



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Consideration of reports of States parties

List of issues in relation to the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Cameroon

Addendum

Replies of Cameroon to the list of issues*

[Date received: 22 February 2017]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. The present document contains the replies of the Government of Cameroon to the comments and requests for clarification made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in advance of its consideration of the combined third to fifth periodic reports on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Cameroon at its seventy-fifth session, to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 15 May to 2 June 2017.

Part I

1. Please inform the Committee of the efforts made by the State party to speed up the adoption and entry into force of the law on the Civil Code.

2. The process of adopting the revised Civil Code is under way.

2. Please give the current definition of the child included in the legislation of the State party. With reference to paragraph 53 of the report of the State party, please provide information on situations where a child reaches majority before the age of 18. Please also indicate the steps taken to combat child marriages.

3. In Cameroon, the age of civil majority is 21, the age of criminal responsibility is 18 and the voting age is 20. These provisions of domestic law do not contravene the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18 years, unless, under the law applicable in the country, majority is attained earlier”.

4. One of the challenges related to determining a child’s age is gender-based discrimination when it comes to requirements for marriage, as boys are allowed to marry at the age of 18 and girls at 15. Pending the completion of the ongoing legislative reforms, the reform of the Criminal Code through Act No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 provided a solution by prohibiting the early marriage of both girls and boys.

5. However, those who marry when they are still minors are automatically emancipated.

Steps taken to combat child marriages

6. According to the results of the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, published in 2016, 36 per cent of women had been married or in a common-law union before the age of 18, compared to 5.4 per cent of men.

7. On the basis of these results, the Government decided to intensify its efforts to combat early and/or forced marriage using preventive and punitive measures.

8. In terms of prevention, studies have been conducted in order to assess the prevalence of the phenomenon in the localities concerned.

9. One study has shown that early and/or forced marriages are widespread throughout Cameroon, with variations across regions, and with the highest rates in the North (60.1 per cent), followed by the Far North (58 per cent), Adamaoua (57.7 per cent) and the East (47.8 per cent).

10. In addition, numerous awareness-raising activities have been conducted, including the celebration of the Day of the African Child on 16 June 2015 on the theme “25 years after the adoption of the African Children’s Charter: accelerating our collective efforts to end child marriage in Africa”.

11. Cameroon has also joined the African campaign to combat child marriage. This has involved a combination of awareness-raising and the organization of mobilization workshops and the development of home-grown strategies to combat early and forced marriages in the Far North region (districts of Kar-Hay, Moulvoudaye, Moutourwa, Guidiguiss and Kousséri), including the establishment of denunciation brigades. In addition,

a briefing on combating child marriage was held for parliamentarians on 25 October 2016, resulting in the development of an action plan to combat the practice. Furthermore, forums of governors and traditional and religious authorities have been organized in the regions concerned.

12. The campaign was launched nationally on 11 November 2016 under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the head of Government, with the participation of the African Union. Finally, Cameroon took advantage of its hosting of the Women's Africa Cup of Nations to conduct advocacy and awareness-raising activities.

13. In terms of punishment, the reform of the Criminal Code through Act No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 strengthened the legal framework by criminalizing any marriage contracted between individuals under the age of 18. While the previous provision of the Criminal Code allowed for the punishment of "anyone who gives in marriage a girl under the age of 14 or a boy under the age of 16", article 356 of the new Criminal Code, entitled "Forced marriage", removes the legal disparities between girls and boys in relation to the age under which they cannot be given in marriage. "[A]nyone who gives in marriage a girl or boy under the age of 18" is subject to punishment.

3. Please inform the Committee of any legislative and practical measures taken or under consideration to eliminate discrimination against girls, children born out of wedlock, children with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex children, refugee or asylum-seeking children, internally displaced children, albino children and indigenous children.

14. The Constitution of Cameroon affirms equal rights and duties for all, as follows: "all people are equal in rights and duties". In order to strengthen this equality, a comprehensive anti-discrimination provision was included in article 242 of the new Criminal Code, entitled "Discrimination", which criminalizes most grounds for discrimination, while introducing a significant innovation, namely discrimination based on medical status. It provides:

"Any person who refuses another access either to premises open to the public, or to employment, because of that person's race, religion, sex or medical status, when said status does not put others at risk, shall be punished by a period of between 1 month and 2 years' imprisonment and a fine of between 5,000 and 500,000 CFA francs."

15. Article 241, entitled "Insulting a race or religion", is more specific and provides for the punishment of any person who engages in insulting behaviour as defined in article 152 against a race or religion to which a number of citizens or residents belong.

16. With regard specifically to children with disabilities, there are plans to experiment with inclusive education in 68 pilot schools, to train teachers in inclusive education, and to establish a specialized and inclusive school at the Cardinal Paul Emile Leger National Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities. Attention is drawn to the development and adoption of a national policy on inclusive education, the establishment of specialized centres for children with disabilities in some institutions; the establishment at the universities of Buea and Yaoundé of faculties of education with specialized education departments; the introduction of a module on sign language and Braille in the science department of the higher teacher training college in Yaoundé; the conclusion in 2015 of an agreement between the University of Yaoundé I and the PROMHANDICAM association for the transcription of tests in Braille; and the granting of subsidies to private special education establishments.

17. Children born out of wedlock, whether natural or born of adulterous relationships, are afforded the same treatment as other children, based on the principle of non-discrimination applied by the courts.

18. Children with albinism benefit from double protection: the protection afforded to persons with disabilities and protection aimed at combating social exclusion. Accordingly, they receive various forms of assistance. The World Association for Assisting Persons with Albinism and Defending Their Interests (ASMODISA) provides support to empower

persons with albinism. To this end, it has concluded a partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

4. Please provide detailed information regarding steps taken to combat poverty among children, including among those deprived of a family environment and those in a vulnerable situation.

19. In order to better address the issue of child poverty, the Government, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), commissioned a study on multidimensional child poverty in Cameroon. The study, the results of which were released on 8 February 2017, used the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) approach. The idea was to follow up on Sustainable Development Goal 1.2. The results of the study will help to develop a strategy to combat child poverty.

20. Furthermore, the Government has drafted a framework document outlining a national policy on the comprehensive development of young children.

5. Please inform the Committee of measures taken by the State party to remedy the underlying causes of violence, including sexual violence, against girls and to ensure that perpetrators of such violence are prosecuted and punished. Please indicate the measures taken to abolish any legislative provision that enables a rapist to be acquitted by marrying his victim. Please also indicate by what means victims may access assistance and rehabilitation services.

21. In order to combat violence, the Criminal Code, as amended by Act No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016, retains certain offences involving violence against women and girls, while introducing new offences that expand the range of behaviour punished. For example, articles 277-1, 277-2 and 302-1 now explicitly mention female genital mutilation, breast ironing and sexual harassment as punishable offences.

22. In addition, subsequent marriage between a rapist and his victim no longer constitutes grounds for waivers of prosecution under article 298. The following measures have also been taken:

- The dissemination of legal instruments for the protection of the rights of women and girls;
- An ongoing study on gender-based violence with the Central Census and Population Studies Office;
- The updating of the National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence and the National Plan of Action to Combat Female Genital Mutilation;
- The dissemination of the new Criminal Code;
- Awareness-raising and advocacy among community leaders regarding violence against women and girls.

23. In 2016, these measures reached thousands of people.

24. With respect to rape cases, 1,127 investigations have been opened, giving rise to 494 judicial investigations, 414 prosecutions before the courts, 293 convictions and 69 acquittals.

25. In addition, advocacy targeting parliamentarians has been conducted to highlight the magnitude of violence against children, in particular girls, in order to establish penalties for perpetrators.

26. Other initiatives that have contributed to accelerating the elimination of sexual exploitation and violence include:

- A study on sexual violence against children and on family relationships in Africa;
- The establishment of seven call centres for the reception and care of victims and survivors of gender-based violence in the Littoral, Centre, East and Far North regions;

- The validation of standards of care for child victims of sexual exploitation and violence;
- The establishment of a chain of actors to support child victims of sexual exploitation and violence;
- The production of outreach materials (comics, brochures, posters, flyers, sketches, etc.) on the rights of the child and efforts to eradicate cultural practices harmful to children;
- Capacity-building for officers of the court and other legal professionals, including judges, lawyers, bailiffs and notaries, on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for better protection of the rights of women and children.

6. Please provide information on steps taken to combat torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, and to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of such acts. Please also inform the Committee of measures taken or envisaged to introduce a total ban on corporal punishment.

Combating torture and inhuman or degrading treatment

27. In accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, torture has been made a criminal offence under article 277-3 of the Criminal Code.

28. The definition set out in paragraph 5 of that article reads as follows:

(a) The term “torture” means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical, mental or moral, is intentionally inflicted on a person, by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity, for such purposes as obtaining from him or her or a third person information or a confession, punishing him or her for an act that he or she or a third person is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or her or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind.

(b) The term “torture”, thus defined, does not include pain or suffering arising from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

(c) No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.

(d) An order from a superior officer or a public authority may not be invoked as a justification of torture ...

29. Efforts have been made to ensure that penalties are proportional to the seriousness of the acts committed. Thus, paragraphs 1 to 4 of the same article provide for the following:

“(1) Anyone who involuntarily causes the death of another through torture shall be liable to life imprisonment.

(2) The sentence shall be imprisonment for 10 to 20 years if the torture causes the victim to be permanently deprived of the use of all or part of a limb, organ or sense.

(3) The sentence shall be imprisonment for 5 to 10 years and a fine of 100,000 to 1 million CFA francs if the torture causes the victim to become ill or unable to work for a period of more than 30 days.

(4) The sentence shall be imprisonment for 2 to 5 years and a fine of 50,000 to 200,000 CFA francs if the torture causes the victim to become ill or unable to work for a period equal to or shorter than 30 days, or to undergo mental or psychological pain or suffering.”

30. In any event, law enforcement officers who fail to apply legal provisions criminalizing torture are subject to disciplinary penalties and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

31. In 2013, six gendarmes were given disciplinary sanctions for committing torture, inflicting bodily harm or violating the right to life. Similarly, the director of the main prison of Meiganga and six of his staff were suspended for three months for inflicting violence on a prisoner, and a senior police officer received a reprimand and a note in his file for assaulting a person brought to the police station.

32. In 2014, disciplinary measures, including warnings, reprimands and temporary suspensions, were taken in respect of 10 members of the National Police for assault against persons in police custody, persons brought to a police station and others.¹

33. During the same period, 15 members of the National Gendarmerie were investigated for torture, bodily harm, violations of the right to life, and arbitrary arrest and detention.² In addition, legal action was taken against two officers, seven non-commissioned officers, six privates, and one gendarme for murder, manslaughter and torture.³

34. During the period under consideration, the military courts handed down 35 convictions against law-enforcement personnel for acts of torture, abuse of official position, arbitrary arrest and detention, murder and manslaughter.⁴ The military court of Garoua sentenced one private to life imprisonment and another to 1 year's imprisonment, with a 3-year suspended sentence, for being accessories to torture and murder.

35. The civil courts sentenced a prison guard to a 1-year non-suspended term of imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 CFA francs for the murder of a detainee, a charge that was subsequently reclassified as deadly assault under Judgment No. 29/CRIM of 12 July 2012 of the *tribunal de grande instance* (court of major jurisdiction) of Haute Sanaga, in Nanga-Eboko.⁵

Combating corporal punishment

36. Corporal punishment is prohibited both in schools and in family settings. (See the information provided in paragraph 81 on page 12 of the report. The actions described in paragraph 84 are being gradually implemented, following the example of the "schools for husbands" set up in the East and Centre regions since 2016.)

Violence in schools

37. Article 35 of Act No. 98/004 of 4 April 1998 on education policy in Cameroon provides that "the physical and psychological integrity of students shall be safeguarded in the education system. The following shall therefore be prohibited: corporal punishment and any other forms of violence".

38. Studies have been conducted on violence in schools and measures have been taken to prevent and eliminate it. An example is the diagnostic study carried out in collaboration with the NGO Plan International Cameroon, which showed that violence against children can take several forms, including:

- Corporal punishment with the use of pipes or pieces of electric cable to strike students on the thighs, calves or hands;
- Sexual harassment, including touching of students' private parts;
- The use of insults, teasing or violence by peers.

39. Action is being taken to address this issue, with a focus on:

- Promoting a spirit of non-violence in schools;

¹ Report of the Ministry of Justice on the human rights situation in Cameroon 2014, paras. 78 and 79.

² Report of the Ministry of Justice on the human rights situation in Cameroon 2014, para. 80.

³ Report of the Ministry of Justice on the human rights situation in Cameroon 2014, para. 82.

⁴ Report of the Ministry of Justice on the human rights situation in Cameroon 2010-2014.

⁵ Report of the Ministry of Justice on the human rights situation in Cameroon 2012, paras. 67 and 68.

- Building capacity to improve teachers' attitudes;
- Developing and implementing mechanisms for data collection and research on the violation of children's rights;
- Encouraging the participation of children in school management and taking their views into account;
- Sanctioning teachers who have committed acts of violence against children and, where necessary, bringing them before the courts;
- Setting up associations of students' mothers and child-friendly, girl-friendly schools in priority education zones;
- Raising awareness among families through educational talks in the associations of students' mothers and child-friendly, girl-friendly schools in priority education zones. These activities are run by trained village leaders who act as the liaison between these families and the Ministry of Basic Education. They are jointly funded by the Government and technical and financial partners such as UNICEF.

40. Broadly speaking, the outcomes of this action so far indicate an increase in general awareness of the gravity of the issue of violence in schools. As a result, there has been a significant drop in the number of cases of violence in schools.

Domestic violence

41. As regards domestic violence, efforts are made to promote non-violent approaches.

42. When preventive measures fail, the perpetrators are prosecuted. In addition, perpetrators cannot be exempted from punishment on the grounds that they are a family member. For example, in Judgment No. 376/CRIM of 22 April 2014 in the case of *The Public Prosecutor v. Richard Pierre Zambo*, where the accused was charged with manslaughter, the *tribunal de grande instance* of Mfoundi found that the accused had hit his 11-year-old son, which had resulted in the latter's death. The death certificate concluded that the cause of death was a haemorrhage. The accused was found guilty and convicted in accordance with the law.

7. Please provide detailed information on measures envisaged to step up the fight against harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and so-called "breast ironing", and the human, technical and financial resources allocated for that purpose.

Measures envisaged to step up the fight against harmful practices such as female genital mutilation

43. According to the Demographic and Health Survey and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey for 2011, the prevalence rate of female genital mutilation in Cameroon is 1.4 per cent throughout the national territory and 20 per cent in areas where the practice is most widespread.

44. To tackle this practice, which has multiple consequences for the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls, the Government has, for many years, focused on awareness-raising, advocacy, community mobilization, psychosocial support for victims, finding alternative occupations for practitioners, and local monitoring through the establishment of local committees in areas where the practice is common.

45. Furthermore, an important collaborative arrangement has been established between the Government and the Cameroon Council of Imams and Muslim Dignitaries. Act No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the Criminal Code also contributes to efforts to combat the phenomenon.

46. Article 277 (1), entitled "Genital mutilation", is unequivocal in this regard:

"Anyone who mutilates the genitals of another person, whatever the procedure used, shall be liable to the penalties set out in article 277 above.

(2) The penalty shall be life imprisonment if:

- (a) The perpetrator habitually engages in the practice or does so for commercial gain;
- (b) The practice results in the death of the victim;
- (3) The courts may order the loss of rights provided for in articles 19 and 30 of this Code ...”.

Measures envisaged to step up the fight against “breast ironing”

47. The phenomenon of inflicting “breast ironing”, or rather “breast massaging”, on young girls is a harmful cultural practice that aims to delay the development of breasts in adolescent girls.

48. In general, this condemned practice is increasingly dying out, owing to the combined effect of the evolution of societal attitudes and the awareness-raising and punitive measures implemented by the authorities in cooperation with social and financial partners and civil-society organizations.

8. Please list measures taken to:

- (a) **Eliminate bullying, violence and sexual abuse in schools;**
- (b) **Eliminate geographical disparities in terms of access to education;**
- (c) **Reduce the school dropout rate;**
- (d) **Guarantee that primary education is effectively free of charge;**
- (e) **Ensure that every school has separate latrines for girls and boys;**
- (f) **Guarantee access to school for children not included in the civil registry.**

Please also explain the reasons for the growing number of private schools.

(a) Measures to eliminate bullying, violence and sexual abuse in schools

49. In terms of legal measures, the Ministry of Basic Education has commissioned a study to identify undesirable behaviour by teachers and to propose targeted policies and actions to eradicate it.

50. As part of the implementation of programmes and projects developed in cooperation with organizations such as UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Plan International Cameroon, the International Organization of la Francophonie, and Japan International Cooperation Agency, the following actions are being undertaken:

- Building the capacity of local branches of the Ministry of Basic Education and of teachers to safeguard children’s rights, particularly the right to protection;
- Learning modules on the themes of citizenship and peace;
- Awareness-raising campaigns for all members of the educational community to eradicate violence and punishment, including corporal punishment, of children;
- Reporting parents and teachers who use such practices;
- Establishing task forces to report the use of such practices in schools;
- Promoting the holding of educational talks during meetings of parent-teacher associations and school councils;
- The creation of special police units to combat violence in schools;
- Advocacy before decision-makers to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for the prevention of such practices.

(b) Measures taken to eliminate geographical disparities in terms of access to education

51. These measures have included:

- The drafting and approval of the national community-based preschool policy and implementation strategy in 2015 to improve preschool enrolment rates and reduce regional disparities;
- The establishment of community preschool centres with a view to increasing preschool educational provision in rural areas and reducing disparities between rural and urban areas;
- The development of targeted basic education programmes for children in priority education zones, with the support of international organizations such as UNICEF, Plan International and the French Development Agency. These programmes focus on access to education, quality of education and education of girls and children of vulnerable parents.

52. In the context of implementation of the programme budget, the Government has put in place four programmes funded from the 2017 budget, for a total of 122,500,000 CFA francs, to:

- Increase the preschool enrolment rate;
- Improve access to primary education and increase the completion rate;
- Increase the literacy rate.

(c) Measures taken to reduce the school dropout rate

53. These measures include:

- Revising the system for promoting students to the next grade;
- School meals for girls and children from vulnerable families in priority education zones, with the support of the World Food Programme in partnership with UNICEF;
- Promoting inclusive education;
- Making public primary school free by abolishing contributions payable by parents;
- Distributing textbooks to students;
- Bringing schools closer to the people by setting up new public primary schools every year;
- Distributing food to students in the form of dry rations in priority education zones;
- Conducting studies on bottlenecks hampering the education of girls and minorities with a view to taking appropriate measures.

(d) Measures to guarantee that primary education is effectively free of charge

54. These include:

- Distributing textbooks, study guides and workbooks to students, with the support of the Global Partnership for Education;
- Distributing basic education kits to all schools in the context of the transfer of certain powers from the Ministry of Basic Education to the municipalities;
- Distributing micro-science kits.

(e) Measures taken to ensure that every school has separate latrines for girls and boys;

55. The building of blocks of latrines in schools under the public investment budget and with the support of financial and technical partners is continuing (see the information provided in paragraph 175 on page 28 of the State party report).

(f) Measures taken to guarantee access to school for children not included in the civil registry;

56. Measures have been taken to:

- Identify and enrol all school-age children who do not have a birth certificate in school;
- Liaise with the competent civil registry authorities to have birth certificates issued in accordance with the relevant regulations before children submit applications for high school and vocational school entrance examinations, the Certificat d'Études Primaires (French-language primary school-leaving certificate) and the English-language First School Leaving Certificate;
- Raise awareness among parents, in cooperation with the competent authorities, of the need for birth certificates for children who do not have one.

57. Other measures are taken in cooperation with international organizations and civil society, parliamentarians and other social actors.

Reasons for the growing number of private schools

58. These reasons include:

- Insufficient educational provision by the State to meet the strong demand for education, especially in large urban areas;
- The perception among many parents that private school is of better quality than public school;
- Overcrowding in public schools in large cities;
- The recognition by the Government that private education is in the public interest;
- The establishment by the Government of a legislative and regulatory framework for private education that is conducive to, and encourages, the development of private schools.

9. With reference to paragraph 186 of the State party's report, please provide further information on action taken to raise awareness of, reintegrate and rehabilitate children who have been victims of forced labour and economic exploitation.

59. The State party does not have any additional information.

10. Please indicate the measures taken to identify the root causes of the phenomenon of children living in the streets and to prevent it. Please also provide information on measures taken to prevent child prostitution, including among street children, and to stop the trafficking of children and children's organs, and to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished.

60. The Government has signed a cooperation agreement with civil-society organizations, including the United States Agency for International Development and Catholic Relief Services. As part of this cooperation, two baseline studies were conducted on the situation of street children in 2015. The findings and recommendations will give greater insight into the causes of, and means of preventing and dealing with, the situation of street children.

61. In principle, efforts to combat the phenomenon of street children are part of the ordinary work of the country's social centres. However, there are projects to combat the phenomenon in the social centres of the Centre and Littoral regions.

62. A number of main causes have emerged, including poverty, irresponsible parenting, domestic violence, sexual violence and disobedience on the part of children.

63. In terms of prevention, street children are identified and brought to social centres, where they receive psychosocial support to prepare them for returning to their family of origin.

64. Awareness-raising activities are also conducted in these establishments with a view to preventing prostitution.

- 11. Please comment on reports that children may be brought to justice under antiterrorist legislation. Please indicate what is done to ensure that children are detained separately from adults and whether the State party is considering setting up juvenile courts. Please also indicate what measures are being taken to improve living conditions in prisons and to ensure that children whose age cannot be determined are not treated as adults.**

65. Antiterrorism is a new and complex challenge in Cameroon. Investigations opened in this context have unfortunately revealed that some children are involved. In following the relevant procedures, questions have been raised about the responsibility of the children concerned. Discussions have centred on the social reintegration of these children.

Separation of children and adults in detention

66. The separation of children and adults in detention is a principle provided for by law and observed in practice. In prisons lacking a juvenile wing, minors are held in separate facilities from adults.

67. Furthermore, 39 of the 78 currently functioning prisons (of a total of 88) have a juvenile wing and 15 have facilities for minors. It should be noted that not all prisons are able to accommodate minors. To prevent them from being isolated, minors, particularly girls, of whom there are relatively few, are sometimes held in the women's wing.

68. Special facilities have been built to cater for the specific needs of certain categories of prisoners. For instance, quarters for older persons have been established at the central prison in Douala.

Improvement of living conditions in prisons

69. The activities carried out under the first Programme for the Improvement of Detention Conditions and Respect for Human Rights (PACDET I), which focused on the Douala and Yaoundé central prisons, addressed the following subjects:

(a) Defence

- A total of 2,219 detainees received legal assistance (1,190 in Yaoundé and 1,029 in Douala);
- The cases of 1,344 detainees were concluded; of these, 463 involved acquittals, dismissal orders, provisional releases and immediate releases, while 807 detainees were convicted.

70. In the end, 80 per cent of the cases involving persons held in pretrial detention for more than 3 years were settled, leading to a significant reduction in the average length of detention.

(b) Enhancing detainees' awareness of their rights through the following measures:

- The introduction of legal clinics in the prisons of Yaoundé and Douala, where lawyers met individually with every detainee who wished to obtain legal advice;
- The organization of legal briefings for detainees in the form of presentations and question-and-answer sessions.

(c) Investment: the construction and fitting out of visiting rooms and the purchase of 12 computer systems and 26 typewriters for Yaoundé and Douala prisons and the prosecutors' offices and courts in those two cities;

(d) Prisoners' health: improving patient health care by providing prisons with first-aid supplies and basic equipment.

71. The positive results achieved by PACDET I have prompted the Government of Cameroon to sign a funding agreement for a second programme, PACDET II, whose scope has been extended to all central prisons in Cameroon.

72. This has made it possible to improve the functioning of the judicial and correctional institutions by:

- Supporting the implementation of the Code of Criminal Procedure by publishing and distributing 5,000 copies of the Code and 7,796 books of application forms to the Ministry of Justice;
- Encouraging consideration of non-custodial sentences by introducing community service into the new draft of the Criminal Code;
- Improving the functioning of the judiciary by delivering computers, fax machines and photocopiers to the Inspectorate-General of Judicial Services and providing prosecutors' offices and registries of the military courts with office equipment;
- Supporting the formulation and implementation of a training programme for civilian and military judges, regional representatives of the prison service, the directors of central prisons, detainees, health officials and NGOs;
- Providing legal assistance to 5,413 detainees and speeding up the handling of their cases.

73. Detention conditions have been improved in the following ways:

- 10 central prisons have been provided with 10 delivery trucks;
- Biogas systems have been built in 8 central prisons;
- 10 boreholes have been constructed in 10 central prisons;
- Disease has been prevented through prisoner vaccination programmes and the emptying of septic tanks;
- Health care has been provided to sick prisoners through the delivery of medical equipment and medicines;
- Income-generating activities have been introduced in 8 central prisons (farming: Bertoua, Ebolowa and Garoua; animal farming: Bafoussam, Bamenda, Buéa, Douala, Maroua, Ngaoundéré and Yaoundé).

74. Work carried out on infrastructure, which has been financed by counterpart funds, involves the construction of infirmaries in Bertoua, Bamenda, Douala, Ebolowa, Garoua, Maroua, Ngaoundéré and Yaoundé.

75. Detainees have been prepared for social reintegration by being provided with educational materials and equipment (desks, boards, television sets, beds, mattresses, DVD players).

76. Lastly, in order to improve the functioning of prison institutions, the Inspectorate-General of the Prison Service and the regional representatives have been provided with four-wheel drive pickup trucks and two prison vans.

77. With regard specifically to children, in most prisons, whereas adults are entitled to one meal a day, children receive two meals a day and gruel in the morning.

12. With regard to the increase in the rate of abduction, recruitment and use of children, particularly girls, as human bombs or human shields by the terrorist group Boko Haram, please indicate what prevention measures have been taken or envisaged by the State party and the efforts made to bring those responsible to justice. Please provide information on steps taken to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims within their families and communities.

78. Through the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Government runs awareness-raising campaigns to educate families and communities regarding the need to protect their children. Actions to promote knowledge of children's rights and obligations are also undertaken to help children become good citizens. Some child victims are placed in rehabilitation centres with a view to ultimately being returned to their families and communities.

79. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family has undertaken a number of measures aimed at the socioeconomic and family reintegration of victims. Measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of the abuses of Boko Haram include the provision of economic kits, to be used for income-generating activities, to internally displaced persons from the affected areas in the Far North region.

80. Prevention measures include the establishment of monitoring committees and the holding of media campaigns to help the public detect and report suspicious conduct.

Part II

13. The State party is invited to briefly (three pages maximum) update the information provided in its report with regard to:

(a) New bills or enacted legislation and their respective implementing regulations

- Act No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the Criminal Code.

(b) New institutions and their terms of reference, and institutional reforms

- Decree No. 2017/0039/PM of 19 January 2017 establishing the modalities for the opening, organization and operation of crèches and day-care centres.

(c) Newly implemented policies, programmes and plans of action and their scope and financing

- National policy paper on the protection of children, drawn up in 2016;
- National platform for the protection of children, including in emergencies;
- Establishment of platforms bringing together various stakeholders involved in child protection on issues such as child marriage, juvenile justice and gender-based violence;
- UNICEF is supporting the preparation of a plan of action that is to be drafted after completion of a national study on harmful cultural practices conducted under a strategy to combat child marriage.

(d) Newly ratified human rights instruments

- No new instruments ratified.

Part III

Data, statistics and other information, where available

14. Please provide budgetary information for the past three years on budget lines allocated for children and social sectors, particularly with regard to health, education and social services, expressing each budget line as a percentage of the total national budget and gross domestic product, and indicating geographical distribution.

15. Please provide updated statistical data for the past three years, disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, geographic location and socioeconomic status, regarding:

(a) Birth registration

81. The National Registry Office is now operational. It is responsible for the centralization of statistical birth registration data at the national level. According to the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, the proportion of children under the age of 5 whose birth has been registered is 66.1 per cent. This figure is significantly higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

(b) Child marriages

82. According to the results of the survey:

- 11.4 per cent of women aged between 15 and 49 were married before the age of 15;
- 36 per cent of women aged between 20 and 49 were married or in common-law unions before the age of 18.

(c) Pregnancies and maternal mortality among girls and adolescents

83. Statistical data are not available.

(d) The number of cases of abuse and violence against children, including in the form of corporal punishment, with additional information on the type of assistance offered to child victims and the follow-up given to such cases, including prosecution of the perpetrators and the sentences handed down

- 24 per cent of adolescents have been subjected to breast ironing;
- 1.4 per cent have been the victims of female genital mutilation.

84. Statistics from certain courts show that 1,648 children — 335 boys and 1,313 girls — have been the victims of violence and other offences. In 2015, a total of 3,532 persons were convicted for such offences. The most common forms of violence prosecuted were indecent behaviour with a minor under the age of 13 (840 cases) and rape (221 child victims). The least common forms of violence against children were torture, manslaughter and illegal national arrest. An example of a case involving prosecution and sentencing is that of a 7-year-old girl whose father delivered second-degree burns to her genitals on 28 January 2015, claiming that she wet the bed, the accused was placed in pretrial detention on 3 February 2015 on charges of violence against a child, and was sentenced under judgment No. 423/Cor of 7 May 2015 of the court of first instance of Ngaoundéré to 1 year's imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 CFA francs in compensation for the victim, represented by her mother.

(e) Cases of sexual violence and rape perpetrated against children that have been investigated and the outcome of trials concerning such cases, including the sentences handed down, the reparations offered to victims, and any instances of perpetrators having been acquitted as a result of marrying their victims

85. No data are available.

(f) Children suffering from malnutrition

86. According to data from UNICEF, 33 per cent of children suffer from chronic malnutrition, almost 14 per cent of them from severe malnutrition. The rate of stunting is 12 per cent among children under the age of 8; 17 per cent among children aged between 9 and 11 months; and 42 per cent among children aged between 18 and 23 months and between 24 and 35 months. The rate of chronic malnutrition is slightly higher among boys (35 per cent) compared to girls (30 per cent). The malnutrition rate in rural areas is 41 per cent compared to 22 per cent in urban areas (2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey).

(g) Children infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS and those enjoying access to antiretroviral therapies

87. According to the 2014 survey, the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among persons aged between 15 and 49 is 4.3 per cent. Among children aged between 15 and 19, the rate is 2.7 per cent, but this varies according to socioeconomic quintile, as follows: quintile 1 (1.2 per cent), quintile 2 (2.7 per cent), quintile 3 (3.1 per cent), quintile 4 (3.4 per cent) and quintile 5 (2.7 per cent). For the same age group, a comparison was made between the rate at the national level and in the northern regions, which showed that Adamaoua has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, at 4.1 per cent, compared to 1.2 per cent in the Far North and 1.1 per cent in the North. The same survey showed that 32 per cent of girls and 41.2 per cent of boys aged between 15 and 24 were capable of properly identifying the means of

preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and rejecting the main misconceptions about transmission.

- (h) **The number of children and adolescents using drugs and the treatments available to them, as well as the number of children enjoying access to mental health facilities and ambulatory services in that respect**

88. No data are available.

- (i) **Asylum-seeking and refugee children, including unaccompanied minors**

89. In keeping with its legendary tradition of hospitality, Cameroon has taken in almost 350,000 refugees, who are fleeing the violence of the terrorist group Boko Haram or political crises in neighbouring countries. Cameroon has endeavoured to respond in the most appropriate manner to their needs to ensure their full enjoyment of their rights. These needs mainly involve nutrition, health, water and sanitation. In addition to these Government measures, there has been strong public mobilization nationwide, with people generously offering their support to refugees.

90. There are currently 194,617 refugee children in Cameroon, 4,992 unaccompanied minors nationwide, and 1,262 asylum-seeking children in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala.

- (j) **The number of children recruited by armed groups, as well as the number of children used as human bombs and human shields**

91. It is difficult for the State party to give an objective response on this subject. Children used as human bombs are abducted and recruited by force to the Islamic sect Boko Haram without the knowledge of their families or communities.

- (k) **The number of children currently detained on charges of associating with the terrorist group Boko Haram**

92. Some 20 children are charged with associating with the terrorist group Boko Haram.

- (l) **The number of cases of female genital mutilation, indicating the follow-up given to such cases, the sentences handed down against perpetrators and the reparations and compensation available to victims**

93. It is difficult to provide information on this practice given its insidious nature. As efforts to combat the practice intensify, female genital mutilation is increasingly practised in secret. However, current mapping shows that female genital mutilation affects more than 1.4 per cent of the female population nationwide and 20 per cent in the areas where it is most prevalent. It can reasonably be assumed that, with family mobility, displacement of population groups in the interior of the country and the influx of immigrants from the Central African Republic and Nigeria, where, according to a 2013 report by UNICEF, the prevalence rate is estimated at 35 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively.

94. The legal framework for combatting female genital mutilation was expanded with the adoption of Act No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the Criminal Code. The Code provides for penalties for the perpetrators of genital mutilation, regardless of the procedure used, of 10 to 20 years' imprisonment (article 277 and 277-1). The penalty is life imprisonment if:

- The perpetrator habitually engages in the practice or does so for commercial gain;
- The practice results in the death of the victim.

95. With the entry into force of this law, there has been a transition from awareness-raising to prosecution.

- (m) **The number of male or female excisers who have been offered State party support to find alternative sources of income**

96. Actions to support practitioners are undertaken by both the Government and civil-society organizations.

16. Please provide data, disaggregated by age, sex, socioeconomic category, geographic location and nationality, concerning children deprived of a family environment, and please indicate for the last three years the number of children:
- (a) Separated from their parents;
 - (b) Living in a household headed by a child;
 - (c) Placed in an institution (disaggregated according to the duration of placement);
 - (d) Placed in a host family;
 - (e) Adopted within the country or abroad.
97. No data are available.
17. Please provide data for the past three years, disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability, ethnicity and geographic location, on the number of children with disabilities:
- (a) Living in their families;
 - (b) Placed in an institution;
 - (c) Attending a regular primary school;
 - (d) Attending a regular secondary school;
 - (e) Attending a special school;
 - (f) Not attending school at all;
 - (g) Abandoned by their families.
98. No data are available.
18. Please provide data for the past three years, disaggregated by age, sex, socioeconomic background, religion, geographic location and ethnicity, regarding school enrolment rates (by sex and percentage) of the relevant age groups in primary and secondary schools.

Table 1

Gross enrolment by region and sex for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015

Region	2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Adamaoua	133	109	121	144	119	132
Centre	107	107	107	111	111	111
East	118	109	114	129	118	124
Far North	137	108	123	137	111	124
Littoral	93	93	93	97	97	97
North	146	114	131	155	125	140
North-west	124	124	124	119	117	149
West	150	146	148	150	147	149
South	135	138	136	152	155	153
South-west	104	108	106	106	111	108
Total	124	113	118	127	117	122

Source: Department of Planning, Projects and Cooperation Division/Ministry of Basic Education.

Note: The statistics for 2015-2016 are still being analysed.

Table 2

Gross completion rates (per cent) for primary level by region and sex for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015

Region	2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Adamaoua	67	47.3	57.15	71.1	50.5	60.7
Centre	72.5	75.9	74.1	75.7	80	77.8
East	70	61	65.5	71.5	62.8	67.2
Far North	73.7	49.2	61.6	73.4	52.4	63
Littoral	71.5	78	74.6	75.3	83	79
North	85.5	53.2	69.3	86.7	56.5	71.5
North-west	87.6	88.2	87.9	85.7	82.9	84.3
West	94.7	93.5	94.1	95.5	94.9	95.2
South	86.3	82.2	84.3	93	88.7	90.9
South-west	74.3	79.3	76.7	76.6	81.8	79.2
Total	78	70	74.2	79.7	72.8	76.3
Priority education zone			63.6	76.5	54.5	65.5

Source: Department of Planning, Projects and Cooperation Division/Ministry of Basic Education DPPC/MINEDUB.

Note: The statistics for 2015-2016 are still being analysed.

19. Please provide data for the past three years, disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, rural/urban population and geographic location, concerning the number of children:

(a) Working in the formal or informal sector of the economy (disaggregated by type of work, including dangerous work)

99. The relevant statistics are not available for the past three years, as no studies have been conducted on the matter. The most recent data are from:

- The national report on child labour in Cameroon, National Statistics Institute (Dec. 2008);
- The country report led by the Understanding Children's Work programme and entitled "Understanding child labour and youth employment in Cameroon" (June 2012);
- A study by the National Statistics Institute entitled "Worst forms of child labour: pilot survey on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cameroon", December 2011.

100. However, it should be noted that child labour in Cameroon affects 41 per cent of children aged between 5 and 17 — a total of 2,441,181 children — who are employed in various occupational categories.

101. The majority of child workers — 85.2 per cent — are employed in the primary sector. Trade, food service and manufacturing employ 7.9 per cent and 4.3 per cent of economically active children, respectively. Of these children, 78.4 per cent are unremunerated and 12.6 per cent remunerated. However, 3.8 per cent are self-employed and 3.7 per cent regular workers.

102. A total of 91.5 per cent of children carry out domestic tasks in their own homes.

103. According to the Demographic and Health Survey, children's participation in economic activities increases with age, as follows:

- Children aged 5 to 9: 24.5 per cent;

- Aged 10 to 14: 51 per cent;
- Aged 15 to 17: 57 per cent.

(b) Involved in forced begging

104. No data are available.

(c) Living in the street

105. The majority of street children live in the street (55.6 per cent) or in a family (32.8 per cent), whether their biological family (15.8 per cent), a host family (13.2 per cent) or an adoptive family (3.8 per cent). Shelters are home to 5.3 per cent of children.

106. Almost 30 per cent of such children have finished middle school.

107. 72 per cent of children aged between 15 and 17 have an educational level of middle school or lower.

108. Among street children, 33.3 per cent have a deceased father, 26 per cent a deceased mother, and 10.5 per cent have lost both parents.

109. 47.3 per cent have already been incarcerated or in police custody.

110. Of the children who have been incarcerated or held in police custody, 56.5 per cent are aged between 15 and 17 and 15.9 per cent between 5 and 9. However, this last statistic should be treated with caution, as it is based exclusively on statements by the children, without any proof of their real age.

(d) Victims of human trafficking

111. No data are available.

(e) Victims of sale

112. No data are available.

(f) Victims of prostitution

113. There are no statistics for the past three years; the statistics available are from December 2011, from a study by the National Statistics Institute entitled “Worst forms of child labour: pilot survey on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cameroon”.

(g) Victims of child pornography

114. No statistics available.

20. Please provide the Committee with an update of any data in the report which may have been superseded by more recent data or affected by new developments.

21. In addition, the State party is invited to specify the issues affecting children that it considers to have priority with regard to the implementation of the Convention.
