

Participation of Civil Society in the preparation of the Cooperation Strategy of the EU-ACP Agreement in Cameroon

A civil society perspective

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Overseeing the application of the ACP-EU Cooperation Agreement

In June 2000, the European Union signed a cooperation agreement with the ACP group of African, Caribbean and Pacific states. The so-called Cotonou Agreement provides a framework for cooperation between the European Union and the 78 ACP states until the year 2020. As the successor of the Lomé Convention, the new Agreement covers broader aspects of cooperation between the EU and the ACP states and includes trade, aid and political dialogue.

One of the foremost elements of the Cotonou Agreement is the recognition of the role of non-state actors within the general scope of the Agreement. This recognition is backed by provisions for the participation of non-state actors, including civil society organisations, in all aspects of the Agreement's application. This report is part of an initiative by the civil society organisation ADEID to oversee the implementation of this Agreement. The initiative is based on the belief that it is important to reinforce the independence of non-state actors to ensure their effective participation.

European NGOs and the civil society organisations in the ACP countries must conduct this oversight initiative together. The first point examined was the degree of real participation by non-state actors, and in particular civil society organisations, in the setting out of the Country Assistance Strategies and the National Initiative Programmes for EU support of individual ACP countries.

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
ACS	Action de Carême Suisses
CSSP	Country Support Strategic Papers
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FCIL	Fonds Canadien d'Initiative Locale
FONGDEC	Forum des ONG de Développement du Cameroun
HIPC	Highly-Indebted Poor Countries
LLSI	Léo Lagrange Solidarité Internationale
MINPAT	Ministry for Public Investment
NC IUCN	Netherlands Committee of the World Conservation Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Indicative Programme
OSC	Organisation de la Société Civile Camerounaise
PRSD	Poverty Reduction Strategy Document
RAAF	Réseau Africain d'Action Forestière
SIATA-GTZ	Service Interafricain de Technologie Appropriée
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Evaluation of the Participation of Civil Society in the Cooperation Strategy in Cameroon

Introduction

This report is the first of a series to be prepared and published for broad distribution on the subject of cooperation between the European Union and Cameroon under the theme *Civil Society Participation in the Monitoring of the Cotonou Agreement*. This first report looks at participation in the drawing up of a country cooperation strategy (CS) for Cameroon and the National Indicative Programme (NIP). This report is part of an initiative launched as a result of talks between ACP civil society organisations and the European Union. The initial reports will be drafted by the civil society organisations of Benin, Cameroon, the Dominican Republic, Tanzania and Uganda.

The aim of that gathering was to reflect on the ways and means to monitor civil society participation by a certain number of countries in the application of the Cotonou Agreement. It is important to point out that the gathering followed up on the meeting held in Brussels in May 2001 on the sidelines of the conference of the least-advanced countries, which laid the foundations for the organisation of civil society at national, sub-regional and world levels with the objective of attaining effective and efficient participation in the application of the Cotonou Agreement.

The Cotonou Agreement, civil society participation and the drafting of country cooperation strategies

The Cotonou Agreement is a framework for cooperation between the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union. It was signed in June 2000 and replaced the Lomé Convention. The Agreement highlights poverty in the ACP countries as the primary focus of ACP-EU cooperation.

It is now broadly acknowledged that civil society participation is an important prerequisite for reducing poverty. Therefore, participation of non-state actors, including civil society, is a fundamental principle of the Cotonou Agreement. Article 4 of the Agreement states that non-state actors, including civil society, should be informed and involved in the drawing up of cooperation strategies and policies.

Cooperation strategies and policies are in the first instance defined in the National Indicative Programmes. These Programmes outline the sectors and avenues for cooperation between the EU and the individual ACP states for a period of approximately 5 years. In the first stage of the preparation of a National Indicative Programme, the EU and the ACP government in question must prepare and approve a Country Cooperation Strategy. This strategic study for development sets out the contribution for EU cooperation to the country's development strategy.

In keeping with Article 4 of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU and the ACP countries agreed that civil society should be consulted and involved in the establishment of Country Cooperation Strategies and in the programming process.

The ADEID

The ADEID is an association set up under Cameroon law with the aim of promoting human development that respects local culture and the environment. The ADEID is the focal point of ACP civil society in Cameroon. It was set up in 1990 as a national NGO comprising an administrative board and an executive bureau. The executive bureau is headed by an executive secretary supported by several assistants.

The European Union and Cameroon

The first ACP-EU Agreement was signed in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. Since then, Cameroon has been co-operating with the EU in a number of fields, such as transport policy and decentralisation. In a later phase, deemed non-priority, health and HIV-AIDS, rural development and agricultural sectors were dealt with and, lastly, support for structural adjustment and macroeconomic reforms was included.

Gathering experiences

A work plan was outlined for clearly defining the indicators used in monitoring. Lastly, Eurostep conducted a survey with contributions from ACP organisations that resulted in a common basis for comparative analysis. However, theoretical work to give greater depth to the general analyses and to the method used to select indicators remains to be completed. Those tasks are included in the category of research and action.

The survey was conducted in several phases:

Preparation, during which all the required material was organised and a list of people to contact was drawn up;

The survey itself was done in two different ways:

- a) Visits – direct interviews based on the questionnaire and on brainstorming sessions;
- b) The sending of the questionnaire by e-mail to 70 national NGOs;
- c) An invitation to NGOs and to civil society to hold a forum of exchange for comments and recommendations concerning the cooperation strategy document.

The questionnaire used was the one drawn up by *Eurostep*, with some local adaptations.

A civil society forum for exchange was also held to discuss the cooperation strategy document for Cameroon. The event included the participation of some 15 members of civil society and produced a number of resolutions and recommendations.

RESULTS

1. Information and communication

After consulting several NGOs and other civil society organisations, it became clear that information on the Strategy Document procedure had not been distributed. Moreover, most of the organisations did in fact receive the strategic cooperation document on July 4, 2001, at the Hilton Hotel during a meeting with the civil society, but the EU Delegation and the Cameroon State at Yaoundé failed to understand that it was a national strategic cooperation document.

If civil society is to be informed, it must be unequivocally approached prior to the drafting of the document so that it can organise and prepare its contributions.

2. Consultation

According to the EU Delegation, the Ministry for Public Investment (MINPAT) and the European Commission's Delegation consulted civil society during information meetings organised at Yaoundé in February 2001 and in various regions of Cameroon.

However, looking at how those consultations were organised, with a large number of participants from development sectors (more than 300 in Bamenda), one may well wonder about the effectiveness of such gathering that in fact lasted only a few hours.

Given that consultations were held throughout the country, one can presume that acceptable proposals were tabled during the conclusion phases. But in light of the fact that most organisations present focused only on financing possibilities, one can also presume that the strategic document was not foremost in the minds of the delegates.

While in Cameroon there is a well-organised NGO structure, the European Commission Delegation and the MINPAT decided not to depend solely on that structure for consultations with civil society, but in addition reached out to a wide variety of people. That strategy enabled them to meet a maximum number of actors, although its effectiveness was debatable, owing to the excessive number of participants and their diversity.

According to the civil society members who took part in the meetings, the question of contributing to the drafting of the strategic cooperation documents was never mentioned and nearly all of them were totally unaware of them. The civil society members wanted to be consulted in an open fashion and requested sufficient time to be allotted to them to make their contribution.

In July 2001, a meeting was held in Yaoundé bringing together a number of partners from the EU Delegation and representatives of civil society. The EU Delegation selected the participating representatives from a list of 22 organisations that had already been pre-selected for the HIPC (heavily-indebted poor countries) initiative. The participants received the strategic cooperation document.

According to the participants, there was not enough time to react. In addition, very few of them understood the importance of the document and what was expected of them.

The best way to organise these consultations is to call on the support of an existing national

structure and to provide support to the civil society organisations in the country's regions, at the same time that thematic groupings are encouraged. Initiatives are already up and running in the country and it is up to the EU Delegation to recognise and support them.

In conclusion, one may question whether the selection criteria of the HIPC initiative is compatible with those used for participating in the analysis of the strategic cooperation document. Opinions are divided. Some say that letting civil society choose its own representatives is a difficult task whose outcome is uncertain given the differences of opinion and conflicts of interest amongst the members. But is that not simply a manifestation of the diverging and dynamic trends in civil society organisations? However, the EU Delegation should not be ascribed all the blame for deciding on how to select the representatives of civil society. But it is clear that civil society would have preferred to do more than merely make comments and instead really take part in drawing up the strategic cooperation document rather than being placed before a *fait accompli*.

3. Dialogue and transparency

On July 4, 2001, in Yaoundé, civil society, represented by several dozen members, was informed of the drafting procedure of the strategic cooperation document. In fact, it was a presentation of the document itself. But the civil society members had nothing to say in response and felt they were not concerned by the strategic cooperation document. That is why there have been practically no reactions from civil society. Therefore, the quality of information addressed to civil society organisations must be improved. Furthermore, this confirms the view that if we place more trust in civil society, it will do a better job at circulating information and getting organised.

The State appears to like the idea of broadening the consultation, but says it *cannot find a genuine talking partner* in civil society with whom it can discuss the issues. That is a further source of wide differences of opinion.

The organisations identified expressed the wish to hold a meeting in November 2001 to make comments and put forward proposals on the strategic cooperation documents and they did indeed meet. They asserted the hope that their views would be taken on board when the document is finalised, it being understood that the document they had received was a preliminary draft.

COMMENTS

The state officials questioned were very much in favour of broad involvement of civil society. But according to them, civil society is still not very organised and there are still many non-professionals in the sector. It is a matter of selecting the right methodology to ensure that civil society can get organised at a time when civil society is not making any specific, general-interest (altruistic) proposals. Moreover, civil society has yet to demonstrate its skills and credibility as a development partner on whom the state can count.

The EU Delegation should make an effort to play its role of referee and abstain from taking initiatives in the place of civil society. The EU Delegation naturally wants to see tangible results in terms of organisational capacity, efficient use of time and representation, but these things take time. A sustainable process must be allowed to take root. One must not forget that

the national civil society has the best knowledge and expertise and that it is enough to back civil society's efforts in order to attain good results.

While people say that civil society is not sufficiently organised, there are nevertheless some initiatives that are being taken by NGOs and other members of civil society. Today these organisations are promoting the creation of a national platform for non-state actors. (see annex 6).

On the initiative of the Finance Ministry, the civil society representatives were asked to make contributions to the final poverty reduction strategy document (PRSD). That event, held in Yaoundé, lasted 3 days, from April 9 to 11, 2002. It enabled all the participants to take effective part. The state, through this event, has helped convert civil society into a real development partner for the country and strengthen its leading role in the drawing up of development policies. The gathering followed up on population surveys in the field (ECAM II) and differed from other initiatives in that it was longer and the stakes were higher. Civil society welcomed that state initiative that will set in motion a new era in the civil society-state partnership.

Judging by the responses to the invitation to take part in the forum to discuss the cooperation strategy document, it would appear that at this stage several organisations are not interested in the Agreement. Most of the issues discussed outside the meeting rooms concern possibilities and criteria for funding by the EU. For many, that was the most salient point raised during the information sessions organised by the EU. Consequently, there is a need to work with the organisations that are expressing interest and who have the necessary skills and capacity, while the other organisations could take part at a later stage. In that connection, the EU expects the "Secondary Cities" and "FORUM II" projects will enable it to build on its partnership experience with civil society in all its diversity.

Both of these projects are designed to support the creation of urban infrastructures and to support municipalities and civil society through the funding of micro-projects. (see annex 5)

RECOMMENDATIONS¹

1. We propose the following recommendations in the area of **information and communication** for drafting the country strategic cooperation documents [Country Support Strategy Process (CSSP)] and the Cotonou Agreement in general:
 - Civil society members should organise around the question of communication in order to gather information and inform others about developments in the Process.
 - Existing groups, forums and thematic networks should come together around a common platform, such as the *Comité de suivi de l'Organisation de la société civile du Cameroun*, without any one group dominating or alienating the others, to get to know each other better and have an impact on decisions that promote civil society participation in the application of the Cotonou Agreement.

¹ For further details on the resolutions and recommendations adopted at the Civil Society Forum for Exchange held on November 6 and 7, 2001 in Yaoundé on the strategic cooperation document, please see annex 4.

- NGOs and non-state actors should develop horizontal and vertical mechanisms for the collection and distribution of information down to the grass roots, on the application of the Cotonou Agreement and the various projects to eradicate poverty.
- The European Union should support civil society initiatives to create opportunities for cooperation, information and communication using new technologies; such as a Web portal for development and environmental issues, an e-group, digital conferences, etc.
- The state should offer broadcasting time on national radio and television to civil society to hold debate on issues concerning development, the environment and governance so that civil society can present its activities relating to the Cotonou Agreements and the poverty-eradication movement.

2. Consultations

- The EU should base itself on an existing national structure and should support the organisation of civil society at regional level. At the same time, it should support thematic groupings. Initiatives are up and running in the country, and it is up to the EU delegation to recognise and support them.
 - The non-state actors should unequivocally be informed via consultations with a view to drafting the strategic cooperation document. They should have the means and the time to organise their cooperation and to gather the various contributions being transmitted from a range of sources, from the grass roots to the trade and employers' associations.
 - The state should continue its cooperation² with a wide variety of actors (see annex 8) in order to promote democratic practices in civil society. A single vertical structure of non-state actors should not be sought at any price, but the state should not overlook specific characteristics and should reach out to representative groupings, such as in the PPTE Initiative, which met around a basic national platform.
- β A tripartite state-EU-civil society roundtable session should be organised on radio or television once every three months to discuss the application of the Agreement and to draw important lessons for the future of the partnership.

1 Dialogue and transparency

- Civil society should commit itself to getting involved in the drafting of the strategy documents and should define the selection criteria of its members and representatives for their contributions in terms of proposals and recommendations for the final document, as well as to identify boundaries and limits in the application phase.
- Dialogue between civil society³ and the EU should be more frank and smoother, and meetings between EU Delegation officials and civil society representatives should be less problematic.
- The state should consider non-state actors as partners in the drafting of the national cooperation strategy document and require their participation in keeping with the selection criteria jointly agreed by the parties and based on the skills and capacity of the organisations to effectively contribute to the cooperation strategy document.

- Civil society should strive to be more precise and concise when addressing the EU Delegation. Civil society should clearly spell out its expectations and the aim of the meeting with the EU Delegation. That would facilitate communication with the EU Delegation, which has a very busy schedule. A unit, for example the environment unit, may also be contacted directly, preferably by scheduling a meeting in advance.

Conclusions

Civil society in Cameroon is not very knowledgeable about the process for drafting the strategic cooperation documents. The term is unfamiliar and, while the EU Delegation ostensibly wants to increase the involvement of civil society members, there are some questions surrounding the efficiency of the exercise and the transparency of consultations.

Encouraging civil society to get organised on its own and letting it define criteria for the involvement of its members in the process is a challenge that the EU Delegation and the non-state actors must take up. Non-state actors are still not very capable of making specific contributions to the cooperation strategy document. Fortunately, some NGOs and the Civil Society Forum for Exchange held on November 6 and 7, 2001, took up the challenge and came up with some specific proposals.

It is our hope that the state-civil society partnership will develop on the basis of mutual trust, without manipulation but with some degree of institutionalisation in which the state can take on its role of leader in the ACP-EU Convention.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

ADEID

The ADEID works with the following four programmes:

- The youth, culture and citizenship programme for local development
- The preventive health and AIDS programme
- The programme for rural development, promotion of women and micro-businesses
- The biodiversity and environmental governance programme

The ADEID, with the help of the *Comité de suivi de l'organisation de la société civile camerounaise*, has created a working group specialising in international cooperation. The group will help civil society to create mechanisms allowing civil society to take part in the application of the Cotonou Agreement.

The ADEID is a member of several national and international networks, such as the FONGDEC, the development NGO forum in Cameroon, and the *Réseau Africain d'Action Forestière* (RAAF). At local level, the ADEID coordinates civil society groupings in the western province of Cameroon.

The ADEID has participated in several international conferences held in Africa, America and Europe and has always made contributions to resolving the problems of the day. The ADEID has many wide-ranging partners in its projects, for example the UNDP, the World Bank, NC-IUCN, WWF-USA, FCIL-Canada, ACS-Switzerland, SIATA-GZT, ETW-Netherlands and LLSI-France, to mention only a few that have supported our projects in the past and continue to do so.

The ADEID's current project is to design a Web page (Gateway infodev) for sustainable social and economic development in Cameroon. The aim of the Internet portal will be to show to the world Cameroon's economic potential in the fields of development, farm production and crafts, eco-tourism, industrial production, and initiatives in eradicating poverty, in particular via agreements with the ACP-EU group, the UNDP, the World Bank, etc. The site will be open to all grass roots communities and other members of national life, whether state or non-state actors.

We would be pleased to receive your contributions for the realisation of this project that is so cherished by civil society. Our thanks go to *Eurostep* and Euforic for their technical support of the digital conference involving Cameroon civil society and the Cotonou Agreement, the new African initiative and food security.

ANNEX 2

CRITERIA FOR MEASURING CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE COUNTRY SUPPORT STRATEGY PROCESS

- 1) Information/awareness of the dialogue process around the Country Support Strategy paper process
 - a. How widespread did ACP and EU government actors distribute information on the Country Support Strategy process and the related foreseen consultations?
 - b. Through which media?
 - c. How timely was this in relation to the scheduling of the preparation of the Country Support Strategy paper?
 - d. What in your view is the best mode for distributing information on this process?

- 2) Consultation
 - a. Was there an invitation from your government to consult with civil society actors on Country Support Strategy Process?
 - b. Did civil society attempt to initiate consultations with your government on this process?
 - c. Did the European Commission Delegation attempt to initiate or facilitate consultations between your government and civil society actors? If so how?
 - d. Was there a selection process of civil society actors for these consultations? If so who was responsible making this selection and under what criteria?
 - e. If the answer to any of the first three questions is yes, did consultations actually take place?
 - f. If consultations took place, how wide a grouping of civil society did your government attempt to consult with?
 - g. How timely were consultations in relation to the scheduling of the preparation of the Country Support Strategy papers, i.e. before actual government drafting of the Country Support Strategy papers?
 - h. How long was the period set aside for consultation with civil society organisations for the preparation of the Country Support Strategy papers?
 - i. What modes/channels for consultations were used?
 - i. Systematic set of meetings scheduled before hand
 - ii. Ad hoc meetings
 - iii. A single meeting
 - iv. Written correspondence
 - v. Correspondence via the telephone
 - vi. Electronic discussion via the Internet
 - j. Did your government attempt to create new or utilise existing structures such as committees or taskforces with representation from civil society to inform its position on the Country Support Strategy papers?
 - k. Did civil society attempt to create new or utilise existing structures such as Non-state actor fora or national NGO committees etc. for these consultations?
 - l. What in your view is the best mode for consultations with civil society on this process?

- 3) Level of dialogue and transparency
 - a. Was consultation aimed merely at giving information on Country Support Strategy paper process to civil society or was it aimed at exchanging views on input and positions for the Country Support Strategy papers?
 - b. What was the role of civil society in the analyses choice of national priorities and focal areas?
 - c. Did civil society organisations receive written or oral responses to positions, input or question they put forward for the Country Support Strategy paper process?
 - d. Was there an opportunity for civil society to submit written comments/questions/positions on the Country Support Strategy paper process?
 - e. Were civil society organisations informed about how the positions they put forward were fed into the system of decision-making by their governments on the Country Support Strategy paper process?
 - f. Have civil society organisations been able to see the end product of the consultations with them, i.e. the draft Country Support Strategy paper?

- 4) If consultations did not take place
 - a. What were the obstacles?
 - i. Point of view of delegation
 - ii. Point of view of Commission
 - iii. Point of view of civil society
 - b. What measures have been taken or need to be put in place to address this situation?

ANNEX 3

ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED

- Ministère des Investissements Publics et de l'Aménagement du territoire (MIPA)
- European Commission Delegation at Yaoundé,
- Centre International d'Etudes Forestières et Environnementales (CIEFE)
- Centre d'Accompagnement de Nouvelles Alternatives de Développement (CANADEL – ONG)
- Forum de Développement des ONG du Cameroun (FONGDEC) et Association pour la promotion des Initiatives Communautaires (APICA-ONG)
- Association Française des Volontaires du Progrès (AFVP)
- Coalition des ONG pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et le Développement Rural (COSADER-ONG)
- ANACLAC-ONG
- Mr Ebalé Salomon, member of civil society and university professor,
- Mrs Abiba, peasant leader at Foubot,
- German Development Cooperation – Ministry for the Economy and Finances (GTZ-MINEFI)
- Organisation pour le Développement Economique des Communautés (ODECO-ONG) , at Yaoundé
- Association Enfants, Jeunes et Avenir (ASSEJA-ONG)
- The Cameroun /European Union coordination unit

ANNEX 4

Resolutions and Recommendations from the Civil Society Forum for Exchange, held on November 6 and 7, 2001 at Yaoundé, to discuss the cooperation strategy document

RESOLUTIONS

The participants decided to do the following:

- Request a meeting with the European Union as soon as possible;
- Establish the EU's vision of development sector-by-sector;
- Include in this report summaries of project proposals;
- Organise a meeting on transport via the follow-up committee of the *Organisation de la Société Civile du Cameroun (OSCA/Cameroun)*;
- Improve the representation of civil society organisations, i.e. all the non-state actors such as churches, associations of cities, trade associations, employers' associations, national organisations, journalists' associations, artists' groups, etc., involved in the process set in motion by the OSCA/Cameroun;
- Publish the resolutions of this forum on the Internet so as to enhance the contribution of the civil society organisations;
- Create an e-group, i.e. a Web site, and organise video-conferences.

RECOMMANDATIONS

To the Government

On the subject of transport, the participants recommend the involvement of civil society in the following areas:

- Drawing up the structure of the networks;
- Overseeing the execution of the projects;
- Participating in the contract-awarding process;
- Taking part in road management through grassroots community organisations;
- Defining the materials policy so as to facilitate the use of asphalt;
- Identifying the slip roads for isolated rural zones that are not included on the layout.

On the forestry policy, the participants recommend the following:

- the systematic involvement of national civil society organisations in the independent observatory.

In the area of dialogue with civil society, the participants recommend the following:

- Institutionalisation of the state-civil society partnership;
- Ensure that civil society is no longer classified in areas where activities are not concentrated and instead is regarded as a partner of the state, the EU and the international community.
- Establish a clear mechanism for funding NGO activities;
- Involve civil society in the drawing up of the national indicative programmes and the annual review;
- Make sure the state supports the civil society in its efforts to get organised (l'OSCA/Cameroun) .

To the European Union

- The establishment of a civil society focal point for the European Commission Delegation;
- Heeding the real needs of civil society for a better allocation of resources;
- Achieving broader dialogue with civil society, taking into account the organisational process under way as well as the existence of sectoral and regional networks.

ANNEX 5

Involvement of non-state actors in the programming of the 9th EDF in Cameroon

Overview of the exercise

February 2001 Fact-finding mission to identify potential talking partners in civil society and to sound out their leading concerns in the field of development. Four seminars/workshops were organised by consultants who were sent to inform non-state actors of the new provisions of the Cotonou Agreement and to report on their concerns and priorities.

The main conclusions

The results of the fact-finding mission highlighted the difficulties at this stage in finding valid talking partners who are sufficiently representative of civil society as a whole. There is a wide range of actors with varying degrees of reliability and differing objectives. Nevertheless, keen demand for actions, that could be carried out by and bring benefit to civil society, was reiterated.

March-May 2001 Inclusion of the mission's findings in the 9th EDR country strategy

1.1 The main guidelines

On the basis of the aforementioned findings, EU participation in the indicative sum of 9 million Euros of budget A will focus on actions able to build structures for civil society so that the various actors can be genuinely representative.

In a later plan, specific actions can be outlined and supported with a view to extending on a permanent basis and improving a participatory mechanism for civil society and the application and monitoring of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the Cameroon.

To sum up, the following points outline a possible support strategy that the Commission could set up for civil society under the 9th EDF.

- Political support for government actions designed to strengthen civil society, including administrative decentralisation and management of public finances;
- Continuation of actions and the safeguarding of *acquis* obtained via the projects in the 8th EDF's 2nd sector of concentration (support for secondary cities, decentralised maintenance of rural trails) and monitoring of government commitments in this area.
- Introduction of a technical support and institutional programme for civil society, with chapters on "structuring dialogue", "training", etc.
- Creation of a fund to defray the cost of audits and evaluations as well as institutional backing for NGOs and other eligible organisations;
- Gradual introduction of a fund for direct financing of actions carried out by NGOs and other eligible organisations;

- Funding for NGO actions from a budget line that is consistent and compatible with civil society and the Strategic Document for Poverty Reduction, including consideration of the prior opinion of the Delegation's geographic service.

May 2001 Meeting with the technical monitoring committee (TMC) under the MINEFI to examine the participatory process started by the Cameroon Government as part of the PPTE initiative, i.e. selection of non-state actors to be included on the advisory committee that monitors the management of PPTE resources.

July 2001 Distribution of the Country Strategy Document to representatives of non-state actors (22 NGOs eligible for the PPTE initiative plus EU-Cameroon cooperation partners and other donors, in addition to international NGOs, NGO groups, representatives of religious groups and representatives of decentralised territorial groups).

An information meeting for non-state actors to include the presentation by the European Commission Delegation, in the presence of the national authorising officer's support services, of the 9th EDF Country Strategy Document. (see list above)

An announcement to the non-state actors inviting them to make observations and remarks to the Delegation relating to the 9th EDF Country Strategy Document.

A conference with EU Commissioner Poul Nielson on the application of the Cotonou Agreement.

Conclusions: How to move ahead?

For the application of the 9th EDF

A study should be conducted to identify a support programme to strengthen civil society under the 9th EDF. The study should look into the state of play of programmes begun under the 8th EDF, in particular the participatory urban development programme for the cities of Douala and Yaoundé, as well as FOURMI II and the Support Programme for decentralised urban development capacity in 5 secondary cities in Cameroon, designed to bolster the decentralised capacity for local development, and suggest a transition procedure for moving from the 8th to the 9th EDF, including the extension of existing projects, etc. (see attached note)

Political dialogue

The Delegation is planning on joining the participatory action launched by the Government in the context of the PPTE initiative (see related note) and the broader framework of the PRSD. Moreover, the Delegation is planning to use existing structures, e.g. the poverty eradication platform and network, as well as Cameroon-European Union cooperation dialogue.

ANNEX 6

THE SECONDARY CITIES PROJECT

Decentralised Urban Development Capacity-Building

1st meeting to provide information to the entire population of the Bafoussam urban community
March 14 2002, 10:30 a.m.

Participants:

- the European Union
- the representative of the MIFI Prefect
- the Government delegate
- the President of the Municipal Council
- Representatives of the administration (e.g. Social Affairs, Women's Condition, etc.)
- Representatives of civil society

The EU funded the 5-year programme with 14 million FCFA francs. It focuses on 5 cities in Cameroon: Maroua, Ngaoundéré, Foumban, Bamenda and Bafoussam.

The programme is to get underway on December 1, 2002.

The start-up phase comprises the following:

- Diagnosis of the selected cities
- A training plan
- A financial audit of the municipality

The programme runs from December 31 to June 31.

Actions in the field will be given shape from August to September.

The main aim of the project is to improve the population's living conditions.

It comprises 3 chapters:

1st chapter: support for the municipality

2nd chapter: Strengthening civil society (associations, NGOs, etc.) and support for micro-projects.

3rd chapter: a public works project, for example clean-up activities and road maintenance.

Definition of support for Decentralised Urban Development Capacity-Building

Support for capacity-building: training, improving the flow of information, material and funding.

Decentralisation: This task belongs to all the partners. The EU staff is a "facilitator".

Development: the notion of well-being and a better life.

The cooperation bodies are:

- The Steering Committee (MINPAT) provides the broad guidelines
- The National Cooperation Committee (MINAT) guides the project on a day-to-day basis
- The Local Cooperation Committee identifies and selects the projects.

The municipality will put forward proposals on the membership of the local cooperation committee, which must be made up of administrative authorities, elected officials and representatives of civil society.

It has yet to be seen whether a committee for the allocation of funds is necessary for the proposed projects. There is an idea to open an office in the western and northern regions to be managed by an urban planner. The office in the west of the country, covering Bamenda, Foumban and Bafoussam, will be located in Bafoussam. The project's overall organisation will include international, national and local experts.

The allocation of the 14 billion has not been determined. The best projects will be selected. The purpose of encouraging competition amongst the selected cities is to foster urban dynamism. The financial contribution of civil society and the municipality will be approximately 20% of the total funding applied for. The Local Cooperation Committee defines the eligibility criteria.

It is preferable to start with the micro projects that are the most effective and whose results are discernible immediately.

ANNEX 7

The organisation of civil society is moving ahead and its members have started a number of collective projects:

An application from the OSCA-Cameroon sent in on December 5, 2001, to the President of the Advisory Committee for the Follow-up of Management of PPTE Resources for the opening of a budget line making use of PPTE resources to reinforce collective actions by civil society to fight poverty.

Today we are in a position to fund collective actions by civil society via PPTE funds (OSCA-Cameroon Committee, January 9, 2001) and a study of projects is underway.

The collective actions by the Cameroon civil society proposed by the Follow-up Committee, whether or not under a budget line from PPTE resources, are as follows:

1. Finalisation of the organisation process at national level;
2. Development of a collective civil society strategy in support of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (PRSD);
3. Reinforcement of national coordination capacity of civil society organisations;
4. Coordination, through a partnership, of the large civil society projects;
5. The gradual development of a body of ethics for the Cameroon civil society;
6. Effective participation in other resources, both national and international;
7. Contribution to the initial actions of l'OSCA- Cameroon;

A CALENDER OF SOME SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Activities planned	Probable date
1. Organisation at national level	
.1. Production, translation and distribution of draft statutes and rules of procedure of Cameroon civil society organisations (CSO)	February 2002
.2. Production, translation and distribution of the reference document covering the key features of Cameroon CSO	February 2002
.3. Provincial awareness meetings at Douala, Bamenda and Garoua	February 2002 Start of April 2002
.4. Constituent General Assembly of Cameroon SCO	
1. The Common Civil Society Strategy in support of the PRSD	
.1. Production, translation and distribution of the DSC/SC/PRSD	September 2002 November 2002
.2. National meeting for the adoption of the DSC/SC/PRSD	
1. Reinforcement of national capacities of civil society organisations	
.1. Production, translation and distribution of the collective mechanisms project	March 2002 March 2002
.2. Representative grouping of civil society organisations	April 2002 (-March 2003)
.3. Distribution of the overall outlay	
1. Partnership coordination of the large civil society projects	
.1. Quarterly meeting of the joint technical staff	1 st meeting in June 2002
.2. Field mission by technical staff members	1 st mission in

	October 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Esprit et Ethics” document by civil society .1. Production, translation and distribution of the reference document .2. National adoption meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April–May 2002 2nd half of July 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation of the civil society in the 9th EDF .1. Production, translation and distribution of the civil society-9th EDF document .2. National CS-9th EDF meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd half of July 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation of CS in the New African Initiative .1. Production, translation and distribution of the CS-NAI reference document .2. National adoption meeting .3. 3rd African civil society summit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 May 2002 6 to 10 May 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contribution to initial actions by OSCA Cameroon Release of the contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd half of April 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Start of the 2003 programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 2003 (Dec. 2003)

ANNEXE 8

Communiqué

from the Cameroon Tribune

The Minister for the Economy and Finances recently organised an important seminar at the Yaoundé Conference Centre from April 9 to 11, 2002 as part of the process to draft the poverty reduction strategy document. The vast majority of civil society representatives were to take part.

The work of the seminar, which had the support of the UNDP and the World Bank, was to focus on the following areas:

1. The consideration of the analyses and suggestions collected from the population during the participatory consultations held in January 2001.
2. The selection of essential indicators for the follow-up and evaluation of the national poverty-reduction programme.

The inaugural session was begun on Tuesday April 9, 2002 at 10 a.m. sharp and was chaired by the Minister responsible for the Stability and Economic Recovery Plan. The practical work was conducted in plenary sessions and workshops. Their conclusions will enrich the information required for the full drafting of the poverty reduction strategy document, a key element in our country's dossier with a view to the completion of the reinforced PPTE initiative.

* * *

Mrs Etoga, a management secretary, makes only a half-hearted effort to conceal her greying hair and she does not manage to hide the expression of misery on her face. These stretching exercises are a real ordeal for this 55-year old woman, who, after a long, hour and a half walk, will surrender her tired body to a painful gym session. But she endures until the end without flinching, only a pout that betrays the fact that she is not having the time of her life.

At 9 o'clock, when a mass of people, including *Madame Geneviève*, crosses the finish line on the Boulevard du 20 Mai, she is bathed in sweat and panting heavily. But *Madame Geneviève* felt concerned and encouraged when the General Secretary of the Public Health Ministry rose to speak. Henri Engoulou extolled, quite by chance, the virtues of sport in reducing the risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. The speaker, himself dressed in a track suit and sweating copiously, stressed the need to make a connection between sport and health. At that point, a faint smile appeared on the lips of Mr Etoga.

An hour and a half earlier, a quite different event was taking place on the very same spot involving a crowd of Sunday athletes, trainers, officials from the Public Health Ministry, the Youth and Sport Ministry and the World Health Organisation. Minds were already warmed up when the distribution took place of T-shirts...