

# THE NORTH-WESTERNER

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SEPTEMBER 2022

## RE-BRANDING FOR BALANCED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**THE PEOPLE-ORIENTED STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN**



**DISCOVER THE PEOPLE'S TOGHU**



**REGION WIDE PERSPECTIVES TO DECENTRALIZED  
COOPERATION**



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# Editorial

**W**elcome to the maiden issue of *The North-Westerner*, a scripted forum for persons, benefactors, friends, well-wishers of and from the North-West Region of Cameroon; a publication of the North-West Regional Assembly. It serves as another vehicle for exchange; a bridge to connect all concerned citizens, parties, who cherish the welfare and development of the resilient population of the Region, wherever they are. It complements audio-visual programmes, the webpage and social media platforms of the North-West Regional Assembly.

On January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021, the North-West Regional Executive Council was officially commissioned, after an earlier swearing-in ceremony, which had taken place at the North-West Court of Appeal in Bamenda. On that occasion, the vision for the Region was shared. This vision for a new North-West Region, conscious of innate capacities and capabilities, is poised to take its development, its destiny to greater and higher heights. The three-pronged vision centres on Peace, Youth Engagement and Economic Development. The rebranding, nay rebirth of the Region from the foundations of its cultural identity and community structures that have stood the test of time, far from being an imperative, is a project, which will restore human dignity, peace and sustained development.

We acknowledge all the Municipal Councilors and our traditional rulers, who made history on December 6, 2020, by



**Prof. Fru Angwafo III**

*President, North West Regional Assembly*

voting in the maiden Divisional Delegates and members of the House of Chiefs respectively. We remain committed to souring up our nurturing, our formal and informal education, at home, in schools and in the community, so we groom our young men and women to meet the challenges of building a more inclusive and prosperous society in an extremely competitive world.

Our primordial and permanent quest for development requires peace and a positive mindset; and all of us must take ownership of our exceptional Special Status, which fulfils our desire for more input and action at the local and regional levels. Of course, this is exceptional, because it is only in the North-West and South-West Regions that we have three Commissioners in each, a parliamentary-type governance, and a Regional Vice-President, who must be a traditional ruler, as well as a Public Independent Conciliator. I, therefore, appeal to all the members of the Regional Assembly to join



hands in the construction of the new North-West Region, whose rebirth demands discipline, patience, commitment, and requires serious introspection on three scores, or should we say, three pacts:

1. The moral imperative of love, compassion and empathy, translated into a Moral Rearmament Pact, as it were. This moral imperative of love, compassion and empathy, a humanity heritage of time-immemorial, from the African foundations of civilization, is as relevant today as ever. This African ethos, embellished over centuries by the Greco-Romans, and coded in the Judeo-Christian ethic of today's world, is the basis of the UN Human Rights Charter. We must continue to work to ensure that our country, Cameroon, remains a respected member in this regard in the concert of nations.

2. Youth Empowerment and Employment (YEE), indeed, should be the fountain of our endeavors in the rebirth of our Region, as in the fountain of youth! No business or community can thrive, let alone survive, without investing in its future. Youth empowerment and employment, key aspects of human development, are a prerequisite to physical development. Both depend largely on how successful our moral pact has molded the mindset. The quest for both human and physical development is our most pressing preoccupation. To forge on, we need to share the same objectives, values and principles of peace. We must arrest the slide of our region into ruin from benign neglect and the mindset

of negativity. Peace is right, strife is wrong! On this question, there is no room for neutrality, because in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all directly or indirectly." As such, we should all, as a matter of priority, be crusaders for peace and harmony. History has shown time and again that those who think they are well off in a war economy are short-sighted. It is a matter of survival. We must stop the collective fratricide, it is the one action that will determine, indeed, condition our survival as a people! Not a single life or livelihood should be wasted anymore!

3. We yearned to manage our affairs, the challenge is here and now upon us. The ten-Region race is on. Where do we want to be in this race of the Regions? We can, and should be the best! But to make our mark, we must agree on the collective will to build peace, a North-West Community Peace Pact (NWCPP)! We should refrain from becoming captives of the past. One should not live in the past, for it is past, gone! But we are endowed with the ability and resource to start here and now to invent a brand new present and build a brighter future. The right time is now! We aspire to leave no stone unturned and to leave no one behind.

Finally, we stand here to acknowledge and answer the call to serve, to serve the best interests of our people. For, ours is the Assembly of the people; we are ready to listen to them. It is their right. It is our duty. *Non Sibi Sed Aliis*; and in the spirit of the African ethos, we say, "U na Mi, Mi na U, Wi bi Wi."



# Erecting a New North- West Region The Moment is Upon Us

## Preface to cover

*Honourable Waindim Jude Nsom*

Yes, the time to rebuild is now; and the moment is upon us.

Coming on the heels of the Major National Dialogue, which held in Yaounde from September 30 to October 4, 2019, the North-West Regional Assembly saw the light of the day, within the framework of a new dispensation, anchored on Article 62 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, as stipulated in Section 327 of Law No. 2019/24 of 24 December 2019, granting Special Status to the North-West and South-West Regions. This was, indeed, a fresh impetus, consequent on the historical specificities of the two Regions, notably in education, Common Law, culture, languages, chieftaincy, heritage and vestiges.

And it came to pass, that after the Regional Council elections, which held in Cameroon on December 6, 2020, a bi-cameral, Paliamentary-type Regional Assembly was voted in for the North-West Region, made up of 70 Divisional Representatives and 20 members of the House of Chiefs, with the specific mission of re-building a new North-West Region, through balanced, sustainable development.

Thus far, the performance sheet of the North-West Regional Assembly indicates a bias for citizen participation in development options, especially so through the elaboration of the North-West Regional Development Plan (RDP) for the period 2023-2027. This is a people-oriented strategic development plan, rooted on the targets of Cameroon's National Development Strategy, NDS30; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and UN-Habitat.

Indeed, for this RDP to fully translate the aspirations of the people, focus must be on local economic development, aimed at building up the economic capacity of local communities, so as to improve the economic future and the quality of life for all.

Of course, the major index cards of the local economy of the Region shall be pegged on its Development and Investment Fund, taking cognizance of the fact that the economy of the entire Region is founded on its micro-finance institutions, especially thrift and loan schemes, as well as the famous “njangi” (Nchwah): all of this factored into a Region-wide approach to decentralized cooperation.

However, for all such good ventures to take firm root, peace must return to the Region, with the peace missions of the North-West Regional Assembly being a veritable kicker. This Peace and Development Initiative (PDI) could not have been timelier, coming at the wake of a new academic year, with statistics indicating a significant rise in school enrollment and in the number of functional schools.

The support of the North-West Regional Assembly for an effective 2022-2023 academic year, coupled with the recent donation of some medical equipment to Health Districts in all Divisions, signals a new dawn. The moment is thus upon us, to seize the opportunity and re-brand our Region; and the time is now. It remains incumbent upon us to bridge the gullies and chasms that have divided us for far too long. It is time for all of us to pay more than lip-service to being each other's keeper. Yes, it is time to live the African Ubuntu spirit to the fullest, encouraging communal equality, propagating the distribution of wealth, and as a vestige of the agrarian people we are, making sure we collectively act as a hedge against the crop failures of individuals. Yes, I am, because of who we all are; and we are, because we share the core principles of communality, respect, dignity, value, acceptance, sharing, co-responsibility, humaneness, social justice, fairness, personhood, morality, group solidarity, compassion, joy, love, fulfillment, conciliation, et cetera. “U na Mi, Min a U, Wi bi wi”

As we look forward to the cleansing of the land by our fathers, custodians of our traditional mores, keepers of the word of authority, people who render justice in the name of the ancestors, we pray that healing be achieved, and social harmony restored.

Never, never and never again, shall we be brought to suffer the scourge of self-annihilation! “Non sibi sed omnibus!”

# Interview

## “THE NORTH-WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR BALANCED, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

Following the March 2022 Session, of accounts of the North west Regional Assembly, its president answered questions from the press on the Assembly’s performance catalogue.

Follow the excerpts of the interview of the President of the North-West Regional Executive Council, Prof. Fru Angwafo III:

**What new thing does the Regional Assembly bring to the life of a citizen living in the North-West Region?**

**President:** The North-West Regional Assembly brings in a fresh impetus in the political space of the Region; as well as balanced, sustainable, spatial territorial development. The Fons of the Region have their representatives voted by their peers in each Division. They freely table, discuss and debate issues concerning Chieftaincy, heritage, monuments, vestiges and our national languages in the House of Chiefs. They equally vote on deliberations tabled by the Regional Executive Council. In like manner, the Divisional Representatives table, discuss, debate and deliberate on matters devolved to Regions in the socio-economic sectors concerned in the House of Divisional Representatives. Indeed, this bicameral nature of the Regional Assembly is a new dispensation whereby policies are formulated, planned, programmed, budgeted, executed, followed up and evaluated under the watchful eye of the community, through its structures and representatives, with the aim of bringing about the economic development and social progress of the Region.



**What is the fundamental difference between the two Houses and what is their composition?**

**President:** The bicameral body of the Regional Assembly is made up of 90 members: The House of Chiefs, composed of 20 members and represented in the Regional Executive Council by their President, who is Vice President of the Regional Executive Council, and another member, who is Secretary 2 of the Regional Executive Council. The House of Divisional Representatives is made up of 70 members from the seven Divisions of the Region.

**Since the North-West Regional Assembly went operational following the December 6, 2020 elections, what has been the road covered so far?**

**President:** In accordance with Section 349 of Law N°. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019, instituting the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, the President of the Regional Executive Council has to present a special report on the situation of the Region, the

devolved powers, the activities and functioning of various services and bodies of the Region as well as appropriations". Devolved powers have been transferred to the region by the law mentioned above.

In the light of above-cited Law, some seventy-three competences are expected to be transferred to the Regions in respect of devolved powers. However, only competences from four of the twenty ministries involved were concerned in the Presidential Decrees of 28th December 2021. These are the Ministries of Environment (Decree N°. 2021/747 of 28th December 2021), Housing and Town Planning (Decree N°. 2021/744 of 28th December 2021), Transport (Decree N°. 2021/745 of 28th December 2021), Tourism and Leisure (Decree N°. 2021/746 of 28th December 2021). The terms of reference (cahiers de charges) are awaited from these ministerial departments.

As for services, the North-West Regional Assembly is yet to have any. Presidential Decree N°. 2021/742 of 28th December laid down the Standard Organization of Regional Administration. It gave a six-month deadline for establishing services. The activities of the Regional Assembly were provisionally performed by the Regional Executive Council, since only the Secretary General, Finance Controller and Regional Treasurer were officially commissioned. It is, indeed, a big relief to have the organizational chart so as to elaborate a recruitment plan for services and the Regional Executive Council will henceforth concentrate on policy implementation. I would like to appreciate the efforts of the few staff so far detached to the Regional Assembly since 2021.

During the first year of existence of the North-West Regional Assembly, twenty-five deliberations were adopted. All but one were approved, giving a percentage realization rate of 95% in relative terms. These deliberations

are presented in our performance chart, with remarks where necessary.

**The Regional Assembly saw the light of day within the framework of the Special Status accorded the North-West and South-West Regions as part of solutions to the Anglophone Crisis, and this, at the heels of the Major National Dialogue, which ran from Monday, 30 September to Friday, 04 October 2019. What exactly is the Special Status?**

**President:** The Special Status is anchored on following major index cards, which are:

A Constitutional proviso that permits the North-West Region to benefit from their historical specificities in Education, Common Law, culture, languages, chieftaincy and other heritage issues.

It is enshrined in Law No. 024 of 24 December 2019, instituting the Code on Regional and Local Authorities. In practical terms, the North-West and the South-West Regions, consequent on the fact that they share the same colonial past and culture, are, therefore, favored by the above law viz: They have Assemblies composed of two House instead of a Council (one house) in the other eight Regions of the country.

They have three Commissioners: one in charge of Economic Development, another for Health and Social Development, and the third for Education, Sports and Cultural Development. This specificity is absent in the eight other Regions of Cameroon. Special Status Regions have a collegial Executive Council, and all of its eight members wear sashes, whereas only the President does in the eight other Regions. There is equally the Public Independent Conciliator, who is independent of the Regional Assembly and appointed by the Head of State for a 6-year mandate. He mediates between the citizen-client and the Regional Assembly if the citizen feels their rights have been violated.



### What has the Regional Assembly done towards a return to peace in the Region?

**President:** During our last Ordinary and Extraordinary sessions, we did table for the appraisal, adoption and vote of the Regional Assembly, a peace-building programme, which was already factored into our 2021, 2022 budgets. This programme is aimed at reaching out to all our local communities, through the various stakeholders like the local civil and municipal authorities, Parliamentarians, internal and external political and business elite, traditional authorities, religious bodies, civil society organizations, our women and youth, to talk peace and a return to normalcy. We equally intent to engage the youths in a cash economy through High Intensity Labour Activities (HILA) for the benefit of local communities. To achieve this, a lot of training is required, especially of the various stakeholders; and this shall be the main focus of our next ordinary session.

### How accessible is the North-West Regional Assembly to the common man?

**President:** The North-West Regional Assembly welcomes everyone during working hours and during non in-camera sessions of the Assembly, which hold quarterly.

### What are some of the challenges faced by the North-West Regional Assembly and how are you handling them?

**President:** The North-West Regional Assembly is faces with the following challenges:

1. The on-going civil strife in the Region, characterized mostly by rebellion, resistance, intolerance and intransigence of a segment of the population, which is not ready to listen or embrace the new order.

2. There is the perennial issue of paltry resources in a world that is in economic recession; and here we are, a whole new institution with a performance paradigm in need of human resource recruitment, training and appropriate deployment.

3. Right at our door-steps, we have the phenomenon of economic sabotage with frequent lockdowns and destruction of markets and rudimentary economic institutions for local development.

4. At the level of central government, we have partial devolution of powers and competences, which is concretely translated into a reality of incomplete decentralization.

5. We are faced with the grate challenge of insecurity, which prevents the Regional Assembly gaining access to all parts of the Region to be able to achieve our assigned missions.

### What is the rapport between the North-West Regional Assembly, the Governor as Representative of State, and the Public Independent Conciliator?

**President:** These are three distinct and different institutions:

The Regional Assembly is an elected body with a five- year mandate, the chief mission of which is to bring development to the Region, peace being a prerequisite, of course.

The Governor, as Representative of State, is the tutelage of the Regional Assembly, with *a posteriori* control.

The Public Independent Conciliator, appointed for a six-year mandate, is charged with mediating between the citizen user/client and the Regional Assembly.

Interviewed by Wanchia Cynthia

# Special Report

## PREC'S ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE OF EXECUTION OF DELIBERATIONS OF THE NWRA FOR JUNE 2021, SEPTEMBER 2021 AND DECEMBER 2021 SESSIONS  
The North-West Regional Assembly and Citizen Participation; a Premium Non Sibi Sed Aliis

JUNE 2021 SESSION DELIBERATIONS			
DELIBERATION	OUTPUT	RESULT/OUTCOME	REMARKS
1. Adopting the budget of the North-West Regional Assembly for the 2021 fiscal year in the sum of three (3) billion CFA francs.	Closed commitment on 31/12/2021	Administrative and Management accounts available	Satisfactory
2. Authorizing the President of the Regional Assembly to purchase eight (8) service cars.	-Authorization from the Prime Minister -Contract awarded on the 17/11/2021 -40 % paid to the supplier	- Purchase of cars done on the 15/03/2021 - Purchase slip	Delivery of cars awaited
3. Authorizing the President of the Regional Assembly to create committees within the Regional Assembly.	- Need identification - Potential members	Nine committees so far	- Committees are functioning - Regular payment to committee members
4. Authorizing the President of the Regional Assembly to subscribe Insurance for the Assembly.	Preparation and launching of tender selection of the company	- Zenith Insurance Company selected - Ends on the 27/04/2022	REC, Regional Councilors and staff can submit original receipts duly established and signed by a recognized medical institution for reimbursement. This must fall within the time covered by the insurance policy
5. Granting remuneration, allowances and other benefits to the Secretary General and the Regional Treasurer.	Not done	Awaiting regulatory text from the State	
6. Authorizing the President of the Regional Assembly to recruit personnel for the Regional Assembly.	Note done	- Poor and inefficient work - Insufficient staff	-Standard organizational Chart available -The Regional Assembly has to deliberate on its adjustment
7. Granting the President of the Regional Assembly housing allowance.	On-going	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
8. Granting the President of the Regional Assembly authorization to negotiate and sign diverse conventions and partnerships.	- Two conventions signed - Another in preparation	Received gifts from MEDSHARE USA and financial support worth twenty-six million (26,000,000) CFA frs. awaited	Satisfactory
9. Authorizing the allowances and other benefits allocated to guests or invited persons during sessions, commissions and meetings of the North-West regional Assembly.	On-going	Paid all invited guests during sessions since June 2021	Satisfactory
10. Granting allowances to the Chairperson, members and Secretary of the internal Tender's Board of the North-West Regional Assembly.	On-going	All sessions of the tender commission were paid in 2021	Satisfactory
11. Granting remuneration, allowances and other benefits to members of the Regional Executive Council and deliberative organs.	On-going	REC members received all their allowances for 2021 by December 2021	Awaiting payment for 2022
12. Authorizing the President of the Regional Assembly to create the North-West Development Investment Fund (NOWEDIF).	On-going	Contract to draw up memorandum and articles of association in progress	Awaiting final document

13. Authorizing the Regional Executive Council to review and re-do the Standing Orders with the committees concerned, mindful of the corrections made for deliberation during the next session.	Done	Revised Standing Orders to be presented in September 2021	Satisfactory
14. Adopting the North-West Regional Assembly Logo.	Done June 2021	Approved	In use
<b>SEPTEMBER 2021 SESSION DELIBERATION</b>			
15. Adopting the Standing Orders of the North-West Regional Assembly.	Modified	Approved for Divisional Representatives in September 2021 and in January 2022 for the House of Chiefs	In use
16. Approving a training programme for the North-West Regional Assembly.	Not yet operational	Training programme available	Budgeted
17. Granting annual leave to members of the Regional Executive Council.	Not yet operational	Still to go operational	Still to go operational
18. Approving the budget adjustment of the North-West Regional Assembly for 2021 financial year.	Budget went operational	Accounts available	To be presented in the 2022 March session
19. Rescheduling from January to March the presentation of the Representative of State on Regional Services.	Deliberation proposed	Deliberation adopted	Programmed for 2022 March session
20. Approving the creation of Local Development Programmes (LDP) in the community for execution by members of the North-West Regional Assembly.	Terms of reference available	Funds not yet available	Awaiting funds from MINFI
21. Call to Order during proceedings in the Regional Assembly.	Cancelled	Cancelled	Cancelled
<b>DECEMBER 2021 SESSION DELIBERATIONS</b>			
22. Adopting the 2022 budget of the North-West Regional Assembly, balanced in revenue and expenditure at the sum of 3,538,000,000 CFA francs	Budget adopted	Approved	To be revised in an Extraordinary session
23. Authorizing the disbursement of the sum of three million (3,000,000) CFA frs. to Honorable Representatives, members of the North-West Regional Assembly, for community decentralized activities for the 2022 financial year.	Terms of reference elaborated	Terms of reference to be presented at the March 2022 session	To be executed when funds are available
24. Authorizing the President of the Regional Executive Council to operate impress accounts.	Stalled activity	Urgent actions not committed	To be executed when funds are available
25. Authorizing the President of the Regional Executive Council to carry out feasibility study for a dry port in Bamenda	On-going	Results awaited	

## The North-West Region



### Mezam Division

With a surface area of 1,745 Km<sup>2</sup>, a density of 300,35 Habitants/Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 524,127 Habitants (2005), Mezam is made of seven Sub Divisions: Bafut, Bali, Bamenda I (Bamendakwe), Bamenda II (Mankon), Bamenda III (Nkwen), Santa and Tubah. Some of its cultural and natural potential include:

- **The Mankon Fondom**, one of the oldest monarchies of the Grass-fields people of the North West Region. The Royal palace and its museum, made up of a collection of local craft (made by the kings and local craftsmen) and other vestiges of the colonial era is a must-see attraction in the Region.
- **The Bafut Fondom**, established at approximately some 500 years ago, is one of the most important Fondoms of the North-West Region. Established by King Mfor Feurlu, who unified the villages of Bukari and Mbebili, the history of the Fondom is marked by the war against the Germans, resulting in the partial destruction of the Fondom between 1901 and 1910. After the war, the Fondom was reconstructed with the assistance of the Germans.
- **The Bamenda Handicraft Centre**: This cooperative was established in September 1964 to rescue and support the dying local handicraft skills and maintain the rich cultures and traditional values of the local

people. It has become a centre for the promotion of local handicraft know-how and breeding ground for artists to express their skills, transforming wood and clay to create statuettes, jewels, vases, stools and other works of art for decoration.

#### - Festivals:

**The Abeug-afor Festival in Mankon or MBOMALA:** It is a Grand Biennial cultural and economic jamboree organized at the Mankon Palace with the objective of show-casing the rich history, culture, economic and tourism potentials of Mankon Fondom to the world. It is equally geared towards cultural revival. Highlights of this 7 day event include: cultural animations and displays, ritual performances, exhibition and sale of arts and craft works, gastronomy, industrial and commercial products.

➤ **The Lela Festival in Bali:** This is a traditional festival usually organized in December in the Bali Fondom, located some 20 km away from Bamenda. The Lela Festival marks the enthronement of a new Fon and the celebration of initiation rites for the new members of the secret societies.

➤ **The Bafut Achum Festival:** It is usually celebrated every year in December to show to the public the sacred rites of members of the secret societies and to commemorate the past victories of their ancient warriors.

## Bui Division

Bui Division, the capital of which is Kumbo, covers an area of 2,297 km<sup>2</sup>, rises 2,172m above sea level, and as of 2001 had a total population of 322,877. It has the following Sub Divisions: Jakiri, Kumbo, Mbven (Mbiame), Nkum, Noni (Nkor), Oku (Elak).

Nseh, Din, Nkar and other Fondoms are vassal States of the Paramount Fondom of Nso. Mbiame and Oku are offshoots of the Nso dynasty and are considered Fondoms of higher status than the vassal States named above.

Nso is one of the biggest tribes in Cameroon. Its capital, Kumbo, was originally called Kimbo. It is one of the few Fondoms in the country that still uphold and protect the heritage of their tradition and cultural values. At the head the Paramount leader of others Fons in Bui, namely Oku, Noni, Mbiame, Nkar, Kiluun, Nseh, Mbokam, Ndze'en, Dzerem etc. This Fondom, founded by a woman, *Ngonso*, also has some other traditional rulers like *Shufais*, *Fais*, *Sheys*, *Yaas*, *Fengais* etc. These people wrongly referred to as Banso has a very rich but oral traditional history. Although oral tradition can at times lead to some uncompromising stories/facts, the aspect of handing History down through story telling has helped to trace the History of Nso as far back as the 14th century. The major cultural festival of the Nso people is the Ngonso Festival, organized in Kumbo to showcase the culture and identity of a people poised to be in harmony with their ancestors as a blessing for future endeavours that unite and galvanize them for more progress, development and prosperity.



## Menchum Division

### Menchum Division

Menchum Division covers an area of 4,469 km<sup>2</sup> and as of 2005 had a total population of 161,998, and its capital is Wum with the following Sub Divisions: Fungom, Furu-Awa, Menchum Valley, Wum.

The Wum municipality was created in 1948. It was known as the Wum Native Authority (N.A) and covered the Kom area, Fungom, Furu-Awah, Beba-befang and the Esimbi areas. In 1964, the name changed from Native Authority to Wum Area Council with the Kom area carved out to form the Kom-Bum Area Council. The Council was chaired by a District Officer and later by an elected chairperson. In 1974, the Council became Wum Rural Council, with its management put under the control of an appointed Council Administrator. In 1993, Wum Rural Council was carved out into four Councils according to the four Sub-Divisions in Menchum, namely: Furu-Awa, Fungom, Benakuma and Wum Rural Council. By virtue of Decree No. 2004/18 of 22nd July, 2004 on rules applicable to Councils, Wum Rural Council became Wum Council.

Menchum Division has an altitude of about 900m to 2,140m above sea level in the mountains and about 600m in the valleys, and this explains why timber

production is possible in the area. 17 villages make up the entire Division: Kesu, Naikom, Magha, Cheregha, Zongefu, Zongekwo, Zonetegha, Watue, Wajung, Ghidze, Waindo, Bu, Aguli, Bangwe Atue, Menten and Itiaku. Of these 17 villages, 10 are in the Aghem Clan, then the rest are Menteng, Agulli, Bangwe, Atwe, Itiaku, Echuan and Bu.

The population is a conglomerate of ethnic groups, which are the Aghems, Tikaris and Hausa/Fulani in Wum central and the Widikums in Agulli, Atwe, Menteng, Itiaku and Bangwe. There are also immigrants from other parts of the country especially from the Divisions in the North-West Region and from neighbouring Nigeria with whom the municipality share boundaries. The Aghem originated from Munchi and assimilated some Tikar customs and the Bu people claim their origin from Tikar. Today, tribal distinctions are still very common in the municipality due to the enclaved nature of the area.

## Ngoketunjia Division

With headquarters in Ndop, the Division was created by Decree N° 92/186 of the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1992. It has a surface area of 1,126 Km<sup>2</sup>, a density of 155 hab/Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 187,348 Inhabitants (2005) with the following Sub Divisions: Babessi, Balikumbat, Ndop.

**The name, Ngoketunjia refers to a mountain in Bamunka, Ndop.**

C u r r e n t administrative arrangements have resulted in the emergence of a peri-urban centre (popularly known as Ndop or Bamunka Urban). The peri-urban centre is located along the Bamenda - Nkambe stretch of the Ring Road and extends a little bit from the boundary with Bamali village situated beyond the Ndop Cooperative Union to beyond Saint Mary's Catholic Comprehensive

High School, which stretches into Babungo village.

Bamunka is the Sub Divisional Headquarter of Ndop Central Sub-Division and the Divisional Headquarter of Ngoketunjia Division and has direct boundaries with Babungo, Baba I, Babessi, Bambalang, Bamessing, Bamali and Belo Sub-Division in Boyo Division. The Bamunka people have some cultural heritage, which they hold jealously and are preserving it. Unlike the Gregorian calendar with 7 days of the week, there are eight (8) days of the week in Bamunka including Mbimbee, equivalent to the

Christian Sunday; Mbikoh: free working day; Mbimboune: free working day; Mbingow: free working day and main market day; Mbibekah: *Njangi* day but otherwise free for work; Mbiliteh: free working day; Mbiyih: rest day and lovers day; Mbikedih: free working day.

Babungo is one of the four villages of Babessi Sub-Division, about ten kilometers from Bamunka on the high plain of Ndop, which is fertile and rich in water, intensely cultivated and surrounded by a ring of hills covered with pastures, making it an ideal grazing land. Since October 2003, Babungo



Museum started to contribute to the development of the cultural values aimed at overcoming the gap between local and global, as well as between tradition and modernity. They opened up new job opportunities and possibilities for development linked to the enhancement of an

important resource of the country, whilst reinforcing the conscience of a rich cultural identity opened to encounter and exchange with the cultures of the world. The museum was designed using local materials, techniques and labour thanks to an Italian architect Antonio Piva, lecturer in

Museography at the Faculty of Architecture of the Politecnico of Milan and a UNESCO collaborator. Upon the opening of this museum to the public, it has been attracting a lot of visitors to Babungo village to see the sculptures.

Ngoketunjia Division is also host to the famous rice production facility, UNDVA.

## Donga Mantung Division

Created in by Presidential Decree in 1949, this Division has a surface area of 4,299 Km<sup>2</sup>, a density of 62,78 Inhabitants/Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 269,931 Inhabitants (2005). It has the following Sub-Divisions: Ako, Misaje, Ndu, Nkambe, Nwa.

Mbum, Yamba and Mfumnte are the three main ethnic groups that make up Donga Mantung Division. The Mbum people specifically, occupy the Nkambe Plateau and are believed to have migrated into the area from North-East Cameroon (Adamawa Plains) more than four hundred years ago, in three successive groups or waves of Warr, Yah and Tang. These three groups are today referred to as clans and together, constitute 32 Mbum villages, each headed by a chief locally called, Nkfu. Ascension to the throne was and is still exclusively for male members of the royal family.

16 villages make up the Nkambe Central Sub-Division, and the people of all these villages speak the same language, Limbum. The estimated population of Nkambe Central as of 2018 is 171,487 with a growth of 4.86% per annum. 17 villages make up the Ndu Sub-Division, speak the same language, Limbum, and are of the Wimum tribe. Ndu Sub-Division has an estimated population of 95,000 in inhabitants as of 2018. Misaje Sub-Division is made up of 12 villages consisting of three clans: Kemezum, Channey and the Bessa. The three clans speak different dialects. The population of the Sub-Division is estimated at 26,641 inhabitants. Ako Sub-Division is made up of 18 villages There is one main ethnic group in this Sub-Division called Mbembe. They speak virtually the same language. The population is estimated at 44,349 inhabitants. Nwa Sub-Division is made up of 42 villages consisting of three clans: Mfumte, Yamba and Mbaw, with an estimated population of 122, 000 inhabitants. It is the oldest Sub-Division in the North-West Region, created on July 4, 1963.





**Momo Division**

*Turaco Bannermani. Photo credit: Markus Lilje.*

**Area : 1 792 Km<sup>2</sup>**  
**Density : 77,39 Inhabitants/Km<sup>2</sup>**  
**Population : 138 693 Inhabitants (2005)**  
**Subdivisions :**

- **BATIBO**
- **MBENGWI**
- **NGIE(ANDEK)**
- **NJIKWA**
- **WIDIKUM**

The MOMO Division whose headquarter is MBENGWI has been created by Presidential Decree n° 68/DF/431 of 26/09/1968 and is headed since the 13th of march 2017, by Mr. Fouda Etaba Benoit Nicaise, Senior Administrative Officer. The indigenous people are Meta people, to whom a few settlers from neighboring tribes like Ngie and Oshie have been added (see references to Dillon's work). The name "Mbengwi" means "a land of wild animals" in the Meta language since it used to be a hunting ground in the precolonial days, though it was settled before it

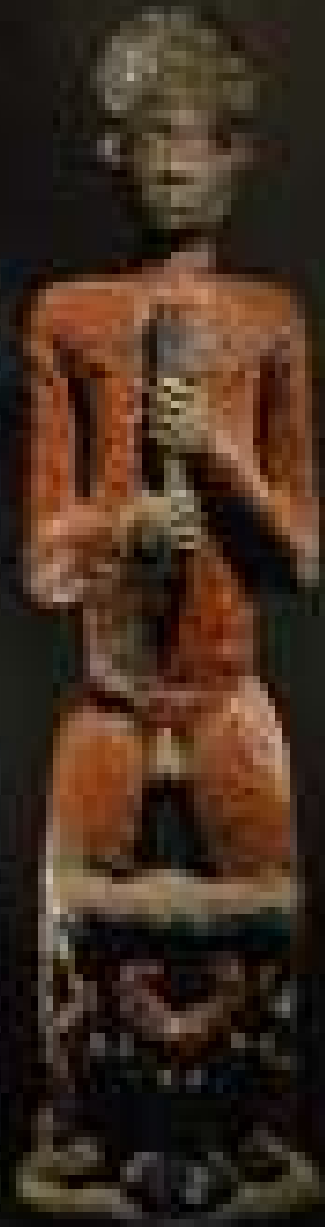
became upgraded to an administrative centre. Today, this is still the principal function of the town whose growth has stagnated because of youth exodus and lack of income generating activities - both in the town and its hinterland. Interesting sites in include the Abi waterfalls in the heart of town and the Catholic monastery. Ecological attractions include wildlife watching (especially birds) and fishing in the Abi and Mezam Rivers. For people with anthropological interests, the 30 or so Fon's palaces (centers of traditional rule) offer an artistic wealth that is the envy of any Museum on African Art (especially woodwork) with artifacts dating back more than 300 years. For the culturally minded, the annual MECUDA (Meta Elites Cultural and Development Association) organised dance competition are also a must see. It usually comes up between December and March and offers the opportunity for this people to showcase a cultural heritage of more than 50 traditional dances. Sometimes plays and competitions in sports and other activities are organized (including agric shows).

**Boyo Division**

Boyo Division, created in 1992 and found in the centre of the North-West Region of Cameroon, shares boundaries with six of the seven Divisions of the Region, to the exception of Momo. The landform is hilly, often interspersed with deep incised valleys that

produce a picturesque landscape. The climate ranges from humid in low altitude areas to very cold and chilly around the Ijim Mountain, which stands above 2,500m a.s.l. dominated by afro-montane species and a high-level of endemic and endangered species. Boyo Division





takes its name from the Boyo Mountain, which towers 2,200m a.s.l and is contiguous with the Ijim Mountain. It is dominantly made up of the Kom people, who are unique in their system of matrilineal inheritance in the Region. It is divided into four Administrative Sub Divisions, three of which are Kom (Fundong, Njinikom, Belo) and administered traditionally by HRH the Paramount Fon of Kom; and the other, Bum, of Fonfuka Sub Division. Other people found in the Division are the Bororos, Hausas and many “settlers.”

The Ndawara Tea Estate is the only agro-industry in the Division. However, Boyo is a major source of cattle in the Region and beyond, with many cattle markets in Konene, Subum and Fundong. The staple food of the people is corn fufu, which is eaten together with huckleberry (njamanjama) and roast chicken, widely known today as khati-khati (describing the act of chopping up the roast chicken into pieces).

Over 200,000 people of Boyo Division live within a day's walk of the Ijim Mountain Forest, a source of water, firewood, timber, fibres, medicinal plants, food (honey, mushrooms, fruit and animals) for most of the population, equally playing an important role in local tradition and culture. Ijim harbors “The King of the Forest,” commonly referred to as the red feather bird, which enjoys endangered, red list bird species status for over 18 years now. Much as the bird is the subject of fables, proverbs and songs among the local communities, it is still hunted for the highly prized red flight feathers that adorn a man's traditional cap as a status symbol and in ceremonial awards throughout the western parts of Cameroon. Afo-A-Kom

Boyo is also home to the famous locally and internationally acclaimed AFO-A-KOM (“A Kom Thing”), noted for its spiritual aura, which has graced many a museum, fairs, exhibitions the world over, and has been at the centre of many Kom songs, beliefs, ritual practices and celebrations. In 1966 it was stolen from the Kom Palace, and seven years later, it was recognized in a U.S. art gallery, and after some dispute, it was returned to the Kom people. During the reception of the statue in Yaounde, President El Hadj Amadou Ahidjo suggested to H.R.H. Fon Nsom Ngwe that “Mbang” (as it is also called) be kept in the National Museum in Yaounde, but the Fon replied that if the President could provide enough space in Yaounde for him to go and bring the Kom people to stay with it there, then he would accept the President's proposal. Seeing that Kom and the Afo-A-Kom were inseparable, the President made it possible for the statue to be taken back to its habitual residence at Laikom. It was briefly put on display at the Tourism Office in Yaounde and then transported by air to Bamenda and then ferried to Fundong where it was handed back to the Kom people. Indeed, Afo-A-Kom is, and remains, the soul of the Kom people.

# ECONOMY



## THE PEOPLE-ORIENTED STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE NORTH-WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

By Wanchia Cynthia

The 2020 elections into the North-West Regional Assembly marked a turning point in the Republic of Cameroon in general and in the two English-speaking Regions in particular. It marks a shift from a heavily centralized system of governance to a participatory system at three levels, namely: the local (communal), regional and national (central) levels. The journey was not an easy one. Some people hold the opinion that this system used to generate fears and suspicion in some circles of State authority. If the multi-faceted fallouts on the nation are many, they may be more in the English-speaking Regions.

In order to forge ahead without betraying the aspirations of the people, the North-West Regional Assembly did consultations at all strata of the Region to conceive a strategic development plan that will serve as a compass for the development of the Region for the next five years. This highly objective document is inspired by the now widely acclaimed mantra “Mi na U, U na mi, Wi bi wi.”

NWRA's strategic five-year plan is people oriented, centered on the proverbial community spirit with citizen participation. The ambitious plan aspires to leave no stone unturned and leave no one behind! This community solidarity will be built around moral and civic rearmament, life skills centered education and economic empowerment.

The major findings from the discussions with representatives of the different segments of the population, a people known to have been strong in association, community solidarity and the cooperative enterprise movement, seem to have lost self-esteem

and self-confidence. A people whose energy and industry yesteryear inspired hope and self-determination within the nation of Cameroon, is burdened with the dictates of non-representative warlords.

Burdened by consequences of the on-going crisis in the Region like physical trauma from arson, hostage-taking, kidnapping, torture and murder, the population has suffered a lot of social and psychological trauma. This has rendered the hitherto industrious population of the North West Region highly dependent. This dependency is first and foremost psychological, then social and invariably economic.

The strategic development plan with key actions will then be developed in a regional work plan within the attributes devolved to the Regions by twenty Ministries of the central government. A central anchor of all action is communication and cooperation within each project. The key actions include:

### **Community Social and Mental Health project**

The NWRA strategic plan of action tackles the need to review health systems and build a mansion of actions. The intention is to get a geographic and timeline spread over the 21 Health Districts from 2021 to 2025; widening the scope of financing by seeking international co-operation that will ease the burden in human, material and organizational resources. There is an urgent need for a community Mental Health scheme with the provision of focus groups, group and individual psycho-social activities. The health scheme will factor in psychotherapy, psychiatric care, and detoxification care with centers in the BRH, DDR, and REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELAYS relying on telemedicine, Theo-therapy and tele-care.



A component of it also handles communication around citizen participation and collective solidarity where no one will be left behind. In that regard, soft messages of love, compassion and empathy for a fractured land with people in need of post trauma/stress individual and group psychotherapy will be made available.

The plan will engage a flagship broad communication program with digital storytelling, traditional town criers, tam-tam, classic and community radios, TVs, social media and community theaters with movies in palaces. The griots and folkloric traditions of fireside chats with oral transmission of values, and cultures in the hinterland and key civil society operatives such as the Social Safety network group, Community Initiative for Sustainable Development COMISUD, SHUMANS, Justice and Peace, just to name a few, will fit in the process.

### **Community Empowerment and vocational project**

As per the strategic plan, the empowerment of the community and vocational project will mimic the administrative organization of the Region, such that there is a

Regional focal point, Divisional, Sub-Divisional, District and village focal points. Those selected to head the groups will be citizens with tested and proven altruism and commitment to the betterment of fellow citizens, and will serve as models and resource for small-scale context-driven projects. This outcome is to strengthen life skills development, and the culture of sharing, as well as sports and theatre for peace-building.

### **Regional Education Relief Fund**

There is no gain saying that a Region hitherto known as the citadel for education in our nation, has been negatively hit by the crisis, with schools, teachers and students targeted. There is in addition a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the products from our present educational system. Virtual excellence, more of job seekers than job creators, short of innovation and creativity are the characteristics that define our nation's present-day products of the education system.

Restructuring in objectives, form and function not only seems imperative but a compulsory thing to do to in comparison to other educational systems like in Singapore with an eleven-month school year; Ghana and Kenya with a broader and stratified mix of grammar, technical and vocational education seem to

be attractive. They are practical, so that no matter where formal education is ended, the consumer has either primary, secondary or tertiary skill sets commensurate with well-defined needs in growing local economies begging for creativity and innovation.

However, as per the discussions with the cross-section of the Region, there is a pressing need for access to education which has been battered by armed groups. There is nothing more

frustrating than the pain of a generation of vulnerable orphans, and the handicap of war willing but unable to access education. The NWRA is encouraging village development groups, in collaboration with their traditional rulers and other stakeholders, to donate school fees and needs to the needy they identify. The Region will design a transparent management of this social pact so that for benefactors who so wish, their names will enter the regional roll of development gurus. These rolls will be displayed in the halls of the Regional Assembly while some of the charitable contributions may be tax-deductible for entrepreneurs.

### **Regional Investment and Development Fund**

In yester years, the people of the North-West grouped under co-operatives, micro-finance institutions and banks to cater for common interest, a culture gradually being exported. These groups laced with common interests will invest in essential life- saving needs such as potable water and energy, amongst others.

The creation of a Regional and Investment Fund will provide seed funding to attract financing of big projects such as hydro-electric or solar energy plants, which can kick-start genuine industrialization.

The absence in a Region of a development finance and investment instruments limits industrial action and strengthens reliance on the central government. The North-West ethos of yester years beaming with confidence and pride is fading as collective interest wanes at the expense of individual interests. Yet, a well- designed project that factors a win-win approach coalesces all individual concerns to cater for common good.



## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

# LESSONS FROM BEYOND

By Jude Nsom Waindim

### CONTEXT

The purpose of Local Economic Development, LED, is to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation (World Bank). Thus, it is an on-going process by which key stakeholders and institutions from all spheres of society, the public and private sector, as well as civil society, work jointly to create a unique advantage for the locality and its firms, tackle market failures, remove bureaucratic obstacles for local businesses and strengthen the competitiveness of local firms.

The International Labour Organization, ILO, defines LED as a participatory process, which encourages social dialogue and public-private partnerships. It enables local stakeholders to jointly design and implement a development

strategy, which fully exploits local resources and capacities, and makes best use of the area's comparative advantages.

Mohr, Fourie and Associates (2015) define Economic Growth as an annual rate of increase in the total production or income of the economy. As such, a positive economic growth is measured when the economy is above the population growth; and here, Economic Development translates in the reduction of unemployment, poverty and inequality in the growing economy.

Given the above definitions, each Regional or local Municipality defines its Local Economic Development as the reduction of unemployment, poverty and inequality in the growing economy of the locality, as the Municipality's vision is about delivering appropriate, sustainable and affordable services towards socio-economic growth for the development of its community.

### National Context

For its **economic** and social **development**, **Cameroon** adopted in 2009 a long-term **development vision**, which aims to make



**Cameroon** an emerging country (NDS-30). This strategy aims at facilitating the structural transformation of the national economy, and promoting more inclusive development. In particular, it intends to revamp the production, industrial and manufacturing sector by promoting domestic consumption and production in strategic fields. NDS30 is, therefore, a reflection of the legitimate aspirations of a people, determined to provide its input to our country's emergence, in a spirit of social cohesion. It is increasingly the expression of a renewed call for mobilizing the sons and daughters of our country, within the country and the diaspora, to work positively in favour of the irreversible drive towards Nation building.

2021 growth projections in Cameroon stood at 3.3%, thus, aligning to strong strategic options contained in the NDS-30, such as structural transformation, human capital development, strengthening governance and decentralization, revisiting public policies and supporting production and processing daily consumer products.

### **Regional and Local Economic Development**

The economy of the North-West Region as a whole, and that of its local communities, cannot be discussed outside of the economic imperatives of the NDS-30. Of course, in line with Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019, Regional and Local Authorities have the legal mandate and obligation to align LED initiatives with national priorities, so as to strengthen and support the capacity of local government, make available financial and technical resources to implement and sustain LED, share information regularly on economic trends, land use, investment and new developments with municipalities, monitor and evaluate the impact of LED initiatives. In this light, therefore, the Region is positioned in such a way that it has to maximize the economic potentials offered by its natural endowments, making choices about where to

allocate scarce resources to ensure maximum impact, so that the Region gets the best possible economic leverage to achieve its socio-economic objectives.

### **Economic Development Vision of the North-West Regional Assembly**

Based on this understanding, the economic development vision and strategic intent of the North-West Regional Assembly should be determined as follows:

The seven Divisions and 34 Councils of the Region should grow and develop through social partnerships, so that all people benefit from the economy and have equitable access to social services. Here, our focus is on a local economy mainly animated by *Tontines* (Njangi; Nctwah), Thrift and Loan Schemes, Microfinance Institutions, Farmers Cooperatives, Common Initiative Groups, Credit Unions, et cetera.

For our economic development of our communities to thus take root in sustainability, our Regional Economic Strategic Intent (RESI) should be to maximize the economic value and job-creation potential of our Districts and Divisions, through a strengthening of the comparative advantages of priority sectors and creating competitive advantage in the agricultural and livestock production and processing sectors.

Of course, the economy of our Municipalities does not operate in a vacuum; it is affected and influenced by changes at the Regional, national and global stage. It is, therefore, important to set the local economic development strategy within the framework of national and more particularly Regional policies and legislation.

### **Stakeholder roles and Responsibilities in LED**

The promotion of economic growth and development is an integrated effort for all key stakeholders in the local community. This means that all key stakeholders in a Municipal area must work together to tackle challenges, find ways to ensure the provision of services in a sustainable manner, in order to create conducive

environments for the creation of job opportunities.

These stakeholders should not only be the end-beneficiaries of LED interventions. They must be involved in: planning for LED; implementation of LED; monitoring and evaluation of LED.

Government officials and politicians have a combination of roles to play, including the roles of manager/co-coordinator, facilitator, investor, representative and regulator. However, as stated earlier, the local economy is inextricably linked to the District, Division, Region and national economies. Each Division has a role to play in respect to coordination between surrounding areas, facilitation of sector strategies and investment in Division-wide initiatives. The Region and central government have roles as regulators, investors and coordinators. Thus, our local government (Councils) must play all the various roles in partnership with the Division and Region

### **The Role of the Community**

Their buying, selling, building, saving and investing lie at the heart of community organization, culture and identity. To ignore the community voice in a LED process would be to miss a fundamental constituency.

#### **a) Labour**

Organized labour is an important stakeholder in the implementation of LED initiatives and programmes. Increasing the number of jobs is a key objective of LED. Job seekers, as well as those already employed, must be consulted in the LED process. Labour represents the backbone of the economy. Workers have a role as productive human capital, as consumers and as political interest groups.

#### **b) Consumers/investors**

Without consumption, the local economy would not grow at an acceptable level. By choosing where to spend their money, on what products and on what suppliers, communities invest in the local economy daily.

Recognizing their power is an important part of LED.

#### **c) Stimulators/entrepreneurs**

Communities stimulate business creation or expansion through: identification and support for markets; partnerships; and non-profit organizations identify gaps and areas of need in communities and then design and develop programmes to address these needs.

#### **d) Facilitator**

Non-profit organizations facilitate outside expertise and resources to meet needs through: dissemination of information; support for targeted groups; facilitation of development funding; facilitation of partnerships between different stakeholders to address a need or deliver a project; process facilitator.

#### **e) Investor**

Non-profit organizations are a significant resource in a community. The commitment and passion of members along with the funds raised can be used to drive and stimulate aspects of the local economy. This role is at times shared with the public sector, parastatals, communities and the private sector, who choose to become partners in the development of a project, area or target group.

### **The Role of the Private Sector**

While the role of business in LED is widely acknowledged, there is a tendency only to focus on big businesses and the formal sector. The informal sector also has an important role to play as investor and entrepreneur across the formal and informal divide.

### **Lessons from Beyond:**

#### **The Rwandan Experience: Rising from the ashes**

The potential of the North-West Region to rise out of the ashes of the socio-political quack mire it finds itself at the moment, cannot be over-emphasized. This is a socio-politico-ethnographic polity, which reflects the entire nation's cosmopolitan architecture; a people, whose core values come out distinctly in what

binds them together: *Peace- Justice-Unity-  
Hard Work-Solidarity.*

Of course, many potential partners, donors and international Decentralized Cooperation experts thinking of the Bamenda Highlands of Cameroon at the moment, only see a shooting war of, and against secession. Yes, they see violence in all its most base forms: they see internal displacements and the urgent need for humanitarian assistance; they see a lackluster approach to an announced Presidential Reconstruction Programme of the devastated areas of the two most afflicted English-speaking Regions of the North-West and South-West.

Indeed, some simply still anchor the current impasse on “Bad Governance,” given especially the recent turn-of-events around the country's administrative response to the COVID-19 pandemic, further sinking the country into more vestiges of disease, crime, poverty, corruption and the possibility of more violence.

However, what many of such observers do not really come to terms with, is the glaring fact that in the midst of all this melee, there is a particular group of people with the will, zeal, determination and drive to make a big difference: The North West Regional Assembly. And we draw our inspiration from **RWANDA:**

Rising from the ashes of a genocide of no common compare, this is a country, which has developed so fast that in world-record time, it has become the only country in the word to distribute medical supplies and blood to the most remote of areas using drones; a country that already operates a one-laptop-per-child school programme, having launched a satellite to provide internet to rural schools: the Singapore of Africa, indeed! With the fastest economy, Rwanda has become one of the safest and cleanest countries, and to say the least, it has become a model State to the rest of Africa.

The Rwandan experience speaks to us

in the North West Regional Assembly of Cameroon:

We are resolved to rise above our most immediate, short-term and long-term challenges, by simply following strong examples, despite the deep crisis. After all, as the Rwandan experience admonishes, a bad past does not mean a bad future!!!

Yes! The people of the Bamenda Highlands of Cameroon have all the potential and possibilities to become the change we set out to effect; determined more than ever before, never to be held down by what is happening and would have happened in the past: The future is the target!

This future, of course, and this, we have in abundance to offer, is anchored on **a triple heritage:**

- The diverse culture, customs and traditions of our people.
- A virgin and budding tourism industry, animated by a people with legendary hospitality, friendship and warmth.
- A traditional, participatory sense of belonging, and ownership of community, self-reliant, sustainable development.

### **The Singapore Economic Miracle: Integrated Land-Use Planning Experience**

The constraints of limited land, that is, 718km, of which 23.7% was reclaimed from the sea, sustains a population of 5.5 million inhabitants, with no natural resources. The City-State of Singapore is highly industrialized and depends on importation of everything, including food. Long-term Land-Use Planning plays a key role in the success story of this city, which has a 1.9% unemployment rate and 90.5% home-ownership, with 100% access to clean water and virtually all their projects are fully implemented and realized. This is done through close Inter-Agency collaboration, some of which are:

- **National Parks Authority**, with one of



its success stories being **Gardens by the Bay Project**, where a land size of more than five (05) hectares was reclaimed from the sea and a tourist park for all categories developed.

- **National Environmental Agency**, with one of its success stories being the **Semakau Landfill and Waste Water Treatment Plant**, which covers a total area of 350 hectares of land being reclaimed from the sea for this project. It is expected to handle all Singapore waste till 2035 and is serving not only as an Education, Tourist and Research Centre, but equally in the process, building land that would be handed to the Land Authority for redevelopment as a small island in 2035. The goal of environmental sustainability is to see a clean, green and good living environment.

As a compact and high-density city, integrated public housing and public transport planning and development, ensure that planning is done before development, and all approvals effected before any construction is done, the Master Plan being the sole guide. In this case, the main drivers of a sustainable development hinge on the environment, society and economy, **with growth guaranteed through DECENTRALISATION**. The city has been transformed from a garden city to a city in the garden, the key planning principles being:

- **Adopting an integrated approach.**
- **Having flexibility within certainty.**
- **Taking a long-term view.**
- **Having an open and transparent system.**
- **Taking a balanced view towards social, business and environmental needs.**

In a nutshell, the success story of Singapore rests on an **Urban Systems Approach for Planning and Developing a Liveable City**.

This is an outcome of an interwoven

quality of life, a competitive economy and a sustainable environment at the top, resting on a broader base of an integrated Master Planning and development, and a broad-based dynamic urban governance supporting this system.

The Transport system in Singapore is part of the integrated approach, where the public transport mode is encouraged in order to reduce traffic and car dependency. This is done through a mass rapid transit system (MRT). **Private Car ownership is discouraged through additional registration fee, excise duty, road tax, petrol duty, high cost parking and electronic road pricing.** This is only after the car owner would have obtained a Certificate of Entitlement (COE) through an online bidding process to own a car. The Central Business District (CBD) is carved out as a restricted zone for vehicle entry. **The Land Transport Authority is in charge of policy, planning, development, management, regulation and enforcement of control in the transport sector under a land transport Master Plan.** Here, 75% of transportation at peak hours is made through public transport (bus or train).

Infrastructure financing is part of Singapore's fiscal policy, whereby no borrowing for spending is allowed and all money borrowed is channeled into investments. With corporate and personal income taxes classified as low when compared to international standards, government remains the key supplier of main public infrastructure. Public services are largely delivered on fees charged, based on full cost recovery. Merit goods infrastructure, which include housing, education and health care, have government interventions through agencies and co-payments by users.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) is seen in the sectors of Water and Waste Management. Approval process for projects is as follows: Establishing need for project; Feasibility studies of project; preliminary design; final design; Call for Tender; Award of Tender.

For the North-West Regional Assembly to give meaning its vision for a new North-West Region, we have more than just one leaf to borrow from best practices beyond.



## Njangi Revolution

# A STEADY WAY OF GROWING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

*By Victory Marshal Ayafor Basang*

**H**ave you ever been a member of a njangi group? Are you currently a member of one? What's your experience with njangi groups? Did you know that the rise of the self-help groups in the North West Region commonly known as njangi groups? These njangis are most often pioneered by women. In this article we are going to dwell profoundly on what Successful Njangis Know & Do, Why Many Fail.

Well, most of us can vividly remember how our parents and their friends would meet after a certain period of time and make contributions and discussions on finances over a cup of palm wine or raffia or food like fufu corn or achu. More than ever before, we need such common initiatives to booster the economy of our region.

'Njangi' is a term used to describe self-help groups in the North-West Region. A Njangi is an informal cooperative society that is used to accumulate and invest in savings. Njangis are also referred to as micro-savings or

investment clubs. Njangi if properly harnessed can be a sure way to create local wealth and investment capital in our communities.

In the North West Region, there are estimated to be over 30,000 Njangis that control up to a total of 30 billion francs CFA in assets. And according to a report by Financial Sector Deepening Cameroon, (FSD Cameroon), an organization working to promote financial inclusion in Cameroon, Njangis were already being used by 41% of Cameroonians by 2018. FSD Cameroon traces the origin of Njangis to women labour groups. Although Njangis tended to be for women mostly, over the years after their growth and huge successes, men have also opted-in.

Njangis typically used a merry-go-round structure in which all members contribute a certain fixed amount monthly or weekly or even daily. The amount is then given to one of the members in turns.

Over time many Njangis have started to formalize with some even registering as companies investing in various areas including



agriculture, Common initiative groups, associations and other organizations. A common feature that has been maintained is table banking - where members can borrow from the pool of contributions available.

Njangis (in all their different forms) are so popular in the North West Region that financial industry analysts estimate that at least one third of North Westerners belong to one.

“One in every three adult North Westerner is a member of an investment or this njangi groups. We believe that these njangi groups have a lot of potential. If the capital they have is properly harnessed, it would help our Region immensely,” says Prince Ayafor George, the chairman and President of the Royalty Investment and Njangi Group (RING).

#### Advantages of Njangi Membership

According to RING, some of the advantages of Njangi membership include;

Njangi lowers the risk level of the members' personal loss because they make savings and investments as a group and therefore, in case the profits or interests are not realized as projected, individual loss is very minimal.

Njangis allow members to learn and benefit from the shared ideas and experiences with other members. Through meetings and interactions, members can get the opportunity to research, analyze and spot different viable opportunities, hence providing a learning opportunity.

Njangis have a way of boosting our local economy and financially empowering its members, since most members borrow from with defined interest rates or benefit from the njangis to set up or enhance their

business ventures.

Njangis are a great way for people to meet and make valuable contacts and also meet like-minded people. Since these groups consist of people from different lines of professions and backgrounds, it is an opportunity to build healthy relationships and create long-lasting friendships.

Njangis provide discipline and structure. Personal/individual saving proves a challenge for many people and being in a Njangi will allow you to contribute to the savings group either monthly or weekly and it's not easy to break your commitment because other members are there to keep you accountable and disciplined.

A Njangi creates a source of wealth. You can save and raise a certain amount of capital you require for a project much faster than you would as an individual. Investing creates a long-term return on wealth.

#### Why Most Njangis Fail

Many Njangis start with the big picture of being the very best place to save, borrow, and invest. However, according to statistics, either most Njangis collapse within the first two years of formation, or the members become dissatisfied because their goals are not being met or some members are irregular, thereby bringing some significant setbacks in the njangi group .

Here, are some of the reasons why most Njangis here in the Region fail:

#### 1. Lack of transparency

Transparency is one of the major reasons why Njangis go under. Lack of honesty with funds and bank or financial statements could lead to the failure of a Njangi.

In most cases, with irresponsible members, especially as part of the Exco, njangi groups fail to seamlessly account for

all their financial transactions. Research by FSD Cameroon has shown that theft and embezzlement of funds in Njangis stand at 13%.

With the ever-increasing technology, Njangis can now even use mobile phone applications to better manage their savings.

Digital Apps that can help your njangi and savings group to manage all your group investments including; helping in financial record keeping thus allowing for a more transparent flow of resources.

## 2. Leadership problems in the Njangi group

Electing leaders for a Njangi is key to its success. If the leaders are effective, the Njangi becomes effective. The problem is that many Njangis fail at creating an effective formula of selecting reliable leaders. Sane, trustworthy leadership might be all you need for your Njangi to function smoothly and blossom.

### 3. Failing to have clearly set rules

A sailor cannot operate a ship without a compass because they will either get lost, crash or sink the ship. For any njangi scheme to sail well, you need to have set rules and regulations that will be your guide. They may not be complicated rules but simple rules like time management and contribution deadlines can actually make a njangi fall if not properly adhered to. You need to have a guiding framework for all the members with the consequences of breaking them for your investment group to succeed.

How Can You Make the Best of Your Njangi?

#### i. Have a shared purpose

As members of the njangi or savings group, what is your goal? What are you saving towards? What do you want to achieve? Do you have a shared goal of what you want to achieve? What projects would you like to invest in as members? How much will you contribute and within what period to ensure that you are actually working towards actualizing your goal? Do you want to lend money to members? If so, how much and at what interest rate?

#### ii. Ensure that you adopt professionalism

Once you have identified your specific goals as a group, it is important to have leaders who will ensure that there is a smooth running of events and finances. Elect a chairperson, a treasurer, and a secretary according to how you decide together. This will help

you have a clear leadership structure and proper record of meeting minutes, and your cash flow as well. Agree on how often you would like to have meetings and how your meeting will be structured as well.

iii. Handle everything professionally even if you just began the Njangi as friends. Professionalism ensures that in case anything happens like a fallout, your records are well kept or you don't borrow out a sum of money to a member that is bigger than their holdings or savings in the njangi coffers.

#### iv. Review your progress as a group

During your monthly or weekly meetings, let that be an open floor for the members to give their suggestions, ideas, criticism, and allow them to voice their opinions, requests and concerns etc. That can come in handy because during such meetings you gain insight on how to better your njangi savings and investments. It is a time to review your group and check how far you have come and how you'd want to progress even further.

#### v. Go beyond your money and savings goals.

In as much as your njangi is a professional or local economic empowerment initiative, recognize that members have a life beyond the group. You can build great relationships that are more than just contributing and saving in your njangi. Build each other up. If one of you has a wedding, burial, hospital bill, or graduation you can come together and organize how you can come through for them and stand with them. Make your impact go beyond only your njangi meetings.

To conclude, Merry-go-rounds and Njangis have become a way of life for many here in the region. And coming together to achieve a common goal is a great thing. Njangis provide an opportunity for most people to create a transparent way to raise and invest resources, thereby promoting the economy of the region. Since you have people to ensure accountability, this makes it easier for many to be committed and consistent. If well managed, a njangi can be a great informal way of harnessing capital, bringing about self-improvement, local development and achieving financial success.

## NW Economy in focus

By Victory Marshal Ayafor Basang & Sylvia Waindim

The North-West shares boundary with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Region is spread on a surface area of 17,910 km<sup>2</sup> with a population evaluated at over 3 million. It has seven Divisions and 34 Sub-Divisions.

The economy of the Region is agriculture-based, with the existence of organizations, which are charged with improving seeds of high-yielding crop varieties, constructing and rehabilitation of water schemes as well as preserving livestock and contributing to local development.

The Upper Noun Development Authority (UNVDA) is one of the organizations in charge of boosting the economy of the Region with the cultivation of rice. With the existence of heavy equipment for rice-farming production, production areas have been increased by 10,000 hectares and this has created employment for many youths in the Region.

This development corporation was created in 1970 by Presidential Decree No 70/DF/529 of October 29, 1970, and later was transformed into a development authority by Presidential Decree No 78/157 of May 11, 1978. Its present statutory area of intervention touches five Divisions of the North-West and West Regions of Cameroon, namely: Mezam, Ngoketunjia and Bui in the North-West, and Noun and Bamboutos in the West Region.

The Presidential Decree No. 78/157 of May 11, 1978 gives UNVDA the mandate to handle the development of the agricultural sector in the Upper Noun Valley and redefines its functions within the framework of direct intervention in rice production, processing and marketing. UNVDA equally gives technical and material support to farmers, organizing them into professional groups for seed multiplication, and opening up of access roads. In 2018 UNVDA developed more 7,000 hectares of rice fields, up from 3,400, which had been developed from the available 15,000 hectares.

We also have the Grassfield Participatory and Decentralized Rural Development Project (GP-DERUDEP). It is a poverty alleviation initiative co-funded by the Government of the Republic of

Cameroon, the African Development Bank and Beneficiary Communities. GP-DERUDEP

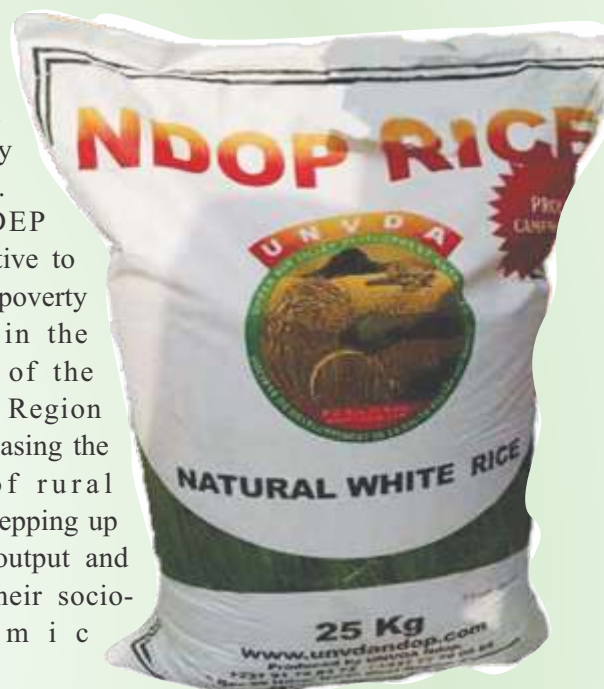
has as objective to contribute to poverty alleviation in the rural areas of the North-West Region through increasing the incomes of rural farmers by stepping up agricultural output and improving their socio-economic environment.

It has been ensuring the expansion of arable areas and the intensification of production through traction, improved seeds, inputs, notably organic fertilizer, suitable technological packages and methods for reducing post-harvest losses. This component also facilitates the integration of crops and livestock for better management of agro-pastoral area, animal health improvement and the promotion of short cycle livestock rearing and fish farming, as well as access to marketing facilities. Further, the North-West is one of highest cattle producing and livestock rearing Regions in Cameroon, ranked second after the Adamawa Region. Different species of cattle breed abound in the North-West Region.

The Region can boast of the biggest tea plantation in Cameroon: The Ndu Tea Estate spreads over 1,568 hectares and produces 1,600 tons, employing thousands of workers.

The Region also specializes in the production Irish potatoes found in Santa Sub-Division of Mezam Division, Bui Division and some parts of Boyo Division. The Irish potatoes are sold in markets found in Yaounde and Douala, as well as in neighbouring countries like Nigeria, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.

More so, the Region is also reputed for the cultivation of green leafy spices and vegetables. Santa Sub-Division is first in the cultivation of spices that are





sold in markets all over the country. There are also vegetables (huckleberry) that are cultivated in large parts of Ngoketunjia and transported to markets in Yaounde and Douala.

Tomatoes and other fruits such as watermelon are cultivated in large quantities in Ngoketunjia Division and sold all over the country. Due to the fertile nature of its soil, food produce like carrots, green beans, leaks, Irish potatoes and spices are the main cash crops of Santa Sub-Division.

The Region also has a reserve of palm oil production. Some areas in Momo Division (Widikum, Ngie and Batibo) are rich in the cultivation of palm oil. Government, through the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, has plans of constructing a palm oil transformation unit in Ngie Sub-Division. This is expected to process palm oil in large quantities that could be sold in international markets.

The economy of the North-West Region is poised to receive a big boost with the creation of a dry port and establishment of projects aimed at harnessing local production despite being the Region experiencing the second highest inflation rate in Cameroon, given the ongoing crises, COVID 19. Elsewhere, the war between Russia and Ukraine is causing war-induced prices on basic commodities like flour and cereal in the Region, which build up to an inflation rate of 4.4% second to 4.5% in the South Region as declared by the National Institute of Statistics in their May 2022 report.

Despite this inflation rate of 4.4% being above the 3% tolerable inflation rate as declared by the

Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the North-West Regional Assembly is handling various projects to revitalize the economy, such as the creation of a dry port where sea cargo will be trans-shipped into inland destinations, an Agricultural Development Agency to address barriers regarding commercialization for farmers and access to affordable capital for farmers, a circular economy to eliminate waste, circulate products at their highest value and regenerate nature and a project to process and transform locally produced food. These projects are bound to boost the economy and offer employment to youths.

In addition to these projects, the youths of the Region have demonstrated high levels of entrepreneurship across different sectors, from entertainment, gastronomy, to innovative initiatives such as the melon seeds cracking machine, the peanut coating machine by Kwe Juliette, the hand washing machine by Njini Daniel, the model plane invented by Tsague Vidiol, to name just a few.

The North West Region is a land of full potential and craftsmanship. To a certain extent, the cultural identity of a typical “graffi” man is mainly characterized by a rich and steadily growing craftsmanship and skill acquisition industry. All around the Region, one will discover youth apprentices acquiring skills and empowering themselves in handicrafts like woodworks, pottery, sculpture, basket making, rattan cane products, and various works of crafts. The North-West Handicraft Village situated at Mile 4 Junction Nkwen-Bamenda, the Bamenda Handicraft Centre at Finance Junction and the Prescraft at Commercial Avenue are all artisanal hubs for the exhibition and commercialization of these products.

Each of the seven Divisions of the Region is also blessed with fertile land that produces natural traditional flavours like the sweet raffia or palm wine and nature's harvest like the undiluted natural honey from Oku.

The Mbengwi Monastery at the heart of Momo Division is best known for the following economic activities that help boost the economy of the Division and the Region at large: medicinal products, candles, pigs and dog rearing, production of wine, honey rearing/harvesting, cattle rearing for beef, production of butter/cheese/yoghurt and many other dairy products. The Emmanuel Sisterhood in Bafut is also a renowned production centre for delicious dairy products like cheese, milk bread, yoghurt and other delicacies.

# DESTINATION FOR QUALITY HEALTH FACILITIES



By Ruth Che Wanchong

The North-West Region prides itself on renowned medical facilities. It is worthy to note that patients across the country find solace when they step foot in the Region, especially in health facilities such as the Bamenda Regional Hospital; Mbingo Baptist Hospital; the Shisong Cardiac Centre; Acha Annex; Banso Baptist Hospital; and a host of many others, with some of the fine brains as far as medical specializations are concerned.

In and around Bamenda, patients are all referred to the Bamenda Regional Hospital because it is highly equipped with a cream of experts, who are doing a great job in almost all health domains. Furthermore, all the Divisions and Sub-Divisions of the Region have health facilities - public and private - offering health care in local communities. In general terms, most staff of these health facilities work hard to uphold the ethics of the profession. In all the Baptist health facilities, for example, their Motto reads, "The CBC Health Board seeks to assist in the provision of health care to all who need it as an expression of Christ's love." Hence, they do not play around with their patients since health-care to them is a way of expressing Christian love to their clients. The Bamenda Regional Hospital

The Bamenda Regional Hospital, a State-owned hospital for the entire Region, is a referral hospital created in 1956. The main mission of this

hospital is first, to provide quality health-care to the population, and secondly, to provide pedagogic support to health training institutions in the Region. The hospital offers training to medical schools such as the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Bamenda, medical laboratory schools, and other nursing institutions around the Region. Most of the medical doctors working here are also teachers in the University of Bamenda. Thus, the hospital serves as a practising school.

One of the objectives of the hospital is operational research. The students come to the Bamenda Regional Hospital to touch and feel the reality, face the patients and to practise the various pathologies they have studied in school. There is equally a reference laboratory therein for tuberculosis, while other partners come for research in HIV/AIDS. The catch phrase here is collaborate with the community.

This Regional referral hospital boasts of a qualified and competent staff strength of close to 500 workers, out of whom 41 are doctors. The hospital has one Internal Medicine Doctor (an internist), a Neurologist in charge of nerve problems, an ophthalmologist in charge of eye-related issues, and three gynaecologists. This is a whole team, besides laboratory technicians, nurses, nutritionists, hygiene and sanitation staff, midwives and mental health related specialists.



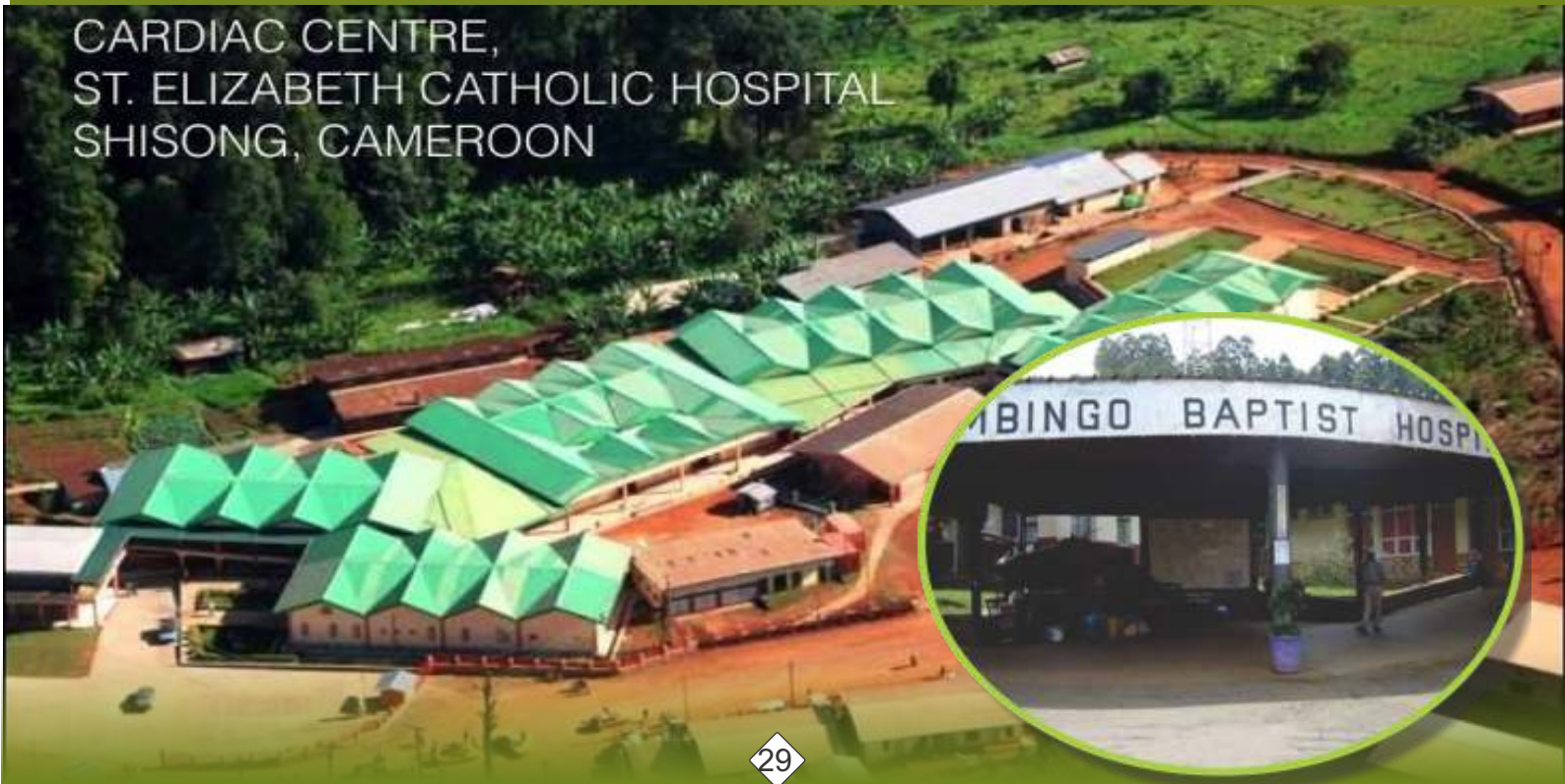
Being a referral hospital, the Bamenda Regional Hospital receives referrals from all over the nation, as far as Douala, Bafoussam, Widikum, Ndop, etc. It has one of finest Imaging Centres, as well as a Haemodialysis Centre. The hospital equally carries out blood transfusions; however, it does not fabricate blood. Blood transfused into patients is donated by goodwill Cameroonians.

St. Elizabeth Hospital Shisong and the Bango Baptist Hospital (BBH) Other renowned health facilities in the Region are the St. Elizabeth Hospital Shisong and the Bango Baptist Hospital (BBH) in Bui Division. The St. Elizabeth Hospital Shisong has a Cardiac Center (the only one in the whole of Central Africa), which has successfully operated a good number of cardiac patients in the country. Both the St.

Elizabeth Hospital Shisong and the Bango Baptist Hospital have training schools for health personnel.

**Mbingo Baptist Hospital**  
Mbingo Baptist Hospital is a referral hospital in Cameroon and the West Africa Sub Region; it is an approved HIV/AIDS treatment center. It serves as a training centre for the Pan African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) and the Christian Internal Medicine Specialization programmes (CIMS). The Hospital began in 1952 as a Leprosy Settlement. In 1965, the General Hospital became an up-shoot of the Leprosy Settlement. The Hospital provides comprehensive health-care among which the following services stand out: general nursing, eye surgery, general surgery, orthopaedic surgery, Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) surgery, surgical and internal medicine residency programs, vocational training and rehabilitation.

## CARDIAC CENTRE, ST. ELIZABETH CATHOLIC HOSPITAL SHISONG, CAMEROON





## The Region: VOX POP

# The People Speak

### What the Population Thinks about the North-West Regional Assembly, its Role and the Peace-Building Process

The North-Westerner Magazine was on the streets to sample people's opinion on what the North-West Regional Assembly is all about and what its role is in the peace-building process. Read their impressions.

### Useful Partner for Education

The North-West Regional Assembly is very active and present at all major public events, with formal presentations on its mission and appeals for citizens of the Region to return to reason and embrace peace. It aids in direct support as well as material/financial assistance to various sectors of the community and vulnerable groups

To be more precise, I will like to talk on the sector that concerns me, Education. The North-West Regional Assembly has enormously offered support to the education sector, especially in the back-to-school campaign for the effective school resumption of the 2021/2022 school year. This led to improved school enrolment compared to the last three years. Communities with functional schools in the Region are more stable and more peaceful than those where schools are not functional. The Regional Assembly's approach



of investing efforts in back-to-school is a perfect way in bringing back lasting peace in our communities.

We also received financial support for the *Regional Inclusive Education Resource Centre* in which the Regional Assembly seats on the *Stakeholders Committee*. This has given the Regional Assembly a human face.

**Mr. Ngwang Roland,  
NW Regional Delegate for Secondary  
Education.**

### Wealth-Creation Regional Assembly

As the Sub-Divisional Chair, Bda III Coordinating Unit of Association of Persons with Disabilities, CUAPWD, I have been privileged with others to have a time out with the North-West Regional Assembly. In December 2021, the Regional Assembly, in partnership with UNDP, organized an end of year festival with the population of the entire Region, people living with disabilities inclusive. I saw this as a bridge to consolidate peace and build the bond



of unity the Region so badly needs. We were able to commune together and to participate in the peace and unity talent show, arts and crafts exhibition, even as we shared a common meal. The highlight of this particular festival for me was the start-up seed capital ranging from CFA 25,000 CFA 100,000 that was given to some meritorious youth to start up their respective

income-generation economic activities.

**Benedicta Akumbom,  
Sub-Divisional Chair, Bda III  
Coordinating Unit of Association of  
Persons with Disabilities, CUAPW.**

### **Inspiration for Development**

I have not heard very much of the North-West Regional Assembly. So, I believe they have to do a lot of sensitization to make the population know much about them. However, for what I know, I guess they have some developmental projects to carry out in the Region. This will help solve some issues raised by the local communities, and the problems raised by those advocating for decentralization. Our community problems will be identified and solved right here by us in the NW. They actually have a role like our local Councils. But they are at the Regional level. Just the fact that we can determine our problems and have a say in their solution with the help of the Regional Assembly is enough to enhance the peace process in the Region.



**Princess Mefor Ayafor  
Santa inhabitant.**

### **Crusader for Peace**

All I know about them is that it is a house with Divisional Representatives and a House of Chiefs. I will actually love to know more about the Regional Assembly and what it has to offer to us the North-Westerners. I know they have been preaching peace and letting people know the importance of a peaceful

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**Deborah Abato  
Bamenda inhabitant.**

### **More Sensitization Needed**

I have just heard of the North-West Regional Assembly from a friend, who was going there to drop her documents f o r employment. She herself did not know much about



what the Regional Assembly is all about. So, I suggest if much communication can be done on what it is all about, I think it will do much good for the North-West population.

**Mr. Naphtaly Atia  
Bamenda City dweller**

### Peace-Building House

The North-West Regional Assembly is a decentralized elective institution, unique to Cameroon's North-West and South-West Regions. The Regional Assembly brings the State closer to the masses through the 70 members of the House of Divisional Representatives and 20 members of the House of Chiefs. It is expected, in line with the deepening of the decentralization process, to attend to the development needs of the peace-hungry people of the North-West Region.



As for its role in the Peace-Building Process, hoping that the President of the North-West Regional Assembly will assume his full powers as Chief Executive Officer of the North-West Region; pending the devolution of all powers and resources provided for by Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities; while aware that the North-West Region has for the most part been in a development coma; Regional Councillors must abhor greed, personal interests and make the North-West Regional Assembly the hope of the masses.

**ATIA Tilarious,  
Bamenda inhabitant.**

### Give Visibility a Chance

If I must be honest, and as an active youth who works on a daily basis with the population, I will say, the North-West Regional Assembly is not branding itself well since its creation. They are not visible as expected. The first time I heard about them was on Television on the day of their installation. Moving around the streets, people literally do not know the House; they do not know that a structure like that exists. So, I suggest they have a lot of communication to do to give the structure visibility. They have to make the population of the Region feel them through the local developmental projects they should be carrying out in the communities. If they have to be successful in the peace-building process, they should not forget actively involving the youth, bearing in mind that some of them, in their youthful energy and exuberance, are the ones distorting the peace of the nation. The North-West Regional Assembly should bring the youths closer and sell their vision to them and see how they can use them as Ambassadors of Peace and Agents of Positive Change or Nation-Building.



**Atigi Samuel.  
Youth Coach and Civil Society  
Activist.**



## Arts, Culture & Society

# SOCIAL LIFE POSTCARD OF THE NORTH-WEST REGION

By Tilarious Atia

Social life in Cameroon's North-West Region is quite interesting and most people find it difficult living in other Regions, if they have stayed in the North-West before.

Despite the chaos and poverty, Cameroonians are friendly people, and North-Westerners are no exception. They have pride in their cultural identity and are usually eager to share information about their Region and people. Although most North-Westerners are battling with their own challenges, there is still a thirst for life, and energy and creativity ensure that locals do what they must to survive.

The North-West Region, home to the Togh regalia, is Cameroon's most revered Region, with an estimated population of about three million, three hundred thousand inhabitants. Its regional capital is Bamenda.

Affectionately referred to as Abakwa and/or Mankon Town, Bamenda is said to be the thermometer of Cameroon's socio-political life.

This capital of Cameroon's North-West Region is known for its cool climate and scenic hilly location, as well as its hardworking and self-reliant population. It also boasts of the biggest socio-cultural heritage unknown to any other region in Africa, housing some of

the richest traditions and features on the continent, as well as a huge number of antiquities.

Found in the western highlands of Cameroon, the North-West Region is bordered to the southwest by the South-West Region, to the south by the West Region, to the east by the Adamawa Region and to the north by Nigeria.

The North-West Region is about the most vibrant Region in the country, playing host to people from all spheres of life, different social and cultural backgrounds, nationalities, regions, ethnic groups and religions. Visitors on first arrival into the bustling Region will most likely have their senses overwhelmed by the chaos, noise and traffic that characterise some of the Region's major cities like Bamenda and Kumbo.

The lifestyle in the North-West Region is fast-paced and, with some of the fastest growing cities in Cameroon, hustle and bustle abound.

Visitors are quick to fall in love with the Region's beautiful topography, from the exquisitely beautiful plateaus with misty waterfalls and springs, to the protected jungles like the one in Alankie, the sacred forest in Mankon. Its streams and rivers are replete with hammerhead mudfish, giant tilapia fish, among other water creatures like the choicest fish species that come

# Bamenda by Night



from Bambalang in Ngoketunjia Division.

The Region is loved for its culture, local cuisines, and the ground-breaking architecture of most palaces. It is also loved for its farms, schools, hospitals, streets, markets, eateries, Toghu designs, artists, natural touch, palm wine and corn beer joints.

The Region is loved for its boldness, toughness, resilience, stardom, and ten-thousand-year-old history.

The streets of the Region's capital city are constantly littered with vendors selling whatever they can get their hands on.

When one talks of getting varieties of things to buy ranging from clothing to shoes, accessories, gadgets, electronics and any other thing one can think of, Bamenda is the best bet. Shopping in Bamenda is a colourful affair, whether it involves markets, or boutiques.

Western-type shopping facilities can be found across the city and are full of local and international fashion brands. Fashion in the North-West is a unique mix of African and Western styles, and visitors who come from other countries find it fascinating to have native clothing made by tailors and seamstresses. The Bamenda Main Market, one of Cameroon's largest

markets, is located in the heart of Bamenda, just a stone's throw from the Bamenda Food Market. Other markets are located in high-brow neighbourhoods across the Region and therein bargaining is essential. Most seasoned hagglers will agree that starting at a third of the asking price and settling at half is the best approach.

The North-West is a cosmopolitan Region and a melting pot of cultures. This is evident in the cuisine on offer in Bamenda, where there are plenty of modern restaurants serving both local and international dishes. Restaurants are largely concentrated in the more affluent areas of the Region's capital, and food vendors line the streets of the commercial districts.

The traditional staples are a variety of green vegetables (mostly huckleberry) and roast chicken (khati-khati) eaten with processed corn, called fufu. Pounded cocoyam (achu) and a variety of soup (yellow soup – ndzani and black soup – ndza-teti) are also widely eaten. There are also other varieties of local Cameroonian dishes sold in restaurants and roadsides by food vendors.

One cannot talk about the affairs of cities in the North-West without mentioning nightlife and entertainment in Bamenda, Kumbo, Wum, Nkambe, Fundong, Ndop and Mbengwi, which keep the Region lively and bubbling. Bamenda residents, for example, use this nightlife to unwind and ease themselves of the stress of a hectic day and the challenges of the time. Art, entertainment and music form an integral part of the North-West culture and its capital city has a thriving nightlife. The Region is famous throughout Africa for its music and art.

There are dozens of nightclubs and live music venues across the Region. Western music, hip hop and traditional African bands are popular forms of entertainment and some music studios are located in Bamenda. Before now, Bamenda used to be the heart of Cameroon's film industry, often referred to as 'Collywood,' which is the fifth largest film industry in Africa after Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Kenya. Foreigners moving to the North-West may take a while to get used to living in such a Region with vast cities, and many will find themselves living in insular expatriate communities behind high walls and security gates, far removed from the reality of life in the Region like is the case in Bamenda's Foncha Street and GRA. But for those eager to explore and leave the bubble, Bamenda offers a true taste of African lifestyle and culture. Foreigners or people visiting should take the opportunity to experience all that the vibrant city and Region have to offer.

Nightlife has never been this sweet in Bamenda. The city, situated in the volcanic Bamenda Highlands, is unarguably considered to be one that never sleeps. Believe it or not, one can enjoy Bamenda's dining, wining, shopping, music, culture and entertainment every hour of the day.

With its numerous little bars, pubs, cafes, and restaurants, one can easily spend the night bouncing from one venue to the next in Bamenda, capital of Cameroon's North-West Region. In fact, there are areas in Bamenda where the sun rises at dusk. The popular street between the Nkwen

Market and Mile 4 Nkwen begins booming like a beehive at nightfall with the smell of roast fish and chicken filling the air.

Even amidst the uncertainty, the people of Bamenda still find time to eat heavily and drink lavishly. The President of the Regional Executive Council, Professor Fru Fobuzshi Angwafo III, who was elected President on the 22nd of December, 2020, clearly has even better plans for the Region in terms of its social standard and development. Some of the plans of the President of the Regional Executive Council are tied around the social life and welfare of the Region and its people.

While stating his vision for the North-West, he revealed his plans to improve the social standard of the Region. He promised to create an official two-way mechanism for interaction with the people in their respective groupings, enabled by his collaborators.

He also assured to seek the understanding of the needs of people before seeking to be understood by them and involve them in policy formulation that would ensure that they (the people) have a chance to be heard and informed. He said his administration would respond directly to the people on policy issues, taking on personal responsibility for guaranteeing that their expressed concerns are addressed.

He stated clearly that his administration will create a vibrant 'Team North-West' to engage the over three million population in diverse ways and also institute initiatives, incentives and systems to reward lawful behaviour, with swift consequences for deliberate flouting of the law.





## DISCOVER THE PEOPLE'S "TOGHU"

By VictoryMarshal Ayafor Basang

The Toghu is a traditional attire from the grassfields, North-West Region of Cameroon. It is a royal fabric that was initially worn by Fons, royalty and other notables. But today, it is worn by all and sundry. It is made with black velvet on hand-embroidered patterns and designs with yellow, red, white, green thread.

Memories of the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games where Team Cameroon, dressed in the Toghu attire, stole the show are still fresh in the minds of many. Team Cameroon carried the day with this outfit.

After winning the hearts of many in London, Team Cameroon put on the Toghu at the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil as well as in Tokyo 2021. In this regard, most Cameroonians on missions abroad and even on leisure trips don the Toghu so as to be identified as Cameroonian. One can say with certainty that Toghu has already inserted itself as a symbol of national unity in Cameroon to the extent that the ball of the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations hosted by Cameroon was christened "Toghu," interpreted as "Tradition, Ornate, Glory, Heritage and Unity." Many have adopted this attire as a symbol that represents Cameroon.

Over time, the wearing of the Toghu has gone beyond the Fondoms and notables to also include everyone, and it is mostly worn in festive circumstances. In its modernized version, the Toghu takes several forms following the inspiration of its embroider. Also,

everyday use has required replacing velvet with lighter fabrics. One of the first areas of modernization is the use of fabric in modern clothing cuts. So, exit the large tunic to make way for stylish and dressy outfits.

Some versions of Toghu offered by brands are wax versions (of the printed fabric, therefore, rather than an embroidered thread on the fabric) or prints of classic cotton patterns as is the case with other African textiles. It is also essential to mention that Ndop fabrics are the main ritual, traditional and royal fabrics in the North-West. This is strictly reserved for Fons and Princes in the North-West, unlike the Toghu, which anyone can wear. Thus, one has to know which Toghu to wear. This is where knowing the patterns and other designs engraved on it is very important. The Toghu is not just a beautifully decorated black attire. The Toghu is how the Grassfield ("graffi") people represent their world-view on fabric. The symbols on the Toghu are the same as what one would find on other pre-colonial and contemporary Grassfield art like sculptures, wooden drums, palace architecture and other artefacts.

Nothing is accidental about the symbols and designs that adorn a Toghu. Herein, as a typical "graffi" girl from the Awing Fondom, I will highlight some of the commonly stitched designs and symbols on the Toghu, and what these signs and symbols represent: the lizard, the spiderweb, the gong and other symbols.

The spider web is a standard feature on the Toghu. Usually woven along the neckline and cuffs of a Toghu, the spiderweb alludes to its maker, the spider, and this creature's forward-looking ways that Cameroon

"Grassfielders" try to emulate. Unlike other creatures, the spider does not go out to hunt its prey. The spider laboriously spins an intricate web. And then the web catches the prey. The spider eats after following a meticulous process and not after an instantaneous incident of catching a prey. The spiderweb on the Toghu reminds the one who wears it to live like the spider: avoid instant gratification; constitute capital, for capital earns profit, and one gratifies self with the



profit. Plan, invest in the future. "Ma'a calcul, ma'a plan" as the Bamileke brothers are wont to say.

The spiderweb also represents connectedness or the value of community networks. A single thread does not make the whole. The cobweb is alternatively presented on the Toghu as intertwined threads, snaking their way across the fabric. These tortuous lines will go their separate ways only to come back and bond with each other.

Another interesting Toghu symbol that is increasingly in use in the collections of contemporary designers is the lizard. Lizards are very inoffensive but resilient creatures. The lizard will go over, under, around and through any obstacle. The Lizard will walk up a wall, crawl through tiny cracks and run upside down across the ceiling without falling. The lizard is, therefore, about The North-Westerner's ability to purposefully pursue their life goals and always daring even the impossible to succeed. The lizard epitomizes the hustler attitude of the typical North-West man or woman's desire to go out there and achieve. It depicts the ability to be undisruptive, invading new spaces and consolidating one's dreams and aspirations. It is what some have derogatorily termed the "kam no go" mindset of Grassfield people. Be it as it may, the North-Westners are proud of who they are: disciplined, innovative and industrious people.

The U-shaped double gong.

This may be known simply as a musical instrument; but it is also the "voice" of the Kwifon: a secret and sacred order of warriors that regulates and protects

Grassfield Fondoms. People who have been inducted into the Kwifon earn the privilege to SEE and HAIL the "Juju" or physical representation of the Kwifon and know its secrets. Uninitiated or common people are supposed to run as personification of the Kwifon comes out of its secret grove to perform its rituals (usually at night and only exceptionally in daylight).

It is worth noting that in a Grassfield society like the North-West Region, some people are more equal than others. The kind of privileges a person can enjoy depends on their function in the community, and the contributions they have made or are making to advance the common good. As the "voice" of the Kwifon, the gong is the symbol for the ones in the community imbued with power and authority that ordinary people only HEAR them but cannot SEE them. So, a gong on the Toghu is a "must have" if one thinks they have arrived the "you-can't-see-me" level in your hustle or in your society.

The classical Toghu is not regular streetwear and certainly not a casual wear. It is the identity of the North-Westerner to the world. It is our culture, our pride. All the merit goes to contemporary designers for infusing new life into the concept of Toghu by simplifying the standard attire and transposing its basic themes onto modern clothing and the fashion market. From casual street wear to extremely stunning red-carpet and banquet outfits worn both nationally and internationally, toghu designers have ingeniously integrated the attire into new products in very innovative and imaginative ways.

Toghu is the art of representing a belief system on a fashion product, whatever the product may be. The art of using fashion to tell a story that comes from a specific context.



Culturally, the moon represents peace and tranquility. It equally represents positive growth amongst a people. It is also connected to fertility and reproduction. The full moon represents the height of success, power, and fulfillment. As such, the moon on the Toghu symbolises the serenity, productivity and fulfillment of the "graffi" people.

The Calabash is one of the symbols of typical rural African life, which many modern individuals have embraced with the aim of preserving their culture. It is also a powerful symbol of womanhood. It portrays the domesticated and enterprising nature of African women, and reinforces their sense of self. The Calabash is an object that was commonly used in most parts of the North-West Region by our foreparents for serving and preserving meals. So, whenever the calabash is seen, it means home. On the other hand, the calabash represents royalty pouring libation, the liquid of life as our forebears (intercessors) are involved.

The tiger teeth designed on the Toghu represents status, rank, place, and position. Therefore, the symbolism of tiger stands for strength, military prowess, and even royalty or Kingship.

First and foremost, crabs are a symbol of defense. Their hard shell, oversized claws, and seemingly fearless attitude are all symbolic of their strong defensive capabilities. Crabs will rarely back down from a fight. Crabs may be relatively small in stature but this does not mean that they should be taken for granted. Crabs are one of the most resourceful, adaptable, and resilient creatures that exist. The above-mentioned traits describe a typical "graffi" person. Thus, the design of the crab on the Toghu symbolises the "graffi" people's defensiveness, resilience, adaptability and resourcefulness; self-reliance, change, growth and tough-skin nature despite challenges.

Horns represent strength, royalty and assertiveness. They also symbolise the power and dignity of a people; as well as strength and royalty.

As has been elucidated, the Toghu, also referred to as Atoghu, has for some time now been greatly sought after by all and sundry. This traditional regalia, which originates from the North-West Region of Cameroon, is now worn all over



Cameroon and abroad. Toghu, which was once designed only in the North-West Region, is now being designed all over the country. It has fast become an outfit in high demand, both nationally and internationally.

A Producer of Toghu outfits in Bamenda, Lum Charisa Apentoh, says she has customers from all over Cameroon and even abroad, who buy her Toghu outfits. The traditional grassfield regalia is made up of designs and some insignias reserved for special personalities.

Today, Toghu is more than just a dressing...it is symbolic of a unified Cameroon. The challenge of the Region is to harness the cultural and social value of Toghu, so as to develop an industrial base for the economy of the North-West.

## Gastronomy

# THE GASTRONOMY OF THE NORTH-WEST REGION

The North-West region of Cameroon harbours the people of Bamenda, commonly referred to as Abakwa people. The Region is made up of seven Divisions (Mezam, Momo, Boyo, Ngoketungia, Bui, Menchum and Donga Mantung Divisions); and food herein as diverse as the people.

North-West food is based largely on plant products such as maize, cocoyams, cassava, plantains, yams, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, and delicious tropical vegetables such as huckleberry, bitterleaf, cabbage etc.

One of the typical dishes of the Region is Achu, made from pounded cocoyam (tubers) accompanied by a yellow sauce made from palm oil, rock salt, condiments and meat. It is a typical dish of the Mezam people in the Region, though cherished all over the nation as a delicacy.

Fufu corn and njamanjama (huckleberry leaves) is a typical dish of the Donga Mantung, Boyo, Bui, Menchum and Ngoketungia people. It is made from cooked corn flour, eaten with huckleberry. Sometimes it is accompanied by roast chicken, prepared traditionally in what has come to be fondly called khati Khati.

The people of Momo Division are well-known for their delicious porridge cocoyam dish (Nangtarré). The porridge is done with palm oil and garnished with bitterleaf.

Porridge plantains (nang-nghom) is also another delicacy eaten in the Region but it is mostly prepared during 'born house' - a colloquial expression used in Cameroon to describe a ceremony that is usually organised to welcome a new-born baby and to honour its mother.



*Achu and "ndzaniki"*

As far as gastronomy is concerned, the North-West Region is rich in many delicious varieties of dishes. North-Westerners also like their cow meat (beef) and or skin (kanda), goat meat, pork and fish to accompany their dishes.

### **Achu and Yellow Soup: Another Way of Life**

Achu and Yellow Soup is a staple meal typical of the people of the North-West Region, precisely in Mezam Division. It features prominently in all events in Mankon, Bafut, Nkwen Babanki, Bamendankwe, Awing, Akum etc.

Achu and Yellow Soup or sometimes Black Soup is a Cameroonian delicacy, which is eaten with a finger. Many refer to this finger-licking delicacy as "one finger round the world." It is made from pounded cocoyams, unripe banana and eaten with a spicy soup. The soup is usually accompanied by a lot of meat, dry fish, towel, liver (all commonly referred to as obstacles), vegetables, egusi and a lot more depending on the person and occasion. The palm oil used for the soup matters a lot, says Mageret Afanui, a restaurant owner. Others say after eating, you should take a glass of palm wine to savour the real taste.

Achu is fast becoming the staple of the entire Region because the soil and the weather are favorable for growing cocoyams in this part of Cameroon. It is also called "akwa" in some places or "taro" in the French-speaking part of Cameroon. It is a dish that is intensively spicy and filled with ethnic flavours.

In a typical traditional setting, the food is served on plantain leaves and eaten on the floor with the fingers. It is a delicacy that is mostly eaten on traditional occasions, festivals as well as birth and death celebrations. Because of the length of time it takes to prepare Achu, it is hard to find people eating it every day as compared to other easy-to-prepare foods. In the



*Corn fufu and “Khati khati”*

years back, it was common to find two or more people eating Achu on the same leaf, symbolizing unity and living togetherness.

Over the years, Achu has become a delicacy for Cameroonians from all over the country. It is available in all restaurants across the national territory. One is tempted to say it will be eaten globally some years to come as visitors from other countries have testified how delicious the meal is. Achu spices are some of the first items in the luggage of most Cameroonians residing abroad when they come visiting. Charlotte Enanga, a Cameronian living in Europe from the South-West Region, revealed that Achu is one of the choice dishes on her menu even in Europe. Her children cherish the dish and she cannot help but prepare it for her family regularly.

It should be noted that various ethnic groups prepare Achu in their own unique style but the bottom line is that it ends up being an amazing delicacy. Caterers make a lot of money from Achu and Yellow Soup across the city of Bamenda, serving a plate from as modest as CFA 500 upwards.

With the coming of modernism, people no longer

eat Achu on leaves; neither do they eat in the same plate. However, to maintain the spirit of unity in a family or community life, everybody sits at the table at meal time when Achu is the menu of the day. Even though modernism has taken the leaves away, there is still one thing that modernism will never take away as far as Achu is concerned: the fact that it will always be eaten with the fingers and never with a spoon.



*Porish Cocoayam “Nangtareh”*

## Feature

# REGION-WIDE PERSPECTIVES TO DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION

*A paradigm shift,  
anchored on the provisions of Article 62  
of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon,  
as stipulated in Section 327 of Law No. 2019/24 of December 2019, granting “Special Status”  
to  
the North West and South Regions of Cameroon.*

*By  
J.N. Waindim  
Questor, NWRA*

### PREAMBLE

The **1972 CONSTITUTION** of Cameroon, as amended by CONSTITUTIONAL LAW N0. 96-6 of 18<sup>th</sup> January 1996, which was modified and completed by LAW N0. 2008/001 of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008, states in SECTION 1(2) of the CONSTITUTION:

**“The Republic of Cameroon shall be a DECENTRALISED UNITARY STATE. It shall be one and indivisible, secular, democratic and dedicated to social service...”**

In December 2019, within the context of finalizing Cameroon's decentralization process, ['Cameroons Parliament approved the](#) General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, which granted “special status” to the country's two Anglophone Regions, the North West and South West, with Bamenda and Buea as capitals and seats of the respective Regional Authorities.

The Constitution and Law N0. 2019/024 on the General Code for Local Authorities define these Local Authorities as comprising the Regions and the Councils; and that their domains of operation shall be to promote the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development in their jurisdictions.



Cameroon being a Decentralized Unitary State, this initiative was a result of the [Major](#) National Dialogue, which the government convened in Yaounde-Cameroon, from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019, with the aim of resolving the war of secession that has been raging since 2017.

One of the key resolutions of this Major National Dialogue was the granting of a “special status” to the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, in conformity with Section 62 Sub 2 of the Constitution of the Republic, on autonomous Regions with special status. The constitution stipulates in Article 62, paragraph (2) that “Without prejudice to the provisions of this Part, the law may take into consideration the specificities of certain Regions with regard to their organization and functioning.”

This “special status” implies that the two English-speaking Regions are placed under the general regime of the State, but are given other prerogatives because of their unique Anglo-Saxon heritage. However, what is important is not the name but the need to bring the administration closer to the people and to make them responsible for their development.

Thus, SECTION 328 of the Decentralisation Code provides for additional powers possessed by the two “special status” Regions to include:

1. Power to participate in the formulation of national public policies relating to the Anglophone educational sub-system.
2. Power to set up and manage Regional Development Authorities.
3. Power to participate in defining the status of traditional Chiefdoms.
4. Power to be consulted over issues relating to the formulation of Justice Public Service policies in the Common Law sub-system.
5. Power to be involved in the management of Public Services established in their

respective territories.

The North West and South West Regions of Cameroon inherited the British colonial system of indirect rule, as well as the English language and the Common Law system; a decentralized form of governance that empowered local communities to carry out their own development.

However, Cameroon is not the first country in the world to have autonomous Regions. In Canada, the Province of Quebec enjoys special status. This special status was used since the 1960's in Quebec so that its distinct culture could be protected and developed while continuing to be part of the Canadian federal system.

In Italy, Article 116 of the Constitution grants some legislative, administrative and financial power, to a varying extent, depending on their specific statute, to five Regions, including: Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino–Alto Adige/Südtirol, Aosta Valley and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. The special status sought to take into account cultural differences, protect linguistic minorities and prevent their secession from Italy after the Second World War.

In the above-mentioned cases, the legislature protected the rights of the minority groups, their education, legal system as well as the language specificities.

In the case of Cameroon, this “special status” sets out to give Cameroon's Anglophone minority English-speaking North West and South West Regions, greater autonomy over local affairs, as well as settle historical grievances.

Most significantly, the bill established for each of the two Regions, a new bicameral Regional Assembly, made up of a House of Chiefs composed of 20 traditional rulers, and a House of Divisional Representatives composed of 70 members. The latter is selected by Municipal Councillors through indirect suffrage, and the former by their peers. The two Anglophone Regions have a new Regional Executive Council, composed of eight members, selected by Divisional Representatives and the House of Chiefs, as follows:

- 1 (One) President.
- 1 (One) Vice President, who doubles as President of the House of Chiefs.
- 1 (One) Commissioner for Economic Development.
- 1 (One) Commissioner for Health and Social Development.
- 1 (One) Commissioner for Education, Sports and Cultural

# “SPECIAL STATUS” RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION

The General Code of Regional and Local Authorities stipulates very clearly that each of these structures shall be administered freely, and with full autonomy, by elected organs, under well-spelled out regulations in force.

Thus, a Region is considered as a local authority, composed of several Divisions and Municipal Councils, covering the same territorial boundary of the Region as an administrative unit. The chief town of the Region as a local authority shall be the headquarters of the Region as an administrative unit, and in the case of the North West Region, it is Bamenda. As such, the general duty of the Region, therefore, is to promote economic development and social progress, contributing to harmonious, balanced, supportive and sustainable territorial development.

From this backdrop, the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities defines Decentralized Cooperation to mean any partnership between two or more local authorities, or their groupings, established for the purpose of achieving common objectives. Such partnerships could be carried out between Cameroonian local authorities, or between the latter and foreign local authorities, but under the terms and conditions laid down by the laws and regulations in force, and in accordance with the international commitments of the State.

The bottom line here is that local authorities may join Cities or Regions, twinning international organizations, or other international organizations of Cities or Regions.

## SITUATING THE BAMENDA HIGHLANDS OF CAMEROON

The Bamenda Highlands of the Republic of Cameroon, administratively known as the North West Region, is also known as the Bamenda Grassfields, the Western High Plateau or the Western Highlands.



This Region is the third most populated in Cameroon, and It has one major Metropolitan City, Bamenda, with several other smaller towns such as Wum, Kumbo, Mbengwi, Ndup, Nkambe and Fundong. A 2010 government report (BUCREP) indicated that the Region saw an increase in its population from approximately 1.2 million in 1987 to an estimated 1.8 million in 2010. Thus, the population density of 99.12 people per square kilometre is higher than the national average of 22.6; the Regional Urban Growth Rate of 7.95% higher than the national average of 5.6%; while the rural growth rate of 1.16% is equal to the national rate. Most recent statistics indicate that the total population of Cameroon stands at about 28 million inhabitants, the North-West Region making for 12% of this total, giving an estimated population of over three million.

Bordered to the southwest by the South West Region, to the south by the West Region, to the east by the Adamawa Region, and to the north

by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the North West Region has many ethnic groups, including immigrants from other Regions and countries.

Like other Regions in Cameroon, the North West is made up of administrative Divisions: Boyo, Bui, Donga-Mantung, Menchum, Mezam, Momo and Ngokentunjia. Each

Division is further sub-divided, with a total of 31 (thirty-one) Sub Divisions in the North West Region. The basic unit of local government is the Council, and today, there are thirty-two Councils, one City Council, and the Region, constituted into a Regional Assembly of a House of Divisional Representatives and a House of Chiefs.

## CONCEPT NOTES ON THE DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION POTENTIAL OF THE BAMENDA HIGHLANDS

### RESUME:

- **Improving Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Security through Integrated Agro-pastoral Farming and Eco-systems Protection.**
- **Enhancing Environmental Management and Conservation, Water, Hygiene and Sanitation.**
- **Improving Fresh Water Eco-systems Services and Management.**
- **Enhancing Vocational Training as a Vital Tool and Strategy in Fighting Urban and Rural Youth Unemployment and Poverty.**
- **Mitigating against, and Adapting to Climate Change through Green Investments.**

I. The whole area of the Bamenda Highlands is predominantly rural and agrarian; it is only 1/5 urban. Thus, agro-pastoral farming (peri-urban agriculture) is the mainstay of the local economy, especially for the female gender. At the same time, the eco-systems (fresh water, forestry, soils bio-diversity, etc) are systematically destroyed and degraded in the course of farming.

Sustainable livelihoods are dependent on renewable natural resources. The continuous and systematic destruction, degradation and decline of this resource base, therefore, is the highest environmental priority issue of the North West Regional Assembly, a situation made even more precarious by the pollution of surface water and ground water, the depletion of fuel-wood, flooding situations of streams and dams during the raining season, and loss of indigenous natural products such as medicinal plants.

The task of the North West Regional Assembly, faced with these issues, is to ensure that the farming population is educated on judicious, sustainable exploitation of already scarce land as well as on the management of the eco-systems.

**II.** About 6 out of 10 people within the Bamenda Highlands area do not always have proper toilet facilities, a factor that contributes to the transfer of bacteria, viruses and parasites found in human excreta, which in turn contaminate water sources, soils and food. This 'disaster' situation calls for urgent attention, considering that safe water and sanitation close to people's homes bring about far-reaching and wider benefits, which extend way beyond the expected improvements to health and a reduction in the time needed for water collection.

Further, the entire Bamenda Highlands area, especially the local communities of surrounding urban, semi-urban and rural Council areas, continue to face serious water problems for home consumption, agriculture, livestock and industry. By and large, this reduces annual agro-pastoral production as well as other socio-economic development endeavours in the Region.

**III.** The bulk of the population of the Bamenda Highland area is made up of unemployed youths, a result of an educational system that forms, from primary, through secondary, to tertiary education, mainly literate youths with very rudimentary imbued work skills and inappropriate precious little vocational training. That is why though endowed with a plethora of natural resources, Cameroon in general, and the Bamenda Highlands area in particular, harbour many youths who languish in abject penury, generalised poverty and misery. The principal needs of the Bamenda Highland youths, therefore, remain:

- The provision of opportunities for adequate professional training in various vocational disciplines such as IT, catering, masonry, bamboo, pottery, wood work, electricity, et cetera.
- Offering opportunities to the vocationally trained to be profitably self-employed and to become employers to their peers.
- The identification of job opportunities, as well as job creation and placement avenues.
- The inculcation in the youths of the spirit and

sentiment of self-esteem, solidarity and collegiality at work.

- Cataloguing young talents in an employment nursery.

**IV.** Green environmental education remains a *sine qua non* condition in mitigating against, and adapting to climate change, to be able to reduce vulnerability to climate extremes and natural disasters; to improve on environment health; and to maintain Regional environmental values with equitable distribution of costs and benefits.

Green investments within the Bamenda Highlands area shall involve re-afforestation, improved forests, food-crop and land management, agro-forestry – all serving as a wide range of opportunities to increase carbon intake and slow deforestation to reduce emissions. As it were, green investment is also a component in disaster management, in environmental management, in poverty reduction, and above all, it reduces the burden to adapt to climate change crisis.

#### **Expected results**

The ultimate aim of the North West Regional Assembly is to improve on environmental management, on the conservation of Regional eco-systems, water, sanitation, hygienic conditions of inhabitants; to alleviate poverty, ensure food security, improve on sustainable livelihoods and income levels, through increased agro-pastoral productivity and production; and to add consistency to the lives of the citizens of the entire Region, by inculcating such values that shall help them to formulate better life concepts.

To be able to bring effective and meaningful change to the lives of the people of the Bamenda Highlands area, the North West Regional Assembly seeks to carry out these sustainable development projects through the Traditional Councils of each village community, with committees set up to manage the day-to-day execution of the activities and programmes of these projects. For effective evaluation and monitoring, these committees shall be technically supervised by experts, consultants and other partners to these projects, who shall provide regular relevant training and follow-up of the respective committees – a participatory partnership for development as spelt out in the 8<sup>th</sup> Millennium Development Goal.



# Oath taking and installation of Pioneer members of NW Regional Executive Council



Regional Assembly Session



*Visit of NW Elite during the September 2021 Session*



*Regional Assembly receives PWD Social club of Bamenda during the March 2022 Session*



*Maiden session of the Regional Assembly*

# VISITS (DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS)



*British High Commissioner to Cameroon*



*Canadian High Commissioner to Cameroon*



*Deputy British High Commissioner to Cameroon*

*Northwest Regional Assembly Supporting Health Facilities  
and social institutions*





Youth Parliamentarians attending the 7th session of the NW Regional Assembly

## Spotlight

## The North West Regional Assembly and Youth engagement.

Prof. Fru Angwafo III

**Y**outh empowerment and Education was one of the three pillars of our development strategy in the address I delivered at the inauguration of the North West Regional Executive Council on January 22<sup>nd</sup> this year. I am particularly grateful to the Vice Chancellor for asking me to deliver the matriculation discourse. Madame VC you honor the people, the youth of our region, herein represented by their Regional Assembly.

I thank the senate, my colleagues, professors, support staff and the entire university community for their dedication and resolve to perpetuate the character and excellence of the University of Bamenda, the university of the future!

Youth engagement, the title of our conversation is all about our future. Franklin Delano Roosevelt is often quoted thus “We cannot always build the future for our youth but we can build our youth for the future”! Youth engagement to many is all about moral rearmament.

Youth is the period in the human life cycle from chronological age 13 to 35 years, characterized by a great physical, physiological growth spurt during adolescence

(age 12 to 20 years) that wanes through early adulthood (age 21-35 years). Youth is a period of great vitality, with bursts of seemingly inexhaustible energy, hope, passion and an ideal period for procreation. It is also the age of opportunity for wholesome development and empowerment through intellectual, moral and material formation. The challenges and contradictions of adolescence mold a cultural base and identity. The human identity whose dimension spans from the individual to the nuclear and extended families, communities, nations and the human family. Youth engagement is all about adults being sensitive to the feelings, voice and actions of young people in a perpetual quest for peace and harmony in the human family. Youth engagement therefore seeks to continuously increase human capital

in emotional intelligence as well as the social, economic and academic quotients.

The ideal product of formation is empowered for a purposeful life nurtured in the moral tradition of doing good for goodness sake. Social education at home, in school and elsewhere in society is geared towards developing youth with the pristine moral values of humility, integrity, veracity (truth) and service to others.

The extent that society succeeds in youth engagement depends on adults managing the nurture- nature divide as they collaborate with youth. Public policy and social change movements will thrive if they focus on youth sentiments, passions, and actions for their development. You are all aware that a ministry for youth, special projects and programs tailored for



youth are justified by the demographic pyramid of ages. Youth voice, youth participation and youth involvement in governance is ever-increasing. The National Youth Council, the national youth card, are vehicles for access to social, economic and financial services at preferred rates and reduced costs. Youth friendly public tax policies to start-ups and youth NGOs- civil societies encourage youth engagement in the public sphere. Youth engagement is an index of democratic governance as youth share responsibilities and leadership with adults who value and respect them. The institution of youth desks in the Regional Assembly for instance will permit

permanent communication and collaboration with youth! We agree with youth who believe that good policies should reflect their diction “Nothing about us without us”

In this regard, the youth engagement mantra considers:

- building relationships with youth
- sharing power with youth
- encouraging discovery, exploration and self-expression
- developing skills for lifelong learning
- providing leadership avenues for youth to test their ideas, evaluate their usefulness in the community
- developing advanced skills for the job market 3Cs Communication, collaboration, critical thinking and self-direction

-fostering flexibility and adaptability as leaders in auditing and evaluating projects; what works and why, what doesn't and why.

Youth engagement translates the UN charter on the rights of the child for an ideal world. All is not a bed of roses, for there are obstacles on the road to a bright future through youth engagement. The shortcomings of institutional racism, culture clash, ethnic divide, sectarianism, the social ills of drug abuse notably alcohols, crack, hemp, tramadol etc which inhibit genuine flourishing of youth. These ills are societal downside and challenges of youth engagement programs. Indeed, they are drivers of mental illness, social inequities, conflict and a future of uncertainty.





## Sports

## NORTH WEST SPORTS GURUS

By Nchechuma Banla NCHETIEVIE

Divisional Representative for Ngoketunjia

In the barrel full of Cameroon's athletes, who have successfully distinguished themselves at the domestic scene with exquisite performances, or flew the country's flag on the international scene and won domestic and global recognition, are sons and daughters of the North-West Region. Among them are the contingent that played and lost the finals of the Cup of Cameroon for football in 1979 to Dynamo Douala, like goalkeeper Joseph Agua, Ngoh Franklin, Nji Sunday, et cetera.

Though PWD Bamenda failed to win the prestigious Cup of Cameroon for football that year, the superlative performance of their midfielder, Nji Sunday, in the eliminatory matches against Canon and Tonnerre Yaounde, as well as at the finals against Dynamo, won him a shirt at the junior World Cup competition in Australia in 1981. A few years after, Nji Sunday burst into national and international prominence. Ben Bola, a lanky lad endowed with a bundle of huge soccer skills, emerged from the Old Town neighbourhood of Abakwa. The multi-talented midfielder, who played for PWD Bamenda, won the hearts of many a football lover in Cameroon with his scintillating dribbling, creativity and accurate ball distribution to the attackers and shielding of wanting

defenders. Ben Bola was so good that all the prime movers of the domestic league at the time in Cameroon - Canon and Tonnerre Yaounde, Union and Dynamo Douala - took repeated turns as suitors for his skills. But each time Ben weighed the financial gains and fame of his move to these teams and love for Abakwa, the latter pulled him down and he stayed. Ben Bola was so good that he was called to the National Team several times. He never excelled there. Not because he was comparatively less competitive, but because emotions provoked by his origin outweighed level-headed reasoning at the time.

But Ben Bola, Nji Sunday, goalkeeper Agua, Guanula Godlove, and others in PDW Bamenda turned out to be the precursors of talented footballers, who emerged in subsequent years from the North-West Region. The promotion of Cammark Bamenda to the Division One in 1984, brought the likes of Kubo George, Sunjo Bongadu, Ngeh Ali, goalkeepers Joe Fielding and Duala Philip, as well as Kah Mua, who was called to the National Team a couple of times.

Without any exaggeration, Kubo George was to Cammark Bamenda in the late 80s what Leonel Messi was to FC Barcelona in the mid 2000s. He and his teammates, reinforced by Ben Bola from PWD

Bamenda, defeated the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon in Bamenda in 1988 by 2-1 in the build-up to the African Nations Cup competition in Morocco. The then coach of the National team, Claude Le Roy, regretted that he did not call the likes of Kubo to his team.

The list of the footballers, who grew from grass to grace and gained prominence in the country and beyond, continued during the years that followed. In 1995, Kumbo Strikers was promoted to Division One. Five years later, in the year 2000, they entered history as the first team in English-speaking Cameroon to win the Cup of Cameroon for football. The soccer prime movers in Kumbo Strikers were the likes of Che Sampson (captain), goalkeeper Lukong Nelson, who later on played for A.S. Vita Club of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lailam Edward.

Other North-West footballers, who created serious national impact are Jude Kongyuy. He participated at the Junior African

Nations Cup in Congo Brazzaville in 2007 with the likes of Alexandre Song, Nicolas Nkoulou, Benjamin Moukanjo, Serge Mbila, Etame Robert, Mbah Njaman of Canon Yaounde, Yende Francis of Union Douala, who captained the Intermediate National Team of Cameroon to success at the UNIFAC Cup in the Republic of Central Africa, and Andongcho Mathew Mbuta. Andongcho was such a gifted soccer craftsman that he did not only leave his local PWD Bamenda to go professional but also won several caps for the Indomitable Lions where he became one of the reliable scorers during his short stay in the team. His professional career took him to teams like New York Red Bulls, Crystal Palace Baltimore in the United States of America, Dinamo București in Romania and Duhok FC in Iraq. But the most prominent of all these footballers, who hails from the North-West, is Fai Collins Ngoran, the dependable right back player of the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon.



*1979 Goalkeeper of PWD Social Club, Joseph Agua welcoming home the 2021 Cup of Cameroon won by his former club*



If all these footballers have succeeded, it is because of the quality of Managers that these teams have had. The North-West parades people who made enormous financial sacrifices to sponsor and manage teams in the Region. Without being exhaustive, we can cite the likes of Ni John Fru Ndi for PWD Bamenda, HRH Fon Doh Gagwanyi III of Balikunbat and Pa Nangah for Cammark Bamenda, Shey Lawrence Tasha under whose leadership Kumbo Strikers won the Cup of Cameroon in the year 2000, and Pa Yong Francis with Yong Sports Academy that won the Cup of Cameroon in 2014. Pa Yong was such a passionate soccer lover and promoter that at one point he alone owned and managed two football teams: Yong Sports Academy (YOSA) in Division One, and National Polytechnic Bambui in the Division Two league. Besides football, the North-West Region also parades athletes in other disciplines, whose fame, born from superlative performances, transcended the local realm to international repute. Athletics is the field under scrutiny here. For so many years now, athletes from the Region have dominated the Mount Cameroon Race. After the hegemony of South-Westerners and foreign athletes, sons and daughters of the North-West sprang to the front seat in 1992 with Tatah Thomas from Bui Division as the pacesetter. Tatah, who later won the race in 1996, and 1998, was followed in the winning curve by Joseph Konyuy from the same Division in 1999 and 2002. Bongkinuyi Januarus did same in 2006 and 2007; and Mbatcha Eric in 2011 and 2014. Godlove Gapsibum features on the selected elite list of five-time winners, with victories in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018 and 2020. Female athletes from the North-West Region also joined their male brethren in this winning spree. Ngwang Catherine blew the bungle with resplendent victories in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2007, and 2008. Her sister from Donga Mantung, Yvonne Ngwaya, continued upsurge of the winning gradient in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2016. When these two went into anonymity, Tatah Carine from Bui cued up in

2018, 2019 and 2020, while Lizette Ngalim stole the show in 2014 and 2017.

This list of prominent North-West athletes is completed by the likes of Victorine Fomun, a table tennis player, who represented Cameroon at the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China; and Julius Ndikum, a handball player, who starred for FAP Handball that represented Cameroon at several international competitions. Football coaches like Atah Robert are not left out. He coached several Division One teams and once served as National Technical Director of the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon. There is also Jules Nyonga, one-time coach of Division One teams like Prevoyance FC Yaounde and Cotonsport of Garoua. Jules Nyonga took Cameroon to the 1996 African Nations Cup competition in South Africa. Before him, another son of the North-West Region, Raymond Fobete, had gone into history as the first Cameroonian to coach the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon. Two sons of the Region, Yongbang Ivo and Ajison Aiden, featured in the 1980s among some of the best referees in the country.

The list of these brilliant sports men and women of the North-West Region, who distinguished themselves with extraordinary performances and won local and national recognition and admiration, might have been much longer. But there are many, who faded before time because of lack of exposure, adequate coaching and encouragement. There are many, who fell on the road to stardom because of lack of appropriate infrastructure. Yet, there are others, whose talents were nipped in the bud because their parents erroneously saw the practice of sports as a sign of failure in life.

But since the sons of the Region like Fai Collins Ngoran, Andoncho Mathew, Ben Bola, Kubo George, Tatah Thomas, Konyuy Godlove, Ngwang Catherine, Victorine Fomun were raised from the anonymity of grass to the popularity of grace, the Region's sporting nursery shall never run dry again. Many more athletes will surely grow from the North-West and serve as ambassadors of the Region and Cameroon.

## Births, Marriages and Promotions



*Mokum Tchoungba Mercy, Volunteer staff in the Directorate of General Affairs finds her better half, Mr. Bung Brian for a happy ever after.*



*Marriage of Honourable Saudatu Sale, Divisional Representative for Bui*



The Personal Assistant to the President, Mr. Muka Martin and wife, welcome a bouncing baby girl on the 17th of August, 2022



*Honourable Hanza Jibirin Danpullo and wife bless God for the gift of a bouncing baby girl into their family*



*Honourable Ghejung Awanti, Commissioner for Economic Development decorated Knight of Valour on the 20th of May, 2022*



*Alomba Anderson Akondi Appointed Interim Director of General Affairs at the North West Regional Assembly*



*Hon. Tantoh Emmanuel, Divisional representative for Mezam decorated officer of the Cameroon order of merit on 20th May, 2022*

## Obituary

### And...There Goes His Majesty, Angwafor III and others

By: BUBA Laura CHIFON

The paramount Fon of Mankon, His Royal Highness Fon Angwafor III, who was the eldest member of the North-West House of Chiefs, is no more. He 'disappeared' on May 21, 2022 at the age of 97. The First class Fon of Mankon had been at the helm of the Fondom since 1959 and was the 20th Fon the Mankon people. He made his mark traditionally, socially, economically and politically.



HRH Angwafor III was member of Parliament from 1962 to 1988, and also served as the first Vice Chairman of the CPDM party. His experience in the maintenance of peace and cultural heritage was a great asset to the North-West Regional Assembly. Fon Angwafor III was a peace crusader as he campaigned a lot for the unity of Cameroon, for non-violence and for dialogue as the Anglophone crisis continued to persist.

Before the passing of HRH Angwafor III, six other members of the North West Regional Assembly had preceded him and this is in just two years of Existence of the House. They are:



Hon. AWA CELESTINE ANYAM (LATE)  
Divisional Representative for Mezam  
Member Regional Assembly



H.R.H. FON JABO NFOR  
IBRAHIM (Missing)  
Member House of Chiefs/RA



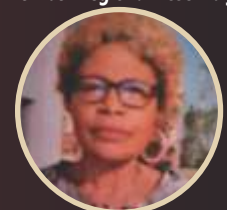
H.R.H. FON MARTIN NGUM  
YOSIMBOM (MISSING)  
Member of Chiefs/RA



H.R.H. FON ONKO MOSES  
AMAH (Missing)  
Divisional Representative for Nchum  
Member Regional Assembly



HON. MARIATU AHMADU (LATE)  
Divisional Representative for Mezam  
Member Regional Assembly



Hon. TANGE ELIZABETH  
Epse Mofor (Late)  
Divisional Representative for Mezam  
Member Regional Assembly

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