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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties to the Covenant, in
accordance with Council resolution 1988 (LX), concerning rights
covered by articles 10-12

CAMEROON

[14 April 1987]

I - INTRODUCTION

1. In reference to the extreme geographical and cultural heterogeneity of Cameroon, it has often been said - and rightly so - that it is a "microcosm of Africa".
2. This country, located in the heart of Africa, encompasses both the humid and rainy climate of the south, and the Atlantic coast in particular, and the arid and dry climate of the northern steppes. In addition, its varied climate is matched by different kinds of cultivation, forest-type in the south and nomadic in the north. Lastly, the total population, estimated at 9,541,109, contains practically all the major population groups in Africa: Pygmies, Bantu, Peul and Fulbe.
3. It is therefore understandable that the unification of ethnic groups and the harmonization of their development have always been among the priorities of independent Cameroon.
4. This desire to ensure national concord is clearly proclaimed in the preamble to the 1972 Constitution, which reads:

"The People of Cameroon,

"Proud of its cultural and linguistic diversity, a feature of its national personality which it is helping to enrich, but profoundly aware of the imperative need to achieve complete unity, solemnly declares that it constitutes one and the same nation, committed to the same destiny, and affirms its unshakeable determination to construct the Cameroonian fatherland on the basis of the idea of fraternity, justice and progress."

5. It also underlies Act No. 84-1 of 4 February 1984, which provides for the amendment of the 1972 Constitution. Article 1 of the Act stipulates:

"The United Republic of Cameroon shall, with effect from the day of entry into force of this Act, be known as the Republic of Cameroon.

6. "The Republic of Cameroon shall be a unitary State.

7. "It shall be one and indivisible, democratic, secular and devoted to the welfare of its citizens. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law."

8. Lastly, the desire to unify the ethnic groups and harmonize their development is reflected in the economic, social and cultural measures taken by successive Governments in Cameroon to date.

II - INFORMATION RELATING TO ARTICLES 10 TO 12 OF THE COVENANT

Article 10. Protection of the family and of mothers and children

A. Protection of the family

9. Under article 1 of the Act of 7 July 1966, there can be no marriage without the consent of the spouses.

10. Paragraph 2 of the article stipulates that any matrimonial agreement concerning a person who has not given his or her consent is invalid, as a matter of public policy, and the party who considers he has suffered damage cannot claim any compensation on this account. Furthermore, under article 356 of the Criminal Code any person who forces another into marriage is liable to imprisonment for 5 to 10 years and a fine of 25,000 to 1,000,000 CFA francs.

11. The preamble to the Constitution of Cameroon states that: "The Nation protects and promotes the family, the natural basis of human society".

12. It is against this background that marriage counselling has been introduced in the social welfare centres responsible to the Ministry of Social Affairs with a view to providing greater protection for families where the matrimonial relationship is at risk, and that a project has been initiated to educate the people in responsible parenthood, involving instruction in family planning and efforts to combat involuntary sub-fertility and sterility. The purpose of the project is to prompt couples to do their own family planning with the means available to them, since the State refuses to lay down an authoritarian family planning policy. It is also against this background that a Family Allowances Code was introduced under Act No. 67/LF/7 of 12 June 1967

and that a social welfare organization was set up under Ordinance No. 73/17 of 22 May 1973 with the task of ensuring, within the context of the Government's general policy, delivery of the various benefits provided for under the legislation governing protection of society and the family.

13. These benefits include:

1. Aid to mothers and infants in the form of pre-natal allowances, maternity allowances, grants to cover medical fees for pregnancy and maternity and any allowances in kind;

2. Family allowances properly so called;

3. A daily allowance paid to female employees who are on maternity leave.

14. Decree No. 82-112 of 9 September 1982, which provides the Government with a legal instrument under which it can provide relief every year to the economically vulnerable classes of society by granting individuals aid in cash and assistance in kind, flows from the same policy.

15. Lastly, as part of its policy of liberalism, the State not only takes measures on its own behalf, but also encourages private initiative in the social welfare field as well. Accordingly, in order to prevent unsuitable initiatives in this area, Decree No. 77-495 of 7 December 1977, which lays down conditions for the initiation and operation of privately organized social work, regulates humanitarian and apolitical activities which provide individuals, families and groups with material or moral aid or educational facilities so as to foster their advancement.

B. Protection of motherhood

16. During pregnancy, women have regular examinations either at Maternal and Child Welfare Centres, in hospital obstetrics and gynaecological departments, or at health centres. They receive a variety of assistance in the form of pre-natal allowances, maternity allowances, allowances to cover medical fees for pregnancy and, if necessary, benefits in kind.

Pre-natal allowances

17. To be entitled to a pre-natal allowance, a pregnant woman has to undergo two medical examinations, which must be carried out by a doctor or a midwife:

The first pre-natal examination is carried out in the third or fourth month of pregnancy;

The second pre-natal examination is carried out between the beginning of the seventh month and the end of the eighth month of pregnancy.

18. The allowances are normally paid to the mother in two equal parts:

The first part after the first examination;

The second after the second examination.

19. The allowance may however be granted in a single payment.

Maternity allowances

20. The right to a maternity allowance is subject to:

(a) Production, by the recipient, of a medical certificate drawn up at the time of the birth by a doctor or midwife, attesting that the child has been born in a viable condition under medical supervision;

(b) Declaration of the birth of the child at the registry office within the time-limits laid down by the applicable regulations.

21. The maternity allowance is paid in a single lump sum at birth or immediately after the request is made.

22. It is normally paid to the mother. If the mother dies as a consequence of her confinement, the allowance is paid to the person actually supporting the child.

Allowances to cover medical fees for pregnancy and maternity

23. Allowances to cover medical fees for pregnancy and maternity are granted:

(a) For each pre-natal examination carried out in the conditions specified by law;

(b) For confinement attended by a doctor or midwife, save in cases of force majeure;

(c) For examination of the child at the age of six months by a doctor or midwife.

24. Articles 91 and 92 of the Labour Code govern work by pregnant women, in the following terms:

"Article 91

"1. Every pregnant woman whose condition has been medically certified may break her contract without notice and without on this account having to pay compensation for breach of contract. Such breach may on no account give rise to damages.

"2. Every pregnant woman shall be entitled to maternity leave, which must commence four weeks prior to, and terminate ten weeks after, the expected date of confinement. Maternity leave may be extended for six weeks in the event of a duly certified illness resulting either from the pregnancy or from the confinement.

The employer may not break the woman's contract during the period of maternity leave.

"3. If the confinement occurs before the expected date, the period of rest may be extended until the 14 weeks' leave to which the employee is entitled have elapsed.

"4. In addition to the various allowances provided for under the legislation for social and family welfare, the woman shall be entitled, during her maternity leave, and at the expense of the National Social Insurance Fund, to a daily allowance equivalent to the amount of salary actually received at the time when the contract of work was suspended; she shall retain her right to benefits in kind."

"Article 92

"1. For a period of 15 months from the date of the birth of the child, the mother shall have the right to time off for breast-feeding.

"2. The total duration of such time off may not exceed one hour per working day.

"3. During the said period the mother may break her contract without notice on the conditions laid down in article 91, paragraph 1."

25. Rest periods for women and children must be of at least 12 consecutive hours' duration.

26. Night work by women and children in industry is prohibited, subject to the exceptions laid down in the joint decree of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and the Minister of Public Health, issued in consultation with the National Labour Council.

C. Protection of young children

27. In identifying young people, an underprivileged and marginalized problem group, the Cameroon Government classified them level by level in order to provide solutions to the specific problems which arise at each stage given the complexity of backgrounds, the variety of regions, climates and customs and the diversity of socio-economic structures.

28. On the basis of the law on this matter in Cameroon, youth can be divided into five categories:

- Children
- Abandoned young people
- Rural youth
- Urban youth
- Young people in schools and universities
- Girls and young women.

Children

29. It may seem paradoxical to include children aged 1-10 in the broad category of young persons, but in Cameroon it is felt that the future of young children is closely linked to that of young persons, and that a balanced youth derives from a healthy childhood. Consequently, the Government's main concern is to lower the still very high rates of morbidity and mortality. To this end, young children (0-5 years) are covered by an expanded programme of immunization (EPI) in addition to routine vaccinations by mobile teams which have been given periodically since 1976 for the following six diseases: measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis.

30. Since 1984, special campaigns have been organized for the vaccination of young children and women. These campaigns are compulsory and free.

31. While, in global terms, Cameroon is self-sufficient where food is concerned, a fairly high rate of malnutrition among children under five years of age has none the less been noted. For this reason nutrition education activities and diet demonstrations at the maternal and child welfare centres have been stepped up.

32. The Constitution of Cameroon guarantees the right to education, and the State undertakes this task as its resources permit, encouraging and assisting participation by natural and legal persons who contribute to it.

33. Pre-school education, albeit still embryonic, is growing rapidly. The aim is to help the child to see himself or herself in relation to the group and to establish his or her identity. In towns, the largest possible number of children are admitted to elementary education despite the inadequate infrastructure; in rural areas, the State is in the process of setting up schools as part of its policy for the equitable distribution of the country's wealth, with the emphasis on backward, land-locked and frontier regions and regions where schooling has not made any particular progress.

34. Terms of admission to education at all levels are the same for girls and boys, who attend the same establishments without any distinction whatsoever.

Abandoned young people

35. In Cameroon, children are generally considered to be sacred and are cared for not only by their parents but by the extended family, by uncles, aunts, etc. Living conditions are evolving in such a way, however, that the distressing phenomenon of abandoned children is becoming more and more frequent. In order to survive, these children are obliged to commit petty thefts and cause significant material damage. This is the stage preceding juvenile delinquency.

36. Handicapped children, with their special situation, may also be placed in this category.

37. Cameroon gives preference to preventive action in this field by promoting and stepping up the rehabilitation of these children in various spheres. Thus the Government has set up three centres for the re-education of delinquents. In these schools, the siting of which has taken account of the country's linguistic make-up, the objective is not only moral education but practical vocational training in order to promote the rehabilitation and resocialization of young delinquents.

38. Article 3, paragraph 1, of Act No. 83/13 of 21 July 1983 on the protection of handicapped persons stipulates that "the prevention and detection of handicaps, and care, education, training, vocational counselling, employment, access to specialized sports and leisure activities for handicapped minors and adults are obligations deriving from the concept of national solidarity".

39. Chapter II, articles 5 and 6 of the same Act, entitled "Specific provisions relating to handicapped children", stipulate the following:

Article 5

1. Children in whom a handicap has been detected or notified shall undergo early treatment applying the principles of social medicine to prevent or attenuate the handicap.
2. By derogation from the principles in force, they may be granted an age dispensation under conditions laid down in the decree for admission into the different educational levels.

Article 6

As far as its resources will allow, the State shall help to meet the expenses of education and primary vocational training of handicapped children, by receiving them in its establishments or allocating special aid for their education, at the request of the children or their legal guardians. In this way the National Centre for the Handicapped at Yaoundé not only provides free medical care and prosthetic appliances for its patients but also provides training in arts and crafts for those who cannot go to school. Two special schools, one English-speaking and the other French-speaking, provide education for the blind.

40. Finally, Act No. 84/4 of 4 July 1984 sets out conditions for the adoption and guardianship of war orphans.

41. This Act governs the protection of a specific target population, consisting of orphans one of whose parents (or the family breadwinner) has been killed in military operations waged for the protection of the constitutional institutions of the Republic.

Rural youth

42. This category includes all young people living in rural communities, which, despite the development of economic and socio-political structures, still have many defects: the harshness of manual labour in the plantations and fields due to rudimentary methods, an unsettled social situation, poor roads to transport products to market, and a lack of entertainment and leisure activities.

43. Cameroon's efforts have focused on providing a more acceptable life for these young people, who are without any doubt the hope and challenge of our development, by designing and carrying out integrated projects and programmes of activities. Through the youth centres and rural youth clubs run by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Government offers idle or unoccupied young people an opportunity to learn a trade so as to play a constructive part in the national economy. This support was the basis for the establishment of the National Office for Participation in Development (ONPD).

44. In centres located throughout the country, this agency is responsible for rapidly training young people, in particular as future farmers, for which they will later receive material and financial aid from the authorities to begin

their careers. A large part of the agency's activities is devoted to the food crops grown in each area where an ONPD training centre has been set up.

45. Special schools also provide technical training for young people in rural areas from the primary to the higher level of general education. At the Elementary Primary Education Certificate (CEPE) level, craft training establishments in most of the provincial capitals provide elementary training in masonry, joinery and carpentry, enabling those thus trained to earn a living locally.

Young people in schools and universities

46. In continuing their studies, these young people are seeking to define their own personalities. This group has been affected by the growth crisis being experienced everywhere in Cameroon.

47. To enhance the mobilization and participation of this group of young people in development, the Government of Cameroon seeks to ensure that their training is firmly focused on the country's needs.

48. Every two years the National Office for Participation in Development recruits young people unable to pursue their studies beyond the primary level to give them two years' intensive education designed to offer a solid grounding in development techniques.

49. Holders of the school-leavers' certificate (Brevet d'études du premier cycle - BEPC) can sit an entrance examination for vocational schools for agriculture, public works, teaching, rural development, etc.

50. Finally, at the baccalauréat and post-graduate level, specialized schools offer numerous courses leading students towards a wide range of careers:

University Centre for Health Sciences;
Joint Military Academy;
National School of Administration and Administration of Justice;
Teachers' Training College for Technical and General Secondary Education;
School of Information Science and Technology;
School of Economics and Commerce;
National Institute of Youth and Sports;
Cameroonian Institute of International Relations;
National Police College.

Girls and young women

51. The task facing Cameroon is not that of formally recognizing equality between young men and young women, but of creating the conditions that will enable young women to experience that equality in their everyday lives - that is, in the final analysis, to educate young women so that they will be able to use their acknowledged rights both in the interests of their own advancement and in the interests of the nation for which they are also responsible.

52. To this end, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was established. It is responsible for promoting measures aimed at securing respect for the rights of Cameroonian women in society, eliminating any discrimination against them and enhancing guarantees of equality in the political, economic, social and

cultural spheres. This was also the background for the enactment of Decree No. 85/256 of 26 February 1985 on the establishment and organization of residential workshops for the rehabilitation and reintegration of socially maladjusted women, women morally at risk and women from needy families.

Article 11. Right to an adequate standard of living

53. The right to an adequate standard of living, the three aspects of which are the right to adequate food, housing and clothing, is recognized by the Cameroonian Constitution, whose preamble states the following:

"The people of Cameroon,

"Resolved to exploit its natural wealth in order to ensure the well-being of every citizen by the raising of living standards, proclaims its right to development as well as its determination to devote all its efforts to that end and declares that it is ready to co-operate with all States desirous of participating in this national enterprise in respect for its sovereignty and the independence of the Cameroonian State."

54. The determination of the Cameroonian people to ensure its development has always guided all the Government's actions.

A. The right to adequate food

55. A large number of measures aimed at promoting this right in Cameroon were taken by the authorities well before Cameroon acceded to the Covenant.

56. These measures are the following:

(a) Implementation of development projects for food crops

This policy is based on the need for rapidly attaining self-sufficiency in certain widely consumed agricultural products such as palm oil, rice, sugar, etc.

Palm oil: The following are relevant to the rapid improvement in output of this commodity:

- (i) The establishment in 1969 of the Société Camerounaise de Palmeraies (SOCAPALM), a State-owned company dealing exclusively with the production of palm oil (establishment of plantations);
- (ii) Increasing the funds available to the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), another State-owned company, to enable it to extend the area planted to oil palms;
- (iii) State support for the search for external financing for private plantations producing palm oil;
- (iv) Implementation of a project for the creation of village oil palm plantations to supplement the work of the large plantations.

Rice: Here similar arrangements have been devised and put into effect in the form of projects for the establishment of supervisory bodies for the implementation of large-scale agricultural water resources undertakings, the opening of rice-hulling plants and the training of farmers:

- (i) Société d'Expansion et de Modernisation de la Riziculture de Yagoua (SEMRY): Established in 1971, first project completed in 1977;
- (ii) Upper Noun Valley Development Agency (UNVDA): Project drawn up in 1976, agency established in 1978;
- (iii) Société de Développement de la Riziculture dans la Plaine de Mbo (SODERIM): Project begun in 1977.

Sugar: Two sugar complexes were established in 1976 and 1977 on the initiative of the State, which has a share in the two semi-nationalized companies. When working to capacity, these two units fully meet domestic demand.

The establishment of a third production unit is under study. It was decided to establish a third unit with a view to covering the country's entire consumption needs by the year 2000.

- (b) Establishment of the Mission de Développement de Cultures Vivrières, Maraîchères et fruitières (MIDEVIV)

This body, established in 1973, is in charge of improving production around the main towns (creation of green belts), to resolve the problem of supplying the large urban areas with food at prices that are remunerative to producers and reasonable to consumers.

- (c) Establishment of the National Office for Participation in Development (ONPD)

In centres located throughout the country, this agency is responsible for rapidly training young people, in particular as future farmers, for which they will later receive material and financial aid from the authorities to begin their careers. A large part of the agency's training activities is devoted to food crops grown in each area where an ONPD training centre has been set up.

- (d) Establishment of a seed project aimed at helping to improve food crops through the production and distribution of improved or selected seeds. Three production centres were established in northern Cameroon in 1976 (Sanguère Guétalé and Doukoulé) for multiplication of varieties suited to this ecological zone (the savannah region). In the same year a fourth seed production centre was established in the forest zone (Nutui centre).

- (e) Earmarking of a proportion of subsidized fertilizer for food crop development

The "subsidized fertilizer" programme, which receives a significant annual subsidy from the State, is aimed at making intensive fertilizer use

possible on even the smallest farms. Originally designed to support certain export crops, in particular coffee, it was subsequently extended to food crops in order to encourage the use of fertilizers for improving yields.

(f) Introduction of a "rural roads" component in all integrated rural development projects: to facilitate access to farming areas and the transport of the harvests to market.

II - SINCE CAMEROON'S ACCESSION TO THE COVENANT, THE FOLLOWING ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO PROMOTE THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Implementation of a national seed policy

57. The aim is to strengthen the State's seed policy because of the need to rationalize research, experimentation, production and standardization activities aimed at providing farmers, in particular those growing food crops, with good-quality seeds in sufficient quantity to meet the need for improving agricultural production, whether of export crops or those intended for local consumption.

58. From this perspective, it was essential to set up a body for co-ordination. MIDEVIV, reorganized in 1984, was assigned this task.

Study on the development of water resources for agriculture in Cameroon

59. This study is aimed at developing a strategy to assist the authorities in planning and rationalizing their actions to promote the intensive use of water in farming, particularly through irrigation, to improve the output and yields of crops intended for local consumption.

60. The need for such a study was underlined by the effects of the long dry season in 1982/1983 and the worsening drought in the Sahelian zone of Cameroon.

Initiation of a study on agro-industries

61. This study, undertaken as part of the preparation of a master plan for the industrialization of Cameroon, is intended to indicate the current situation in the sector and point out existing possibilities and constraints, with a view to devising a framework for developing agro-industries in Cameroon that will take account of the needs of population groups at various stages of growth, particularly in the area of food production for farm consumption.

C. The right to housing

62. The Government of Cameroon, aware of the serious nature of the problem of the living environment in general and housing in particular, has granted it priority status.

63. Objectives in this field are as follows:

To facilitate property ownership among low-income households;

To facilitate self-help construction by all population strata by means of appropriate loans in keeping with each citizen's income;

In the long term, to ensure the construction of a stock of housing which corresponds to the aspirations of the middle classes (housing with rents compatible with their incomes);

To resolve the land problem both in urban and in rural areas.

64. In order to attain these objectives, the Government decided in 1979 to set up a ministerial department specifically responsible for housing, land (including State property) and land registration problems.

65. Legislation has been adopted designed to promote the right to housing through self-help construction or, where that is not possible, through the provision to tenants of housing at rents compatible with their incomes. It includes:

Decree No. 77/193 of 23 June 1977 establishing the Mission d'Aménagement et d'Équipement des Terrains Urbains et Ruraux (MAETUR). The task of this body is to carry out or organize land development operations for the purpose of promoting construction and housing throughout the country.

Order No. 79/PM of 10 July 1981 laying down procedures for allocating plots on estates for those with low incomes.

66. Under this Order, persons fulfilling the following conditions may apply for a serviced plot within such an estate:

They must not possess any immovable property in the town where the estate is located at the time of acquisition of the plot;

They must undertake to occupy the dwelling thus constructed themselves;

They must have a monthly income which does not exceed the ceiling laid down in the applicable regulations and which entitles them to a housing loan.

Decree No. 77/140 of 13 May 1977 establishing the Crédit Foncier du Cameroun (Cameroon Housing Loan Company): this organization provides financial support for any project designed to promote housing.

67. For this purpose, it is authorized:

(a) To finance the provision of services to land earmarked for the construction of low-income housing;

(b) To seek and invest the funds required for property and development companies, as well as for the implementation of any low-income housing programme which falls under the objectives of the plan and meets certain specifications;

(c) To accept the savings of natural or legal persons for the purpose of facilitating property ownership. To that end the Crédit Foncier may, by means of endorsements, guarantees or discounts, grant medium-term and long-term loans;

(d) To carry out all commercial financial operations related to movable and immovable property which have a direct or indirect connection with the purpose mentioned above.

68. In 1983 the State introduced a programme entitled "Three-year Plan". This is a plan for the construction of 9,000 low-income housing units at a rate of 3,000 a year. The Cr dit Foncier is financing the third part of this plan, which continues until 1986.

69. In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Cr dit Foncier, which were approved by Decree No. 84/1633 of 26 December 1984, the terms on which loans are granted have been made more flexible so as to expand housing construction in order to meet the needs of all categories of the population, and particularly low-income or poor families.

70. The Cr dit Foncier grants four types of loan.

LEM (Lotissement   Equipement Mineur) (Estate with minor services) loans to finance the purchase of plots for self-help construction are granted to households with average monthly incomes of the order of 50,000 CFA francs; the loan may amount to 100 per cent of the cost of the operation. The annual interest rate is between 3.25 per cent and 3.75 per cent.

Low-cost housing loans for those with average monthly incomes of 100,000 CFA francs and "medium" loans for those with incomes of 160,000 CFA francs. The interest rates range from 4.25 per cent to 4.75 per cent for low-cost housing loans, and from 5 per cent to 5.5 per cent for "medium" loans, depending on their length.

71. A savings scheme for housing purposes was introduced under an Act of 29 June 1982.

72. Loan periods were extended from 18 to 20 years for individuals, while deposits required were reduced from 20 per cent to 10 per cent in the case of loans for low-cost housing.

73. MAETUR is giving priority to the intensified development of low-income estates, which are partially financed by State subsidies, and are sold to low-income families.

74. At the same time, it is developing middle-range estates without State assistance.

75. For the purpose of expanding and improving housing construction, MAETUR has designed several standard low-cost houses for plot recipients which correspond ideally to each household's income. With the same end in view an international seminar on low-cost housing was held in Yaound  in 1980 for the following purposes:

(a) To create awareness among the population of the use of local materials in low-cost construction (for example baked clay or other bricks, a combination of poto-poto, cement, Cameroon timber, etc.);

(b) To permit an exchange of experience with specialists from other countries on progress made in low-cost building.

76. During the seminar, special interest was focused on the problems posed by squatter settlements, which are typical of developing countries.

77. With assistance from the World Bank, satisfactory results are being achieved at Douala, for example through the renovation of the Nylon neighbourhood.

Article 12. The right to physical and mental health

78. The principal programmes and institutions dealing with the right to health are the public and semi-public health services, which provide 75 per cent of health care, as well as denominational and lay private health services.

79. These services are available both in urban and in rural areas, and complement one another.

80. In the public sector, health care is funded by the State, and users make a small contribution to costs. However, health care is free for the poor, as are pre-natal and post-natal visits and services.

81. In the denominational private sector, which plays a major role, particularly in certain remote rural areas, patients' contributions to costs are modest, as these institutions are non-profit-making in nature.

82. A national insurance scheme so far exists only for a limited number of workers who have joined the Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale (CNPS) (National Social Insurance Fund). Broadly speaking, the health situation remains characterized by high morbidity and mortality rates resulting from transmissible diseases - malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, onchocerciasis, leprosy, trypanosomiasis, measles, etc. - as well as malnutrition, haemoglobinopathies and viral hepatitis, as the following data from the Ministry of Health demonstrate:

<u>Hospital beds</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1984</u>
Total number of hospital beds	20 490	26 382
Population divided by number of beds	317	374
<u>Other data</u>		
Life expectancy at birth (years)	43	45
Infant mortality rate (per mille)	150	95

83. Health protection also involves improving the living conditions of citizens, and the Government of Cameroon has always manifested great interest in maintaining peaceful and healthy conditions for the population.

84. Thus Act No. 74/23 of 5 December 1974 relating to the organization of communes and Decree No. 77/91 of 25 March 1977 defining powers of supervision of communes, associations of communes and commune institutions lay down, inter alia, the functions of the commune as regards public hygiene and public health. A campaign is also under way to rehabilitate the environment in which citizens live.

85. This rehabilitation takes the form of measures of both a psychological and a material nature. As far as psychology is concerned, awareness creation campaigns are being carried out to persuade town and country dwellers that it is for them to organize their future and their well-being themselves through an attitude of responsibility.

86. The measures of a material nature involve prompting the people to restore beauty, neatness and liveliness to their plots, villages or towns themselves. Thus encouragement is provided for:

Modernization of the housing sector (electrification and water supply);

Provision, at the initiative of the populations concerned themselves, of communal services (communal land, wells, latrines, places for worship and public ceremonies, dispensaries, farmers' centres, etc.);

Efforts to prevent animals from straying;

Efforts to ensure clean water, ponds, lakes and watercourses so that they do not pollute the environment and harbour parasites;

Industrial pollution abatement;

Keeping public buildings well maintained and in a perfect state of cleanliness;

Upgrading of green spaces.

87. Conditions regarding hygiene and safety at the work place are laid down in orders issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, after consulting the National Commission for Labour Hygiene and Safety.

88. These regulations are designed to guarantee hygiene and safety standards for workers which are in conformity with those recommended by ILO and other recognized specialized bodies at the international level, while taking local conditions into account.

89. Under article 105 of the Labour Code, all enterprises and establishments of any nature whatsoever, whether public, lay or religious, civilian or military, including those connected with the practice of liberal professions and those belonging to professional associations or trade unions, must organize medical and health services for the benefit of the wage-earning workers they employ.

90. The role of these services involves overseeing labour hygiene, risks of contagion and the state of health of the workers and their spouses and children, and taking appropriate preventive measures, while also providing medical care as required. These services are staffed whenever possible by holders of diplomas in occupational medicine, assisted by qualified paramedical personnel.

91. In conclusion, Cameroon prides itself on the fact that it acceded without reservations to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and draws from it the inspiration necessary for its all-round efforts to ensure respect for all human rights.