

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix – Travail - Patrie

**MINISTÈRE DE LA RECHERCHE
SCIENTIFIQUE ET DE L'INNOVATION**

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Peace – Work – Fatherland

**MINISTRY OF SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

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**SPECIAL SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, Dr Madeleine TCHUINTE**

The Chairperson of the Cameroon Employers' Association (GICAM)
Heads of Employers' Associations,
Business leaders,
Businesspersons,
Distinguished invitees in your respective ranks, capacities and positions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a real pleasure and pleasant duty for me to be in your midst today in Douala, the economic heartbeat of our country, on the occasion of the 2016 edition of the Enterprise Days and University of GICAM. I am especially pleased to take part in this major event, which is an expression of the vitality, viability, seriousness and credibility of your Association.

On this solemn occasion, permit me from the outset convey to you greetings from the national scientific research and innovation community.

Then, allow me thank the GICAM Chairperson for having kindly invited me to take part in this important meeting. This invitation testifies without any doubt whatsoever to the interest that you have in a profession, often discreet, but quite visible through actions that are the foundation of the socio-economic transformations that have taken place in the construction and emergence of modern States. The profession I am referring to is made up of researchers and allied professionals, who spearhead innovation in all the sectors of Cameroon's economy just like elsewhere. And even today, scientific and technological progress, which is the outcome of the efforts of this trade category, are the catalyst of innovation and best guarantee of economic competitiveness.

Our favourable response to your invitation is part of the dialogue and partnership process that we have decided to launch between the business and the scientific research and innovation worlds.

MINRESI is convinced that promoting results from scientific research and technological innovation will guarantee the reinforcement of our economy's expansion, growth and competitiveness. This goal inevitably entails a strong partnership between the national scientific research and innovation system and companies.

Consequently, Research has to work to support companies in their permanent quest to innovate products, organisation and marketing procedures, as well as provide answers to their ever-increasing and diverse requests. In return, companies must accept to give Cameroonian research and innovation the required push to improve on its performances.

**The Chairperson of GICAM,
Business leaders,**

My presence here today is also a materialisation of some recommendations from the “Invest in Cameroon” Forum recently held in Yaounde under the auspices of the Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA; namely, establish ideal conditions for the creation of national champions as regards investment from the use of research results.

Before continuing my speech, permit me take a minute to refresh our memory about the shared commitments we took a few months back at the end of the high-level dialogue, held on the sidelines of the Scientific Research and Innovation Excellence Week (JERSIC 2015), in view of strengthening public-private sector partnership.

In fact, this dialogue led to strong resolutions, with the most important being:

- the creation of a permanent consultative framework between the private sector and the National Research and Innovation System, notably as part of the platform for dialogue between the Government and the private sector, widely known as “Cameroon Business Forum” ;
- the commitment made by companies to support the initiative launched by the Government to set up a cross-sector and inter-institutional funding mechanism, in the form of a National Development Fund for Research and Innovation (FONDRESI), a genuine instrument for the operational coordination and facilitation of funding for research as well as innovation programmes and projects ;
- the determination of the Government and companies to promote Scientific Research and Innovation at the service of development, with the support of institutional research ;
- the commitment of the Government and companies to create an institutional follow-up framework to implement resolutions from the high-level dialogue.

**The Chairperson of GICAM,
Business Leaders,**

We have to implement these resolutions for the shared interest of our two worlds and our country. If we act in this manner, we will in the near future be able to show national and international communities the seriousness of the mutually-beneficial partnership approach that we have taken. In essence, the aim is to show that our partnership approach is key to our society's development. As such, we will ultimately be able to state that the objectives targeted by the organisation of this dialogue have been achieved. On our part, the Government of the Republic will not spare any effort to ensure that the commitments made are honoured.

I would like to point out with great satisfaction that relations between our two communities get stronger by the day. It is worth mentioning, in this regard, the participation and speech from MINRESI during your General Assembly held on 17 December 2015, the signing on that same day, of a partnership agreement with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Crafts of Cameroon (CCIMA), and today the signing of the partnership agreement with your employers' organisation. Equally part of this drive is the audience that we recently granted, flanked by our closest collaborators, to GICAM's Executive Secretary, as part of the preparation of our participation in this meeting.

**The Chairperson of GICAM,
Business Leaders,**

The progress made so far, barely a few months after dialogue started between our two sectors, is a firm testament to our desire to work together in order to give meaning to our partnership.

Everyone now knows that the world is becoming a global village. We have fully entered into an era where the economy is increasingly driven by competition, requiring each State, whether big or small, developed or not, to adopt new attitudes that can enable it to survive. Henceforth, to exist from an economic perspective, we should be able to develop new capacities to conquer markets both internally and internationally, with innovative and competitive products. These capacities must undoubtedly be hinged on the following points:

- (1) the promotion of a modern economy based on knowledge and know-how , meaning science, technology and innovation, more competitiveness and even to adapt to the changes and demands of the global environment ; and
- (2) the creation of favourable conditions for the advent of a strong and mutually-enriching partnership between Research and Companies, likely to boost the creation of wealth and decent jobs for people's welfare.

This political vision is not the outcome of a spontaneous decision, but the culmination of a process patiently built over the years, with guidelines and strong political actions.

From this perspective, the Head of State has taken major decisions for research, which all support the modernisation of the National Research and Innovation System in view of making it a veritable economic instrument for wealth and job creation. The creation of a National Development Fund for Scientific Research and Innovation is fully consistent with this approach. We wish companies will accept to support this welcome decision by the Government so that research projects meet business needs.

In fact, for it to fully develop, research also needs support from companies. This explains why I am appealing to Cameroonian companies to once and for all stand with the Government in order to transform the research and innovation sector into the engine that will propel our country into emergence. This is the choice that has been made and implemented by South-East Asian countries, which in 50 years have gone from under-development to emergence thanks to science, technology and innovation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the national offer regarding research and innovation has grown, by becoming bigger and branching out beyond the standard sectors of higher education and public institutional research. Five (05) categories of stakeholders have been identified in the National Research and Innovation System, namely:

- (1) The government sector for support to policy and strategic development options laid down by the State, including research institutions under the supervisory authority of MINRESI or other ministries that use the results produced;
- (2) The higher education sector including universities and public as well as private institutions of higher learning working under the supervisory authority of the Ministry of Higher Education;

- (3) The private business sector ;
- (4) The private non-profit sector; and
- (5) The non-institutional sector made up of freelance researchers and innovators.

As you can see, the National Research and Innovation System of Cameroon brings together a broad range of actors, both institutional and non institutional, between whom interrelations, often informal, are loose and even non-existent. Let us make the diverse nature of these actors a driving force. These necessary ties should be built, consolidated and made into the binding power of our economic partnership drive for our country's emergence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The participation of MINRESI in the fair that you are organising on the sidelines of the University of GICAM is part of our policy to develop the function of transferring research results to economic sectors and promoting the culture of innovation in our society.

This exhibition-fair also provides the opportunity to present to you the offers in innovation from the laboratories of state institutional research, which can be used by companies.

I would also like, rather briefly, to present herein after the products being displayed by bodies under MINRESI's supervisory authority. As such, you will discover in our stands:

➤ **As regards agricultural research :**

- improved seeds of many varieties of maize, rice and , sorghum ;
- samples of varieties of soja, “*Méringué*” beans much appreciated by households ;
- plantains and varieties of Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and cassava cuttings ;

- citrus, pear, mango and mangosteen plants, citrus fruits, etc. ;
- plants of improved variety of oil palm (TENERA) ;
- cocoa and coffee plants and pods ;
- methods for the transformation of local milk into several types of soft fresh semi-firm cheese, yoghurts, etc. ;
- methods for manufacturing biscuits based on selected maize and natural cocoa powder (patented) and manufacturing of whisky from cocoa;
- methods for roasting coffee;
- methods for producing flour from protein-enriched cassava;
- methods for manufacturing strips from plantains.

It is also worth informing you that IRAD has won four golden medals for the relevance of plant varieties presented during the most recent edition of the International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva. These new varieties are available so that they can be used by your companies to create wealth and jobs in our country. These varieties are **Sorghum, variety CS54**; **Cassava, variety 8034**; **sweet potato, variety Tib1**; and **maize, variety COCA SR**. The characteristics shared by these plant discoveries are their capacity to adapt to diverse ecologies and their resistance to disease, their high-yield potential per hectare, and their capacity to meet human, animal as well as industrial food needs.

I am also taking this opportunity to hail during this event the good example set by some companies and partners that have considerably improved their output thanks to the use of these results from agricultural research. I would cite:

- Guinness, which is already using the sorghum CS54 variety that gives a highly distinct taste to the Guinness “made in Cameroon”
- SODECOTON, which is already using results from agricultural research to improve on its cotton, without using GMO.

- Malaysia, which used genes from oil palm developed by IRAD to improve on the output and competitiveness of its plantations. It is preparing to pay our country royalties for using these products.

➤ **As regards geological and mining research:**

- Improved stoves;
- Solar and hybrid dryers;
- Sawdust briquettes;
- Geological and mineral resource maps of Cameroon ;
- Maps of past and recent earthquakes;
- Maps showing the stations of the national hydrological network.

➤ **As regards cartographic and geographical research :**

- software that helps to avoid overlaps between the land of mining companies which can be used by local councils;
- the database on the various localities of the country ;
- the copy of the new aerial coverage of part of the territory;
- the use of GIS applications (Geographical Information System) in tablets/Smartphones, which have internal GPS, to monitor development projects and manage property. These applications can also be used to create marketable GPS for road traffic in Cameroon.

➤ **As regards medical research and study of medicinal plants:**

- CASMYC antifungal and TABERCINE antibacterial creams ;
- therapeutic foods and complements for persons living with HIV-AIDS and malnourished children, which stops them from losing weight and being stigmatised ;
- composite and fortified flour;

- essential oils used to manufacture cosmetic products.

➤ **As regards research on local materials**

- the production of baked bricks ;
- the production of compressed earthen blocks ;
- the construction of bridges, buildings and coatings ;
- the construction and repair of ovens, boilers and chimneys ;
- the manufacturing of tiles, bathroom installations and utensils ; new design and motifs using traditional frescoes.

Also:

- The National Radiation Protection Agency (ANRP) has expertise to carry out non-destructive tests;
- the National Committee for the Development of Technology has a huge database that can be used by companies ;
- the National Education Centre has expertise to conduct social studies for companies.

The Chairperson of GICAM,

Business Leaders,

I am taking this opportunity to invite the public and companies to visit, throughout the eight days of this edition, exhibition stands for products developed by Cameroonian scientific and technological research.

Take time to discuss with researchers privately or within the framework of B to B meetings, about the modalities for using research results to boost your performances and your competitiveness, and benefit from the series of innovation opportunities that public institutional research is making available to your

companies. Work to find useful resources for the development, production and commercialisation of some innovations for the greater good of your companies and the development of our beloved country.

In conclusion, I would once again state, generally speaking, that the Scientific Research and Innovation sector can fully play its role for our country's development and by ricochet, its emergence by 2035, only if a strong relationship is established between the offer of scientific as well as technological results and their industrial and commercial use.

**The Chairperson of GICAM,
Business Leaders,**

It is by investing a suitable volume of resources in research and innovation that we will come up with new processes, procedures, quality methods for organisation and marketing capable of supporting the competitiveness of your companies for the conquest of new markets. This is the meaning of the signing of the partnership between MINRESI and GICAM that will take place in the course of this ceremony.

The Chairperson of GICAM

While once again thanking you for having kindly invited us, I wish great success to this 3rd Edition of the Enterprise Days and University of GICAM held this 2016.

Long live the constructive dialogue between the Research and Corporate Communities in our country,

Long live the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation

Long live Cameroon and its illustrious Head of State and President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya, who works unrelentingly for the modernisation of the National Research and Innovation System in view of

transforming it into a veritable economic instrument for wealth and job creation in our country.

Thank you all for your kind attention.