

**59TH EDITION OF THE NATIONAL
YOUTH DAY**

**HEAD OF STATE'S MESSAGE
TO THE YOUTH**

Yaounde, 10 February 2025

My dear young compatriots,

In my message to you last year, in similar circumstances, shortly after our country's challenging campaign at the Africa Cup of Nations tournament in Côte d'Ivoire, I assured you that we would return to winning ways.

Our brilliant qualification for the upcoming Africa Cup of Nations tournament to be hosted by Morocco, is testimony to the remarkable achievements of which, you, our talented and courageous youth are capable, by dint of hard work and discipline.

On behalf of you all, I would like to sincerely congratulate our brave Indomitable Lions and their managers. I urge them to forge ahead this path, to continue bringing joy and pride to the Cameroonian people and to set an example to our youth. The Government, under my leadership, will spare no effort to give them all the support they need.

However, I believe I should emphasize here, that the positive momentum we are celebrating together today will bear fruit only if harmony, solidarity and team spirit prevail within and around the team. In this regard, I appeal to the sense of responsibility of all stakeholders.

My dear young compatriots,

This year holds many challenges for our country, our people and our youth. In my recent address to the Nation, I reviewed the constraints awaiting us in our quest for progress.

Some of them stem from the international environment and others from our country's internal circumstances. I will not come back on that.

On the same occasion, I also highlighted the commendable efforts made by the Government to address these constraints and to actively continue to improve the living conditions of our fellow-citizens, based on strong economic growth and the need to maintain peace and security.

While the vast majority appreciated the sincerity of my message, some pessimists chose to focus on the fact that one thing or another had not been done, or had not yet been done, disregarding the real and verifiable constraints I mentioned.

My dear young compatriots,

Let me assure you: Whatever the criticism, I will always speak the language of truth to you.

And the truth is that, despite the multiple and complex obstacles to our development efforts, we have achieved very much together. Tremendous strides have been made in recent years, thanks to our combined efforts and the unwavering support you have lent me.

My dear young compatriots,

I know that, as with all young people worldwide, your education and training mean everything to you. Understandably, you are particularly concerned about your entry into the labour market.

Let's talk about your training for a moment.

It is clear that, with each passing year, the training opportunities are getting better and better in terms of quantity and quality.

The school and university landscape continues to expand and diversify with the establishment of new primary, secondary and higher education institutions.

New specialized courses are regularly introduced in government secondary schools and universities. The professionalization of training curricula is ongoing in all types of education systems to provide young graduates with the requisite technical skills likely to facilitate their access to the labour market.

Similarly, through operational training centres, young people without qualifications can learn a trade and find their place in society. In this regard, I am delighted with the opening of the Nanga-Eboko and Lembe-Yézoum vocational training centres. Other centres are being built in various localities around the country.

I have also instructed the Government to fast-track the setting-up of municipal employment offices, to provide optimum support for young jobseekers.

Furthermore, the number of learners in Vocational Training Centres of Excellence has increased significantly following the reduction in tuition fees in these institutions.

My dear young compatriots,

No country is spared by the youth unemployment phenomenon. Commendable efforts are ongoing to reduce it. To this end, I have instructed the Government to establish a regulatory framework to support the recruitment of first-time jobseekers.

This mechanism is intended to provide better support to young people who have never had a job and to help them find their first job.

The National Directory of Jobs, Trades and Professions has also been set up with this goal in mind. It will help to consolidate, analyse and disseminate information on available job opportunities in our country.

Furthermore, the Government will continue to ensure that training opportunities are as relevant as possible to actual labour market needs, to prevent many graduates ending up unemployed. Scholarships were awarded to hundreds of young Cameroonians in 2024.

I have also instructed the Government to involve as many young people as possible in preserving the environment and combating climate change.

Such is the objective of the ongoing Green Jobs Promotion Programme. It will ultimately help to create over ten thousand jobs through income-generating activities in areas such as sanitation, waste recycling and organic farming.

In the coming weeks, the contractualization of health workers that I announced at the end of last year will be launched. This initiative will spare thousands of young health sector graduates from social insecurity and improve their living conditions.

As you can see, Government is actively developing strategies and tools to reduce youth unemployment. Many government services are being mobilized for this purpose and substantial financial resources are allocated each year to achieve this goal.

Believe me, I will not relent in the fight I have been waging for years against unemployment, particularly youth unemployment.

My dear young compatriots,

I want to assure you that public service recruitments will continue. However, you know as well as I that, whatever the Government's determination and our country's available financial resources, these will never suffice to offer every young person a job in the public service or in the private sector.

I can understand the frustration of many of you. Unfortunately, this frustration leads some of you to wander off the beaten path, and to go astray.

Others, in desperation, choose the perilous and devious route of illegal immigration, with often tragic outcomes, as we are aware.

And yet, as you know, paid employment is not the only means to enter the labour market.

Other avenues exist. Once again, I urge you to explore opportunities in sectors such as agriculture and livestock farming.

You should draw inspiration from the success stories of Samuel Tony OBAM BIKOUE, who has established an agro-industry, or the young TATA BAKARY, who now runs a large farming complex.

Let me remind you that you are definitely the most technology-savvy generation. So take advantage of digital technology to create self-employment opportunities and to address the challenges of your time.

I would also encourage you to participate in the moral, civic and entrepreneurial rearmament programme that the Government has designed to strengthen your civic engagement.

My dear young compatriots,

I understand your legitimate desire to realize your dreams and improve your living conditions. It is only natural that you expect the Government to provide appropriate solutions to the issues that are vital to your fulfilment.

This year, once again, our country will hold important elections. This will afford those of you who meet the legal requirements, the opportunity to freely exercise your civic duty. When the time comes, it will be up to you to make your choice responsibly, in peace and quiet.

Therefore, I urge you not to pay heed to the siren calls by some irresponsible individuals. Do not let them use you to achieve their evil plans of wreaking chaos in our beloved and beautiful country.

Also, do not be swayed by the false and often unachievable promises they try to lure you with.

For my part, I assure you that I will continue to stand by your side in addressing the challenges you face.

Happy Youth Day to you all.

Thank you.