

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Replies of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon concerning the list of issues (CRC/C/Q/CAM/1) received from the Committee on the Rights of the Child in connection with the initial report of Cameroon (CRC/C/28/Add.16)

Received on 31 July 2001

Replies of the Government to the questions of the Pre-sessional Working Group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the initial report of Cameroon (CRC/C/28/Add.16), as contained in document CRC/C/Q/CAM/1 dated 8 June 2001

Yaoundé, 31 July 2001

A. Data and statistics

Questions 1-4: Implementation of article 4 of the Convention, in particular additional information and disaggregated data (by age, sex, ethnic group and religion) on the amount and proportion (expressed as a percentage of the national budget) allocated to children in the fields of:

(a) Education

1. Universalization of primary education

Very specifically, the 1996 Constitution stipulates that primary education in Cameroon is compulsory. Primary education is designed to ensure that the fundamental educational needs of Cameroonian children are met and to provide all school-age children with the basic level of instruction and education required for personal and national development. In addition, the universalization of primary education dovetails with respect for the child's right to education and contributes to the fight against poverty. The abolition of parental contributions (school fees) for primary schooling was decided upon by the Head of State in his speech of 10 February 2000. Finance Act No. 2000/08 of 30 June 2000 recognizes and incorporates the principle of free primary school education at public schools in article 11, (new) paragraph 3.

The Government's objective in universalizing primary schooling is to enable every child of school age to receive a quality basic education by the year 2010. Each child is to be provided with a solid moral, civic, intellectual and practical foundation for a fulfilled life and a springboard for access to secondary school.

Accordingly, the goals are:

To accommodate 115,000 new pupils every year in the first year of primary school;

To raise school attendance from 65 to 75 per cent by the end of 2005.

These objectives will be achieved by abolishing all school fees; encouraging demand for education, particularly among girls; the construction and modernization of school buildings; and the recruitment and ongoing training of teachers.

FREE ACCESS TO PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The abolition of costs payable (school fees) for public primary schools was decided upon by the Head of State in his speech of 10 February 2000. The principle of free access to public primary schools is enshrined in article 11, paragraph 3, of Finance Act No.2000/08 of 30 June 2000.

The Government's objective is to broaden access to education for all children of school age and to prevent girls from dropping out of school. It is thus a matter of extending the coverage and enhancing the equality of primary and secondary schooling. Special emphasis has been placed on strengthening the participation of girls and boys living in priority education zones (the provinces of Extrême-Nord, Nord, Adamaoua, Est and pockets of low school enrolment in the big towns and in border areas), as well as initiatives to support children with special learning needs and early childhood development.

ENCOURAGING GIRLS TO ATTEND SCHOOL

To promote the mass enrolment of all school-age children and particularly of girls, the Government is launching awareness-raising and public information campaigns in collaboration with its partners (the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)).

The decline in the number of children in school that occurred between 1990-1991 and 1995-1996 was attributable to a levelling off of school enrolment under the impact of the economic crisis on the population's standard of living from the late 1980s. The untoward consequences included a decline in the population's purchasing power; an increase in unemployment owing to a wave of redundancies; a shortage of jobs for graduates; a loss of confidence among parents in the school system and, most important of all, the discontinuation of the practice of recruiting primary school teachers from the civil service. The increase in staff numbers since 1997-1998 can be attributed to a noticeable upswing in the economy in recent years and the changing outlook of parents regarding the desirability of sending their children to school. Table 2 below compares the growth in the number of children actually attending primary school with the increase in the numbers of children of primary-school age. The comparison reveals a significant gap of over 2 per cent between the two populations and corresponds to a potential overall cohort of more than 115,000 new entrants in the first year of primary school.

Table 2. Comparison of growth rates and numbers of children attending primary school (%)

Average annual growth rate (%)		
Period	Number of children of school age	School population
1990-1991	+3.0	+1.0
1995-1996	+2.3	+2.6
1996-1997	+0.7	+5.3
1997-1998	+3.4	+5.3
1998-1999	+1.8	

Source: Central Office of Censuses and Population Studies (BUCREP) (incorporating data from the English-speaking subsystem).

In 1999-2000, the general secondary education system catered for a total of 537,654 pupils divided between lower and upper secondary education. Lower secondary education caters for 410,197 pupils (76.3 per cent) and upper secondary for 127,367 (23.7 per cent) (see tables 1 and 2 attached).

Following a steady increase in the early part of the decade until 1995-1996, the secondary school population dipped by 8.04 per cent between 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 before climbing once again.

Vocational and technical education at the secondary level, which is pursued by a little over one quarter of the secondary school population, has expanded significantly (table 1).

3. Sex ratio of the school population

The sex ratio of the school population reveals a significant gap between the numbers of boys and girls in school. This skewing in favour of boys is, however, more apparent in technical and vocational education than at the primary or general secondary levels. In primary schools, the male/female parity index is estimated at 0.82. In provinces where school enrolment is high, these indices tend to converge, whereas, in the provinces of Adamaoua, Extrême-Nord and Nord, owing to tradition and/or religion, this index hovers around 0.5 in secondary technical education: even though the regulations seem to indicate that there is no discrimination against girls in terms of access to secondary technical education, only 44,278 girls, or 39.5 per cent of the total student

population, were enrolled in such courses in 1997-1998 (table 4). Girls tend to be concentrated in the commercial sector, the garment industry, the third sector and home economics; comparatively few are studying for a career in industry.

Table 4. Regional and gender disparities in school enrolment, 1998-1999

Province	Nursery school	Primary school			General secondary school	Technical secondary school	
	Gross attendance ratio	Gross attendance ratio	Gross attendance ratio (girls)	Parity girls/boys	Gross attendance ratio	Gross attendance ratio	Parity girls/boys
Adamaoua	3.24	52	43	0.69	10	2	0.41
Centre	35.98	118	115	0.98	31	8	0.67
Est	10.20	81	74	0.83	12	5	0.57
Extrême-Nord	0.67	51	34	0.48	6	1	0.52
Littoral	21.87	111	92	0.72	36	10	0.67
Nord	3.76	54	39	0.55	9	2	0.41
Nord-Ouest	4.39	64	61	0.88	16	4	0.47
Ouest	10.44	103	98	0.93	26	6	0.49
Sud	16.95	118	114	0.94	28	9	0.56
Sud-Ouest	7.50	61	58	0.89	20	3	0.48
Cameroon	11.49	80	72	0.82	20	6	0.57

Source: MINEDUC/DPRD/SDP/1999 (calculated on the basis of children attending school).

4. Education supply situation

In terms of infrastructure, there were 42,036 classrooms in the 8,753 primary schools functioning in 1998-1999, of which 19,956 were temporary constructions needing some degree of rehabilitation. Against a backdrop of achieving a net attendance ratio of 75 per cent by 2005 and the adoption of a notional class size of 50 pupils per teacher, the required number of classrooms and teachers is estimated at 53,651¹, which will necessitate the construction of 11,612 new classrooms between now and 2005 (or approximately 2,000 a year). The figures regarding classroom requirements do not paint a true picture, however, since no account is taken of the large number of multigrade classrooms.

¹ Increase in the number of teachers and classrooms by 2005 calculated on the basis of the school-age population, data supplied by BUCREP.

In the general secondary education sector, the number of classrooms in private schools decreased by 116 between 1997-1998 and 1998-1999. This can be explained by the economic crisis which led to the closure or mothballing of a number of private schools. In 1999-2000, there were 13,192 classrooms in general secondary schools, of which 1,869 were temporary structures. Of these, 40.7 per cent were in the private sector.

The technical and vocational secondary education sector comprises 298 establishments (not including SAR/SMs), of which 110 are in the State and 188 in the private sector. In 1998-1999, there were 1,557 classrooms and 442 workshops in State-run vocational schools, as against 2,651 classrooms and 718 workshops in private schools.

Current data on teaching staff (table 5) show that the number of primary-school teachers decreased by 2.02 per cent in the State sector between 1997-1998 and 1998-1999. This decrease can be explained to some extent by the freeze on the recruitment of primary-school teachers from the civil service which has been in effect since 1987.

5. Educational expenditure

Table 14. Changes in gross domestic product (GDP) and the budgets of MINEDUC, MINREST and the State

	1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999
GDP, current price (1)	3 243	3 207	3 125.5	3 147	450	4 571	4 932	5 250	5 406
State budget (2)	579 281	572 800	573 600	576 000	581 000	682 000	1 113 000	1 256 750	1 230 000
MINEDUC budget (3)	65 021	70 772	80 710	76 908	49 214	55 961	65 630	84 697	102 772
MINESUP budget (4)	9 947	10 947	10 309	16 145	63 712	3 337	13 016	11 795	12 974
Education budget (5)	74 968	81 719	91 019	93 053	1.18	59 298	78 646	96 492	15 746
MINEDUC budget/GDP (%)	1.9	2.2	2.58	2.25	8.4	1.22	1.33	1.6	1.9
MINEDUC budget/State budget (%)	11.2	12.3	14.7	13.3	10.9	8.2	5.8	6.7	8.3
Education budget/State budget (%)	12.9	14.2	15.8	16.1	1.53	8.6	7.0	7.6	9.4
Education budget/GDP (%)	2.19	2.54	2.9	2.7		1.29	1.59	1.83	2.14

Source: Steering Committee (based on data supplied by DSTAT-MINEFI).

(1) in billions of CFA francs; (2), (3) and (4) in millions of CFA francs.

The data in table 14 show that State expenditure on education has fluctuated according to the vagaries of the economic crisis. Thus, after approaching a level of expenditure close to 3 per cent of GDP in 1992-1993, the education budget as a proportion of GDP declined steadily until 1995-1996.

In 1996-1997, it stabilized, without, however, rising above the 2 per cent mark under which it had fallen in 1993-1994. Finally, in 1998-1999, the indicator climbed back above this level to 2.14 per cent.

As far as private education is concerned, the level of the States' financial contribution decreased from CFAF 7.305 billion in 1996-1997 to CFAF 3.150 billion in 1999-2000. This decrease of over 50 per cent is attributable to the adverse effects of the economic crisis which has afflicted Cameroon since the 1980s. While continuing to recognize that this form of education is in the public interest, the State has been obliged to review its policy; accordingly, Act No. 87/022 of 17 December 1987 stipulates that the financial responsibility of running private schools devolves in full measure upon the sponsors of such institutions. The allocation of grants-in-aid has now become a contingency at best.

Trends in State grants-in-aid to private schools

Year	Primary and nursery; secondary; independent and work-oriented	Apportionment				
		Total allocated	Catholic schools	Protestant schools	Islamic schools	Secular schools
1984/1985	Primary and nursery	3 800 000 000	2 266 742 000	1 307 900 000	93 913 000	131 445 000
	Secondary	1 896 360 000	896 228 000	416 550 000	10 560 000	573 022 000
	Independent and work-oriented	8 640 000	5 760 000	2 880 000		
	Total	5 705 000 000	3 168 730 000	1 727 330 000	104 473 000	704 467 000
1985/1986	Primary and nursery	4 476 000 000	2 551 882 000	1 582 445 000	136 130 000	205 543 000
	Secondary	2 096 360 000	1 003 005 000	445 890 000	10 560 000	636 905 000
	Independent and work-oriented	8 640 000	5 760 000	2 880 000		
	Total	6 581 000 000	3 560 647 000	2 031 215 000	46 690 000	842 448 000
1986/1987	Primary and nursery	4 260 000 000	2 427 340 000	1 446 358 000	152 337 000	233 965 000
	Secondary	3 036 000 000	1 522 012 000	759 381 000	11 430 000	743 177 000
	Independent and work-oriented	9 000 000	6 480 000	2 520 000		
	Total	7 305 000 000	3 655 832 000	2 208 259 000	163 767 000	977 142 000
1987/1988	Primary and nursery	4 200 000 000	2 247 340 000	1 406 893 000	132 337 000	233 430 000
	Secondary	2 259 079 000	1 044 700 000	482 574 000	11 299 000	720 506 000
	Independent and work-oriented	45 921 000	16 960 000	33 120 000	5 001 000	10 840 000
	Total	6 505 000 000	3 489 000 000	1 902 587 000	148 637 000	964 776 000
1988/1989	Primary and nursery	4 701 080 000	2 656 149 500	1 582 869 000	142 337 000	319 724 500
	Secondary	1 250 000 000	625 910 366	253 693 334	3 000 000	367 396 300
	Independent and work-oriented	48 920 000	16 480 000	12 640 000	6 560 000	13 240 000
	Total	6 000 000 000	3 298 539 866	1 849 202 334	151 897 000	700 360 800
1989/1990	Primary and nursery	4 855 080 000	2 856 749 500	1 583 078 500	142 337 000	272 915 000
	Secondary	1 104 400 000	532 401 000	227 306 000	4 000 000	340 693 000
	Independent and work-oriented	40 520 000	16 580 000	8 740 000	5 560 000	9 240 000
	Total	6 000 000 000	3 406 130 500	1 819 124 500	151 897 000	622 848 000

Year	Primary and nursery; secondary; independent and work-oriented	Apportionment				
		Total allocated	Catholic schools	Protestant schools	Islamic schools	Secular schools
1990/1991	Primary and nursery	3 215 992 000	1 088 794 500	1 046 400 500	94 079 000	186 718 000
	Secondary	743 488 000	354 803 000	157 021 000	2 644 000	229 020 000
	Independent and work-oriented	40 520 000	16 980 000	8 740 000	5 560 000	9 240 000
	Total	4 000 000 000	2 260 577 500	1 212 161 500	102 283 000	424 978 000
1991/1992	Primary and nursery	3 208 992 000	1 887 602 500	1 046 400 500	94 079 000	180 910 000
	Secondary	690 488 000	333 103 000	142 421 000	2 644 000	212 320 000
	Independent and work-oriented	40 520 000	17 215 000	9 115 000	5 075 000	9 115 000
	Balance	60 000 000				
1992/1993	Total	4 000 000 000	2 237 520 500	1 197 936 500	101 798 000	402 345 000
	Primary and nursery	3 228 042 000	1 887 622 500	1 049 040 500	94 079 000	197 300 000
	Secondary	708 698 000	333 296 000	142 854	2 748 000	230 000 000
	Independent and work-oriented	43 060 000	17 245 000	9 475 000	6 895 000	9 475 000
1993/1994	Balance	20 000 000				
	Total	4 000 000	2 238 133 500	1 201 369 500	103 722 000	436 775 000
	Primary and nursery	3 178 977 000	1 838 990 000	956 800 000	87 606 000	295 515 000
	Secondary	776 529 000	333 296 000	146 132 000	4 025 000	293 076 000
Not paid 1994/1995	Independent and work-oriented	44 560 000	18 715 000	9 475 000	6 895 000	9 475 000
	Total	4 000 000 000	2 191 001 000	1 112 407 000	98 526 000	598 066 000
	Primary and nursery	3 026 660 000	1 625 600 000	775 500 000	83 200 000	542 360 000
	Secondary	911 000 000	391 000 000	167 000 000		353 000 000
	Independent and work-oriented	62 340 000	16 855 000	9 115 000	6 895 000	9 475 000
	Total	4 000 000 000	2 033 455 000	951 615 000	90 095 000	904 835 000

Year	Primary and nursery; secondary; independent and work-oriented	Apportionment				
		Total allocated	Catholic schools	Protestant schools	Islamic schools	Secular schools
Paid 1994/1995	Primary and nursery	1 477 695 000	776 660 000	383 380 000	41 600 000	276 055 000
	Secondary	459 965 000	195 500 000	83 500 000		180 965 000
	Independent and work-oriented	42 340 000	16 855 000	9 115 000	6 895 000	9 475 000
	Commission	20 000 000				
1995/1996	Total	2 000 000 000	989 015 000	475 995 000	48 495 000	466 495 000
	Primary and nursery	1 900 000 000	1 018 228 581	518 910 899	72 874 991	289 985 529
	Secondary					
	Independent and work-oriented					
1996/1997	Total	1 900 000 000	1 018 228 581	518 910 899	72 874 991	289 985 529
	Primary and nursery	2 887 940 000	1 480 000 000	731 340 000	137 100 000	539 500 000
	Secondary	692 500 000	249 500 000	105 750 000	9 250 000	328 000 000
	Independent and work-oriented	69 560 000	31 200 000	13 440 000	9 980 000	14 940 000
1997/1998	Total	3 650 000 000	1 760 700 000	850 530 000	156 330 000	882 440 000
	Primary and nursery	2 402 690 000	1 236 273 000	696 500 000	188 167 000	381 750 000
	Secondary	508 750 000	205 000 000	78 500 000	10 000 000	215 250 000
	Independent and work-oriented	88 560 000	32 700 000	15 440 000	12 480 000	27 940 000
	Total	3 000 000 000	1 473 973 000	790 440 000	210 647 000	524 940 000

N.B. No payments were made in 1993-1994, and less than one quarter of the grant-in-aid (approximately CFAF 815,000,000) was paid in 1992-1993.

In 1995-1996, the EEC released CFAF 2,560,000,000, but only CFAF 1,900,000,000 was disbursed, to the primary and nursery sector only.

- (b) Health care, particularly primary health care, immunization programmes, health-care services for children, including social insurance

1. Amount and proportion of the national budget allocated to child health care

The “integrated care” option in primary health care has incorporated mother and child health into the training package for health workers at every level. An overall budget is allocated by the Ministry of Public Health for the implementation of both preventive and remedial care.

The proportion of the State budget allocated to health remains inadequate, given that the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that State contributions should be on the order of 10 per cent of the total national budget. This shortcoming is exacerbated by the low level of execution of budgeted investment credits, representing approximately 25 per cent of the entire budget.

This situation is possibly attributable to the following principal factors:

The cumbersome nature of State budget execution procedures;

The specific nature of the State budget: it is an overall, not a sector-based budget.

2. Households

Health-care expenditure accounts for 7.6 per cent of total household expenses in “poor” households and 6.6 per cent in “intermediate” households. Every Cameroonian household currently spends an average of CFAF 83,400 on health care, or CFAF 13,900 per head for an average family of six.

A large proportion of this spending, especially on medicines, occurs in the informal sector.

3. External financing

This is very poorly developed.

Table 1. Changes in the proportion of the budget executed by the Ministry of Public Health in relation to the national budget, 1991-1998

Year	Executive budget (Accounts Act), millions of CFAF			Non-executive budget
	National	Min. of Public Health	Min. of Public Health/national (%)	Min. of Public Health/national (%)
1991-1992	517 864	27 217	4.76	4.39
1992-1993	466 847	22 820	4.89	5.21
1993-1994	427 812	25 059	5.86	4.89
1994-1995	536 537	15 676	2.92	3.88
1995-1996	616 530	16 251	2.64	3.26
1996-1997	863 906	23 156	2.68	3.30
1997-1998	862 302	26 388	3.06	2.58

Sources: MINEFI (Budget Department), Compilation of financial legislation (not including external financing).

4. Child health

Child survival is supported by four priority programmes:

The extended immunization programme;

The national programme to promote breastfeeding;

The diarrhoeal disease control programme.

All these programmes and other child-related issues will be combined in a programme to introduce comprehensive treatment for childhood illnesses.

The extended immunization programme

All public health-care facilities immunize under-fives in accordance with the extended immunization programme. This ongoing project has been strengthened since 1996 by the organization of national anti-polio vaccination days. Overall, immunization coverage in Cameroon is developing satisfactorily. In 2000, only VAT2 coverage posted a decline in comparison with the previous year.

Antigen	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
BCG	54	55	53	63	66	76
DTP1	No data	53	50	No data	58	67
DTP3	46	44	43	48	48	56
Default rate	No data	15	14	No data	17	16
IPV 1	No data	44	43	No data	58	67
IPV 3	46	43	47	48	48	56
Var	46	39	43	47	46	51
VAT2	12	35	32	38	48	43
Completeness of reporting	70	77	75	78	80	85

Source: Multiannual extended immunization programme plan of action.

Vitamin A

Table 3. Proportion of children aged between 6 and 59 months receiving a vitamin A high-dose supplement

Indicators	1998	1999	2000
% of children receiving vitamin A	36.3		
% of mothers receiving vitamin A			

Source: National vaccination day 1998, extended immunization programme/Ministry of Public Health.

Table 4. Eradication of polio in Cameroon through special immunization campaigns

National vaccination day, coverage	1998	1999	2000
Number of polio cases	24		

Source: Extended immunization programme, Ministry of Public Health.

Table 5. Immunization of females aged between 15 and 49 years against tetanus (mother states that she has received at least two injections of tetanus toxoid)

Age	1998	1999	2000
Below 20	51.0		
20-34	49.4		
35+	43		
Total births	49		

Source: Demographic and Health Survey II.

National programme to promote breastfeeding

Campaigns to promote breastfeeding as the sole means of nurturing children up to the age of four months have been launched throughout the country. The percentage of women who breastfeed thus increased from 7 per cent in 1991 to 15 per cent in 1998.

Table 6. Breastfeeding

Indicators	1998	1999	2000
Percentage of women who breastfeed exclusively (below 4 months)	15.4		
Percentage combining breastfeeding and formula (7-9 months)	86.2		
Percentage who breastfeed without interruption (20-23 months)	29.6		

Source: EDE II.

Despite these measures, child mortality nevertheless increased in Cameroon in the period 1991-1998 owing to the deterioration in children's hygiene situation during these years. The economic crisis affected children's health by reducing the scope for intervention by parents and the authorities.

Thus, the number of chronically malnourished children almost doubled in the 0-6 month age group (from 3.2 per cent in 1991 to 5.5 per cent in 1998) and increased by nearly 50 per cent in the 6-23 month age group (from 13 per cent in 1991 to 18 per cent in 1998 for children aged 6-11 months and from 32 per cent in 1991 to 44 per cent in 1998 for children aged 12-23 months). In 1998, only 41 per cent of children with fever and 50 per cent with diarrhoea could be admitted to a health facility.

Table 7. Diarrhoea

Indicators	1998	1999	2000
Percentage of under-fives with diarrhoea	18.9		
Use of oral rehydration therapy	33.8		
Home treatment of diarrhoea	64		

Source: Children aged 0-35 months, Demographic and Health Survey II.

Table 8. Maternal and infant mortality (%)

Indicators	1991	1998
Crude death rate (per thousand)	12.8	10.1
Infant mortality rate (per thousand)	65	77
Juvenile mortality rate (per thousand)	65.6	79.9
Maternal mortality rate (per thousand)	430	430
Total fertility rate	5.6	5.14
Life expectancy at birth (years)	54.3	59

Sources: EDSC 1, EDSC 2, DSCN 98.

Table 9. Deaths owing to measles

Indicators	1998	1999	2000
Measles deaths, five-year-olds	311		258
Measles cases, under-fives	10 731		9 141

Source: Extended immunization programme/Ministry of Public Health.

Table 10. Deaths owing to acute respiratory infections in under-fives

Indicators	1998	1999	2000
Percentage of deaths in under-fives attributable to acute respiratory infections			
Percentage of cases	19.7		
Home treatment of acute respiratory infections	33.8		

Source: Demographic and Health Survey II.

Adolescent health

National AIDS prevention programme

In Cameroon, HIV transmission occurs in 90 per cent of cases of unprotected sexual relations (predominantly heterosexual). Transmission by blood or from mother to child accounts for approximately 10 per cent of infections.

The rate of seroprevalence in the sexually active population is estimated to be 11 per cent, or 22 times what it was in 1987, when it stood at 0.5 per cent. The number of people living with HIV is estimated at over 937,000 and one sexually active Cameroonian in nine is currently infected.

Almost 43 per cent of persons infected with HIV are between 15 and 34 years old.

Table 11. HIV1 prevalence in the sexually active population, by province (2000)

Province	Total tested	Total HIV-positive	Prevalence (%)
Centre	403	45	11.2
Sud	322	36	11.2
Littoral	276	17	6.2
Sud-Ouest	399	49	12.3
Ouest	434	26	6.0
Nord-Ouest	400	46	11.5
Est	339	34	10.0
Adamaoua	330	56	17.0
Nord	417	40	9.6
Extrême-Nord	335	44	13.1
Total	3 655	393	11.0

Table 12. Behaviour in the context of HIV/AIDS varies according to gender

Change of behaviour	Males, 15-19 years	Females, 15-19 years	Males, 20-24 years	Females, 20-24 years
No change	19.8	35.9	12.1	36.9
Have not begun sexual relations	33.3	19.1	6.8	1.9
Have discontinued sexual relations	3.0	2.8	4.0	1.5
Have started to use a condom	18.8	7.3	32.6	9.7
Have limited relations to a single partner	18.7	29.1	33.9	44.0
Have limited the number of partners	11.4	6.6	27.6	8.9
Have requested their partner to be faithful	2.4	2.4	7.9	4.0
Avoids prostitutes	4.7	N/A	9.6	N/A
Other undesirable changes in sexual behaviour	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3
Other desirable changes in non-sexual behaviour	1.4	1.4	0.4	1.6
Other undesirable changes in non-sexual behaviour	5.4	4.4	5.3	4.2

Source: Demographic and Health Survey II (1998).

Teenage pregnancies

The status of women in Cameroon is influenced by deep-rooted social norms which value a woman primarily in her role as a wife and mother, a mentality that prompts many parents to want their daughter to marry before she is legally of age. This situation, coupled with an economic climate that is hostile to women, exposes young Cameroonian women to the risk of teenage pregnancy.

Table 13. Percentage of women who give birth before the ages of 15 and 18

Indicators	2000
Mother by age 15	10%
Mother by age 18	33%

Table 14. Access by pregnant women aged 15-49 to antenatal care

Indicators	1998	1999	2000
Antenatal care (%)	77.4		
Care during childbirth (%)	58.2		
Obstetric care			

Source: Demographic and Health Survey II.

Contraceptive use

The reproductive health sector benefits from a climate that is favourable to initiatives in this sphere owing to the adoption of a number of instruments and the approval of various programmes and projects.

Since 1980, Act No. 80-10 of 14 July 1980 has authorized the sale of oestrogen-based contraceptives in Cameroon. Preventive measures have been put in place by the Government to avoid unwanted pregnancies.

The announcement of the national policy for implementing the primary health care refocus programme (1993) and the standard policy document on maternal and child health and family planning, while aiming to improve and promote maternal and child health, have also helped to improve the accessibility and take-up rate of basic services through support of Government efforts to decentralize the health care system and make contraceptives essential medicinal products.

Table 15. Contraceptive use

Indicators	1998
Prevalence of modern contraceptive methods (%)	8
Prevalence of traditional contraceptive methods (%)	14.7
Fertility rate of women aged 15-19 (per thousand)	14.2
Total fertility rate (%)	5.2

Source: Demographic and Health Survey II.

It should be noted, however, that only a limited number of health care facilities offer maternal and child health and family planning services and most of these are located in urban areas. Sparse nationwide coverage and the slow rate of expansion of maternal and child health and family planning are just some of the problems to which special attention needs to be given. Furthermore, generalized poverty, a lack of information among all classes of the population and the very low level of male participation in reproductive health initiatives are equally formidable obstacles to wider access and recourse to reproductive health services.

Question 6: Statistical data on the number of juvenile courts and juvenile magistrates

There are no special juvenile courts or children's judges in Cameroon. However, the Decree of 30 November 1928 did establish special courts and a probation system for minors, but, owing to inadequate facilities and lack of staff, these functions are being exercised on a provisional basis by the ordinary trial courts. Thus, in criminal cases, the trial court is competent to hear cases involving all offences and crimes committed by minors, whereas crimes committed by adults can only be heard by a regional criminal court.

However, the procedure in such cases is that provided for in special legislation to protect minors. The court has special sentencing options and, if a minor is liable to a penalty, he automatically benefits from mitigating circumstances on the grounds that he is under age.

In 1999, however, only 21 per cent of courts assigned an officer to deal exclusively with juvenile cases on a full-time basis.

Only 13.2 per cent of prosecuting authorities assigned an officer to handle cases involving minors.

Question 7: Detailed information (by age, sex, rural/urban areas) per year, 1999-2001
Number of working children

According to the 1999 statistical yearbook, the number of working children (excluding the agricultural sector) is estimated at 610,209. Estimates for 2000 are not available, but the trend is upwards because the number of children in work increased from 227,287 in 1987 to 590,000 in 1997, an increase of 59.58 per cent over 10 years.

Preventive measures have been taken to combat economic exploitation, especially child labour. This includes domestic work and forced labour by children. There are also measures to protect vulnerable children, particularly those who live and/or work on the streets, and studies are being undertaken with a view to ratifying International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 138 and 182.

All these measures are provided for in the national plan to combat child labour, which is now being finalized.

The measures include:

Speeding up the process of ratifying ILO Convention (No. 182) concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour;

Identifying cases of child labour through the establishment of an employment observatory which will provide statistics on employment in general and child labour in particular;

Formulation of a law to protect working children;

Establishment within the Labour Inspectorate of specially designated structures to monitor child labour with the power to take action in the mainstream and informal sectors of the economy;

Evaluation and possible revision of instruments pertaining to child adoption;

Conclusion of a protocol of agreement with the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) against the backdrop of initiatives to eradicate child labour.

Special protection for all children aged under 18 is provided for within the legal framework described in the initial report.

A new development is the ratification of ILO Convention No. 138 by a decree of 17 April 2001 pursuant to the adoption on 14 April 1998 by the National Assembly of an act authorizing the President to ratify the said Convention.

Disabled children

(c) Disabled children: No statistics are available owing to the lack of a system for gathering information.

(d) Protection of disabled children: There are three State-run institutions catering for disabled people, including a centre specializing in the rehabilitation of disabled children at (DSN: please provide details). Budget allocations to this institution over the last three years are as follows:

1998-1999:

1999-2000:

2000-2001:

Point 2 (awaiting information and clarification from DSN)

(c) Disabled children

(a) Number and percentage of children with disabilities: No statistics are available owing to the lack of a system for gathering information.

(b) Number and percentage of children whose disability is managed either at home or in an institution: No statistics are available owing to the lack of a system for gathering information.

(c) Number and percentage of disabled children integrated into the normal school system and numbers benefiting from special education: no data available.

Number of schools and teachers involved in provision of schooling for disabled children: no data available.

Point 3

(i) Pre-school education: No reliable data is available owing to the lack of studies on pre-school institutions and early childhood facilities.

However, a relevant study is currently being carried out within the framework of the national early childhood policy.

Point 4

Violence against children and child abuse. A study on violence against children and child abuse is currently being carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The study began in September 2000. The collection of field data is almost complete. The task of analysing the results is continuing.

With the support of UNICEF, a national NGO has conducted a study of violence in the home and at school. The validation and dissemination of the results of this study are anticipated.

(d) Children in need of other forms of supervision, for example remand homes.

Number of young offenders sentenced and placed in rehabilitation institutions operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs: between 1999 and 2001, six State-run rehabilitation institutions catered for approximately 900 socially maladjusted minors and juvenile delinquents. One of these institutions is specially designed for girls at risk. Between 1999 and 2001, approximately 600 girls attended this facility on a regular basis.

A decree has just been signed to reinvigorate these institutions. By contrast, there is no reliable data on how children in trouble are dealt with in the prison system, owing to the lack of a system for compiling statistics and the low level of supervision of the penitentiary system by the social welfare services.

B. General measures of implementation

(a) In order to bring statutory law into line with the Convention, a survey of legislative and regulatory provisions is now being conducted. It involves identifying provisions which are inconsistent with the Convention either wholly or in part and distinguishing them from those provisions which conform fully.

This survey was the subject of a workshop held at Kribi in December 2000. The workshop was organized by UNICEF under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice.

(b) Pursuant to Decree No. 69/DF/544 of 19 December 1969, subsequently amended by Decree No. 71/DF/607 of 3 December 1971, the traditional courts are:

Courts of first instance;

Customary courts.

These courts operate in accordance with two basic tenets:

The courts' jurisdiction is subject to the consent of all the parties involved. Modern law applies in cases where one of the parties refuses to recognize the jurisdiction of a traditional law court; In their decisions, traditional law courts are obliged to indicate the custom which they have applied. If this custom is manifestly contrary to law, general principles of law will apply.

The most important inconsistency between customary law and the Convention concerns freedom of opinion (art. 12). The expression and consideration of the child's opinion are not guaranteed under customary law.

(c) The Convention has become part of domestic law. Litigants are thus entitled to invoke its provisions in the courts, especially since it takes precedence over domestic law.

(d) Customary courts are part of the domestic court system. Accordingly, they are designed to settle disputes and their jurisdiction is defined in writing.

Generally speaking, traditional courts are competent to hear civil and commercial cases which statutory law does not expressly reserve for the modern law courts.

Specifically, courts of first instance can hear cases involving the personal and civil status of individuals, marriage, divorce, descent, inheritance, rights *in rem* and real estate.

Customary courts hear disputes of an economic nature, for example claims for recovery of civil and commercial debts, claims for compensation for damage to property and personal injury claims and disputes relating to contracts.

2. Article 29 (1) of Decree No. 98/069 of 4 May 1998 entrusts the Ministry of Social Affairs with the general task of devising and elaborating programmes to promote and protect the rights of the child, without any real interaction.

Outside this framework, no other mechanisms exist to coordinate the enforcement of the rights of the child. Accordingly, the various initiatives to help children are carried out haphazardly by ministries, on the one hand, and private organizations, on the other. This makes it difficult to coordinate interaction and reciprocal initiatives.

Against this background, the authorities are endeavouring to improve the coordination of the enforcement of the rights of the child in Cameroon. This is the way forward to integration.

In 1990, the National Commission to Protect Children at Risk, Juvenile Delinquents and Abandoned Children was formed. However, owing to financial constraints, this body is experiencing operating difficulties;

In January 2001 an inter-ministerial committee was established to coordinate programmes involving cooperation between Cameroon and UNICEF. Its overall objective is to ensure coordination, follow-up and monitoring of the execution of such programmes.

In addition, a number of NGOs are making contributions to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child through programmes and activities focusing on information, mobilization and education. Others are providing care for children in distress or children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Examples of such NGOs are Plan International, which supports children from disadvantaged backgrounds, isolated regions and minority groups (pygmies), and SOS-Kinderdorf International, which provides full-time care for 13 orphans and children with sick parents. Other NGOs provide assistance to children in prison.

3. The National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms (CNDHL) and its contribution to enforcing and monitoring the rights of the child.

The establishment of the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms (CNDHL) by Decree No. 90/1459 of 8 November 1990 was intended to strengthen the process of democratizing public life which is currently under way in Cameroon. The Committee's goal is to protect and promote human rights and freedoms.

As part of its remit to promote the wider knowledge of human rights instruments by all available means, CNDHL compiles and disseminates documents containing core international human rights instruments.

The Committee also organizes seminars for its own members and law enforcement personnel. These include:

A seminar held in Yaoundé from 21 to 24 September 1993 and sponsored by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights;

Four human rights seminars intended for administrators and law enforcement personnel, held respectively at Yaoundé (25-27 July 1997); Bamenda (27-31 March 1995); Douala (5-8 December 1995); and Buéa (7-10 May 1996);

A human rights seminar for lawyers (judges, attorneys, etc.) held at Mbalmayo from 9 to 12 January 1996;

The First African Conference of National Human Rights Institutions, held at Yaoundé from 5 to 7 February 1996;

A consultation meeting on cooperation between CNDHL and NGOs was held in Yaoundé in July 2001.

Furthermore, in 1998, as part of the events to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a seminar was held on the promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

Finally, a technical assistance programme concluded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and CNDHL is currently being finalized. This technical support will enhance the effectiveness of CNDHL.

4. The introduction of human rights training for civilian, military, judicial, medical and law enforcement personnel is a fairly recent innovation. Training is offered at two levels: basic (initial) and ongoing.

At the initial stage, general human rights courses are included in the curricula of the various training colleges.

At the Gendarmerie Training College, human rights courses were introduced in 1993. The curriculum at the National Legal Service Training College and the National Prison Service Training College (ENAP) includes a core rights element and a law enforcement element.

As for the police force, the courses offered by the National Police Training College (ENSP), particularly the course on ethical police conduct, are intended to inculcate in police officers a culture of respect for the law and human dignity.

Furthermore, a number of seminars, conferences and round tables have been organized with a view to informing and raising the awareness of various segments of the population about the rights of the child and the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The launch of the subregional centre for human rights and democracy in Yaoundé in March 2001 will certainly permit the strengthening of the policy of training and raising awareness of the rights of the child. Accordingly, the first subregional workshop organized by the centre has focused on human rights education in Central Africa.

Moreover, a national human rights education policy is currently being finalized. Among other things, it provides for the introduction of human rights education in primary and secondary schools.

Part III

New legislation affecting children

Decree No. 2001/109/PM of 20 March 2001 providing for the organization and operation of State-run institutions for the supervision of minors and the rehabilitation of socially maladjusted youngsters;

Decree No. 2001/110/PM of 20 March 2001 providing for the organization and operation of early childhood facilities;

Finance Act 2001/2002, article 18 (3) of which stipulates that primary education shall be free of charge.

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