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REPORT OF MISSION ON A SHORT-TERM TRAINING  
SEMINAR ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
PROBLEMS AT THE INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS INSTITUTE OF CAMEROON (IRIC)  
YAOUNDE (Cameroon)  
29 April - 10 May 1996

By  
Wilfred A. Ndangko  
Senior Regional Adviser  
(Macroeconomics and Policy Reforms)  
ECA-MRAG

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By  
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Senior Regional Adviser  
(Macro Economics and Policy Reforms)  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The purpose of the mission to the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC) was to prepare and conduct a short-term Seminar on International Economic Problems for the Second Year Doctorate Degree students in International Relations, and also to advise the trainees on the preparation of their dissertations.

2. During the Seminar, a wide range of topical economic issues were addressed including the influence of the international economic environment on African development; new emerging trading systems and blocks; new monetary and financial order; external debt, commodity prices and resource flows; globalisation of the banking, trading and production systems and the evolving East-West economic and financial relations. Particular attention was placed on the impact of these changes on the capacity of African countries to design and implement economic policy reforms.

3. On the basis their areas of specialization, levels of experience, and familiarity with the subject matter, the students demonstrated a clear understanding and appreciation of the issues addressed during the Seminar. There is no doubt therefore that the Seminar enhanced their ability to effectively manage the foreign affairs policies of their respective countries at the subregional, continental and international levels.

4. In view of the impact of the rapid changes in the international economic environment on the long-term development of the African continent, the mission recommends that systematic measures be taken by the management of IRIC to annually review the training and research programmes of the institution to reflect the new trends in the global economy. ECA should continue to provide technical advisory and training services to IRIC so as to enable the Institute achieve its long-term mission.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On the invitation of the Director of the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), W. A. Ndongko, Senior Regional Adviser in Macro-Economics and Policy Reforms (ECA-MRAG), undertook a mission to Yaounde, Cameroon from 29 April to 10 May, 1996. The purpose of the mission was two-fold. Firstly, it was to prepare and conduct a short-term Seminar on International Economic Problems for the Second Year Doctorate Degree students in International Relations. Secondly, it was to assist and advise the students in the preparation of their Doctoral Dissertations.

The short-term Seminar was organised for some 7(seven) trainees in their second year of the Doctorate Programme. The areas of interest of the students included international public law, political science, dynamics of peace in the Middle East, international amnesty, refugees problems in Africa, private law, civil law, women and labour law, democratization in Africa and the Western powers. A detail Time table, Short-term Training Seminar Programme and List of Participants are attached to this Mission Report as Annexes I, II and III, respectively.

## **II. IRIC:MISSION AND ACTIVITIES**

The International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC) is an autonomous institution which was created by a Presidential Decree of 24 April 1971. The international character of the

Institute is reflected by the composition of the membership of its Governing Council, which includes representatives of the international agencies contributing to the financing of the institution. The international status of IRIC is also reflected in the composition of the academic staff and trainees who are both Cameroonian and non-Cameroonians. Most importantly, the Institute is not only open to nationals of African countries but also to qualified candidates from outside the continent.

The main mission of IRIC is to provide higher training courses and advanced research in the field of International Relations in general and Diplomacy in particular. To accomplish its mission, the Institute provides two categories of training. Firstly, there is training in Diplomacy, covering a period of nine months, for Diplomats from the Foreign Ministries of African countries. Secondly, there is Post-Graduate training in International Relations with concentration in Diplomacy, International Marketing and International Banking, Money and Finance.

Advanced Post-Graduate course and research leading to Doctorate Degrees are also offered in the above areas. The Library of IRIC is equipped with considerable documentation in the area of International Relations. It also provides an adequate research centre for the academic staff and specialists in the various areas of International Relations and Diplomacy.

An important aspect of the mission of IRLC is the organisation of seminars, symposia and conferences on some current African socio-economic development and cultural issues and problems which attract eminent scholars, specialists, experts and senior civil servants - from African and non-African countries - who can make substantive and scholarly contributions to the various important and pertinent discussions and recommendations.

It should be noted that the first Seminar of IRLC was organised from 13-25 September 1971. It was attended by senior officials from some thirteen African countries and four experts who examined regional economic cooperation and integration as a viable strategy for the long-term socio-economic transformation and sustainable development of the African continent.

Since the academic year 1971/72, more than some eight hundred diplomats and trainees pursuing short-term courses, from more than 25 countries, mainly French-speaking, have graduated from IRIC. In addition, almost 50% African diplomats serving as Special Representatives of their respective countries at the United Nations Headquarters in New York are former trainees of IRIC.

### III. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

Within the framework of the mandate of IRIC in general, and

international monetary and financial order; disappearance of multilateralism in international economic cooperation; external debt, commodity prices and resource flows; and the evolving new East-West economic and financial relations, etc, with particular reference to Africa, were carefully developed and critically examined together with the trainees during the Seminar.

Attention was also focused on the State of the African economy in a world of transition, current socio-economic development issues, problems, challenges and prospects for the future in a changing global economic environment. A detail summary of the issues addressed during the Short-Term Training Seminars is attached as Annex II.

#### **IV. MISSION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is the view of the mission that given the dedication of the management and academic staff, IRIC should be able to continue to provide effective training in Diplomacy and International Relations to its present and future constituency. However, in view the real and potential impact of the rapid changes in the international economic environment on the long-term development of the African continent, systematic measures should be taken to annually review the training and research programmes of the Institute to reflect the new trends in the global economy.



There is no doubt that IRIC has the human resources and skills to meet with the emerging and sometimes unpredictable changes and challenges of the international economy. Nevertheless, within the limits of the available financial resources and expertise, and its broad mandate, the Economic Commission for Africa should continue to provide technical assistance to IRIC.

**ANNEX I: SEMINAR TIME TABLE**

UNIVERSITY DE YAOUNDE II

2EME SEMESTRE 1995/1996  
CYCLE: DOCTORAT 2EME ANNEE

INSTITUT DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES  
DU CAMEROUN

HEURE/JOUR	LUNDI	MARDI	MERCREDI	JEUDI	VENREDI	SAMEDI
7H30-9H30			SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 29 AVRIL -10 MA	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 29 AVRIL -10 MA	STAGE AU MINREX	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 29 AVRIL -10 MA
9H30 -11H30	LANGUES RENFORCEES <u>MENDO ZE/ZANGE</u>	LANGUES RENFORCEES <u>MENDO ZE/ZANGE</u>	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 29 AVRIL -10 MA	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 29 AVRIL -10 MA	STAGE AU MINREX	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 7h30 -11h30
13H30-15H30					PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 14H30 - 17H30	
15H30-17H30	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 29 AVRIL - 10 MA	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 14H - 18H		SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 14H30 - 17H30		
17H30-19H30	SEMINAIRE DE PROBLEMES ECO. INTERNA. <u>PR NDONGKO</u> 29 AVRIL - 10 MA					
19H30-21H30						

**ANNEX II: SEMINAR PROGRAMME**

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group**

**SEMINAR ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS**

By

Prof. WILFRED A. NDONGKO

Senior Regional Adviser

ECA- MRAG

UNECA

ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

- \* Seminar conducted for the second year doctoral students of the international relations institute of cameroon (IRIC) 1995/1996 academic year.  
Yaounde, 29 April - 10 May 1996

## OUTLINE OF SEMINAR PROGRAMME

### I. AFRICA IN A WORLD OF TRANSITION

- Late 1970's saw many African development programmes and strategies abandoned and unimplemented;
- Deeping African socio-economic crisis since the 1980's;
- Imported technologies are inappropriate due to Africa's dependence on foreign expertise and machines;
- 46 out of 50 countries in Africa earn over 50% of total export earnings from primary commodities;
- 1990's saw Africa's lowest terms trade and purchasing power of exports was negative;
- African manufactured goods account for not more than 2% of the world production;
- African economies are opened weak and cannot withstand external shocks;
- 1980s regarded as 'Lost Decade' in Africa (falling per capita incomes, growing unemployment, falling commodities, deindustrialization);

- Introduction of World Bank and IMF short-term Structural Adjustment and Stabilisation Programmes in many African countries to address the internal and external disequilibrium in their national economies.

## **II. AFRICA AND THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT: AN OVERVIEW**

### **1. New International Economic Order**

- The retreat from multilateralism (ie. from global economic cooperation towards greater dominance in the economic system by those advanced countries with economic power) and multilateral institutions (IMF and world Bank etc...) have become now instruments for advancing the ideology of the developed countries in Africa.
- Excessive marginalisation of the African countries in the making of decisions regarding the management of their economies (eg. the design and implementation of the SAPs by the IMF and World Bank).
- Monopolisation of the revolutionary advances in science and technology by the transnational Corporations of the North.
- African countries have become therefore critically

dependent on international arrangements whereby they buy technology from the international markets in which the sellers (countries of the North) enjoy unchallenged dominance.

There is need, therefore, for:

- a) greater continental cooperation among African countries to combat underdevelopment and foster development of indigenous science and technology;
- b) promotion of people centred and self-reliant development in an interdependent world.

## **2. New Trading Systems**

- The prevailing approaches to the rules; and disciplines of the World Trading System as embodied in the GATT are based on the principles of open, multilateral, transparent and non-discriminatory trading;
- Global systems of Trade Preferences (GSTP) which became operational in 1989 is based on the advantages to be gained from promoting trade within Africa and other Third World countries as a whole ie. it offers

a framework for lowering tariffs and non-tariff barriers;

- Rapid expansion of transnational corporations as the main producers of goods and services with a growing proportion of international transactions taking place among branches of the same firm from or among related firms;
- Developing African countries however continue to face formidable barriers in the markets of the developed countries; world commodity markets and prices remained depressed etc.
- Protectionism in the North affects a large proportion of African exports despite the trade preferences under the Lome Convention.

Consequently, there is need to:

- a) Enhance the capacity of African countries to meet the emerging challenges of the 1990s - globalisation of production, application of new technologies, etc;
- b) Reform the international trading system so as to enable the African countries to step up their share of world trade in products in which they have a district comparative advantage.

### 3. New monetary order

Since the late 1980s, there have been:

- Considerable adverse developments in the international financial markets;
- Recession in the OECD countries and the negative influence on international financial flows to Africa;
- Financial flows from West to the East with considerable negative impact on Africa;
- Rapid expansion of the role of the private banks in creating international liquidity;
- Growing instability, unpredictability and fluctuations in the international economy;
- Notably fluctuations in interest rates and exchange rates and growing uncertainty in capital markets;
- Lack of a mechanism for creating international liquidity in an orderly way has become a major problem in the world economy as a whole;
- Important, therefore, to take appropriate measures to:



- a) Ensure greater use of SDRs - i.e. allocate a reasonable proportion of SDRs on a regular basis to the developing African countries over and above their small IMF quotas;
- b) Put in place international arrangements which can reduce misalignment and volatility of exchange rates of the leading world economies;
- c) Ensure that interest rates are brought down to historical levels through international action; an
- d) Insulate African countries from the effects of excessive high levels of interest rates.

#### **4. African's External Debt and Resource Flows**

- Definition of a national debt (internal and external);
- Dimensions of Africa's external debt problems (how much does Africa owe?, size and magnitude, structure, sources, type and composition);
- Causes of external debt accumulation (domestic and external factors);

- a) Interest rates have remained extremely high, thus greatly adding to the cost of debt servicing for African countries;
  - b) declining foreign exchange earnings, in the face of increasing debt servicing requirements;
  - c) poor economic management and inefficient resource allocation;
- 
- Debt and adjustment (overborrowing by African countries matched by overlending by banks and financial institutions in the North is creating the debt crisis, and these countries compelled to adjust with much higher debt service payments;
  - International efforts to deal with debt overhang of the 1980's in Africa have met with refusal by creditors to bear an equitable share of the burden; thus a revival of growth in the African indebted countries is still a distant prospect;
  - To redress the debt problem in Africa, it is important for the following measures to be taken by the Creditors;
- 
- a) Debt servicing to be reduced to levels that allow

economic recovery to take place is crucial to development in many African countries and also to social and political stability;

- b) Concerned international effort needed to simultaneously achieve debt reduction and debt service reduction in Africa;
- c) Amount of debt servicing should be determined by the levels of the resources a country needs to revive its economic growth and sustain it;
- d) A global solution to the debt problem must include debt relief for the least developed African countries.

## **5. Economic Groupings and Trading Blocs**

- An important external factor which has had considerable impact on the efforts towards the creation of subregional economic groupings and multinational organizations in Africa is the existence and further creation of trade blocs, economic groups and unified economic and political arrangements in Europe, North America, and some Third World countries;
- Examples of such regional trading blocs and economic groupings are the European Union in Europe, LAFTA In Latin America, CARICOM in the Caribbean, ASEAN in

South-East Asia, NAFTA in North America and the recent East-West cooperation following collapse of the USSR;

- On the other hand, subregional and regional organisations set up in Africa in the past decades are a vital set up building blocks for collective socio-economic transformation of the continent's among and self-reliance;
- Paradoxically, however, while the North is seeking new advantages through the formation regional trading blocs and economic groupings, the initiatives in Africa have been allowed to weakened;
- For example, the creation of a single European Market will result to reduced access of African products to these markets;
- Furthermore, the prospective integration of the former USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe into the World economy could also create problems for the African countries because the expected competition from East Europe in the Word market;
- Adverse developments from the emerging regional economic and trading blocks should offer real opportunities to Africa in the following ways:

- a) Compulsive increase in intra-Africa trade;
  - b) Promotion of south-south trade and general cooperation;
  - c) Accelerated export diversification through forced shift from traditional to non-traditional exports with increased processing of traditional minerals and agricultural commodity products;
  - d) Higher export quality and increased international competitiveness of Africa's economies; and
  - e) Enforced reduction of excessive external dependence through diminished foreign exchange earnings and rising import costs;
- In order to complement the foregoing Strategies, African governments must:
- a) Increase their support for subregional and regional cooperation schemes by reducing exchange controls and exchange restrictions; and widening the range of products covered by the preference;
  - b) Support trade expansion by regional coordination of investments in selected economic sectors and fields;

- c) Ensure that regional economic organisations identify opportunities for efficient import substitution;
- d) Guarantee that larger and more advanced countries within each grouping pay particular attention to the needs of the least developed ones;
- e) Make greater efforts towards the resolution of conflicts and preservation of peace in the region;
- f) Work together to increase national and regional collective self-reliance and the internalisation of African economic growth and sustained development strategies;

## **6. Evolving East-West Cooperation**

- The rapid evolution of East-West Cooperation is one of the recent changes in the international economic relations which is producing a negative impact on Africa's long-term development. The cooperation has intensified since the end of the Cold War and the socio-political changes in Eastern Europe unleashed by the policy of "Perestroika and Glasnot", initiated by the former President Michael Gorbachev of the Soviet Union.

- The post-Cold War era characterised by intensive East-West cooperation has robbed Africa of whatever strategic significance

that super-power rivalry provided it. The geopolitical isolation of Africa is now being compounded by economic isolation.

- The African continent is becoming increasingly marginalised in terms of international political and economic policy-making. Western disengagement from Africa to the interest of Eastern Europe is taking place at the time when the majority of African countries are pursuing politically risky economic reforms that were imposed on them by bilateral and multilateral aid donors as prerequisites for increased development and investments.

- With respect to East-West cooperation, there is mounting preoccupation of Western aid donors with the worsening economic situation in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This preoccupation has had a negative impact on Africa inspite of Western assurances that the focus on Eastern Europe would not be at the expense of Africa. For example, the first Lome package offered by the European Community to the AEP group of countries amounted to US\$2.00 per capita, over the first five years of the Convention, whereas recent EEC aid proposals for Poland and Hungary amounted to US\$20 per capita, over three years.

- Furthermore, Africa cannot possibly compete with Eastern Europe as a magnet for Western investments. African leaders and policy makers have expressed their bewilderment on these new attitudes as well as on the speed and volume of official assistance being organized for East European economies when

compared with the slow pace of desperately needed debt relief and resource flows for the most impoverished continent. To this extent East-West Cooperation has had a negative effect on the African Continent.

#### **7. European Single Market (1992)**

- Although some people have argued that the experience of Northern American and European regional groupings has little or no relevance for the African States, there is no doubt that European, Latin American and Asian approaches to and experience in economic cooperation as well as their institutional framework, appealed to the developing African nations; especially with regard to the nature of the objectives and the potential problems which can arise from such efforts towards economic cooperation by autonomous political and economic entities.

- With respect to the broad aims of cooperation agreements among 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the 12 European Economic Community (EEC) countries, the ACP's overall mandate and view of the regional cooperation has been shaped by political and economic trends in post-independent Africa.

- This mandate has been reflected since 1975 in Lome I (Chapter 4), Lome II and Lome III (Chapter 7) conventions through the insertion of provisions for the establishment of regional and interregional enterprises, development of regional tourism,



cooperation in import substitution, market expansion, trade promotion for various ACP exports, economic diversification in the ACP states, financial assistance for ACP regional economic organizations and regional cooperation in agriculture and rural development, health, preservation of environment, industrialization, education and training as well as cultural and social activities.

- Notwithstanding the fact that efforts towards sub-regional economic cooperation have been encouraged under the various Lome Conventions, the touchy issue and disturbing question which calls for the serious attention of the African States is what shall be the impact of the unified European Single Market in 1992 on the efforts towards the implementation of the African Economic Community.

- It should be borne in mind that Article 13 of the Single European Act which in essence amends Article 8a of the EEC Treaty states that: "The Community shall adopt measures with the aim of progressively establishing the internal market over a period expiring on December 31, 1992. The internal market shall comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured".

- There is no doubt that the most important implication of the Act concerns trade liberalization. To this extent, therefore, and within the context of the Single Market, the European Economic Community intends to eliminate internal and

technical barriers to trade between the industrialized countries including the developing countries of Africa.

- However, such trade liberalization has never had and cannot be expected to have the same impact on the developed European countries as on the less developed African countries since they are not at the same level of development.

- In effect, the EEC will be setting up barriers to imports from Africa. Consequently, it will be extremely difficult if not possible, for the poor African countries to have the capacity to compete in an open expanded European market. This would certainly affect the flow of private capital to the African continent and, in turn, slow the pace of its long-term economic development. For this reason, the African Economic Community will have to initiate some effective and long-lasting measures which would enable the African continent develop the economic and bargaining capacity so as to confront an expanded European market.

- Under the circumstances, therefore, the only alternative solution is that the African states must continue to intensify their efforts towards the implementation of the African Economic Community. The importance of economic cooperation and integration at the continent level for the African states is that it will help to speed up the process of economic recovery and

structural transformation already embarked upon by these countries.

- This is absolutely necessary because with a proportionate increase in technology and competition from North America, Japan the newly industrializing countries in Asia and Latin America and from the countries of Eastern Europe, the African states will progressively lose their share of trade with the EEC unless they also engage in technological innovations and advancement. Entry in the market will be determined largely by the appropriateness of the new technologies and products the African states will offer in the new enlarged European market.

- Furthermore, the quality and competitiveness of African products and services will naturally have to be tested first in the African internal markets. This implies that the strength of the African economies will no longer derive from relations with the external region economic blocs and political organizations such as the EEC but from interregional and intrastate investment and trade.

- Africa's short experience of cooperation with the EEC, within the framework of the Yaounde and Lome Conventions, by itself provides a convincing evidence of the dangers of putting the bulk of the continent's eggs in Europe's basket. Africa's trade with Europe, under the EEC/ACP Conventions, has failed to live up to expectations, at least as judges by the performance of the different Conventions.

- Finally, unlike the case of EEC member States which attach considerable importance to the gains resulting from the greater international division of labour, capital movements, and increased competition within Europe, the African Economic Community must regard economic cooperation and integration at the continental level mainly as a means of fostering the growth of their member States and subregions.

Regional intergovernmental agencies and institutions such as the African Development Bank have an extremely important role to play towards the realization of the objective of the African Economic Community at both the sub-regional and regional levels.

### **III. PROSPECTS FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE LONG-TERM:**

#### **SOME DETERMINING FACTORS**

- **Reaffirmation, operationalisation and implementation of existing policy Blue-prints** (Monrovia Declaration, LPA, FAL, APPER, UNPAAERD AAF-SAP, Africa Charter for Popular Participation in Development, and the African Economic Community Treaty).
- **Getting the Policy Instruments Right** (application of multiple exchange rates systems, different interest rates policies and selected credit control and price support policies for food production and self-sufficiency).

- **Developing Internal Capacity to respond to external shocks.**  
(e.g. due to the menace of drought to agriculture, collapse of commodity prices and declining export earnings, reduced external capital inflows and heavy debt service obligations, have limited ability of many African countries to promote economic recovery).
- **Achieving Congruence between Priorities and Resource allocation** (i.e. how to ensure the most efficient use of available scarce resources).
- **Putting in Place an Effective Human Development Policy and Strategy** (at the centre of African socio-economic development lies this factor but it has to be improved through literacy campaigns, provision of adequate scientific and technological know how; thus ensuring national and optimal utilisation of the human resources).
- **Making Regional and Sub-regional Cooperation and Integration an Integral Part of Domestic National Policy** (through the avoidance of conflicting national policies, demonstration of better political will and real commitment, suppression of some national sovereignty in the strategic areas of cooperation - all these so as to counteract Europe into a Common Market in 1992, U.S. Canada Free Trade Area, Australian -New Zeland Free Areas and Ocean for Asia).

- **Removing Infrastructural Constraints to Long-term Development** (i.e. address problems of inadequate infrastructure, environmental management, afforestation and desertification, and technological break through).
  
- **Making Individual and Collective Effort to ensure that Domsday scenario is proved wrong** (i.e. to ensure that the prediction by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, sometime ago, that "Africa in the Year 2000 will to be in the ditch is now. It will be in the bottom of a deep black hole", must not be allowed to come true).

ANNEX III

List of Participants in the Seminar

NAME	NATIONALITY	AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION
1. NGODWE ALAIN	Cameroonian	DROIT PUBLIC/SCIENCE POLITIC DYNAMIQUE DE PAI MOYEN ORIENT
2. BINDZI GERVAIS	Cameroonian	INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC LAW AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ACTION IN AFRICA
3. SALANDJDUKOU NODJITDLOUM	Chadian	PRIVATE OR CIVIL LAW (WOMEN & LABOUR LAW)
4. CHINTOUE SANATU	Cameroonian	DROIT PUBLIC/SCIENCE POLITIQUE- (DÉMOCRATISATION EN AFRIQUE ET PUISSANCES ACCIDENTALES)
5. EBOLO MARTIN DIEUDONNE	Cameroonian	SCIENCES POLITIQUE
6. SANGALE MEGBEKA JULES ALAIN	Cameroonian	INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATION
7. ASSOMO MEVA'A NOELLE ODILE	Cameroonian	INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATION
8. ATEM AKD AGBOR AMBANG	Cameroonian	FOREIGN POLICY

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