

The **Prime Minister, Head of Government, His Excellency Philemon YANG**, this Thursday 28 December 2017 chaired a Cabinet Meeting at 9 a.m. at the Prime Minister's Office.

Apart from his close aides, the Meeting was attended by the Vice Prime Minister, Ministers of State, Ministers, Ministers Delegate and Secretaries of State:

Three items featured on the agenda namely:

1. Statement by the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training on *Government strategy for the retraining of workers*;
2. Statement by the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife on *local processing of timber and non-timber resources*;
3. Information note by the Minister of Urban Development and Housing on *the main conclusions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International conference on sustainable urbanization in Canada, China and Africa (ICCASU II)*.

After the introductory statement by the Head of Government, the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training started by saying that Government policy on retraining of workers is defined in the professional training strategy paper and is available in the 10-year Plan for Vocational Training Development for the period 2014-2024. For this strategy to be operational, Government has a network of high-level vocational training centres created with the assistance of technical and financial partners.

The following are among the mechanisms that underpin Government strategy for retraining, (i) *continuous and tailored training*, which offers salaried or self-employed workers the opportunity to acquire or improve their skills in the fourteen (14) existing professional branches in Cameroon; (ii) *apprenticeship training*, through the implementation of a pilot project for the gradual shift from traditional apprenticeship to renovated apprenticeship; (iii) *the validation of acquired experience* helping to recognize the professional aptitudes of any person who has gained experience through conventional or non-conventional channels. Looking at the constraints that hinder the implementation of ongoing initiatives in retraining, the Minister advocated, inter alia, the revision of the legislative and regulatory framework governing vocational training, as well as the adoption of a consensual partnership model with the productive sector.

Speaking after him, the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife first made an appraisal of the state of affairs of the local processing of timber and non-timber resources in Cameroon. It was revealed that out of the 160 timber processing units operating nationwide, 124 are limited to first phase processing, 25 go to the second phase processing and 11 do third phase processing, which provides the market with finished and high added value products. As for non-timber forest resources, their processing remains artisanal and is centred on semi-finished products. This situation is mainly due to equipment deficit of the existing processing units and insufficient training in woodwork trades.

Referring to the measures taken or envisaged by Government to develop the local processing of timber and non-timber resources, he emphasized the adoption of two main tools, namely the Industrialization Plan for the Timber Sector, which is an integral part of the Industrialization Master Plan, and the National Development Plan for Non-Timber Forest Products. Actions carried out using these tools include (i) improving the supply and access system to timber and non-timber resources; (ii) training and capacity building for industrial, small and medium-sized enterprises and artisans involved in the field of advanced wood processing and derived products; (iii) organising and structuring sector stakeholders and (iv) improving the legal framework and increasing production. Furthermore, to meet national and international demand for quality products, the Minister stated the creation of a School of Wood Arts and Crafts, the adoption of incentives to increase the competitiveness and accessibility of timber products processed locally, as well as the mobilization of investment funds dedicated to the timber industry.

Finally, the Meeting followed the information point of the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, who reviewed the main resolutions of the 2nd edition of the International Conference on Sustainable Urbanization in Canada, China and Africa, held in Yaoundé from 12 to 14 December 2017. Among the resolutions, the creation of a Regional Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Urban Development in Africa in Yaoundé, with essential missions including training, applied interdisciplinary research, and organizational support for urbanization.

At the end of the discussion following these statements, the Prime Minister instructed the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training to pursue the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the vocational training offer, while considering market needs and submit a plan to strengthen the operational capacities of the existing vocational training centres. Regarding the processing of timber and non-timber products, the Head of Government instructed the Minister of the Economy to start reflecting on the establishment of a sustainable industrialization financing mechanism in Cameroon. He also instructed the Minister of Finance to define measures for the enactment of a more attractive tax regime, for the benefit of companies investing in 3rd phase processing of timber and non-timber products. Finally, the Prime Minister urged the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, to ensure the establishment of the Regional Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Urban Development.

Under miscellaneous, the Minister of Higher Education and the Minister of Arts and Culture respectively gave updates on, the progress of the distribution to university students of the first consignment of 80,000 computers out of the 500,000 computers specially offered by the Head of State and, the commissioning of the National Musical Arts Corporation of Cameroon (SONACAM).

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.-

Yaoundé, **28 DEC 2017**  
**Séraphin Magloire FOUA**  
SECRETARY GENERAL,  
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

