

**MINISTRY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
AND INNOVATION**

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

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
CARTOGRAPHY**  
*INSTITUT NATIONAL DE  
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**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

*MINISTERE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT  
SUPERIEUR*

**THE STATE UNIVERSITIES OF  
CAMEROON**  
*LES UNIVERSITES D'ETAT DU  
CAMEROUN*

## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

*COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL*

# **SUSTAINABLE CITY IN CAMEROON**

9-13 November 2009, Yaoundé

Under the patronage of :

- **MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING**
- **MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTION OF NATURE**
- **MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION AND DECENTRALISATION**
- **MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, PLANNING AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Under the patronage of the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, the Ministry of Environment and Protection of Nature, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, and the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education will organise an international colloquium entitled 'Sustainable City in Cameroon' in Yaoundé from 9 to 13 November 2009.

At a time when decentralisation is put in practice in Cameroon, at a moment when our urban municipalities and councils are experiencing some kind of precipitation with regards to environmental protection, at a time when the towns managers are manifesting a certain disposition to a better universal governance, it seems interesting to open, through a conference of international dimension, a transdisciplinary reflection on "Sustainable City in Cameroon", to enable mayors place their current preoccupations to future exigencies.

This scientific event is being organised through the initiative of the National Institute of Cartography (INC) in collaboration with State Universities (Geography, Sociology and Urban Management departments).

## **I- NATIONAL CONTEXT AND PROBLEMATIQUE OF A SUSTAINABLE CITY**

### **1.1. NATIONAL CONTEXT**

After the severe economic crisis that Cameroon experienced between 1985 and 1995, the country's economy is gradually recovering marked by return to growth. The successive macro-economic stabilisation programmes and structural reforms put in place have succeeded to clean the public finance and improved on the framework of business as well as the general competitiveness of the Cameroonian economy. Cameroon's qualification for reduction of debts in favour of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) in May 2000 by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank opened a new perspective for the country, thanks to the budgetary economy mobilized beginning from the decision point that Cameroon attained in October 2000. The country reached the Completion Point of the HIPC initiative since April 2006.

The country therefore enters the third millennium with important advantages but also with major challenges to diversify its economy, promote growth and improve the living conditions of the populations. Amongst the advantages are a stable macroeconomic framework after adjustment policies supported, more encouraging conditions for the development of the private sector, a comfortable development position in a sub regional framework that is more and more opened, an economic growth rate that stands at 4.5 %, despite the continuous decline in the petroleum sector, a youthful and educated population capable of injecting new technologies and improving productivity and political and institutional stability.

Amongst the major challenges to highlight, are the fight against poverty, protection of the environment, the need to diversify the economy, and the speeding up of growth to respond to the needs and expectations of the populations, and the production of the sustainable city.

The 1972 Constitution revised by the constitutional law of 18<sup>th</sup> January 1996 and that of March 2008 brought a decisive impulsion in the process of decentralisation by consecrating the decentralised unitary character of the state of Cameroon. This law establishes two types of decentralized local collectivities: the regions and councils. The specific laws adopted in 2004 organised the regimes of these two categories of decentralised territorial collectivities. A law equally adopted in 2004 fixed the general regime of decentralised territorial collectivities and previewed the elaboration of a specific law relative to their financial regime. Such a constitutional process created a favourable framework for the production of a sustainable city.

### **1.2. PROBLEMATIQUE OF THE SUSTAINABLE CITY**

Sustainable city have been the subject of many definitions, some focused on ecological urbanism, and others centred on the quality of life. Sustainable city from its first assertion designates a town or an urban unit that respects the principles of sustainable development and ecological urbanism, that seeks to jointly combine economic challenges, environmental, and culture of urbanism, following the participatory democratic approach defined by Agenda 21 of the Rio Conference.

Some of the definitions consider it as a city that integrates the following two fundamental exigencies:

- the factor that limits its development being henceforth its natural capital, and the most deprived population being the most affected by problems of development, it seems necessary to integrate environmental protection as a social exigency that is essential to the population.
- the need to improve on the quality of life of its citizens rather than simply optimising consumption.

Faced with the present urbanisation tendencies and ecological exigencies, we can in a general manner, define a sustainable city as in three periods (Emelianoff, 1999)<sup>1</sup>:

- It is a city that is capable of maintaining itself over time, keeping its identity, maintaining a collective sense and long term dynamism. It is a perennial city in its spatial quality, characterised by a great capacity to resist, to innovate and to renew.
- A sustainable city should be able to offer a good quality of life everywhere and with different given means between different frameworks of life. This exigency calls for a social and functional mixing, and or susceptible strategies of deducing exclusion and marginalisation in favour of a new expression of proximity and solidarity. Proximity notably, should be organised in response to the cost (energetically and geopolitically linked to petroleum interest) and heavy risk of hyper mobility. Solidarity on its path should integrate access to housing and other basic infrastructure, and the emergence of a true urban citizenship.
- A sustainable city should definitely integrate the imperative of a development equitable on a dual socio-economic and ecological plan be it at the level of a territory or at that of the entire planet. It implies reducing social inequality and the ecological degradations, by considering the impact of urban development at different scales (local or global).

The interactions between the ecology, economy and development have been put into evidence since almost three decades<sup>2</sup>. The concept of "Sustainable development" on its part is still very recent and was only consecrated in literature only during the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 face with the intensity of biodiversity loss and Global warming. Its initial definition orientated towards preservation of the environment and prudent consumption of non renewable natural resources, will be modified by the three pillar definitions that should be reconciled in a perspective of sustainable development:

- Economic progress ;
- Social justice ;
- Environmental preservation.

The objective of sustainable development is therefore to formulate viable schemes and to reconcile economic, social and environmental aspects of human activities. In the current context of profound mutations in human habitats, characterised by an unprecedented urbanisation in history, the concept of "Sustainable City" strongly manifest the penetration of the vision of sustainability in urban studies and urban problems. The concept of sustainable city, like the tendency of forest conservation that is practiced in the whole planet, should extend all over where urbanisation manifests itself in occurrence in the countries of the south, Cameroon included.

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Emelianoff C., 1999.- "La ville durable, un modèle émergent (Porto, Strasbourg, Gdansk) », thèse de troisième cycle de géographie, Université d'Orléans<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In 1972 during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm

In Cameroon good macroeconomics performance was not very profound as the indicators relative to the health of the population, to education and to access to basic infrastructures are being showed today. Indeed, one notes that the social sector that degraded considerably during the period of the economic crisis, had not yet improved with the recovery of the economy. The reduction of salaries in the public service of up to 70% in 1993 was catastrophic. The supply of basic social services was affected by government financial difficulties during the period of crisis. However, the government concentrated these last years, remarkable efforts in the support and funding of mineral, forestry and agricultural development activities. It also invested in public works, in the support of planning and territorial management and the fight against natural disasters and poverty. Certainly, current management actions in the major metropolis of Cameroon and for which the C2D (French debt relief program) actively intervene are to be put in the same logic, but in which measure are they registered in the perspective of production of sustainable cities?

## **II- OBJECTIVES AND PRESENTATION OF THE CONFERENCE**

From the myriad of definitions, one notes that the concept of "Sustainable City" embraces a varied and transversal number of themes such as access to equipment and basic services, energy, waste, transport, the milieus (water, air, soil, land tenure), governance, global warming. It also has to do with producing quality housing, and the means of transport that is cheap and accessible to all, by facilitating the richness and the social and cultural diversity.

The conference therefore intends to focus at the same time on the conceptual consistence and operationalisation framework of sustainable city, within the context of developing countries in general, and Cameroon in particular. In other terms if the problems of urbanisation and growing ecological imprint have rendered the urban classic model obsolete, the question is again raised to know how to renew or renovate the town, in a manner that will reconcile economic development, social justice and environmental protection in the mid and long term?

Scientific research in general and social science research in particular have an important role to play in such a question so as to contribute to the promotion of a sustainable city in Cameroon. It is supposed to help the entire decentralised territory henceforth in Cameroon to take, for their towns, the path towards sustainability.

This colloquium addresses to researchers in human and social sciences as well as mayors, urbanists, environmentalists, and other specialists of nature protection and biodiversity (zoology, forestry, renaturation...). During this conference, researchers are expected to sensitise urban development actors, national and international community on the importance and the challenges of sustainable city, as well as on the modalities of its production in Cameroon.

Universities having been relocated in Cameroon are expected to contribute amongst others in a manner that one can produce a sustainable city in their region. In a likely manner, we expect contributions from decentralised territorial collectivities that are supposed to use their experiences of town management, to identify in their actions, those that carry trade-mark of sustainability.

## **III- MAJOR AXES OF THE CONFERENCE**

Four main axes of reflection are proposed that will enable a diversity and complementarity of approaches.

- ***Disciplinary approaches of sustainable city: cross views***

Some people are of the opinion that the concept of "Sustainable City" is enough clear to be operational. Many others look at it as a panacea and catalogue of intentions that should have enabled everybody at a time without much precision, in a concrete manner, to combine a number of exigencies that at times are contradictory. In other words, as of now we do not dispose standardised principles, indicators, and measurable clear criteria that permit one to evaluate and validate the level of sustainability of a town.

The concept of sustainable city is not limited to a given scientific discipline. History, anthropology, sociology, geography, architecture, town planning, economy and political sciences,

have also been interested using different approaches. Each and every one is called up to reflect, confront and bring together the different approaches through their presentations. This has to do with finding how a sustainable city is perceived as a subject of study, what type of tools and knowledge are elaborated by the different disciplines? Interventions will focus on the common or specific domains on these disciplines.

- ***Sustainable City and Urban management***

Elaborating the town of tomorrow supposes situating, understanding, and articulating the use of space and time and more especially emergent uses that may become central tomorrow. This has to do with housing and intermediary space, familiar spaces that receive daily population influx, distant places and or places visited occasionally. This also has to do with socio-collective infrastructures and equipments that are relevant for usage in the past such as transportation by bus, as well as those that are relevant for emergent usage such as domestic services or services needed facilitated by new technologies. Indeed, the attraction of a relatively cheap land is the cause of urban expansion at the expense of the rural peripheral space that are supposed to supply to the population of major towns all the resources that they need and absorb the emissions of waste that they produce. Dormitory towns and quarters are thus created whereby the distance vis-à-vis the job side results to a multiplicity of consequences. Traffic jam, time wastage on the vehicle trajectory, increase in the rate of motorisation and multiform inconveniences. This ends up seriously disturbing the functional relation of the town with its periphery that migrates steadily and reduces the benefits expected from planned management. It is then that appears other actors of urban construction.

Association and solidarity life in the heart of the town participate alongside the public authorities in urban production. Their role in urban development may not be well understood or marginalised for now. The evolution in the use of a town and housing is susceptible to confer a greater role to associations and forms of urban solidarity associations. Town management implies actors in positions, interest, competence, and logic of divergent and contrasting actions. The act of urban planning comprises the ability to reconcile the different interests of these diversified actors by their nature, functions, and means of action. Planning also seeks for equilibrium or adequacy between the assignment and the available means. In the context of decentralisation in Cameroon, are actors involved in the construction of a sustainable city the same? With what tools and what technical competence and available material do we dispose of assuming the identified and assigned mission?

- ***Sustainable City and Economic development***

A town is a framework where many economic projects are directed but they are not often an issue to reckon on. Competition and the economic crisis create unhealthy collective conditions in which values such as solidarity, equity, and social justice are relegated to a secondary position. The town appears then as a seat for social inequality unemployment for persons that are more or less qualified, and protesters of all sort given an enabling environment to manifest their discontent. Urban problems are not limited solely to towns in the real sense.

As they are practiced, urban economic activities (agriculture, commerce, industry, and other services) are registered in the process of urban production? Does the town produce riches or participate solely in its redistribution or in the sharing of revenue activities take place out of the spatial imprint? In which measure does a sustainable city render production and access to qualitative and quantitative consumption goods very important?

- ***Sustainable City and Environmental Protection***

In a general manner the issue of environment occupies a very important place in the world today. If it is global because of its reference to the fight against the effects of global warming, and pollution of the biosphere, it is locally perceived within the framework of sustainable city (recycling of water and waste, short and sober channels, fresh, clean and assured energy, energy economy and heating, etc...).

The rapid growth of private transport and high intensity of resource consumption constitute important threats to the urban environment and therefore our health and human wellbeing. Data on several aspects of the urban environment such as water consumption, municipal waste production, treatment of residual sewage, noise nuisance, and atmospheric pollution, is not always complete and inadequate for an evaluation of the urban environment that will be handed to the future generation. A sustainable city is prohibited from exporting the cost of its development to other populations, other generations, or ecosystems. Application of the directives of Agenda 21 gives a sustainable city the possibility of maintaining itself over time by offering a good quality of life in all places and slight differences between the life frameworks. The essential elements or services that enable one to appreciate the attainment of the status of a sustainable city are for example feeding, water and energy consumption, and waste management. For the latter case, attempts by urban agriculture to absorb it is only a partial way to make available at all times some highly consumed produce. This may lead to food self sufficiency especially at this time of hunger following the rising costs of some basic necessities. With regards to the positive impact of urban agriculture on air, soil and water pollution, it can be perceived as a means of payment of ecological debts stemming from urban development and as a consequence an indicator of sustainable city. What other initiatives seem to control a town in Cameroon in the field or out of a sustainable city?

#### **IV- CALL FOR PAPERS**

This call for papers is addressed to persons of diverse horizons (scientific, decision makers, civil society) interested and or implicated on research on towns or urban management. Contributions in the form of articles should carry one or more of the following themes to be developed during the colloquium.

The summary (300-400 alphanumeric signs) should comprise:

- The title ;
- Name and surnames of the author or authors;
- Profession and discipline ;
- Complete Professional address ;
- Electronic address ;
- Summary and key words in French ;
- Summary and key words in English ;

The important dates retained for the different phases of this scientific manifestation are as follows:

- Date of the first announcement : December 20, 2008
- Date of the second call : February 20, 2009
- Deadline of reception of summaries : May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009
- Deadline of reception of full texts : September 20, 2009
- Date of publication of the colloquium's articles: December 2010.

The contributions written in French and English in Word or PDF formats should come to the secretariat of the colloquium here at:

National Institute of Cartography,  
Avenue Monseigneur Vogt,  
Post Box 157  
Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The website created for the organisation of events is as follows:

<http://www.inc.ayoos.com>

#### **Contacts**

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## **V- TENTATIVE PROGRAMME**

### DAY 1: 9 November 2009

8h-10h00	Registration
10h-12h	Opening Ceremony Contributions of different authorities
12h00	Cocktail
14h-15h	Plenary presentation
15h-15h30	Coffee Break
15h30-16h30	Plenary presentation
16h30-17h30	Technical Session

### DAY 2: 10 November 2009

8h30-10h00	Plenary presentation
10h-10h30h	Coffee Break
10h3-12h30	Plenary presentation
12h45-13h45	Lunch
14h-15h	Plenary presentation
15h-16h	Plenary presentation
16h-16h30	Coffee Break
16h30-17h30	Technical Session

### DAY 3: 11 November 2009

8h30-10h00	Plenary presentation
10h-10h30h	Coffee Break
10h3-12h30	Plenary presentation
12h45-13h45	Lunch
14h-15h	Plenary presentation
15h-16h	Plenary presentation
16h-16h30	Coffee Break
16h30-17h30	Technical Session

### DAY 4: 12 November 2009

8h30-10h00	Plenary presentation
10h-10h30h	Coffee Break
10h3-12h30	Plenary presentation
12h45-13h45	Lunch
14h-15h	Plenary presentation
15h-16h	Plenary presentation
16h-16h30	Coffee Break
16h30-17h30	Technical Session

DAY 5: 13 November 2009

8h30-13h00	Guided tour to examine the problematic of a sustainable city in two towns : Mbalmayo and Yaoundé
13h30-14h45	Lunch
15h-16h30	Closing ceremony
17h	Departure of the participants