

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN CAMEROON
(50 YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE)**

**SATURDAY
MARCH 6, 2010**

ORGANIZED BY



PROGRESSIVE INITIATIVE FOR CAMEROON

Conference Description

This will be the first “State of Democracy” conference on Cameroon ever and will bring together various stakeholders in a very necessary forum to engage in frank and open discussions on the situation of democracy and human rights in Cameroon. The main goal is to critically evaluate the democratization process in Cameroon and reinvigorate national and international debate on Cameroon’s democratization efforts by examining the best strategies to promote and move the democratization process forward. This Conference is also very important considering the defining situation of the country, specifically the highly anticipated Presidential election in 2011.

Conference Background

PICAM is organizing the conference on “The State of Democracy in Cameroon 50 Years After Independence” to bring together Cameroonians and supporters of democracy in Cameroon to participate in evaluating, discussing, planning, and re-engaging in the democratization process in Cameroon. The Republic of Cameroon composed of the former British and French Cameroons gained independence on January 1, 1960 and October 1, 1961 for East and West Cameroons respectively.

This event will mark the golden anniversary (50 years) of the independence of Cameroon. 50 years after independence, Cameroonians have seen only minimal changes to their standard of living. Real democratic engagement remains farfetched; professional development is reserved for the well connected; and basic human rights seem to be non-existence. The conference is an important and necessary step to address the gaping lack of democracy and human rights within both the political and civil structures in Cameroon.

Conference Approach

- ❖ Define the core elements of democracy and human rights from internationally recognized and accepted documents.
- ❖ Present and debate different visions for a democracy in Cameroon from the perspective of the civil society and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Identify and prioritize practical strategies required to achieve renewed and concerted effort towards the building of a sustainable democracy in Cameroon.

Build bridges amongst activists from diverse sectors of the civil society, as well as with representatives from the private and government sectors, with a view to strengthening collaborative efforts to achieve true democracy in Cameroon.

Conference Objectives

The objectives of the conference on The State of Democracy in Cameroon include:

1. Discuss and evaluate the democratization process in Cameroon;
2. Create a network of engaged supporters of democracy in Cameroon;
3. Promote democracy, transparency, and accountability in government;
4. Initiate a climate of dialogue for frank and open discussion about democracy in Cameroon;
5. Create strategic ties and unifying framework among movements for democracy in Cameroon;
6. Promote equal access to rights and leadership and a role for all in the democratic future of Cameroon;
7. Seek strategies to empower institutions to adopt democratic principles for a just and accountable society;
8. Create opportunities for increased civil society involvement in open discussion on democracy in Cameroon;
9. Increase awareness on the principles of democracy and identify tangible steps and projects to promote continued movements towards democracy;
10. Fight against apathy by building relationships, promoting participation and responsibility, and encourage the organization of transparent and democratic movement for Cameroon.

Conference Mission

- ❖ To assess the situation of democracy and respect for human rights in Cameroon 50 years after independence.

Conference Vision

- ❖ To inspire renewed and sustained interest in the democratization and human rights effort in Cameroon.

Conference Strategy

- ❖ Increase public awareness and citizen participation in the democratization process in Cameroon.
- ❖ Engage Cameroonians at home and abroad in discussion and activities necessary for a vibrant democratic society.
- ❖ Increase the influence, the efficiency, and the credibility of civil society actors in their efforts to shape the democratic agenda in Cameroon.

Conference Presentations

1. An Overview of Democracy and Rule of Law in Cameroon.
2. The Role of the Government in Advancing Democracy.
3. The Role of National Institutions in Advancing Democracy.
4. The Role of the Civil Society in Advancing Democracy.
5. Traditional Rulers and the Democratic Process in Cameroon.
6. The Role of the Media in Building and Advancing Democracy.
7. The Role of Educational Institutions in Promoting Democracy.
8. Periodic and Transparent Elections as Part of the Democratic Process.

9. The Role of the Police and Armed Forces in a Democracy.
10. The Role of the International Community in Advancing Democracy.

For a brief description of each of the above topics, please visit

<http://www.picam.org/events/democracy/presentations.htm>.

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Conference Registration

This conference is open to everyone although preference will be given to Cameroonians and other nationals involved in democracy and human rights work on Cameroon. The only exceptions to this are presenters and guest speakers. All applicants must fill out the registration form as completely as possible, indicating institutional affiliation, position within organization, and contact information of the organization to maximize their chances of invitation for the conference. Visit conference website for online and mail-in registration forms.

International Participants

This conference is open to individuals from around the globe. Participants that will require a US visa to travel for the conference must so indicate in the Comment/Suggestion section of the registration form in order to have a Letter of Invitation issued for that purpose. Visas are the discretionary prerogative of the United States Government and it is the responsibility of each potential conference participant to satisfy the requirements for a US visa. Besides issuing a Letter of Invitation, we will not assist any participant in the visa application process in any other way. Please contact your local US consulate or embassy for visa information.

Conference Venue

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American University
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United States of America
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Conference Contact

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Conference Website:

<http://www.picam.org/events/democracy/home.htm>

Organization Website:

<http://www.picam.org>

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