

11th, International Anti-Corruption Day Celebration in the South West Region Activity Report –December, 2014



*Do not take, do not accept, please report:
Break the Chain against Corruption*

**The Secretary General
at the South West Governor's Office
leads the International Anti-Corruption Day Celebration
in the South West Region**

Introduction

At the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2003, the United Nations General Assembly designated 9 December as the International Anti-corruption Day. Each year in Cameroon this day is commemorated throughout the 10 regions of Cameroon by the National Anti-Corruption Commission of Cameroon (CONAC) alongside its partners.

In the South West Region in particular, the 11th edition of the International Day against Corruption served as a lightning rod and reminder to members of government and the wider civil society population in the region, to reflect on the need to fight corruption by 'breaking existing corruption chains' that slows human and economic development in the region.

Amongst the group of participants who turned out to manifest vigorously against corruption as a wrong doing in the South West Region and Cameroon in general, was the office of the Governor of the South West Region championed by the **Secretary General Mr. Ndikum Clement Fon.**

This year's celebration of the International Anti-Corruption Day in the South West Region was marked by two major events namely:

- **A sporting march to communicate a change of attitude and public condemnation of acts of corruption as criminal and demeaning of the public image and dignity of Cameroon.**
- **A Regional Seminar to appraise the work of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and dialogue with citizens, on how to expose corruption and ensure integrity and accountability for the benefit of both citizens and government.**

Below is an overview of activities conducted in Buea, regional capital of the South West Region in commemoration of the 11th, International Anti-Corruption Day.

I. Sporting Match

As recent as 10 years ago, public manifestations against corruption in all its forms, such as bribery, embezzlement, extortion, or trading in influence, nepotism, etc, had remained hidden as many ordinary citizens and public officials alike feared reprisal. But attitudes to come out publicly against corruption as an evil and a crime in society are changing in the South West Region. From **Bongo Square** to **Mermoz Junction**, right up to **Lycee Bokwango** and later to **CRTV regional station**, the **D.O** and **the Governor's** offices in Buea, the **Secretary General** at the office of the Governor led a procession of ordinary citizens, civil servants, entrepreneurs, civil society and police officials in a sporting match to create public awareness in Buea about fighting corruption in all its form.



Challenging corruption in this way was no small encouragement for those who watch the procession as well as for those who participated in the exercise. The general feedback was that broad stakeholder involvement and engagement to oppose practices of corruption in the South West region in this way, encourages citizen participation to fight and report corrupt practices that are witnessed on a regular basis by citizens.

The 11th International Anti-Corruption day provided a platform for reflection on new actions to boost ethical behavior and best practice rules in public administration in the South West Region.



Formerly signs of growing tolerance toward corruption were conspicuously championed by senior executives in public administration, but today as more and more politicians and chief executives are being tried and convicted, a new drive for

self-control and professionalism in public service is being instilled. The effective execution of the nationwide sporting match against corruption by the Service of the Governor of the South West Region as mandated by President of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) demonstrates that the South West Region will not be left behind in the nation-wide crusade against corruption in Cameroon fronted by the National Anti-Corruption Commission of Cameroon (CONAC).

II. Regional Seminar

In commemorating this day (the 11th International Day against Corruption) in the South West Region, the National Coalition against Corruption under the National Anti-Corruption of Cameroon (CNLCC/CONAC) organized an exchange event to appraise the work of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and dialogue on how to expose corruption and ensure integrity and accountability for the benefit both citizens and governments.

This event was presided over by the Secretary General at the Governor's office of the South West Region (Mr. Ndikum Clement) in collaboration with the Regional Focal Point for CONAC/CNLCC for the South West Region (Mr. Stephen Asek) alongside two Regional Inspectors (Mr. Etoo-Regional Inspector N^o.1-in charge of Prefectural Administration and Mrs Lilian Edoug-Regional Inspector N^o.2-in charge of Technical Services).



The meeting started following the arrival of the Secretary General representing the Governor of the South West Region at 3:30pm. The program followed with the signing of the National Anthem and thereafter a presentation of the statement of the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to the global community on the occasion of the 11th, International Day against Corruption. The message was read to an attentive audience by the Regional Focal Point for CONAC's National Coalition against Corruption for the South West Region -Mr. Stephen Asek- who also doubles as Country Director for the British International Governance Institute's Country Chapter in Cameroon (the Focal Integrity Team-FITCAM).



One of the high points in the statement of the UN Secretary General worth mentioning was its acknowledgement of corruption as a global problem which strikes hardest at the poor.

While calling on everyone to help end corruption, and come together for global fairness and equity. There was considerable emphasis however on public servants. Seeing that the world and its people can no longer afford, nor tolerate, corruption, the UN Secretary General said unmistakably that:

“Public services must uphold the highest standards of integrity and ensure that appointments are driven by merit. Public servants, as well as elected officials, must be guided by ethics, transparency and accountability”.(Ban-Ki Moon: 11th, December, 2014).



The Regional Inspector N^o.1 Mr. Etoo followed with a reading of the message of the President of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) Dr. Dieudonne' Massi Gams. In his address to the Cameroonian public the Chairman of the National Anti-Corruption Commission called on all Cameroonians irrespective of religious creed, profession and rank to say 'No to Corruption' urging everyone to take the fight against corruption seriously. The fight against corruption should not be perceived as a mere slogan without any real impact, it has to involve rigorous personal and permanent engagement at all levels to remove the common enemy of corruption which affects the well-being and social progress of all Cameroonians the message highlighted.

After these the program entered its third part with a projection of a documentary by the National Anti-Corruption Commission's Communication Department.

The documentary highlighted the successes which CONAC has achieved so far in the fight against corruption across the country alongside its current challenges.



The need for the Commission to be given more authority to prosecute cases where sufficient evidence already exists was emphasized by many Cameroonians who were interviewed in the documentary. Participants at the meeting were impressed by the work CONAC had accomplished as a young institution and praised its entire team and supporters. The external networks it has created both within and outside of the country to scale up the fight against corruption, encouraged many who for the first time had an opportunity to follow a full report on the activities and engagements of the National Anti-Corruption in Cameroon in detail.



During the interaction and exchange sessions the call for CONAC to focus on building the capacity of youths was suggested. The idea of the Commission decentralizing itself to urban and sub urban areas for representation was equally mentioned as one of the ways through which the Commission can be effectively present in the field to identify, and deter corrupt practices.

As noted by another participant, 'the sufferings of young people today are consequential on the practices of corruption that are being upheld by current leaders governing the country'. As for the religious community that was present, their opinion was that, Cameroon will be better if we build on the moral principle of doing unto others what we expect them to do unto us. Fighting corruption has to be seen and taken upon as a personal struggle, by this every Cameroonian should

endeavor to integrate moral and spiritual principles to guide the way he/she governs his/her life.

At the close of the interactive session, the Secretary General at the Governor's office, -Mr. Ndikum Clement, reassured participants that the fight against corruption in Cameroon is continuous and persistent, evident by the existing political will to fight corruption demonstrated by the Head of State H.E President Paul Biya.



Overall, the event was rated by participants as satisfactory and commended the National Anti-Corruption Commission for initiating such an event.



A family photo was taken to seal the ceremony followed by refreshment. Media outlets such as CRTV and Hi-TV communicate the sporting match and seminar deliberations to the wider community of the South West Region through their various news programs.

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Done in Buea:

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