

**THIRTY THIRD SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
OF EXPERTS FOR CENTRAL AFRICA UNDER THE THEME: “Made in
Central Africa: from a vicious circle to a virtuous circle”**

DOUALA CONSENSUS

Preamble

WE, participants at the 33rd session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for Central Africa under the theme: “Made in Central Africa: from a vicious circle to a virtuous circle”,

Representing Governments of ECCAS member States, regional and sub-regional institutions (ECCAS, CEMAC, their specialized institutions and OAPI), the private sector (Employers organizations, Chambers of Commerce, etc.), the Civil Society, as well as agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, and other financial and technical partners, meeting in Douala, Republic of Cameroon, on the initiative of the Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (SRO-CA/ECA) and in collaboration with the Government of Cameroon,

Noting that with an average annual real GDP growth rate of 5 per cent between 2010 and 2015, economic growth in Central Africa neither accelerated the pace of industrialization nor enhanced the development of intra-regional trade,

Noting that several countries of the sub-region affected by the collapse of commodity prices, notably oil, are facing significant macroeconomic imbalances marked by a contraction in growth, spiralling indebtedness, worsening fiscal and trade deficits and a substantial drop of external reserves,

Recognizing that the current system of production has not been able to engender a virtuous circle of inclusive growth, essentially because of

heavy concentration of production factors and resources in low productivity activities,

Considering that to foster a shift towards a trajectory of sustained growth and long-term human development, the structural transformation expected in Central Africa must derive from an industrialization process anchored on commodities given the existing natural resources potentials,

Aware that economic diversification through an accelerated industrialization process is the imperative pathway towards inclusive and sustainable growth and breaking with vulnerability arising from increased dependence on unprocessed raw materials,

Taking due account of the communiqué of the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States (CEMAC), held in Yaoundé-Cameroon on 23rd December 2016 prescribing steps towards short-term macroeconomic stabilization and intensification of measures and actions to achieve economic diversification,

Hereby adopt the Consensus hereafter to speed up economic diversification through industrialization:

It is important to prioritize industrial policy in national development visions and strategies, while ensuring consistency with the rest of macroeconomic and sectoral policies, notably trade and urbanization policies. Accordingly, there is need to promote an appropriate macroeconomic framework underpinned by active and contra-cyclic public policies, fostering the entrepreneurial spirit, innovation and competitiveness.

Consequently, it is important to generate or update sub-regional and national industrialization policy frameworks. At sub-regional level, the industrialization framework must be harmonized taking due account of the ongoing process of rationalization of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). At national level, industrial policies must be drafted and effectively implemented, with commitment at the highest level

possible. Moreover, institutions, mechanisms and tools must be strengthened and a framework for inter-sectoral coordination and public-private consultation enhanced.

It is imperative to organize regular high-level regional meetings between member States and private sector players, notably within the framework of annual summits on industrial development in Central Africa.

In order to accelerate the industrialization process in Central Africa, it is imperative to raise the level of productivity, competitiveness, attractiveness of economies and of sub-regional integration.

In this light, it is important to ensure that industrialization is not only transformative and hinged on commodities, but is driven by trade and promotes agro-industry and the manufacturing sector.

Accordingly, special emphasis must be laid on the "Made in Central Africa" trademark, as well as establishment of industrial areas and growth centres, to the accelerated implementation of the initiative "Boosting Intra-African Trade – BIAT", support to the development of national, sub-regional, regional and international value chains as well as support to nascent industries.

Valuing local products and promoting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) is key to boosting their competitiveness for better integration into value chains.

Facilitating access to national and sub-regional funding instruments suited to the needs and requirements of a transformative industrial policy is indispensable. The time has come to diversify partnerships of the type "resources for infrastructure" and opt for partnerships of the type "resources for industrialization" wherein our natural resources will form the basis of our industrialization.

All recommendations of the 33rd Session of the ICE contained in annex 1 need to be brought to the attention of the policy organs of ECCAS and CEMAC and member States. The Bureau of the ICE, with the assistance of

the ECA Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa will monitor the implementation of the Douala Consensus and its recommendations.

Vote of thanks

We, participants at the 33rd session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for Central Africa, meeting in Douala from 26 to 29 September 2017, extend our gratitude to His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon and Head of State, for authorizing the hosting of the session.

We also thank the Government and people of the Republic of Cameroon for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us throughout our stay in Douala.

Lastly, we thank the ECA for the impeccable organization of the 2017 edition of the ICE and commend the choice of the theme of the session. We are satisfied with the level of representativeness of participants from national and regional stakeholders working on the issue of industrialization, agro-industry and value chains in Central Africa.

Done at Douala, on 29 September 2017