

**COMMISSION DES DROITS
DE L'HOMME DU CAMEROUN**



**SOUS-COMMISSION CHARGÉE
DE LA PROMOTION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME**

Secrétariat Permanent

Division de la Protection et de la
Promotion des Droits de l'Homme

B.P./P.O. Box 20317, Yaoundé
Fax : (237) 222-22-60-82

**CAMEROON HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**SUB-COMMISSION IN CHARGE OF
HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION**

Permanent Secretariat

Human Rights Protection
and Promotion Division

Tel.: (237) 222-22-61-17 / 691 12 86 70
e-mail: cdhc@cdhc.cm
Web : www.cdhc.cm

**STATEMENT BY THE CAMEROON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT
TRAFFICKING**

26 June 2022

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (hereinafter: "the Commission"), established by Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019 and set up on 29 April 2021 following the swearing-in of its members before the Supreme Court sitting in Assembled Chambers,

Bearing in mind Resolution A/RES/42/112 of the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted on December 7, 1987, through which it decided to observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26, aiming to achieve a society free from drug abuse while raising awareness of the great danger that illicit drugs pose to our society and especially to young people,

Bearing in mind the Preamble of the Constitution of 18 January 1996, which states that "[t]he human person, without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights" and that "the nation [...] shall protect women, the young [...]",

Bearing in mind that the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted on 27 June 1981 in Nairobi, Kenya, entered into force on 21 October 1986 and ratified by Cameroon on 20 June 1989 states in Article 18 (1) states that "[t]he family shall be the natural unit and basis of society. It shall be protected by the State which shall take care of its physical health and moral",

Bearing in mind the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, which aims to limit the possession, consumption, trade, distribution, import, export, manufacture and production of drugs solely for medical and scientific purposes, and combat drug trafficking through international cooperation to deter and discourage drug traffickers,

Recalling the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, adopted on 21 February 1971, entered into force on 8 August 1975 and ratified by Cameroon on 5 June 1981, which establishes a system of international control of psychotropic substances. It responds to the diversification and expansion of the number of drugs giving rise to illicit use and has set up controls for a number of synthetic drugs according to their potential for illicit use on the one hand and their therapeutic value on the other hand,

Noting the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, adopted on 20 December 1988, which entered into force on 11 November 1990 and was ratified by Cameroon on 28 October 1991, and which provides pragmatic measures against drug trafficking, including provisions against money laundering (Article 3 (c), (cii) and (ciii)) and the diversion of precursor chemicals (Article 12 (1)), and provides for international cooperation through controlled deliveries (Article 11) and transfer of proceedings (Article 8),

Referring equally to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) known as the Palermo Convention, adopted in 2000, entered into force on 29 September 2003 and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), known as the Merida Convention, adopted on 31 October 2003 and entered into force in 2005, both ratified by Cameroon on 6 February 2006, which states that "*The purpose of this Convention is to promote cooperation to prevent and combat transnational organized crime more effectively*",

Observing that the African Union, at its 3rd Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control, adopted a Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention 2019-2023,

Noting that drug abuse is the excessive use of one or more drugs, i.e. substances that alter the way the mind works (psychotropic effect) and are considered to be addictive¹,

Bearing in mind that drug trafficking is an illicit global trade that includes the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances prohibited by law²,

Taking note of statistics from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime which show that:

- approximately 275 million people used drugs and more than 36 million suffered from drug use disorders in 2020³
- 5.5% of the population aged 15 to 64 used drugs at least once in 2021⁴
- 36.3 million people, or 13% of the total number of drug users, suffer from drug use disorders⁵
- more than 11 million people inject drugs, half of whom are living with hepatitis C⁶
- over the past 24 years, according to the UNODC World Drug Report 2021, the harmfulness of cannabis has quadrupled in some parts of the world, even as the percentage of adolescents who perceive this drug as harmful dropped by 40 per cent⁷
- opioids (drugs with analgesic properties used mainly for pain relief) continue to represent the greatest burden of disease attributed to drug use
- the feeling of physical and mental well-being sought by consuming the drug is overshadowed by serious adverse effects on the enjoyment of the right to health
- that drug use has extreme societal effects, with drug abuse affecting not only those who abuse drugs but also their families, peers, colleagues, friends and supervisors, government resources and the economy as a whole.

¹ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abus_de_substances, consulted on 15/6/2022.

² *Le trafic de drogues*, <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/fr/thematic-areas/transnational-threats/drug-trafficking/>, consulted on 15/6/2022.

³ <https://www.un.org/fr/observances/end-drug-abuse-day/messages>, consulted on 6/5/2022.

⁴ https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press_releases/2021/June/unodc-world-drug-report-2021_pandemic-effects-ramp-up-drug-risks-as-youth-underestimate-cannabis-dangers.html, consulted on 6/5/2022.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ UNODC World Drug Report, 2021.

Considering this year's theme which is “**Addressing Drug-Related Challenges in Health and Humanitarian Crises**”⁸,

Bearing in mind that the Covid-19 crisis has pushed more than 100 million people into extreme poverty, and has greatly exacerbated unemployment and inequality. In doing so it has created conditions that increase the number of persons likely to use drugs and engage in illicit cultivation⁹

Considering that some drug supply chains have been disrupted by the new Corona virus pandemic and traffickers are looking for alternative routes, including sea routes, depending on the commodity,

Noting that rapid technological innovation, as well as the use of new platforms to sell drugs and other substances is making drugs more available and accessible everywhere,

Bearing in mind that the main challenges that still need to be tackled include the resilience of young people to drugs, crime and violence; reforms of the penitentiary system to stop radicalization and production and trafficking of drugs,

Noting also that there is a close link between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including human trafficking, firearms trafficking, cybercrime and money laundering,

Further observing that drug trafficking and organized crime fuel cycles of violence and perpetuate conflicts. Armed groups and terrorists benefit from drug trafficking with its disastrous impact on the system of education, peace and development¹⁰,

The Commission notes that in Cameroon, statistics from the National Committee for the Fight against Drugs (CNLD)¹¹ show that:

- 21 per cent of the Cameroonian school-age population has already used drugs
- 10 per cent are regular users, 60 per cent of whom are between 20 and 25 years old
- that more than 15 per cent of 15-year-olds are affected by this scourge, with a higher prevalence in schools
- that not only is the use of drugs and other psychotropic substances taking on increasingly alarming proportions in our society, but that it is also the cause of too many recurrent cases of violence both between pupils and against teachers in schools.

The Commission notes that the main primary substances that are in demand in Cameroon are:

- cannabis (58.54%), very often associated with tobacco
- tramadol (44.62%), which is popular amongst motorbike riders in Cameroon's major cities and is the cause of many road accidents¹²
- cocaine (12.10%)

⁸ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drugs/index-new.html>, consulted on 6/5/2022.

⁹ ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/a-decomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_767028.pdf, consulted on 21/6/2022.

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/fr/observances/end-drug-abuse-day/messages>, consulted on 6/5/2022.

¹¹ <https://www.dw.com/fr/au-cameroun-la-drogue-malgr%C3%A9-la-sensibilisation/a-57757046#:~:text=Les%20statistiques%20du%20Comit%C3%A9%20national.contre%20ce%20ph%C3%A9nom%C3%A8ne%20au%20Cameroun,consulted on 3/9/2022.>

¹² Martin Mateso, *Cameroun : des morts subites et des motards qui planent, quand l'addiction au tramadol vire au cauchemar*, https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/societe-africaine/cameroun-des-morts-subites-et-des-motards-qui-planent-quand-l-addiction-au-tramadol-vire-au-cauchemar_3624565.html, consulted on 15/6/2022.

- heroin consumed in 5.70% of cases
- the rest of the substances are made up of traditional preparations for a level of consumption of 7.59%, solvents (7.36%)¹³,

The Commission notes that:

- *Cameroon is considered a major importer and trans-shipment point for locally produced cannabis that is transported to other African countries, mainly to Nigeria.*
- *tramadol is the main synthetic drug of concern in Cameroon and the drug most in demand after cannabis. It is usually trafficked from India via West Africa, and Nigeria in particular, and distributed within Cameroon.*
- *Cameroon is a transit and destination country for heroin¹⁴,*

The Commission, aware of the challenges in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, ***lauds*** Government efforts to put an end to such activities or limit the harmful effects on our society by:

- ratifying the international and regional treaties to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking
- signing Decree No. 92/456/PM of 24 November 1992 relating to the establishment and organization of the National Committee for the Fight against Drugs
- the enactment of the Law No. 97/019 of 7 August 1997 on the control of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors and on extradition and mutual legal assistance in matters of trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors). The law defines illegal acts and provides for penalties for those who have illegally possessed, purchased or cultivated plants or substances classified as narcotics or psychotropic substances, the small quantity of which allows them to be considered to have been intended for their personal consumption
- the signing of a convention between the Republic of Cameroon and the Kingdom of Spain on 26 January 2010, aimed at establishing cooperation and sharing of information and resources in matters of drug trafficking
- establishing in 2015, a unit in charge of securing schools and universities within the General Delegation for National Security, which is regularly called upon by school authorities for cases of violence, indiscipline and drug consumption
- the signing of an order on 7 March 2022 by the Minister of Territorial Administration to prohibit the marketing and consumption of Chicha (water pipe) throughout the national territory.
- the seizure by the Far North Customs Sector on 23 March 2022 of a cargo of narcotics worth 100 million CFA francs by the Far North customs sector consisting of 20 bags of Indian hemp and tramadol¹⁵;
- the destruction on 22 June 2021 of a cannabis plantation located at Bamelu, a locality in the village of Baleghang in Batcham Sub-division in the West Region, cultivated on nearly 5 hectares by elements of the Mobile Intervention Battalion (GMI No. 3) from Bafoussam¹⁶;

¹³ <https://www.investiraucameroun.com/sante/2808-11268-21-de-la-population-camerounaise-a-deja-experimente-une-droge-dure-le-cannabis-etant-la-plus-demandee>, consulted on 6/9/2022.

¹⁴ Global Organized Crime Index 2021, Cameroon, https://ocindex.net/assets/downloads/english/ocindex_profile_cameroon.pdf, consulted on 22/6/2022.

¹⁵ <https://ecomatin.net/le-secteur-des-douanes-de-lextreme-nord-saisit-une-cargaison-de-stupefiants-dune-valeur-de-100-millions-de-fcfa/>, consulted on 21/6/2022.

¹⁶ <https://actuacameroon.com/2021/06/25/ouest-5-hectares-de-cannabis-detruits-a-batcham/>, consulted on 21/6/2022.

- the voluntary and gradual withdrawal of street children, launched on April 1, 2020 by the Ministry of Social Affairs during which more than 80 street children aged between 7 and 17 wandering in the Yaoundé shopping center and exposed to all forms of abuse including drug abuse were transferred to three centers for a period of three months¹⁷;

The Commission urges the government and other stakeholders to continue health education and social re-integration of youths,

The Commission commends the efforts of international organizations, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as development partners and civil society organizations, media professionals who work tirelessly to raise awareness among young people about the consequences of the consumption of drugs and narcotics in open and closed environments,

The Commission reminds parents or other persons responsible for the child that under Article 20(1) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child they are “*primarily responsible for his education and his development*” and must provide him with advice and ensuring follow-up in order to protect them against drug abuse,

The Commission strongly encourages traditional and religious authorities and communities to provide more guidance to young people and promote religious and cultural norms that discourage drug abuse,

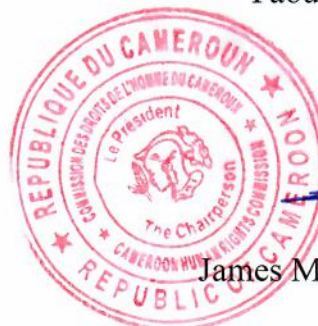
The Commission condemns the recurrence of acts of domestic violence, violence among young people, particularly in educational circles and in society in general, which is sometimes caused by the consumption of drugs,

The Commission strongly encourages traditional chiefs, religious leaders, parents, families and communities to contribute more to the fight against the use of drugs and narcotics, to preserve the fundamental rights of citizens,

The Commission recommends greater cooperation between countries in the fight against drug trafficking given the porosity of our borders and the development of more ingenious means of drug trafficking,

The Commission, for its part, will spare no effort to further promote and protect human rights through training workshops, awareness campaigns, advocacy, prison visits, fact-finding missions, handling of complaints, self-initiated investigations, and prevention of torture.

Yaoundé, the 24 June 2022



James MOUANGUE KOBILA

¹⁷ Protéger les enfants de la rue, <http://www.mincom.gov.cm/2020/04/29/protoger-les-enfants-de-la-rue/>, consulted on 21/6/2022.