

PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN CAMEROON

The protection of human rights in general and of children in particular is framed in Cameroon by a legal arsenal consisting of protocols, ratified charters and international conventions, national laws and regulations. In this wise, it should be noted that the preamble of Law No. 06 of 18 January 1996 amending the 1972 Constitution states that **"the human being without distinction of race, religion, sex or creed possesses sacred inalienable rights."** In it is also found Cameroon's commitment to fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and all related and duly ratified international conventions.

At the international level, as said by the Head of State, **His Excellency Paul Biya** at the UN Special Session on Children in 2002, "Cameroon has ratified almost all international legal instruments on the child.

"It may well include but not limited to: -

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child on 11 January 1993;
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 05 September 1996; - Convention No. 138 of the ILO Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 14 April 1998;
- Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, on 27 May 2002.
- The Optional Protocol to the CRC Protocol of 18 December 1989 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, instrument of accession dated December 4, 2004.
- Supplementing the United Nations Convention of 15 November 2000 against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children. Protocol ratified by Cameroon (the Decree of 18 November 2004).

At the national level,

In addition to its membership in the various above-mentioned international legal instruments, the Government of Cameroon has decided to always put children at the centre of its concerns. That is why it adopted since independence, legislative and regulatory measures critical to the implementation of children's rights, and initiated procedures which are at a very advanced stage. **These measures are:**

- The Civil Code which regulates the issue of parental responsibility in its articles 1384 and those following.
- The Penal Code in which the protection of children's rights is evident, particularly in the provisions of Articles 29, 39 al.6, 48, 80, 179 (custody of a minor), 340 (infanticide), 341 (attack on descendants), 342 (slavery and pawning) 198 paragraph 1 (b) and (c) (banned publications) and 337 and following articles that deal with the child and family;
- The adoption of Law No. 2005/007 / of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code , which has many favourable provisions for the child who commits or is victim of an offense;
- The adoption of Law No. 2011/024 of 14/12/2011 on the fight against the traffic and trade of persons, repealing Law No. 2005/015 of 29/12/2005 on the fight against the traffic and trade of children; 1 / 3 Promotion of the Rights Of the Child - Decree No. 2011/408 of 09/12/2011 on the organization of Government, establishing several departments in charge of the promotion and protection of children's rights.

These are, for example,

- The Ministry of Social Affairs (social protection of the child),
- The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (promotion of children's rights),
- The Ministry of Basic Education (teaching Nursery and General Primary),
- The Ministry of Secondary Education (technical and general education),
- The Ministry of Public Health (Prevention and health care to the mother and child),
- The Ministry of Youth and Education Civic (promotion of leisure and post and extracurricular activities, etc.).
- Adoption perspective of the law code of individuals and families;
- Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on educational guidance which sets the age of compulsory schooling at 14 years;
- The Labour Code and regulatory acts relating to labour from which children are prohibited;

- Decree No. 90-524 of 23 March 1990 established a National Commission for Juvenile Delinquents, Abandoned Children or those in Moral Danger;
- Decree No. 2001/041 of 19 February 2001 on the organization of government schools and establishing the powers of officials of the school administration, which in its article 47 institutes the exemption of annual contributions requested from pupils of government primary schools, to give effect to the gratuity of primary education as decided by the President of the Republic on 10 February 2000.
- The development of two draft laws on the Child Protection Code and that of Persons and the Family respectively.

Beyond the above mentioned legal framework, various actions to direct effects were undertaken both by the Cameroonian government and partners. These include:

Programmes for cooperation with international organizations of the United Nations working in the field of promotion and protection of children's rights: UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO / BIT, the Global Fund, etc..

The extension of the rights of the child is carried out by:

- The organization of awareness campaigns during celebrations marking the Day of the African Child (16 June), National Youth Days (February 11) and various other national and local events;
- The organization since 1998 of sessions of the Children's Parliament with the training of junior parliamentarians on the rights of the child and distribution of various information carriers;
- Production of 15,000 tapes on the CDE distributed to children in schools and other walks of life during the sensitization campaigns;
- The production of posters and flyers for public awareness on the violation of children's rights;
- The organization of several annual editions of Radio and Television Days for children, based on the extension and promotion of the rights of the child;
- The gradual integration of modules on the teaching of human and children's rights in school and university curricula;
- For its part, the translation and dissemination of the CRC in local simplified language faces the problem of the plurality of national languages and illiteracy.

In perspective, the achievement of children's rights calls for:

- The continuation of the ongoing process of the improvement of the national framework by internalizing the provisions of the international legal instruments ratified particularly through the adoption of specific legislative texts and the creation of an autonomous structure in charge of following up the implementation of the said rights; 2 / 3 Promotion of the Rights Of the Child
- Strengthening the institutional framework for the effective implementation of the relevant texts;
- Capacity building services and social workers;
- The continued sensitization of children, their parents and communities on the rights of the child;
- Strengthening partnerships with civil society and bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation in the protection and promotion of children's rights.