

REPUBLICQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix –Travail- Patrie

MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION
DE LA FEMME ET DE LA FAMILLE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace- Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY



**28TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF FAMILIES**

15 May 2022

THEME: “Families and new technologies”

TERMS OF REFERENCE

April 2022

I. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

The 28th edition of the International Day of Families is being observed on 15 May 2022 in accordance with the proclamation of the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/47/237 of 20 September 1993. This annual commemoration reflects the importance which the international community attaches to families and to their situation around the world. The Day thus offers States the opportunity to dwell on emerging issues that impact the structure and functioning of the family. It aims to create awareness among the national and international communities, of issues relating to families and to increase the knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting this basic unit.

Universally recognized as the basic unit of any society, regardless of the type considered (nuclear, large, single-parent or recomposed family), the family is not a closed entity; it remains open to the outside world. As such, the different members who make up this unit interact, and so is the family also interacting with the political, economic and socio-cultural environments that surround it.

It is because of the central place given to the family in society in general, and in our country in particular, that it is regulated by a legal and institutional framework that consecrates it as a veritable institution.

Actually, in addition to the Constitution of 18 January 1996, which states in its Preamble that "the Nation shall protect and supervise the family, the natural basis of human society", many national, regional and international legal texts that were ratified by Cameroon protect the family.

At the national level, we can mention among others:

- the Penal Code;
- the Civil Code;
- the Ordinance of 29 June 1981 on the organization of civil status and various provisions relating to the status of persons;
- the Labour Code.

At the regional level, Article 18 (1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights urges the State to protect the family by taking care of its physical and moral health.

At the international level, under Article 16 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the family is viewed as the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. This provision is reiterated in similar terms in Article 2 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights and Article 10 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child makes the family one of the three guarantors of the rights of the child, together with the State and the society. It stipulates that the family, as the fundamental group of the society and natural environment for the development and well-being of all its members and particularly the children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community, especially as every child needs to grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, for a complete and harmonious development of his/her personality.

Moreover, the well-being of the family is a key issue in the strategic development policy frameworks endorsed by Cameroon. The 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy sets out a universal plan of action to achieve a sustainable and balanced development aimed at the full expression of the human rights and well-being of all people. This entails leaving no one behind and ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are met for all segments of the society and at all ages, with particular focus on the most vulnerable. 16 targets in relation with the family are developed in SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 11 and 16.

At the national level, Pillar 4 of the National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS 30): 'Development of human capital', integrates support for families through the promotion of the well-being of the population, especially the most vulnerable. For the Government, it is all about consolidating the achievements and expanding the scope of social protection to as many people as possible, by gradually integrating all social categories who till date were outside the system, through the reduction of social inequalities, the development of protection measures against all forms of vulnerability, social cohesion and inclusion.

The megatrends regarding the development of new technologies, demographic shifts, rapid urbanization, migrations and climate change, have dramatically reshaped our world in recent years, affecting both individuals and families.

Seen as an important way forward, new technologies refer to two different meanings: in the broad sense, it is high technology and in the narrow sense it is about ICT (information and communication technologies), that is, all modern tools that facilitate communication and the exchange of information such as computers or the Internet. They refer to the rapid and massive appearance of digital technology in our lives in general, be it at the social, economic level, etc.

Across the world, the forces of change are affecting all aspects of human life and its institutions, including the family. Technology impacts the family institution in many ways: through the media, the internet, social networks, mobile telephone, the world of work and social services.

Definitely, these trends often radically change the way people live, their values, their perspectives, and the relationships they have within and through their social institutions. The emergence of new technologies has revolutionised and changed the world.

Technological progress and dissemination have contributed immensely to improving the living standards of millions of people, notably by reducing poverty, improving health, widening economic opportunities and choices, but also educational opportunities. For instance, the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of digital technologies in the world of work, education and communication. The pandemic has accelerated technological transformations that were under way both in society and at work, including the increased use of digital platforms and related technological innovations like cloud computing and the use of mega data and algorithms. As a result, innovative and flexible ways of working for both employees and employers have been on the rise.

However, there are negative effects such as the stress to accommodate to changes in the living and working environment, challenges to established or traditional values and erosion of the reference factors that give meaning to life, the proliferation of hate speech which are defined by the European Court as *"all forms of expression that propagate, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, migrants and immigrants of origin"*. Proliferation of "fake news" and pornographic videotapes. In the latter case, in 2021, Cameroon witnessed untold morality scandals such as "sextapes" involving celebrities and young girls with consequent waning of their reputation and serious repercussions on their families.

All these situations and many others, provoked the reaction of the Head of State on the issue, in his speech of the New Year 2022, when he said: *"Lately, we have witnessed an upsurge in unpatriotic behaviour, the proliferation of hate speech and the posting of violent, obscene and shameful videotapes which have shocked the nation's collective conscience. The persistent publication of "fake-news" in the mainstream or social media has contributed towards sustaining falsehood, thus preventing many of our fellow citizens from getting the right information on key issues"*. This led him further to call on everyone to show a sense of individual responsibility and to instruct the Government to step up efforts to raise awareness on the responsible use of social media.

Worthy of note is the fact that technological innovation is taking place at an increasingly rapid pace, providing unexpected opportunities which can greatly enhance family life in some instances and concurrently cause the disintegration of the family in other instances. The speed of change is such that our knowledge of its specific effects on family stability is deficient. This knowledge gap undermines the

abilities of policy initiative as well as families to, on the one hand, take effective action to take advantage of the considerable opportunities for families that present themselves and, on the other, deal with the negative effects.

In light of the timeliness of the phenomenon in terms of the upsurge of multiple issues related to new technologies and great economic and social opportunities they offer to young Cameroonians for the enhancement of family income, Cameroon shall observe the 28th edition of International Day of Families under the theme: “*Families and new technologies*”. The theme focuses on the impact of new technologies on the well-being of families. It shall give stakeholders the opportunity to reflect on how technological change affects the family unit in the performance of its functions; how change driven by new technologies affects relationships among family members; and how new technologies can help the family in its efforts to adapt to change in order to continue to play its central role.

OBJECTIVES

II.1 General objective

The general objective of the commemoration is to raise awareness on the impacts of new technologies on family life in view of harnessing the positive aspects and countering the negative aspects.

II.2 Specific objectives

- identify the different types of new technologies and examine their impact on family stability and harmony;
- comprehend the impact of digital technologies on children and parents;
- raise awareness of families and communities on the best possible uses of new technologies;
- educate family members on the responsible use of the Internet, other digital platforms and new technological devices;
- raise awareness of communities on the negative effects of new technologies;
- study the nature, forms and extent of technological change and its impact on families

II. EXPECTED RESULTS

- At least 5,000,000 persons are aware of the implication of new technologies in family life and how best they can use these to their advantage;

- families and communities are aware of their role in mitigating the negative effects of new technologies;
- the nature, forms and positive effects of new technologies are identified;
- strategies of coping with technological changes and its impact on families are drawn up.

III. ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT

Activities to mark the commemoration of the 28th edition of the International Day of Families shall be carried out in full respect of Covid-19 barrier measures. The following activities are earmarked:

- organisation of a press briefing for the Minister ;
- organisation of a national forum on *families and new technologies*;
- organisation of educative talks on the theme in the WFECs;
- organisation of sessions of parenting education;
- communication and community mobilisation on issues related to domestic violence, clandestine migration, human trafficking, slavery and the irresponsible use of social networks, etc.;
- mass celebration of marriages;
- support for the registration of birth certificates.

IV. SUB-THEMES

- Social change, new technologies and families;
- Employment, technology and families;
- Health, basic social services, technology and families;
- New technologies and family security;
- New technologies and education of children;
- Youths and social media platforms;
- Family life and new technologies;
- Families and cyber criminality;
- Family responsibilities in mitigating the negative effects of new technologies;
- Cameroonian families in the face of technological malpractices;
- New technologies, migration and human trafficking.

V. STAKEHOLDERS

- Relevant government ministries and other public entities;
- NGOs and associations dealing with the promotion and protection of families;

- Traditional and religious leaders ;
- Women and family networks and associations.