

**REPORT OF
THE
ELECTORAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT
MISSION**

CAMEROON

**Mission Dates:
10-21 July 2017**

Mission Report

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	2
II. Mission Background	5
III. Political Environment.....	6
IV. Electoral Framework.....	7
V. Assessment of capacity and needs of election stakeholders.....	12
VI. Assessment of UN capacity for electoral assistance and coordination mechanisms	15
VII. Current and planned electoral assistance by other organizations.....	16
VIII. Sustainability and cost-effectiveness of requested or proposed electoral assistance	16
IX. Potential risks and benefits in the UN providing electoral assistance	17
X. Assessment of potential for election-related violence.....	19
XI. Recommendations	19
XII. Annexes:.....	21

I. Executive Summary

1. An electoral needs assessment Mission (NAM) was deployed to Cameroon from 10 to 21 July pursuant to a request for electoral assistance from the General Director of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM). The request, conveyed a first time in December 2016 and a second time in May 2017, initially focused on support for Information, Education and Communication activities, was reformulated to state ELECAM's intention to agree on areas of work for the UN to assist in the preparation of the 2018 presidential and legislative elections. Upon the NAM's arrival in Cameroon, ELECAM informed that it would like to be supported through the provision of vehicles, motorcycles, tablets, laptops, and spare parts for voter enrolment kits for its regional, departmental and communal branches.

2. The NAM was led by Akinyemi Adegbola, Principal Electoral and Political Affairs Officer of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs (EAD/DPA), based in the UN Office to the AU, Addis Ababa. He was accompanied by Pascale Roussy, Electoral/Political Affairs Officer (EAD/DPA), Nadjita Francis Ngarhodjim, Special Assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary General at the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and Dieudonné N. Tsiyoyo, Regional Electoral Advisor at the UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa. The Terms of Reference of the NAM are attached as Annex II

3. The NAM took place against the backdrop of increased challenges for the Government. Politically, the overwhelming dominance for the last three decades by the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) of President Paul Biya at national and local level has created an environment of mistrust with little if no room for dialogue with the opposition, leading to a generalized voter apathy and the apparent perception that voting would not result in any changes. Economically, the country has been facing an economic crisis as a result of the drop in the price of oil and has become the beneficiary of an IMF credit facility for a total amount of US \$ 666.2 million, making it more difficult for the country to build economic resilience. Socially, heightened tensions in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon (North-West and south-West

regions) due to protests by the local population over perceived marginalization have degenerated into a persistent conflict. On the security front, the Boko Haram sect has been active in the Far-North region since 2014, prompting the deployment of a rapid intervention brigade and the establishment of close security cooperation with neighbouring Chad and Nigeria but also leading to the influx from Nigeria of about 60,000 civilians seek refuge in Cameroon, while over 182,000 Cameroonians are also internally displaced. Insecurity is also on the rise in the eastern part of the country which is also hosting more than 274,000 refugees from the Central African Republic. These challenges could impact on the smooth organisation and administration of the elections in 2018

4. Although 2018 is expected to be a year with a strong electoral focus with the renewal, as per the Constitution, of the presidential, senatorial, parliamentary and municipal mandates, none of the NAM's interlocutors seemed certain that the elections would take place. The only element of certainty seems to be that the President is the one to decide on when to call the elections, this being his legal prerogative. The lack of clarity impacts on the electoral process and the work of ELECAM around voter registration, particularly insofar as the compilation of the voter lists and/or their revision are suspended from the moment elections are called for. Moreover, the speculation around this subject (a by-product of a highly centralised political system) does not augur well for a smoothly run electoral cycle as it appears to create the perception of a process in which the scales are tilted against opposition political parties, given that they are less able to plan their activities.

5. The current legal framework, while in theory making for a more transparent and equitable electoral process, is also a cause of grievances among opposition parties. The NAM heard complains about provisions facilitating fraudulent practices on election day, during both voting and counting. The NAM also heard about the predominance of arbitrariness despite the existence of the Constitution, not yet fully implemented, and a relevant legal framework. The legal basis for the use of a gender quota during the 2013, while legitimate, was criticized for being a rule internal to CPDM and lacking an implementation decree ("décret d'application"). Finally, some interlocutors of the NAM pointed to the fact that the Electoral Code was adopted unilaterally by the Government as the result of a compilation of the existing legislation and that no consultation with political parties and/or civil society at large took place.

6. The creation of ELECAM, praised by all the NAM's interlocutors as a positive development since it centralized all the electoral operations and represented the possibility for the electoral process to be run more efficiently and impartially, is being criticized for lacking independence and not ensuring enough the transparency of the electoral process. This is mainly due to the composition of the Council, representing mainly the ruling party, with the President nominating Council members without consulting the political parties and/or civil society. In addition, although the legal framework foresees the participation of parliamentary parties in all phases of the electoral process through the establishment of dedicated supervisory commissions at all levels, in practice only the ruling party is represented. Finally, the fact that a former Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the institution in charge of the elections prior to the creation of ELECAM, has become the General Director while the new Council's President has not yet taken his oath of office, impacts on the credibility of ELECAM as a whole.

7. On the front of the voter register, the NAM identified two main issues. First, while the introduction of the biometric registration and voter cards in 2012 allowed rationalizing and cleaning the register, it did not solve the problem of the inclusiveness, which is still dogged by many factors, including both the problem of apathy and the inaccessibility of a large proportion of

the population to national identity cards. In addition, as there are no official figures certifying the strength of the potential voting population and the overall population in general, it is difficult to appreciate the accuracy of ELECAM's figures. According to the latter, the total number of registered voters is some 6.5 million, which would represent an increase of only one million compared to the 2013 elections but also appears to be rather low compared to the country's total population, estimated at 23-24 million.

8. The second issue linked to the voter registration is the distribution of voter cards that does not happen simultaneously when a voter registers, but only after that voter's data has been cross-checked by ELECAM. While ELECAM informs voters that their card is ready for collection, not everyone comes to collect. As a result, ELECAM keeps the cards for distribution at polling stations on election day. According to ELECAM, this phenomenon affects only 2.5 percent of the 6.5 million registered voters. However, the NAM heard contradictory allegations about three million uncollected voter cards in the possession of ELECAM. Further, the NAM heard plausible allegations of undelivered cards being used on election day by political parties to stuff ballot boxes and inflate their votes.

9. During the mission, the NAM could determine that all development partners were clearly in favour of the UN taking the lead in supporting the electoral process and in coordinating electoral related assistance. This was due to the UN's historic role in the making of the country, but also to the good offices role recently played by UNOCA in the settlement of some issues in the Anglophone regions. In fact, it is the NAM's view that the UN presence on the ground can adequately support any proposed electoral assistance, even if this would require strengthening the UNDP country office's capacity.

10. However, the NAM identified a clear absence of appetite on the donors' side for material support as it was requested by ELECAM. From that point of view, the UN would need to guard against the risk of "overpromising" given the clear reluctance of development partners to commit to any major capital investments. Particular attention should be paid to this in subsequent discussions with ELECAM and in the process of project formulation.

11. There are clear potential benefits to UN involvement in electoral support as this can potentially contribute to improvements in the quality and openness of the process. However, considering the various challenges facing the Cameroonian State which may probably persist into the electoral period, international efforts to facilitate dialogue and the search for consensual solutions will continue to be an important contribution to the country's stability. Such efforts on the part of the UN may become even more acutely needed in the unexpected event of a post-Biya Cameroon – a scenario that is on the minds of many, but only spoken about in whispers.

12. In view of the above and other observations, the NAM recommends, among others:

13. That UNDP initiate a real dialogue about the content and long-term impact of the assistance as the bases for the eventual establishment of an electoral assistance that would enable a more inclusive and transparent electoral process. It is further suggested that UNDP consistently ensure that there is proper coordination and communication among all the stakeholders involved. Possible areas of support for such a project are – institutional capacity development, civic and voter education and procurement. The UN system should also support measures and activities aimed at stimulating increased participation of women and youths in the political and electoral processes.

14. That a financial planning capacity in the proposed project be included so as to contribute to realistic and cost-effective budgeting and management of available resources and encourage Development partners to reconsider providing some funding to complement government resources.

15. That one senior Electoral Adviser, specialised in training, communication and voter education, be recruited and deployed in the last few months of 2017 so that they are able to assist ELECAM in designing a solid communication and voter education strategy for 2018.

16. That the Resident Coordinator take the lead in coordinating the work done by the various UN agencies and the efforts of development partners. External coordination should be inclusive of ELECAM. Such coordination should also be cognizant of the reporting mechanism to the Focal Point for electoral assistance matters (USG for Political Affairs) and the role of good offices of SRSG Fall/UNOCA to facilitate adequate follow up as appropriate, and in particular to ensure a coordinated response around risks of election-related violence

17. That the Cameroonian authorities further concretize their commitment to the upcoming electoral process by supplying the relevant and timely technical, material and most especially financial support in a timely manner. Such a commitment would increase the chances of a more transparent and smoothly run process and contribute to creating a more conducive environment and could also positively impact on the current lack of interest on the side of the donor community.

II. Mission Background

18. Following a request for electoral assistance from the General Director of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) dated 18 May 2017, an electoral needs assessment Mission (NAM) was deployed to Cameroon by the UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance. In a previous letter conveyed to the UNDP Country Office in December 2016 ELECAM had formulated a very specific request focused on support for Information, Education and Communication activities. However, following a change in the leadership of ELECAM's deliberative body (the Council), a new request was conveyed in May 2017, which only stated the EMB's intention to agree on areas of work for the UN to assist in the preparation of the 2018 presidential and legislative elections. Upon the NAM's arrival in Cameroon, ELECAM informed that it would like to be supported through the provision of vehicles, motorcycles, tablets, laptops, and spare parts for voter enrolment kits for its regional, departmental and communal branches.

19. The NAM was led by Akinyemi Adegbola, Principal Electoral and Political Affairs Officer of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs (EAD/DPA), based in the UN Office to the AU, Addis Ababa. He was accompanied by Pascale Roussy, Electoral/Political Affairs Officer (EAD/DPA), Nadjita Francis Ngarhodjim, Special Assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary General at the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and Dieudonné N. Tsiyoyo, Regional Electoral Advisor at the UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa. The Terms of Reference of the NAM are attached as Annex II.

20. The NAM took place from 10 to 21 July and included two field trips respectively to the Far North Region on 14-15 July and the North-West Region on 16-18 July. The NAM held consultations with representatives of the organs legally tasked with the main electoral process activities, including ELECAM, and the Supreme Court, as well as with a wide range of national

and international stakeholders including the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and other members of the Government, the Speaker of Parliament and the Director of Cabinet of the President of the Senate, political parties, civil society organisations (including women's groups), bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as relevant parts the UN Country Team (UNCT).

III. Political Environment

Political background

21. The political system in Cameroon has been overwhelmingly dominated for the last three decades by the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) of President Paul Biya, whose supremacy has never really been challenged at the national level, given that the rare existing strong opposition parties have only demonstrated any significant strength at the regional level, especially in the home regions of their leaders. CPDM controls all the institutions of the country, including the Parliament, which is criticised by the opposition for not playing its role of controlling the action of the Government (absence of debates on key political issues and the government's response thereto) or, even, of being controlled by the Government (reportedly no private-member bill have ever been passed by the Parliament since its establishment). The influence of the ruling party extends to the local level where state representatives and local authorities are reportedly all CPDM members or local barons with clear links to the party. The level of mistrust between the CPDM and the opposition is very high, in the absence of any formal or informal framework for ongoing political dialogue.
22. Like many countries of the central African region, Cameroon has been facing an economic crisis as a result of the drop in the price of oil. An extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC) held in Yaoundé on the 23 December 2016, in the presence of the Director General of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Ms. Christine Lagarde, and the French Minister of Finance Mr. Michel Sapin, discussed the economic and financial situation of the CEMAC member states, including the impact of the drop in the price of raw materials, especially oil. The meeting adopted a series of measures aimed at building the resilience of the economies of the region vis-à-vis what they considered as an exogenous shock, including, inter alia, the diversification of their economies, the consolidation of public finances, the adjustment of their economies with the support of the IMF, improving public debt sustainability, and the reinforcement of regional integration and international cooperation. Following the Summit, Cameroon, like the other CEMAC countries initiated negotiations with the IMF, culminating in the signing on 26 June 2017 of an economic and financial programme financed through the Extended Credit Facility for a total amount of US \$ 666.2 million.
23. It was against this background of economic crisis that tensions erupted in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon (North-West and south-West regions) initially linked to corporate demands put forward by the English-speaking lawyers and teachers associations regarding what they considered as the progressive marginalisation of the common law and the English-language education systems. The lawyers and teachers were eventually joined by traders' and transporters' unions to form the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC), with the aim of speaking for all Anglophone region Cameroonians and proposing federalism as the solution to the injustice highlighted by the lawyers and teachers in their demands. CACSC staged several demonstrations in the two English-speaking regions, leading to confrontations with security forces which officially resulted in the death of two persons and the arrest of dozens others. CASC was

dissolved by the government on 17 January and its leaders were subsequently arrested and transferred to a high security prison in Yaoundé where they are facing trial by a military court on terrorism charges, carrying the death penalty. Claiming that social networks were being used by the diaspora to fuel tensions in the English-speaking regions, the government shut down Internet access in the North-West and South-West regions from 17 January for a total of 94 days. Internet connexion was reinstated only on 20 April following intense pressure from the international community.

24. The troubles in the English-speaking regions erupted at a time when Cameroon is facing security challenges in the Far-North region (neighbouring Chad and Nigeria) where the Boko Haram sect is active since 2014, prompting Cameroon to deploy a rapid intervention brigade and to enter into close security cooperation with Chad and Nigeria. The situation has since improved significantly but remains volatile as Boko Haram, which has been militarily diminished, is now resorting to asymmetrical attacks, usually suicide bombings using young girls. Attacks by Boko Haram in neighbouring Nigeria have forced about 60,000 civilians to seek refuge in Cameroon, while over 182,000 Cameroonians are also internally displaced. Insecurity is also on the rise in the eastern part of the country which is also hosting more than 274,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR), which has faced precarious internal situation for many years now.

Human rights situation

25. Cameroon has faced intense criticism from human rights organisations for restrictions on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of opinion, expression, and peaceful assembly, with several people, including journalists and civil society actors being arrested and tried by a military court on the basis of a 2014 counter-terrorism law. The opposition also regularly complain that its planned demonstrations and public events are regularly banned or dispersed on the ground that they disturb public peace and order. The detention conditions, especially of those arrested in connexion with the fight against Boko Haram, has become a source of concern for human rights organisations as of recent, with allegations of torture being regularly made. According to reports, the situation is particularly bad in the English-speaking regions, especially since the eruption of the socio-political crisis in those regions in November 2016, with arbitrary arrests and detention, extrajudicial killings, excessive use of force by security forces and intimidation of journalists, human rights activists and persons suspected of supporting the demand for federalism or separatism, being regularly reported.

26. Thanks to the implementation of a quota system during the 2013 legislative and local elections, the percentage of women in parliament has reached 31.1 percent, representing a 17.2 percent increase from the previous parliament. However, women's representation at the local level remains low (less than 10 percent). The legal basis for the quota system needs to be clarified and popularised – according to interlocutors, ELECAM essentially enforced a rule internal to CPDM, fuelling grievances among opposition parties, some of whose lists were rejected (see further below). Also, the capacity of women's groups and political parties would benefit from being reinforced in order to further promote women's participation. There are also well organised voices calling for the promotion of the participation of other marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), both as voters and also as candidates.

IV. Electoral Framework

Legal electoral framework

27. The Electoral legal framework in Cameroon includes the 1972 Constitution, as modified in 1996, Law No. 2012/001 of 19 April 2012 (the Electoral Code), as amended in December 2012, and Law No. 2006/011 of 29 December 2006 (on the creation, organisation and functioning of ELECAM), as modified in 2008. The unified electoral code lays down provisions governing the election of the President, members of the National Assembly and the Senate, as well as municipal councillors, and referenda.

28. The President is directly elected by popular vote for a seven-year term with a simple majority of the votes cast. In 2008, the Constitution was amended to remove any limit to the presidential term.

29. The Constitution provides for a bi-cameral parliament comprising a 180-member lower chamber (National Assembly) and a 100-member Senate. Members of the National Assembly (NA) are elected for a term of five years by universal suffrage and secret ballot through a mixed single round ballot, comprising a majority system and a proportional representation system. Voting is for a set list of candidates. In constituencies, having only one seat, voting is for a single candidate. There is no transfer of candidates from one list to another. The lists are submitted by each political party in a given constituency; they must be complete and have the same number of candidates chosen from its members as there are seats to be filled. There are no independent candidates. Members of the NA are eligible for re-election for unlimited mandates, in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Code.

30. Out of the 100 Senators, 70 are chosen by indirect suffrage by an electoral college, comprised of regional councillors, and 30 are appointed by the President of the Republic. Although the Constitution foresees the election of Regional Councilors in the framework of the decentralization, regional elections have yet to take place. The Senate itself was first established in 2013 by an electoral college, which, in the absence of regional councillors, was composed of municipal councillors.

31. Although the transition to multiparty democracy in the early 1990s led to the mushrooming of political parties, the number of which is nowadays estimated at 318, only seven of them are currently represented in the National Assembly while there are only six in the Senate. With 148 seats at the National Assembly and 82 members and/or affiliates in the Senate, the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CDPM) overwhelmingly dominates parliamentary work. This leads many in the opposition and civil society at large to believe that Parliament is a rubber stamp rather than an effective instance of control over governmental action. According to opposition parties and civil society, whereas legislative power rests with Parliament, in practice it is the President who consistently initiates all laws.

32. Municipal councillors are elected for a term of five years by universal suffrage and secret ballot and through a mixed single round ballot, comprising a majority and proportional representation system. Each council constitutes an electoral constituency. Voting is for a set list of candidates. Candidates cannot be transferred from one list to another. The Electoral Code sets the number of municipal councillors based on the size of the population, starting with 25 councillors for councils with less than 50,000 inhabitants up to 61 councillors for councils with more than 300,000 inhabitants. Currently, there is a total number of 10,636 councillors.

33. While in theory the current legal framework makes for a more transparent electoral process, several interlocutors of the NAM complained about some provisions, claiming that these facilitate fraudulent practices on election day, during both voting and counting¹ (for instance, the use of multiple ballots, and provisions allowing for continued distribution of voters' cards on polling day). The NAM also heard about the predominance of arbitrariness despite the existence of the Constitution and a relevant legal framework.² In addition, the NAM was reminded that the Constitution was not fully implemented and that the creation of the Constitutional Council was still pending. Finally, some interlocutors of the NAM pointed to the fact that the Electoral Code was adopted unilaterally by the Government as the result of a compilation of the existing legislation and that no consultation with political parties and/or civil society at large took place.

34. A coalition of opposition parties represented in Parliament attempted to submit a wide range of legal amendments after the 2013 elections. The main elements of these draft amendments related to the composition of ELECAM (both Council and DGE), the introduction of integral biometry from registration to voting (that is as a means of voter identification at polling stations), the distribution of voter cards, a more equitable boundary delimitation, the establishment and proclamation of results, and, for all elections, the introduction of a single ballot and a second round of elections. However, due to the predominance of the ruling party, these proposed changes were never considered.

Possible impact of political environment on the administration of elections

35. The NAM identified at least three factors of political instability that could impact on the smooth organisation and administration of the elections in 2018. Indeed, the country faces challenges on several fronts, from Boko Haram's recurrent incursions in the north to the yet unresolved crisis in the Anglophone regions in the west and the generalised voter apathy linked to the overwhelming predominance of the ruling party and the apparent perception that voting would not result in any changes.

36. On the security front, Boko Haram's recurrent armed assaults, including suicide attacks, from neighbouring Nigeria into the Cameroonian territory in the Far North has been representing a serious threat to state order since the beginning of 2014. Should the security situation remain unchanged in 2018, the impact on any elections would be significant since it would make difficult any efforts to transport electoral materials along the borders unless with heavy support from the military on all sides of the borders, which would require the support and cooperation of neighbouring countries. Such a set-up would also mean for the Government to rely even more on popular vigilante groups, probably resulting in a significant loss of it's the State's ability to ensure full oversight of the electoral process. The NAM took note of the fact that in the present moment ELECAM's intention is not to re-deploy for the elections but to bring the polling centres and stations closer to those voters internally displaced (it was not clear from discussions whether this

¹ Such fraudulent practices include multiple voting, more ballots cast than voters on the voter list, undue influence of the ruling party in the instances in charge of voting and counting, voters with no registration or identity card allowed to vote, fraudulent use of voter cards leading to ballot stuffing, change of figures on the tally sheets between counting and tabulation.

² This was exemplified with the fact that in the 2013 elections laws superseded by the Electoral Code were applied in the dispute resolution mechanism. Several interlocutors also reported that during these elections administrative authorities retained wide discretion as to whether a meeting and/or rally was authorised and they seemed to take a particularly restrictive approach in relation to applications for meetings and party activities in areas where support for the ruling party was not high.

would imply polling for electoral contests in the current locations or in regard to the actual place of origin).

37. With the Anglophone crisis which brings to the fore various demands for increased decentralisation, federalism or secessionism, the Government finds itself facing a similar existential threat. While none of the NAM's interlocutors mentioned any intention to boycott the elections, such a scenario cannot be discarded, as cannot be discarded some hardening of the Government's position. The crisis touches indeed the very core of the country's indivisibility and appears to be treated as such by the public authorities. During its visit to the North West region, the NAM could appreciate that the level of animosity between various political stakeholders and ELECAM was real. The fact that the latter became the target of violence in the peak of the crisis is a sign that the electoral process could be further attacked for political reasons. Several interlocutors of the NAM in the capital city pointed to the need for dialogue with a view to ensuring the actual implementation of the decentralisation process and others constitutional institutions (Constitutional Council, Regions, etc.).

38. Finally, all the NAM's interlocutors pointed to a serious problem of voter apathy which can be exemplified in part by the low number of registered voters. The NAM took note of the many factors that underlie such an apathy namely: 1) lack of confidence in ELECAM which is perceived as an instrument of the ruling party mainly due to its composition; 2) lack of interest in the electoral process since the results appear to be "known" even before the elections take place; 3) alienation between the populations and the administrative and political elites which are perceived as defending and perpetuating their own interests as opposed to the common good; 4) lack of independent candidates. Some interlocutors of the NAM alluded to the potential risk of civil unrest due to the deterioration of the economic and social fabric. The NAM heard how the most neglected social group happens to be the youth which represents over 60 percent of the overall population, and how apart from working in the civil service or belonging to the administrative-political elite, there were barely any economic prospects for the younger generations. Many interlocutors of the NAM questioned the actual reasoning for keeping the voting age limit at 20 years when the age to join the army was already 18 years (itself a factor of frustration among the youth). The NAM also took note of the fact that political activism among the youth is a fairly nascent phenomenon and that despite some movements on the social networks encouraging young people to register as voters, there are few young political leaders of note. NAM interlocutors referred to a youth focused social-media driven movement that appears to be gaining momentum. Its potential political impact is yet to be tested.

Complaints and appeals process

39. According to the Constitution, the organ competent for electoral disputes for the Presidential and legislative elections as well as referenda is the Constitutional Council. While the President announced during the 2013 legislative and municipal elections that the Constitutional Council would be established after the proclamation of the results, this did not happen. In its absence, the Supreme Court fulfils its functions. Petitions related to the total or partial cancellation of election operations must be filed no more than 72 hours after the close of the poll. The Constitutional Council announces election results within a maximum period of 15 days from the date of closure of polls for the presidential election and 15 days for the legislative elections.³

Access of women and underrepresented groups to the electoral process

³ In spite of a planned meeting, the NAM did not manage to meet with the Supreme Court

40. The Electoral Code stipulates that candidate lists must take the various sociological components of the relevant constituency as well as gender. For the 2013 joint legislative and municipal elections, in the absence of an implementation decree (“décret d’application”) stipulating modalities for its implementation, ELECAM introduced a 30% gender-based requirement in the drawing of candidate lists for both municipal and legislative elections. In the majority part of the legislative elections, ELECAM required that for each candidate, the alternate be of the opposite sex. On that basis, ELECAM rejected lists of some political parties who complained that the quota was not set in the legal framework and ELECAM was exceeding its powers (hence the perception that ELECAM was enforcing an internal CPDM rule). While ELECAM’s position and approach was praised by civil society organisations and the international community as an indicator of its increased assertiveness in supervising the electoral process, the NAM heard that there is no prospect to have the system quota enshrined in the legal framework by next year’s elections and that the only possible way to secure women’s representation in elected positions would be to have an implementation decree.

41. While the Electoral Code does not address the needs of PWDs or those of indigenous peoples, since 2011 the needs of these marginalised groups have been given more attention on the part of ELECAM thanks to concerted efforts of civil society organisations (CSOs) with the support of the Yaoundé-based OHCHR Regional Office. Special measures, such as making a braille ballot paper available, were adopted in the 2013 elections to facilitate their participation. However, the NAM also heard from specialised CSOs that more needs to be done to enable a more inclusive participation and a fairer representation in political posts.

Current electoral schedule

42. 2018 is expected to be a year with a strong electoral focus since the mandate of elected officials at all levels of government – President, Senators, Members of Parliament and Municipal Councillors – comes to an end (for the most part, this is a coincidence, as the durations of mandates for different offices are not the same). Although the electoral calendar can be guessed on the basis of each mandate’s duration, none of the NAM’s interlocutors seemed certain that the elections would take place as per the Constitution. In fact, the confusion was such that the NAM heard three different scenarios from five elections (all those mentioned above plus the regional elections) to four or even only one (i.e. the Presidential election). The only element of certainty seems to be that the President is the one to decide on when to call the elections, this being his legal prerogative. Some of the NAM’s interlocutors indicated that the electoral campaign had already started with some ministers travelling across the country and some political parties organising their national congress. Other interlocutors on the other hand pointed to the fact that initial 2018 draft budget indications did not include specific election budget lines. The lack of clarity impacts on the electoral process and the work of ELECAM around voter registration, particularly insofar as the compilation of the voter lists and/or their revision are suspended from the moment elections are called for.⁴ Moreover, the speculation around this subject (a by-product of a highly centralised political system) does not augur well for a smoothly run electoral cycle as it appears to create the perception of a process in which the scales are tilted against opposition political parties, given that they are less able to plan their activities.

⁴ Between 20 and 50 days prior to the expiration of the mandate of the President, 40 days prior to the expiration of Members of Parliament and Senators, and 20 days prior to the expiration of Municipal councillors.

V. Assessment of capacity and needs of election stakeholders

Electoral Management Body

43. The 2012 Electoral Code provides for a central role for ELECAM in the organization and supervision of elections. ELECAM's organigram includes a deliberative body, the Electoral Council, and an administrative and executive body, the General Direction for Elections. The latter is sub-divided into four operational divisions concerned respectively with Electoral and Referenda Operations; IT, Voter Registry and Statistics; Administrative and Financial Affairs; Communications and Public Relations. The implementation of electoral operations is supported by branches at all levels of the administrative and territorial subdivision, including 10 regional delegations, 58 departmental agencies and 360 communal antennas. Altogether some 2,441 staff are employed across ELECAM's Council, General Direction and administrative and territorial branches.

44. Since becoming operational in 2008, ELECAM has organised three electoral contests: the election of the President of the Republic on 9 October 2011, Cameroon's first-ever senatorial elections held on 14 April 2013,⁵ and the legislative and municipal elections jointly held on 30 September 2013. Undoubtedly, most of the NAM's interlocutors opined that the creation of ELECAM was a positive development since it centralised all the electoral operations and represented the possibility that the electoral process could be more run efficiently and impartially. While ELECAM still depends upon the Ministry for Local Government and Decentralisation for budgetary and administrative purposes, it operates independently from it. However, the NAM also heard complaints that the institution lacks independence and the electoral process remains opaque.

45. First, the composition of the Council was criticised for representing solely the ruling party through former high-ranking cadres and/or personalities closely associated to it. While the President has tried to address this perception by increasing the number of members and incorporating personalities from civil society, few still consider the Council independent. The fact that Council member nomination is done unilaterally by the President with no consultation with political parties and/or civil society, reinforces this perception.

46. Similarly, it was brought to the attention of the NAM that although the legal framework foresees the participation of those political parties represented in Parliament in all phases of the electoral process through the establishment of dedicated supervisory commissions at all levels, in practice only the ruling party was represented. Several reasons were brought forward for such a situation. Firstly, the electoral commissions include representatives of the administration, who, for most of them, are affiliated to the CPDM. Second, some opposition parties complained that ELECAM would not communicate with them properly. Finally, ELECAM representatives indicated that parties tend to ask for a fiduciary compensation for their participation when this should normally be done on a voluntary basis or at each party's cost.

47. The two-headed structure of the institution is also considered to be an issue, particularly following the recent changes at the head of the Council and the General Direction. The fact that a former Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the institution in charge of the elections prior to the creation of ELECAM, has now become the General Director while the new

⁵ Under the Constitution Senators are elected by indirect by an electoral college. This election was organised following the publication of Decree No. 2013/056 of 27 February 2013 convening the Electoral College and in keeping with the provisions of Law No.2012/001 of 19 April 2012 relating to the Electoral Code.

Council's President has not yet taken his oath of office, creates the perception that the Council has become irrelevant, which impacts on the credibility of ELECAM as a whole.

48. There have also been staff movement within the General Direction, which together with the creation of new structures led to internal tensions that have been exposed publicly, causing concerns that the organization may not be as efficient as it is supposed to be.

49. Finally, despite having local branches, ELECAM is not considered by most electoral stakeholders as having the proper equipment and network to cover the entire territory and reach out to all the voters. The NAM heard both from the ruling party and some opposition parties that in many instances they are the ones to provide ELECAM with manpower and operational funding in their respective strongholds.

Voter Registry

34. The electoral register which was widely perceived as outdated and unrepresentative of the electorate until 2011 was overhauled in 2012. ELECAM registered voters anew while introducing biometric registration and voter cards, a longstanding demand from opposition parties and the international community. This allowed rationalising and cleaning the registry by eliminating duplicates and triplicates and removing deceased voters. For the 2013 legislative and municipal elections, voter registration using biometric means captured some 5.5 million voters, in contrast to the estimated 7.5 million voters registered for the 2011 presidential election. However, the inclusiveness of the register of voters is still dogged by many factors, including both the problem of apathy and (much quoted by NAM interlocutors) the inaccessibility of a large proportion of the population to national identity cards.

50. Since the adoption of the Electoral Code in 2012, voter registration has become permanent and periodic. The Electoral Code defines the calendar for updates every year, with the period January - August devoted to the actual voter registration while the rest of the year is dedicated to the verification and cross-matching of the data between ELECAM and the various stakeholders. This is also the period used to clean up the register, including cases of multiple registration and deceased citizens. In addition to the special commissions set-up for the purpose of verifying voter data and which includes representatives of the local administration and political parties, ELECAM also enters in contact with various ministries and agencies to cross-check information. These include civil registry, Health Ministry, Justice Ministry, not to mention the Ministry of Territorial Administration and decentralization (MINATD). The NAM took note of the fact that the coordination with all these entities was very ad hoc and not systematic, and was also made difficult by the fact that only ELECAM's data is currently fully computerised. It would appear that the possibilities for greater synergies among these various entities, including eventual support by ELECAM and the National Agency for New Information and Communication Technologies to these agencies are yet to be fully explored.

51. Registration takes place at communal level and for each polling station. It is open to all citizens over 20 years and residing in the commune for the past six months, as well as those citizens paying their direct taxes in that commune for the fifth consecutive year. The data verification is done through verification commissions, composed of representatives from ELECAM, the administration, mayor's offices and political parties. Each year's final list is made public on 30 December.

52. ELECAM informed the NAM that by the beginning of July 2017 there were 6.5 million voters registered for 24,500 polling stations. Compared to the number of registered voters in 2013, this represents an increase of 1 million voters in four years, or 250,000 voters on average per year. The overall number of registered voters appears to be rather low compared to the country's total population estimated at 23 - 24 million. The number of voters captured in each annual update also appears to be quite low, in terms of productivity, considering the resources invested in deploying the registration teams. The NAM also heard various contradictory allegations about the number of registered voters in the northern regions, considered to have at the same time one of the lowest registration rates yet with as many as three million uncollected voter cards in the possession of ELECAM staff (the same figure of three million was cited as the number of "improperly issued" national identity cards in circulation). Although ELECAM's breakdown by year and region shows a relatively steady increase across the country, including for the northern regions, the fact that there are no official figures certifying the strength of the potential voting population and the overall population in general makes it difficult to appreciate the accuracy of ELECAM's figures.

53. For most of the NAM's interlocutors, the low number of registered voters can be explained by voter apathy, as already mentioned above. The NAM also heard that there are technical and cultural reasons for the low number of registered voters, and that these reasons happen to be interconnected. Indeed, many people do not have an identity card, while this document is required to register as a voter. Although there are alternatives to the identity card, namely the birth certificate or, when this is not available, a judicial statement of birth, very few people consider making the effort to obtain a document certifying their identity, even though such a document is essential to go through the various phases of education (e.g. to obtain a degree) and professional life. In addition, as it was explained to the NAM, while obtaining a birth certificate within the first month of birth is free of charge, it becomes quite complex and expensive after that as it requires first to obtain a "certificate of apparent age" issued by a doctor and then to go to a court at departmental level, which overall could cost over CFA 5,000 (about USD 90). Thus, not only do very few people seem to have relevant contacts with the state administration, but even if they have, the cost of such contacts is so high that it becomes dissuasive for people to obtain a document certifying their identity. Only a compelling reason would encourage them to overcome all these financial and administrative hurdles. In fact, the NAM was reminded that for the 2011 presidential election the President waived the costs linked to the late acquisition of a birth certificate (thus facilitating obtention of national ID cards free of charges for all potential voters).

54. Finally, it was reported to the NAM that the distribution of voter cards was not optimal and that not all voters end up receiving their voter cards. Although this phenomenon affects a relatively small number of voters, namely about 2.5 percent of the 6.5 million registered voters, it denotes once again a cultural attitude on the part of the voters which ELECAM does not seem to take fully in consideration. Indeed, voter registration is a two-step process, whereby the voter first gets his/her data entered in the database, and is only delivered a voter card after the data have been cross-checked. Once this is done, ELECAM sends a message (sms) to the relevant voter, informing him/her that their voter card is ready for pick-up. As it turns out, people do not naturally understand this phased approach. In fact, for many having their data entered in the database epitomizes the process of registration, particularly as they receive a receipt as a result. They, therefore, do not see the need to come back at a later stage. The work patterns of rural dwellers (peasant farmers) contributes to this. In addition, since there is little difference in the material used for the receipt and the voter card, registered voters do not necessarily understand the distinction between the two.

55. Such a phased approach is in itself problematic as it potentially creates the conditions for electoral fraud and the perception that such fraud is instigated by ELECAM. Indeed, should voters not come to collect their voter cards prior to election day, ELECAM keeps them for further distribution at polling stations on election day. However, the NAM heard plausible allegations of undelivered cards being used on election day by political parties to stuff ballot boxes and inflate their votes. A more rational way of registering voters and delivering their voter cards, accompanied by a more effective communication towards voters would certainly go a long way to safeguard the process. ELECAM counters that the existing system is what enables them to limit fraudulent registration and multiple registration through post-registration verification.

VI. Assessment of UN capacity for electoral assistance and coordination mechanisms

56. The United Nations has a long history of electoral support in Cameroon, which goes back to 2003, when the country endeavoured to improve and consolidate its democratic framework and electoral systems through reforms and innovations, with a view to promoting the rule of law, citizen participation and economic governance. The latest UN electoral NAM was conducted in 2009, whereas a DPA-led follow-up mission and an evaluation mission took place in 2010. Both missions recommended the UN provides electoral assistance to ELECAM through technical support to 2010-2012 electoral cycle, which included the October 2011 presidential election and the July 2012 legislative elections.

57. Launched in January 2010, the project was implemented in two phases: 1) a preparatory phase – January 2010 to February 2011 – aimed at operationalizing ELECAM which was freshly instituted as an independent election management body; and 2) the implementation phase aimed at providing support to various stakeholders involved in the electoral process to strengthen conflict prevention mechanisms and contribute to a peaceful and conducive environment in the run-up to the elections. The project final budget was estimated at US\$ 1,460,843.

58. The project activities evolved essentially around technical support to ELECAM for institutional capacity building; promotion of dialogue among the electoral stakeholders as a means of conflict prevention and peacebuilding; support for the computerization of electoral operations; and to other actors such as political parties, civil society organizations, and the media.

59. Other UN entities operational in Cameroon, including UN Women, UNESCO and the Regional Office of UN Human Rights for Central Africa, have also contributed to the electoral process within their mandates and respective areas of intervention.

60. It is the NAM's view that the UN presence on the ground can adequately support any proposed electoral assistance. Specifically, the UNDP country office would be willing to implement the proposed assistance, provided that its capacity in terms of relevant human resources is strengthened accordingly.

61. As for the UN engagement at the political level, it will be necessary and crucial to ensure seamless contact and consultation between UNDP Cameroon and the Libreville-based UN Office in Central Africa (UNOCA). UNOCA, through the SRSG, has been active in high-level contact on the internal situation in Cameroon. It is essential to maintain continuity and coherence with such contacts in the context of the electoral process.

62. Relevant coordination mechanisms among international actors in the country, particularly in the area of elections, should be put in place. While development partners have been lukewarm in indicating interest in any direct support to ELECAM, they have nevertheless indicated keen interest in such coordination mechanisms, as a means to ensure exchange of information, coherence of interventions and a platform for potential joint demarches.

VII. Current and planned electoral assistance by other organizations

47. Currently, there is no non-UN electoral assistance, namely ECCAS, African Union or the EU being provided on the ground. However, the possibility for them to implement projects or deploy election observers cannot be ruled out in due course. Likewise, organisations like IFES and NDI may be operational in the country, if as planned the US avails some financial resources for them to implement initiatives in promoting citizen participation broadly.

63. The meetings with the cooperation partners made it possible to ascertain that there is clear interest in seeing the UN play a leading role in supporting the electoral process, although it is not apparent that any are currently interested in providing financial support.

64. Among those met by the NAM, Canada, whose election management body served as a model for the structure of ELECAM, indicated that they would not have any funds to allocate to the electoral process as such and that for the past few years they have been focusing on issues linked with citizenship, women's empowerment and broader governance in concerns. Similarly, the EU and the US remained shy of committing any direct assistance to ELECAM. The US informed that their programmatic priorities in view of next year's elections include participation of women, youth and PWDs, and support to domestic election observation, including the conduct of parallel vote tabulation. The US have supported the recent launching of a women's caucus with some of the elected officials from the last legislative and municipal elections, and are training some of the young leaders. The EU is currently funding two NGO platforms working respectively in the field of domestic observation and women's participation. On the other hand, France, which has been asked by ELECAM to assist with election data security through the setting up of a VPN, as well as staff capacity building and strengthening for all levels of the institution, indicated that Cameroon was a priority country for the French Government and as such it would surely receive some support for the electoral process with the caveat that this support cannot comprise equipment needs. Coordination arrangements should be agreed in case these plans materialise.

VIII. Sustainability and cost-effectiveness of requested or proposed electoral assistance

65. All partners met by the NAM agree for the need to closely coordinate under the lead of the UN on the ground. The NAM was reminded of the historic role of the UN in the making of the country, but also of the good offices role recently played by UNOCA in the settlement of the issues in the Anglophone regions. Coordination among partners is already happening at political level within the framework of the so-called "8+8" monthly meeting that focuses on broad governance issues and the GAPE (Groupe d'Appui au Processus Electoral). While partners have varied interests, and do not always come to a consensus, there is clear interest on their part to cooperate and work under a common coordination. Such coordination mechanism will need to closely associate ELECAM among other national interfaces.

66. The current UNDP country programme document, part of the UNDAF 2018-2010 and prepared in consultation with the Government, is based on the country strategic vision – The Cameroon ‘Vision 2035’ – which calls for “an emerging nation, democratic and united in its diversity”. It is aligned with the growth and employment strategy; the African Union agenda, 2063; the Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2030; and the UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017.

67. At the moment of the NAM, no official budgetary figure or document was available for the 2018 elections and it was not clear if any of the planned elections was to be included in the regular Government’s budget. Estimations from ELECAM, provided verbally, would put the total costs for direct suffrage elections (municipal, legislative and presidential elections) between USD 100 million and USD 125 million. “It is also as yet unclear whether regional elections will be called (for the first time since provided for constitutionally of January 1996)”

68. At the moment of the NAM, no official figure was available for the 2018 elections and it was not clear if any of the planned elections was to be included in the regular Government’s budget. Estimations from ELECAM would make the total costs for direct suffrage elections such as municipal, legislative and presidential elections between USD 57 billion and USD 70 billion.

69. In regard to the request for material support (vehicles, tablets, laptops, spare parts for VR kits), much would depend on the willingness of partners to invest in such requirements at this stage. While the NAM’s field visits allowed for an appreciation for some of the logistical challenges faced by ELECAM’s field structures in carrying out their tasks, it was very clear from the NAM’s contacts with cooperation partners that there is no appetite on the donor side for this kind of support. While some parts of it (VR equipment for instance) might be worth considering, the UN cannot make a firm commitment given the costs involved.

70. Independent of the disposition of partners, it is clear that ELECAM will need to reflect on a long term strategy for fleet and equipment management and replacement that is sustainable, realistic and fit to its purpose. While the development of such a strategy might be an area in which the UN could be of assistance (separate from any commitments for the actual provision of vehicles or equipment for upcoming elections or even beyond), this will require a stronger funding commitment from the Government.

IX. Potential risks and benefits in the UN providing electoral assistance

Political risks

71. Although the request for electoral assistance came from the election management body, Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), it is supported by the government and other institutions intervening in the electoral process as confirmed by the various authorities and institutions that the NAM met (including the Secretary General to the Presidency and Director of Cabinet of the President). Political parties, civil society and the media were also mostly of the view that ELECAM needs such support, although they all expressed some concerns regarding the perceived lack of independence of ELECAM because of the background of its leaders who are mostly well-known former members of the ruling party. Voter apathy has been a constant phenomenon during the last couple of elections and the next elections cycle is likely to confirm this trend, given the low level of registration on the electoral list and the fact that many are convinced that the victory of the President and the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) is certain. There is therefore a risk for the UN to be viewed or accused of supporting a process to merely rubber stamp

the status quo or perceived as supporting an electoral process that lacks popular support and legitimacy. The risk is however mitigated by the fact that all parties met by the NAM affirmed their determination to take part in the elections despite the criticisms that they mounted vis-à-vis ELECAM. This risk could also be mitigated by the UN providing support to civic and voter education activities.

Technical risks

72. Concerns around the documents required to register as voters (birth certificates and national ID cards deemed expensive) and the distribution of voter's cards constitute some of the technical risks, but this can be managed if efficient and cost-effective measures are put in place.

Financial risks

73. The financial risks are mainly associated with alleged, by different reports, high levels of corruption said to prevail in Cameroon and the uncertainty around the timeframe, nature and level/scope of contributions likely to be made available either by the government itself or by development partners, through what mechanisms, and with what coordination frameworks.

74. Furthermore, the UN would need to guard against the risk of "overpromising" given the clear reluctance of development partners to commit to any major capital investments. Particular attention should be paid to this in subsequent discussions with ELECAM and in the process of project formulation.

Security risks

75. Should the prevailing security challenges in some parts of the country persist, including the social tensions in the English-speaking regions, the activity of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far-North and, to a lesser extent, the insecurity induced by the spill-over on the eastern regions of Cameroon of the instability in the Central African Republic, there are risks that electoral operations could be negatively impacted in those areas. However, if one has to judge by the fact that voter registration in these areas has been carried out fairly well, despite some incidents (attacks on ELECAM vehicle and staff in the North-West region and relocation of some registration centres in the Far-North), one would expect that the Government would take appropriate measures to mitigate those risks during the elections. It will be important to continue through UN good offices to encourage the authorities to ensure the most inclusive elections possible. **DGSN about security measures**

Benefits

76. Considering the various challenges facing the Cameroonian State (on the economic, social and security fronts), and which may probably persist into the electoral period, international efforts to facilitate dialogue and the search for consensual solutions will continue to be an important contribution to the country's stability. While there still needs to be further dialogue on ELECAM's needs and the chances of them being met in the short to medium term, there are clear potential benefits to UN involvement in electoral support, which can potentially contribute to improvements in the quality and openness of the process, while also promoting the image of the UN as a well-meaning honest broker that can be trusted by all sides

X. Assessment of potential for election-related violence

History of electoral violence

77. Since the early 1990s, elections in Cameroon have been marred with political violence which has been decreasing, commensurate with the loss of interest for elections on the part of the population. The NAM received information regarding violence in the context of past elections, including the 2013 legislative and local elections during which the representatives of the ruling CPDM were reportedly intimidated and physically assaulted in the strongholds of the opposition, while the opposition also made similar complaints regarding CPDM in areas under the latter's domination.

Future potential issues

78. The potential for political violence during the next electoral cycle cannot be ruled out and would probably be proportionate to the interest that these elections would generate. Such an interest could be gauged by the level of enrolment (especially of the youth) on the electoral list (thus far quite low) and voter turnout on polling days. In the English-speaking regions of North-West, there are some extremist groups calling for secession and whose view is that the region is not concerned by the elections organised by Cameroon. Those groups have the tendency of intimidating all those who do not share their vision to separate the English-speaking regions from Cameroon and are likely to organise violent actions during the election as a means of making a political statement. Recent incidents indicate that they may not be pliant even to historical political leaderships in the regions, thus constituting a fairly unpredictable factor. Disturbances, including through suicide attacks, of the electoral process are also quite conceivable in the Far-North where Boko Haram remains active even though it has been seriously diminished.

XI. Recommendations

79. Given the keen interest of ELECAM to receive support from the UN and of the partners to see the UN take on a leading role, the context appears to be favourable for the delivery of UN electoral assistance. However, given the reformulation of the request more focused on technical equipment than capacity building and strengthening, there is a need to pursue the (re)definition and delivery of such assistance to ensure that both ELECAM and the partners are not only on board but engage in a real dialogue about the content and long-term impact of the assistance. It is therefore recommended that UNDP initiate such contacts as the bases for the eventual establishment of an electoral assistance that would enable a more inclusive and transparent electoral process. It is further suggested that UNDP consistently ensure that there is proper coordination and communication among all the stakeholders involved.

80. In light of this, a comprehensive electoral project could be established, based on mutually agreed needs as well as available resources. The following areas of support could be explored for assistance in the framework of such a project:

- Institutional capacity development and development of a strategy for ongoing training for ELECAM leadership and staff (especially region-based staff)
- ELECAM Institutional Communication

- Establishment of a platform for dialogue and exchange of information between ELECAM and political parties, both ruling and opposition parties
- Civic education and sensitization
- Support capacity building initiatives for women as potential candidates to elective positions, and promote better conditions for women’s participation;
- Youth Political participation
- Support capacity building initiatives for media practitioners, particularly in relation to election coverage;
- Support to civil society organisations in the area of civic education;
- Coordination of overall electoral assistance
- Procurement of equipment for voter registration, with a view to ensuring that the registration is timely and efficient – and to benefit from savings associated with UN procurement in such areas. The same could apply to the procurement of vehicles should ELECAM obtain the resources for that from government or other sources.
- Advocacy for a participative electoral reform for the improvement, at term, of the entire process.

81. Within the framework of the eventual project, it is recommended to recruit one senior Electoral Adviser, specialised in training, communication and voter education, and with a solid appreciation for institutional dynamics. Suggested deployment period is in the last few months of 2017 so that they are able to assist ELECAM in designing a solid communication and voter education strategy for 2018. Other required consultants may be added on an “as needed” basis in the course of project implementation.

82. The Resident Coordinator should take the lead in coordinating on the one hand, the work done by the various UN agencies (UN Women, OHCHR, UNESCO), currently done in a disparate manner, and on the other the efforts of development partners. External coordination should be inclusive of ELECAM.

83. The UN system should support measures and activities aimed at stimulating increased participation of women and youths in the political and electoral processes. Special attention should be devoted to ensure that an action plan to secure gender quotas can be agreed with all the relevant stakeholders, particularly political parties, and implemented well ahead of the 2018 direct suffrage based elections.

84. Given the current challenges on the economic front, Cameroon may face difficulty in fully funding its electoral processes. Development partners may want to reconsider providing some funding to complement government resources. Inclusion of a financial planning capacity in the proposed project may contribute to realistic and cost-effective budgeting and management of available resources for ELECAM.

85. The Resident Coordinator should establish a system of regular reporting to the Focal Point for electoral assistance matters (USG for Political Affairs), also shared with SRSF Fall/UNOCA to facilitate adequate follow up as appropriate, and in particular to ensure a coordinated response around risks of election-related violence.

86. The UN, through the good offices of SRSF Fall, complemented as necessary by the RC/ Country Team, should continue to support dialogue efforts with the aim of finding a sustainable solution to the root causes of the tensions in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon.

87. The NAM encourages the Cameroonian authorities to further concretize their commitment to the upcoming electoral process by empowering ELECAM to perform its tasks to the best of its ability and supplying the relevant and timely technical, material and most especially financial support in a timely manner. Such a commitment would increase the chances of a more transparent and smoothly run process and contribute to creating a more conducive environment, by allowing ELECAM to show to election stakeholders greater predictability and visibility in the planning and implementation of its tasks. In addition, such an engagement could positively impact on the current lack of interest on the side of the donor community and contribute to encouraging them to support a process perceived as having the best chance of allowing citizens to freely express their will.

XII. Annexes:

- Request from Member State
- Focal Point's response to request
- Terms of Reference
- List of interlocutors or schedule of meetings for the mission
- List of any special assessments undertaken
- Checklist on Gender and Electoral Assistance

Note: At the time of submission of the report to the Focal Point the following letters should also be submitted:

- Letter to Member State with summary of assistance to be provided
- Cover letter to main assistance provider for report circulation

Signature Block

Akinyemi O. Adegbola
Team Leader
Needs Assessment Mission

August 2017