

**TOAST BY H. E. PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO CAMEROON OF THE PRESIDENT OF
THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND MRS BOZIZE YANGOUVONDA**

Yaounde, 7 December 2009

Mr President, Dear Brother,

The First Lady of the Central African Republic,

It gives my wife and I great pleasure to welcome you among us today.

Welcome to Cameroon.

I do not think I need to recall all what our two peoples have in common. This is known to us. However, these brotherly ties have been strengthened in recent years in order to address the terrible hardships suffered by the people of the Central African Republic. Mr President, be it known that we have shared their agony and waited impatiently for them to see better days.

That is why we are particularly pleased by your visit because it affords us the opportunity to congratulate you for having spearheaded this “all-inclusive political dialogue” which has led to the signing of a peace accord between your Government and the rebel factions. We cannot but hail this accord which, we hope, would usher in lasting peace in your country.

Of course, for our part, we will continue to support this process of stabilization at the global and regional levels through our contribution to the peace-keeping force as well as our participation in the Central African Peace and Security Council.

We are also very pleased that the said dialogue has led to the formation of a national unity government and the establishment of a “Truth and Reconciliation” Commission. To us, this and the launching of the “Disarmament, Demobilization and Integration” Programme augur well for the creation of suitable conditions for the organization of the upcoming presidential election in your country. Rest assured that we will support all actions which foster national stability and harmony in the CAR, for your security and stability are also ours.

This demands constant consultations on issues of transborder insecurity, as was the case during the Joint Security Commission meeting held recently in Bertoua. It is only through concerted action against transnational criminality and smuggling of light weapons that we can overcome these scourges that disrupt the life of our populations in the areas concerned.

I believe we must give fresh impetus to all the forms of consultation at our disposal such as our Higher Joint Cooperation Commission which met in its 10th session in 2002 and our Ad Hoc Committee on border demarcation, both of which could find solutions to some of our common problems.

Such active solidarity at the bilateral level could be implemented in many areas. Without claiming to be exhaustive, I would mention the domain of higher education where our universities will readily admit your students as they have already started doing; mining and forest exploitation where we face similar problems; road networks given that Cameroon can help link up your country; and so on and so forth.

As it can be seen, our common interests are numerous. And there would be no better way of materializing this feeling of brotherliness in us than by jointly fostering such interests.

However, there is yet another domain where our understanding could help move things forward. I am referring to sub-regional integration, which, admittedly, is moving slowly but surely both within ECCAS and CEMAC.

There is no gainsaying that it is in our common interest to narrow the gap between our positions. Divided, we fall, united we stand! In this world of ours marked by uncertainty, only those who manage to stick together stand any chance of emerging victorious. We must therefore overcome our differences which are often vestiges of the past or of outdated national egoism. This is the same opinion I recently expressed to our common brother and friend, President Idriss DEBY ITNO.

I do hope that we will have the opportunity to address these issues during the next session of the Conference of CEMAC Heads of State scheduled to be held in Bangui under your chairmanship.

Mr. President, Dear Brother,

You can count on me to back your efforts for the creation of a strong and dynamic community. Our peoples who aspire to peace and prosperity will certainly be grateful to you for that.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for having honoured us through your friendly visit.

I now invite you to raise your glasses to the health of our brother and friend, the President of the Central African Republic, and of Mrs BOZIZE YANGOUVONDA, as well as to the friendship ties existing between the CAR and Cameroon.

Thank you for your attention./-