

**TOAST BY H.E. PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON ON  
THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LUNCHEON OFFERED IN HONOUR OF THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND MRS BAN SOON TAEK**

**Yaounde, 10 June 2010**

**The Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization,**

**Madam,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives the Cameroonian people and me great honour and pleasure today to welcome to Yaoundé, Mr BAN KI MOON, Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization.

Mr Secretary-General, the presence beside you of Mrs BAN SOON TAEK, to whom my wife and I extend very special greetings only further graces the occasion of your visit. We therefore wish you and your delegation a warm welcome to Cameroon.

The relation between my country and the United Nations Organization which is under your able stewardship is a longstanding history of trust and friendship.

No one here can forget that it was through the United Nations that Cameroon made its maiden entry onto the international arena. Furthermore, the fact that your visit comes at the time when we are celebrating the golden jubilee of our independence is of special significance to us.

As an offspring of the United Nations, it was only normal that Cameroon should develop a special relationship with our common organization.

As far as we are concerned, the United Nations has the loftiest task ever: keeping peace in the world. Cameroon's ambition is none other than to contribute to it to the best of its ability. Throughout the past few decades, Cameroon has asserted this loud and clear.

It has not however limited itself to that. Each time the United Nations, in its effort to arbitrate disputes, defuse tensions or resolve conflicts, has had to commit itself, my country has sided with it and lent its voice to it. Beyond such political support, whenever approached, Cameroon has never hesitated to take part in various peace-keeping operations in Cambodia, Kosovo, CAR, DRC, Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire and Darfur.

Indeed for Cameroon, the supreme body for the preservation of global peace and balance, I repeat, is and must be the United Nations Organization. For countries like mine, it is the place where the rules are laid down, where such rules must be the same for all, big or small, and where everyone, without exception, must comply. I am fully aware that such a vision is somewhat idealistic, but sooner or later, we will have to get there if we do not want international democracy to remain an empty word.

The United Nations is also the place where international law can help settle disputes in all independence and impartiality. Cameroon had the experience in the Bakassi Affair in which the UN played a key role through efforts by you and your predecessor to arrive at a settlement and implement it.

I will not fail to mention the role played by your organization in the domain of respect for human rights, not only in the usual sense of the term but also as regards the right to health, to education, to culture, to work, to development, to security, to a healthy environment, etc.

It would be tedious to list the major initiatives taken by the United Nations in different domains. Today, I will mention only one of them on account of the fact that to me, it seems fundamental, and that in Africa, it is probably a prerequisite for the success of all the others. I am referring to the Millennium Development Goals.

When they were set ten years back, great expectations were raised. Unfortunately, one cannot but note that there have been major delays in attaining them. Even if this situation can be explained, the fact remains that this infernal pursuit race between increased poverty on our continent and development progress could lead to disasters if the former prevails over the latter. In the days ahead, I believe, this issue will be reviewed.

The idea is not only to talk about assistance or solidarity, but above all to forge between Africa and the developed world, the type of relationships that more equitably integrate African economies into the global economy.

The ties that our continent is starting to establish with emerging countries constitute evidence that this can be done. There is a need for the old industrialized countries which are our traditional partners to draw from these practices. I believe the United Nations could play a useful role in convincing them. I am convinced that all the countries concerned stand to benefit from it.

**Mr Secretary-General,**

Permit me to seize the opportunity of your presence amongst us to say a few words about an increasingly burning issue which, for some time now, has often been raised in international meetings such as the recently held Yaounde Conference on Africa's future. I am referring to the reform of the Security Council and the abnormality of having no African country as a permanent member of this important body. My feeling is that consensus is being built progressively about the need to right this wrong.

Mr Secretary-General, we count on you to defend this cause for us to move closer to a solution. I believe that it is not only the interest of African countries, but also that of our Organization that is at stake, for, whatever enhances its representativeness strengthens its authority. As you are aware, I am one of those that pin their hopes on the United Nations, which, I believe, is better positioned to exert an unbiased and impartial influence in global governance.

Lastly, I wish to thank the United Nations, through you, for the constant support it gives to my country, particularly through its specialized agencies represented in Cameroon. They are doing an excellent job.

**Mr Secretary-General,**

The Cameroonian people know what they owe the United Nations and its Secretary-General. On their behalf, permit me to express our appreciation for your perseverance and determination in working for peace and development.

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I now invite you to raise your glasses in honour and to the health of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization and of Mrs Ban Soon Taek.

**Thank you for your attention.**