

**50TH SESSION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC
COOPERATION (OIC) COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS**

Theme: **"Development of Intra-OIC Transport and
Communication Infrastructure: Major Instrument in
the Fight against Poverty and Insecurity"**

**OPENING SPEECH BY H.E. PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

Read by the Prime Minister, Head of Government

Yaounde, 29 August 2024

- Your Excellencies, Ministers of Foreign Affairs,
- The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation,
- Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamalekoum!

Allow me to, first of all, implore the grace of the Almighty and Merciful Lord upon each and every one of you, and to wish you all a warm welcome to Yaounde, capital of the Republic of Cameroon. May you have a most pleasant stay in our country.

Cameroon is honoured to host the 50th session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers, the very first to be held in the Central African Region.

I am pleased to point out that this diplomatic meeting coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of Cameroon's accession to the OIC. This happy coincidence thus affords us the opportunity to commemorate fifty years of intense, multifaceted and fruitful cooperation with our common Organization and, indirectly, with each of the member countries represented here.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cameroon is hosting the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers at a time when the world is facing major challenges.

These challenges include the ongoing crisis in the Gaza Strip and, more globally, in Palestine. Thousands of Palestinian and Israeli civilians are being killed and the humanitarian situation is catastrophic. It is necessary to find an equitable and final solution to this complex problem in order to avert a regionalization of the conflict, with more tragic consequences.

Cameroon has always stood for a two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

The international community has admittedly made a significant contribution towards achieving this objective. However, peace will be restored only if the various conflicting parties engage in a frank and sincere dialogue. Such is the condition for achieving peace and security much desired by all.

True to its policy, Cameroon supports any initiative based on dialogue and consultation, the only path towards a lasting and final solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Other challenges are facing the space of OIC countries and beyond. I would like to mention just a few, namely climate change, intra- and inter-state conflicts, economic and social crises, scarce strategic resources and poor development.

Our common Organization must urgently and efficiently address these challenges. To this end, we should be more creative while putting aside our differences. We will achieve lasting solutions through more active cooperation based on sincere solidarity among us

In this context, coordination of cooperation policies and connectivity between territories seem to offer guarantees of sustainable development. It is for this reason that, in agreement with the General Secretariat, the following theme was adopted to guide our deliberations here in Yaounde, and I quote: *"Development of Intra-OIC Transport and Communication Infrastructure: Major Instrument in the Fight against Poverty and Insecurity"*.

The theme, which is topical, will enable us to reflect on ways and means of addressing the challenges of transport and communication infrastructure between Member States. The resulting positive impact will effectively contribute towards fighting poverty and insecurity.

Hence the need to revive and concretize the Dakar-Port Sudan railway project. The African Union has a similar project, namely the construction of a rail line on the Dakar-Djibouti corridor. It is therefore necessary for the two organizations to cooperate in implementing these two integrative and growth projects.

- Your Excellencies,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

The noble mission of our common Organization is to ensure the contribution of the Muslim world to the promotion of peace and progress between nations.

My country's contribution to the functioning and political and institutional life of the OIC is multifaceted. It is manifested politically through active participation in strategic meetings and various activities.

Economically and financially, Cameroun contributes to the budgets of the General Secretariat and bodies and specialized institutions of the OIC. Besides its statutory contributions, Cameroon has often, through donations, supported some of the Organization's institutions and programmes such as the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, the Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology and Development and the Special Programme for the Development of Africa.

Furthermore, as part of solidarity, Cameroon often provides financial or material assistance to Member States who are victims of national disasters or terrorist attacks.

I wouldn't conclude my speech without commending OIC's significant contribution to my country's socio-economic development.

Cameroon is the first Member State to have received financing from the Islamic Development Bank upon its creation in 1975, through the construction of the Songloulou Hydroelectric Dam. I am pleased to also mention the financing of road infrastructure projects, the improvement of health care and education.

My desire is that this cooperation be further strengthened and diversified for the mutual benefit of OIC Member States and the people of Cameroon.

Lastly, I would like to express the wish that the deliberations that are starting today in line with the recommendations of the 15th Islamic Summit in Banjul will mark the beginning of a better future for our peoples. May the resolutions that will be adopted reflect the consensus of Member States here present, in order to give them more force and meet the expectations of our peoples in the face of insecurity, poverty and the adverse effects of climate change.

May the Almighty and Merciful Lord bless the deliberations of the 50th session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers here in Yaounde!

I declare your meeting open.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Thank You.

Choukran Lakoum!