

**REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN**

Paix – Travail – Patrie

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**MINISTERE DE L’HABITAT ET  
DU DEVELOPPEMENT URBAIN**  
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**REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

Peace – Work – Fatherland

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**MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT**  
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**ANSWER BY THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO AN  
ORAL QUESTION BY A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
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**The Right Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,**

**Honourable Members of the National Assembly,**

Permit me above all else to thank the Right Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable **CAVAYIE YEGUIE DJIBRIL**, and Honourable **Paul NJI TUMASANG**, for the opportunity and honour afforded me through oral question No. 2018/0202/QO/AN/9, to provide answers to the August House on various aspects of Government's housing and urban development policy.

I am convinced that by the end of this exercise, we will be able to clear any lingering grey areas about Government's firm readiness to provide appropriate solutions to the legitimate concerns of urban and rural dwellers, on the one hand and, on the other hand, together chart lasting solution to remove the bottlenecks that stand in the way of the sub-sector's take-off and thus accelerate implementation of the recommended solutions to boost that important segment of the policy of great achievements implemented under the lofty impetus of **His Excellency Paul BIYA**, President of the Republic, under the coordination of the Prime Minister and Head of Government, **Philemon YANG**.

From the get-go, I wish to thank Honourable NJI TUMAGANG for his pertinent remarks and observations, which are indeed a source of concern for most fellow citizens. Also, while slightly watering down his passion and impetuosity, I will strive humbly to provide answers and clarify some falsehoods about this crucial and topical subject.

If I may venture to summarize Honourable NJI TUMASANG's diatribe, I will say that the Honourable MP is concerned about "the absence of a planning policy and of controlled development of our cities". This boils down to questioning the roles and

responsibilities of sector players and the coherence of the strategies and actions carried out.

My intervention will wrap around the 6 (six) concerns articulated.

**Regarding the steps taken by my Ministry to remedy the situation described**, it is important first to recall that Laws No. 2004/003 of 23 April 2004, on Town Planning and No.s 2004/017 and 018 of 22 July 2004, on the orientation of decentralization and that lay down the rules applicable to councils, recognize Regional and Local Authorities (RLAs) as the real leaders of their cities while Government's role is governed by a Presidential Decree to fix and organize the mandate of each ministry.

Also, some of the questions asked do not fall within the ambit of my Ministry. This concerns, notably the questions relating to water and electricity supply that fall within the remit of the Ministry of Water Resources and Energy (MINEE); the question too about the location of bars comes under the remit of administrative authorities working under the tutelage of the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT).

**Also, urban planning, management and supervision competencies** are devolved to Government Delegates and Mayors, while MINHDU's role is essentially to support, regulate and provide technical and financial assistance and capacity building within the limits of available financial resources and within the framework of an existing formal MINHDU-RLAs cooperation platform. Thus each year since 2010, we have transferred nearly **CFAF 3 billion** to RLAs to prepare urban planning documents in close to one hundred RLAs, including 14 City Councils. In addition, a guide or "**VADEMECUM**" for the preparation and monitoring of implementation of planning documents was published in 2011 and was widely disseminated via several regional seminars organized across the national territory.

Besides, a National Urban Trades Training Programme (PNFMV) was set up in 2015 with the support of French Cooperation and in partnership with MINAT and the UCCC to build the capacity of local elected officials, municipal technicians and the State in urban trades in general and urban management in particular. Furthermore, to ensure better land use, we are assisting the Douala City Council through a project that aims to establish a digitalized system of management of administrative authorizations and a single window for the issuance of town planning instruments, with intent to spread same to the other 14 City Councils. In the same vein and in consultation with the National Institute of Statistics, the National Institute of Cartography and the PAMOCCA Project to modernize the Surveys Service, we have undertaken to establish geographic information systems (GIS) for better oversight of land use, through an integrated mechanism for creating linkages between planning documents and cadastral plans.

As a corrective measure and to mitigate and eradicate the unplanned housing phenomenon, bold steps have been taken since a few years with the support of bilateral and multilateral donors. Thus, in cooperation with UN-HABITAT, a pilot experience to

restructure poor neighbourhoods has been conducted in three cities (Yaoundé 6 in the Kolbikok neighbourhood, Bamenda in the Sisia neighbourhood and Kribi in the Afamabé neighbourhood).

We may also cite the C2D 1<sup>st</sup> generation projects as well as the Urban Sector Development and Water Supply Project, implemented with the assistance of the AFD and the World Bank respectively. The cited projects permitted improved access to urban services in various cities (Douala, Yaoundé, Bamenda, Maroua, Mbalmayo, etc).

While admitting that efforts still have to be made to step up urban planning throughout the 374 RLAs of the country, we must acknowledge that the major problem is that of implementation by mayors of the said planning documents, coupled with ownership thereof by the citizenry who are either ignorant or non-compliant. Accordingly, since 2014, following the first National Urban Forum (NUF1), we initiated and organized in **Yaoundé, Bafoussam and Bertoua**, vast awareness raising campaigns for urban stakeholders christened "**I am a City changer**".

Overall, the onus is on RLAs to consolidate these initiatives and to assume their role as managers of their cities.

**With regard to drainage and road networks operations**, it is an exaggeration to talk of the total absence of drainage in our cities.

Indeed, City Councils are equipped with sanitation plans to which are pegged water drainage projects. These plans are being prepared progressively for medium-sized councils. These documents are gradually implemented through the construction of hydraulic structures during road construction works.

By way of example, we may cite the two major sanitation projects under implementation in Yaoundé and Douala. The first, namely phase 2 of the Keep Yaoundé Clean Project (PADY II) nested in Government's strategy as captured in the Growth and Employment strategy Paper (GESP), is implemented in sequel to phase one implemented from 2006 to 2016, and that made it possible to reduce flooding in the city centre and to curb the prevalence of water-borne diseases (malaria, typhoid, cholera,...). The project costs about **CFAF 78 billion**. Second, we may cite the Douala Rain Runoff Drainage Project that costs about **CFAF 110 billion**. It aims to build 39 km of canals and drains. Lastly, it is worth noting that studies regarding the construction of drains in Maroua and Kousséri have been completed. Construction of the said structures will be done progressively as financial resources permit.

**Regarding the question of wastewater overflowing on the streets because of blocked gutters**, I regularly urge local elected officials, within the framework of the platforms mentioned above, to sensitize their residents about acts of civic irresponsibility that consist in blocking gutters by dumping therein household waste that prevents water

flow. Also, rehabilitation and/or construction of treatment plants has been kicked-started in Yaoundé (Biyem-Assi, Mendong, Cité verte, Messa, ...), Douala (Bonamoussadi, ...), and Garoua (Central Prison, ...), to cite just these few.

**Regarding road networks**, it is an abiding concern in our cities. However, through its Urban Transport Infrastructure Development Programme, MINHDU has taken steps to maintain, rehabilitate and build roads. Maintenance and rehabilitation of road networks is carried out with Road Fund resources and the Public Investment Budget (PIB). Road networks rehabilitation and/or construction may also be supported by specific programmes such as PLANUT, preparations for the 2016 and 2019 editions of AFCON, the C2D, the PDVIR and emergency works.

Construction of new roads that is subject to prior technical studies, takes account of the concerns raised by the Honourable MP. For instance, we may cite the access road to Olembé New Town that is broad enough to ease whatever volume of traffic. We may also cite the « Mimboman-Nkoabang » East bypass that deviates traffic from the East region to avoid traffic jam along the Nkomo road. In Douala, we may cite the East and West gateways into the city and the access roads to low-cost housing sites.

In the same vein, access roads to sporting, touristic and hospital infrastructure will soon start in Yaoundé, Garoua, Bafoussam, Douala, Buéa, Bandjoun and Foumban, **as part of preparations for AFCON 2019**. In Limbe, similar works were executed in the run up to **AFCON 2016**. For its part, the PDUE has contributed to unlock under-structured neighbourhoods in Bamenda, Mbalmayo, Douala, Yaoundé and Maroua. The Inclusive Cities Development Programme (PDVIR) is being readied and will serve to unlock under-structured cores of other cities (Kumba, Batouri, Ngaoundéré, Kousséri, etc).

The road networks component in Yaoundé and Douala of **phase one of PLANUT** permitted the construction of structuring road networks in Yaoundé and Douala. In Yaoundé, we may cite roads in Mvog-Mbi, Mvog Atangana Mballa, Mvog Ada, Biyem Assi, and Mendong neighbourhoods and in Douala, we may cite roads in the Bonabéri, Youpwé and Bépanda neighbourhoods. Currently, 15 contracts of phase two works are under implementation, including 8 in Yaoundé.

Rehabilitation of roads in Bertoua, Garoua and Bafoussam is under preparation as part of the C2D programme - Regional Headquarters. Construction of the Yaoundé-Nsimalen highway is in process with an implementation rate of 72 per cent in the open-country section. In the urban section, studies have been completed and the search for funding is ongoing. Similarly, studies on bypass roads for big cities are ongoing and construction of such bypasses will help to deviate transit traffic and avoid congestion in city centres.

Government's shoestring budget does not always afford MINHDU the resources to meet its objectives. Achievement of the objectives set by the GESP that projects the

construction of 150 km of road networks by 2020 thus becomes a concern if the budget allocated for maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of roads is not increased in the years ahead.

Like I said earlier, **the relationship between my Ministry and local authorities** is governed by basic instruments that create no room for ambiguity. To better coordinate and facilitate the actions of all stakeholders, I instituted, upon my appointment as MINHDU, a dialogue, listening and proposals framework with all local elected municipal officials and I frequently discuss with administrative authorities the need to assist RLAs in exercising their competencies.

**On the Urban Development Master Plan**, your question affords me the opportunity to reassure you about Government's current policy thereon via the 2009 Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP), which converges with the 2035 Vision Document and constitutes the reference framework and compass for Government action and assigns a number of objectives to my sector. Sector translation of the strategy gave rise to a strategy paper approved in 2014, which is broken down into three operational programmes implemented each year, namely: the Housing Development Programme; the Urban Environment Improvement Programme and the Urban Transport Development Programme.

Regardless of the urgent challenges and issues to be addressed, we have also initiated the preparation of a **Housing Policy and Strategy Paper** that is being finalized, as well as an **Urban Policy Paper** with the assistance of UN-HABITAT, whose goal is to pool and harmonize the interventions of the various stakeholders involved.

**With regard to MINHDU's contribution to the emergence of our country**, it is worth recalling that Cameroon urban architecture with its **312 cities** distributed over the national territory constitutes an undeniable asset for the economy and development of our country insofar as cities account for more than **65 percent of the national GDP**. Also MINHDU's budget allocation shall be scaled up through allocation of substantial resources, in view of the high contribution of the urban sector to the development of the national economy and growth.

**Lastly, with regard to the issue of access to low-cost houses by low-income persons**, you give me the opportunity to harp once more as I did on several occasions on the fact that the production cost of houses in Cameroon remain very expensive due to many factors including the lack of State hereditaments and high costs of compensation operations for the constitution of land reserves designed for housing operations ; the high costs of inputs (cement, rebar, sheet metal, etc.); the high tax burden ; the handcrafted character of production and transportation of materials ; the high costs of concessionaires networks ; insufficient financing.

Also, the State being unable to provide free houses to the population sponsors the production cost thereof to the tune of 40 to 50 percent to ensure access to the middle class of population. Accordingly, many Programmes are currently completed or underway, notably the first phase of construction of 1.675 low-cost houses in Yaoundé and Douala under the Government Programme to construct 10.000 low-cost houses and develop 50.000 constructible plots; the Chinese Programme to construct 1.520 low-cost houses in Yaoundé, Douala, Limbé, Bafoussam, Bamenda and Sangmélina (already completed), the housing component of PLANUT currently underway in eight Regional Capital exclusive of Yaoundé and Douala, at the rate of 100 housing units per city. In the same vein, there is the municipal complex construction Programme implemented with FEICOM/CFC CVUC funding and driven by MINH DU, with an upfront investment of **FCFA 10 billion**, as well as the fiftieth anniversary complex in Yaoundé and Douala, under the delegate project management of the government delegate.

Moreover, many reforms and steps are underway to further curb the housing costs and ease access thereof for the lowest income persons. Without being exhaustive, we can mention the **finalizing of the study on low-cost housing financing** that will help increase financing both for investments and purchasers while securing foreign loans. Also, there is the ongoing **finalizing of a low-cost housing bill** that will make it possible to clearly define the incentives required for low-cost housing programmes, and to clarify the targets. It is also worth mentioning innovation in the **industrial sector with ongoing construction in MBANKOMO of an industrial base designed** for production of building material and other equipment within the framework of the Italian PIZZAROTTI Firm project.

Furthermore, in a bid to reach a greater number, many steps are taken to **support self-construction**, especially through the crafting of guides, provision of roughly developed constructible plots under the 50.000 plots dimension of the Government Programme underway, and support for structuring of self-constructors into housing cooperatives. It is also worth mentioning that emphasis shall be laid on **production and construction with local materials** through MIPROMALO and other private operators whose pilot projects are underway in Yaoundé.

**The national private sector** has not been left behind. As such, we have signed agreements with various real estate developers to assist them in their projects through the construction of primary infrastructure, and their capacity building given the multifaceted shortcomings they continue to display to date, and which justify their gloomy activities.

In short, **the Right Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Members of the National Assembly**, you have the right to note that the Government spares no effort to improve the living environment and conditions of urban and rural population, but I wish to share with you the conviction that more than ever, the key to success in the quest for development would be that each stakeholder plays fully his role, including the private sector that I urge to get more interested in the real estate sector.

Lastly, this is the opportunity to beseech once again the Monitoring Committee of the Housing Policy, established in this venue on late 2017 under the supervision of the Right Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly to enable us to raise awareness among the national opinion and leverage the necessary resources to boost the actions undertaken and drive our country towards the path of emergence slated for 2035.

**the Right Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly, Your Excellency Prime Minister, Head of Government, Honourable Members of the National Assembly,**

In conclusion, I would like to thing that I have humbly met the relevant concerns raised by **Honorable Paul NJI TUMASANG** and through him, to the whole House and I am willing to provide further details in my cabinet and on other occasions.

**On that note, I thank you for your kind attention./-**