

Yaoundé Report and Meeting Briefing: November 27-28, 2017

Office of the Resident Country Representative International Governance Institute-Cameroon

The International Delegation of International Governance Institute led by its chairman, Paul New accompanied by Stephen Asek, Andrew Bunnett, David Bell and Christopher Samuel, held meetings with several government ministers of Cameroon and their cabinet members on 27th and 28th of November, 2017 respectively.

Overall Objective of the Cameroon Visit

Following more than 10 years of support to public institutions and civil society organizations in Cameroon, through the International Governance Institute's Focal Integrity Team, the organization was taking a new leap forward to expand its commitment to improve and support integrity, good governance and economic growth programs in Cameroon. The meeting between the IGI United Kingdom Delegation to Cameroon and the Ministers of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicraft [MINPMEESA], Employment and Vocational Training [MINEVT] and Public Contracts [MINMAP] was aimed at fine-tuning draft Memorandum of Understanding alongside areas of cooperation and partnership earlier discussed with these ministries.

1. Highlight of the Meeting with the Minister of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicraft [MINPMEESA].

The first of the meetings was with the Honorable Minister of MINPMEESA—Professor Laurent Serge accompanied by four [4] of his closed collaborators on the one hand, and on the other hand the Chair of International—Paul New and five [5] of his close collaborators. The meeting began at about 1:00pm Cameroon time and lasted for more than an hour.

The discussions started with a presentation of the International Governance Institute's **Support Program for Growth and Employment in the Informal and Social Economy Sectors [SPGEI]**. The SPGEI was initiated in July 2015 and has continued with over 3 editions. That is from 2015 to 2017 respectively. Over 3 years of the program's implementation in Cameroon, SPGEI has supported more than 500 informal sector actors with advanced Business Management and Public Service Governance training. The 2017 program in Buea was jointly launched by the Minister of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicraft and the General Manager of FEICOM with entrepreneurs from the Center, North West, South West and Littoral Regions of Cameroon.

The discussions and exchanges with the Minister and the IGI Delegation was on the expansion of the SPGEI support program to benefit an additional 20,000 young Cameroonians active in the informal sector in Cameroon.

The details which include empowerment of entrepreneurs in the social economy and informal sectors in Cameroon from 2018-2022 plus the allocation of a scholarship package of up to 60percent to Cameroonian youths active in the informal sector, who want to continue formal education in business management via distant learning education in the United Kingdom after their training in Cameroon— as agreed by the IGI

delegation. The Minister thank the Chair of IGI for his interest and support towards economy growth and empowerment of youth in Cameroon and emphasized his collaboration including the need to empower informal sector actors with business training and skills which will facilitate their movement from the Informal to the formal sector of the economy.

The Technical team of MINPMESSA at the meeting headed by its Head of Legal Affairs continued in the discussions with the IGI team in the finalization of a draft memorandum of understanding to be signed by both parties by early 2018 vis a vis IGI's Support Program for Growth and Employment in the Informal and Social Economy Sectors [SPGEI]. A group photograph to immortalize the meeting was then taken as seen below.



2. Highlight of the Meeting with the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training [MINEVT].

The IGI delegation was again received in audience by the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training alongside 6 [six] of his senior cabinet members. The meeting was a follow up to the letter from the Prime Minister and Head of Government of Cameroon to the Resident Representative of International Governance Institute to Cameroon in which the Head of Government congratulated IGI for its work in supporting Cameroon Government's policy of emergence through the empowerment of young people. The letter from the PM equally informed the Resident Representative of the transmission of IGI's 2017 July Policy Brief tagged "*Policy Brief on Elaboration of an Informal Sector Human Capital Emergence and Skill Upgrade Strategic Framework*" which has been forwarded to the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training for action.



In view of this, the Chair of IGI met with the honorable Minister of Employment and Vocational Training to discuss IGI's program of support and intention to work closely with the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training to respond to the significant challenge of preparing Cameroon's young people for jobs in the modern economy and labor market.

Although a vast number of Cameroonian youths are literate and tend to be vastly better educated than their parents' generation, they find it difficult to operate efficiently in economies and societies where corruption is entrenched. Therefore, organizations like IGI want to play a leading role to provide "intermediary services" where the public sector falls short, and stimulate the adoption of transparent policies and practices to better enhance young people's growth and employment opportunities by 2035.

The Minister expressed his delight and commitment to working with International Governance Institute in the elaboration of a program, that will mobilize young people's potential for rapid economic take-off with respect to the Head of States' 2035 emergence policy for Cameroon.

The Minister instructed his collaborators to continue work with the IGI Country Office to finalize a Convention Project that will be reviewed and presented to the Head of State for signature as soon as possible, and allow for a closer collaboration between the International Governance Institute and the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training. The meeting ended at about 5:30 pm with a group photograph to commemorate the meeting.



3. Highlight of the Meeting with the Honorable Minister of Public Contracts in Cameroon [MINMAP].



At about 11: 15 Cameroon time, the Minister of State at the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon in charge of Public Contracts, together with his Secretary General, the President of the Ministry's Anti-Corruption Unit and other senior collaborators received the International Delegation of International Governance Institute led by its Chair, Paul New and its Resident Country Representative to Cameroon-Stephen Asek.

The Ministry of Public Contracts through its regional delegation in the South West Region is one of the early government institutions aside from the National Anti-Corruption Commission [CONAC], which has benefitted enormously from IGI's technical support and programs. The Regional Delegate for Public Contracts for the South West Region therefore joined the delegation and discussions that ensued at the meeting.

Having worked with this ministerial department in the past, IGI had identified a number of areas and interventions together with the Regional Delegate for MINMAP/SWR wherein it wanted to discuss closely with the Minister and his collaborators, and thereby pursue a common direction in tackling the challenges identified together. The Minister expressed his gratitude to IGI and maintained, that despite numerous measures taken to address dysfunctionalities in the public contracts sector, more need to be done to improve integrity, fight corruption, reduce delay and waste of resources in the delivery of public contracts across the country.

Four areas of program support and technical assistance by the International Governance Institute was expounded. The Minister then accorded his endorsement and commitment to continue working with IGI team and expertise towards a procurement sector where stakeholders live and work with integrity.

Areas of collaboration and assistance to be commenced by 2018 has been elaborated as follows:

From 2018-2022 through the joint cooperation with the Ministry of Public Contracts, IGI will deliver the following programs and projects to address a number of challenges identified:

Technical Assistance: Component 1 [2018-2020]

- The Digitalization of the Public Investment Budgets Logbook via Mobile Technologies and Website; facilitating Community follow up of their BIP projects
- Organization of community awareness campaigns and meetings with beneficiaries of BIP projects contained in the logbook. The goal is to promote engagement and participation of the population in monitoring of Public Investment Budget Projects in Rural Cameroon
- Education of Community Leaders to Follow up with project owners to prepare tender files early for their respective projects
- Training and establishment of community monitoring groups; ensuring participation of community leaders during project installation exercise and project delivery; the goal is to ensure and promote community ownership and participation in monitoring timely execution of local development projects

Technical Assistance: Component 2 [2018-2022]

- Bi-Annual Capacity Building of MINMAP's Anti-Corruption and Ethics Promotion Unit on Advanced Anti-Corruption Studies & Corruption Risk Assessment and Management Tools. Covering the following subjects:
 1. The Concept of Corruption
 2. Capacity Building in Asset Recovery & Corruption Investigations [Pre-investigation, Investigation, Prosecution and Repatriation of stolen funds];
 3. Corruption and Development
 4. Anti-Corruption Interventions & Institutional Social Audit Tools,
 5. Corruption Prevention and Digital Technologies
 6. Corruption & Public Service Efficiency Monitoring Tools
 7. Organizational Culture & Ethical Development
 8. Development & Implementation of Organizational Codes of Conduct
 9. Development of a Corruption Prevention Plan
- Staff Capacity Building and Continuous Professional Skill Development for Senior Management Staff [SMS] at MINMAP's Central Services on Public Service Governance and Advanced Government Business Management [With -CPD Certifications offered by IGI]
- Regional and Divisional MINMAP's Staff: Capacity Building and Continuous Professional Skill Development vis a vis their functions on Public Service Integrity, Government Business Management and Public Procurement Corruption Prevention and Risk Management [With -CPD Certifications offered by IGI].

Technical Assistance: Component 3 [2018-2022]

- Promoting Service Delivery Effectiveness: Organize Knowledge Sharing and Learning Workshops for MINMAP's Stakeholders [Contractors and Contracting Authorities]
- Learning and Exchanges on Corruption and Development
- Best Public Procurement Practices, Codes of Conduct, Project Management and Business Ethics

The above areas of intervention and technical assistance will form the basis of collaboration and cooperation between International Governance Institute and the Ministry of Public Contracts for the period 2018 to 2022. The meeting which lasted for up to an hour ended with group pictures/photographs.



Other Meetings that did not come to Fruition

A third and fourth meeting planned by the IGI International Delegation and the Ministry of External Relations and the Coordinator of the National Governance Program of Cameroon at the Prime Minister's office could not be met.

The failure to meet was due to the following reasons:

The Coordinator of the National Governance Program at the Prime Ministry was on leave/vacation and thus was not disposed to meet with the delegation as reported by his office.

The time scheduled for meeting with the honorable Minister of External Relations came later in the day and thus it was not possible to meet since the International delegation had to retire to the airport early for their flight back to the London.

**Done in Buea
International Governance Institute
Cameroon
07/12/2017**