

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

PEACE – WORK - FATHERLAND

PAIX – TRAVAIL - PATRIE

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
AND THE FAMILY

MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION DE LA
FEMME ET DE LA FAMILLE



National Action Plan to support women's participation in decision –making in Cameroon



Planet 50-50 by 2030
Step It Up for Gender Equality

2018, Revised Edition

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Cameroon's political agenda envisaged Senatorial and Presidential elections in 2018 and the municipal, legislative and possibly regional elections in 2019.

In a bid to improve women's representation in positions of decision-making during the different elections, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, with the technical and financial support from UN-Women organized "Gender coffee" sessions in the ten (10) regions of the country under the central theme: "Reinforcement of women's participation and representation in public life and decision-making".

Gender café is a concept developed by MINPROFF and UN-Women in 2014, to serve as a platform for dialogue and exchanges towards boosting women's participation in political life. Organised for the first time in Yaoundé and in response to several requests, Gender café has now been extended to the other Regions, but for the North-West and South-West Regions, owing to the socio-political insecurity prevailing there.

In the wake of these forums, a road map was adopted, setting up a task force charged with formulating a National Strategic Plan. Given that the said plan must identify the specific needs of each Region, nine (9) regional strategies were developed and regional task-forces comprising 10 (ten) persons put in place, to ensure their implementation. However, it must be pointed out that the West Regional Strategic Plan incorporates the needs and worries of the North-West Region.

The underlying objective of these ventures is guided by the theme, "Developing a 'Gender-Elections' National Strategic Plan", designed to be implemented during the upcoming elections.

The '**bottom-top approach**' adopted for developing the above mentioned strategies requires that ideas, or even needs be gathered from grassroots in a participatory forum.

During the regional gender cafés, obstacles to the full participation of women in political life were identified and this led to the formulation of some recommendations.

I. DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENDER CAFES

I- context of the formulation of the national action plan to support women's participation in decision-making

The present Strategy is an outcome of brainstorming during Gender Cafés organised at the headquarters of the 10 (ten) Regions of Cameroon, supplemented by the delivery of the Strategic Development Workshop to Implement Gender Café Recommendations, held on 21 and 22 December 2017 by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, in partnership with the UN body for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN-Women). The said workshop which was an extended task brought together, women and men including:

- Members of Parliament;
- Locally elected representatives;
- Representatives of the UN System;
- Representatives of ELECAM;
- Officials of civil society organisations as well as council and regional authorities;
- Representatives of political parties;
- Representatives of the media;
- Personnel from the central and devolved services of MINPROFF.

A. WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN?

First and foremost, the Strategic plan is based on the fact that, despite the commendable strides made by the Cameroon Government to empower the Cameroonian woman politically, political life is still dominated by men. Moreover, absence of such a document would continue to defeat all efforts deployed, here and there, towards raising the participation of women in political life.

In addition, this Strategic Plan is intended to give our country a reference tool that can serve in concerted actions in the face of the numerous existing action plans and strategies that hinder attempts to increase women's representation in the political landscape and in resolving problems raised. In this way, this strategic

plan is likened to a compass designed to ease decision-making and equally constitutes a guide to boosting the participation of women in political life, taking into consideration the specificities of each Region. It ultimately constitutes an advocacy document as well as a fund-raising tool. From a general perspective, the Strategy obtains a set of guidelines, intended to inspire and jump-start national action. It takes into account the diverse cultural, religious, political and institutional contexts and seeks to offer appropriate solutions.

In this light, it is a tool intended to promote national integration, culture of peace and a harmonious living together.

DIAGNOSIS (what is the current situation?)

With regard to the current level of women's participation in the political life of our country, analysis of available information on the diverse regional realities reveals that, a number of elements still hamper the active participation of women in the politics of Cameroon. These include:

- Absence of a political culture and lack of information;
- Indifference of women to political matters;
- Lack of the NIC due to its high cost, the increasingly intricate formalities for obtaining it and socio-cultural barriers in certain regions;
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem in women;
- Lack of support and guidance attributable to the lack of confidence that men exercise towards women in certain Regions;
- Barriers erected by certain community leaders against women, multiple forms of discrimination and the masochist habits of men;
- The low-educational level and illiteracy of young girls as compared to young boys;
- The individualism of men and women;

- The irresponsible behaviour of some men in households, that overburdens women with domestic chores;
- The rejection of women with disabilities;
- The abject poverty of women;
- The low cost of farm produce that leads to the precariousness of rural women.

Besides government actions, the issue is increasingly reaping the fruits of the advocacy work of the civil society, accomplished essentially by female organisations, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and human rights associations, which insist on the importance of encouraging the participation of women in political life.

B. What are the characteristics of this strategic plan?

For this strategic plan to be meaningful, it must:

- Be harmonised, realistic, practical, inclusive and take into account the specificities of Regions;
- Be multi-sectorial;
- Be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound) ;
- Be in compliance with the law and clearly outline major guidelines of the national women empowerment policy;
- Be consensual and national (government, parliament, Local Councils, CSO) and represent a road map that enables the mobilisation of all stakeholders involved in the political participation and advancement of women;
- Be developed in a progressive manner, taking into account the existing challenges and available resources.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

A. Overall objective

- To increase the participation of women in political and public life, and attain the 50/50 parity goal by 2030.

B. Specific objectives:

- Increase the number of women at elective positions;
- Increase the number of female electors (women and girls);
- Encourage women and girls to engage in political life;
- Raise the enrolment rate of women of voting age by 20% on voter registers in 2018;
- Prepare for upcoming elections;
- Advocate for the inclusion of financial penalties in the law against discriminatory practices in electoral matters;
- Advocate for the inclusion of gender parity in the electoral law.

C. Contains of the strategic plan

- All what obstructs political participation upfront, notably conditions for an active participation of women in political life, by tackling the matter of socio-cultural, educational, employment, health barriers and myths as well as participation in economic life;
- Consolidation of the legal foundation of gender equality;
- Political participation per se at national level through 'awareness drives or "political conscience-awakening" of women, respect of the principle of equality within political parties, implementing measures considered as positive action, participation of women in general elections and discharge of political responsibilities by both men and women;
- The mechanism for monitoring and evaluating implementation of the recommendations contained in the Strategic plan.

III. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS :

- Advocacy for enforcement of the electoral law that guarantees more than 30% of women (quotas) in elective positions;
- Lobbying authorities and elites to facilitate issuing of the Birth Certificate and the National Identity Card to adults;
- Organisation of educational talks for an increased and equal participation in political life;
- Political education and training of women at grassroots level;
- Dissemination of legal instruments on election;
- Regular organisation of gender cafés and decentralisation of forthcoming editions to all divisions;
- Developing subvention mechanisms or schemes for female candidates in elections;
- Translation and broadcast in local languages of national and international legal tools;
- Lobbying for the protection of women's political interests.

IV. SCOPE OF ACTION

The present Strategic Plan, here presented, which is a result of a widespread consultation process, provides concrete solutions to situations common to the country as a whole, while offering alternatives to address the specific situations in various regions. It obtains as a harmonised national document acceptable to the entire country.

In the present Strategic Plan, emphasis is laid mainly on female political participation. However, other indicators pertaining to the exercise of civil, economic, social and cultural rights must be equally taken into account.

**NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION.**

S/NO	PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED	ACTIVITIES	STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT	RESULTS	INDICATORS	PARTNERS	OFFICIALS IN CHARGE	COST (CFAF)	Execution deadline
1.	<p>Lack of political training/coaching</p> <p>Women's lack of interest in political life</p>	<p>Capacity building workshops for women</p> <p>Regular organization of Café gender decentralized at the Divisional level</p> <p>Organization of awareness campaigns for women on nation building (promoting women, importance of elections and electoral participation)</p>	<p>Mobilization and mass communication</p> <p>Coaching</p> <p>Sensitization, information and training of women on the electoral process and on political life</p>	<p>Information Education Communication</p> <p>- Popularization of existing texts and laws</p> <p>- Organization of seminars, campaigns, radio/TV and community programs in official and local languages, -information sessions in Associations (churches, famies, njangi groups) and through ICTs</p>	<p>Women are trained and participate in the electoral process</p> <p>Texts and laws are popularized and known</p>	<p>Percentage of women who master the political rules</p> <p>Number of texts popularized, number of persons sensitized, number of radio and TV programs.</p>	<p>- State</p> <p>-Local Councils</p> <p>- Women NGOs</p> <p>- CSO</p> <p>MINPROFF</p> <p>MINJUSTICE</p> <p>MINAS</p> <p>MINCOM</p> <p>ELECAM</p>	<p>MINPROFF</p> <p>UN Women</p> <p>MINPROFF</p>	<p>To be determined</p> <p>150.000.000</p>	

2.	<p>-Violence against women who engage in politics</p> <p>-Discrimination</p>		<p>-Arm the women who are faced with political adversity</p> <p>-Sensitization and training</p> <p>-Advocacy in favor of vulnerable persons</p>	<p>Capa city building coaching develop their leadership mentorship judicial support</p> <p>-sensitization of partners of women who engage in politics</p> <p>- organization of 3600 educative talks</p> <p>-Creating a watchdog and supervisory unit coordinated by the task force</p> <p>-Put in place mechanisms that favor their integration</p> <p>-Propose a quota for persons living with disabilities</p>	<p>-Drop in the level of violence</p> <p>-Discriminatory practices against women are reduced</p> <p>- Solutions found to problems of discrimination or violence</p> <p>-Effective presence of persons living with disabilities in decision making spheres</p>	<p>-Number of women engaged in spite of the violence</p> <p>-Number of complaints from women victims of violence reduced</p> <p>-Number of persons living with disabilities present in decision making spheres</p>	<p>-The State</p> <p>-MINPROFF</p> <p>-Task force</p> <p>-Partners</p> <p>-Local Councils</p> <p>-NGOs</p> <p>-CSOs</p> <p>-Women's Associations and Women's Networks</p>	<p>MINPROFF</p> <p>UN WOMEN</p> <p>MINPROFF</p> <p>UN WOMEN</p>	<p>To be determined</p> <p>To be determined</p> <p>360.000.000</p>	
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3.	<p>- Poor solidarity amongst women</p>	<p>Organization of educational talks</p>	<p>-Incite active solidarity amongst women</p> <p>-sensitization and training</p>	<p>- Mentoring</p> <p>-Sponsoring</p> <p>- Coaching</p> <p>-Networking</p> <p>-Platforms</p> <p>-Forums</p> <p>Conscientise women by holding 3600 educative talks, publicity spots, praise singers, a communal task force in charge of sensitizing the women.</p>	<p>-Level of active solidarity</p> <p>-Women are more engaged and united in political issues</p>	<p>-Number of platforms for active solidarity</p> <p>-Number of task force created</p> <p>-Number of women conscientised</p>	<p>-The State</p> <p>-MINPROFF</p> <p>Local Councils</p> <p>-Women</p> <p>-NGOs</p> <p>-CSOs</p>	<p>MINPROFF</p> <p>UN WOMEN</p>	<p>To be determined.</p>	
4.	<p>-Socio-cultural myths</p> <p>-Existence of socio-cultural barriers</p>		<p>Advocacy with traditional and religious authorities</p> <p>Advocacy and sensitization</p>	<p>-Sensitization</p> <p>-Motivative measures in favor of families and traditional authorities, for the liberation</p>	<p>-Number of myths and barriers eliminated</p> <p>Educative talks</p>	<p>-Number of girls who have gone to school</p>	<p>-traditional authorities</p> <p>-leaders of associations</p> <p>-opinion leaders</p>	<p>-The State</p> <p>UN Women</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Associations</p> <p>-CSOs</p>	<p>To be determined</p>	

				and empowerment of women Organization of educative talks with traditional and religious leaders, women's associations, NGOs, family heads etc	are organized	The number of persons sensitized	MINPROFF MINAT Traditional, religious, community leaders and leaders of associations	MINPROFF MINAC	500.000	
5	-Poor education on citizenship -Lack of NIC and birth certificates	Organization of educational talks on the importance of civil status papers/documents Advocacy with authorities and elites to ease the issuance of birth certificates and NIC (National Identity Cards)	-mobilization and identification of women of voting age -Advocacy -involvement of administrative authorities	-mobile caravans to distribute NIC - the delay of procedures -proximity campaigns	Number of cards issued, distributed and withdrawn Issuance/ reception of 36000 official papers/ documents and	-% of women whose ID cards have been issued -% of women who have withdrawn their ID cards -% of cards distributed	-MINPROFF -MINJUSTICE -Civil status officers -CSOs -NGOs -associations Religious officials	MINPROFF UN Women MINJUSTICE	To be determined 331.200.000	

	-Seizure of the NIC by the spouse or parent	Capacity building for families that are socialization units Educational talks on the importance of civil status papers Creation of a discussion platforms for women with disabilities and non-disabled women	Sensitization -birth declarations -possession of NICs -enrollment on voters' registers -participation in élections(voting)	Organization of 720 consultations at the base extended to local authorities	participation in elections	Number of papers/documents issued	MINJUSTICE -GDNS -ELECAM -MINSANTE Local Councils - Development partners -CSOs -traditional and religious authorities	MINPROFF		
6	-Extreme poverty of women and lack of financial resources	Creation of women solidarity and support groups and networks Creation of a Council or brain trust comprising former Members of parliament and	-Mobilization of financial resources for female candidates -Advocacy with donors Capacity building for women associations	-Capacity building for women -Specific financial and material support -ensuring their empowerment	-Women are empowered -Funds are mobilized from donors and women are supported	-% of empowered women -Existence of a support fund	-MINPROFF -UN Women associations -networks -NGOs -CSOs -MINPROFF - Development	-MINPROFF -UN Women - Development partners	To be determined	

		female politicians Creation of lobby groups to defend the political interest of women	-coaching and support to potential candidates -Training workshops on the management of financial resources and accounting -Literacy workshops for women who carry out revenue-generating activities -Advocacy	-identification of female leaders -mobilization of funds from the UN -System and other development partners -creation of new IGAs -consolidation and diversification of existing IGAs -Creation of a support fund by MINPROFF and political parties -Advocacy for the enactment	A law on quotas in gender representation is enacted	Law on quotas in gender representation	partners -political parties -Women aspirants -elected officials Members of Parliament CSOs	MINPROFF	PM	
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				of a law to fix quotas for gender representation						
7	-Institutional barriers	-Creation of a Council or “brain trust” comprising former Members of parliament and female politicians - Creation of lobby groups to defend the political interest of women -Creation of mechanisms to provide subsidies to female candidates	Advocacy	-720 capacity building sessions for men and women on the importance of the participation of women in politics -Advocacy for the enacting of a law fixing quotas of gender representation	A law on quota systems 720 training sessions organized	Law on quota system	Legislators CSOs	MINPROFF	IM (In memory)	
8	Weak economic/purchase power of women		-capacity building	Organization of 720 capacity building sessions for women in economic empowerment	720 training sessions organized	Number of women trained			3.600.000.000	

9.	Lesser women in elective positions (Senate, National Assembly, Municipal Executive)	Advocacy and implementation of positive measures, namely the Electoral Law that guarantees the 30% female representation	Sensitization of women	Sensitization campaigns and capacity building for women	A maximum number of women is sensitized and trained	Number of women sensitized and trained	MINPROFF Development partners associations -religious bodies - community leaders	MINPROFF	3.600.000.000	
10.	Lack of networks for elected women and female bureau members of Political Parties in Cameroon		Creation of a chain to identify and conduct a census for elected women and officials in various political parties from the base to the summit	Create a national directory	National directory created	Existing directory	-MINPROFF -Political parties -NIS -NGOs BUCREP	MINPROFF	5 billion	
11	Lack of confidence and self esteem	Organization of workshops on self-realization/ development	Capacity building and acquiring of skills				-MINPROFF -Political parties -NIS -NGOs BUCREP	MINPROFF	5 Billion	

12	Lack of support and training/coaching						-MINPROFF -Political	MINPROFF	To be determined	
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