



Integrated Country Strategy

Cameroon

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Strengthening governance in Cameroon is the Mission's policy priority; all else – security, health, humanitarian assistance, and natural resource management – flow from that.

President Biya, in office since 1982, has announced his candidacy for October 7 elections, and is largely expected to win another seven year term, which would carry him to the age of 93. Amid an overcentralized power structure in which the presidency wields tremendous power, opposition political parties remain divided, and civil society weakened by harassment and a lack of a financial base, ordinary citizens have largely given up hope for increased government efforts to tackle corruption or improve infrastructure: their apathy is manifest in declining voter registration and turnout rates.

We are promoting democracy, good governance, and human rights by working with civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, the government, and opposition leaders. We will also use democracy programming to underscore the importance of voter registration and democratic participation, particularly amongst women, youth, and disadvantaged groups. While over 50 percent of the population is female, only a quarter of them are registered voters. The median age in Cameroon – 19 – is two years below the legal voting age.

Despite decades of relative stability, the country faces internal challenges, including a crisis in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions that began in November 2016, stemming from the Anglophone Cameroonians' longstanding feelings of marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government. Those seeking secession by any means have come to the fore in the wake of government detention of moderates and have committed abuses against security forces and citizens. The security forces' approach to the crises in the Anglophone regions, including attacks on civilians, have led to allegations of human rights abuses by international human rights organizations. We will continue pursuing a neutral, balanced approach to the Anglophone crisis by calling for an end to the violence by all sides and emphasizing the need to commence a broad-based dialogue with no pre-conditions, and by highlighting our enduring friendship with Cameroon.

Cameroon has played an important role in the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS/WA both bilaterally and through the Multi National Joint Task Force. Cameroon promotes regional stability by contributing troops to MINUSCA, the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic. While far from over, the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS/WA in the Far North has been a comparative success story. Cameroon's security forces have benefited from the specialized training we have provided. Our engagement has allowed us to provide instruction in human rights and the importance of building good relations with the local population. We will also continue to assist Cameroon to identify and address drivers of instability and extremism through support for conflict resolution, development, and law enforcement in the Far North. Working with the government, civil society, and international partners, we seek the maximum impact for our limited CVE and stabilization dollars.

On health, we are focused on bringing the HIV/AIDS and malaria epidemics under control; strengthening the country's health systems so it can eventually provide quality health services without reliance on foreign donors; and, boosting its emergency supply chain management capacity to allow it to deal with infectious disease outbreaks effectively. Working with the World Bank and others, we will continue to encourage the government to increase spending on health as a share of GDP, in part to reduce the high rate of maternal and infant mortality. Currently, as a share of GDP, Cameroon spends less than the sub-Saharan African average on health. We are working to eliminate user fees for HIV/AIDS diagnosis and treatment; as Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire have shown, eliminating fees increases the rate of uptake, and access. Finally, success working with the Global Health Security Agenda may show a path toward the government to take greater ownership of health programming.

Cameroon faces humanitarian challenges from refugees and internally displaced persons in six of its ten regions. Cameroon is host to approximately 250,000 refugees from the Central African Republic and 93,000 refugees from Nigeria. The war against Boko Haram has generated approximately 225,000 IDPs, and the conflict in Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon has led to another 200,000 IDPs. As the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Cameroon, we recognize that Cameroon has been a welcoming host to refugees for decades, but that welcome mat is starting to fray. We support UN efforts to transition from humanitarian to development assistance, and efforts by donors and the Cameroonian government to promote livelihood and resilience efforts. We will also support Cameroon's efforts to address food insecurity and malnutrition among vulnerable populations in the country.

As we pursue the ICS goals outlined above, we will continue to protect and provide essential services to U.S. citizens living in or visiting Cameroon. Our consular officers are dedicated to protecting American citizens in Cameroon and defending our borders from intending immigrants seeking to enter our country illegally. Through our public diplomacy, we promote understanding of U.S. government policies and American culture. We will continue to assist U.S. companies, encouraging Cameroonian companies to buy U.S. goods and services and insisting on a level playing field for U.S. investors. In the firm belief that only private sector investment will allow the Cameroonian government to achieve its goal of becoming a middle-income country by the year 2035, we prioritize those U.S. investments that generate high paying jobs at home as well. To Cameroon, we will continue to emphasize that the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and U.S. companies' adherence to good corporate responsibility ensures that the Cameroonian people, not corrupt politicians, get the benefit of any investment. We will also encourage Cameroon to manage its natural resources and protect its wildlife effectively. Cameroon is a focus country in the Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2016. To ensure that we remain on track in advancing our ICS goals, we will regularly assess the degree to which we are achieving measurable progress and recommend tangible actions to be taken going forward.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Strengthen Democracy and Good Governance

Mission Objective 1.1: Cameroon strengthens its democratic institutions and reduces human rights violations and abuses.

Mission Objective 1.2: Cameroon improves its business climate by reducing corruption and increasing transparency, and expands U.S. trade relations.

Mission Goal 2: Cameroon Secures Itself and its Region

Mission Objective 2.1: Cameroon increases its capacity to combat terrorism, identify and address drivers of instability and extremism, and support local, moderate voices to peaceably manage conflict and prevent violence.

Mission Objective 2.2: Cameroonian security forces are able to independently conduct border security and counterterrorism operations and instill trust in local communities.

Mission Goal 3: Improve Health Outcomes

Mission Objective 3.1: Cameroon reduces overall morbidity and mortality from HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other health threats.

Mission Objective 3.2: The Government of Cameroon's health security capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to health threats is strengthened.

Mission Goal 4: Empower Cameroon to Transition from Receiving Humanitarian Assistance to Focusing on Development

Mission Objective 4.1: Opportunities for economic development and youth employment are increased, leading to increased growth and diversification of the livelihoods of poor households.

Mission Objective 4.2: Cameroon's national and community-based institutions are strengthened to improve service delivery and increase the resilience of vulnerable populations.

Management Objective 1: Post maintains a high level of customer satisfaction with ICASS services, despite significant growth in U.S. direct hire staff in the last three years.

Management Objective 2: To ensure a motivated, skilled workforce, Post improves the quality of life and morale for the Mission community.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Strengthen Democracy and Good Governance

Description and Linkages: Embassy Yaoundé's Mission Goal 1 mirrors AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy goal #3 – Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, and Good Governance. The goal aligns with the National Security Strategy for Africa in its call for reform and promotion of effective governance, improved rule of law, and development of institutions accountable and responsive to Cameroonian citizens. It will be critical for the United States to maintain a neutral approach in promoting democracy programming and conducting advocacy, especially given the politically-charged crisis in the Anglophone regions, while simultaneously ensuring that the government protects individual rights and prosecutes those who violate them.

Mission Objective 1.1 Cameroon strengthens its democratic institutions and reduces human rights violations and abuses.

Justification: There are differences in perception about the state of democracy in Cameroon among ordinary citizens and elites, though this is evolving towards a recognition that the political situation will need to change. The United States is best providing slow, steady support for institutions that support democracy through targeted technical assistance and advocacy, combined with consistent, constructive criticism and well-thought out, strategic public messaging. Lack of support for institutions and poor governance are systemic risks.

Mission Objective 1.2 Cameroon improves its business climate by reducing corruption, increasing transparency, and expands U.S. trade relations.

Justification: Cameroon does not meet the minimum requirement for fiscal transparency partly due to the opaque financial management of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Despite their importance to the national economy, they have become a burden to the Government of Cameroon in most cases and an open-ended, non-transparent funding stream in others. Cameroon suffers from endemic corruption, routinely scoring towards the bottom of Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index* (153 of 180 in 2017). Financial opacity combined with numerous burdensome and unnecessary business registration requirements and corruption make Cameroon a difficult place to do business. Cameroon ranked 163 of 190 in the 2018 World Bank's *Doing Business Report*. Steps taken by Cameroon to address fiscal corruption and corruption, along with needed reforms to improve the business climate, would help promote greater U.S. investment and bilateral trade. In turn, increasing U.S. investment in Cameroon improves the business environment by creating a micro-climate of companies that must adhere to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. It is also in

the United States' interest to promote bilateral trade with Cameroon with a view to creating jobs in both countries. The United States can best provide assistance through targeted training and advocacy. Lack of U.S. government advocacy would make it more difficult for U.S. businesses to operate in Cameroon and for U.S. private sector investment that creates jobs in both countries to establish itself in Cameroon.

Mission Goal 2: Cameroon Secures Itself and its Region

Description and Linkages: Embassy Yaoundé's Mission Goal 2 is tied to AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy goal #1, Advance Mutual Peace and Security Interests. The goal aligns with the National Security Strategy for Africa in its call for working with partners to improve the ability of their security services to counter terrorism, human trafficking, and the illegal trade in arms and natural resources. Cameroon is a strong partner in the Defeat ISIS Coalition and the regional fight against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. However, it is time to transition U.S. security cooperation to a more steady-state approach that incorporates non-military solutions. It is also vital that the United States continue to support stabilization efforts including by supporting local, moderate voices in the Far North Region where Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa (ISIS/WA) conduct attacks. Cameroon is focusing on factors that contribute to the crisis in the first place; longer-term stability will depend on its increased efforts to ensure the trust of the population, especially in its security forces.

Mission Objective 2.1 Cameroon increases its capacity to combat terrorism, identify and address drivers of instability and extremism, and support local, moderate voices to peaceably manage conflict and prevent violence.

Justification: Cameroon faces multiple security challenges, including the ongoing threat of Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa and internal conflict affecting the Anglophone regions. Addressing these challenges requires effective law enforcement responses that respect human rights and the rule of law. Durable or sustainable peace cannot be achieved unless and until Cameroon addresses the root causes. Support for Cameroon's efforts to take a leading role, including by supporting local moderate voices and addressing root causes, helps prevent these problems from resurfacing in new shapes and forms. New violent extremist organizations and nefarious opportunistic actors can exploit unresolved grievances, resulting in further need for U.S. assistance and a perpetuation of the humanitarian crisis.

Mission Objective 2.2 Cameroonian security forces are able to independently secure their land and maritime borders, counter violent extremist organizations in the Far North, and respect human rights.

Justification: It is in the United States' interest to bolster Cameroon's security forces that are protecting their border while promoting Cameroon's respect for the law of armed conflict and protection of human rights. Cameroon's ability to provide secure

economic access for landlocked neighbors is pivotal to regional stability. As a key partner in the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa, Cameroon's success in the Far North against violent extremist organizations is crucial to securing mutual interests as well as providing a safe environment for Cameroonians to thrive. U.S. security assistance programs support Cameroon's equipping and training needs aimed at the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS/WA, with an emphasis on building the institutions that promote self-sufficiency. Additionally, security assistance programs help institutionalize the law of armed conflict and respect for human rights across all aspects of Cameroon's security forces, including by furthering civilian-military relations within the civilian population. The United States also supports Cameroon's peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic, and leadership in regional maritime security, which is evidenced by the absence of a piracy incident in Cameroonian waters since 2011. If Cameroonian security forces cannot secure their borders and significantly improve civilian-military relations, stability not only in Cameroon, but through the entire region, will be threatened.

Mission Goal 3: Improve Health Outcomes

Description and Linkages: Embassy Yaoundé's Mission Goal 3 is tied to AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy goal #4.1, Transform African Health Systems to Accelerate Reductions in Mortality. The goal aligns with the National Security Strategy's Pillar I, Protect the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life. Within that broad goal, President Trump specifically called for combatting biothreats and pandemics. Within this framework, we will continue to work with Cameroon to address HIV and Tuberculosis epidemics (through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief – PEPFAR) and malaria (through the President's Malaria Initiative – PMI). Another top priority is to support Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) activities focused on preventing, detecting, and rapidly responding to endemic and emerging health threats, which can lead to a global pandemic. We will also continue to encourage the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to increase ownership and ensure sustainability of health programs put in place with U.S. government support. Failure to undertake these activities risks endangering the progress we have made as a result of our investment in health in Cameroon and ensuring a healthy workforce that can ensure the country's economic development and overall stability.

Mission Objective 3.1 Cameroon reduces overall morbidity and mortality from HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other health threats.

Justification: Through Strengthened Health Service Delivery, support from the President's Emergency Response to (PEPFAR), the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS), the Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI), the Neglected Tropical Disease Program (NTDs) and other USG funded programs, and in close collaboration with other donors, particularly the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to which

the United States is the largest bilateral contributor, the U.S. government will support Cameroon as it works to reduce overall morbidity and mortality by decreasing the number of deaths to HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other causes. Strengthening health service delivery will help ensure that Cameroon maintains a healthy workforce and an economy that remains a stabilizing force in a chronically unstable part of sub-Saharan Africa. We will also leverage HIV/AIDS and malaria funding to impact on the broader health system and reduce maternal and child mortality, including by strengthening supply chain systems and reducing barriers for accessing care – through elimination of user fees for health services and supporting the development of universal health coverage in Cameroon.

Mission Objective 3.2: The Government of Cameroon’s health security capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to health threats is strengthened.

Justification: Strengthened health security supports President Trump’s call, in his National Security Strategy, to combat biothreats and pandemics. If we do not support Cameroon in these efforts, the country may not have the ability to quickly and effectively respond to potential outbreaks, which could pose a risk to U.S. citizens or require U.S. humanitarian assistance. Strengthening Cameroon’s health security will help ensure that epidemic-prone pathogens like Ebola virus and avian influenza, which are easily transmissible and will not spread from their origins to the United States in this 21st century, connected world.

Mission Goal 4: Empower Cameroon to Transition from Receiving Humanitarian Assistance to Focusing on Development

Description and Linkages: Embassy Yaoundé’s Mission Goal 4 is tied to AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy goal #4, Promote Inclusive, Country-led Development. The goal aligns with the National Security Strategy’s Pillar IV, Advance American Influence. Within that broad goal, President Trump specifically highlighted priority actions to reduce human suffering. We will support humanitarian programs that save lives while building the resilience of vulnerable people, households, and communities to withstand recurrent shocks and stresses and prevent a slide into chronic poverty. Currently, six of ten regions experience crisis or the effects of the crises in the country. However, donor fatigue and competing crises have taken a toll on the provision of humanitarian aid to conflict-affected populations, including internally displaced persons and refugees. Until Cameroon is able to transition from a humanitarian crisis to developing the country’s potential, through sound development programs, humanitarian assistance will continue to be needed to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

Mission Objective 4.1 Opportunities for economic development and youth employment in conflict-affected regions are increased, leading to increased growth and diversification of the livelihoods of poor households.

Justification: Cameroon is characterized by a subsistence economy, with the majority of the population living in rural areas and dependent on farming, herding, or fishing to meet their food and other basic needs. For most people affected by conflict, livestock and crop cultivation are their only means of survival; however, violence and insecurity have limited mobility and constrained core coping strategies. A thriving agriculture sector is crucial to long-term peace, development and growth. In this context, there is a need to invest in building the foundations of a resilient and peace-conducive agriculture sector that will ensure food security for all and sustainable livelihoods for households relying on it, particularly among the most vulnerable youth living in rural areas. Providing alternative livelihoods for women, displaced populations, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and youth is paramount for stabilization of communities and peace building. Diverse and reliable income sources and livelihoods are crucial to enable households to diversify their asset base. Without these efforts, Cameroon is likely to remain in need of humanitarian assistance for decades to come, and an increased sense of marginalization could lead some young Cameroonians to turn to violent extremist organizations as a source of identity and livelihood.

Mission Objective 4.2 Cameroon's national and community-based institutions are strengthened to improve service deliveries and increase the resilience of vulnerable populations.

Justification: Access to and control over productive resources such as agricultural land, water, pasture, forests and livestock are the foundation of resilient livelihoods in Cameroon. Access to these resources by sections of the population, including refugees, IDPs, and returnees, youth, and women, varies considerably. The livelihoods of vulnerable groups in conflict-affected regions are heavily dependent on natural resources. Therefore, unequal access to and control over these productive resources limits the ability of vulnerable groups to adapt to shocks and stressors. In line with USAID West Africa's regional activities, we will strengthen the resilience of households, communities, and institutions to more effectively prevent and cope with threats and disasters that impact agriculture, food security, and nutrition. Without these efforts, Cameroon is likely to remain in need of humanitarian assistance for decades to come.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Post maintains the current high level of customer satisfaction with ICASS services, despite a significant growth in American direct hire staff at post in the last three years.

Justification: Post has grown considerably in the past several years, which has caused growing pains for the service providers. A particular concern for the Management Section is that it is nearly impossible to locate secure, comfortable, and affordable housing as houses are being torn down, and large apartment complexes are being put in their place. The limited housing options are further restricted by the host country's inability to provide reliable water, electricity, and internet services. Post must ensure that the ICASS platform catches up to the higher level of staff and programming and to address infrastructure and training needs. Maintaining strong internal management controls and implementing management best practices is key to maintaining high performance standards. Failure to do so would result in waste and fraud and lower morale and productivity.

Management Objective 2 To ensure a motivated, skilled workforce, Post improves the quality of life and morale for the Mission community.

Justification: To ensure that Embassy Yaounde is a high performing Post, it is essential that the Mission takes a strategic, pragmatic approach to maintain and increase morale at post for U.S. and local staff members and third country nationals. Maintaining morale among LES staff is crucial especially as those at Grade 7 and below have not seen a salary increase since 2010. For the U.S. staff, having the opportunity to participate in community programs sponsored by the CLO, especially those who do not have French language ability, makes a significant difference to quality of life in Cameroon. Equally important is ensuring that Eligible Family Members are able to work in the mission. Lack of inroads in these critical areas would make it difficult for Post to attract and retain a skilled workforce and ensure proper internal management controls.