

July 2022 Session Speech.

The Representative of State,

Members of Parliament, Statutory advisors to the Assembly,

My Lordships, the Presidents of the North West Appeal Court, the Administrative Bench and Attorney General of the North West Region,

The Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda,

The Public Independent Conciliator,

Lords Spiritual and Temporal,

Members of the Regional assembly, of the House of Chiefs and the House of Divisional Representatives,

The President of the Regional Chapter of the Union of Cities and Councils of Cameroon,

The City Mayor and Council Mayors,

Expert Consultants,

Special Invites,

Ladies and gentlemen of the Press and Communication organs,

Population of concerned Citizens,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning. You are all welcome. Here we are at the June 2022 session, the seventh of the NW RA, today July 26th 2022. We thank God Almighty, our creator for making it possible. Before we continue, I beg your indulgence to rise for a minute of silence in respect of another departed member of our august body; HRM ANGWAFOR III, SAN, Member HOC from Bamenda 2, Mezam. We also seek divine mercies for the affected, and the too many who have transited to glorious eternity from the barbaric conflict eating away the North West to annihilation. We are saddened by the continuing absence of HRM YAKUM Kevin TEUVIH, Vice President of the Regional Executive Council and President of the House of Chiefs still in captivity for over seven months. We pray and remain hopeful for his release.

The purpose of this July session is to permit all stakeholders especially the parliamentarians to fully participate in this all important conversation on conciliation, conflict resolution, peace building and development. The pre-session seminar at the Public Independent Conciliator's chambers sets the tone for members of the regional Assembly. A discussion on the rights and responsibilities of citizens and avenues to avoiding as well as mitigating conflict, standards of operation (reception and welcome) of citizens to foster service delivery as enablers of dialogue and social harmony, and social cohesion will be on the menu.

During the sixth session of the Regional Assembly, the Regional Executive Council opted for citizen capacity building in peace building. This training is statutory, enshrined in sections 40 and 41 Of the Bill to Institute the General Code for Regional and Local Authorities, providing individuals (citizens, inhabitants, the public of the NWR) the opportunity to influence public decision and actions with regards to peace.

WE wish that the population of the region actively participates at all stages of the regional development cycle: planning, programming, implementation, monitoring, follow up, reporting and evaluation. This can only be attained if we elaborate a collective regional framework to foster attitudes and practices towards a complete return to normalcy in the region.

Your REC is trying hard to ensure that they “leave no one behind” political economy inclusiveness principle for citizen participation is a reality, with effective participation of the vulnerable, especially the physically challenged, women and youths in peace building projects.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen,

This session will run from Tuesday 26th July to Thursday 28th July and will take the form of interactive sessions with expert trainers in peace building. The delivery and discussions with stakeholders on the main themes should lay the groundwork on divisional and sub-divisional seminars and community projects across the entire region. The deliverables at the divisional level will be the training and retention of young men and women as peace ambassadors in various quarters and villages. This will foster sustainable actions towards social cohesion but more importantly employ the unskilled youth through a high intensity manual labor approach. Therefore, the Assembly will support small community projects for roads, bridges, wells, sanitation, farms and construction. These projects are of course identified and prioritized by the community through its steering committee, comprising representatives of traditional, religious, administrative authorities, cultural and development associations, women and youth groups. The role of the steering committees, partners such as Safety Net and credit unions, the regional councilors, mayors, and peace ambassadors will be discussed. This is our take on citizen participation in community development and peace building, a core value in the devolution of power (decentralization).

We once more appreciate the traditional rulers, representation of major religious bodies, civil society organizations of the transport and educational sectors, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion team, representatives of the youth population, parliamentarians and mayors, whose presence here is testimony of the ever-increasing role and ownership of your Regional Assembly. Social intercourse and cohesion are critical ingredients for building lasting peace in our beloved region and this confabulation with stakeholders has long been overdue. Commitment, communication, collaboration and continuous interaction of all stakeholders is ever so necessary in the construction of a new North west Region where everyone counts and is counted. Not only shall no one be left behind but we must all move ahead together as in our proverbial slogan. “U na Mi, Mi na U, Wi bi Wi”

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once more the Regional Assembly will distribute hospital supplies from Medshare International, an American NGO with members of North-West origin, to all twenty one health districts of the region. This is the fruit of symbiotic collaboration between the state, the region and the civil society organization, Limona Foundation, local partner of the region. We are looking forward to more cooperation and collaboration with the diaspora in the USA in this area.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the installation of the Regional Executive Council, we formulated a three prong agenda for the Regional Assembly which articulated the imperative for peace, a reset of the mindset through moral rearmament (education), and finance mobilization for infrastructural development counting on the time tested community spirit of the north westerner. This development paradigm puts people at the center, ahead of finance and infrastructure; although it may not seem so in the real world. We therefore put a premium on meeting the urgent social needs and aspirations of our diverse populations. We foresee Community Theater, pristine cultural events and handicraft, festivals and virtual communication platforms as tools to capture the burgeoning youth populations. Listening to these groups and involving them in elaborating projects and programs will build bridges; grow self-esteem and self-confidence as social pillars for our human development. We should be formulating an operational collaboration framework in the community in respect of our cultural pillars: tradition, religion and the secular state is an imperative foundation for sustainable peace and development.

We are working out a trauma healing project for psychosocial support to grief stricken and bereaved persons. Many local and international organizations have joined the nexus of civil society organizations working with the UNDP to foster social cohesion, reconciliation and reconstruction. There is an abundance of passion, love, compassion and empathy for the vulnerable deprived. As we ride high on these emotions, we should work in synergy with the highly efficient Presidential reconstruction plan in our sundry divisions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Human intensive manual labor activities identified by the community will consume the greater part of the 2022 budget as well rehabilitation and renovation works on palaces, destroyed health and school buildings. The contracts for these projects as well as studies for the North-West Development and Investment Fund, a handicap center, two emergency medical centers, two mortuaries and a vocational training center have been awarded. As far as possible, we promote local content in using improved local materials with indigenous techniques by natives of the region. This scheme not only occupies the unemployed burgeoning youth but contributes in strengthening the local economy. We are expecting enlightening exchanges on best practices on the circular economy and local economic development during this session. Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable participants of this never to forget session, history will not forgive us if we remain phlegmatic observers of the current changing world order and its projections of a global economic downturn. We must answer present at the challenging call for innovation and not as disinterested importers of values, science and technologies from the orient or the west. Home grown solutions to our problems and needs must be harnessed to sustain local development. Imagine wheat grown in OKU, transforming household waste for money, farming, and energy. With the runaway costs of imported fertilizers, how about replacing them with ammonia and nitrogen from human urine! We must engage our scientists and researchers in a partnership with the business sector so that these ideas can become foundation projects for local development.

In this regard, the terms of reference for NOWEDIF and local development finance will be presented during this session. Following this, the studies on mounting the fund and local development finance will be carried out as budgeted for 2022. Following the budgetary adjustment of last April 2022, the region is expecting additional revenue from FEICOM and Smile Train, an American NGO who is partnering with our Assembly to strengthen the region's health system. The funding from FEICOM is predicated on a deliberation from the august house. Studies have been done on the procurement of two rigs for digging bur holes across the entire region to solve the perennial problem of water insecurity. Region-wide distribution of portable water in all subdivisions will surely improve the welfare and health of our populations.

Fellow Citizens,

In our inaugural speech, we sought to rebrand the region by going back to the future relying on our proverbial community spirit that has waned over the years. This is special for we bring to our nation, our continent, the North West character in our costumes, customs, cookery, dance, dress etc. But there is much more, tangible and intangible and so special that defines us positively. Our logo proudly depicts our core values of peace, justice, unity, hard-work and solidarity. Let our uniqueness define our contribution today and build a lasting foundation for future generations. Let our manners, kindness, respect, compassion, self-control and anger management, and other aptitudes, attributes and skills our latitude for peace building, for harmonious wholesome development!

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable participants,

Is it too much to ask that this assembly lead by example so that we one day live in a North-West region free of jealousy, gossip, backbiting, envy, hatred, threats, verbal abuse, physical abuse of any kind, assault, battery, kidnapping and murder? Is it too much to ask that we communicate more, collaborate more, love more, with compassion and empathy in solidarity for our survival? What is "U na Mi, Mi na U, Wi bi Wi" in the absence of our basic freedom and human spirit? Discipline, rule of law, equity, social justice and above all morality, after all, have been dear to our people from time immemorial. It is time for each one of us to take stock, to be the change agent and commit to a better peaceful North-West, the region of the future!

I want to thank all of you on behalf of the Assembly who have come notwithstanding the challenges of the day. With such commitment, we are certain the North West shall not only overcome but shall prevail. And the sooner the better!

Long live the commitment of development stakeholders of the region,

Long live the people of North West as they unite to work for peace and development,

Long live Cameroon and its illustrious Head of State, President Paul BIYA,

Thank you for your indulgence.