

**71st SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New York, 13 September to 23 December 2016)**

General Debate

**Theme: The Sustainable Development Goals: A Universal Push
to Transform our World**

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

New York, 22 September 2016

Mr President,

Cameroon congratulates you on your election as President of this session. Your rich experience in the public and private sector both nationally and internationally, as well as your human qualities, augur well for our proceedings. In this regard, I wish to assure you of my country's support and the full collaboration of its delegation.

I am also pleased to commend the work done by your predecessor, Mr Mogens Lykketoft, whose tenure was marked by successful initiatives to make the United Nations a more open and transparent Organization.

Lastly, I would like to pay a glowing tribute to Mr Ban Ki-moon for the achievements made during his two terms within a particularly challenging difficult global context.

Cameroon, for its part, feels honoured about his visit in 2010 and hails the strengthening, during his term, of the excellent cooperation ties it enjoys with the United Nations Organization.

Mr Secretary-General, you will always be welcome to our country.

**Mr President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This session is opening in a context marked by turmoil of various kinds, where thankfully, there are some bright spots and glimmers of hope.

In a remarkable show of human solidarity, we have, in recent years, laid the building blocks of one destiny for humankind. Let me mention in particular the Rio+20 outcome document which is meaningfully titled "*The Future We Want*", as well as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and lastly, the Paris Agreement obtained at COP21.

Within this context, my country welcomes your decision to place your tenure under the banner of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It therefore hails the holding of this debate on the Sustainable Development Goals nine months after their adoption. The SDGs, it should be recalled, constitute the first global agenda that considers development in all its dimensions: security, economic, social, human and environmental.

Clearly, the originality of the 2030 Agenda lies in the fact that it goes beyond the conventional indicators of economic growth. It truly focuses on human progress,

humanity's heritage, commonweal, security for all ... It is an ambitious agenda which requires everyone's genuine involvement.

Under this agenda, our common goal is to alleviate poverty and to leave no one behind. It is a challenge that we have set for ourselves and that we must take up together in order to respond to the expectations of our peoples and in short, the summons of history.

Mr President, as you are aware, we have, in the past, adopted agendas, declarations, and action programmes which raised great hopes in the world among the youth, women and men in the cities and in the countryside. They heralded a new world of peace and shared prosperity.

Nonetheless, the agreed actions have only been partially implemented. We deplored this whenever we had to, right here: we failed to honour all our commitments, especially financial. We did not fulfil all the hopes and aspirations of our peoples.

Today, let us get organized to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fare better. Since it is about "*transforming our world and leaving no one behind*", let us then find wherewithal to realize our ambitions.

Such wherewithal, in our opinion, is of three categories:

- Firstly, political: our political will should be constant and not wax and wane according to circumstances.
- Secondly, financial: our contributions should be predictable, certain and adequate. This will require unprecedented mobilization.
- Lastly, moral: the principle of the duty of solidarity among peoples should be reaffirmed and observed.

In so doing, we will be helping the SDGs accelerate the advent of a world of peace for all everywhere, a world of prosperity for all.

As you are aware, Mr President, it is no longer a matter of promises. It is time for commitment. It is time for action.

Our efforts will encounter various obstacles, including persistent conflicts and rising terrorism. My country is in a position to talk about them, having been engaged over the past three years in a veritable war against the latter scourge. This new type of threat to peace and development, I readily repeat, requires a collective response, collective determination and action.

Goal 16 of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, which focuses on the promotion and advent of peaceful and inclusive societies should, as far as we are concerned, help us to efficiently fight Boko Haram. As underscored by one of the targets of this goal, we should, quote *“strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime”*, unquote.

Mr President,

Cameroon wishes to thank you for inviting her, alongside the other UN member countries, to this debate on the implementation of SDGs, this new universal push to transform the world.

The outcomes of previous agendas and programmes have shown us the urgent need to find wherewithal to achieve our ambitions.

If we decide, here and now, to effectively and concretely mobilize our immense resources,

If we decide to devote them to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Then will the SDGs truly become this push to transform today’s world into a world of peace and shared prosperity.

Thank you Mr President.