

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE
TECHNICAL MONITORING COMMITTEE
FOR ECONOMIC PROGRAMS
PERMANENT SECRETARIAT
PRSP PREPARATION STATUS REPORT

(December 28, 2001)

I. The Interim PRSP

1. The Government of Cameroon prepared an interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) during the first half of 2000. The document was well received by Cameroon's development partners and, in particular, enabled the country to reach its decision point in October 2000 under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.
2. The interim PRSP was designed and prepared in accordance with a participatory process, which afforded the poorest inhabitants an opportunity to (i) freely explain their perception of poverty; (ii) list the major determinants of this scourge; and (iii) recommend measures to alleviate it significantly.
3. The budget for 2000/2001 (fiscal year beginning July 1, 2000), and even more that of 2001/2002, are oriented towards poverty reduction and improving governance, and clearly reflect the government's commitment to implement the Interim PRSP. A budget envelope of CFAF 95 billion (US\$131 million) is foreseen in the 2001/02 budget for expenditures to be financed using the interim assistance obtained so far in the context of the Enhanced HIPC Initiative.
4. The utilization of the HIPC resources mobilized in the context of interim assistance reflects the priority themes identified in the Interim-PRSP. In order to ensure transparent and efficient management of these resources, a national consultative committee for the follow-up of the implementation of the HIPC Initiative was established in June 2001. This committee consists of nineteen members, including seven ministries (Economy and Finance, Public Investment and Regional Development, National Education, Public Health, Public Works, Towns, and Agriculture), three representatives of bilateral donors (France, Canada, and Germany), two representatives of multilateral donors (UNDP and Commission of the European Union), and seven representatives of the civil society. The International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and African Development Bank have observer status.
5. The committee has already held three meetings (June 21, October 26, and December 6, 2001). At the June 21 meeting, the Committee decided to establish three thematic working groups responsible for reexamining the expenditure programs for the 2000/01 budget, which had been elaborated in March 2001 by the relevant ministerial departments in concert with development partners, on the basis of well defined criteria. At the October 26 and December 6, 2001 meetings, the

committee examined and approved expenditure programs for a total of about CFAF 35 billion (US\$50 million), which focus on the following six major areas: (i) health and HIV/AIDS; (ii) education; (iii) other social sectors; (iv) rural development; (v) infrastructures; and (vi) governance.

II. Elaboration of the full PRSP

Progress to date and constraints

1. The original target date for **the production of the full PRSP** was November 2001. A thorough assessment of the situation soon revealed that this time frame was unrealistic. A major reason was the revision of the timetable for developing and conducting the second Cameroonian household survey (ECAM II), given the expansion of the survey's scope and the significant financial resources required.

2. At the same time, concerning **the participatory process**, the need to reinforce the capacity of the civil society's many branches to fully contribute to the elaboration of the poverty reduction strategy has also been a significant contributory factor to the delays. Furthermore, the elaboration of the PRSP needed to follow the evolution of the participatory elaboration of the key health and education strategies, which have also experienced delays.

3. **The intensity of the Cameroonian participatory process has entailed a significant financial cost**, which could not initially be supported solely by the government budget. The mobilization of external resources has taken much longer than originally foreseen. In particular, the resources of the World Bank's "Public/Private Partnership Project for Growth and Poverty Reduction" have started to be used as of July 2001 for the participatory elaboration and management components of the strategy. Moreover, it is only in November 2001 that a grant agreement was signed with UNDP that will finance participatory activities.

4. All in all, the participatory process now benefits from significant financial assistance from the World Bank, UNDP, GTZ and the Cameroon's State budget. Other support, though modest, is also envisaged, for example, from UNICEF. The authorities plan to complete Cameroon's full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper by June 2002. A summary of key activities already undertaken and of ongoing and remaining activities is provided in Annex I, and a revised timetable of key steps toward completion of the full PRSP in Annex II. The document will, in particular, serve as the foundation for all assistance the international community will supply to enable the country to achieve the objective of halving poverty between 1995 and 2015.

Activities undertaken to date

Participatory process

5. A **pilot consultation** was undertaken in Maroua in the Far North Province **from October 9-21, 2001**. The consultation assembled numerous participants from the civil society (ONGs), public administrations, and representatives of donors, and discussed the projects being undertaken in the Far North. The pilot operation afforded the opportunity to test the approach that the authorities intend to use during the second stage of participatory consultations beginning in January 2002.

6. **Nine thematic working groups will contribute to the deepening of the analysis of poverty and the refinement of policies and strategies for its reduction.** These are: (1) rural development; (2) economic growth; (3) governance; (4) job creation and integration of disadvantaged groups; (5) urban poverty reduction; (6) infrastructure rehabilitation; (7) education and poverty reduction; (8) health and poverty reduction; and (9) microfinance. Three groups are already operational (health; education; and urban poverty reduction). Each thematic working group is composed of representatives from public administrations, civil society, and development partners. For sectors where a sectoral strategy has already established, thematic groups will base their work primarily on the said strategy.

7. **Looking ahead to the participatory finalization of the PRSP,** the Minister of Economy and Finance provided over 500 copies of the interim PRSP and the priority action plan for improving governance and combating corruption to **all deputies to the National Assembly, provincial governors, departmental prefects, and the rectors of state and private universities** in order to elicit suggestions for improvement from them, as well as from the administrative authorities, students, teachers, and researchers interested in economic and social issues in general, and poverty reduction in particular.

8. **The national poverty reduction network that has been established** by the authorities is designed to provide a framework within which all actors in the fight against poverty, without exception, can exchange information. **Consultations to launch the network were held in Kribi July 17–19, 2001** at a seminar/workshop that brought together resource persons from the civil society, representatives of NGOs and religious denominations, university instructors, researchers, and representatives of trade unions, mayors' associations, public administrations and the civil service. The seminar, which was fully participatory in nature, yielded the initial elements of a consensus on the characteristics of the future network.

Second Cameroonian household survey (ECAM II)

9. **The technical preparation of ECAM II has benefited from technical assistance from the World Bank and financial assistance from the European Union.** This assistance resulted in the launching of **data collection operations** in September 2001. Collection of data from the 12,000 sample households nationwide was completed on December 17, 2001.

Activities to be undertaken or already ongoing

Participatory Process

10. **The second round of participatory consultations for the preparation of the full PRSP will take place throughout Cameroon in January 2002.** The Minister of Economy and Finance will chair the opening seminar on January 7, 2002. The objectives of the consultations are to (i) supplement, clarify, and, as far as possible, prioritize the key components of the provincial poverty profiles; (ii) inform the actors involved in the fight against poverty and target population groups of poverty reduction actions and strategies already underway or planned at the provincial level, particularly with respect to HIPC expenditures; (iii) gather suggestions for improving the PRSP from the various stakeholders in the poverty reduction effort; (iv) share with provincial actors the initial ideas put forward at the introductory seminar for the national poverty reduction network in Kribi in July 2001 regarding the configuration and operation of the network; and (v) identify the key indicators for monitoring and tracking poverty at the provincial level.

11. **The activities of the other thematic groups** (rural development, economic growth, governance, employment and reinsertion of excluded groups (*groupes défavorisés*), infrastructure rehabilitation, and microfinance) will be **launched before end-February 2002**. The activities of the rural development thematic group will be based on the integrated rural development strategy for which a draft is already available. The activities of all the thematic working groups will be completed by April 2002.

Second Cameroonian household survey (ECAM II)

12. **Computerized data entry began on October 8, 2001**. Two thirds of the data had been entered by December 14, 2001, and the **data entry process will be completed by January 5, 2002**. File cleanup began in early December 2001 and is expected to continue through March 2002.

13. In addition to the very useful information expected from ECAM II, the results of the **household expenditure survey (*Enquête dépenses ménages, EDM, which is currently being finalized*)**, will facilitate a more in-depth analysis of urban poverty, particularly in Douala and Yaoundé. The findings of the **multiple indicator survey (*Enquête à indicateurs multiples*)**, which is **also nearing completion**, will enhance understanding of the status of vulnerable population groups, especially women and children.

III. Budgetary impact of the strategy

1. Implementation of the poverty reduction strategy—the objective being to halve poverty in Cameroon by 2015—will require the mobilization of massive financial resources both within the country and from development partners, an amount that is far in excess of the HIPC resources Cameroon can expect to receive.

2. The sectoral thematic groups will come up with initial calculations, after which the technical monitoring committee for economic program (a smaller forum) will prepare a more detailed cost summary. These calculations will reflect the constraints of a coherent medium-term macroeconomic and budgetary framework. The education and health sectors, which have made the most progress in developing their sector strategies, will be the first to propose medium-term scenarios. The other key sectors will then use these examples to develop their own scenarios. The CTS plans to approach Cameroon's development partners for relevant technical assistance. The terms of reference for this technical assistance will be prepared by the thematic working groups.

Cameroon: Preparation of Full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper—Implementation Status of Key Activities

Activities	Timetable	Observations
Participatory Process		
ECAM II (Production and Analyses of key household survey data)		
1. Participatory consultations and launching the work for the establishment of a national poverty reduction network	Sectoral and Other Activities	
	Reinforcement of the areas/pillars of the growth and poverty-reduction strategy, based on the recommendations from seminar held on October 30–31, 2000	
	1.1 Preparatory work of the coordinating unit	October 2000–May 2001
	1.2 Mapping work	February–April 2001
	1.3 Hiring and training of surveyors and auditors	August 10–25, 2001
	1.4 Delivery of material and equipment for conducting the survey	September 2001
	1. Identification of sectoral working groups	May 2001
	2. Formulation of the terms of reference for the sectoral working groups	May 2001
1.1 Pilot discussions in the Far North Province	October 2001	Completed
1.2 Formulation of the terms of reference for the establishment of the national poverty reduction network	May–June 2001	Completed
1.3 Preparation of discussion methodology	May–June 2001	Underway
1.5 Consciousness-raising (<i>sensibilisation</i>)	August–December 2001	Under way

	Activities	Timetable	Observations	
Participatory Process	ECAM II (Production and Analyses of key household survey data)			
		Sectoral and Other Activities		
	1.6 Finalization of technical documents	June 2001	Completed Documents published	
	2. Gathering ECAM II data	September 10–December 17, 2001	Completed	
	3. Formulation of computerized programs for the processing and treatment of data	March–September 2001	Completed	
	3.1 Hiring and training of staff for computerized data entry	September 20–30, 2001	Completed	
		3. Technical meetings of the thematic working groups, with a view to refining the sectoral strategies and policies and across-the-board thematic issues included in the I-PRSP	October 2001–February 2002	Under Way. Works at advanced stage with respect to three of the nine working groups
	1.4 Seminar on the national poverty reduction network, with the participation of NGOs and other civil society organizations involved in the PRSP preparation process since early 2000		July 2001	Completed Report published
	1.5 Constitution of teams that would conduct participatory discussions in 10 provinces		August–September 2001	Completed
		3.2 ECAM II data entry and processing	October 8, 2001–January 5, 2002	Under way
	3.3 Clearance of all files	October 20, 2001–January 30, 2002	Underway	

	Activities	Timetable	Observations
Participatory Process	ECAM II (Production and Analyses of key household survey data)	Sectoral and Other Activities	
1.6 Preparatory work for the second stage of participatory discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of the key conclusions of the reports on the first stage of the participatory discussions • Summary of the regional socio-economic studies completed in 2000, with UNDP support • Establishment of list of HIPC projects by region • Finalization of the methodology for the discussions 	4. Submission and presentation of the reports by the working groups	March 2002	
1.7 Technical meetings of the teams to conduct the participatory discussions and to present (i) the methodology for the second stage of the participatory discussions; and (ii) the summary of the I-PRSP		January 7, 2002	
1.8 Actual implementation of the participatory discussions in the 10 provinces		January 9–19, 2002	
	4. Publication and use of the data on urban poverty from the survey on household expenditures and living conditions in Douala and Youndé	October–December 2001	Use of data in formulating the sectoral strategies
	5. Publication and use of data from the survey on women and children (multipurpose survey)	September–November 2001	Use of data in formulating the sectoral strategies

Participatory Process	Activities	Timetable	Observations
	ECAM II (Production and Analyses of key household survey data)		
1.9 PRSP preparation status report to be submitted to the Boards of the World Bank and the IMF	6. Availability of the initial first complete results of ECAM II	January–February 2002 by end-December 2001	Completed
1.10 Consideration of the PRSP preparation status report by the Boards of the World Bank and the IMF.		January 2002	
2. Presentation of the results of the second stage of participatory discussions		February–March 2002	
3. Retreat for drafting the first draft of the full PRSP		March 2002	
4. Selection of monitoring indicators to follow-up progress in reducing poverty		February 2002	
5. Incorporation of ECAM II data in the first draft of the full PRSP			
	7. Validation of the first complete results in a seminar and integration of the validated results in full PRSP draft	March 2002	
	8. Review of the findings and conclusions of the thematic studies	February–April 2002	
6. Seminar for the presentation and finalization of full PRSP		April–May 2002	

	Activities	Timetable	Observations
Participatory Process	ECAM II (Production and Analyses of key household survey data)	Sectoral and Other Activities	
7. Adoption and publication of full PRSP		May–June 2002	
8. Transmission of the full PRSP to Cameroon’s donors and the Boards of the World Bank and the IMF		June 2002	
9. Partnership, participation, and strengthening of the capacities of the key participants in the national network for the reduction of poverty			
9.1 Organization of seminars to reinforce the capacities of the key participants of the national network for the reduction of poverty		As of May 2002	
9.2 Reinforcement of capacities in programming, implementing, and monitoring basic public investment programs		As of May 2002	
9.3 Reinforcement of capacities in programming, implementing, and monitoring public investment projects in urban areas		As of May 2002	
9.4 Reinforcement of capacities in programming, implementing, and monitoring public investment projects in key social sectors		As of May 2002	
9.5 Reinforcement of the capacities of observatory units on governance and anti-corruption units		As of May 2002	

**Cameroon: Preparation of Full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Revised Timetable**

Participatory process	Activities		Timetable (as of July 2001 in EBS/01/105, Appendix IV)	Revised Timetable and Comments
	ECAM II	Other		
	1. Preparation and mapping work for ECAM II		October 2000–June 2001	October 2000–August 2001
		1. Reinforcement of the areas/pillars of the growth and poverty reduction strategy, based on recommendations from seminar held on October 30–31, 2000.	January–October 2001	May 2001–March 2002 (revised)
1. Technical consultations with development partners			April 2001	
2. Seminar on establishment of a national poverty reduction network			June 2001	July 2001 Report available
3. Pilot discussions in the Far North Province for presentation of I-PRSP, and gathering of suggestions for finalization of full PRSP			June 2001	October 19–21, 2001
4. Choice/selection of indicators for monitoring progress made in reducing poverty			June-July 2001	February 2002 (revised)
	2. Gathering of ECAM II data		June-September 2001	September 2001– January 2002 (revised)

**Cameroon: Preparation of Full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Revised Timetable**

Participatory process	Activities		Timetable (as of July 2001 in EBS/01/105, Appendix IV)	Revised Timetable and Comments
	ECAM II	Other		
5. Participatory discussions in all provinces, in light of lessons learned from the pilot consultation			July-August 2001	January 2002 (revised). Process to be launched on January 7, 2002, and consultations to take place during January 9–19, 2002
	3. Development of data and publication of first complete results		October-December 2001	January-February 2002 (revised)
6. National seminar on reconciling results from participatory discussions			August 2001	February–March 2002 (revised)
7. Retreat to draft preliminary version of the full PRSP			September 2001	March 2002 (revised)
		2. Consideration of data from survey on women and children (multipurpose survey)	September 2001	September–November 2001 (revised)
		3. Consideration of data from survey on household expenditures and living conditions in Douala and Yaounde (urban poverty)	September–October 2001	October–December 2001(revised)

**Cameroon: Preparation of Full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Revised Timetable**

Participatory process	Activities		Timetable (as of July 2001 in EBS/01/105, Appendix IV)	Revised Timetable and Comments
	ECAM II	Other		
8. Incorporation of ECAM II results in preliminary version of full PRSP			November– December 2001	March 2002 (revised)
9. Seminar on presentation and finalization of full PRSP			December 2001	April–May 2002 (revised)
10. Adoption and publication of full PRSP			January–February 2002	May–June 2002 (revised)
11. Transmission of full PRSP to World Bank and IMF			March–April 2002	May–June 2002 (revised)