

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ON THE OCCASION OF THE 4TH UCCC MAYORS' MEETING ON THURSDAY MARCH 2ND 2023 IN BAMENDA

Honorable members of the REC,

The Honorable members of the Regional Assembly,

The First vice National President UCCC,

The Regional President UCCC,

The City Mayor, Mayors,

The Director of CBC Health Services,

The Director of LIFIDEP,

The Director of PROLEADER,

Members of the press,

Lords temporal and spiritual,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen, I stand on established protocol.

Good morning and welcome. I am grateful for the invitation to address you, key actors of local development, indispensable partners of the region.

Permit me start by commending your efforts as pioneer actors in the implementation of Law NO 2019/024 Of 24 December 2019 instituting the General code of Regional and Local Authorities through the Special Status granted to the North West and South West Regions. Your input as Mayors in driving local development and improving livelihoods in your respective municipalities can never be underestimated. The Challenges of the time are obvious but you've defied all odds to champion progress and improve the living conditions of our populations with the outstanding projects and actions you carry out year in, year out. Kudos to that. With such selfless commitment and die-hard dedication, Municipal councilors, to promote a better Region for all; we are certain the North West Region shall attain its penultimate destiny.

It is in the public interest of the Region at large that Regional and Local councils ensure and maintain close working collaboration, through legitimate, legal and regulatory frameworks. True; the Regional Assembly and councils have much in common, sometimes with overlapping attributes and or responsibilities; particularly in the economic, social, Educational, Health, cultural, and sports sectors.

This said, the practical approach proposed to attain our collective missions and objectives as local Authorities could only entail healthy partnerships and joint planning for annual Regional and council work plans; this will not only allow us avoid duplication of projects, but also strengthen collective actions, improve performance and governance. We must therefore ensure joint planning, programming, budgeting, execution, evaluation of projects. Our collaboration will constitute the best platform for design and follow up of cross cutting actions and activities for the common good of our populations. Beginning 2023, our tender documents include Mayors as important actors in the social control of all projects awarded by the North West Regional Assembly.

As part of this collaboration and cooperation, it is imperative for the municipal councils and Regional Assembly to leverage on pooled resources and crowd funding for the execution of impactful projects in the communities to improve the lot of our populations.

I also urge you all as mayors to be actively engaged in the activities and life of the Regional Assembly as the Law defines. Section 347 of the code, which states that senators and Mayors of the Region shall take part, as of right, in the proceedings of the joint sessions of the Regional Assembly in an advisory capacity. It should be noted that fixing on this law, I call for more of your participation and active engagement in our sessions. I also call on you to engage our Regional Assembly Members in your Council Sessions. This mutually beneficial win-win collaboration between councils and the Regional Assembly is crucial in effectively carrying out our missions as key actors in driving local development in the Region. An agreement between the UCCC and the Regional Assembly should pen the details on our respective roles and responsibilities.

As enshrined in section 40 and 41 of the code, it is our common responsibility as local authorities to promote citizen participation in the actions of councils and Regions. To that effect, Mayors are key stakeholders in peace building and local development, I therefore enjoin you all to uphold citizen participation and community engagement through village and quarter peace and development committees and town hall public hearings. We are grateful for your active participation in the sub-divisional PDC. Thanks for accepting ceded durable materials from our community HILA projects. This approach has proven to be the best, in the execution of the North West Regional Assembly's Peace and Development Initiatives through Community Decentralized activities (PDI-CDA) crystalizing the bottom up approach.

As far as Decentralization is concerned, competences from 5 ministries have been devolved to the Regions by the State. These ministries are: Housing and Urban Development, Transport, Tourism, Environment and protection of Nature; and since February 10th in the domain of Health. If the population must feel the impact of decentralization and local governance, there must be firm synergy and collaboration in word and deed; for devolved actions and resources to the region should be catalysts to the municipal council performance scoreboards.

The challenge of re-branding the North West Region you and I dream of is as great as the stakes tied to it; it will require innovative initiatives, energy, and our proverbial spirit of collaboration and cooperation. Mayors and the Regional Executive council are key stakeholders therefore in the building of a more self-

reliant, forward-looking North-West Region we are all yearning for and working towards building. That said, I wish you all a fruitful session, and in the spirit of regional solidarity “U na Mi, Mi na U, Wi bi Wi”.

Long Live the North-West Region and its dynamic populations,

Long live inclusive local cooperation and citizen participation,

Long Live sustained Decentralization,

Long live the Republic of Cameroon.

Thank you for your keen attention.