I would like to point out the numerous initiatives undertaken for the appeasement and restoration of social cohesion, within the framework of the implementation of the Presidential Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of the North-West, South-West and Far North regions, by order of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, as one of the positive outcomes of the Major National Dialogue for the return of peace to these regions. This presidential plan will enable the socio-economic activities of these regions to be revived through reconstruction, infrastructure development, support for socio-economic activities and adaptation to climate change. In the Fako division in particular, this involved, among other things, the rehabilitation of 9 health centres and 11 water supply systems.

The actions I have just mentioned, without claiming to be exhaustive, are sufficient proof that we have the potential to ensure the resilience of our population in the face of this demographic growth. However, we must recognise that there are still constraints and challenges that our country cannot meet alone. That is why, while renewing the expression of gratitude of the Government of Cameroon to our partners for their multifaceted support, I

appeal to them to increase their support so that together, we can succeed in providing Cameroon with a quality population capable of driving the much-desired socio-economic development.

I cannot conclude without extending my warmest congratulations to the authorities of the city of Limbe and the Fako division for all the efforts they made to ensure the smashing success of this event. The challenge was great, but your hard work made it possible to meet it successfully. The activities carried out in this city for several days for the celebration of World Population Day 2022 testify to the great commitment you showed.

In this expectation, I would like to say to you, the populations of the Fako, the internal and external elite of this beautiful Division, that you should remain optimistic about your future, because this future seems to me to promote the sustainable development of your division.

If the efforts already made are maintained, I am convinced that our commitment and determination will provide the people with an environment conducive to their full development, a priority set by **His Excellency Mr. Paul BIYA**, President of the Republic, in his ambitious programme of great opportunities. Of course, we will have to show more anticipation, flexibility and adaptation to meet the challenges of the years to come.

Long live World Population Day 2022,

Long live International Cooperation,

Long live the city of Limbe and the South-West region,

Long live Cameroon and its illustrious leader, President Paul BIYA,

Thank you for your kind attention.