

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix – Travail – Patrie

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MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION DE LA FEMME ET  
DE LA FAMILLE  
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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace – Work – Fatherland

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MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND  
THE FAMILY  
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## **37<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN CAMEROON**

### **THEME :**

**“EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN TODAY  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW”**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **I - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

International Women's Day (IWD) has its origin in the struggles of workers and feminist demonstrations demanding women's right to vote, better working conditions and equality between citizens of both sexes. These demonstrations shook Europe and the United States at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Considering the consistency of these claims with humanitarian and development challenges, the international community made these issues to become an important tool for awareness-raising and advocacy in order to improve the situation of women in all areas. In 1975, one of the decisive steps in this commitment was translated by the celebration for the very first time, of the International Women's year, marked by the First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City. The Mexico City conference ended with: (i) the Declaration on women's equality and their contribution to development and peace, (ii) the Action Plan for achieving the objectives of the International Women's Year.

On 08 March of that year, the United Nations celebrated the International Women's Rights Day for the first time, and in 1977, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing an International Women's Rights Day.

Since 1986, Cameroon is celebrating the event with keen interest. The liberalisation of public life and democratisation which are part of the innovations of the 80s in Cameroon, the accession to power of the Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA, go hand in glove with the policies to promote equality, which are based on the strategic frameworks for development planning. The creation of a Ministry dedicated to the promotion and protection of women's rights stems from these developments.

It is from this perspective that we must understand the IWD whose symbolism is multidimensional :

- The international community's commitment in favour of social justice and the protection of human rights for development and peace;
- The struggles of modern societies in the quest for global well-being and sustainable peace ;
- The will of States to permanently establish the conditions for the participation of all in citizenship and in the expression of human rights;
- The increasing consideration of the issue of women's status and human rights in the global agenda and development strategies of States;
- The social expectations, in terms of promoting the equality of citizens and the rule of law.

## II – CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

The 37<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Women's Day (IWD) in Cameroon is placed under the theme: “**equality between women and men today for a sustainable tomorrow**”. The theme falls in line,

At the **international level** with:

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably the 5<sup>th</sup> goal: "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower Women";
- Generation Equality Campaign of UN-Women: For women's rights and equal future;
- Priority theme of the 66<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66) which is: “Achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate and environmental change, and reduction of public disaster risk.

At the **national level**, it is based on:

- Cameroon's effort to achieve emergence by 2035;
- the implementation of the HeForShe Campaign;
- the adoption of the National Development Strategy by 2030 (NDS 30), a reference framework for government's development actions for the next Decade, with a focus on women/men equality and women's empowerment.

All these issues require the combined efforts of all actors, in order to improve the status and living conditions of women.

However, despite the efforts made in recent years in our country in the area of promotion and protection of women's rights, gender inequalities are still a major concern. According to the “data published on gender equality in Cameroon” by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2019, **39%** of the national population live below the poverty line, **51.5%** of which **are women**. Still at the social level, be it in the area of education, health or employment, violence against women and girls as well as gender disparities persist.

The choice of the theme of the 37<sup>th</sup> edition of the IWD was therefore prompted by the need to reduce all forms of discrimination against women and girls, to strengthen the measures aiming at gender equality and women's empowerment.

Moreover, this theme calls on States to bring out the contribution of women and girls across the world in mitigating the effects of climate change, in adapting to them with a view

to build a sustainable future for all. Enhancing equality between women and men in the context of a climate crisis and reduction of disaster risk is one of the greatest global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For, climate change has had and continues to have serious impacts on the environment, the economic and social development.

Healthwise, the slowdown of activities and the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic continue to make women vulnerable, as they suffer the most profound impacts, including the increase in domestic and sexual violence.

It is important to acknowledge that women and girls are effective leaders and key agents of change. They are involved in sustainable development initiatives, their participation and leadership are visible in all areas. There is need therefore to continue support for these initiatives, to examine the opportunities as well as the constraints in order to give women and girls the means to make their voice heard and be equal actors in decision making for sustainable development.

To this effect, Cameroon, under the impetus of the Head of State, is developing policies, strategies and measures aimed at better protecting and securing human rights in general and women's rights in particular. We can mention among others:

- personal commitments of the Head of State;
- implementation of the Global Campaign to End Violence Against Women, launched by the United Nations Secretary General since 2012;
- domestication of international and regional normative frameworks for the protection of women's rights;
- ratification of texts on the promotion and protection of women, such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, relating to women's rights (Maputo Protocol);
- adoption of law N0. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the penal code, with provisions on the rights of women, families and children;
- formulation of strategic frameworks for the promotion and protection of women's rights ( National Gender Policy and its multisector action plan for implementation, gender profile, gender mainstreaming track record, National Strategy for the fight against GBV, National Action Plan for the fight against Female Genital Mutilation, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of the national action plan for resolutions 1325 and related resolutions);
- encouragement and support to association movements involved in the promotion and protection of the various women's rights.

Strengthening actions in favour of women/men equality requires the collaboration of all actors in the society, through a multisector and participatory approach. This is the essence of the 37<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Women's Day.

### **III – OBJECTIVES**

#### **III.1 – General objective**

Mobilise the national community in order to achieve equality between women and men for a sustainable tomorrow.

#### **II.2 Specific objectives**

- strengthen women's resilience to climate change;
- strengthen the fight against climate change to reduce disaster risks;
- organise nationwide awareness-raising and advocacy activities on the preservation of the environment;
- strengthen awareness-raising and advocacy on violence against women and girls;
  
- popularise the rights of women and girls;
- involve all stakeholders in the fight against violence on women and girls;
- strengthen men's participation in awareness-raising sessions on women's rights.

### **IV – EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Women's resilience to climate change is strengthened;
- fight against climate change to reduce disaster risks is strengthened;
- awareness-raising and advocacy activities on preservation of the environment are organised nationwide;
- awareness-raising and advocacy on violence against women and girls are strengthened;
  
- rights of women and girls are popularised;
- stakeholders in the fight against violence on women and girls are involved;
- participation of men in awareness-raising sessions on women's rights is strengthened.

### **V – SUB-THEMES**

- gender and climate change ;
- fighting Gender-Based Violence: A challenge to achieve gender equality;
- gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- economic empowerment of women and girls;
- culture, traditions and harmful cultural practices;
- fighting against deforestation;
- preservation of oceans ;

- role of community and religious leaders in the fight against violence on women and girls;
- normative framework for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls;
- understanding gender-based violence;
- media and gender-based violence.

## **VI – ACTIVITIES**

- national and regional launchings;
- media and communication activities (round tables, educational talks, conference debates, socio-legal clinics, ...);
- sports and cultural activities;
- women's health activities;
- various trainings for women and girls;
- capacity building for women and girls;
  
- support and donations to women and women's groups
- trade fairs, open door days;
- visits, exchange trips, game contests and various attractions;
- virtual meetings;
- march past

## **VII – METHODOLOGY**

The 37<sup>th</sup> edition of IWD will take place in two main phases, that is the preparatory phase and another phase dedicated to the celebration itself.

### **The preparatory phase**

It is dedicated to the participatory formulation of guideline documents, which include the TOR describing the historical background, context and significance of the chosen theme, the objectives of the celebration and the expected results.

There shall be a harmonised national programme integrating regional programmes and the activities of institutional and social partners.

### **The celebration**

It shall take place on 08 March 2022 across the national territory. The launching of activities will be an essential step. The Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family will carry out the national launching, in a locality unanimously agreed with the social and

institutional partners. Regional launchings are envisaged, under the coordination of local administrative authorities.

Partners will freely carry out their activities, with their own resources. However, upon request and depending on the resources available, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family shall provide them with technical support, based on the nature of the requested action.

The media shall be invited to contribute to ensuring a better social appropriation of the event and visibility of MINPROFF's actions. Radio and television programmes as well as round table discussions, shall be conducted in the official and national languages across the national territory.

**NB :**

- The activities of partners and various technical supports will be presented in a report that shall be forwarded to the President of the Organising Committee 7 (seven) days after the celebration;
- the General Report integrating contributions from the Regions will be submitted 14 (fourteen) days after the celebration.

**PRINCIPLES TO BE RESPECTED**

- IWD should be carried out in dignity and the scrupulous respect for moral values, republican institutions as well as social and/or family responsibilities;
- at the security level, the involvement of the administrations in charge of public law and order shall be indispensable;
- participants must comply with the instructions from the Organising Committee;
- as concerns health, the respect of preventive is essential.