

Globalization and its effects on cameroon



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I. INTRODUCTION

A-Definition

Globalization is the process of economic, political and social integration of people across the globe into a complex system of exchange and corporation.

According to Wikipedia encyclopedia: “ globalization describes an ongoing process by which regional economies society and cultures have become integrated through a globe-spanning network of communication”.

Globalization is multidimensional, affecting all aspects of life-economic, cultural, environmental and social as well as relations between governments and nations on all the continents. It is characterized by an intensification of cross border trade and increased financial and foreign direct investment flows, promoted by rapid liberalization and advances in information technologies. Its implications range from the trade and investment flows as well as flows of capital. The global process of globalization has made the pursuit of development and maintenance of internal and external stability very difficult and delicate task. On one hand globalization holds out to those countries that are engaged in the process, the promise of a sustainable growth in trade and international investment. On the other hand, it heightens the risks of instability and marginalization. Globalization is multifaceted with many important dimensions composed by the flow of information, data, knowledge and technologies. For instance, internet facilitates the exchange of information and makes various peoples around the world always connected. In this process a doctor located in Cameroon can obtain help from a colleague located in Hungary at any time on an extremely urgent case without need to travel, but just by using his computer

and the internet connection. What we can do with the telephone of course in some cases. Two students from distant countries can work together when necessary using new technologies of information.

B – Necessity and genesis of globalization

Disputed, there is still little idea that a kind of process comparable to globalization took place during the Antiquity and this process was happening step by step. One can locate a first expression of this process from the second millennium before Jesus-Christ: a vast commercial zone extending from Indus in the Minoan world via the cities of Fertile Crescent. This first attempt will be of short duration because of the stop of trade caused by the irruption of Indo-European invaders at the end of the second millennium.

The second attempt will take place at the creation of the Persian Empire which allows the establishment of an indirect commercial contact between the phenician and Greek colonies and between Indian cities. The Greeks therefore became fully aware of wideness of the world.

Far from putting a term at this commercial cultural and diplomatic process of unification of the ancient world, destruction of the Persian Empire will increase it appreciably. Thus « Hellenistic globalization” has common features with that of our time:

* The mixing of the populations: following the conquests of Alexandre, the Greeks will settle everywhere in the Persian Empire (in particular in Bactriane). Consequently they create for themselves cosmopolitan cities with the example of Alexandria, populated by Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews.

* The constitution of a world culture: the Greek culture becomes universal culture that the non-Greek endeavors to acquire. We also have the constitution of a welt-Literature (the library of Alexandria containing Indian and Buddhist texts).

* Intensification and the globalization of the exchanges: the trade becomes particularly flourishing, primarily because of the suppression of the tariff barriers as a result of the quasi-disappearance of imperial authority. The Greeks settled in India were involved in the production of Buddha that was exported to Japan.

* Multilateralism: constitution of more or less equal States by their size and their strength, which involves certain emulation.

* The technical innovation: great scientific and advanced technical discoveries will not be equalized before a long time with Syracuse and Alexandria in particular.

Globalization began gaining momentum in the 1960s when businesses in search of larger markets expanded their reach and interests beyond national borders. Four major developments have defined and strengthened this process: the expansion of the universe of economic activity beyond the nation-state; the liberalization of international trade; the growing importance of international financial flows; and the growth of information and communication technologies. These developments have almost completely refashioned the world economic system. We can also mention the aftermath of the Second World War with the creation of the WTO, GATT, IMF WORLD

BANK during 1940 decade, to prevent another world crisis and to promote the reconstruction of Europe and the development of the global trade.

II. INFLUENCE OF GLOBALIZATION ON CAMEROON

Globalization has helped increase growth and wealth in recent years, but it has not done so for all continents and all countries. In the least developed countries and on the African continent in particular, a worsening of existing imbalances has impeded development and aggravated poverty. The marginalization of these countries is reflected in their small share of world trade, output, and foreign investment.

For countries like Cameroon, the situation is exacerbated by unsustainable external debt and by unfulfilled promises of official assistance at a time when the country cannot continue its reforms and development efforts without financial support. We should examine the different facets of globalization and assess its benefits and risks in light of the recent Economic, Political and Social evolution that have shaken Cameroon.

A. ECONOMIC IMPACT

Despite a sometimes unfavorable international environment, marked by climatic constraints that have affected northern regions of the country, Cameroon has, on the whole, recorded satisfactory rates of growth in recent years. The country recorded growth of 5 percent or more in 1998, and the country is working to improve per capita GNP significantly while controlling inflation. However, this performance has been achieved at the price of costly structural reforms that have often negatively affected the most vulnerable segments of society.

Moreover, Cameroon is still far from reaching its goal of an annual sustained growth rate above 7 percent a year, which is essential if it is to achieve the quality of life of other developing countries. It is not impossible for Cameroon to accomplish this goal, but it can do so only by integrating with the world economy and by accelerating reforms, with two fundamental objectives in mind:

(i) Creating the best possible conditions for private investment by promoting greater openness in domestic and foreign trade; and

(ii) Making the economy more efficient by redefining the role of the state, reforming the civil service so as to improve the business climate, and introducing a transparent legal and regulatory framework that will encourage private investment. Governments should focus on social development, particularly health and education, to make up the large deficit that the country has in this area.

The financial sector, an essential channel for implementing and ensuring the success of these reforms, must be included in any reform program. The consolidation, restructuring, and modernization of the banking sector and the development of capital markets and financial institutions are both important. However, past experience suggests that, to be successful, reforms must be adapted to each country's specific economic and social characteristics as well as to its priorities and level of development.

While Cameroon may bear primary responsibility for achieving the reform and development objectives, international organizations and the international community must support Cameroon's efforts. If the clear desire

of Cameroon to pull itself up and become part of the world economy is combined with greater determination on the part of the industrial countries to honor their commitments and open their markets, with the support of regional and international organizations, we will be able to meet the challenges of increasing growth and reducing poverty and thus lay the foundation for political, economic, and social stability.

As a first step, the industrial countries could support Cameroon's efforts by allowing the country's exports free access to their markets, which would enable the heavily indebted countries in particular to better integrate with the global trading system. The abolition of trade barriers, according to some studies, could yield income flows that are three times the amount of the external aid provided to the developing countries. This conclusion leads us to a crucial point about the availability of resources, which have thus far been insufficient for Cameroon relief from the burden of their external debt, through cancellation or rescheduling, would enable the country to save resources that could be allocated to productive investment, which would generate growth and improve social justice.

These same partners could provide additional support by promoting flows of private capital to Cameroon, especially Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which instead of generating debt, creates new jobs and often brings new technologies to the country. Indeed, if Cameroon is to raise the level of its technological development, it will need to establish partnerships with the advanced industrial countries in the areas of natural and mineral resources. Through these partnerships, know-how would be transferred from the advanced economies to the country and provide value added that would

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position the country's products to meet global demand and compete internationally. Finally, Cameroon's partners could provide support by honoring their existing financial commitments to the reduction of poverty. Poverty in Cameroon affects close to 40% of its people. Cameroon can make good progress evading the scourge of poverty and improve the lives of its citizens if it relies on new existing blue prints and capture the benefits of globalization. Communication technology has herald a global competition for capital goods, bank loans and other services. Today's economy depicts a world in which innovation is more important than mass production. A world in where investment buys new concepts or the means to create them rather than new machines. A world where rapid change is a constant, a world at least as different from what came before as the industrial age was from its agricultural predecessor, a world so different such that its emergence can only be described as a revolution. Where do developing countries such as Cameroon fit in this new world economy? What can Cameroon do to become a major player in today's global economy?

B. POLITICAL IMPACT

A combination of new technologies and the globalization of the economy present challenges to the government of Cameroon, the custodian of the wellbeing of its people. Until recently, the state's scope of activities had no defined limits. In addition to its sovereign functions (for example, security, justice, education, and health care), it was involved in economic life through direct control over the production and distribution of many goods and services. In Cameroon, the state has been responsible for managing even

financial institutions, as well as controlling trade and capital flows between the national economy and the rest of the world.

This interventionist system, which was justified in various ways, eventually ran out of steam in early 1990s. But it did not give way to a burgeoning private initiative. A restrictive regulatory framework limited private initiatives to marginal activities, stifling the emergence of a true entrepreneurial class. It is precisely from this restrictive regulatory framework that Cameroon must extricate itself if she is to realize her true potential in the global economy. For this to happen, government action must focus on four areas.

a) Stabilizing the macroeconomic situation. This is essential if Cameroon is to be competitive in the globalized economy. Unproductive spending, fiscal imbalances, and large balance of payments deficit needs to be contained. Only then will the state be able to devote more resources to the construction of adequate infrastructure (such as better roads, deep seaports and proper airports, adequate supply of electricity, and availability of portable water), consolidation of the long-term bases of development (such as education, health care, and the environment), and the struggle against poverty and unemployment.

b) Reducing the size of the public sector. The state needs to withdraw from the commercial sector and devote more time and resources to the delivery of essential public services. The tool for this is the privatization of inefficient public enterprises. Neoclassical reasoning intimates that the private sector is far better equipped than the government to manage commercial activities effectively, because its decision-making apparatus is less unwieldy and its

ability to adapt to changes in the environment is greater. Reforms in the public sector must be guided by the desire to liberalize economic activities and promote free enterprise. Therefore, the state must encourage healthy competition among businesses while eliminating economic rents and mechanisms that legally confer a dominant position on a firm or economic agent/ethnic groups.

A framework for allowing market forces to efficiently determine prices needs to be instituted. Such a framework would encourage competition among businesses and suppress the distortions inherent in any system of administered prices and controls. Thus, the establishment of the Douala Stock Exchange (DSX) is a welcome move. The DSX will no doubt (i) promote the movement of capital across Cameroon and foreign markets; (ii) increase investment opportunities; (iii) encourage optimum financing for Cameroonian firms; and (iv) increase the attractiveness of Cameroon as a country for investment, both by regional and non-regional investors. To reap maximum benefit from these, Cameroon needs to liberalize trade and foreign exchange transactions to attract foreign investment.

c) Good governance. Cameroon needs to focus on the following issues:

Ø Transparency of government. Citizens must be kept informed of the decisions of the state and their justification. There must be simplicity of procedures. Whether in fiscal matters, investment, or other areas, administrative procedures need to be as simple as possible, with the number of participants reduced to a minimum.

Ø Responsibility. Public officials must be held accountable and, if necessary, penalized for offenses. The fight against corruption must be intensified. Eradication of this scourge is imperative for promoting healthy competition, eliminating surcharges, and strengthening the efficiency of economic management.

Ø Individual freedom and collective expression. A free and responsible press, in particular, is an important pillar of democracy. The State must uphold the independence of the legal system. The legal system must be free from pressure and intervention from political forces or any other organization, to ensure that its decisions are independent and impartial. While Cameroonian business laws on paper are clear, few foreign investors have come forward because implementation of those laws is problematic. Under the current judicial system, local and foreign investors have found it complicated and costly to enforce contract rights, protect property rights, and obtain a fair and expeditious hearing before the courts.

C. SOCIAL IMPACT

In Cameroon, civil society plays a dual role. First, as a mouthpiece for democracy, it is the chief challenger of the power of the state, limiting deviations from good governance and acting as a regulator in the political arena. This civil society (voluntary organizations, community groups, trade unions, church groups, co-operatives, business, professional and philanthropic organizations and a range of other NGOs) is growing remarkably fast. It is becoming more organized and collaborates effectively with civil society in other countries. Cooperation with institutions such as the International Federation of Human Rights is a good example of how this

phenomenon works. In the areas of development, the environment or human rights, NGOs have added a new dimension to traditional politics and have helped to find new forms of addressing national problems. As evidenced in the privatization and deregulation schemes, Cameroon is forging ahead with the establishment of a proper functioning market economy. However, despite its overall efficiency, the market economy can generate negative social and environmental externalities. Civil society, as represented by consumer associations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), serves as a watchdog to contain market excesses and to guard against environmental abuse by increasing public awareness of ecological problems for example, disposal of toxic waste.

Civil society also has a major role to play in smoothing the entry of Cameroon into the global economy. Being close to the people and their concerns, it is the appropriate forum for raising awareness of the challenges globalization poses and for the necessary changes in thinking. It is therefore important that civil society be fully involved in defining growth strategies, whose success is largely dependent on popular support. In sum, civil society can also play a significant role in promoting the mobilization of savings through decentralized financial institutions and, in general, helping to combat poverty especially via the microfinance schemes.

III. CAMEROON EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

On many aspects, history, colonial, socio-cultural, geographical, religious, human, linguistic, Cameroun is the country of diversity, Country of contrasts; moreover Cameroon is sometime considers like Africa in miniature. Its specificities are rather representative of the other African contexts in the

south of the Sahara. In order to comprehend the Cameroon school system it is important to relate its history and evolution and to address how education in Cameroon copes with the stakes of globalization.

A. HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

It is undoubtedly advisable to recall that the history of school in Cameroun is closely linked, first to the large campaign of Christian evangelization, second to the project of colonization engaged by the European States. On this point, one of the Cameroun specificities is to have known three colonial models and thus three colonial systems of school, which subjacent ideology influences remain strong in the current modes of education.

Our concern is thus to observe the process of construction of the school, through its actors, with the consequent impact of successive reforms. Three key moments marked the development of the school and the school policies in Cameroun: the colonial period (1844-1959), the post independence period (1960-1985) and from 1990 to our days.

The colonial period (1844-1959)

The origin of school in Cameroun is precise. Many authors agree to say that it is with the arrival of missionaries “ Baptist missionaries” from London, settled on the Cameroonian littoral since 1841 that schooling starts. In fact, the first school opens its doors in 1844 in Bimbia at the instigation of Joseph Merrick. Later, we assist to the settlement of others congregations, and in particular the Bâlois missionary of protestant confession, the fathers pallotins and American Presbyterians. All intervene on the school scene and the ground of conversion. In 1859, we already count seven schools Baptists including five in Douala, one in Victoria and one in Bimbia. By the moment <https://assignbuster.com/globalization-and-its-effects-on-cameroon/>

Gustave Nachtigal makes “ Kamerun” a German protectorate in 1884, there already exists an old school tradition of forty years. From 1919 to 1959 Cameroun is successively placed under the mandate and the supervision of France and England. The First World War leads to the departure of the Germans from “ Kamerun” in 1918 with the division of German possessions in Africa; France inherits 80% and England 20% of Cameroon. The treaty of Versailles of June 29, 1919 gives to France and England the role to manage both respectively territories. The act of the mandate signed in 1922 comprises, for the powers agents, the “ obligation to increase by all the means the material and moral well-being... of populations”. It recommends to them moreover “ to give to all the missionaries the facility to penetrate in territories, to raise buildings with a religious aim and to open schools”. The mandate lasts until 1944.

The post independence period (1960-1985)

With the end of the supervision, in 1959, French Cameroon reaches independence in 1960, Reunification in 1961 with the old British part, form the federal Republic of Cameroun. The first persons in charge for the country are conscious owing to the fact that “ the future is built by education”. From the beginning, the State assures the right of schooling for every body. It is the principal actor. The reunification of the two educational subsystems inherited from colonization does not take place, they cohabit. Each one draws its marks according to its history and its past. French-English bilingualism is preserved. Local languages miss from official programs. The church which provides schooling and evangelization makes use of both languages in their schools. Decades 60, 70 and 80 are the years of the

school boom. This qualitative and quantitative extension is to be put in relation to the politic and economic guidelines of the time. As a whole, the movement of education largely changed while adapting sometimes to local realities. However, by many aspects, as well on the Anglophone side as on the French-speaking side, the system has continued to develop and maintain the functional structures, symbol of identification acquired the times before independence. For example, the mode of organization and the school calendar, which prevail during colonization, remain unchanged. Thus, with each of the three levels of schooling the academic year which is spread out from September to June, does not take account of economic, climatic nor agricultural realities of the country. In this same context, vestiges of the models of certification resulting from the colonial time continue to structure the evaluation of the trainings. It is only in 1995 that the CEPE becomes the CEP. The grading examination (first part of the baccalaureat), which goes back to 1952 is removed in France since decades, but remains a requirement for the passage in final class in Cameroon. It is a selective examination.

From 1990 to our days

In reality, it is in 1985 that begins this new era. It will be of great interest to grasp the school crisis and the reforms which will be committed to the turning of the years 2000. The societal crisis which shapes the 1980 decade stands precise in 1990, when it becomes severe and multiform. All the political, cultural, democratic, economic sectors are concerned by the crisis. This context led to a tumultuous upheaval of the social landscape. To adapt to the new situation, Cameroun reaches the Program of structural adjustment (NOT) imposed by the International Monetary Fund (the IMF) and

the World Bank. In the case of public policies implication, we observe the interaction between the local ideas and the transnational models of management. As a consequence of this economic situation, the imbalance between demand and supply of education increases. The huge size of the crisis, because of its bad social effect, led to the deterioration of the credibility that population have been put in school and by the same occasion tarnish the image of the school. For these reasons, at the time when we attend the great fall of the school, the idea of globalization crosses the public debates. Supranational influences contribute a lot, in the redefining of the education policy to meet the new exigences. We can consider as a good consequence of the crisis the injunction of some backers who provide fund and loan. The school scene becomes favorable to necessary reforms and starting earning some benefits from external aid. The new orientations of the school keep traditions French and English systems. It is on the university level that the most advanced attempt to legitimate the world logic of education is observed with the implementation of LMD system (Bachelor, master, and PhD) impelled by the Bologna process.

B. STAKES OF GLOBALIZATION AND CAMEROON EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

On the basis of a certain number of reports, it is advisable to identify and analyze the stakes to which the challenges of the educational policies graft. It is estimated that Cameroun, in 2015, by its population, will have to accommodate nearly five to six million pupils at a time when the objectives of universal education therefore will not have been achieved. To face this challenge, primary school enrollment is expected to play a decisive role in realizing the recommendations contained in the Millennium. Education for all

remains an issue that nourishes a belief that the growth of schooling can contribute to the promotion of the economy. Approximately 15 to 20% children from 3 to 4 years old follow a pre-school education. The authorities, to better meet the challenges of education for all, should focus on the maternal education which seems not to experience a significant development. This option should be accompanied by a number of measurements facilitating the effectiveness of free and compulsory education. The problems of universal education raise the question of the participation of the girls in education. On this point, in Cameroun, the enrollment of girls remains a recurring and urgent problem. At the heart of globalization, the knowledge is the question of communication and information technologies. It an issue of importance. The project underlines the numerical fracture between north and South. The history of the school in Cameroun, the diagnosis of its forces and its weaknesses still remain to be made. In a world which evolves/moves and changes permanently, the school has to change while adapting to changes and with the new contexts. The school is not only ideology. It is also a shared culture and openness. It provides knowledge and values that are approximately universal. It is in the sense that globalization education, which can not be uniform or submission to a single and total order, is beneficial. It constitutes a new element to take into account in the definition of the educational policies. Globalization will not make it possible to reduce the problems and inequalities noted. In a step forward, it is good governance and the efficient leadership that will make a difference. Obviously, Cameroun is always looking forward to unify its educational system. The school in Cameroun is not yet the Cameroonian school. It needs a heart, an identity to meet the needs of the society. Hence

the effort that lies ahead. In this beginning of the third millennium, African education system, for fear of sinking, are faced with the urgency of reform

IV. CONCLUSION

For the foreseeable future Cameroon's government will continue to play a significant role in the daily lives and wellbeing of its people, the changing paradigm of increasing reliance on market forces notwithstanding. The economically strong forces in society who assert a need to dismantle impediments to international trade often also assert a need for "strong" domestic policies to ease the functioning of markets. Handicapped by the weakness of its infrastructure and low level of industrial development, Cameroon is clearly not sufficiently integrated into the global economy. However, it is also clear that the country cannot afford to remain on the sidelines of globalization. To facilitate its inclusion in the world economy, Cameroon must begin to make significant institutional reforms-in particular, by refocusing the functions of the state toward its essential mission of delivering needed public services; promoting the development of a dynamic private sector within a liberalized and transparent framework; and strengthening the role of civil society, which is critical for any social and economic change. Regional economic integration is also a necessary element for securing Cameroon's active participation in globalization.

All these reforms have extremely high financial and social costs that far exceed the country's current resources. It should be noted that a country without trained men and women can be seen as a community of primitives. For the development of the country, the nation has to be able to rely on individual as well as collective intellect. This knowledge can only be acquired

through education; therefore the government of Cameroon has to be able to provide the necessary means to reach the objective of providing education for all the young peoples. It is hoped, therefore, that Cameroon may be able to count on international cooperation to support its economic development efforts. Particular attention must be paid to managing the external debt that weights heavily on public finances and considerably reduces the maneuvering room the government needs to generate financing for infrastructure and poverty reduction. The various debt-reduction initiatives undertaken by the international financial community are very encouraging and should be explored more intensively.

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