

# Moving out of oil and fish imports can overturn Cameroon's fortunes, says top UN official

*Yaounde, 12 Feb 2014 (ECA)* – Cameroon can completely overturn its economic fortunes if it could get out of the grip of fish and energy oil importation, UN Under-Secretary General and ECA Executive Secretary Carlos Lopes has told the country's Prime Minister – Philemon Yang.



“Cameroon's two biggest lines of imports are oil products [for energy] and fish – if Government can focus just on locally producing and transforming just these two main imports, the country would be catapulted to a great peak, with the right macroeconomic climate”, the visiting UN official told his host at an audience in the Star Building – Cameroon's Prime Minister's Office downtown Yaounde.

Mr Lopes who is on his first working visit to the Central African sub-region since his appointment by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in September 2012, held a long and compelling discussion with his host on the stakes of economic transformation in Africa.

“We are on the threshold of big change on the continent with just one percentage point needed for making the magic 7 to help change our fortune in general” said ECA's Executive Secretary, adding that three major pillars needed to be built for Africa's positive growth to engender its much needed transformation. These, he noted, would include: making good use of the continent's demographic dividend – that is turning the continent's human capital into a huge opportunity for development, creating modern jobs for the youths in today's fast-paced technological world and implementing the right strategies to ensure growth actually leads to transformation.

Such a transformation, Mr Lopes added, would come from targeted development that could be driven by

Africa's ***Vision 2063***, a blue print developed by the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank with goals for the continent's leap forward between 2013 and 2063. The ECA official said it was necessary for African states to formulate a framework of objectives styled African Development Goals with both short term and long term measurable development targets. This would shift the continent's development conversation ***from proclamations to implementation***, he went on.

And it was a very keen Cameroonian Prime Minister who listened to Mr Lopes and concurred that the transformation of his country's economy was imperative. Mr Yang said his Government was getting down to doing the right things in this direction, notably the building of dams to harness more energy for industrial and agricultural transformation and establishing more partnerships with the private sector.

"I take your message very seriously," Cameroon's Head of Government told his guest. "You must come here more often," Mr Yang added before offering Mr Lopes a sculpture of a royal elephant head made from the kola nut tree with decorated cowries, coins and tusks as a symbol of everlasting friendship, peace and cooperation.

---

**Source URL:** <http://www.uneca.org/media-centre/stories/moving-out-oil-and-fish-imports-can-overturn-cameroots-fortunes-says-top-un>