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Fourth periodic report submitted by Cameroon under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2016* **

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Acronyms and abbreviations

NAFI	National Agency for Financial Investigation
ARVs	Antiretrovirals
Camwater	Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation
CARMMA	Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HYSACAM	Cameroon Hygiene and Health Company
ILO	International Labour Organization
PMCT	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

I. General introduction

1. Following its consideration of Cameroon's combined second and third periodic reports at its 41st and 43rd meetings, held on 21 and 22 November 2011, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted concluding observations at its 59th meeting, held on 2 December 2011. These observations identified positive aspects while raising concerns with regard to the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2. The present report, covering the period from 2012 to 2016, updates the information contained in the preceding reports. Prepared on a collaborative basis, with inputs from both public-sector and civil society stakeholders, it describes the action taken on the Committee's recommendations, in terms of government legislation, policies, programmes and projects, to ensure the inclusive enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

II. Recommendation 7. Domestic application and implementation of the Covenant

3. As noted in the previous report (para. 11), the Covenant, like other duly ratified international instruments, is part of domestic law by virtue of the principle of the primacy of international law enshrined in article 45 of the Constitution. To promote the effective application of this principle, Ministry of Justice seminars have since 2011 included a module on the implementation of the international human rights treaties by domestic courts (see annex 1).

4. Moreover, under the Bar-Governance-Rule of Law project 2016–2018, the Cameroonian Bar has been organizing training sessions for human rights lawyers since April 2016. By the time the project ends in 2018, it is expected that 1,400 trainee lawyers and 40 fully qualified lawyers will have been trained.

5. There is a growing trend towards invoking and applying the human rights treaties in judicial proceedings. Those most frequently invoked are the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Awareness-raising is continuing and it is hoped that the Covenant will likewise be invoked by judges and defendants.

III. Recommendation 8. Effective measures to combat corruption

6. In addition to implementing a national governance programme with an anti-corruption component, the Government has focused on strengthening its institutional, legislative and judicial mechanisms to combat corruption, which adversely affects people's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

A. Strengthening of institutional mechanisms for combating corruption

7. The Government strengthened anti-corruption mechanisms by stepping up the activities of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, the Supreme State Audit Office and ministerial anti-corruption units, creating a strategic research and trends committee within the National Agency for Financial Investigation (NAFI) and improving governance of the public procurement system.

8. The Anti-Corruption Commission continued its activities during the period from 2011 to 2015, notably through awareness-raising, investigations and reports on its work. It disseminated the national anti-corruption strategy, the charter of the national anti-corruption

coalition, the national programme of integrity education and the progress report on anti-corruption measures in Cameroon.¹

9. During the reporting period, the Commission received more than 12,426 complaints of corruption and corrupt practices. Following their investigation, more than 2,810 cases were referred to the judicial authorities and other competent government bodies. The Commission's monitoring and auditing of microfinance establishments and mobile telephone operators enabled the State to recover over 10 billion CFA francs (CFAF).²

10. Between 2012 and 2015, the Council for Budgetary and Financial Discipline, a unit of the Supreme State Audit Office, held 96 regular and 23 special sessions, following which 113 decisions were handed down, including 17 acquittals, 29 decisions imposing fines totalling CFAF 42,706,232,038³ against managers found guilty of misconduct and ordering them to repay appropriated funds, and 11 decisions ordering suspension from public service for periods ranging from five to seven years. Some of the accused voluntarily paid special fines and made repayments totalling CFAF 10,134,925⁴ out of a grand total of CFAF 3,227,519,395.⁵

11. By decision No. 00163/MINFI/SG/ANIF of 29 April 2013 of the Minister of Finance, NAFI registered the creation of a strategic research and trends committee. The committee helps identify new forms of economic and financial crime, detect illicit financial flows, notably those used for funding terrorism, and propose to the authorities ways of strengthening the mechanisms for combating economic and financial crime. Between 2011 and 2015, NAFI received 1,718 reports of suspicious transactions in financial establishments and referred 407 cases to the courts during the same period.

12. With a view to ensuring good governance in the public procurement system, in 2014 and 2015 the appeals and disputes review committee set up within the Ministry of Public Procurement received 953 appeals from bidders, 22 requests for arbitration concerning disputes between the contracting authority and the Procurement Commission and 77 applications from various stakeholders, including the Public Procurement Regulatory Agency.

13. Monitoring of the execution of public procurement contracts was also stepped up. The monitoring of 5,016 contracts found that over 2,868 had been executed in compliance with the Public Procurement Code, while more than 538 were non-compliant. As a result, an amount of some CFAF 30,833,656,943⁶ was repaid to the Treasury. In addition, the monitoring of more than 3,071 public procurement contracts by local teams resulted in the repayment of over CFAF 151 million.⁷

14. As a result of all these measures, over 130 companies were barred from public procurement for various fraudulent practices during the financial years indicated above. Moreover, some senior officials in the Ministry of Public Procurement were penalized for different kinds of misconduct. Hotlines were set up to help reinforce all these anti-corruption measures with a complaints mechanism.⁸

B. Strengthening of legislative mechanisms

15. Legislative mechanisms were strengthened by the adoption of the Penal Code⁹ under Law No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016, which incorporates some of the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The Code criminalizes not only corruption but also insider trading (sect. 135-1), taking up prohibited employment (sect. 136-1) and

¹ See the Commission's progress reports on anti-corruption measures in Cameroon, 2011 and 2014.

² Approximately 15,267,175.57 euros.

³ Approximately 65,200,354.56 euros.

⁴ Approximately 15,473.17 euros.

⁵ Approximately 4,927,510.53 euros.

⁶ Approximately 47,074,285.41 euros.

⁷ Approximately 230,534.35 euros.

⁸ The numbers of these hotlines are: 288 20 06 06; 673 20 57 25; 663 49 28 21; and 699 37 07 48.

⁹ For all Penal Code provisions cited in the present report, see annex 2.

failing to declare a conflict of interest (sect. 313-1). Anyone reporting such offences is henceforth exempt from prosecution (sect. 134-2).

C. Strengthening of judicial mechanisms

16. In addition to the ordinary courts, the creation and operation of a specialized court, the Special Criminal Court, and the ongoing activities of the Audit Division of the Supreme Court have strengthened judicial mechanisms for the protection of public funds.

17. Created by Law No. 2011/028 of 14 December 2011, the Special Criminal Court is competent to try cases of misappropriation of public funds amounting to CFAF 50 million¹⁰ or more. To ensure its effectiveness and pursuant to the above-mentioned law, Decree No. 2013/131 of 3 May 2013 created a specialized corps of judicial police officers within the Special Criminal Court, managed and overseen by the Court's public prosecutor. Between its entry into operation in October 2012 and 2015, some 219 cases were referred to the Court. Over the same period, the Court handed down 152 convictions, 44 acquittals and 47 stays of proceedings.¹¹ The amount recovered in judicial costs during that period was estimated at CFAF 213,571,¹² while the amount claimed by the State was CFAF 48,390,791,919.94.¹³ The amount recovered through the repayment of misappropriated funds totalled CFAF 5,093,129,862.¹⁴

18. The Supreme Court's Audit Division continued its operations. In the area of judicial oversight, it issued 309 provisional rulings and 205 final decisions, of which 46 were orders for the payment of fines totalling CFAF 48,852,000¹⁵ and 159 were judgments against public accountants ordering the repayment of public funds totalling CFAF 1,848,386,026.¹⁶ In the area of administrative oversight of public and semi-public companies, it produced 31 reports — 15 containing interim observations and 16 containing final observations — during the reporting period, representing an estimated CFAF 89,839,030,000.¹⁷

19. A commitment to governance in the extractive sector enabled Cameroon to be declared compliant with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in 2013.

IV. Recommendation 9. Ensuring that the Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms is adequately staffed and funded

A. Staffing

20. The Commission has 30 members or commissioners representing the National Assembly, the Supreme Court, the Bar, universities, religious denominations, women's organizations, civil society organizations, trade unions, the National Medical Association, public and private press organs and government departments (social affairs, justice, prison administration, advancement of women).

21. It also has a permanent secretariat, six functioning regional branches of the 10 set up around the country and some 100 staff members.

¹⁰ Approximately 76,335.88 euros.

¹¹ See Ministry of Justice report on the situation of human rights in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

¹² Approximately 326.06 euros.

¹³ Approximately 73,879,071.63 euros.

¹⁴ Approximately 7,775,770.78 euros.

¹⁵ Approximately 74,583.21 euros.

¹⁶ Approximately 2,821,963.40 euros.

¹⁷ Approximately 137,158,824.43 euros.

B. Funding

22. In 2012, the Commission received a budgetary allocation of CFAF 1.1 billion,¹⁸ including CFAF 400 million¹⁹ for investment and CFAF 700 million²⁰ for the operating budget. Between 2013 and 2015, the allocation for the operating budget increased by CFAF 20 million²¹ to CFAF 720 million,²² while that for investment remained unchanged. While still inadequate, the Commission's operating budget is growing²³ and should, with the necessary relaxation of procedures for the release of funds, enable it to perform its functions.

V. Recommendation 10. Adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation

23. Anti-discrimination measures are based on the Constitution, the preamble to which states that the human person, without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights, and affirms that all persons have equal rights and obligations and that no person may be harassed on grounds of origin or religious, philosophical or political opinions or beliefs, subject to respect for public policy.

24. These constitutional provisions, which replicate most of the prohibited grounds for discrimination set out in article 2, paragraph 2, of the Covenant, are supplemented by specific sectoral laws. For instance, to prevent any kind of discrimination in politics, Law No. 2012/001 of 19 April 2012 containing the Electoral Code requires that gender and all sociological components be taken into account in drawing up candidate lists for legislative and municipal elections.

25. Section 38 (3) of Law No. 2010/002 of 13 April 2010 on the protection and promotion of persons with disabilities stipulates that in no circumstances may disability constitute grounds for discriminating against or rejecting job applicants with disabilities.

26. Any press article that disseminates ideas based on racial superiority or hatred or encourages discrimination will be seized and the competent court will issue an order for the press outlet in question to be banned (Law No. 90/052 of 19 December 1990 on the media).

27. Section 242 of the Penal Code, entitled "Discrimination", imposes a comprehensive ban on discrimination by criminalizing most grounds for discrimination enumerated in the Covenant and introducing a new one of discrimination on the grounds of health status.

28. Section 241 of the Penal Code, entitled "Contempt of race or religion", is more specific, punishing anyone who commits contempt, within the meaning of section 152, of the race or religion of a number of citizens or residents.

VI. Recommendation 11. Enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by indigenous peoples

A. Adoption of a consistent and comprehensive policy to promote the right of indigenous peoples to an adequate standard of living

29. In order to guarantee the right of indigenous peoples (the Baka) to an adequate standard of living during the reporting period, the Government and its partners launched

¹⁸ Approximately 1,679,389.31 euros.

¹⁹ Approximately 610,687,022 euros.

²⁰ Approximately 1,068,702.29 euros.

²¹ Approximately 30,534.35 euros.

²² Approximately 1,099,236.64 euros.

²³ The Commission's operating budget for 2016 is CFAF 756 million or approximately 1,152,439.02 euros.

special programmes involving capacity-building, funding of income-generating activities and the preparation of a development plan for the Pygmy community.

30. In the context of major construction projects in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples, the Government drew up programmes for the socioeconomic development of those peoples. For instance, the programme to support agricultural competitiveness, signed among the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Livestock Production, Fisheries and Animal Industries, was designed to build indigenous peoples' intergenerational production capacities in the agropastoral sector and to increase their incomes, thereby enabling them to contribute their share to national growth. The programme, costing CFAF 5 billion²⁴ and covering the period from 2013 to 2015, resulted in the funding of income-generating activities for indigenous peoples that made them self-sufficient.

31. Under the programme, 10 hectares of land were acquired for Pygmy leaders to grow food crops and further funding was granted to 36 groups to set up agriculture and livestock projects.

B. Guaranteeing the economic, social and cultural rights of indigenous peoples when major projects outlined in the growth and employment strategy paper are launched

32. A socio-environmental impact assessment is always carried out before any development project is launched, particularly in the forest areas inhabited by indigenous peoples (Baka Pygmies). The purpose of the assessment is to measure the project's potential impact on the environment, natural resources and the population's sociocultural life. The Mbalam iron project executed by the Cameroonian iron ore company Cam Iron is one example. Cam Iron drew up an indigenous peoples plan that defined the strategy for protecting the culture and livelihood of indigenous peoples (Baka Pygmies) in the project areas. The plan's aims include:

- Making an inventory of indigenous peoples' land and forest resources so that they can have long-term access to them;
- Ensuring that the plan takes account of the food security, education and health of the Baka Pygmies;
- Giving indigenous peoples culturally appropriate education about the project in question and the management of forestry resources;
- Maintaining a long-term participatory approach with the Baka community throughout the project and helping indigenous peoples obtain hunting licences; and
- Using non-wood forest products that are not threatened with extinction.

VII. Recommendation 12. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and the labour market

33. The third General Population and Housing Census, conducted in 2010, found that there were 2,910,000 persons living with at least one disability in Cameroon. In the light of this finding, the Government has continued to take steps to ensure the exercise of the specific rights of persons with disabilities, especially in the areas of education, employment and work.

A. Education

34. Through Joint Circular No. 283/07/LC/MINESEC/MINAS of 4 August 2007 on the identification of pupils/students with disabilities or whose parents have disabilities, the

²⁴ Approximately 7,633,587.79 euros.

Government enabled such children to enrol in public primary and secondary schools and to take official examinations. It also promoted the social inclusion in education of persons with disabilities by disseminating domestic and international legal instruments advocating the right of persons with disabilities to education. In 2013, nearly 10,000 copies of Law No. 2010/002 of 13 April 2010 on the promotion and protection of persons with disabilities and of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were produced and distributed in pocket format and in formats accessible to persons with visual or hearing impairments. In 2014, the National Union of Associations of and for Persons with Disabilities translated Law No. 2010/002 into two local languages: Beti and Ghomalá. The Government also updated and circulated widely its guide on accessibility of education to persons with disabilities and its guide on accessibility of public infrastructure and buildings.

35. Disability awareness days, such as the one held in 2013 on the theme “Let’s love our children, let’s take our children out”, serve a similar purpose.

36. At the organizational level, a service for the promotion of inclusive education was set up in the Ministry of Basic Education, as provided for in Decree No. 2012/268 of 11 June 2012 establishing the Ministry’s organizational structure. This advance was accompanied by strategic developments such as the inclusion of disability issues in the strategy paper for the education and training sector, 2013–2020, resulting in the inclusion, since 2013, of modules on disability in teacher training college curricula and the in-service teacher training curriculum. National school inspectors received training on inclusive education at a course held in Yaoundé on 9 and 10 August 2016. Moreover, during official examinations, special measures are taken to ensure that buildings and tests are accessible to persons with disabilities.²⁵

37. Since education also depends on students’ having access to buildings, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Public Procurement Regulatory Agency signed a joint letter on the accessibility to persons with disabilities of infrastructure and buildings that are either public or open to the public, to ensure that project managers observe the requisite technical specifications.

38. The recent incorporation of the inclusive approach has yielded results (see annex 3). In the 2014/15 school year, 4,083 pupils with disabilities were admitted to public educational establishments, accounting for 0.19 per cent of the 2,108,279 pupils enrolled in public general and technical education.

39. With regard to partnerships, a library for blind and visually impaired persons was set up in 2014 at Douala University. On 28 April 2014, the Government signed a cooperation agreement with the non-governmental organization Sightsavers on building teachers’ capacities in the area of inclusive education and supplying specialized schools with teaching aids.

B. Employment and work

40. Incentives were put in place to guarantee the employability of persons with disabilities. Among statutory measures, two circulars were signed:

- Joint Circular No. 075/LC/MINEFOP/MINAS of 30 December 2011 on access to vocational training for persons with disabilities, aimed at improving the conditions for admitting and providing support to such persons and to other at-risk groups in public and private vocational training institutions;
- Joint Circular No. 074/LC/MINEFOP/MINAS of 30 December 2011 on access to employment for persons with disabilities, aimed at helping such persons find work in public or private companies or become self-employed. The circular details

²⁵ For instance, assigning candidates with impaired mobility to ground-floor examination rooms; enlarging the font on tests for visually impaired persons and placing such persons close to the blackboard; transcribing tests into Braille for blind persons; interpreting examination instructions into sign language for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons; and, also for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, replacing dictation tests with tests requiring them to identify mistakes.

measures such as advertising and posting job opportunities, earmarking job offers for persons with disabilities and guaranteeing the availability of resources for funding microprojects put forward by persons with disabilities.

41. With regard to training, the monograph on occupations accessible to persons with disabilities, by type of disability, was disseminated widely. Centres such as Bobine d'Or train persons with disabilities in dressmaking and hairdressing and promote their inclusion in society and the labour market. Between 2005 and 2015, the Information Science Training Centre for Visually Impaired Persons trained 58 visually impaired persons. The African Institute of Informatics has trained around 205 persons with disabilities for jobs in information and communication technology.

42. With regard to employment, for 2010/11 the civil service recruited 110 teachers with disabilities who held a Teacher's Grade One Certificate as part of the Ministry of Basic Education initiative to hire general education teachers.

43. Following the agreement reached between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Employment Fund on 4 September 2006 on facilitating the social and workplace inclusion of vulnerable persons, four persons with disabilities received vocational training and 24 received funding totalling CFAF 8 million²⁶ to help them become self-employed.

VIII. Recommendation 13. Amendment of legislative provisions discriminating against women

44. Cameroon has undertaken a whole range of legislative reforms. Successful reforms include the elimination from the Penal Code of discriminatory provisions on adultery, rape and early marriage.

45. As a result, section 361 of the Penal Code now imposes the same penalties for adultery whether committed by a man or a woman. Section 297, which used to exempt a rapist from prosecution if he subsequently married his victim, has been repealed and section 242 penalizes all forms of gender-based discrimination.

46. Section 356 on forced marriage, which used to penalize anyone who gave in marriage a daughter aged under 14 or a son aged under 16, no longer differentiates between girls and boys with regard to marriage age.

IX. Recommendation 14. Abolition of forced labour in prisons and consent of prisoners to work

47. There are no laws imposing forced labour as a penalty and this practice does not exist in Cameroonian prisons. The penalty of forced labour was abolished when the Penal Code was amended pursuant to Law No. 90-61 of 19 December 1990.

48. Prisoners cannot be made to work against their will, since a prisoner who does not consent to work will not be productive. In practice, convicted prisoners often sign up for work. Besides, the use of prison labour forms part of the comprehensive prisoner rehabilitation and social reintegration strategy and is based on section 51 of Decree No. 92/052 of 27 March 1992 on the prison system in Cameroon.

49. To be accepted for prison work, prisoners must have been convicted in a final judgment, have served two thirds of their prison term and have a record of good conduct. Moreover, under section 25 of the Penal Code, prisoners earn an allowance for their work, of which two thirds is paid to them upon release to help restart their lives outside prison and a third is paid to the Treasury.

50. The 2015 annual meeting of regional representatives of the prison service recommended drawing up a prison policy aimed at the social reintegration of prisoners and the establishment of committees to vet prisoners eligible to work outside prison.

²⁶ Approximately 12,213.74 euros.

X. Recommendation 15. Boosting employment

A. Include in employment policy measures to overcome obstacles preventing young people and women from entering the formal labour market

51. In addition to the growth and employment strategy paper, which focuses on expanding the supply of paid jobs by promoting small and medium-sized businesses, offering self-employment incentives through specific programmes and projects aimed at women and young people and boosting civil service recruitment, the Government, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), drew up a decent work country programme for the period 2014 to 2017. The programme has four priority areas: expanding decent work opportunities and promoting income-generating activities, especially for women, young people and vulnerable groups; improving employment legislation and working conditions for all; building the capacities of employers' and workers' representatives; and social protection.

52. The National Youth Employment Action Plan, 2016–2020 also aims to create at least 380,000 jobs for young people at an estimated overall cost of CFAF 135 billion.²⁷

B. Develop vocational training that meets the needs of the labour market

53. The Government set up 72 new rural crafts and home economics training centres: 22 in 2013, 25 in 2014 and 30 in 2015. These State-run centres, which are partnered with the country's four main vocational training centres (Yaoundé, Buéa, Garoua and Pitoa) and three high-level vocational training centres (Douala, Limbé and Sangmélina), provide training in various occupations. A further 316 privately run centres were approved, 172 in 2014 and 144 in 2015, in an effort to expand vocational training opportunities.

54. To increase access to vocational training, the Government provided financial support to private training centres: CFAF 45 million²⁸ to 23 such centres in 2014 and CFAF 10 million²⁹ to a further 10 centres in 2015.

55. The main challenges faced in the area of vocational training are to strengthen the legal framework, coordinate among stakeholders and follow up with trainees once they have completed their training.

C. Ensure that activities of the National Employment Fund, such as support for setting up micro-businesses and vocational training, help to create jobs in the formal economy

56. The National Employment Fund continued its reception, guidance and employment intermediation services for jobseekers. The number of jobseekers registered at the reception and guidance stage has increased steadily, from 31,328 in 2011, 38,627 in 2012, 38,455 in 2013 and 47,607 in 2014 to 51,330 in 2015. However, the number of jobseekers placed in paid employment is still dwarfed by the ever-growing number of jobseekers registered by the Fund's offices between 2013 and 2105 (annexes 4 and 5).

D. Resources allocated to the National Employment Fund and the National Monitoring Service for Employment and Vocational Training

57. The budget allocated to the National Employment Fund for its activities varied

²⁷ Approximately 206,106,870 euros.

²⁸ Approximately 68,702.29 euros.

²⁹ Approximately 15,267.18 euros.

between 2011 and 2015. It received CFAF 6 billion³⁰ in 2011, CFAF 7 billion in 2012,³¹ CFAF 6.5 billion in 2013,³² CFAF 7.5 billion in 2014³³ and CFAF 8 billion³⁴ in 2015 (annex 6).

58. The budget allocated to the National Monitoring Service for Employment and Vocational Training was CFAF 61.9 billion³⁵ in 2013, CFAF 159 billion³⁶ in 2014 and CFAF 57 billion³⁷ in 2015.

59. The Monitoring Service has 10 regional offices and a central office with a staff of eight, comprising a coordinator, a statistician, a demographer, two secretaries, a driver, a communication officer and an administrative and financial officer.

XI. Recommendation 16. Amount of the guaranteed minimum wage

60. The amount of the guaranteed minimum wage rose from CFAF 28,216³⁸ to CFAF 36,270,³⁹ a 28.54-per-cent increase, following the adoption of Decree No. 2014/2217/PM of 24 July 2014.

XII. Recommendation 17. Enforcement of basic labour standards on plantations

61. Regular inspections and awareness-raising are carried out to ensure that labour standards are enforced on plantations.

62. The periodicity of plantation inspections is determined by Circular No. 0020/LC/MINTSS/IG of 28 December 2015. In regions such as Centre and Littoral where plantation activities are heavily concentrated, regional offices carry out an average of 40 inspections every three months, compared with 20 inspections in regions with an average level of plantation activity.

63. In departments with a high concentration of plantation activity, such as Boumba and Ngoko, Faro, Haut-Nyong, Kadéï, Moungo, Meme, Océan and Sanaga Maritime, departmental offices carry out 20 inspections every three months, compared with 10 for other departmental offices.

64. In the area of awareness-raising, a workshop organized by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa in cooperation with government departments was held at Niété on 22 and 23 September 2015 for Société Hévécam S.A., one of the country's biggest agricultural companies (5,000 employees). As a result of the workshop, the company pledged to draw up a formal policy of social responsibility, set up its own human rights committee, strengthen employer/worker dialogue within the company by appointing and training a staff representative and continue improving the implementation of workers' rights by, inter alia, providing them with housing, health care and living spaces in cultivation areas.

³⁰ Approximately 9,160,305.34 euros.

³¹ Approximately 19,687,022.90 euros.

³² Approximately 9,923,664.12 euros.

³³ Approximately 11,450,381.70 euros.

³⁴ Approximately 12,213,740.50 euros.

³⁵ Approximately 94,503,816.80 euros.

³⁶ Approximately 242,748,092.00 euros.

³⁷ Approximately 87,022,900.80 euros.

³⁸ Approximately 43 euros.

³⁹ Approximately 55 euros.

XIII. Recommendation 18. Right to form trade unions and take part in trade union activities

65. The right to form trade unions is set forth in the preamble to the Constitution and reiterated in Law No. 92/007 of 14 August 1992 containing the Labour Code, which provides that trade unions may be set up without prior authorization according to the conditions laid down by law, that workers and employers may join trade unions and employers' associations of their choosing and that such trade unions and employers' associations may operate freely. The appointment of a trade union registrar by Decree No. 2016/060 of 1 February 2016 should make the trade union registration process more transparent.

66. With regard to respect for the right to form trade unions, in 2012 the Government held a series of 14 meetings with trade unions and employers' associations to identify and find lasting solutions to the problems undermining the functioning of trade unions (annex 7). One of the proposed solutions was the adoption of a law on freedom of association.

XIV. Recommendation 19. Modernization of the social security system in order to guarantee this right to everyone

67. With a view to expanding social security coverage, a voluntary insurance scheme was put in place by Decree No. 2014/2377/PM of 13 August 2014 establishing the terms and procedures for covering voluntary contributors to the old age, disability and survivors' insurance scheme.

68. Under the Decree, the following are voluntary contributors:

- Persons able to contribute but for whom contributing to the old age, disability and survivors' insurance scheme is not mandatory;
- Workers who do not meet the conditions for joining the general social security system, the State employees scheme or any special social security scheme;
- Former contributors for whom contributing to the general social security system is no longer mandatory.

69. As a result of this expansion of the social security system, coverage had increased from 10 per cent to 20 per cent by the end of 2015.

70. The establishment of a non-contributory scheme remains under consideration, however.

XV. Recommendation 20. Bringing domestic legislation into line with international child labour standards and prosecution of non-compliance

A. Minimum working age and categories of hazardous work

71. In keeping with the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), section 86 of the Labour Code sets the minimum age for admission to employment at 14 years. With regard to categories of hazardous work, Order No. 17/MTPS/DGRE of 27 May 1969 on child labour lists the types of industry and occupations that are hazardous to children.

72. Section 342-1 of the new Penal Code deals with child trafficking.

B. Awareness-raising

73. The National Committee against Child Labour was set up by Order No. 082/PM of 27 August 2014. The Committee is responsible for mapping the incidence of child

exploitation in order to propose to the Government effective strategies for combating child labour and measures to enhance the application of the relevant international legal instruments.

74. The process of adopting the National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Cameroon by 2017 has begun. A workshop to approve the Plan was held on 19 March 2014 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

75. In 2014, with European Union support, the Noun departmental free trade union of municipal workers published a workers' and employers' guide to combating child labour in Cameroon. The guide's publication followed a study carried out by the trade union in the villages of Magba and Bangourain, which resulted in the removal of 50 child workers aged 5 to 14 from fishing jobs on the Noun and Mapé rivers.

C. Prosecution of cases of child trafficking and child labour

76. Prosecutions were brought against persons who had made illegal use of child labour, including cases of child trafficking. Such cases include the following:

- Public Prosecutor's Office and Clauvis Chérif Elangman v. Marie Noëlle Kota and Michel Bernard Nsa'a, resulting in Judgment No. 59/Crim of 18 September 2012 of the Haut Nyong high court. The accused, Marie Noëlle Kota and Michel Bernard Nsa'a, were each sentenced to five years' imprisonment and a CFAF 50,000⁴⁰ fine, and jointly to the payment of CFAF 85,450⁴¹ in costs;
- Public Prosecutor's Office and Fatime Doudou, Martin Lassou Djona and Others v. Oumarou Ousman, alias Manou, resulting in a judgment dated 2 June 2013 of the Mayo-Danay high court in Yagoua. After being taken from their place of residence, the victims had been put in charge of herding flocks of sheep and goats. The accused, Oumarou Ousman, was found guilty of the crime of complicity in child trafficking and exploitation and was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, CFAF 48,850⁴² in costs and the payment of CFAF 300,000⁴³ to Fatime Doudou and CFAF 1 million⁴⁴ to Martin Lassou Djona;
- The People v. Dairu Sanda Mbaa and Agnes Kwasinwi Buinda, Suit No. HCN/03/2015 of the Donga Mantung high court. The accused had taken six children aged 8 to 17 from their region of origin with the intention of making them work on plantations in Centre region. By judgment of 15 April 2015, they were convicted of trafficking, given a three-year suspended sentence and ordered to pay a fine of CFAF 60,000.

77. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security had 77 labour inspectors in 2014. The reasons for this low figure were retirements and the assignment of inspectors to other areas of activity, compounded by a freeze on the recruitment of labour inspectors in the civil service.

XVI. Recommendation 21. Legal framework to combat violence against women and girls

A. Review and adoption of laws designed to strengthen the legal framework to combat such violence

78. The adoption of the new Penal Code strengthened the legal framework for combating violence against women and girls. Female genital mutilation, breast ironing and

⁴⁰ Approximately 76.34 euros.

⁴¹ Approximately 130.46 euros.

⁴² Approximately 74.58 euros.

⁴³ Approximately 458.02 euros.

⁴⁴ Approximately 1,526.72 euros.

sexual harassment are now expressly criminalized under sections 277-1, 277-2 and 302-1 of the new Code.

79. Despite the absence of specific provisions, domestic violence and marital rape may be punished under certain provisions of the Penal Code. Domestic violence involving physical violence against a woman is punishable under sections 277, 278, 279, 280 and 281 of the Code, criminalizing grievous harm, assault occasioning death, assault occasioning grievous harm, simple harm and slight harm, respectively. The new Code also contains major innovations:

- Eviction of a spouse or widow from the matrimonial home is now punishable under section 358-1, while preventing the payment of a survivor's pension to a surviving spouse or orphans is punishable under section 180-1 of the Code;
- If a woman is abandoned without resources, she may apply to the courts on grounds of family abandonment and failure to pay maintenance, which are defined as offences in sections 358 and 180 of the Code.⁴⁵

B. Awareness-raising campaigns to combat all forms of violence

80. In 1998, the Government adopted a national action plan to eliminate female genital mutilation, which was reviewed in 2011. A national strategy to combat gender-based violence was adopted in 2012. Advocacy campaigns targeting key stakeholders are being used to raise awareness about these two documents.

81. In 2013, a total of 12,789 individuals and 75 community leaders were given violence awareness training. In 2014, the Minister for Gender Questions conducted two advocacy sessions for members of the Government and, in 2015, information on legal instruments for the protection of women's rights was disseminated to members of Parliament, associations, schools and universities and 703 community leaders. In addition, 150 police officers received training in how to address gender-based violence in humanitarian situations and how to provide all-round care for survivors.

82. Cooperative agreements were signed between the Government and civil society organizations, such as the Council of Imams and Muslim Dignitaries of Cameroon and the Cercle International pour la Promotion de la Création, with a view to expanding public awareness-raising activities with the support of the French Embassy and United Nations agencies.

83. Awareness-raising also took place on the occasion of international days such as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, held on 6 February, International Women's Day, celebrated each year on 8 March, and International Widows' Day, held on 23 June, and also during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign. During the 2015 campaign, the Minister for the Advancement of Women and the Family published a letter in the *Cameroon Tribune*⁴⁶ reaching out to families and appealing to the conscience of all Cameroonians concerning the dehumanizing, intolerable nature of the many forms of violence suffered by women and girls within the family and in their social and working lives.

C. Information on how widespread the various forms of violence against women and girls are, together with statistics on prosecutions and convictions

84. The 2011 combined Population and Health and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey revealed how widespread such violence is in Cameroon:

- 54.6 per cent of women aged 15 or over had been victims of physical violence;

⁴⁵ See recommendation 10 above.

⁴⁶ 4 December 2015 edition.

- 20 per cent of women who had ever been sexually active, and 30 per cent of those who had been sexually active before the age of 13, had had sex against their will;
- Overall, 64 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 had suffered physical violence, 8 per cent had suffered sexual violence and 21 per cent had suffered both physical and sexual violence;
- Among women who had ever been married, 60 per cent had suffered physical, sexual or emotional violence at the hands of their current or former husband;
- Among women who had suffered spousal injury in the 12 months prior to the survey, 43 per cent had been injured as a result of domestic violence.

85. Such violence did not go unpunished, however. In 2015, recorded cases of sexual violence gave rise to 485 investigations and 258 prosecutions, resulting in 157 convictions. In 2014, 84 prosecutions for sexual violence were brought before 54 courts.⁴⁷ A further 35 women suffered serious injuries, 252 suffered minor injuries and 492 suffered slight injuries. The main challenge, however, is victims' failure to report sexual and physical violence.

XVII. Recommendation 22. Intensification of efforts to combat poverty

A. Efforts to combat poverty, especially in disadvantaged and marginalized areas

86. To combat poverty, the Government implemented a policy of national solidarity, providing support for vulnerable families and individuals, particularly through local authorities, and implementing projects and programmes such as the second subprogramme on poverty reduction at the grass-roots level, the social safety nets project and the labour-intensive public works programme of the national participatory development programme.

Programmes and projects

Second subprogramme on poverty reduction at the grass-roots level

87. The result of cooperation between Cameroon and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the second poverty reduction subprogramme is designed to make a lasting contribution to poverty reduction in rural areas by structuring the local economy to focus on the most vulnerable groups. The subprogramme, which began in 2013 and lasts for five years, covers such areas as agriculture, livestock production and handicraft production. Financing has been provided to local organizations through revolving funds. Two microfinance bodies were selected to hold the credit lines for funding these organizations. More than 35 projects have already been funded and eight microprojects are awaiting funding. Two counselling, guidance, advice and support centres are also being set up.

Social safety nets project

88. The overall aim of the social safety nets project is to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups and people living in chronic poverty by means of well-targeted programmes of non-contributory financial transfers.

89. The pilot phase put in place in June 2012 gave the Government a better understanding of its system of social safety nets and enabled it to recommend the introduction of a programme of unconditional direct monetary transfers and a labour-intensive public works programme.

⁴⁷ Before 54 of the country's 58 high courts.

90. The positive outcomes achieved by the pilot project led the authorities to sign a loan agreement with the World Bank in March 2013 for CFAF 25 billion⁴⁸ in International Development Association financing to support a broader five-year social safety nets project benefiting 70,000 poor and vulnerable households in the five regions chosen on the basis of the poverty map (Extrême-Nord, Nord, Adamaoua, Est and Nord-Ouest) and in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala.

Trial roll-out of the programme of unconditional direct monetary transfers

91. Between 2012 and 2014, this Government-funded project allowed the programme of unconditional direct monetary transfers to be rolled out on a trial basis to 2,000 households. Of these, 1,500 households were living in 15 villages of the municipality of Souldé-Roua in Extrême-Nord region and 500 were living in seven districts of the municipality of Ndop in Nord-Ouest region. Each household received CFAF 360,000⁴⁹ in monetary transfers over a 24-month period, consisting of CFAF 20,000⁵⁰ every two months but CFAF 80,000⁵¹ in the 12th and 24th months. In addition to a total disbursement of CFAF 720 million,⁵² households received training designed to improve their health, nutrition, education and skills.

Implementation of the labour-intensive public works programme

92. Under this programme, 150 persons per microproject are employed for 60 days a year at a daily wage of CFAF 1,300.⁵³ Programme implementation began with the creation of 5,000 jobs in Nord region during the first half of 2016. In all, 35 microprojects have been carried out and nearly CFAF 390 million⁵⁴ have been distributed to workers.

B. Protection of women, children and other disadvantaged groups

93. Special attention was paid to the protection of disadvantaged social groups, in this case women, children and older persons.

Women and children

94. A department for women's economic empowerment was set up in the Ministry for Gender Questions. Its responsibilities include training women's organizations to launch projects and set up income-generating activities and providing them with various kinds of support. In 2014, for instance, 10,260 rural women were trained in modern techniques for producing, processing and conserving agropastoral produce; 4,628 women and girls were trained in project design and business management; 20 women received training in dressmaking and embroidery; 50 rural women were taught how to deal with the consequences of climate change; and 50 rural women were trained in agricultural and food product preparation and processing techniques. In 2015, 452 rural women from nine municipalities were informed about the challenges of transforming community initiative groups into cooperatives.

95. The implementation of programmes, projects, strategies and studies to help women enter the formal labour market, such as the "Humid Tropics" programme of agricultural development in humid tropical areas, the UNDP-backed economic and social inclusion programme and participation in the design of the project entitled "Gender and acceleration of women's economic empowerment on the Batchenga-Ntui-Yoko highway, 2015-2017", also serves the same purpose.

⁴⁸ Approximately 38,167,938.93 euros.

⁴⁹ Approximately 549.61 euros.

⁵⁰ Approximately 30.53 euros.

⁵¹ Approximately 122.13 euros.

⁵² Approximately 1,099,236.64 euros.

⁵³ Approximately 1,984 euros.

⁵⁴ Approximately 595,419.84 euros.

96. Agricultural inputs and equipment and subsidies for setting up projects were provided to women's organizations in the country's 10 regions. In 2014, women's associations received farm implements and supplies worth nearly CFAF 25 million,⁵⁵ agricultural inputs and an estimated CFAF 30 million⁵⁶ in subsidies for the design and implementation of income-generating activities.

Older persons

97. Of Cameroon's 19,400,000 inhabitants,⁵⁷ 961,285 are persons over the age of 60, accounting for 5.5 per cent of the total population, 6.5 per cent of the rural population and 3.4 per cent of the urban population. In 2012, the Government adopted a national policy document on the protection and promotion of older persons. In this context, subsidies were granted to private social agencies, associations and non-governmental organizations working with older persons and support was given to income-generating activities designed to ensure that older persons remain independent and learn new skills.

98. Comparative data on poverty rates, disaggregated by sex, region and urban/rural area, are contained in annex 8.

XVIII. Recommendation 23. National strategy and action plan on the right to adequate housing and distribution of social housing

A. National housing strategy

99. The growth and employment strategy paper made provision for a housing development programme to reduce the shortage of built spaces and improve urban planning. Activities have been ongoing since 2013 and will provide Cameroon with 95 new and four updated urban planning documents. A large share of the budget (which has been growing year on year as shown in annex 9) totalling CFAF 102,341,644,000⁵⁸ has been devoted to this.

100. The areas targeted by the participatory shanty town improvement programme are in Yaoundé (Nkolbikok), Kribi 2 and Bamenda 3. The programme is designed to improve housing quality in poor neighbourhoods. In Nkolbikok, it comprises three phases: developing and subdividing the site, selling plots of land and rehousing nearly 450 families in high-rise buildings close to the site. Implementation of the third phase, costing 1 million euros (approximately CFAF 650 million), began in 2012.

101. Lastly, the housing development programme involves rebuilding poor neighbourhoods over a 1,000-hectare area in Yaoundé, at a cost of CFAF 249 million,⁵⁹ and in Douala, at a cost of CFAF 80 million.⁶⁰ By the end of 2012, feasibility studies for two neighbourhoods in Yaoundé and one in Douala had been completed, as well as the programme design process.

B. Social housing for slum dwellers

102. To guarantee access to adequate housing for low-income groups, the Government launched an experimental programme to build affordable homes for low-income households. Under the programme, 1,000 hectares of land were secured, 5,000 plots were developed and 1,000 housing units will be built. Land development work has begun at Talla

⁵⁵ Approximately 38,167.94 euros.

⁵⁶ Approximately 45,801.53 euros.

⁵⁷ See the official results of the third General Population and Housing Census, published on 14 April 2010.

⁵⁸ 156,246,784.73 euros.

⁵⁹ Approximately 380,152.67 euros.

⁶⁰ Approximately 122,137.40 euros.

(Kribi) and Nkondom 2 (Mfou), while studies are under way for the Logbessou University site in Douala.

XIX. Recommendation 24. Right to adequate compensation or alternative accommodation in case of eviction

A. Legal framework

103. Decree No. 2008/0738/PM of 23 April 2008 on land development procedures and requirements regulates urban reconstruction and renovation. Section 6 stipulates that, where land development operations are undertaken by the State, an order of the Minister for Urban Development shall define, inter alia, procedures for the implementation of such operations, for the identification and compensation of owners — whether or not they have land title — and for the creation of the rehousing area and the allocation of plots therein. In such cases, the declaration that feasibility studies for and the implementation of such operations are in the public interest constitutes the second phase of implementation procedures.

B. Expropriations in the public interest and access to remedies for the persons concerned

104. Law No. 85-09 of 4 July 1985 on expropriation for public purposes and the conditions for compensation and its implementing regulations, especially Decree No. 87/1872 of 16 December 1987, form the applicable legal framework governing expropriation and the compensation of victims of public interest projects. These instruments guarantee the credibility of public interest expropriation by requiring that credits be available for paying compensation,⁶¹ that the process be transparent and that affected populations participate in this process through their involvement in the verification and valuation commission.⁶² The Decree also enables persons subject to expropriation to enter into prior negotiations with the project managers of other public entities.⁶³

105. In practice, compensation takes the form of either rehousing⁶⁴ or a cash payment calculated on the basis of the land valuation carried out by the verification and valuation commission. Any complaint or appeal regarding expropriation compensation must be addressed to the commission chairman, who may be the prefect, the governor or the Minister for State Property, as appropriate.⁶⁵ If they do not obtain satisfaction, claimants may appeal to the competent court of the place where the real property is located within one month from the date of notification of the contested decision.⁶⁶

106. In one such case, sites were earmarked for rehousing people whose homes were cleared to make way for the Yaoundé-Nsimalem motorway project (see annex 10).

107. In 2015, the total estimated cost of compensation for 42 public interest projects was CFAF 12,570,917,076,⁶⁷ of which CFAF 9,742,624,804⁶⁸ were for road projects, CFAF 233,453,409⁶⁹ were for land reserves, CFAF 8,768,075⁷⁰ were for the three-year emergency plan, CFAF 478,804,860⁷¹ were for electrification projects and CFAF 2,107,265,928⁷² were

⁶¹ Section 2 of Decree No. 87/1872 of 16 December 1987.

⁶² Affected populations are represented by the mayor or local traditional authorities.

⁶³ Local authorities, public enterprises, holders of public works concessions or State-owned companies.

⁶⁴ In the case of some construction projects.

⁶⁵ Section 19 of the Decree.

⁶⁶ Section 12(2) of Law No. 85/9 of 4 July 1985.

⁶⁷ Approximately 14,874,236.341 euros.

⁶⁸ Approximately 14,874,236.34 euros.

⁶⁹ Approximately 356,417.41 euros.

⁷⁰ Approximately 13,386,374 euros.

⁷¹ Approximately 730,999.78 euros.

⁷² Approximately 3,217,199.89 euros.

for various other projects during the same year. A cumulative total of CFAF 137,021,035⁷³ was paid out by the Yaoundé urban community to 31 residents whose property had been expropriated.

XX. Recommendation 25. Reform of the land tenure system and right of indigenous population groups to ancestral and community lands

108. The land tenure system and the State property system are being reformed. Members of the public and representatives of traditional or customary authorities and civil society are widely involved in this process, both through sectoral consultations and through structured hearings granted to, inter alia, representatives of indigenous peoples.

109. The land tenure system in Cameroon enshrines the principle of equal, non-discriminatory access to land. Any obstacles to women's access to land ownership are attributable solely to harmful cultural practices and customs, which the Government is combating in order to guarantee the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Statistics collected during the reporting period reveal a marked increase in the number of women exercising the right to own land between 2005 (869 land titles) and 2014 (2,306 land titles).

110. In 2015, of 9,872 land titles issued throughout the national territory under all procedures, 4,783 were issued to women, 3,929 to men and 1,160 to communities.

XXI. Recommendation 26. Right to safe drinking water, particularly in rural areas

A. Access to safe drinking water

111. To improve people's access to safe drinking water, the Government, with the support of its partners, has undertaken various projects (see the list of projects and their cost in annex 11) to increase access to drinking water, including in rural areas.

112. During the reporting period, the Government and the Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation (Camwater),⁷⁴ with support from their partners,⁷⁵ mobilized a total of CFAF 65,868,339,263⁷⁶ to implement a number of water supply projects. Between 2008 and 2015, the urban areas and water supply development project installed 50,000 new subsidized connections, added 341.9 km of piping to the water distribution network, overhauled water storage facilities with a capacity of 24,000 m³ in Douala and increased operational production capacity in Douala and Yaoundé to 200,000 m³.

113. A grant agreement signed between Cameroon and Japan for funding the fifth phase of the rural water supply project, 2012–2016, also provided nearly 400,000 people living in rural areas in Extrême-Nord and Nord regions with 700 boreholes and 10 drinking water supply systems. Drinking water supply equipment worth nearly CFAF 14 billion⁷⁷ was delivered.

114. Also in Extrême-Nord, the Mindif drinking water supply project was executed at a cost of CFAF 980 million.⁷⁸ It comprises a 150-m³ water tower, 44 standpipes and a 26,000-watt solar pumping station. The distribution network extends over a distance of

⁷³ Approximately 209,192.41 euros.

⁷⁴ A State-owned company responsible for supplying drinking water.

⁷⁵ Eximbank China, Belfius Bank of Belgium, African Development Bank, Global Partnership on Output-Based Aid, French Development Association, International Development Association, United Kingdom Department for International Development, World Bank.

⁷⁶ Approximately 100,562,350.02 euros.

⁷⁷ Approximately 21,374,045.80 euros.

⁷⁸ Approximately 1,496,183 euros.

13,900 m through the town's streets. At Soulédé-Roua, the connection to the drinking water distribution circuit was made from the town of Gouzda, on the Mokolo-Mora water pipeline, 27 km away. The village also has 30 standpipes. Lastly, with support from the Orange Cameroon mobile telephone company, three boreholes were drilled in the villages of Fotokol, Waza and Mozogo to supply them with water.

115. In Ouest region, 10 boreholes and 10 wells in the towns of Koutaba and Nkong-Zem were overhauled under a decentralization and local development project supported by the German Agency for International Cooperation. Nkong-Zem now has 73 overhauled and functioning water points.

B. Water supply to homes

Expansion of drinking water distribution networks

116. In addition to the 50,000 subsidized connections made under the urban areas and water supply development project, by the end of October 2015 Camerounaise des Eaux and Camwater had made 14,991 connections out of a contractual total of 15,333 connections scheduled for completion by the end of December 2015, an implementation rate of 98 per cent.

117. Also in 2015, 192 km of pipeline of different kinds and diameters, equivalent to 113 km of 100 mm-diameter cast iron piping, were built to supply pipelines with water. The total length of the different kinds and diameters of piping laid was 175.5 km, an implementation rate of 73 per cent for a seven-year concession period.

Increase in customers

118. The number of customers increased by 130,000, from 250,000 to 380,000. A total of 72,300 water meters had been supplied by the end of 2014.

119. Under the contract mentioned above, 100,000 meters were replaced; this was more than the number agreed upon in the contract. Camerounaise des Eaux upgraded 12,944 connections out of a scheduled 13,333, for an implementation rate of 97.5 per cent.

C. Subsidized connections

120. The subsidized connections campaign launched in January 2015, which resulted in 50,000 subsidized connections, came to an end. Recognizing that some customers have low incomes, the subsidy allowed the connection cost to be reduced to 10 per cent of the price normally paid by customers, the remaining 90 per cent being covered by the campaign's partners: the Global Partnership on Output-Based Aid, the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the World Bank.

XXII. Recommendation 27. Right to adequate food and tackling food insecurity

A. Setting up a public food distribution system for disadvantaged regions and groups

121. To tackle food insecurity, the Government set up a national food security programme by Decree No. 2009/0045/PM of 14 January 2009. Food aid is a subprogramme of this programme and includes a mechanism for monitoring and responding to food crises.

122. In response to the food crisis in Extrême-Nord region, the programme distributed food directly to the population. To rationalize this distribution, a committee was set up in

February 2015 to monitor the implementation of emergency food security measures in the region. That same year, there were three rounds of distribution of essential foodstuffs.⁷⁹

B. Measures to tackle the structural problems related to food insecurity

Problems of insecurity of land tenure for small-scale producers

123. To facilitate access to land for small-scale producers, each year the Government sets up land reserves for agropastoral activities. In 2014, 415 ha 80 a 99 ca of land reserves were set up. Moreover, the specifications for land concessions to agro-industrial companies always include living spaces that project managers must develop for local residents.

Transport and distribution of foodstuffs

124. To create food distribution circuits, the Government expanded road infrastructure in order to reach isolated agropastoral production areas. Warehouses were built for packaging and storing agricultural produce in order to reduce post-harvest losses. Markets, including regular and cross-border markets, were built. In 2015, CFAF 620 million⁸⁰ were released for municipalities to build 30 regular markets in the country's 10 regions. Two cross-border markets were also built: Doumo market in Nord region and Orokoba market in Sud-Ouest region.

125. In addition to expanding promotional sales campaigns in the period 2012 to 2015 and in order to ensure the supply of essential foodstuffs to the population in spite of price fluctuations, a basic commodity regulatory and supply board was set up by Decree No. 2011/019 of 1 February 2011. The board revitalized local markets by setting up a trading hub to supply city markets, using street markets, regular State-sponsored markets and, more recently, special State-sponsored markets. All these measures have helped keep cities supplied with meat, fish, chicken and other foodstuffs at weighted prices, which may be as much as 15 per cent cheaper.

Access to agricultural credits

126. In addition to the current project to create an agricultural bank, in 2014 the Government set up and launched a bank for small and medium-sized businesses designed to give small-scale producers easier access to credit. Also in 2014, a project to support the development of rural microfinance enabled CFAF 2 billion⁸¹ of the CFAF 9.55 billion⁸² earmarked for the project to be released for small-scale producers in rural areas. These funds were made available to microfinance establishments to fund 62,000 targeted small-scale rural producers in Centre, Ouest and Extrême-Nord regions.

XXIII. Recommendation 28. Measures to reduce maternal and infant mortality

A. Measures to reduce maternal mortality

127. To reduce the maternal mortality rate, which was 782 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2011, the Government set up a national multisectoral programme to combat maternal, neonatal, infant and child mortality in Cameroon, 2014–2018, the aim being to scale up activities that can have a major impact on maternal, neonatal and child health.

128. To meet the specific targets of the accompanying national strategic plan, seven priority strategic areas were defined, including communication, removal of financial

⁷⁹ The third food donation, made in November 2015, was valued at CFAF 1.05 billion.

⁸⁰ Approximately 946,564.88 euros.

⁸¹ Approximately 3,053,435.11 euros.

⁸² Approximately 14,580,152.67 euros.

barriers, capacity-building, balancing the availability and the quality of care and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

129. The communication component was implemented through the publication of a maternal and child health handbook in 2015. Health workers distribute the handbook, which contains information for antenatal visits, to women of childbearing age.

130. To remove financial barriers, subsidies for the care of mothers and their children, obstetric kits and a health voucher programme were introduced. Implemented on a trial basis since 2011 in the regions of Adamaoua, Nord and Extrême-Nord, the strategy of repositioning obstetric kits has been extended to other regions. The health voucher programme was launched officially on 2 June 2015 at Ngaoundéré regional hospital. It is a prepayment mechanism designed to ensure that women are monitored throughout their pregnancy, during childbirth and for six weeks after giving birth.

131. The maternal mortality monitoring project, designed to help the authorities understand the challenges and take action to improve maternal health, became operational in the country's 10 regions in 2014. That year, 400 health workers were trained to monitor maternal deaths, monitoring committees were set up and maternal and neonatal mortality statistics were reported weekly.

132. Antenatal visits enabled potential complications and risk factors such as pre-eclampsia to be detected in time and treated, thereby reducing maternal deaths. In 2015, out of a target population of 845,048 women, 650,238, or 76.9 per cent, actually had antenatal check-ups, a 7.4-per-cent increase over the rate of 69.5 per cent observed in 2014. In an effort to reduce malaria-related mortality and morbidity, since 2005 intermittent preventive treatment of malaria has been provided free of charge from the fourth month of pregnancy. The Government has also distributed long-life impregnated mosquito nets free of charge to families and communities since 2011.

133. A project to accelerate progress in maternal, neonatal and child health in Cameroon, designed in 2013, was implemented in five health districts of Extrême-Nord region. Spread over a 30-month period (July 2013 to December 2015), the project raised awareness and taught 200 traditional chiefs and community leaders about self-assessment and community mobilization in order to increase the demand for reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health services and build support for 200 community facilities.

134. Set up by the Commission of the African Union to meet the challenges of maternal mortality in African countries, the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) was launched in Cameroon on 8 May 2010. The maternal mortality rate recorded by the campaign in 2013 was 690 deaths per 100,000 live births.

135. In the human resources area, as of 30 May 2016 the reopening of some midwifery schools had increased the number of such schools to 10, of which 5 are public and 5 are private. The Government deployed 183 trained midwives in 2015. A further 5,846 health workers upgraded their reproductive health skills⁸³ between 2012 and 2014. On 16 April 2015, specialized equipment such as incubators, medical examination tables and illustrations of the human skeleton was delivered free of charge by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the MTN Foundation to support teaching modules at the Garoua private nursing school.

136. To increase the availability of maternal and child health care, mother-and-child hospital wings were built and equipped. A referral hospital for endoscopic surgery and human reproduction research and applications opened in Yaoundé on 6 May 2016.

137. All these efforts helped increase the percentage of assisted childbirths from 49.9 per cent in 2012 to 54.69 per cent in 2013 and 63 per cent in 2015.

⁸³ The in-service reproductive health training of 5,846 health workers took place as follows: 1,538 in 2012, 1,679 in 2013 and 2,629 in 2014.

B. Measures to reduce infant mortality

138. By the time the CARMMA project ended in 2013, the infant mortality rate had fallen from 31 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 28 in 2014.

139. In 2015, the proportion of newborns provided with skilled delivery and postpartum care was 38.17 per cent. Almost all (95 per cent) of these newborns were breastfed and 28.2 per cent were exclusively breastfed up to the age of 6 months; in 2011, the rate was 20 per cent. Immunization coverage for newborns has expanded, rising from 77.84 per cent in 2014 to 90 per cent in 2015 (375,792 newborns were immunized in 2015). To advertise the benefits of breastfeeding, Cameroon joins the international community each year in celebrating World Breastfeeding Week. Breastfeeding protects against many problems⁸⁴ responsible for 29 per cent of deaths in children aged under 1 year.

140. In 2014, immunization against rotavirus diarrhoea was added to the immunization schedule. The proportion of children receiving free treatment for uncomplicated malaria rose from 30 per cent in 2011 to 68 per cent in 2014.

141. For the efforts made to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, see the reply to recommendation 31 below.

C. Access of women and adolescent girls to sexual and reproductive health services

142. In addition to the adoption of a number of plans⁸⁵ designed to guarantee the access of women and adolescent girls to sexual and reproductive health services, such as the 2010–2012 strategic plan for the comprehensive development of young children aimed at helping girls and boys achieve their full potential, information on modern contraceptive methods was disseminated to women and adolescent girls with the help of the Cameroon Association for Social Marketing.

143. Under the Youth-Friendly Services project launched by UNFPA in 2015, three reproductive health units were opened: two in Est region (Bertoua regional hospital and Abong-Mbang district hospital) and one in Adamaoua region (Ngaoundéré regional hospital).

144. A number of measures were taken to prevent HIV/AIDS in adolescent girls. An “AIDS-free holidays” campaign is organized annually for adolescents. From 24 July to 12 August 2015, the campaign targeted nearly 700,000 young people, under the slogan “Condoms are good; abstinence and fidelity are even better”. Educational talks and one-on-one meetings were held and awareness-raising materials, including 12,000 leaflets, newspapers, stickers and pins, were distributed.

145. In 2015, capacity-building activities were organized on reproductive health, including family planning methods (617 health workers trained)⁸⁶ and on sexual and reproductive health (4,455 health workers and 180 traditional birth attendants trained).

D. Effectiveness of laws designed to prevent maternal mortality caused by illegal abortion

146. Abortion is criminalized under section 337 of the Penal Code. However, it may be performed on an exceptional basis in the cases provided for in section 339 of the Code. Any

⁸⁴ Poor breastfeeding practices include introducing other foods into the baby’s diet before the age of 6 months and bottle feeding.

⁸⁵ Strategic plan for maternal, neonatal and child health, 2014–2020, designed to promote birth spacing; family planning operational plan 2015–2020, aimed at improving access to family planning services; and strategic plan for the secure supply of contraceptives, 2015–2020, aimed at increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate from 16.1 per cent in 2011 to 30 per cent by 2020.

⁸⁶ The 617 health workers are working in the following regions, among others: Nord (77), Sud (29), Littoral (100), Sud-Ouest (96), Ouest (56), Adamaoua (95) and Est (72).

duly qualified person can perform an abortion if he or she can prove that the mother's health is at serious risk or if the pregnancy is the result of rape.

XIV. Recommendation 29. Measures to combat the distribution of counterfeit medicines and to improve access to quality medicines

147. The policy on medicines focuses on supplying the population with quality medicines at affordable prices. Efforts to strengthen the national system for the supply of affordable quality medicines and other pharmaceutical products continued during the reporting period, as did efforts to combat black-market medicines.

A. Measures to ensure the supply of quality medicines

148. The medicine supply chain comprises a number of structures. The National Office for the Supply of Essential Medicines is responsible for purchasing medicines and medical equipment and distributing them at affordable prices to institutions such as the regional health promotion funds, which in turn distribute them to health facilities. The supply chain is monitored regularly to ensure that stocks are available. Such monitoring has helped reduce stock shortages, with the result that the average number of days for which tracer medicines were out of stock fell from 15 days in 2014 to 13.69 in 2015.

149. Apart from the National Office, wholesalers supplied medicines to private pharmacies and faith-based hospitals.

150. In addition to providing subsidies for the purchase of medicines, the Government negotiated with laboratories to reduce the cost of some medicines sold in the country. The prices of more than 700 medicines dropped in 2011 and 2012, while the figure was 100 in 2013. For example, in 2011, patients spent more than CFAF 11 million⁸⁷ on a 48-week course of medicine to treat hepatitis. Prices dropped in 2012 and 2013, and in 2014 the cost per person of a 12-month course of medicine to treat hepatitis B and hepatitis C fell from CFAF 5,468,000⁸⁸ to CFAF 2,736,000⁸⁹ after an agreement was signed between the Government and Hoffmann-La Roche.⁹⁰

151. In some cases, such as hepatitis treatment for patients with HIV/AIDS, medicines are free. Antiretrovirals (ARVs) and anti-tuberculosis medicines are also free and children under 5 years of age receive free malaria treatment.

B. Dismantling the informal supply and distribution network for poor-quality medicines

152. The Government stepped up its campaign against black-market and counterfeit medicines. The total value of such medicines seized and destroyed in 2010 and 2012 was CFAF 3,933,205,365,⁹¹ while in 2014 it was CFAF 180,383,736.⁹²

153. An action plan against black-market medicines in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) area, 2016–2020, was adopted at a CEMAC meeting in Douala. At the meeting, member States undertook to provide central pharmacies with the necessary human, material and financial resources to ensure the supply of quality medicines.

⁸⁷ Approximately 16,793.89 euros.

⁸⁸ Approximately 83.50 euros.

⁸⁹ Approximately 41.80 euros.

⁹⁰ There has been a further drop since January 2016, as the cost of hepatitis C treatment has fallen by 80 per cent and that of hepatitis B treatment has fallen by 50 per cent (<http://www.mediaterre.org/afrique-centrale/actu,20160125140643.html>).

⁹¹ Approximately 5,996,196 euros.

⁹² Approximately 275,395 euros.

154. Under section 258-1 of the new Penal Code, the black-market sale of medicines is punishable by three months' to three years' imprisonment and a fine ranging from CFAF 1 million⁹³ to CFAF 3 million.⁹⁴

155. The absence of clearly defined procedures for the approval of generic medicines remains a major challenge, however.

XXV. Recommendation 30. General sanitation measures

A. Development of public sanitation services

156. To improve poor water supply, sanitation and hygiene conditions, a national liquid sanitation strategy, 2011–2020, was launched in 2011 with the aim of defining policy options, outlining institutional arrangements and identifying funding mechanisms to help increase people's access to sanitary facilities.

157. The National Advanced School of Engineering has a water, energy and environment laboratory where the main research areas are solid and liquid waste, water management and sanitation and hydrology.

158. In 2012 and 2013, in an effort to help build the project management capacities of the Yaoundé VI district authorities and improve local governance, the School worked with other institutions on the building of service roads and 10 latrines in the Melen and Mokolo neighbourhoods.

159. In 2014, as part of water, sanitation and hygiene activities, the Community-Led Total Sanitation approach was applied in 57 villages in three regions. These regions, along with Est region, benefited from the construction of 16,000 latrines in 2,520 villages.

160. Two initiatives involved the renovation of slum neighbourhoods: the urban areas and water supply development project and the participatory shanty town improvement programme. Between 2009 and 2012, the urban areas project resulted in the construction of 28 km of urban roads and 50 km of drains, the extension of tertiary networks in 16 urban centres, the creation, operation and capacity-building of slum development committees, the signing of 20 partnership agreements and two city contracts and the design of an urban strategy that will soon be announced.

161. Besides introducing community rubbish collection days, the Government assisted decentralized local authorities, which are now responsible for sanitation through the processing of faecal matter and urine into agricultural inputs (urea), by building ecological latrines that are managed by the users (schoolchildren, market traders) organized into environmental education committees.

Waste treatment

162. In some cities, waste is collected and treated by the Cameroon Hygiene and Sanitation Company (HYSACAM), which works under contract to municipalities. In isolated areas, waste is collected by community associations or households and taken to HYSACAM collection points.

163. The Government helped HYSACAM build two United Nations-approved biogas capture plants on the Douala and Yaoundé waste treatment sites in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The company also supplies portable toilets and industrial cleaning services. The entire cost of its services is covered by the State budget.

164. In addition to HYSACAM, there are over 60 businesses in Yaoundé and Douala that provide a septic tank cleaning service for companies, public bodies, hotels, public toilets and a small number of households. However, their activities are often limited by the lack of waste disposal sites.

⁹³ Approximately 1,524.49 euros.

⁹⁴ Approximately 4,573.47 euros.

165. The Government launched a national hospital waste management plan emphasizing the installation of hospital incinerators. A total of 120 health workers received training in hospital waste management and hygiene.

166. Lastly, the manufacture, sale and marketing of non-biodegradable plastic packaging was prohibited by Joint Order No. 004/MINEPDED/MINCOMMERCE of 24 October 2012.

Provision of safe water

167. The Government has promoted equal access for all to an adequate supply of safe water in both urban and rural areas.

168. In urban areas, safe water provision is made more difficult by uncontrolled urban growth coupled with population growth. Camwater has taken numerous steps to address this situation, such as overhauling water pumping stations and supply networks, building hydraulic works and launching many projects that are currently being implemented.

169. In rural areas, with a view to improving and securing access to safe drinking water for the populations of the villages concerned, the Government, assisted by its partners, organized the distribution of 2,000 hygiene kits in 2012 and the dissemination of information on simple techniques for making water fit to drink in the home.

170. Water is supplied to these areas by wells and boreholes equipped with manually operated pumps and by some 370 rural distribution networks that are currently being overhauled (Scanwater system). Since 2010, municipalities have been responsible for managing and operating facilities that fall outside Camwater's concession area, unless the latter agrees otherwise. They also receive technical assistance for the installation and management of modern water points, under the programme of support for decentralization and local development launched by the German Agency for International Cooperation. This technical assistance comprises surveying, mapping and the training of pump repairers.

B. Sanitation measures in schools

171. Many activities were carried out in both basic and secondary education.

Basic education

172. In 2015, 7,528,000 children, including 4,360,000 school-age children, were deparasitized as a result of helminthiasis and schistosomiasis control activities. Immunization campaigns and medical visits were organized for children in vulnerable population groups. To prevent cholera in schools, campaigns were launched to promote hand washing with clean water and soap (WASH campaign).

173. To provide safe drinking water for pupils, 21 schools were connected to the Camwater network between 2012 and 2014 and 307 boreholes/water points were built in other schools, 60 of them in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund. The situation of all schools with facilities supplying drinking water in 2014 can be seen in table 1 (see annex 12).

174. In rural areas, 4,919 primary schools out of a total of 8,948 (54.97 per cent) have facilities supplying drinking water to pupils, as can be seen in table 2 (see annex 12).

175. The efforts made by public authorities and development partners to protect the environment and promote hygiene in schools resulted in the building of 2,474 toilets between 2006 and 2014.

176. As a result, out of 18,135 primary and nursery schools surveyed during the 2013/14 school year, 9,852 (54.32 per cent) had toilets, while the remaining 8,283 either had no toilets or were in the process of building them.

177. A gender approach is followed in building toilets. The number of separate latrines in primary and nursery schools increased by 3,463, from 3,754 in the 2006/07 school year to

7,217 in 2014/15. The availability of separate facilities has encouraged more girls to enrol in school.

Secondary education

178. The same concerns about sanitation in schools resulted in the building of 90 toilet blocks in secondary schools between 2012 and 2014.

179. The sanitation measures taken by public authorities have helped prevent cholera and other diseases associated with water and hygiene in schools.

XXVI. Recommendation 31. HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, particularly for vulnerable groups

180. The Minister of Public Health issued new AIDS guidelines in May 2016, designed to build on Cameroon's progress in AIDS control by stepping up prevention and treatment for all population groups and meeting the needs of rural communities and at-risk groups. Measures were also taken to ensure that persons living with HIV/AIDS are aware of their human rights and the laws that protect them.

A. HIV/AIDS control measures in general

New AIDS guidelines⁹⁵

181. The new guidelines are in line with 90-90-90, an ambitious treatment target set by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to help end the AIDS epidemic. The UNAIDS target is to ensure that, by 2020, 90 per cent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90 per cent of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy and 90 per cent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

HIV-prevention activities

182. HIV prevention through awareness-raising took place on occasions such as the Cameroonian week against AIDS, World AIDS Day, the Universiade, International Women's Day and the Hope Run. During the reporting period, 15,174 educational talks and 61,055 one-on-one meetings were held, targeting 114,537 persons, of whom 76,668 were women.

183. The Government distributed condoms to people in urban and rural areas. The number of male condoms distributed rose from 21,645,424 in 2011 to 34,080,104 in 2015, while that of female condoms rose from 486,417 to 1,922,049 over the same period.

184. Awareness-raising activities led to a steady increase in the number of people diagnosed with HIV. In 2014, 667,770 persons were diagnosed, compared with 538,252 in 2013, an increase of 24.1 per cent. At the same time, the AIDS prevalence rate declined from 4.3 per cent in 2011 to 4 per cent in 2014.⁹⁶

Access to treatment

185. The Government's determination to decentralize medical care for people living with HIV/AIDS is reflected in the steady increase in the number of treatment centres in both urban and rural areas: from 153 in 2013 to 163 in 2014.

186. The Government mobilized funds to purchase ARVs, which continued to be provided free of charge to the affected population. In 2012 and 2013, stocks of AIDS

⁹⁵ See, inter alia, Decision No. 10019/MINSANTE/CAB/CNLS/GTC/SP of 24 May 2016 and the Minister of Health circulars of 26 May 2016 on the care of people living with HIV, the deployment of paediatric counsellors and the plan for enlisting laboratories to conduct viral load testing.

⁹⁶ National AIDS Control Committee.

medicines ran out more than once, but measures were taken to resolve the situation. UNAIDS purchased ARVs and in 2014 the President granted the National AIDS Control Committee a CFAF 5-billion⁹⁷ subsidy with which to purchase ARVs. Also in 2014, a software programme was installed to enable ARV stocks to be managed more rationally at the regional level in order to increase their availability.

187. The availability of medicines helped increase the number of people receiving treatment. In all, 105,653 persons were being treated in 2011 and this figure increased to 117,541 between January and October 2012. The number receiving treatment in 2013 totalled 131,531, rising to 143,837 in 2014 (see annex 12) and 167,850 in 2015. The 2015 figure amounted to over half of the 302,312 persons that the National Strategic Plan to Combat AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, 2014–2017, projected would be receiving ARV therapy by 2017.

188. People living with HIV also received free treatment against co-infections, for instance, cotrimoxazole prophylaxis against cryptococcal meningitis and oropharyngeal candidiasis. Tuberculosis and hepatitis care was also incorporated into HIV-related care.

Treating HIV/AIDS in rural areas

189. In addition to the comprehensive measures described above, action was taken specifically for people living in rural areas. In 2013, with UNAIDS support, training sessions and national workshops were held to build the capacities of 740 rural community outreach workers in prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV. These resulted in the voluntary testing of 1,600 persons in rural areas and helped link up pregnant women in the rural communities directly concerned with antenatal/PMTCT clinics.

B. Treating HIV/AIDS in vulnerable groups

Measures for children

190. The Government incorporated classes on HIV into teaching curricula, leading to a marked increase in the content and coverage of HIV-prevention services for schoolchildren. Some 3,284 educational talks were given to 24,087 pupils, 12,001 of them girls. The “AIDS-free holidays” campaign targeting young people is held annually.

191. To ensure that pregnant women living with HIV do not infect their babies during pregnancy or childbirth, increased efforts were made to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Awareness-raising campaigns were conducted to educate the population about PMTCT, and knowledge transfer in local languages was encouraged in order to speed up antenatal visits and ensure that people learn about PMTCT.

192. Government PMTCT efforts resulted in greater PMTCT coverage and a reduction in the rate of mother-to-child transmission. PMTCT coverage was 38 per cent in 2011, 45 per cent in 2012 and 61 per cent in 2013, while the mother-to-child transmission rate was 14 per cent in 2011, 13 per cent in 2012 and 9 per cent in 2013.

193. Children born to HIV-positive mothers were given ARV prophylaxis. In 2014, 10,749 children born to 20,584 HIV-positive mothers received ARV prophylaxis.

194. Children’s access to HIV testing should improve, given that the National AIDS Control Committee, adhering closely to the new HIV/AIDS guidelines, has recruited 356 paediatric counsellors in addition to the 756 counsellors for adults. The deployment of such counsellors to health facilities will support and encourage HIV testing in paediatric care, immunization and postnatal care units.

Treating HIV/AIDS in women

195. On International Women’s Day and the International Day of Rural Women in 2015, some 1.2 million women were given information about voluntary HIV testing and the correct, regular use of condoms. On these occasions, 1,661 people underwent voluntary

⁹⁷ Approximately 7,633,580 euros.

testing. Pregnant women were among those who received free treatment against AIDS. In 2014, for instance, 21,307 HIV-positive pregnant women out of a total of 41,684 received ARV therapy, a rate of 51.1 per cent, compared with 32.7 per cent in 2013, while in 2015, 29,458 out of 48,771 HIV-positive pregnant women received ARV therapy, a coverage rate of 60.4 per cent.

Treating HIV/AIDS in prison

196. Awareness-raising campaigns were carried out in prisons. In 2013, for instance, 1,173 prisoners were targeted by prevention messages. AIDS treatment centres have been available at Kondengui central prison and New Bell central prison since 2007. Voluntary testing was offered to all new prisoners and those diagnosed as HIV-positive are receiving ARV therapy. Peer educators were trained in prisons to teach other prisoners about HIV/AIDS. A number of prisoners from Est, Centre, Littoral, Ouest and Sud regions received training as peer educators from 8 August to 2 September 2015.

Measures for female sex workers

197. A working group to combat HIV/AIDS in men who have sex with men, female sex workers and their clients was set up by Ministry of Public Health Decision No. 1106/D/MINSANTE/CAB/STBP/CNLS/SP/SPSE of 15 June 2015.

198. The National AIDS Control Committee provides the necessary technical support and monitoring for HIV/AIDS organizations. One such organization, Horizon Femmes, helps raise awareness about HIV and educates female sex workers. Since 2015, it has used its “life centres” for training peer educators to raise awareness among male partners and clients of female sex workers and also men linked with prostitution rings.

C. Making people living with HIV/AIDS aware of their human rights and the laws that protect them

199. To enhance the protection of people living with HIV/AIDS, the National AIDS Control Committee set up a working group on HIV/AIDS-related stigmatization and discrimination to propose and coordinate activities for promoting HIV/AIDS-related rights in Cameroon.

200. In 2013, the working group’s activities included: making 111 people living with HIV/AIDS and 227 representatives of 12 national trade union confederations aware of the need to combat stigmatization and discrimination; preparing a handbook on the rights and obligations of people living with HIV/AIDS in Cameroon; and producing a poster entitled “It’s up to all of us to combat stigmatization and discrimination”. The group also approved the national policy document on combating AIDS in the workplace in an effort to enhance protection of rights and access to care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

201. At a capacity-building workshop for public administration gender focal points, held in Édéa on 9 and 10 December 2015 on the topic “Health, planning and HIV/gender”, representatives of government departments were alerted to the need to take HIV/AIDS into account in strategic planning frameworks, including planning, programming, budgeting, execution and monitoring/evaluation.

202. Section 242 of the Penal Code protects people living with HIV/AIDS against discrimination based on, inter alia, their health status.

XXVII. Recommendation 32. Policy to combat tobacco consumption

203. Cameroon ratified the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in 2006. Although it has not adopted implementing legislation, it did take a number of steps at the local and national levels to control tobacco consumption. The following circulars were issued:

- Circular No. 001/MINESUP/SG/DPDSU of 11 July 2012 on combating tobacco consumption in the central services of the Ministry of Higher Education and in public higher education institutions;
- Circular No. AS/003/LC/MINAS/SG/SLCFS of 23 July 2014 prohibiting smoking in central and decentralized services of the Ministry of Social Affairs;
- Circular No. 3/MINSEP/SG/DDSHN/SDMS of 13 March 2015 of the Minister for Sports and Physical Education, addressed to sports federations and organizers of sporting events, prohibiting the sponsorship of sociocultural and sporting events by tobacco manufacturing and marketing companies.

204. The 2015 Finance Act subjected tobacco imports to a special tax of CFAF 3,500 per 1,000 cigarettes. This tax amounts to only 19 per cent of the retail unit price, compared with the 70 per cent recommended by the Framework Convention.

205. The Multisectoral Anti-Tobacco Commission was set up by Decision No. 327/MINSANTE of 12 October 2015. The Commission advises on the implementation of anti-tobacco measures pursuant to the Framework Convention and the new international tobacco control guidelines.

206. Section 39 of Law No. 2006/18 of 29 December 2006 regulating advertising in Cameroon prohibits the advertising of cigarettes and other tobacco products by print media, radio, television, posters and cinema or any other similar structure.

207. Locally, the Bamenda I sub-prefect signed Decision No. 06/SPD/BLPA/2015 of 26 March 2015 prohibiting smoking in public places in Bamenda I.

Public awareness-raising campaigns against tobacco consumption

208. The Government raised awareness against tobacco consumption among public officials. On 24 February 2015, mayors and town councillors from Centre region took part in a workshop at which they received information and exchanged experiences on combating tobacco consumption at the local level. They were made aware of the risks of tobacco consumption and passive smoking.

209. On 20 August 2015, the Cameroonian Anti-Tobacco Coalition, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health, held a workshop in Yaoundé to inform civil society about the findings of the 2013 Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS 2013), tobacco control efforts in Cameroon and the content of the preliminary draft national anti-tobacco law. The 2013 GATS survey in Cameroon revealed that 8.9 per cent of persons over the age of 15 (13.9 per cent of men and 4.3 per cent of women) had consumed tobacco or tobacco products.

XXVIII. Recommendation 33. Equal enjoyment of the right to education

A. Free education equally accessible to all

210. By law, school attendance is free⁹⁸ and compulsory⁹⁹ in Cameroon.

211. In order to prevent and punish any violations of these principles, the anti-corruption brigade set up by Decision No. 2336/B1/1464/MINEDUB/CAB of 16 August 2011 carried out checks¹⁰⁰ to combat the payment of illegal fees in public primary schools.

⁹⁸ Section 47 of Decree No. 2001/041 of 19 February 2001 on the organization of public schools and the responsibilities of school administrators states that pupils enrolled in public primary education shall be exempt from paying the required annual contributions.

⁹⁹ Section 6 of Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on education policy in Cameroon states unequivocally that the State shall ensure children's right to education, while section 9 states that primary education is compulsory.

¹⁰⁰ In 2011, checks were carried out on 32 public primary schools targeted on a trial basis (in Douala, Yaoundé and Bamenda), accounting for 0.29 per cent of all public primary schools in the country,

212. All in all, between 2011 and 2015, checks were carried out on 99.75 per cent of functioning public primary schools and 28 cases of corruption were uncovered, a rate of 0.22 per cent. As a precautionary measure, administrators and staff found guilty of misconduct were dismissed.

213. To provide for children displaced in Extrême-Nord region as a result of the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group, a three-year emergency school plan costing CFAF 3,644,257,000¹⁰¹ was adopted, enabling 268 classrooms, 68 latrines and 56 boreholes/water points to be built. Special measures were taken to redeploy teaching staff.

214. For measures to make education accessible to persons with disabilities, see the developments in inclusive education described above.¹⁰²

B. Financial assistance to low-income families

215. Assistance to low-income families consisted of the free distribution of textbooks to low-income children, mostly in rural areas.

216. The operation to distribute free textbooks to public primary schools as part of the World Bank-funded Global Partnership for Education, which began in 2015, will continue in 2016. Under this second phase, a further 269,356 textbooks will be distributed to pupils, adding to the 300,000 reading books (French/English) and mathematics books purchased the previous year for Class One pupils, as well as 25,632 teaching guides and 795,196 workbooks for the same classes.

C. Measures to reduce dropout rates

217. The provision of food and dry rations to children in vulnerable population groups and priority education areas is aimed at reducing school dropout rates and improving the literacy rate, nutritional status and health of school-age children, with particular emphasis on schooling for girls.

218. In 2014, with World Food Programme (WFP) support, 84 public schools (35 in Nord region and 49 in Extrême-Nord) received food supplies with which to provide school meals for a total of 19,459 pupils and give 1,728 girls food to take home.

219. Between 2012 and 2016, a total of 501,087 pupils benefited from this project, at a total cost of CFAF 4 billion.¹⁰³ The operation helped reduce the early marriage rate among girls in recipient communities, increase school enrolment and attendance, especially for girls, and increase the retention rate for girls.

220. To guarantee access to education, in 2014 there were 8,267 preschools throughout the country, of which 3,623 were part of the French-speaking subsystem and 4,644 were part of the English-speaking subsystem. Nationwide, there were 14,580 classrooms: 8,753 in the French-speaking subsystem and 5,827 in the English-speaking subsystem.

221. In primary education, there were 18,135 schools in 2014, including 10,881 in the French-speaking subsystem and 7,254 in the English-speaking subsystem. Nationwide,

with no cases of corruption recorded. In 2012, checks were carried out on 364 primary schools out of 2,538 public primary schools in regional capitals (23.04 per cent), with 15 cases of corruption recorded, accounting for 4.12 per cent of the total targeted. In 2013, checks were carried out on 881 schools out of 3,804 public primary schools in the capitals of the country's 58 departments (31.7 per cent) and nine cases of corruption were punished, i.e. 1.02 per cent of targeted schools. In 2014, checks were carried out on 1,861 schools out of 5,982 public primary schools in the capitals of 360 districts (47.72 per cent) and no cases of corruption were recorded. In 2015, checks were carried out on 9,364 schools out of 10,913 public primary schools (87.07 per cent) and four cases of corruption were recorded.

¹⁰¹ Approximately 5,555,633.98 euros.

¹⁰² See section A of the reply to recommendation 12.

¹⁰³ Approximately 6,106,870.22 euros.

there were 82,013 classrooms: 58,097 in the French-speaking subsystem and 23,916 in the English-speaking subsystem.

D. Professionalization of higher education

222. Education is being professionalized, as evidenced by the introduction of master's degrees and doctorates and specialized courses geared to the professionalization of education in all universities, including research centres.

223. A higher education graduate career observatory was set up on 23 June 2013, providing reliable statistics on how the employment of graduates leaving higher education is being managed and how many of them have found jobs. It also supplies the information needed to adjust and adapt curricula and teaching and assessment methods in order to respond more effectively to the needs of the job market.

224. The Government also helps young graduates who design innovative projects or projects with strong growth potential to set up businesses. Business incubators were created for this purpose at the National Advanced School of Engineering in Yaoundé. These incubators are designed to teach young people how to set up a business and familiarize them with the worlds of scientific research, intellectual property and business.

XXIX. Recommendation 34. Rights of indigenous peoples

A. Right of access to ancestral lands and the resources found there¹⁰⁴

B. Principle of participation and protection of the distinctive cultural identity of indigenous peoples

225. The Government makes sure that indigenous peoples participate in their communities' development. The national participatory development programme designed a development plan for the Baka Pygmy community. Accordingly, by Decision No. 2/B of 9 April 2013 and in accordance with the 2012 socio-environmental agreement signed between the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development and the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Government appointed 31 heads of social protection to implement the Baka development plan in 31 municipalities in Est, Centre and Sud regions. These services were intended mainly to ensure that the community's specific needs were taken into account and that the Baka community was involved in local development.

226. Participation in local development also involves educating indigenous peoples and preserving their cultural identity. In 2014, under the "Baka rights and dignity" project aimed at improving education for Baka children while ensuring that they remain attached to their culture, teaching in the Baka language was tested in eight pilot schools in Est region, involving 734 children from the 2013/14 school year onward. To assist this project, 421 textbooks comprising spelling tables and mathematics books incorporating Baka cultural values were distributed in 2014, along with 421 slates with the Baka alphabet written on one side. This assistance resulted in a 5-per-cent increase in school enrolment among Baka children.

227. In 2015, Plan Cameroon developed a new strategy for promoting school attendance among the Baka: intercultural multilingual education. The strategy involves teaching Baka children to read and write in their mother tongue first, before beginning to teach them Cameroon's two official languages. The project was launched officially on 31 March 2015 and involves 54 primary schools and eight municipalities in Haut-Nyong department.

¹⁰⁴ See reply to recommendation 11.

XXX. Recommendations 35 and 36. Ratification of international instruments

228. Cameroon ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict by Decree No. 2012/243 of 30 May 2012.

229. The process of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which was launched by Decree No. 2010/347 of 19 November 2010, will be completed by the deposit of the instruments of ratification with the depositary body.

XXXI. Recommendation 37. Cooperation with United Nations special procedures

230. Cameroon cooperates with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. At the Government's invitation, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, visited the country from 16 to 23 July 2012. Some of his recommendations, such as those on forestry legislation and social security, are beginning to be implemented.

231. The Government agreed to a request by Catarina De Albuquerque, Independent Expert on the human right to water and sanitation, to visit the country in August 2013.

232. Rita Izsák, Independent Expert on minority issues, visited Cameroon from 2 to 11 September 2013.

233. The Government also agreed to requests for visits from Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, and Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. At the Government's request, these visits were deferred for security reasons, but the invitations stand and the visits will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

234. In 2014, as part of its cooperation with Human Rights Council special procedures, the Government accepted the system of standing invitations.

XXXII. Cooperation with the United Nations system

235. Navanethem Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, made an official visit to Cameroon from 30 June to 2 July 2013, in the course of which she was able to talk to a number of national authorities and bodies.¹⁰⁵

236. In addition to its regular attendance at sessions of the Human Rights Council and its ongoing dialogue with United Nations treaty bodies in responding to lists of issues and requests for information, Cameroon took part in the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review.

237. António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, visited Cameroon on 24 and 25 March 2015, while Volker Türk, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, visited in February 2016. Cooperation is ongoing with the United Nations Centre for Democracy and Human Rights in Central Africa, which provides support to national institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry for the Advancement of Women and the Family, National Security Department, Ministry of Defence/National Gendarmerie and National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms).

238. Irina Bokova, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Joan Clos, Executive Director of the United Nations

¹⁰⁵ On that occasion, she talked to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Advancement of Women and the Family and the Presidents of the Senate and the National Assembly. She also met with representatives of judicial bodies, the President and members of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms and members of the diplomatic community and civil society.

Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, made official visits to Cameroon in February 2014, from 15 to 17 February 2016 and on 29 and 30 August 2016, respectively.

239. From 23 to 28 June 2013, Cameroon hosted an official visit by Mamadi Diakite, UNAIDS Senior Regional Human Rights and Law Adviser. Cooperation is also ongoing with such United Nations bodies as UNAIDS, whose Executive Director, Michel Sidibé, visited Cameroon in 2015; WFP; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); UNESCO; and UN-Habitat, and is generally accompanied by various kinds of support and projects.

240. For instance, in the framework of cooperation with UNAIDS/Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, 15 subsidy agreements were signed for Cameroon: 7 for HIV/AIDS, 5 for malaria and 3 for tuberculosis. In May 2016, the Global Fund disbursed nearly US\$ 348,442,751 to the main recipients responsible for using these subsidies.

241. Cooperation with FAO is reflected in the pilot project to help create a phytosanitary database on integrated crop protection in Cameroon's forest area, the project to support the development of fruit growing in Cameroon and the project to assist host populations in Extrême-Nord region in the aftermath of the atrocities committed by Boko Haram.

242. Cooperation between Cameroon and UNESCO extends to several areas, such as the training of 4,088 teachers to provide HIV education in primary, secondary and high schools (the project ran from 2009 to 2013). Projects being executed in the period 2015–2017 include technical support and mobilization of extrabudgetary resources for information and communication technology training at the country's three technical teacher-training colleges; increasing educational opportunities by setting up national or subregional virtual universities and building infrastructure at the Maroua advanced teacher training college; and professionalizing education and combating graduate unemployment (establishment of the system of undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees).

XXXIII. Recommendation 39. Dissemination of the Committee's concluding observations

243. After its presentation, the Committee's report was made available to the competent public and quasi-public services and a press release was published and broadcast to inform the national and international community of the adoption of the concluding observations and explain how the report could be accessed.

244. The concluding observations contained in the report were transmitted by correspondence to government departments, judicial bodies, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations for information and with a view to their involvement in the preparation of Cameroon's fourth periodic report. It was on the basis of their inputs that the Ministry of Justice drafting committee prepared the draft fourth periodic report, which was submitted to all participants for approval at a workshop held on 15 September 2016. The draft fourth periodic report was also submitted to civil society representatives for consideration at a workshop organized by the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms on 11 October 2016.