

# **STUDY ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN CAMEROON**

BY

**African Union of the Blind (AFUB) and the Cameroon National  
Association for the Blind (CNAB) in partnership with Disability  
Rights Promotion International (DRPI) and Swedish Association of  
the Visually Impaired (SRF)**

## **REPORT**

Presented By

**MADAME EVA JACQUELINE ETONGUE MAYER  
CONSULTANT**

August 2007

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Lists of abbreviations	6
<b>Section 1: Context of the study</b>	<b>8</b>
Paragraph 1: The social, economic and political situation of Cameroon	8
Paragraph 2: The research sites	14
A: Description of the research sites	14
1. Bafoussam	14
2. Bamenda	15
3. Yaoundé	16
B: Reasons for the choice of these sites	18
<b>Section 2: Systemic measures put in place to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities in Cameroon</b>	<b>20</b>
Paragraph 1: At the international and regional levels	20
Paragraph 2: At the national level	33
<b>Section 3: Overview of the movements of persons with disabilities in Cameroon</b>	<b>49</b>
	52
<b>Section 4: Research findings</b>	<b>52</b>
I. Characteristics of the interviewees	55
II. Data analysis	
A. Difficulties encountered	55
B. Abuse and violence	56
C. Discriminatory attitudes	60
D. Limited access	63
E. Positive life experiences	65

F. Access to human rights principles	68
F.1 Dignity	69
F.2 Autonomy	70
F.3 Equality	72
F.4 Inclusion	74
F.5 Respect for Difference	75
G. Responses to abuse and discrimination	77
G.1 Distancing	77
G.2 Resistance	77
G.3 Reporting/legal action	78
H. Reasons for not reporting	78
H.1 Lack of access	79
H.2 No anticipated result/no change expected	79
H.3 Fear	80
H.4 Self-Censorship & Blame	80
H.5 Lack of financial means	81
I. Systemic roots of discrimination	81
I.1 Social	82
I.2 Economic	83
I.3 Legislative	84
J. Gender, ethnicity and class and disability	85
J.1 Gender and disability	85
J.2 Ethnicity and disability	86
J.3 Class and disability	86
III. Intersections (comparative tables)	87
1. Barriers by attributes	87
a. Barriers by age groups	87
b. Barriers by gender	89
c. Barriers by type of disability	90

2. Access to human rights principles by attributes	91
a. Access to human rights principles by age rank	91
b. Access to human rights principles by gender	92
c. Access to human rights principles by type of disability	93
<b>Section 5: The main conclusions and recommendations of the study</b>	<b>95</b>
I. Main conclusions	95
II. Main recommendations	97
1. Raise awareness	97
2. Improve respect	98
3. Social supports	98
4. Legislation	100
5. Economic assistance	100
6. Political representation	101
7. Solidarity between people with disabilities	101
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A: Methodology	
1. History of the project	102
2. Start of the project in Cameroon	103
2.1. Organisational framework of the study and setting up the team	103
2.2. Opening ceremony of the seminar	104
2.3. Associations of/for persons with disabilities represented at the seminar	104
2.4. Research sites	105
2.5. Material for data collection	105
2.6. Material for data analysis	105
2.7. Challenges/ difficulties	106
3. Evaluation meetings held in the course of the project	106
4. Lessons learned and follow-up strategies	110

Appendix B:	Interview guide	112
Appendix C:	Information sheet	118
Appendix D:	Interview code sheet	124
Appendix E:	Free and informed consent form	125
Appendix F:	Coding scheme	126
Appendix G:	Example of Interview Notes	134
Appendix H:	Background of the African Union of the Blind (AFUB)	135
Appendix I:	Memorandum of understanding between AFUB and ANAC	136
Appendix J:	Speech of the President of the NCHRF, Yaounde	138
Appendix K:	Project personnel	140
Appendix L:	List of associations of and for persons with disabilities in Cameroon	142
Appendix M:	List of national texts on the protection of the rights of disabled persons in Cameroon	143
Appendix N:	List of documents consulted	144
Appendix O:	Lists of useful addresses	145

## LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAT:	Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
TCC:	Technical consulting committee
CEDAW:	Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
CEDR:	Convention for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination
CEMAC:	Economic and monetary community for Central Africa
ICJ:	International court of justice
CRYBC:	Club of rehabilitated young blind people in Cameroon
CMW:	Commission for the protection of the rights of migrant worker and members of their family
NCHRF:	National commission on human rights and freedoms
CONRHA:	National commission for the rehabilitation and integration of the socio-economic status of persons with disabilities
CONDAD:	National commission for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities
CRAHMA:	Centre de rééducation et d'appareillage des handicaps moteurs et amputés du Cameroun
CRC:	Convention on the rights of the child
CSTC:	Confederation of workers union in Cameroon
DAPH:	African decade for persons with disabilities
DRPI:	International promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities
DUDH:	Universals declaration of human rights
FENHACAM:	National federation of associations of persons with disabilities of Cameroon
FNE:	National employment fund
HCDA:	Human rights high commission
HRC:	Human rights commission
MINAS:	Ministry of social affairs
MINEDUC:	Ministry of national education
MINEFI:	Ministry of finance
MINSANTE:	Ministry of public health

MINSUP: Ministry of higher education  
MINTRANSPORT: Ministry of transport  
NAB: National association of the blind  
OIT: International labour organisation  
OMPH: World organisation for of persons with disabilities  
ONU: United Nations organisation  
ONG: Non governmental organisation  
OPEH: Disabled children's parents' organisation  
OUA: Organisation of African unity  
PAM: World's action program for of persons with disabilities  
PIB: Gross domestic product  
PM: Prime minister  
PNUD: United nations development programme  
RBC: Community base rehabilitation  
CPDM: Cameroon people democratic movement  
SCNC: Southern Cameroonian national council  
SDF: Social democratic front  
SDN: League of nations  
SNAES: National syndicate of officers and teachers of secondary schools  
SRF: Swedish association of disabled and blind persons  
SYNES: National syndicate of higher education teachers  
UA: African union  
UAFA: African union of blind people  
UCCAO: Cooperative union for arabica coffee in the west  
UDC: Cameroon democratic union  
UNAPHAC: National union of / for persons with disabilities of Cameroon  
UNDP: National union for democracy and progress  
UPC: Cameroon people's union  
USTC: Syndicate of Cameroon workers union

## **Section 1:      CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

In addition to presenting the social, economic and political situation of Cameroon, this section also provides a description of the project sites.

### **Paragraph 1: Social, economic and politic situation of Cameroon**

Baptised and called "Rio dos Camaroes" by a Portuguese named Fernando Po in 1472, the first English Baptist Missionaries settled in Cameroon in 1845. In 1868, a German trading post was opened around Douala and the German colonisation of Cameroon began with the signing of a treaty in July 1884 between King Bell of Douala<sup>1</sup> and Gustav Nachtigal. In 1945, Cameroon became a Trust Territory under the United Nations organisation (ONU), which replaced the League of Nations .French Cameroon acquired independence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1960 and then became known as the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The first president of Cameroon was Ahmadou Ahidjo, a Muslim from the North, who had been the Prime Minister since 1958. In 1972, the Federal Republic was changed to a Unitary State. Ahmadou Ahidjo won the elections of 1975 and 1980. In November 1982; Ahmadou Ahidjo resigned for "health reasons" and was replaced by former Prime Minister Paul Biya, a Christian from the South. Ahidjo later on regretted his decision to resign, and the unsuccessful coup d'état that followed, carried out by his supporters forced him into exile in 1983.

With a surface area of 475.442km<sup>2</sup> and a population of about 16.3 millions inhabitants (World Bank, 2005), the former French Cameroons and British Cameroons united in 1961 to form the present day Cameroon, an average country in Africa with a demographic rate of 1.8 % (World Bank, 2005) per annum, and with 47.2% of the Population living in the urban area. Found in Central Africa, Cameroon is a diverse range of cultures, sharing boundaries with the following Countries: the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Nigeria. In Cameroon, the poverty rate is

---

<sup>1</sup> Doula is presently the Economic capital of Cameroon. It is a coastal town.



estimated at about 50%. The life expectancy rate according to the 2005 report of the United Nations Development Programme is 45.8 years, with 41.6 % of the population being below 15 years of age.

Cameroon has a variety of geographic features, composed of: plains, highlands, mountains such as Mount Cameroon which has an active volcano. Mount Cameroon is the highest mountain in Sub-Saharan Africa with a height of about 4.095 m. Cameroon has a tropical humid climate in the South and is dry in the North. Temperatures range from about 25°C in the South and 32°C in the North. The North is also a harbour to plateaus, lakes, oceans and coasts. Around the mountainous zones in the West, the temperature varies with altitude and can get quite cool. Cameroon occupies a central position in the Continent and is well known for its bilingualism (English and French). Spanish and German are also spoken in some urban areas. Close to 240 local languages are spoken in Cameroon, corresponding to the 240 ethnic groups. Cameroon is a secular State with two principal religions: Christianity (35-40%) and Islam (15-20%). It is worth mentioning that a larger part of the Population is animist (45%).

Despite the numerous educational programmes, the literacy rate of the population who are 15 years and older remains at 67.9% according to the 2004 statistics of the UNDP.

Politically, President Biya after taking over power in 1982<sup>2</sup> decided to make the principle of stability his main concern. With a majority in the National Assembly, the Presidential Party: the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM) occupies the first rank. The opposition parties such as the Social Democratic Front (SDF), l'Union Démocratique Camerounaise (UDC), l'Union des Population du Cameroun (UPC), the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP) have lower capacity in the exercise of their political activities. Opposition parties have been around since 1991, but it wasn't until January 2002 that 159 political Parties were officially legalised. There exist weak alliances between parties as well as internal party disagreement. The relationship between the party leadership and the elected candidates is dominated by questions regarding the

---

<sup>2</sup> He came to power on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1982 and was re-elected several times, the last being in October 2004.

terms of office which are regulated differently by the constitution<sup>3</sup> and the electoral code. Cameroon is still in search of a stable party system which would be less concerned with the debates about the indigenous and non indigenous cleavages.

In Cameroon, the international Community is more concerned with the follow-up of reforms especially in matters of Good Governance<sup>4</sup>, decentralization, the development of the Northern part of the country and dialogue with the Anglophone minority group.

Cameroon by 1970 was very rich in hydrocarbon and according to the UNDP human development indexes in 2006 (ranked 144 out of 177 Countries), and must today diversify and consolidate its other resources related to agriculture (44%), industry (20%) and other services (45.2%). As a leading maritime power within the CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa) zone, Cameroon represents 42.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through exports to the Countries of this region. This regional flow represents 5.4% of Cameroonian commercial exchange. Nevertheless, at the regional level, Cameroon remains relatively discrete though cooperation with neighbours of the franc zone and remains centred around trans-frontier security. In the economic domain, internally, Cameroon is pre-occupied with finalising the ongoing dialogue with Bretton wood institutions for the establishment of the Debt Relief-Development Contract programme providing a re-injection in the economy of 100M€ per year for ten years.

Diplomatically, Cameroon at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) won the frontier dispute with Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsular. In addition, Cameroon remains a refuge camp for the refugees from the Central African region.

Based on Parliamentary democracy, the President of Cameroon has a great range of powers that can be exercised without consulting the Parliament. The President, endowed

---

<sup>3</sup> The Cameroon Constitution was approved by referendum in 1972 and revised in January 1996.

<sup>4</sup> This includes the fight against corruption and the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

with executive powers, is also the Chief of army. He is elected by universal suffrage for a term of seven years. He appoints the Prime Minister (who is the head of government) and presides over the Council of Ministers. The President has the power to dissolve the National Assembly and declare a state of emergency using a decree that confers on him such special powers. He may decide to prolong or shorten the legislative mandate as he sees fit.

The Legislative power in Cameroon is bi-cameral. The Members of Parliament (called the National Assembly) with 180 deputies are elected by universal suffrage for a term of five years. The country's constitution provides an upper house of the Legislature (Senate), though it is not yet operational. The National Assembly which has the principal responsibility to enact laws has practically never stopped the voting of any legislation. Also it has the capacity to throw out of office the Prime Minister by a motion of censure or by refusing to grant him its confidence.

The Constitutional Council is the organ charged with handling Constitutional matters. It decides on the Constitutionality of laws, international treaties, internal regulations and conflicts of attribution between State institutions, between states and regions and between regions. It is also charged with in handling matters related to the Presidential and Legislative elections and referendums. Constitutional Council decisions are not susceptible to recourse. Though the Constitutional Council is not yet operational and considering the fact that it is not accessible to common citizens, bringing matters before it is limited to the president of the Republic, the Presidents of the two houses of parliament and 1/10 of the parliamentarians. The Supreme Court acts in its place in certain matters.

There exists another Higher Court of Justice which judges the president of the Republic in cases of high treason and members of government concerning cases of complicity against the security of the state. The Social and Economic Council has consultative duties. The power and independence of the Judiciary in Cameroon is enshrined but it is also

submitted to political influence. The principal source of law is the 1972 Constitution (approved by referendum and revised in January 1996) derived from the French civil law system. However, previous to 1996, Cameroon adhered to the obligatory jurisdictions of the international court of justice.

In the northern part of the Country, powerful traditional chiefs have their personal armies, their courts of justice and prisons which they use against their political rivals. The level of corruption in the country remains high.

In regards to unionization Cameroon has general trade unions such as the confederation of Cameroon Workers Trade Unions (CCTUC) and the Cameroon workers Trade Union (CWU), as well as trade Unions with special vocations such as; the National Trade Unions of Higher Education Teachers, the National Trade Union of Agents and Secondary School Teachers, the National Organisation of Cameroon Teachers and the Cameroon Teachers Association etc...

The current Human rights situation in Cameroon varies, between normal protection and weak mechanisms for protection. However, Cameroon continues her ratification of international conventions related to Human rights. The law no 2004/16 of 22 July 2007 created the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) which replaced the National Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms created in 1990 by a presidential decree.

The Cameroonian media sector is characterised by an increase in daily press issues although the numbers are not regularly released. The audio-visual sector which for long has been monopolised by the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) is presently witnessing certain developments; also noted is the dynamism of private radio stations particularly in Douala and Yaoundé.

Thanks to Cameroon's richness in petroleum resource and the favourable agricultural conditions, it may be said that Cameroon has one of the most promising economy in Sub Saharan Africa in terms of availability of raw materials.

The active economic group represents more than 41 % of the total population. When we consider the age range to be 15 years and above, we realise that this group represents 60.90% of the population. Meanwhile the inactive population stands at 59.05%. This inactive population is essentially composed of; secondary school children and students (61.7%), house keepers (25.3%), retired property owners, aged persons, persons with disabilities and idlers (13%). Job seekers represent 29.95% of the active population in the rural areas versus 43.9% in the urban areas. Amongst persons without jobs and those searching for jobs (comprising both those from the villages and towns), 85% have never had a job. The active economic population is composed of 65.9% of farmers, graziers, hunters and fishermen; 14.3 % of workers or non-agricultural labourers; and 19.8% occupies other jobs. Amongst the active population, 56.9% are self employed, 20.1% are on a salary, and 19.7% serve as domestic workers while 2. 9% are apprentices.

Crude oil and petroleum products, bauxite, iron minerals, wood, coffee, cocoa, cotton, rubber, banana, cereal, animal husbandry and aluminium are the principal resources. Frequent water borne diseases, deforestation, overexploitation of pastures, desertification, and destruction of wildlife and over-fishing are problems faced in Cameroon. In 1999, the rate of HIV/AIDS infected adults stood at 7.73%, and 540 000 lived with the illness, while 52 000 died that same year.

It is in this context that Cameroon is to be examined on the question of the respects of the rights of persons with disabilities. Studies were conducted in three sites alphabetically classified in this order: Bafoussam, Bamenda and Yaounde.

## **Paragraph 2: The Research Sites**

For this study, we explored these three sites Bafoussam, Bamenda and Yaoundé. In this paragraph, we shall provide a description of these three sites (A) and we shall emphasize the reasons for the choice of these sites with respect to the rights of persons with disabilities in Cameroon (B).

### **A: Description of the Research sites**

#### **1. Bafoussam**

Bafoussam, the capital of the western province has a population of 1843,518 inhabitants with a density of 132.7 inhabitants /km<sup>2</sup> on a surface area of 13,896km<sup>2</sup> and has 08 divisions. The population of Bafoussam is semi Bantus. It is a mountainous area with impressive water falls, large Bamelike Chieftaincies, and crater lakes. It is one of the provinces in Cameroon with traditional funerals<sup>5</sup> and ngoun<sup>6</sup>.

Bafoussam remains a town bubbling with commercial activities. The town is a junction full of transit points where goods and provisions from the littoral, Centre, Northwest, Southwest and the entire Northern zones pass through the town. Bafoussam is a prosperous town that draws most of its revenue from the cultivation of Arabica coffee. That is why it is the headquarters of the Cooperative Union of Arabica coffee in the western Province (UCCAO) which organises the harvesting, transformation and marketing of Arabica coffee, the agricultural pride of this region. Bafoussam which is the departure point to the neighbouring Bamileke chiefdoms, harbours many crafts centres where one can easily find craftsmen at work.

Bafoussam is the principal town in the Bamileke region and in the Bamileke dialect; the word Bafoussam “fũ sap” means “treasure of the trench”. Historically, the land near the

---

<sup>5</sup> They perform carnivals during death ceremonies between the months of November and February.

<sup>6</sup> This is a great ceremony that unites all the Bamoun people, between the months of November and December.

trench that separates the present day Bamun and Bafoussam was very rich. That land was called "fùsap". The first inhabitants originated from Bamun (precisely from the Tikar plains) same as the Balengs, thus making them brothers. The main chiefs that have led the Bafoussam people are: Fotié, Tagho, Mambou 1919-1933, Tchountchoua Paul 1933-1958, and then Ngompé Elie. Today the chief of the village is also the mayor of the town and his name is NjitackNgompé Pelé.

The Bafoussam urban council was founded in 1926. It is under a Government delegate appointed by the president of the Republic. The municipal councillors of this community elect a head of the municipal council. French is the principal language that is spoken in Bafoussam. It contains certain support structures for persons with disabilities as well as pre-cooperatives such ANAC found in the Mifi, Menoua and Nde divisions.

## **2. Bamenda**

Bamenda is the capital of the Northwest province and an Anglophone agglomeration zone. At the entrance of the town, is the administrative quarter known as "Up Station" which is found on the hill top. Mankon-town which is directly below the administrative area undergoes rapid expansion due to the intense commercial activities in the area. Bamenda has a population of 1.702.559 inhabitants on a surface area of 17.300km<sup>2</sup> covering 07 divisions. The population density is 98.4 inhabitants /km<sup>2</sup>. This mountainous province is a smooth continuity of the western province. It is covered with natural beauties such as: a green landscape, chiefdoms and waterfalls which qualify the province as a high traffic tourist site.

As a former base of the Europeans, Bamenda harbours administrative services and residences of senior civil servants. The presence of many craft centres enables visitors to appreciate the creative capacity of a population that attaches itself vigorously to its traditions and customs. Situated at an altitude of 1500m and 80km from the north of Bafoussam, Bamenda remains an attractive and booming town. At the basin, surrounded

with cliffs, Bamenda stands on two levels: Maintown is the lower level with moderate houses and businesses, Bafreng manton occupies the upper level of the town.

This province and that of the southwest are the two regions of Cameroon that were colonised by the British. English is the main spoken language in this province.

In Cameroon, Bamenda is known for its demonstrations and uprisings which occur frequently due mainly to the activities of opposition parties such as the Social Democratic Front (SDF) of Mr. Ni John Fru Ndi (one of the principal challengers of President Paul Biya in Cameroon). In Bamenda, there exist less than six structures which receive and cater for all types of persons with disabilities such as:

- SAJUKA: Saint Joseph Children and Adult Room that takes care of disabled and blind persons;
- MBINGO Agricultural Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind;
- KUMBO Baptist integrated School for the Deaf;
- BOYO Death Institute for the Blind Bamenda Centre;
- Shelter Workshop for Disables;
- Seta Handicapped Training Centre for the Blind (Mbengwi);
- ANAC Pre-cooperative, in the Mezam Division.

### **3. Yaoundé**

It was founded in 1889 when the Germans opened a military post, on a hill in the Ewondo land. Yaoundé developed gradually because of the activities of German merchants who came to trade in ivory. It was occupied by Belgian troops during the First World War before being placed under French protectorate. Its growth was very slow in the beginning due to the rural exodus to Douala and it was exacerbated in 1957 with the crisis in the cocoa sector and internal problems. Yaoundé town was implanted within a chain of mountains, dominated by Mountain Febe which stands 1060 meters high. The different quarters are dispersed in a haphazard manner, leaving a greater part of the town for the cultivation of food crops and for vegetation. The average temperature in Yaounde is 22°C.



As the headquarters of the Centre province, the town of Yaoundé has a surface area of 68.953 km<sup>2</sup> covering 10 Divisions and harbouring a population of about 2.272.259 inhabitants with an average density of 32.96 inhabitants /km<sup>2</sup> (CIPRE,2002). By law N° 87-15 of July 1987 of the Cameroon government, Yaounde was transformed from a rural to an urban council. The changes that occurred from "community" to "council" equally transformed and transferred duties and powers, shifting them from the Mayor to the Government Delegate, appointed by the presidency. The constitutional law of January 18<sup>th</sup> 1996 modified the system of the urban council which remained under the Government Delegate, but created 6 new urban councils (Yaoundé I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VII) endowed with elected Municipal councillors.

Divided into 7 divisions, Yaoundé has more than one hundred quarters, the most well-known being:

- Bastos; A sophisticated residential area which harbours many restaurants and most of the important embassies;
- Madagascar and Essos (quarters with great population)
- Mokolo (great commercial quarter and a harbour to many markets and shops by the road sides. Here sellers and vehicle owners struggle to occupy the pavements. It is a dense quarter with diverse population).
- Camp SIC hippodrome (former residential quarter situated in the former central town. It harbours many banks, a few ministries and restaurants).
- La Briqueterie (also known as "la Brique", is the Muslim quarter in Yaoundé. This quarter has a reputation of being dangerous, but we equally can find very delicious roasted meat (Soya).

Yaoundé is a tertiary town with very few industries such as: breweries, sawmills, workshops, tobacco, paper mill, mechanics, and construction materials. Yaoundé has an international airport (Nsimalen airport) near the entrance to the city. This province which

harbours the political capital of the country, offers many attractive sites to visitors, including:

- The numerous natural sites of the province such as the Akok-Bekoe cave.
- The different monuments and the traces of colonisation such as: the statue of Charles Atangana, the first chief of the Ewondo people who are the main ethnic group of the capital.
- The Ottomo forest reserve (in Ngounou).

In terms of structures that rehabilitate persons with disabilities, there are many amongst which we can cite the following:

- ESEDA (Specialise school for the children who are deaf;
- PROMHANDICAM (Service that promotes persons with disabilities in Cameroon);
- L'Externat Medico Pédagogique "Colombe";
- Bobine d'Or;
- National centre for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities;
- Workshop for the protection of persons with disabilities;
- ANAC pre cooperatives in Mfoundi, Mbam, Nyong, Mfoumou and Lekie

## **B: Reasons for our choice of these sites**

Looking at the above description, we realise that these sites offer a many advantages for studying the human rights situation of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. Taking a collective and individual view, these sites can be said to represent the Cameroonian society due to:

- Their linguistic diversity (English/French) offering a good representation of the population of persons with disabilities in Cameroon;
- Their large and mixed/diverse population providing a good representation of the sex and age ratios of persons with disabilities;

- The diversity of the activities being carried out (from agricultural, industrial to craftsmanship and office activities etc) ;
- the standard of living of the population; and a broad social representation of persons with disabilities in Cameroon (Poverty, wealth, illiteracy, literacy...);
- Given the lack of recent and concrete data on persons with disability in Cameroon<sup>7</sup> on which to base a strategy for participants' recruitment, the presence of institutions in charge of persons with disabilities in these cities also offered the advantage of facilitating a connection with this population.
- Their geographical positions (Centre, Western and North West provinces), which is offer a rich advantage in terms of the representation and diversity of the various ethnic groups which constitute the population of Cameroon.

In conclusion, one can say that, together these towns are a good representation of Cameroon. If we had considered just a unique site for this study, we would not have gotten the expected results.

---

<sup>7</sup> The first and only census on persons with disabilities in Cameroon was conducted between 1984-1985. The results were made public between 1986-1987. Ninety two thousands, one hundred and eighty (92.180) persons with disability were enumerated, and fifty five thousand, eight hundred and twenty (55.823) men, and thirty six thousand, five hundred and fifty seven (36.557) women. Due to the numerous constraints, the census could not cover the national territory; therefore it ended up being a sample study. Of the following category persons; blind, deaf, mobility impaired, the amputated, mentally deranged, mutilated, lame and paralysed etc...

## **Section 2: SYSTEMIC MEASURES PUT IN PLACE TO PROTECT, PROMOTE AND FULFIL THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN CAMEROON**

The protection and fulfilment of the rights of Persons with disabilities in Cameroon is based on international, regional and national instruments, accords and principles. Looking at the regional aspect of this study, an accent is put on the African region and on what makes the systemic provisions unique in Cameroon.

### **Paragraph 1: At the international and regional levels**

#### **I. Instruments for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and the follow-up mechanisms.**

##### **A. Instruments**

The presentation of these instruments takes into consideration the problems of the rights of persons with disabilities. Thus, we shall treat these instruments at two levels: at the level of the United Nations and at the African level.

##### **1. At the level of the United Nations**

The international obligations on the question of the rights of Persons with disability are constraining. In this sense it gives the state the obligations to ensure the rights of Persons with disabilities are recognized. But they are also non- obligatory i.e. the state simply engages itself to ensure the respect of the rights of Persons with disabilities. These international instruments are general and only specific for a certain category of Persons with disabilities.

## 1.1. Obligatory or constraining United Nations instruments

The essential ones are:

- The universal declaration of human rights of 1945;
- The convention on the elimination of racial discrimination of 1965;
- The international Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights of 1966;
- The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination on women of 1979;
- The convention on the rights of the child of 1989;
- The convention of the international labour's organisation n° 159 on professional re-adaptation and employment of disabled persons;
- The convention against torture of December 1984;
- The convention on the protection of the rights of immigrant workers and their families;
- The international convention in relation to the rights of Persons with disabilities of 13 December 2006 opened to signature and ratification since the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 .It was signed since its adoption by 80 countries.

### 1.1. a. The Universal declaration on human rights, articles 1, 2, 7 and 25

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights ..... Each one can boast of all his rights and freedoms..... without any distinction .... All are equal before the law and have rights without distinction, to equal protection before the law. All have rights to equal protection against discrimination.... and against all incitement to such discrimination.....everybody has the right to a satisfactory standard of living that guarantees his/her health, his/her well-being.....especially...right to security in case ....of disabilities..."

### **1.1. b. The International pact on social, economic, and cultural rights**

#### **Articles 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 and 15**

“Countries that are part of this pact seek to assure that the rights .... are applied without any discrimination .....these countries recognise the right to work ... equal payment for a job with equal values....the right for all to have a satisfactory standard of life ..... To enjoy the best state of physical and mental health that he is capable of attaining ..... As for education, it has to place every one at a state where he can freely play a useful role in the society....primary education has to be freely accessible to all; secondary education has to be general and made accessible to all... higher education has to be made accessible to all in full equality.....the state recognises the right for all ... to participate to cultural life; to benefit from scientific progress and its applications”.

### **1.1. c. The International pact relative to civil and political rights**

“Countries involve ..... engage themselves to ... guarantee to all individuals... the right .... without any distinction ....; that ... any body, whose rights and freedoms are stolen, will dispose a useful appeal..... None shall be submitted to torture, pain or any cruel treatments, inhuman or degrading. Particularly, it is forbidden to submit someone with freely asking his medical or scientific background.....All are equal before the court and the courtyards of justice.... All have the right to be recognised in their environment of personal jurisdiction.....none shall be the subject of arbitrary interference or illegal in his private life, his family, his home .....the right to marry and form a family is well known to man and woman..... Every citizen has the right and the possibility ... to take part in the management of public affairs...; to vote....; to attain, in equal general conditions, to public posts..... All are equal before the law and have right without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this effect, the law has to forbid all discrimination and guarantee equal and efficient protection against discrimination to all”.

**1.1. d. The Convention of the international labour's organisation n° 159 on professional re-adaptation and employment of persons with disabilities Articles 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8**

"Each member has to .... Formulate, put into action ...a national policy concerning professional rehabilitation and employment of Persons with disabilities. This policy should have as goal to make sure that measure of adequate professional rehabilitation are made accessible to all categories of Persons with disabilities and to promote the possibilities of employing Persons with disabilities in the job market.... This policy should be based on the principles of equal opportunity between disabled workers and workers in general. Equality of opportunity between male and female disabled persons should be respected. Competent authorities have to take measures in view of providing .... services of professional orientation, professional training, placement, employment, and other connections that can permit Persons with disabilities to obtain and conserve a job opportunity and to progress professionally. ... Measures have to be taken to promote the creation and development of services of professional rehabilitation and employment for Persons with disabilities in rural isolated zones..."

**1.1. e. The Convention on the rights of the child**

"State parties commit themselves to respect ... and to guarantee the rights of every child within their jurisdiction, without distinction ... the states take every measures ... appropriate to protect children from every form of violence, attack, physical or mental brutality....bad treatment or exploitation... States recognise that children who are mentally or physically disabled have to live a normal and decent life, in conditions that guarantees their dignity, their independence, and facilitate their active participation in their community... States involved recognises the rights of children with disabilities to benefit from special treatments, encourage and assure grant on demand to disabled children who fulfil the necessary conditions and for those taking care of them, favourable assistance... the assistance ... is conceived in such a way that the children with disabilities have effective access to education, training, medical care, rehabilitation, preparation for a

job and to procreative activities. They have to benefit from these services in a proper way to ensure social integration and their personal happiness...”

### **1.1. f. Declaration of the rights of persons with disabilities**

#### **Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10**

“Persons with disabilities should be enjoy their full rights ... these rights are to be recognised to all Persons with disabilities without any exception, nor distinction or discrimination. Handicaps only have rights in respect to their human dignity. Persons with disabilities no matter their origin, nature and seriousness of their problems and deficiencies, have the same rights as their counterparts..., i.e. that of enjoying a decent life, as normal and lively as possible... They also have the same civic and political rights as any normal human being..; they have rights that permit them to have as much autonomy as possible. ... They have rights to medical, psychological and functional treatments, including devices of prosthesis; to medical and social rehabilitation; to education; to training and to professional reintegration; to aid, council, services of placement and any other services which assures maximum valorisation of his capacities and aptitudes and hasten the process of his social integration or re-integration... Persons with disabilities have rights to economic and social security and to a decent standard of living. They have the rights within their capacities to obtain and retain a job offer or to practise an occupation that will be useful, productive and remunerated. ...The personal needs of persons with disabilities have to be taken into consideration at all stages of the economic and social planning. They have the right to live by their families... and to participate in all social, creative and procreative activities. No persons with disability shall be subjected ... to a different treatment which is not in line with his/her state. If the stay of persons with disabilities in a specialised institution is indispensable, the environment and the living conditions should be much similar to that of the people of his age group ... Persons with disabilities should be protected from all forms of exploitations, rules or discriminatory and improper or deteriorating treatments. ”



## **1.2. Non-constraining or obligatory United Nations instruments**

The essential ones include:

- The Declaration of the rights of Persons with disabilities proclaimed by the general assembly of the united Nations in its resolution 3447 (xxx) of 09<sup>th</sup> December 1975;
- The Principles to protect persons with mental illnesses and ameliorate health care, adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 46/119 of 17<sup>th</sup> December 1991;
- The United Nations rule for equality of opportunities for Persons with disabilities adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 48/96 of 20<sup>th</sup> December 1993;
- The World's Action Programme for Persons with disabilities;
- The Cairo Action Programme;
- The Copenhagen declaration;
- The Copenhagen action programme;
- The Beijing Action Platform.

### **1.2. a. Declaration of the rights of persons with disabilities of the United Nations in its resolution of 09<sup>th</sup> December 1975**

In addition to the definition that this declaration gives concerning persons with disabilities, this text assembles the rights that persons with disabilities benefit from without any discrimination, in 13 articles. It includes amongst others rights: the respect for human dignity, civic and political rights, rights to greater possibilities of self-independence, rights to medical treatment, to social and economic security, right to a family life, and to the protection against all forms of torture.

**1.2. b. The United Nations regulation on the equality of opportunities for persons with disabilities adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 48/96 of 20<sup>th</sup> December 1993**

The United Nations regulations on equal opportunities for persons with disabilities adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations are based on 22 points. A few examples are: Sensitisation, healthcare, rehabilitation, support services, accessibility, education, employment, leisure, sports and culture, information and research religion, working conditions, etc.

**1.2. c. World's action programme for persons with disabilities**

The activities of the World's Action Programme for persons with disabilities resulted in the declaration of the International Day for Persons with Disabilities in 1981 which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1992 (resolution 37/52).

**1.2.d. Principles to protect persons with mental illnesses and ameliorate health care, adopted by the General Assembly of the united Nations in its resolution 46/119 of 17<sup>th</sup> December 1991**

The United Nations on the basis of non discrimination adopted 25 principles that will serve as guidelines for the protection of persons, with mental illnesses and ameliorate health care treatments.

**1.2. e. The Vienna declaration, part 1 para. 22 and part 2 para. 63 and 64**

"We should particularly ensure that persons with disabilities are not victims of discrimination and are able in equal conditions to enjoy their rights and fundamental freedom of as every human being as well as actively participating in all aspects of social

life... the World's Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed that, human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal and for that reason, were applicable to all, without restrictions to persons suffering from disabilities.

All human beings are born equal and have the same rights to life and wellbeing, education and work, independent life and to actively participate in all social aspects of life. Any form of direct discrimination or any discriminatory treatments against persons with disabilities constitute a violation of their rights ... Persons with disabilities are entitled to a place as their desires lead them. We should guarantee equal opportunities for them by eliminating all forms of obstacles, be it physical or financial, as well as social or psychological that restricts or prevents their full integration in societal life”.

#### **1.2. f. The Cairo action programme**

“The Objectives are to:

- See to it that all persons with disabilities enjoy their rights and participate in all aspects of social, economic and cultural life;
- Create and reinforce conditions to balance the chances for persons with disabilities and guarantee the acknowledgement of their potentials in the economic and social development process;
- Ensure the respect of the dignity of persons with disabilities and protect their independence...;
- Measures to be taken: ... At all levels, public authorities have to favour mechanisms that guarantee the respect for the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthen the possibilities of their integration....”

### **1.2. g. The Copenhagen declaration**

“We the Head of State and Governments,... shall define an action frame within which:... we will guarantee that, underprivileged and vulnerable persons and groups participate in the social development and ensure the recognition by the society of the consequence of the exclusion and to respond to it by ensuring the respect of the rights of person and by making the physical and social environment accessible....

We shall ensure equal opportunities at all levels of education for the child, the youth and the adult with disability.....

We will see into it that persons with disabilities have access to rehabilitation services and to other services that permit them to live an independent life so as to permit them live a comfortable and independent life thereby participating fully in the social life.”

### **1.2. h. The Copenhagen action programme; Para.62 (a), (c), (d) and 75(k)**

“To better open the job market to persons with disabilities, we should: ban legislation and work regulations which discriminate against persons with disabilities ....Adapt working environments to the needs of persons with disabilities ... provide all forms of employment for example, working assistantship to persons with disabilities who are in need of such services ... Governments should in collaboration with organisations of disabled persons and the private sector, give equal opportunities to all so that persons with disabilities can fully take part in the social activities and enjoy all the advantages that follow. Policies concerning persons with disabilities should be centred on their competence and not their disabilities thereby respecting their dignities as citizens ...”

### **1.2.i. The Beijing action platform, par.106 (c) and (d)**

“Measures to be taken: ... conceive and put in place..., health programs while taking into consideration the gender issue... so as to answer to the need of women ... Ensure that girls and women of all ages, suffering from any form of inability, receive aid”.

## **2. At the level of the Organisation of African Unity**

At the African regional level, the principal instrument for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is the African charter on human and people's rights, as well as few other conventions and some additional protocols to the African charter.

### **2.1. African charter on human and people's rights**

**adopted by the OUA resolution CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I. L.M. 58(1982), of 27 June 1981, which went into existence on the 21 October 1986**

The African charter on human and people's rights in other words (Charter of Banjul) seeks to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in the African continent. Adopted by the Organisation African Unity (OAU) in 1981, the Banjul charter entered into force in 1986. It remains the first normative instrument for the promotion and protection of human rights in the continent.

This charter does not only protect the rights of individuals, but also the rights of persons in a "group" or a "collective" unit. In this manner, it constitutes a lasting legacy. Better still, the charter equally places obligations on individuals beside those placed on member states. It covers a wide range of human right aspects such as the: civic and political rights, socio-economic and cultural rights and the rights to development.

### **2.2 The OAU convention, dealing with the problem of African refugees**

Adopted in Addis-Ababa during the OAU conference of the Heads of State, which held from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1969, the OAU convention, managing the problem of African refugees was signed and it was entered into force on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1974.

### **2.3 The African charter on the rights and wellbeing of the child**

The African charter of the rights and wellbeing of the child was adopted in Addis-Ababa in July 1990.

### **2.4 Protocols relating to the African charter on human and people's rights relating to the creation of an African court on human and people's rights**

It was created and adopted in Ouagadougou, on the 09<sup>th</sup> of June 1998, from the protocol relating to the African charter on human and people's rights.

### **2.5 The Protocol of the African charter on human and people's rights relating to the African woman**

From the project of Protocol to the African charter on Human and People's Rights relating to the African woman, this Protocol was adopted on May 28<sup>th</sup> 2003 at Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, during a meeting of Ministers of African Union.

## **B. Follow-up mechanisms on the Instruments of Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

These follow-up mechanisms on instruments of promotion and protection of human rights will be looked into, at different levels in relation to the various institutions namely: the United Nations level, the African region, America, European or other specialised institutions.

### **1. The United Nations follow-up mechanisms for persons with disability**

#### **1.1. Mechanisms put in place with respect to human rights instruments**

These mechanisms are Commission bodies ensuring the implementation of signed treaties by Member States. They include:

- The Commission to eliminate racial discrimination (CERD);
- The Human right commission (HRC);
- The Commission to eliminate discrimination against women (CEDAW);
- The Commission against torture (CAT);
- The Commission on the rights of the child (CRC);
- The Commission for the protection of the rights of migrant worker and members of their family (CMW);
- The Commission on the rights of person's with disability (not yet active).

## **1.2. Mechanisms instituted by virtue of the regional instruments of human rights**

- The European court of human rights;
- The Inter- American commission for human rights;
- The American court of human rights;
- The African commission for human and people's rights;
- The African court for human and people's rights where we can add the role of NGOs.

## **2. Special procedures**

Special follow-up procedures for the implementation of instruments on the promotion and protection of human rights are:

- Special rapporters (rapporteurs);
- Working groups that can intervene at the level of the states. They are thematic or statey.
- The Human right commission which since 2006, became known as the Human rights council. This organ treats issues addressed to the United Nations Secretary General.

### **3. Appeals to the follow-up mechanisms**

#### **3.1. The authors of appeal**

Appeals to these Treaty Follow-up mechanisms can be done by:

- States;
- Individuals;
- Moral persons (NGOs, associations and the civil society in general)

#### **3.2. Types of appeals**

Appeals to these mechanisms can be done in many ways:

- By sending appeals or complaints against the States;
- By communications or sending petitions against the States.

It should be noted that appeals may be compulsory or optional.

### **4. The Legal strength and the nature of actions taken by these mechanisms**

The international law was created by States who put in place mechanisms to peacefully settle their differences. By so doing, they agreed to preserve and respect State sovereignty. For this reason, many of these international appeal actions have non legal backings.

Generally, the appeals have enabled these international organs to formulate the following:

- Observations;
- Recommendations ; or
- Opinions and judgements



As far as the 7 aforementioned treaty organs, as well as the ILO, the Inter- American commission for human rights and the African commission for human's rights are concerned, decisions taken at their level have semi-legal backings.

Less frequently, some of these appeals have legal coining and this leads to legal international rulings which may become obligatory or constraining for the accused State party, compelled to respect the ruling. This includes appeals sent to international institutions such as:

- The European Court of Human Rights;
- The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ; and
- The African Court of Human and Peoples Rights.

The outcome and judgements rendered by these bodies becomes an obligation for the concerned State.

## **Paragraph 2: At the national level**

All Persons with disabilities must be able to fully enjoy their rights without exemption, distinction or discrimination. These rights have to be recognised and guaranteed by texts and their implementation must be followed by strong and adequate policies, structures and facilities. How is the situation here in Cameroon? This question will be approached using the following angles:

### **A: Sources of the rights of persons with disabilities in Cameroon**

In Cameroon, the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disability finds their source in international texts which Cameroon is party to as well as the limited National texts on:

- The Universal declaration of human rights, articles 1, 2, 7 and 25;
- The International pact on the economic, social and cultural rights; articles 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 and 15;
- The Convention of the international labour organisation N° 159, articles 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8;
- The Declaration on the rights of persons with disability , articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10;
- The Convention on the rights of the child, articles 2, 9 and 23;
- The African charter of human and people's right of 27<sup>th</sup> June 1981;
- The Cameroon constitution;
- Law N° 83/13 of 21<sup>st</sup> July 1983 relating to the protection of persons with disability;
- Degree N° 90/1516 of 26<sup>th</sup> November 1990 binding the modalities of application of law N°83/13 of 21<sup>st</sup> July 1983 relating to the protection of persons with disability;
- The penal code in its article 282 relating to the neglect of persons with disability.

It should be noted that the United Nations convention relating to the rights of persons with disabilities adopted by the General Assembly on December 13<sup>th</sup> 2006, which was open for signature and ratification by the states in May 2007, has not yet been signed or ratified by Cameroon.

## **B: Overview**

Generally, a disability is considered an individual problem which results from a deficiency, an incapacity, or the inability to use certain parts of the human body.

In Cameroon, there exists no constitutional definition of disabilities. However law n° 3/013 of 21<sup>st</sup> July 1983 and its degree of application n° 90/1516 of November 26<sup>th</sup> 1990

relating to the protection of persons with disabilities fills this vacuum. Moreover it should be noted that these texts constitute excellent legal background for the protection of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. This law which contains in all 12 articles has been subject to criticisms. Many consider its enacting terms to be more of an incitement than an obligation for the State. This law despite its weaknesses helped to put the State away from criticisms and to fill the gap that existed as far as the protection, promotion and the socio-economic integration of persons with disabilities. As such, article 1 of the 1983 law defined a person with disability as, someone who, stricken by physical or mental, congenital or accidental deficiency, experiences difficulties to carryout his/her duties as any normal person.

It should be noted that, the law of 1983 concerned all the categories of disabilities that exist in Cameroon, most especially; the blind, deaf, dumb, dwarfs, retarded, etc.

The Cameroon constitution guarantees the rights of all its citizens amongst which are persons with disabilities. However, they are practically relegated to the second rank in many domains in our society such as: employment, education, environment, health, infrastructure etc.

Article 3 (1 and 2) of the 1983 law, forbids all forms of discrimination towards persons with disabilities. This measure has been criticised for its ambiguity because its practice is uncertain; for example families and sometimes the society in general, show little concern towards persons with disabilities.

Besides the existence of this law in favour of the rights of persons with disabilities, a national forum on the rights of persons with disabilities was held in June 2005. There has been brainstorming on the idea of the creation of a national solidarity fund in favour of persons with disabilities and many charitable associations and organisations have championed this idea. The Ministry of Social Affairs which is the supervisory body of this demographic has signed a document with the Ministry of Secondary Education that

guarantees free secondary education for persons with disabilities. Moreover, a presidential decree was signed, which instituted National Identity Cards for persons with disabilities.

### **C: Government structures that care for persons with disabilities**

The Ministry of Social Affairs is the principal government structure that in charge of issues for persons with disabilities in Cameroon. Within this Ministry, there exists a department in charge of the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. This Ministry works as an umbrella under which other organisations of the civil society operate. The missions of this department are as follows:

- The establishment of a disability card to persons with disabilities in the case of a disability that is approved by the competent authorities;
- The creation of rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities in Yaoundé, Buea and Garoua to provide them with professional training in specialised domains;
- The allocation of subventions for the smooth operation of associations and institutions that work with or for persons with disabilities. This is because, the terms of article 24 (2) of the 1990 decree which allocates material or financial assistance to persons with disabilities have not always been respected. Even when it is respected, the amount is not aligned with respect to the demand;
- The creation in 1996 of the National Committee for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of persons with disabilities in order to put together, initiatives to create an environment of equal opportunity for persons with disabilities;
- The creation of a specialised school for the deaf (ESEDA);
- The creation of a follow-up centre for retarded and mentally deranged persons (Centre Jamot)...

In addition to these government structures, there exists in Cameroon a national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights known as the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms in Cameroon, (NCHRF) created by the law n° 2004/016 of 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2004. This institution has the general mandate to ensure the promotion and the protection of the rights of every body, including persons with disabilities. In the framework of its activities, it submits annual reports to the Head of State and the president of the National Assembly; semi-annual reports to the Prime Minister, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation and also to the Minister of Justice. These reports can also be sent to its international partners especially the United Nations. In order to implement this law, a Working Group in charge of the rights of special categories of persons was created within this Commission in November 2006, and it is presently headed by a person with disability who is a member of the Commission.<sup>8</sup>

#### **D: Poverty and persons with disabilities**

In the Cameroonian society, persons with disabilities are the most vulnerable and poorest because most of them are under educated and under employed. Many live in the streets and begging has become their major occupation. Poverty is seen as one of the factors that obstructs the assistance society could provide to these persons with disabilities. In reality, many families in Cameroon live below the poverty threshold. In these conditions, it becomes difficult to give the required assistance to the families of persons with disabilities.

So to fight against poverty amongst persons with disabilities, the following measures have been taken by the State:

---

<sup>8</sup> This person is Mr. Ondoua Abah Gabriel, Chairman of the National Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities of Cameroon (UNAPHAC).

- Encourage persons with disabilities to create individual enterprises, production and sales cooperatives. (Article 15 of 1990 degree);
- Assist persons with disabilities with technical training programmes (Article 16 of degree);
- Provide partial or full tax exemption and postal charges to persons with disabilities;
- Provide subventions to assist private institutions that work toward facilitating the independence of persons with disabilities ;
- If possible, provide material and financial assistance in the form of pension, to persons with disabilities who possess a valid disability card (Article 26 (1) of degree);
- If possible, assist collectively, groups and associations of persons with disabilities, as well as legalised organisations that takes care of persons with disabilities or member of their families (Article 23 (2) of degree);
- Provide medical assistance to persons with disabilities after presentation of a disability card established by a competent authority. This aid covers the cost of consultation, lab test, hospitalisation, operation and evacuation services (Article 25 of degree);
- However, not all persons with disabilities possess a disability card. Even those who have this card do not always benefit from these health services when they go to the health centres in Cameroon.

### **E: Education and persons with disabilities**

In Cameroon the practice in families who have children with disabilities is that, choices are open to nondisabled children whereas children with disabilities are looked upon by families as unproductive and unnecessary burdens. Nondisabled children are encouraged in their studies.

Bearing in mind the fact that, persons with disabilities are human beings with the same status as any other person in the society, the government has elaborated framework to promote and protect their rights. In this effect, the law of 1983 with its degree of application has relaxed measures concerning the age limits for persons with disabilities to enrol in school. Article 5 (3) of the 1990 decree for example stipulates that: "pupils and students with disabilities are authorised to repeat a current class twice if the failures in the examinations are caused by the difficulties related to their physical or mental state". Paragraph 4 of the same article stipulates that ; qualified persons with disabilities in specialised private training institutions, should be attributed subventions or special didactic materials, scholarships in schools and universities, gifts in cash or kind to young persons with disabilities and to children born of parents with disabilities in need. These positions would have been laudable if they were matched with effective measures for their implementation. So far, their implementation has been slow and difficult. We should however appreciate the partnership that exist between the Ministry of Secondary Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs, materialised by the joint circular N° 34/06/LC/MINSEC/MINAS of 02 August 2006 which guaranteed free education and an end of year examination fees for students with disabilities of public secondary schools.

## **F: The economic situation in Cameroon**

The government policy to fight against unemployment takes into consideration persons with disabilities. Among the measures taken by the government to fight unemployment, is the creation of the National Employment Fund (NEF); a structure that welcomes, orientates and trains job seekers. However, it has been noticed that this structure does not always give the place of choice to persons with disabilities. Due to their physical condition and in consideration of the existing law, a person with disability deserves special attention in line with the provisions of articles 15 to 20 of the decree of application of the 1990 law .. In this light, persons with disabilities can appeal for and obtain partial or total tax exemption at the level of the Ministry of economy and Finance.

## **G: Specialised structures for the training of persons with disabilities**

There are no government structures specialised in the training of persons with disabilities. However, a few private structures exist for the professional training of persons with disabilities such as:

- Bobine d'Or in Yaoundé trains females with disabilities in sewing and designing. At the end of their training, sewing machines are given to them and some financial assistance that can permit them to open their own workshops;
- Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind in Buea (RIB) that trains Persons with disabilities in craftsmanship etc.

## **H: The employment of persons with disabilities**

In Cameroon as in many other African countries, access to the job market is difficult and constitutes a major pre-occupation for many young qualified persons with disabilities. Measures to deal with this difficulty/barrier for persons with disabilities (the most vulnerable group) are found in the decree of 1990 in its article 11 (1) which holds that, "Persons with disabilities who have received professional or academic training, shall benefit from the same conditions of recruitment and remuneration in public and private employments as any other normal person as far as the post is compatible with their state". Paragraph 2 of this article adds that "In no case should disability be a motive for the discrimination against or rejection of a candidature".

A proper understanding of this article shows a serious contradiction of terms between the two paragraphs. Meanwhile paragraph 1 stipulates that a person with disability can only take part in exams compatible with his/her condition. Paragraph 2 claims that, his/her disability should not constitute an obstacle to his/her recruitment. From these two texts, we can notice some deliberate acts of discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities in the employment process.



In Cameroon, there exist various forms of competitive examinations whereby persons with disabilities can take part, but their candidature is not always accepted. More over, there exists no national rule that specifies their employment conditions and the type of employment they can apply for. In addition, article 12 of the above mentioned decree stipulates that “public and private enterprises should reserve as much as possible, job opportunities which are accessible to persons with disabilities, to the proportion of at least 10%”. Once again, it is regrettable to mention that this position is not yet applied.

### **I: Accessibility in favour of persons with disabilities**

The law of 1983 and its decree of application have regulated and facilitated the accessibility of persons with disabilities to certain institutions. For example, article 34 of the decree makes provisions for home assistance and reduction of transport fares for persons with disabilities.

Article 35 stipulates that “in the domain of studies and social accommodations, the public authorities concerned should, allocate within their programmes, a proportion of special accommodations for persons with disabilities who use wheel chairs or who suffer from mobility problems”.

Article 39 of the same decree holds that “Public places, institutions and the entire residential estates should have as much as possible, reserved parking lots, public toilets, special telephone booths and equipments adapted to the physical conditions of persons with disabilities. They have to be in-line with the accessibility standards as demanded by article 37 and 38 as cited above”.

Since the promulgation of this decree 17 years ago, no initiative has been taken to put these recommendations to action.

## **J: Environment and persons with disabilities**

It is with great regrets that we note that in Cameroon, there exists no standard legal provision that enables persons with disabilities to fully enjoy the right to a secured and comfortable environment. It has also been noticed that persons with disabilities are not taken into account during the construction of roads and dwelling structures.

## **K: Communication and persons with disabilities**

Persons with disabilities are disadvantaged when confronting communication barriers. . No concrete action has been taken by the government to give them easy access to information. This responsibility has two implications.

Firstly, the law of 1983 and its decree of application are not obligatory or constraining enough.

It is therefore imperative to stimulate/lobby parliament to vote on the law that has been developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This law devotes great emphasis to the repercussions for authorities or actors who refuse to integrate persons with disabilities in their political, social or economic programmes.

In another respect, the media is almost indifferent regarding the question of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. Their attitude has a negative influence on the ongoing policies concerning the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. We cannot ignore the fact that the media is a powerful medium of communication which has an incomparable capacity of social transformation. Their full participation is necessary in order to change the perception of the population towards persons with disabilities.

## **L: Social affairs in Cameroon**

In the Cameroon society, persons with disabilities suffer from discrimination from various sources: families, neighbours and the society at large. One of the approaches adopted by the government to fight against this discrimination has been by integrating them through legal provisions in activities such as sports, recreations and international competitions. By article 21 (2) of the decree, a program of sport and physical education has been planned for persons with disabilities at the secondary and university levels.

## **M: Civil and political rights**

Persons with disabilities who are citizens of Cameroon have according to the Constitution, the same rights as any other normal citizen. These rights for example include: the right to vote and participate in the political affairs of the country. Nonetheless, practical measures are not always taken to enable the person with disability to enjoy his/her rights. Voting stations in Cameroon and the voting systems for example, are not adapted to the conditions of the blind.

## **N: Assistance to persons with disabilities**

Article 23 (2) of the 1990 decree holds that collective assistance can be given to groups and organisations of persons with disabilities; to recognised organisations that cater for persons with disabilities, or to their families. Moreover, article 24 (2) stipulates that centres in charge of persons with disabilities can benefit from subventions in conformity with the existing laws. Also, they can be authorised to manage the aid packages of persons with disabilities under their care.

## **O: Breach of laws relating to persons with disabilities**

The decree of 1990 in its article 43 disposes that: "... is punishable by law in accordance with article 315 of the penal code:

- Whosoever issues unduly a disability card to a valid person;
- Any valid persons who establishes or uses a fake disability card;
- Any unauthorised person who issues a disability card".

It is important to note that the Cameroon legislation is very limited as far as the breaches of laws relating to persons with disabilities are concerned. Besides the breaches related to the issuing of false disability cards, the present legislation does not dispose measures to punish offences related to other forms of violations of the rights of persons with disabilities.

## **P: Public awareness and persons with disabilities**

In view of limiting disabilities in Cameroon, the Government through the Ministry of Health organises regular vaccination campaigns during International Vaccination Days in which, children aged between 0 to 5 years are vaccinated against poliomyelitis, meningitis and other illnesses. For others, treatments are administered to prevent blindness and other diseases. In addition, there exists a rehabilitation centre for persons with disabilities in Etoug-Ebe in Yaoundé which welcomes confirmed children with disabilities, and makes diagnosis of their illnesses in order to reduce or prevent the aggravation of their disabilities. Moreover national and international organisations such as the African Union for the blind through the Cameroon National Association for the Blind (ANAC), carries out serious sensitisation activities with the public through seminars such as those on HIV/AIDS or on the Rights of persons with disabilities.

### **Q: Health centres and persons with disabilities**

Some rare medical institutions in Cameroon offer special treatments to persons with disabilities such as; a reduction on the consultation, tests and lab fees after presentation of a disability card.

However, very little attention is paid them in other health institutions especially in private hospitals where, they are treated as any other person irrespective of their conditions. No special attention is given to them by the health personnel in such centres.

### **R: The Person with disability and inefficiency**

Persons with mental disabilities are considered in Cameroon as incompetent because they lack the mental faculties required by law to carryout legal actions. For example, they cannot sign a deal or be brought in as witnesses in court. Their facts and observations will simply be seen as useless and not legally binding.

### **S: Priority actions and intervention strategies**

The priority actions and intervention strategies that follow are found in the rehashed version of the National Action Plan for the promotion and protection of human rights in Cameroon. The framing of this document on human rights in Cameroon was completed by the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) with support and financial assistance from the High Commission on Human Rights via its Sub Regional Centre for the Central African and the Great Lakes in Yaoundé; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and in partnership with both the national governmental and non governmental actors working in the domain of human rights.

## 1. Priority actions

With respect to the priority actions, the Plan proposes the following measures:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Taking special measures to ensure the employment of persons with disabilities;
- Elaborating policies in the public transport sector that favour persons with disabilities;
- Encouraging private transport facilities for groups of persons with disabilities, by providing them with conducive logistics adapted to their conditions;
- Eliminating architectural barriers;
- Putting in place measures to ease the movements of persons with disabilities;
- The creation of a National Solidarity trust Fund for persons with disabilities;
- Ratifying United Nations Conventions on persons with disabilities...

## 2. Intervention strategies

For the implementation of the various identified actions, the intervention strategies which we divided in three parts are:

### **a. The organisation of meetings, conferences, round tables colloquiums of coordination on the following aspects**

- The putting in place of a national policy on the professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, in order to guarantee their full professional integration;

- The promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities within the job market. It should be based on the principle of equality between workers with disabilities and their counterparts;
- The promotion of the equality of chances and treatments within the job sector between the workers with disabilities who must be respected) and their counterparts;
- The reinforcement of measures to provide professional counselling, training, placing, employment and other measures destined to ensure for the person with disability, a befitting job within which he can progress professionally;
- Promote the creation and the development of services for professional rehabilitation and employment for persons with disabilities in rural and isolated areas.

**b. The organisation of pleading campaigns on:**

- The recognition of the rights of children with mental or physical disabilities to live a comfortable and decent life under conditions that guarantee their dignity, independence and active participation in social activities;
- The recognition of the rights of children with disabilities to special treatments and to encourage and ensure their obtainment of aid packages after the fulfilment of the required criteria as well as to those who cater for them;
- The provision of aid to needy children with disabilities and to the children of parents with disabilities in order to ensure their education, training, access to health care , rehabilitation, preparation to the job market , leisure activities and above all , their social integration...

### **c. The prevention of disabilities**

As far as prevention is concerned, the strategy to use will revolve around the following measures:

- The prevention of disability within the health sector;
- The prevention of disability within the professional milieu;
- The prevention of accidents on our roads....



### **SECTION 3: OVERVIEW ON THE MOVEMENTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN CAMEROON**

The first movement of persons with disabilities in Cameroon started in the 1970s and was called the General Union of Persons with Disabilities of Cameroon; known by its French appellation as Union Général des Grands Infirmes du Cameroun (UGAGIC). Its headquarters was in New Bell, Douala. Its founder and President, Mr. Nyaga Alphonse was blind but full of great ambitions as well as a strong uniting spirit. He successfully ensured the primacy of this organisation that brought together all categories of persons with disabilities until 1981, when it became the National Union of Persons with Disabilities of Cameroon (UNACAM); led by Mr Zogo Megne Alphonse, a lame man.

In June 1985, UNACAM which was the broadest organisation that united persons with disabilities in Cameroon was in turn replaced by the National Federation of Associations of Persons with Disability of Cameroon (FENAHCAM).

This federation took into account, the peculiarities and diversities of each association or groups of associations with respect to their domains of activity. The federation enjoys a double tutelage: from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Territorial Administration. FENAHCAM was recognising for its social utility by decree no 71/DF/315 of 19 July 1971, when it took over from UGAGIC.

By this recognition, the following associations immediately sprang up:

- l'Association Nationale des Aveugles du Cam (ANAC);
- l'Association Nationale des Handicapes Moteurs et Amputés du Cameroun;
- l'Association Nationale des Anciens Lépreux du Cameroun (ANALCAM);
- l'Association Nationale des Déficients Auditifs du Cameroun (ANDAC);
- l'Association Nationale des Sourds muets du Cameroun (ASCAM);
- l'Association des Handicapés Moteurs et Amputés du Cameroun (AHMAC);

- l'Association des Parents d'Enfants Handicapés (COLOMBE);
- la Fédération des Handicapés Sportifs du Cameroun;
- Fondation Petit DAN et SAHAH ( for Orphan children);
- Club des Jeunes Aveugles Réhabilités du Cameroun (CJARC);
- Ligue de Solidarité des Femmes Handicapées du Cameroun (LISOFHAC);
- Association des Etudiants Handicapés (AEH);
- Amicale Nationale des Handicapées du Cameroun etc.....

This list may not be exhaustive one because, after the 19 December 1990 Law on the freedom of association, thousands of associations of or for persons with disabilities were created.

Each of the above mentioned associations have a legal status as well as internal rules and regulations in conformity with the law on the freedom of association in Cameroon – No 90/053 of 19 December 1990. They equally are affiliated to FENAHCAM, but maintain their independence. This affiliation is completed by the payment of a standard membership fee which is defined by the executive committee of FENAHCAM. They are all under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) .The federation was recognised for its social utility by a presidential decree. With this, it benefits from certain facilities as stated by the Cameroon legislation.

The main problem faced by these specialised associations is that of financial autonomy, which impedes their desire to operate in full independence and to organise their general assembly meetings within the expected time frame. The Government of Cameroon has not made budgetary allocations for these associations to operate smoothly.

Moreover, the 1990 law on the freedom of association equally inspired the creation of thousands of associations for persons with disabilities, whose founders were rather interested and motivated by the financial benefits .Poverty and unemployment had led

many people to see the creation of associations as an easy way to increase contacts and foreign sponsorship.

Nonetheless, in Cameroon, we cannot consider all leaders of associations as stranded and unserious persons. A good number of leaders of associations are not only well qualified but also have devoted intentions towards their activities for persons with disabilities.

## Section 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, we shall discuss the main results of the field study, but before that, we shall briefly discuss the characteristics of the persons interviewed in order to better situate the results.

### I: Characteristics of interviewees

The data in this study was from different persons with disabilities. The field work was based on interviews conducted with persons with disabilities<sup>9</sup> in their daily environments. In fact, one hundred (100) interviews were conducted in three (03) different areas and ninety six (96) were used for the following analysis<sup>10</sup>. The interviews were recorded and stored in tapes. Immediately after the data collection, the team proceeded to transcribe the information and engage in further analysis.

We must mention here that the areas the team used for the study-the Centre, Northwest and Western provinces - are a remarkable reflection of the diversities that exist amongst the ethnic homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, with different levels of education and lifestyle. Due to the difficulties to obtain a befitting sample reflecting the population of persons with disabilities, we were bound to use the utilitarian approach which consisted of assembling our interviewees while taking into account the diversity that exists within the population and the different forms of persons with disabilities in Cameroon with respect to the geographical environment, age and gender.

The teams mandated to conduct the interviews spent approximately 20 days in each chosen area and were able to interview the following number of interviewees:

- For the Centre province, Yaoundé, 48 persons with disabilities;
- For the Western province, Bafoussam, 35 persons with disabilities;

---

<sup>9</sup> These consisted of all categories of persons with disabilities, except for mentally deranged persons. There were men, women, literates and illiterates. In short, this report will better analyse the facts.

<sup>10</sup> We did not take into account the data from four interviewees because the information they gave were not proper for the analysis in this study.

- For the North West province, Bamenda, 17 persons with disabilities.

The disparities noticed amongst the interviewees in the three sites: Yaoundé, Bafoussam and Bamenda, was due to the fact that the preparatory work for the study took place in Yaoundé. Furthermore, the majority of the persons used for the study resided in Yaoundé, composed mostly of students, including the Leading researcher of the project. Due to the examination constraints, these students were obliged to limit themselves to the town of Yaoundé and its surrounding localities. For this same reason, some were able to work in Bafoussam, which was nearer to Yaoundé, than Bamenda.

It is equally important to note that, Bamenda is essentially an Anglo-Saxon area and there were very few researchers who had a good mastery of the English language; thus, only a limited number of persons were qualified to be sent to this region, thus limiting the number of interviews. As previously mentioned, in our opinion, even if this research was conducted separately in the different sites, there will still be no fundamental changes to the results that were obtained.

The results presented below are based on the 96 interviews we validated from amongst the 100 that were conducted on adults with different forms of disabilities and living in the three different geographic areas.

Table 1 below summarizes the demographic data of the surveyed population.

**Table 1**  
**Demographic characteristics of the participants**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Type of Disability</b>
Female	45		
Male	51		

Below 26		18	
26 - 40		49	
41 - 55		14	
56 - 70		12	
70 +		3	
Mobility Impaired			45
Blind			36
Deaf			4
Albinos			11

Given the absence of statistics concerning people with disabilities in Cameroon, and the small range of the sample used in this study; the approach of sampling by probability with respect to a given population was not applied. Instead, the research team considered *purposeful sampling* to be the most appropriate sampling strategy.

Based on the three demographic criteria described above—gender, age, and type of disability—the team used snowball sampling to recruit and select participants. Due to the weakness in the sampling which was not fully representative of certain categories of persons with disabilities on the field, the team faced difficulties in reaching the target population. However, the sample was quite balanced in terms of gender and geographic location although it brings out significant disparities in relation to age and the types of disabilities.

The majority of the respondents ranged between the ages 26 and below and from 26 to 40. These were mainly the mobility impaired, the blind and the dumb. Consequently, those over 41 years old as well as persons with intellectual, psychiatric, or other disabilities are sparsely or completely unrepresented in this sample.

This had some setbacks on the data analysis and affected the ability to make comparisons between groups, particularly across different types of disabilities. Despite this limitation, the data gathered through this research addressed firstly, issues of human rights in relation to persons with disabilities. It equally brings clarifications on certain aspects which we shall see as the work unfolds.

## **II. Data analysis**

On the basis of the collected elements, the following analysis was made: difficulties encountered, abuse and violence, discrimination, limited access, positive life experience, access to human rights principles, respect for difference, responses to abuse and discrimination as well as the systematic causes of discrimination.

In comparison to the study that was carried in Kenya, the elements of analysis used in this study in Cameroon were very important.

### **A: Difficulties encountered**

Generally, the analysis carried out shows that, the life of persons with disabilities in Cameroon is marked by acts of discrimination, prejudice and inequality.

Tables 2 to 4 summarize the different difficulties, derived from this research which results from the daily experiences of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. The results indicate that persons with disabilities face difficulties ranging from discriminatory attitudes, abuse and violence.

There is also the question of accessibility for people with disabilities in accessing certain services and facilities leading to cases of segregation and exclusion within the context of; the family, job side, at school and in the society in general where disability is often seen as a burden of shame.

## B: Abuse and violence

*Abuse and violence* within the context of this study refers to situations of abuse and violence that the interviewee, living with a disability, or someone else with a disability known to the respondent, has experienced. Table 2 presents results on *abuse and violence*.

**Table 2**  
**Abuse and violence**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Percentages<sup>12</sup></b>
Abuse and violence experienced in the family context:	4	4.2
Abuse and violence experienced with the public authorities	1	1.0
Abuse and violence experienced at school:	3	3.1
Abuse and violence experienced in the community and in society at large	17	17.7
Situations of abuse and violence experienced in the job side	2	2.1

These results indicate that for the majority of persons with disabilities (approximately 18 %), situations of abuse and violence occurred in the community and society at large. The blind and persons with visual problems for instance, reported in this exercise how they were put to trial several times by individuals who had doubts about their optical problems. Here is an excerpt from one interviewee:

---

11. **Sources coded** represent the number of interviewees who reported having experienced a particular barrier or violation of human rights.

12. **Percentages** represent the proportion of interviewees who reported having experienced a particular barrier or violation of human rights.



*...Il y a un homme d'affaire de la place qui voulait nous aider. Le moment où il voulait me donner de l'argent, après ce qu'on m'a dit il déplaçait l'agent de gauche à droite. Peut-être pour voir si je suis effectivement aveugle.*

[translation: "... There was a businessman that wanted to help us. The moment he went to give me money, an officer moved from left to right. Perhaps to see if I am actually/ effectively blind. "]

Furthermore, interviewees reported, as seen below, that they are frequently being duped, either in relation to the quality of items they buy or the amount to be given to them, whenever they go shopping. This may be due to the fact that the society or community at large is aware of their blindness, and the fact that the blind cannot know whether or not they have been cheated.

*...Parfois, quand je pars au marché pour acheter les marchandises, si je ne fais pas attention on me fait mal. Donc, je demande toujours qu'on me fasse toucher ce que j'achète pour que je sois sûr de ce que j'achète...*

*...Il y a un homme à qui j'ai donné de l'argent pour m'aider à acheter certaines choses pour mes besoins quotidiennes. Par exemple, ce qu'on vend à 200 Fcfa, il me dit que le prix s'est 500 Fcfa. Il ne m'a donc pas remboursé parce que l'argent était fini...*

[translation: ... Sometimes, when I go shopping, if I don't pay attention someone will do me wrong. So I always ask if I can touch what I buy to be sure of what I am buying...

*... There is a man whom I gave money to help me buy certain things for my daily needs. For example, what sells for 200 francs, he told me sells for 500. He didn't reimburse me because the money was finished..]*

The mobility impaired persons reported that drivers of public service vehicles deliberately ignore them and treat them with contempt as evidenced in the statement below:

*...I tried to board a cab, when the driver noticed that I will cause delay, he drove away suddenly...*

Persons with disabilities also experienced situations of abuse and violence within their family. More than 4 % of the people with disabilities interviewed reported having experienced abuse and violence from their family members. They generally were oppressed by their mothers, stepmothers, husbands and siblings because they are considered to be different and not able to efficiently perform the duties that are assigned to them. In many cases their share of inheritance was taken away by their able bodied siblings, thereby leaving them to dwell in poverty. This explains the acute impoverishment amongst persons with disabilities which has reduced them to paupers in the streets where they are exposed to very difficult situations.

In their job sites, persons with disabilities were also exposed to numerous situations of violations of their rights, abuse and discrimination. More than 2 % of the respondents reported situations of abuse and violence on their job sites. Their salaries were not paid in full because the employers alleged that they had incurred extra expenses as a result of their presence in the enterprise or institution. The ill-treatment of persons with disabilities in their job sites was not linked to the quality of the services they produced. This research finding also indicated that many persons with disabilities were deprived of the right to an annual leave. An interviewee gave an example of the situation:

*...Je suis secrétaire et je travaille comme secrétaire (après avoir faire la demande) à un collège de la place. Je ne me sens pas à l'aise ici au lieu du travail, parce que depuis que je travaille, il n'y a des congés pour moi. On ne m'a jamais donné l'assistance pour l'argent du taxi et l'augmentation de mon salaire, pourtant j'ai fais les demandes.*

[translation: *I am a secretary and after making a request I work at a college instead. I do not feel at ease here at work because since I work there's no holiday for me. No one has gives me help with money to take a taxi and augment my salary even if I request it.*]

One respondent reported experiences of abuse and discrimination in their relationships with public authorities. This person reported how difficult it was for some one with a

disability to meet an authority when faced with a problem. At times, persons with disability are either being sent away from the office, or they receive no reply to their files. Persons with disabilities also reported situations of abuse and violence at school. More than 3 % of those interviewed reported that they underwent harsh treatment in learning institutions. This low percentage can be explained by the fact that children with disabilities are generally well treated by their mates who freely interact with them. Also, it could be because very few persons with disabilities are literate. In this light, the legislation of Cameroon has exempted persons with disabilities from paying school fees, so as to encourage them to go to school.

However, some have been subjected to serious abuse in certain educational grounds such as harsh insults and serious isolation. A student (albino) who could not see the blackboard well from the back of the classroom had his request to move to the front denied by his teacher..

There were reports from some blind students that some teachers did not take their conditions in consideration. Furthermore, in Cameroon, the blind persons still face problems of transcription during examinations.

In the field interviews, respondents also reported situations of abuse and discrimination experienced by other persons with disabilities they knew. These ill-treatments were experienced within the family, on the job sites, at school, and in society in general. In many families, they were neglected, hid and locked in rooms. They were not registered in schools nor taken to the hospital in case of illness. Sometimes, they were forbidden to receive visitors or to pay visits.

Many persons interviewed have revealed cases of physical and psychological maltreatments, with no help given to them.

## C: Discriminatory attitudes

*Discriminatory attitudes* included negative impressions, clichés and attitudes that isolated and excluded persons with disabilities. Table 3 presents the results of the interviews related to discriminatory attitudes.

**Table 3**  
**Discriminatory attitudes**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Discriminatory attitudes in the family	9	9.4
Discriminatory attitudes by public authorities	7	7.3
Discriminatory attitudes at school	10	10.4
Discriminatory attitudes in society	28	29.2
Discriminatory attitudes in the job sides	6	6.3

Results in table 3 show that more than 29 % of those interviewed had faced negative perceptions, including clichés which led to the isolation of and discrimination against persons with disabilities in their own communities and society at large. The prevailing negative social attitudes and perceptions of disability in the society reportedly affected the self-esteem of persons with disabilities. They faced poor treatment especially when they used public facilities such as transportation systems. This respondent complained how he was treated by other commuters in a public service vehicle:

*...Un jour j'ai pris le taxi pour la maison. Etant dans le taxi les autres clients ont demandés au chauffeur pourquoi il a porté l'aveugle ? Ils disaient que les aveugles perturbent beaucoup et que je vais perdre leur temps. Ils ont dis au chauffeur qu'ils vont descendre du taxi s'il me porte...*

[translation: *One day I took a bus to go home. Being in the bus with other customers, the bus driver was asked why he brought the blind along. They said the blind disturbed them greatly and I will waste their time. They said to the driver they*

*are getting off the bus if it takes me.]*

Basic needs of belonging and brotherly love are hard to fulfil because the community considers persons with disabilities as inferior beings. People feel ashamed to walk or be seen in the company of, or be friends with persons with disabilities as revealed below:

*"I attended a funeral three years ago and was sitting nearby someone, the person asked me to sit away from him..."*

Very often, people with disabilities are seen as a burden to society. In some communities in Cameroon, disability is seen as a curse. For superstitious persons, disability is hereditary and can be transmitted from parents to children. In other communities, people with disabilities are treated as second class citizens.

More than 9 % of persons living with a disability also faced acts of discrimination within their own families, often because they were not able to participate in family activities in the same way as others members. Many of the interviewees had been victims of oppression and negative remarks and attitudes from their family members that were overtly expressed through harsh words such as useless, hopeless, and good for nothing. As this man recounted:

*...A cause du fait que je suis handicapée et ma femme handicapée, ma famille n'envoie plus les gens habiter avec nous. Ils disent que nous ne pouvons pas nous occuper des gens.*

[translation : *Due to the fact that I am disabled and my wife is handicapped, my family does not send more people to live with us. They say that we can't take care of people.*]

Another man had this to say:

*« Il y avait une manifestation familiale. Je suis allée là-bas. Etant là-bas, on m'a donne une veille latte pour que je m'assoie à l'écarte et que je ne dois pas participer à la manifestation... »*

More than 6 % of those interviewed said they have faced discriminatory attitudes on their job sites. One of the respondents summarized this by saying:

*...The most serious challenge we face at work is discrimination. Interactions become difficult since we are always seen as misfits. We face a lot of rejection...*

More than 7 % have faced discrimination from public authorities. In most cases they face indirect acts of discrimination. For example, an authority may ask his / her secretary to tell the person with a disability that he is not going to be served. . This generally occurs when these public authorities think that persons with disabilities are always out to get financial support; such prejudice has been expressed by this interviewee:

*...when we went to meet the government Delegate of the council of this constituency, to discuss about the future of people with disabilities. Knowing that we are visually impaired, he decided to communicate to another person that he is not ready to receive us. He knew that with our visual disability we could not see him, but we overheard him and detected his voice...*

It must be noted that the majority of respondents in this study, complained of the long procedures taken to treat their complaints in public offices. Thus, they feel relatively set aside by the State. This worsens when the same complaint from a normal person is treated diligently by a public agent.

At school, at least 10 % of students with disabilities were often isolated and maltreated by their teachers and fellow students, as if they were less important or sub humans. Some teachers and students showed disrespect by wondering whether the disabled students were capable of doing things the right way or as well as non-disabled students. This is exacerbated with the blind and albinos, because their teachers do not take into consideration their conditions in the development of their programmes and sometimes they are completely ignored.

## D: Limited access

Another type of barrier facing persons with disabilities, which emerged from this study, was the fact that persons with disabilities do not have the same facilities as every normal person. Results concerning access related barriers are presented in table 4 below.

**Table 4**  
**Limited access**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Barriers and obstacles in communicating with others	5	5.2
Barriers and obstacles in accessing education	3	3.1
Barriers and obstacles to access public services and authorities	1	1.0
Barriers and obstacles to access the physical environment (including transportation)	6	6.3
Barriers and obstacles to access the job sector	4	4.2
Poverty	5	5.2

Results show that poverty or economic deprivation constituted more than 5 % of the problems faced by the respondents.

Results also indicate that access to education was a problem faced by more than 3 % of the interviewed persons in this study. On the basis of disability, many people faced difficulties in getting admission into secondary schools and colleges of their choice.

A large proportion of people with disabilities have not been able to go to school because their parents thought it would be a waste of resources. In other cases, the family does not send their disabled children to school because of poverty. What's more, it is the responsibility of the academic institution that refuses to admit people with disabilities.

(The next sentence I'm not sure exists in the French<sup>©</sup> the legislation on the issue of free school fees for persons with disabilities in place is not being implemented. In other instances; families could not afford the fees because they lived in abject poverty. The opportunity for a good education was also, often denied by the directors of the institutions when they realized that the student who applied for admission was a person with disability. The experience reported by this young man was shared by many others as well:

*... Quand je voulais m'inscrire pour le niveau maîtrise, il était question de remplir les fiches et voire un enseignant pour qu'il écrive nos noms. Mon camarade (qui est aussi non voyant) et moi somme allés voire un de nos enseignant qui nous a enseigné depuis les niveaux 2 et 3. Il a carrément refusé d'écrire nos noms. Il nous a dit qu'il ne veut pas être gêné en classe parce que le cycle maîtrise est un cycle difficile et ça demande beaucoup de mobilité. Donc, avoir sur ses mains les non voyants, ça va lui créer des problèmes.*

[translation: *When I went to sign up for a higher level, the teacher refused to write down our names. My friend (who is also blind) and I went to our teacher who taught us since level 2 and 3. He refused to write our names. He said he does not want to be embarrassed in class because the cycle is difficult and demands a lot of mobility. So having him teach the blind is going to create problems.*]

More than 4 % of the respondents also reported barriers and obstacles that impeded access to work. Employers often hold misconceptions believing that persons with disabilities would not perform their duties as efficiently as the rest of the staff and their movements will equally be slowed down. An interviewee asserted in these words:

*After my computer training, I sought for a job in one organisation. We were short listed for interview. So, when we were for interview, I performed best. But, the employer told one he will have to employ second persons to clean up the surroundings, if he employs me, because of my disability. For this reason I wasn't employed because of my disability.*

People who are deaf or blind or who have physical disabilities faced significant barriers in communication and transportation. Results indicated that at least 5 % of the respondents



faced these kinds of barriers. Moreover, communication was a particularly constraint for blind persons. They reported that newspapers and other public documents do not exist in Braille. In this respect they feel deprived of information.

One respondent also reported facing barriers and obstacles from a sector that was supposed to assist them. Public service agents and the authorities did not always make the task easy for them.

The most significant obstacle that people with disabilities in Cameroon faced, however, is having access to the physical environment such as hospitals, public institutions and transportation. More than 6 % of those interviewed indicated that accessing the physical environment was one of the major causes of the discrimination they faced in their daily lives. This is a particular problem to those with physical disabilities, and for people who are blind, having access to the transport system was a major problem which often caused late arrivals at their job sites or activities which they had to take part in.

Many public transport vehicle operators found it a waste of time to stop for the additional time necessary for a person with a disability to board the vehicle. Equally, accessing public facilities, such as offices (without lifts) has been a great problem for persons with physical disabilities and for blind persons. Stairs have frequently been reported to be the most difficult part of the task.

In most cases (more than 70 %), the various types of barriers experienced by people with disabilities (whether discriminatory attitudes, negative perceptions, abuse and violence or limited access) were not unique instances; on the contrary, they tended to occur more than once throughout the lives of each respondent.

### **E: Positive life experiences**

Despite the negative experiences recounted by the interviewees, they however were well treated in other circumstances. Such positive experiences have taken place in academic

arenas, in the family, as well as in social and job contexts. Positive experiences were also reported in religious settings and in relationships with some public authorities. Results are presented in the table 5 below.

**Table 5**  
**Positive life experiences**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive life experiences within the <b>school</b> context	12	12.5
Positive life experiences within the <b>family</b> context	23	24.0
Positive life experiences with <b>public authorities</b>	9	9.4
Positive life experiences in the <b>community/society</b>	36	37.5
Positive life experiences in the <b>religious</b> Context	3	3.1
Positive life experiences in the <b>Job</b> context	31	32.3

It can be deduced from table 5 that most positive experiences tend to take place within the community/society (37.5 %), at work (32.3 %), in the family (24.0 %) and at school (12.5 %). These positive experiences reported included positive or good interaction in the community, through the concern which is sometimes accorded to persons with disabilities as expressed in the statement below

*A l'hôpital, on m'accueille en préférence puisque dès que j'arrive on me montre là où je peux m'asseoir alors qu'il y'a des valides qui sont debout. Parfois je ne respecte pas le rang puisque quand j'arrive certains infirmiers me disent seulement que je vienne pour être servi.*

[translation: *At the hospital, sometimes I get preferential treatment when I arrive and someone gives me a seat even when other people without disabilities are standing. Sometimes I do not respect the ranking and when I arrive some nurses tell me only that I come to be served.*]

Positive experience also involved receiving help and collaboration from colleagues in the workplace. For instance a man with a mobility impairment, working with the Ministry of Basic Education reported that:

*J'ai une vie avec une satisfaction presque continuelle parce que je suis conscient de ce que j'ai et de ce que je n'ai pas. Ma satisfaction est donc d'ordre spirituel et moral. Depuis que je suis rentré au service de budget, j'ai trouvé des collaborateurs qui m'acceptent ; parce que nous vivons une ambiance bonifiant.*

[translation: *I have a life with an almost continuous appreciation because I am aware of what I have and what I don't have. My satisfaction is therefore spiritual and moral. Since I returned to service budget I found people who accept me because we live in an enriched environment.*]

It also included being fully involved in the decision-making activities within the family or being helped by school mates. It was reported that some school mates found pleasure and delight in reading what had been written on the blackboard, for their mates who were blind, and even carried the school bags of those with a mobility impairment.

A few interviewees also reported being treated positively in their relationships with public and religious authorities.

It was reported that some staff in the Social Affairs Ministry always treated persons with disabilities with a lot of attention. Some of them had even taken measures to sensitize their colleagues who were still lagging in order to change their attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

In the religious setting, for instance, it was reported that a blind lady was designated to read the gospel scriptures (transcribed in Braille) during sermons in a church in Yaoundé (This was to enable their integration).

## **F: Access to human rights principles**

One of the major goals of this study was to get a glimpse of the situation of human rights violations experienced by persons with disabilities in Cameroon. Rather than simply trying to identify the needs of such persons as earlier studies did, this study was commissioned/ designed to monitor the extent to which persons with disabilities enjoyed their fundamental rights in Cameroon.

Although a few descriptions of positive experiences have been gathered in this study, interviewees overwhelmingly reported having encountered, throughout their lives, recurrent violations of their fundamental rights. Results on human rights violations towards persons with disabilities are presented in tables 6 to 10. These violations took place in different contexts: the family, at school, at work. and in community/society in general, as well as in relationships with public authorities and the government.

As discussed in the previous section, the barriers that persons with disabilities experienced in their daily lives included discriminatory attitudes, emotional and physical abuse and limited access in many diverse circumstances. These barriers have led to violations of the rights of persons living with disabilities.

In this study, we investigated how the barriers and obstacles faced by persons with disabilities affected their rights, by examining the four key human rights principles: dignity (perceptions of a person's worth), autonomy (ability to make choices and decisions on issues that affect one's own life), equality (having the respect for differences and handicaps and being able to participate fully on equal terms), and inclusion (being recognized and valued as equal participants). We also wanted to take into account the integral social and economic needs of others and we therefore tried to understand how these barriers affected the rights of people with disabilities. We also explored the perceptions of the interviewees regarding the ways in which disability is being treated and viewed in the Cameroonian society with respect to other "social differences" (like those related to ethnicity and gender).

## F.1: Dignity

As a human right principle, dignity refers to the impact of particular life experiences on the individuals' perceptions of self-worth. Results are presented in table 6 below.

**Table 6**  
**Dignity**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive view in interviews on dignity	18	18.6
Negative view in interviews on dignity	70	73.0

About 73 % of persons with disabilities in this study reported to have negative life experiences as far as their dignity was concerned. According to them, this was mainly due to the fact that the community has a negative perception of persons with disabilities. They reported cases where they were being ignored, disrespected, or rejected by individuals or authorities. One student interviewed who is blind reported his experience as follows:

*<< Au lycée Bilingue, j'étais candidat à la coopérative. J'avais les gens qui pouvaient bien me voter. Mais quelque temps après, ils se sont dis que, qu'est-ce qu'un aveugle peut faire à la coopératif comme président.>>*

*[translation: At the Bilingual college, I was a candidate at the co-operative. I had supporters, but after my ability to be president of the cooperative was questioned on the basis of my blindness.]*

In the same light another respondent with mobility impairment reported:

*I searched for a job and was granted an interview opportunity. I attended the interview and the employer noticed that I had a physical disability and things could therefore not work out the way I desired.*

In some families, persons with disabilities are discouraged from marriage. One young woman, angry and discouraged, reported:

*....Ma mère me dit souvent que je ne suis pas faite pour le mariage et que je ne serais pas utile à un homme. Quand il y a une opportunité on l'oriente toujours vers les autres filles de la famille.*

[translation: *My mother often told me that I'm not made for marriage and that I would not be useful to a man. When there's an opportunity for marriage it always gets directed towards other girls in the family.*]

Some interviewees further pointed out the impact that traditional values and customs have on the treatment of persons with disability. Despite their qualifications and capabilities to be family heads, many have been denied this privilege just because of their disability:

*<< ...La tradition ne favorise pas l'handicapé, puisque étant handicapé on n'accepte pas facilement pour que nous soyons chef de la famille. C'est parce qu'on estime qu'il y a des choses que vous ne pouvez pas faire.>>*

[translation: *Tradition doesn't support people with disabilities since people don't easily accept that we could be the head of the household. It's assumed that there are things we can't make or do.*]

Nevertheless, 19 % of the interviewees in this study reported that, despite their disability, they have a certain degree of positive life experience with respect to the dignity of their persons. This percentage was reportedly free from negative treatments such as discrimination.

## **F. 2: Autonomy**

Autonomy as a human right principle means one has the ability to make choices and decisions on issues that affect one's own life (including choosing the forms of support for people with disabilities). Results are presented in table 7 below.

**Table 7**  
**Autonomy**

Variables	Sources Coded	Percentage
Lack of Autonomy	20	20.8
Self-Determination	39	40.6

About 41 % of respondents reported being able to exercise autonomy in their activities. They felt they were able to make every decision related to their lives despite their disability. Those who know their rights carried out actions to ensure their respect, especially in issues such as inheritance, access to school, to work and other necessary facilities. They struggled very hard in order to be listened to and to participate in activities in which they normally would have been involved. This respondent, who is a shoe-maker by profession, showed his self-determination in the following quotation:

*I have been working hard to get money to buy more materials for my job. I was thinking to go to Italy to learn shoe making as to better improve on my services.*

Another individual was proud that he successfully got married thanks to his own determination and sacrifice. He said:

*J'ai risqué la mort et la prison pour elle puisque j'ai décidé qu'elle est ma femme. Quand t-on prend décision de se marier à une femme, il faut aller avec un cœur pas avec deux cœur si non ça va te jouer. On s'est donc décidé que la femme soit enceinte avant qu'on le signal. C'est comme ça donc que s'est passé avant que je sois marié.>*

[translation: « I have risked death and prison since I decided she was my wife. When one makes the decision to marry, it is necessary to go with your heart and not play games. Before getting married, her getting pregnant would be the signal. »]

In this study approximately, 20.8 % of persons with disabilities reported having been denied the right to make decisions on issues affecting their own lives. Others described how they were forced into taking actions against their own will. They had been judged incapable of deciding on their own because of their disability. The lack of autonomy was also experienced by many other persons with disabilities who were known to the respondents. Being dependent on others for daily living tasks, as blind people often reported they were, was seen as limiting the individual's ability to make decisions. Equally, the lack of autonomy and the inability to participate in some activities was due to obstacles of communication. As such, significant decisions affecting the life of a person with a disability were either made by a parent or another party who most often ignored or disagreed with their personal point of view.

The higher proportion of persons who are able to exercise autonomy over those who were denied the access to make decisions shows that people with disabilities in Cameroon are struggling for the respect of their rights and independence.

### F.3: Equality

Equality as a human right principle implies having the respect for differences in terms of disability and being able to participate fully on equal terms in activities. Results of this are presented on table 8 below.

**Table 8**  
**Equality**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Equality	11	11.5
Inequality	24	25.0

This result indicates that 25.0 % of the respondents reported haven received unequal treatments in the family, community, at work, at school and by some public authorities.



They claimed that, it was because some people think disability is synonymous to incapacity. Thus, an employer will rather employ someone with no disability than to employ a person with a disability, no matter his qualification and competence, as this man recounted:

*From what he said, if he is employing me he has to employ another person to take care of the surrounding since as I won't be able to do so, due to my disability. But, he wants to employ one person who will work as a secretary and clean-up the surroundings.*

Another respondent who has a disability reported how he had been treated unfairly in his family.:

*...C'est parce que je suis l'aîné de la famille et je suis d'une famille assez diminué. Donc, quand j'ai perdu la vue, je me suis senti frustré puisque ma famille m'a d'abord rejeté que je ne suis plus utile à eux. Mais au fur et à mesure j'essai de vivre avec.*

[translation: *Because I am the eldest of the family and when I lost my sight I felt frustrated. My family rejected me because I was no longer useful to them. But I am trying to live with it.*]

However, only, 12 %, of respondents cited incidences in which they were respected for their diversity and/or disadvantage and considered themselves to participate in full equality. Some people were fairly treated by their families, employers, and teachers. A small proportion of interviewees claimed that they were allowed to participate in academic activities such as discussions in groups, games and dramas, without any discrimination. Some interviewees reported that their employers also cared for and treated them on an equal basis as the rest of the employees. Some even revealed that their employers financed their advanced professional trainings.

## F. 4: Inclusion

Inclusion as a human right principle involves the capacity of being recognised and valued as an equal member in the society. It equally involves the total consideration of a person's social and economic needs. Table 9 below presents the results of the interviews with respect to inclusion.

**Table 9**  
**Inclusion**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Exclusion	15	15.6
Inclusion	38	40.0

Results from table 9 indicate that about 16 % of the respondents had experienced situations of segregation, isolation and lack of support for their needs on the basis of their disability. They reported being alienated by the community due to their disability. Many had been rejected and denied the opportunity to interact with others. Some of these respondents had even been abandoned by their friends, as seen below:

*Il y a mon meilleur ami qu'on a fréquenté et vécu ensemble pendant 10 ans. Il m'a quitté quand j'ai perdu la vue. Les camarades ont fait la même chose. Quand il m'a quitté, ça m'a frustré. C'est pour cela que quand quelqu'un s'intéresse de moi, je me méfies.*

[translation: *There was my best friend and I living together for 10 years. He left me when I lost my sight. My friends have done the same thing. When he left, I got frustrated. This is why when someone is interested in me, I am suspicious.*]

Conversely, 40 % of the respondents reported incidences in which they were recognized and valued as equal parties and received special consideration and treatment. Some mentioned cases where they received help, as this interviewee indicates:

*Yes I needed people to sensitise other. Fortunately, the medical officers here are doing their best to sensitise the public.*

This sharp disparity in responses may suggest that the struggle by persons with disabilities for their rights and recognition is beginning to bear results in the Cameroonian society.

## **F.5 Respect for difference**

Beyond the positive conclusions in the preceding paragraph, the pattern that emerges from the present study largely indicates that persons with disabilities in the Cameroonian society are treated differently. Their treatment is mixed.. Table 10 summarizes how disability is viewed in this country.

**Table 10**  
**Respect for difference**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage.</b>
Interviewee reporting disrespected and devalued	45	47.0
Interviewee reporting labelling	51	53.1
Interviewee reporting being respected and valued	18	19.0

Practically in every interview, one found examples of discrimination, abuse and violence that amounted to the violation of rights of persons with disabilities. Results indicate that persons with disabilities are often labelled on the grounds of their disability. More than 53 % of the respondents recounted that, in one way or another; they were given negative nicknames based on their disability.

The labelling of persons with disabilities seemed to be a common practice in Cameroon. Disrespectful ways of addressing people with disabilities such as "gaingairou, bonblanc..." (for Albinos); "eboa, bend-bend foot, kotto..." (for mobility impaired persons) were often

reported. Blind persons were labelled with the names of famous blind musicians, for example, "Stephen Wander".

This stigmatization is a serious violation of human dignity, since in Cameroon; these names are used with a lot of contempt. Persons with whom these nicknames are used are obstructed. They always felt deprived of dignity. Individually as well as collectively, persons with disabilities were relegated to the background of the society and treated as sub-human beings.

Results also indicate that 47 % of the interviewees were disrespected and devalued in their activities and opinions. Most often, they feared giving their opinions concerning very important issues for fear of being attacked physically, psychologically and/or emotionally. At times when they are misunderstood when they solicit guiding, as this blind person attested:

*Un jour j'étais à coté de SCORE<sup>13</sup> et j'avais sollicité de l'aide d'une demoiselle pour me guide pour SCORE. Malheureusement pour moi, elle m'a dit qu'elle n'avait d'argent à me donner.*

[translation: *One day I was outside of SCOPRE and I had sought the help of a woman to guide me to SCORE. Unfortunately for me, she told me she didn't have any money to give me.*]

Despite this proportion, 19 % of the respondents reported cases of being respected, accepted, cared for and valued. But despite this proportion, situations of abuse and discrimination override memorable treatments of dignity and respect.

---

<sup>13</sup> This is a big super market in Yaoundé.

## **G: Responses to abuse and discrimination**

After having faced repeated discrimination and abuse at times, interviewees responded in different ways. Some have chosen to distance themselves from the environment in which they had been exposed to discrimination in order to avoid further discrimination and abuse. Others have resisted by trying to change the situations and contexts in which they have experienced discrimination. Others have reported or engaged in legal action as presented in table 11 below.

**Table 11**  
**Response to abuse and discrimination**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Distancing	1	1.0
Resistance	8	8.3
Reporting and legal action	49	51.0

### **G.1: Distancing**

Results in table 11 shows one person decided to distance himself from those situations and environments which caused them pain and suffering in the past. Due to the manner in which they had been treated in the past in such situations, they opted to stay away from such situations, avoiding future embarrassments.

### **G.2: Resistance**

Results in table 11 above also indicate that some interviewees maintained contacts with places where they experienced such abuse in order to change the situation. More than 8 % remained calm but flexible, resistant to oppression by the struggle for respect of their rights rather than stay in situations of adversity and hostility. For example, we have the testimony of a man who was not respected by his family:

..... J'ai dû m'imposer dans ma famille et imposer mon rang social dans ma communauté.

[translation: *I myself in my family and my imposed social rank in my community.*]

Contrarily, some interviewees decided to impose or invite themselves to places where they were unwelcome. The testimony of this young lady best relates the situation:

*Une fois je suis allé à la radio pour présenter un journal. Il y avait quelqu'un qui ne connaissait pas qu'un non voyant peut lire. Il a demandé à ses collègues si je pouvais lire ? Parce qu'il n'est pas décors pour que je présente le journal. Il se fâché et sortit même de la salle du journal. J'ai fini par présenter le journal.*

### G.3 : Reporting /legal action

Results further indicate that a significant number of interviewees chose to report legal actions of abuse and discrimination. Approximately 51 % of those interviewed had attempted legal actions though most of their attempts were unsuccessful. However, there were some rare cases where public authorities took measures to solve their complaints.

### H. Reasons for not reporting

Although discriminated against in many cases, most of the interviewees chose not to complain or file a complaint. Their reasons for not reporting are numerous, as seen in Table 12 below.

**Table 12**  
**Reasons for not reporting**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage.</b>
Lack of Access to complaint institutions	3	3.1
No anticipated results / nothing will change / no	7	7.3

change is expected.		
Fear	9	9.4
Self-blame	17	17.7
Lack of financial means and resources	1	1.0

**H.1: Lack of access**

Approximately 3.1 % of the interviewed persons stay silent in the face of discrimination and abuse they suffer due to lack of access to appropriate administrative and/or legal structures or lack of information about how to proceed to make a claim. They do not know how to access and cannot access existing places to register complaints at. This interviewee who spoke below confirmed that she did not know the appropriate administrative or legal structure to file a complaint:

*..Je ne savais pas où aller me plaindre.*

[translation: *I did not know where to go with my complaint.*]

Others affirmed that they could not engage legal actions due to the absence of efficient and befitting government institutions capable of managing such situations or requests.

**H.2: No anticipated results / no change is expected.**

Others went further to express their lack of confidence with the administration in place, seeing it as a fruitless endeavour and believing no concrete action would have been taken to solve their problem. Consequently, no result was expected.

More than 7 % of the respondents revealed that they did not report their experiences because they believed that nothing would have been done. Some felt that since the

cause of discrimination against person with disabilities was due to people's attitudes, there was no need to complain and no action would be taken. Others believed that the solution to ensure the respect of the rights of persons with disabilities is only possible with the effective implementation of the law on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. On why this person did not report violations, they said it was

*...parce que dans autres situations j'ai fais une plainte et ça n'a rien aboutit. Les choses sont toujours détournées.*

[translation: *Because in other situations I make a complaint and nothing succeeds. Things are always diverted.*]

### **H.3: Fear**

Results also indicated that more than 9 % of the respondents failed to report cases of abuse and discrimination because they feared the consequences of reporting. For that reason, they feared to generate further conflicts within the family, at their job sites and in their immediate social environments.

### **H.4: Self-censorship and Self-Blame**

A substantial number of those interviewed took the blames on themselves. Approximately 18 % of interviewees did not report abuses suffered because of feelings of shame and inferiority. Rather than attributing discrimination to social and economic circumstances, this group of respondents tended to think that the disability itself justified the oppression they experienced. Like the following case where a student did not report the lack of consideration and accommodation from his teacher during lectures with respect to his condition:



## H.5: Lack of financial means

One respondent did not report situations of abuse and discrimination because of the lack of financial means as cited below:

*« Non, je n'ai pas porté plainte parce que je n'avais pas d'argent pour acheter le timbre pour ma plainte »*

[translation: « no, because I don't have money to buy the stamp for my complaint »]

It should however be noted that no respondent reported being unable to report cases of abuse and discrimination because of corruption.

## I: Systemic roots of discrimination

Systemic causes of discrimination consist of the fundamental social, political and economic factors that incite abuse and discrimination against disabled people. Throughout the interviews, respondents reflected on their experiences and some commented on the broader social, economic and political factors and contexts that contributed or reinforced the discrimination that people with disabilities faced in Cameroon. Results of systemic roots of discrimination are presented in table 13 below.

**Table 13**  
**Systemic roots of discrimination**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Social	43	44.8
Economic	2	2.1
Legislative	8	8.3

## I.1: Social

Most of the time, acts of exclusion and discrimination against persons with disabilities were related to the manners in which social activities and relationships operate and are organized. About 45 % of the interviewees reported abuse and discrimination from different social factors with numerous and varied examples throughout the course of the interviews. For instance, many interviewees had affirmed that had social roots, and originated from the deep and entrenched stereotypes prevailing in the Cameroonian society. In this society, disabled people were caricatured as burdens, useless, good for nothing, and cursed, and curses on their families. One man commented as follows:

*... Les gens pensent qu'un handicapé doit toujours demander de l'argent, et qui ne réfléchit pas. On nous colle tous ce qui est péjorative.*

*« people think the disabled person always has to ask for money and is not reflective. One attaches all to us that is pejorative.”*

Another man said:

*They had hardly understood the abilities of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, they question their investments in us.*

People with disabilities were also frequently discriminated against by owners of public service vehicles. Again, the issue here was not a particular discriminatory attitude of an individual driver, but rather, it is a general problem of total indifference by public transit operators towards people with disabilities. It was clearly a systemic, rather than an individual issue.

In many other cases where people with disabilities were misdirected, abandoned by public service vehicles or even driven away from, the problem was generally connected to the impression of society towards them. The stereotype that persons with disabilities are beggars and poor has become so deeply entrenched that drivers assumed that disabled people would not pay for the services rendered to them, and so the public transport conductors would not carry such persons .

Discrimination within the family generally ties in with the context of poverty. The need for assistance in the daily activities of persons with disabilities is seen by most families as an unnecessary dependency and an added cost that brings no contribution to the economy of the family. In this context of extreme poverty, this is a situation which very few families were willing to endure. Again discrimination in this case seems to be related to negative social gaps that exist between persons with disabilities and their families rather than simply the attitudes of a member of a particular family.

## **I.2: Economic**

Other acts of exclusion and discrimination against persons with disabilities can be related to the manner in which economic activities are organized and managed in the Cameroonian society. In fact, about 2 % of the respondents felt that, the barriers they are exposed to were rooted in the economic system. In particular, certain respondents considered discrimination as a direct consequence of the abject poverty in which they were forced to live. This respondent best relates it:

*...J'avais problème avec quelqu'un. Je suis allé me plaindre a la gendarmerie et on m'a demandé de repasser. Après quelques jours, je repars pour la brigade, on me demande les frais de descente de 50 000 Frs. ça ma décourager parce que je ne pouvait trouver les 50 000 Frs...*

[translation: « I had a problem with someone. I went to complain to the police and they asked me to return. After a few days I report to the brigade and they ask for 50 000 Frs in fees. I got discouraged because I can't find 50 000 Frs. »]

### I. 3: Legislative

Discrimination against persons with disabilities also stems from the non implementation of laws or policies to protect their rights. In this case, disability was not the main cause of such attitude. Many people with disabilities were able to carry-out most of the tasks that were assigned to them. The problem therefore resided in the fact that society and its immediate environment refused to recognise disabled people's rights. A respondent observed:

*<<.....Je me suis dis que quelque part la machine gouvernementale n'est pas cohérente, puisque je ne vois pas comment le Chef de l'Etat peut décider de quelque chose et on refuse de l'obéir. Il y a des lois, mais personne ne les applique.>>*

[translation; « *I told myself that the part of government machinery is not coherent, since I don't understand how the head of State can decide what things he wants to refuse to obey. There are laws but people don't apply them.* »]

From this study, it has been realised that, the government has not clearly formulated the laws and/or policies that guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities and their implementation has not received the attention it deserves. Government policy in general demands that persons concerned by a government regulation should be represented in the framing and decision making process.

On the other hand, certain laws or policies constitute an obstacle to the access by persons with disabilities to certain prestigious educational and professional institutions .In this respect, one student reported:

*« Non, il y a les textes pour l'entrée à l'École Normale Supérieure par exemple qui disent que les postulants ne doivent pas souffrir d'aucune défiance de la vue, etc. »*

[translation: « *..There are texts for entering the school that say applicants should not suffer from any lack of vision* »]

## **J: Gender, ethnicity and class and disability**

This study also explored respondents' perceptions about the way in which disability is viewed in the Cameroonian society relative to other "social differences", namely those related to class, ethnicity and gender. It further examined how respondents perceived the intersections of disability with class, ethnicity and gender, and their impact on discrimination.

### **J.1: Gender and disability**

Respondents seemed to be divided with respect to their views about the ways in which gender and disability intersected to result in discrimination. About 48.0 % of interviewees answered this question, with a similar number of respondents in each gender. The majority of them, both women and men, think that gender has no impact on the discrimination faced by people with disabilities in Cameroon (although more men are of that opinion than women). In other words, according to these respondents, men and women are equally likely to be oppressed and experience exclusion and discrimination if they have a disability.

However, some have the opinion that gender has an effect on discrimination faced by people with disabilities in Cameroon. One of the male respondents reported that:

*« La femme handicapée subie plus de frustration qu'un homme handicapé. Donc dans ma situation, elle serait confrontée à des choses plus pire que moi »*

[translation : *« The disabled woman faces more frustrations than the disabled man. So in my situation she has already faced worse situations and things than me. »*]

A female respondent argued that the above statement is true in social interactions. She further argued that it is a surprise to come across a disabled woman who is married, a

man with or without disability will always prefer a woman with no disability. She reported:

*« Oui, c'est le plus regrettable, puisque entre 85-95 % de familles vont toujours refuser que leur frère ou fils épouse une femme handicapée. La famille aura toujours besoin d'une femme qui peut travailler ».*

[translation : *« Yes, it's very regrettable, since between 85-95% of families will always refuse that their brother or son marries or married a disabled woman. The family will still need a woman who can work. »*]

Nevertheless, one male respondent reported:

*"Women are treated more than fairly, and with a little more respect than men".*

## **J.2: Ethnicity and disability**

About 41 % of the interviewees offered comments on this topic. Here again, responses varied. While some considered ethnicity to influence disability, others disagreed. In general, however, despite the ethnicity of a disabled person, s/he is primarily treated according to her/his disability, as explained by one of the respondents:

*...Je pense que les traitements reçues par les personnes handicapées est du au fait qu'elles sont handicapées. Donc, ça ne tient pas compte de l'ethnie de la personne.*

[translation: *« I think that the salaries received by people with disabilities is because they are disabled. So it doesn't reflect the ethnicity of the person. »*]

## **J.3: Class and disability**

In Cameroon, as in many other parts of the world, disability is often equated with poverty. About 44.0 % of the interviewees believe that class (simply defined as being poor or rich) interacts with the situation of the disabled to expose or protect people with

disabilities from abuse and discrimination. Their views were quite diverse. Nevertheless, some consensus seemed to exist around the idea that in a society where the standard of living is generally low, as in Cameroon, economic power is the most significant means of gaining social status, and protecting rights.

In short, being disabled and rich ensured access to basic human rights, while those who were disabled and poor (as are the majority of people with disabilities in this country) were pushed to the margins of society and suffered discrimination, oppression and persistent denial of their human rights and dignity.

### **III. Intersections (Comparative tables)**

In addition to describing the meaning and content of the variables used in this study, this research has explored the relationships among variables<sup>14</sup>. This analysis focused on three attributes: age, gender and type of disability, and examined the relationships between these variables and the types of barriers respondents experienced as well as their access to and exercise of human rights principles. Where possible Chi Square tests were performed to test whether the group differences encountered were statistically significant.

#### **1: Barriers by attributes**

##### **1. A: Barriers by age group**

Table 14 shows the relationships between types of barriers faced by interviewees according to their age group.

---

<sup>14</sup> This analysis was done using the NVivo<sub>7</sub> Matrix Coding Queries tool.

**Table 14**  
**Incidence<sup>15</sup> of barriers by age rank**

Variables	Under 40			Above 40		
	SC <sup>16</sup>	R% <sup>17</sup>	C %	SC	R%	C %
Attitude	46	73.0	52.9	17	26.9	70.8
Abuse	28	93.3	32.2	2	6.7	8.3
Access	13	77.2	14.9	5	27.8	20.8
All barriers	87	(78.4 %)		24	(21.6 %)	

Because a large proportion of our sample falls in the age group under 40 years, the highest incidence of discriminatory attitudes, abuse and access barriers were also found in this group. Given this large differential however, comparisons across age groups are meaningless and therefore our analysis will focus mainly on the distribution within each group.

In both groups, incidences most reported related to experiences of discriminatory attitudes. People with disabilities below the age of 40, however, reported a much higher incidence of abuse and violence than those 40 years old and over. While those above the age of 40 experienced more situations of limited access.

---

<sup>15</sup>In the discussion of the barrier types matrices, the term INCIDENCES is used to represent the sources coded under each category of barriers reported. This is because one respondent might have reported more than one incidence under a certain category of barriers. For example under the category of Discriminatory Attitude, one respondent might have quoted on sub-categories such as discrimination within family context (ATTFAM) and at the same time quote on discrimination at work (ATTWK, school (ATTSCO) and society (ATTSOC). The same is applicable for Abuse and violence and Limited Access categories of the barriers. For standardization of the results, the study converted the results into percentages of the total incidences reported, in terms of rows and columns. Find results in the appendix

<sup>16</sup> **SC:** Sources Coded

<sup>17</sup> **R%: Row Percentages** enable comparisons across groups (age, gender and type of disability) for any particular variable (whether types of barriers or their human right implications)



## 1. b: Barriers by gender

Table 15 compares the various types of barriers by the gender of the respondents.

**Table 15**  
**Incidence of Barriers by gender**

Variables	Males			Females		
	SC	R %	C %	SC	R%	C%
Attitude	33	51.6	56.9	32	49.2	57.1
Abuse	11	36.6	19.0	19	63.3	33.9
Access	14	73.7	24.1	5	26.3	8.9
All barriers	58	(51%)		56	(49%)	

Table 16 shows that male and female interviewees, generally, reported similar incidences of barriers. It is important, however, to examine how different types of barriers affected each gender.

The results indicate that a distinct pattern of barriers exists for males and females-males are more likely to suffer from discriminatory attitudes (more than 56 %) than abuse (19 %) and access barriers 24 %). Females are more likely to report incidences of discriminatory attitudes (more than 57 %) than abuse (at least 33 %) and limited access (8%). However, incidences of abuse are reported by women almost twice as often as by men, suggesting that gender intersects with disability to produce this type of discrimination against women. Furthermore, a close examination of the reports gathered shows that abuse and violence of women with disabilities occurs mainly in the domestic sphere, at the hands of their parents, partners and siblings, as is commonly found in the general female population.

**1. c: Barriers by type of disability**

This section examines barriers faced by respondents according to the type of disability. Results are presented in table 16.

**Table 16  
Incidence of barriers by disability type**

Variables	Visually impairment			Mobility			Albinos		
	SC	R %	C %	SC	R %	C %	SC	R %	C %
Attitude	33	53.2	66.0	24	38.7	48.0	5	8.1	50.0
Abuse	11	37.9	22.0	14	48.3	28.0	4	13.8	40.0
Access	6	31.6	12.0	12	63.2	24.0	1	5.3	10.0
All barriers	50	45.5%		50	45.5%		10	9.1%	

A comparison of particular types of barriers faced by people with particular types of disabilities (row percentages) must be done with caution since the distribution of our sample was very uneven with respect to this attribute. In general, people with visual impairments and people with physical impairments reported similar rates of barriers, but albinos reported significantly less, mostly because they were also less numerous in our sample.

More interesting are comparisons within groups. All three groups seem to experience more discriminatory attitudes than any other kinds of barriers, but this difference is particularly strong among people who are blind and have low vision people. Albinos, on the other hand, also tend to report a high incidence of abuse (the highest among the three groups), which is likely to place them at a high risk for experiencing discrimination and violation of human rights.

## 2: Access to human rights principles by attributes

### 2. a: Access to human rights principles by age rank

Table 17 examines the relationship between access to human rights principles and the age rank of respondents.

**Table 17**  
**Access to Human Rights Principles by Age Rank**

Variables	Ages below 40			Ages above 40		
	SC	R %	C %	SC	R %	C %
<b>AUTONOMY</b>						
Lack autonomy	16	84.2	6.4	3	15.8	7.0
Self determination	28	8.8	11.2	4	15.8	6.9
<b>DIGNITY</b>						
Being valued	15	15	6.0	0	0	0
Being devalued	48	84.2	19.2	9	15.8	20.9
<b>EQUALITY</b>						
Equality	8	88.9	3.2	1	11.1	2.3
Inequality	15	78.9	6.0	4	21.1	9.3
<b>INCLUSION</b>						
Inclusion	30	90.9	12.0	3	9.1	7.0
Exclusion	10	76.2	4.0	3	23.1	6.9
<b>RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE</b>						
Labelled	36	80.0	14.4	9	20.0	20.9
Respected	15	88.2	6.0	2	11.8	4.6
Disrespected	29	85.3	11.6	5	14.7	11.6

In both groups considered, reports of incidences involving violation of basic human rights principles significantly outnumbered reports of access to and exercise of those same principles. In other words, what these results clearly indicate is that people with disabilities in Cameroon, regardless of their age are being treated with inequality and disrespect. They are excluded from mainstream society, and they are prevented from exercising autonomy and self-determination even on decisions that affect their own lives. Devalued in the eyes of society and sometimes even their family, their dignity as human beings is seriously violated.

## 2. b: Access to human rights principles by gender

This section looks at access to human rights principles by gender. Outcomes are presented in table 18.

**Table 18**  
**Access to human rights principles by gender**

Variables	Males			Females		
	SC	R %	C %	SC	R%	C%
<b>AUTONOMY</b>						
Lack autonomy	11	55.0	6.1	9	45.0	5.3
Self determination	22	56.6	12.1	17	43.6	10.1
<b>DIGNITY</b>						
Devalued	36	51.4	19.8	34	48.6	20.2
Valued/ Honoured	8	44.4	4.4	10	55.5	5.9
<b>EQUALITY</b>						
Equality	2	18.2	1.1	9	37.5	5.3
Inequality	15	62.5	8.3	9	37.5	5.3
<b>INCLUSION</b>						
Exclusion	7	46.7	3.9	8	53.3	4.8
Inclusion	17	44.7	9.4	21	55.3	12.5
<b>RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE</b>						
Labelled	28	54.9	15.5	23	45.1	13.7
Respected	10	55.5	5.5	8	44.4	4.8
Disrespected	25	55.5	13.8	20	44.4	11.9

Table 18 shows that access to and exercise of human rights principles is different for women and men. The results suggest that males with disabilities are more likely than females to report incidences of lack of access to basic human rights principles. However

statistically significant differences were only found for reports of access to equality, where men more often than women report experiences of inequality (Chi Square of 5.931 for a  $p = .01$ ). This difference may be related to the fact that gender norms and values prevailing in Cameroon assign greater power to males than to females. Consequently, more disabled male reported lack of access to that “authoritative” role than females, who are in the general population too, socialized into more submissive roles.

## 2. c: Access to human rights principles by type of disability

Access to human rights principles according to disability types is presented in table 20.

**Table 19**

### Access to human rights principles by type of disability

Variables	Visually impairment			Hearing impairment			Mobility impairment			Albinos		
	SC	R %	C %	SC	R %	C %	SC	R %	C %	SC	R %	C %
<b>AUTONOMY</b>												
Lack of autonomy	7	36.8	5.6	0	0	0	9	47.4	21.4	3	15.9	7.1
Self determination	14	36.8	11.3	2	5.3	18.2	19	50.0	12.2	3	7.9	7.1
<b>DIGNITY</b>												
Devalued	32	46.4	25.8	2	2.9	18.2	31	44.9	19.9	4	5.8	9.5
Valued	5	27.8	4.0	1	5.5	9.1	7	38.9	4.5	5	27.8	11.9
<b>EQUALITY</b>												
Equality	4	36.4	3.2	0	0	0	7	63.6	4.5	0	0	0
Inequality	9	39.1	7.3	0	0	0	11	47.8	7.1	3	13.0	7.1
<b>INCLUSION</b>												
Exclusion	6	24.9	4.8	0	0	0	7	50.0	4.5	6	16.2	14.3
Inclusion	14	37.8	11.3	2	5.4	18.2	15	40.5	9.6	1	7.1	0.6
<b>RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE</b>												
Labelled	16	32.0	12.9	3	6.0	27.3	22	44.0	14.1	9	18.0	21.4
Respected	7	38.9	5.6	0	0	0	8	44.4	5.1	3	16.7	7.1
Disrespected	19	42.2	15.3	1	2.2	9.1	20	44.4	12.8	5	11.1	11.9

Given the uneven distribution of our sample according to types of disability, comparisons across groups are limited. People with mobility impairment, being the most numerous group in our sample, are also the ones who show highest incidences across almost all variables.

Except for the principle of dignity, where a Chi Square of 8.24 was found for a  $p=.04$  (indicating a difference in the pattern of response of albinos, vs. all the other groups) no statistically significant differences were found across disability groups in terms of access to fundamental human rights principles. Results show that in general incidences involving disrespect for difference, inequality and violation of dignity are more typical than experiences of access to and exercise of these human rights principles. (column percentages). Nevertheless, across all disabilities (except the albinos) interviewees also reported experiences of inclusion and self-determination more often than lack of access to these human rights principles. These apparently contradictory results certainly deserve further inquiry in the future.

Numerous reports of being labelled on the grounds of disability were found across all disability groups indicating that this disrespectful and oppressive practice prevails in the Cameroonian society. Incidences of unequal treatment, exclusion and violations of human dignity are also often reported.

Thus, this study led to major findings on disability. Recommendations are presented in the following section.

## **Section 5: THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **I. Main conclusions**

Considering the context of Cameroon, the main conclusions of this study come from not only what respondents said, but from the underlining issues related to problems faced by persons with disability brought out from our experience of work at the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon. This approach has been adopted to reflect the practical background for necessary actions to be undertaken.

Based on the material used for the analysis of the data retrieved from the field work and from our personal experience, the following conclusions were made relating to barriers experienced, abuse and violence, discriminatory attitudes, limited accesses, positive life experiences, access to human rights principles (dignity, autonomy, equality and inclusion), respect for differences, reactions to abuse and/or discrimination and the systematic causes of discrimination.

These have been enumerated as follows:

- The government is the only body capable of providing effective and sustainable solutions to the problems faced by persons with disabilities in Cameroon.
- Almost all the existing rehabilitation centres were put in place by secular and private initiatives; meanwhile government structures are almost inexistent and invisible.
- The amount the government allocates to institutions in charge of rehabilitation in the form of subvention is insignificant and irregular
- There exist no specialised training institutions for persons with disabilities;
- There is inadequate number of teachers in charge of training persons with disabilities and the existing percent of such teachers rather received in-service training;

- Some administrative and training personnel have a poor interpretation of the law of 1983 and its 1990 decree of application relative to the rights of persons with disability; especially concerning the free access to education of children with disabilities or of parents with disabilities;
- The 1983 law and its 1990 decree of application relative to the protection and defence of persons with disabilities in Cameroon is not coercive;
- The number of staff from the public service delegated to institutions in charge of persons with disabilities is insignificant;
- The situation of both skilled and unskilled persons with disabilities with respect to the job market is precarious ;
- Persons with disabilities are less represented in many public competitive exams;
- Most parents are often depressed and distraught concerning the disabilities of their children;
- There is the lack of specific data on the number of persons with disabilities in Cameroon;
- The social policy concerning the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities is inappropriate;
- The National Pilot Committee on persons with disabilities is precarious;
- The percentage of persons with disabilities represented in important state bodies( the National Assembly, Ministries, Public enterprises etc) is insignificant;
- There is no National Solidarity Fund to financially assist micro projects and ensure the financial independence of persons with disabilities ;
- Persons with disabilities are still discriminated against, in certain national texts especially those related to the entrance into the Higher Teachers Training Institute, and other institutions.

Based on the conclusions from the analysis of the collected data, and considering the current situation in the international scene concerning the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, it should be mentioned here that Cameroon has not yet signed nor ratified the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with



disabilities that was opened for signature in March 2007, at the end of the data collection for this study.

## II. Main recommendations

In the face of all the barriers and discrimination described in this study, the interviewees raised a number of valuable suggestions to improve the situation of persons with disabilities in their country. A summary of this is presented in table 20 below:

**Table 20**  
**Recommendations**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources Coded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Raise Awareness	52	54.2
Improve Respect	13	13.5
Social Supports	13	13.5
Legislation	16	16.7
Economic Supports	6	6.3
Political Representation	1	1.0
Peer Support	18	18.8

### 1. Raise awareness

Raising awareness was the most significant recommendation made by the interviewees. More than 54.2 % of the interviewees made the following remarks:

- The State should better educate the public on issues related to disabilities as well as on how to behave towards such persons;
- The State should organise conferences on subjects related to the rights of persons with disabilities such as: discrimination, exclusion, protection against abuse, education and health, etc;

- The Government as well as organisations in charge of issues related to disabilities should improve the awareness of parents and the entire community on issues concerning disabilities so that they are better able to accept their conditions and interact with them.

An interviewee explained this in the following words:

*..... Sensitisation of the community should be true and should be told that persons with disabilities are normal people just like you and I and they can do what you do if accorded necessary assistance.*

## **2. Improve respect**

Approximately 14 % of interviewees demanded more respect and consideration from the government and particularly from the Ministry of Social affairs, which is in charge of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. These interviewees felt that, government should be at the forefront in drawing the attention of the public concerning the respect for persons with disabilities. In order to achieve this, social personnel should be better trained on their responsibilities towards persons with disabilities and on their rights. According to some of the interviewees, society should not be focused on disabilities but on what persons with disabilities are capable of doing.

## **3. Social supports**

As far as social support to persons with disabilities is concerned, the recommendations on this issue were the most numerous, despite the fact that they represented only 13.5 % of the interviewees. They suggested that the government should carry out the following measures:

- Much should be done in the domain of social support to persons with disabilities;
- Strive to improve the living conditions and income of persons with disabilities and their families;
- Assist persons with disabilities with transportation, housing, education,, health and employment facilities;
- Particularly put in place appropriate measures concerning the employment of persons with disabilities;
- Promote physical education and sporting activities for persons with disabilities;
- Create better services for persons with disabilities such as guidance and counselling services for those who suffer from discrimination and abuse;
- Elaborate policies for the benefit of persons with disabilities in the public transport sector to ease their transportation and to create and encourage private transport facilities for groups of persons with disabilities;
- Provide financial assistance to small income enterprises with low profit , thereby ensuring their survival and improving the living conditions of the owners;
- Put an end to architectural barriers;
- The Ministry of Social Affairs should create in collaboration with the Ministry of Health special units to deal with psychological problems faced by persons with disabilities;
- The government should grant special attention to the subvention and transfer of qualified persons with disabilities into specialised accommodation structures ;
- Ban the marginalisation of persons with disabilities within our society because they are part and parcel of our different environments but are not different beings;
- Government should make Braille writing more accessible to the public, creating specialised institutions for the teaching of Braille and introducing it as a course in the Higher Teachers Training Institute and other higher training institutions. The general aim being to increase the number of schools for the blind, increasing the knowledge on the use of the white cane (for the blind), and the Braille writing in learning institutions, in addition to organising seminars to sensitise and train the

public on their importance.

#### **4. Legislation**

In the legislative domain, 16.5 % of the interviewees made a couple of recommendations as seen below:

- The Cameroon government should continue with its effort to effectively implement the law of 1983 on the rights of persons with disabilities. It should avoid the selective implementation of its terms with respect to this law;
- The law of 1983 as well as its decree of application of 1990 should be amended in order to ease interpretation ;
- The government should speed up its plans to revise and render the law of 1983 and its decree of application of 1990. In the same vein, appropriate measures should be taken in order to ensure sanctions and reparations in case of violations of the rights of persons with disabilities;
- The joint letter signed by the Ministries of Social Affairs and Secondary Education on education should be transformed from a simple circular to a legal document;
- Appropriate measures must be put in place to facilitate the access to entrance exams by meritorious persons with disabilities.

#### **5. Economic assistance**

As far as economic assistance to persons with disabilities is concerned, 6.3 % of the interviewees recommended that, the State takes the following measures:

- The state should create a National Solidarity Trust fund;
- Due to the expensive nature of training materials , the Government should increase the amount of subventions allocated to institutions that accommodate persons with disabilities;

- To put in place more adaptable measures to facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities.

## **6. Political representation**

As far as the political representation of persons with disabilities is concerned, one interviewee made the following recommendations:

- That the government should effectively take into account the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the law of 1983. By this law, 10 % of state personnel should be taken from amongst the disability group. This was to ensure their greater representation in every sector of the society;
- Measures should be taken to ensure greater representation of persons with disabilities in most national legal institutions such as the parliament, State bodies and institutions.

## **7. Solidarity between persons with disability**

As far as this question is concerned, 18.8 % of the interviewees recommended that the government should put in place measures to ensure solidarity amongst persons with disabilities.

In the light of the external recommendations concerning persons with disabilities, it's on the issue of the improvement of the solidarity amongst persons with disability themselves that we crown this section of recommendations in this study that deals with the rights of persons with disabilities in Cameroon.

## **Appendix A:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **1- HISTORY OF THE PROJECT:**

Research on the rights of persons with disabilities initially was a project of the world Union for the Blind (UMA). The project was elaborated to be realised in the six regions which are members of the Union.-UMA<sup>18</sup>

Through the African Union for the Blind, Africa quickly expressed the desire to benefit from this project. Considering the number of persons with disabilities in the Continent, coupled with the absent of appropriate legal instruments to defend the rights of this category of persons, a leadership workshop for leaders of associations for the blind and six government representatives (from Morocco, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Swaziland, Kenya and Cameroon) was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of Nov. 2006 on the defence of the rights of persons with disabilities. At the end of this forum, Cameroon (because of her bilingualism)\* and Kenya were chosen to begin the pilot phase of the project.

The aim of this pilot phase is to show that reports from Cameroon and Kenya will serve as models for other member Countries and regions of the Union (UMA). Another important aspect of this study was to create a global awareness on the issue of the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa.

This project as well as the outcome of the six states seminar that was held in Nairobi in 2006, coupled with the two training workshops for assistant Monitors and support staff under the auspices of the National Association for the Blind and the African Union for the Blind which took place from 26-27 November 2005 and in Nairobi on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006; were made possible, thanks to the joint financial assistance of the Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired (SRF), the Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI), African Union of the Blind(UAFA) and the Cameroon National Association for the

---

<sup>18</sup>Africa, Asia, Asia- Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and the Caribbean.

Blind(ANAC) and with the recognition of Eric Staaf, Mme Rita Samson, Pr Marcia Rioux, Mme Paula Pinto, Dr Elly Macha, Mr. Cornelius Ojanguelle and Mr. Paul Tezanou.

## **2. THE START OF THE PROJECT IN CAMEROON**

### **2.1 The Organisational Framework of the Research and the setting up of the team**

Looking at the global objectives of the project which aims at understanding the situation of the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa, a training workshop for monitors was held in Yaoundé (Hotel Meumi). The workshop prepared the ground in order to ease the collection of reliable data on the rights of disabled persons in Cameroon; one of the countries designated for the pilot research.

In the course of the workshop, which lasted for 8 days, twelve disabled monitors, six blind men and six other disabled people merged with six disabled assistants and three support staff, who were equipped with useful aptitude on how to conduct interviews and collect data in the field. These monitors were chosen from specific associations they represent with regards to their level of education and the positions they occupied in their respective associations. They were all students of law in the state universities in Cameroon. Equally, the issue of gender (male/female) prevailed in the choice of the survey agents.

Amongst the participants of this the seminar was Mme Carole LEWE – Local Coordinator of the project and, Mme Eva Etongue Mayer, Principal Consultant who presented a paper on the legal framework of the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in Cameroon.

The main facilitators during the seminar were Pr. Marcia Rioux and Francis, as well as Mr. Erik Staaf and his assistant Oseh .The coordinator, Mr Cornelius Ojanguelle was equally present .The training covered the following themes:

- Disability and Human Rights ;

- International Normative Context of Human Rights;
- The Typology of Human Rights;
- International legal Framework on Civil and Political Rights;
- Monitoring and the Implementation of Human Rights within the United Nations system;
- Best Approach to the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Changes Strategies and Approach based on Human Rights;
- Conduction of interviews;
- Organisation and Administration of Monitoring Project.

## **2.2 Opening Ceremony of the Seminar**

The opening ceremony of the Yaoundé workshop witnessed the artistic participation of the World Association for the Intellectual and Moral Defence of Albinos (ASMODISA). The Chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF), Dr Chemuta Divine BANDA, whose speech appears in appendix "H" of this report and the President of ASMODISA, M. Jean Jacques NDOUDOU MOU all took part in this ceremony.

The presence in this ceremony of the Chairwoman of the Cameroon National Association of Persons with Disability of Cameroon (FENAH CAM), Mme TCHAPTCHET Jeannette, Mme Land Georgette, Chairwoman of Association National des Lépreux Blanchis du Cameroun, a representative of the South Africa High Commissioner in Cameroon and a representative of the Ministries of Health and Higher Education are worth mentioning.

## **2.3 Associations of/for Persons with Disabilities represented in the Seminar**

Under the coordination of the project initiators, the Cameroon National Association for the blind (ANAC), the following associations took part in this part of the project:

- National Association of the Deaf



- National Association of Lepers of Cameroon
- National Association of People with Physical Disabilities
- National Association of Women with Disabilities of Cameroon
- World Association for the Defence of Albinos

#### **2.4. Research Sites**

Three sites were chosen for the research: The Centre Province with its headquarters in Yaoundé, the North West province (Bamenda) and the Western Province (Bafoussam). Apart from these headquarters, studies were also carried out in Eseka (Central Province), Dschang, Foumban and Koutaba in the Western Province.

#### **2.5 Material for data collection**

To conduct interviews on the field, monitors were equipped with Dictaphones, writing pads, pens as well as manuals for data collection which they used during their training. Monitors were equally provided with engagement forms to be signed by each interviewee before the start of each interview.

#### **2.6 Material for data analysis**

For the data analysis, the African Union for the Blind was authorised to use the software specialised for qualitative analysis of data on human rights known as Nvivo 7.

In addition to the manual at the disposal of the consultant of the project, Mme Eva Etongue Mayer and her Assistant Mr Kelvin Ayuk Ettah equally benefited from the enriching assistance of Mme Paula Pinto of the University of York, Toronto, on the use of the software.

## **2.7 Challenges /difficulties**

With regards to the linguistic and ethnic diversity of Cameroon and taking into account some major circumstances, the following difficulties were encountered during this study:

- Some team members fell sick at the start of the activity;
- The academic schedule of some of the students slowed down the progress of the activities as initially planned;
- Some interviews were repeated as result of the poor sound quality and recording;
- These had a setback on the analysis of the data during the transcription phase;
- There was equally the problem of transcription of information obtained, from the local languages into French or English. A total of five (5) interviews (3) in Ewondo 19 and (2) in Bamoum 20 were conducted in the local languages;
- There was also the problem of merging the information gathered in French and English into one language for the purpose of analysis and the elaboration of the final report.

## **3. Evaluation meetings held in the course of the project**

In conformity with the research plan of work concerning the rights of persons with disabilities in Cameroon, an important evaluation meeting was held at the Centre d`accueil des Aveugles notre Dame de la Paix de Dschang, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2006.

This workshop was presided over by Mr Paul Tezanou, Chairman of the African Union for the Blind and member of the coordination team:

- M. Cornelius OJANGOLE, Coordinator of the project;

---

<sup>19</sup> This is one of the main languages of the inhabitants of the Centre Province

<sup>20</sup> This is the language of the Fouban population

- Mme Eva ETONGUE MAYER, the Principal researcher;
- Mme Carole LEUWE, Local coordinator of the project.

Present at the meeting were the following monitors, assistants, support staff, an interpreter of sign language, a social personnel as well as an observer as seen below:

1. ENONGENE Geraldine, a monitor from the Western Province;
2. YONE WABO Sandrine, a monitor from the Western Province;
3. NGUEUZET Gustave, a monitor from the Western Province;
4. FONTE Mama, a monitor from the Western Province;
5. ZEMFAC Germain, a monitor from the Western Province;
6. Ngong Peter, a monitor from the North West Province;
7. OBANG Ernest, a monitor from the central Province;
8. MEKOUNDE Jean Francois, a monitor from the Central Province;
9. NGUESSE EWANE Felicite, a monitor from the Central Province;
10. NZALE MEYOU Rodolfe, a monitor from the Central Province;
11. MBAHIN Hortance S, an assistant from the Western Province;
12. GADJO Jacqueline, an assistant from the Western Province;
13. NDEOA Dremoh, an assistant from the North West Province;
14. YIYINA Rose, an assistant from the North West Province;
15. NKOULOU Fabrice FRANK, an assistant from the Central Province;
16. AZAMBOU Ermine, a support Staff;
17. KENGNI Innocent, a support Staff;
18. OUYENGUELELEK Rose-Michel, a support Staff;
19. Claire DUPENDANT, an interpreter of the sign language;
20. TEZONG Simone, Secretary of the coordination team;

21. MBOUMBE Elisabeth, an observer;

22. KENFACK Josephine, a social worker at Dschang;

During this meeting, each team presented a report of their various activities carried out on the field.

### **The Team for the Western Province**

The first team for the Western Province worked in the Fouban and Koutaba localities where they conducted certain interviews in the local language. The team did not encounter much difficulty given the fact that one of the monitors who understood the Bamoun language acted as an interpreter. However, communication was difficult with the blind and the deaf.

Out of the ten persons scheduled, the team succeeded in conducting interviews with 9 of them. A mentally disabled person insisted to be interviewed. In order to calm him down, the team told him he will be interviewed during the second phase.

The team equally faced transportation problems as a result of the poor state of the roads. On one occasion, one of the monitors had an accident on a motor bike though no injuries were sustained.

The second team for the Western Province equally faced some difficulties. The team could not maintain contact with persons with disabilities. Deaf persons did not want to collaborate as if they were under the influence of their companions. In the Sampling process, this team was obliged to replace the dumb with mobility impaired persons. The majority of the contacted persons refused to give any information and they considered the engagement sheet as an initiation into a sect or secret society.

### **The Team for the North West Province**

This team for the North West province started work on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2006. The team encountered difficulties with the Albinos who refused to be considered as persons

with disabilities. Communication problems were equally encountered as a result of the poor network system which obstructed appointments. On the field, the team was obliged to conduct interviews while standing for long hours, given the fact that there were often no seats.

Communication between the parties was also a problem. In reality more than 20 % of the persons interviewed expressed themselves in "Broken English/Pidgin English" as a result of their low levels of education. The fact that most of the persons with disabilities refused to express themselves prolonged the interviews for hours and the team had to exercise patience and use different methods in order to successfully conduct the interviews.

### **The Team for the Centre Province**

Interviews in the Centre Province took place between the 23 and 28 of October 2006. This team was divided into two groups; one in Yaoundé and the other in Eseka<sup>21</sup>. Poorly conducted interviews were repeated at a later date.

The major difficulties faced by this group which was mainly in contact with the intellectual group were as follows:

- They received threats from the husband of one lady who was interviewed in his absence;
- The difficulties to convince the intellectuals for an interview;
- The little attention that was given to the team. For instance, in some institutions the team had to wait under the rain for classes in order to conduct interviews with students after classes;
- Some of the persons with disabilities insisted to be interviewed before signing the engagement form;

---

<sup>21</sup> The headquarters of the Nyong and Ekelle Division

- Some of the persons were not cooperative. They continuously swore.
- their miserable conditions of the dialect instead of responding to the questions;
- Communication with the deaf wasn't easy;
- Some of the persons with disabilities insisted to be paid before the interviews.

At the end of this presentation and brainstorming, the following recommendations were made:

- Difficulties should be grouped into two; those which could be resolved by the monitor and those which needed the attention of the coordination team;
- The addresses of the Coordinators should be given to the monitors;
- Elaborate a good plan of action before descending on the field;
- Make a daily report on the field actions;
- In case of difficulties on the field, advice should be sought from group members before taking an action;
- Interviews should be conveyed to the consultant, Mme Eva for transcription, analysis and report;
- Another dictaphone should be given to the consultant in order to ease her work;
- The local coordinator should be should be informed on the various problems encountered.

On this note, the meeting ended at 6:00pm. The stipends previewed for the activity were paid and there was general satisfaction.

#### **4. Lessons learned and follow up strategies**

The lessons learned have been integrated amongst the recommendations and in the summary of the study. For the follow-up strategies, the following activities have also been envisaged:

- leaders of Associations of persons with disabilities present at the seminar should form a lobbying Committee to act as a pressure group to the National Committee on the Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities(CONRAD)<sup>22</sup>;
- The reports of the research should be made publicly through the media;
- Copies of the report should be transmitted to all organisations, institutions and administrations which are members of the National Committee for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities;
- Lobby the government in order for the political integration of persons with disabilities as well as the report to be made a priority in its 2008 programme;
- Solicit the support of foreign partners for the effective follow-up by the government;
- Lobby for the membership of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms in to CONRAD, regarding its missions and competence.

---

<sup>22</sup> This is a government structure created by a prime ministerial decree in 1996, to specially deal with the legal, administrative and financial issues concerning persons with disabilities. All the leaders of associations of persons with disabilities as well as all the ministerial departments, the Presidency of the Republic and the National Assembly are all represented. This committee meets once a year under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

## Appendix B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

STEP 1 – Introductions, Background Information, Consent & Collection of Personal Data:

(a) Introduction of monitors:

(b) Review of Project Information Sheet and Free & Informed Consent Form:

[Proceed with questioning ONLY if consent is given.]

(c) Collection of personal information:

- Interview Code \_\_\_\_\_
- Sex \_\_\_\_\_
- Age Range [check one]  
18-25 ,26-40 ,41-55 ,56-70 , 71 and older
- Type of Disability [mark as many as apply]
  - mobility
  - sensory – if so, blind , deaf
    - intellectual
    - psychiatric
    - other \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify)

STEP 2 – Asking the Prompting Questions

1. What are the most difficult barriers or challenges that you face in your life?
2. Have you been left out or treated badly because of your disability?
3. Have you been prevented from participating in activities that you wanted to do?

*Which prompting question(s) did you use?                       1     2     3*

*Which prompting question(s) was/were most effective?     1     2     3*

STEP 3 - Getting Details About the Issue(s)/Situation(s) Raised

WHAT?

- What happened?



- How did it happen?

WHEN?

- When did it happen? (Date? time of day?)
- Is it still happening or has it stopped?
- Is this an ongoing situation?

WHERE?

- Where did it happen? (if the situation is specific to a location, get city/village, province/state)
- Did it happen in only one place? In more than one place? (record all of the places)

WHO?

- What type of person caused the situation? (For example: government official, doctor, bus driver, neighbour ...)

WHY?

- Why did it happen?

[REPORTING?]

- Did you report the situation to anyone?  
yes      , no
- [• If you did report the situation: ]
- What kind of person/organization did you report it to?
  - government official
  - police officer
  - army officer
  - NGO employee
  - religious leader
  - cultural leader
  - ombudsperson
  - other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify)
- How did that person react?
- What action was taken?

- [• If you did not report the situation:]
  - Why did you not report it?

STEP 4 – Relating the Issue(s)/ Situation(s) Raised to the General Human Rights Principles:

[ Dignity ]

1. Did you feel:
  - disrespected? [Or]
  - Respected? [Or]
  - did respect not have anything to do with the way you felt ?

What made you feel that way?

2. Did you feel that your feelings were ignored or that no one cared for you?
3. Did you feel that people were paying attention to you and your deeds?  
[Why or why not?]
4. Did this situation make you feel less worthy?
  - Yes
  - no
  - [- If yes, what made you feel that way?]
5. Did you feel isolated in this situation?
  - Yes
  - no
  - [- If yes, what made you feel that way?]

[Autonomy]

1. Did you feel that you had a choice [or that you made a decision on your own]?
  - yes
  - no
2. Did you have real options in this situation?  
[If not, what stopped you from having options?]
3. Did you want to make a different decision or did you want to do something else?
4. Did you have enough information to make that decision?
5. Did you feel pressured to act the way you did?

[Non-Discrimination & Equality]

1. In what way do you think your disability had something to do with what happened?
2. Do you think that people without disabilities would be treated the same way you were? [Why?]
3. Do you know anyone else who was treated in the way you were? [Why?]
4. Do you feel that you were treated like you were less valuable than other people in the same situation?

[Inclusion]

1. Did your community support you in this situation? [If so, how?]
2. Were you separated from people without disabilities? [If so, how?]
3. Did you need a service or some assistance so that you could participate? [If yes, what service(s) or assistance?] [Did you receive them?]

[Respect for Difference]

1. Were you treated the way you were in this situation because people thought you were different? [If yes, why?]
2. Do you think that other people would have been treated in a similar way in this situation?
3. Would someone of a different ethnicity be treated that way?  
Would a woman be treated that way?  
Would a poor person be treated that way?
4. Do you feel that people label you and then treat you differently because of the label?

[FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION:]

- Is there someone we could contact who saw this happens or who could provide us with more information?
  - - YES            - NO

If yes:

- What is their name? [Record name on Coding Sheet]
- Can we contact this person?  YES  NO

- If yes, what is the best way for us to contact him or her?  
[Record details on Coding Sheet]

[POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, WAYS TO AVOID FUTURE VIOLATIONS: ]

In your opinion, what action[s] should be taken to improve [or prevent] the situation?

[SUMMING UP ISSUE#1:]

Is there anything else that you would like to say about that issue/situation?

STEP 5 – Interview Conclusion

[Do you have anything else you would like to add?]

[Do you have any questions for us?]

Thank you very much for your time.

(End of interview)

F. Final comments and transfer of data.

- Withdraw the tape from the recorder and fit in the corresponding code on the flyer (the same code as on the tape);
- Immediately, the team of monitors should listen to the recorded interviews.  
In case a part of the band is unclear, the monitors would have to fit in the spots with the notes taken during the interview;
- These notes should consist of the following observations:
  - a) Details on the place where the interview was conducted (for example, the type of building, rooms etc where it was conducted);

b) Details on the difficulties or disturbances faced during the interview (for example, noise from an aeroplane which may disturb the conversation. seizure of electricity which might impede visibility, etc.)

c) Any doubts concerning the truthfulness of the information given during the interview – underscore the reasons for such doubts (for example inconsistent, incoherent and contradictory answers, etc)

Hand in the following document to the project coordinator:

- The recorded tape of the interview- labelled with the interview code;
- Complete notes taken from the interview;
- The complete sheet of the codes;
- The signed free and informed consent form.

## **Appendix C:**

### **INFORMATION SHEET**

This information is provided so that you can make a decision about whether or not you want to participate in this study. We are giving you a lot of information because we want you to be able to make the decision that is best for you.

Sponsors:

The study is being sponsored by:

- African Union of the Blind (AFUB), which is a non-governmental umbrella organisation of national associations of and for blind and partially sighted persons in Africa.
- Kenya Union of the Blind (KUB), which is a national association of and for blind and partially sighted persons in Kenya.
- Centre for Disability Rights Education and Advocacy (CREAD), which is a collaborative organization of five organizations of persons with disabilities in Kenya.
- Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI), which is a research project based at York University in Toronto, Canada
- Swedish Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted (SRF), which is a national association of and for blind and partially sighted persons in Sweden.

#### **Why are we doing this study?**

We are collecting information about the lives and experiences of people with disabilities by talking directly to people with disabilities. We want to see if their human rights are being respected. The information we collect will be studied and reports will be written. The names of participants will not be mentioned in the reports unless they have given us clear permission to do so. The reports will be available to organizations of people with disabilities, other groups working to improve the lives of people with disabilities, the media and governments.

The reports will be used to:

- let people know about violations of the rights of people with disabilities
- help stop human rights violations
- provide facts to back up arguments for changes in laws, policies, and programs to improve the lives of people with disabilities
- keep track of the steps that the government has taken or has failed to take in order to fulfill the promises it has made to people with disabilities when it signed agreements at the United Nations saying that it would protect, promote and fulfill the rights of people with disabilities

### **What will happen in this study and what will you be asked to do?**

Our project is going to various countries around the world to talk to people with disabilities about their lives and their experiences.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked a series of questions about your life and your experiences. We will particularly want to know if your human rights have been violated and how they have been violated. In other words, we will want to know if there are unfair things that have happened to you which have stopped you from participating in society in the way that people without disabilities participate in society.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed by one or more people with disabilities who are members of a local organization run by people with disabilities. We call these people the "monitors". We know that, in the past, people with disabilities have often been left out of research about people with disabilities. We think that it is only fair that people with disabilities play an active role in any research about them.

During the interview, the monitor(s) will take notes. If you give them permission to do so, they will also tape or digitally record the interview so that we can be sure to get all of the information you provide accurately.

Depending on the methods of communication that are used, the complete interview should take approximately 1 to 3 hours to complete.

After the interview, the monitor(s) will give all of their notes and the tape/digital recordings to the person in charge of the project who we call the Project Coordinator. The monitor(s) will not keep any copies and will not talk to anyone except for the Project Coordinator about what you said. The interview will be confidential.

The Project Coordinator will pass the notes and recordings of your interview to the researchers who will study them. Your name will not be on any of the information given to the researchers; they will not know whose information they are studying.

After looking at your information and the information from interviews with at least 50 other people with disabilities in your country, the researchers will write reports that will be given to organizations of people with disabilities, other groups working to improve the lives of people with disabilities, the media and governments. Your name will not be mentioned in the reports without your clear permission.

**Are there possible negative things that might happen if you participate in the study?**

There are no negative things that will happen to you by participating in this study. However, you may feel uncomfortable when you start thinking about some of the questions that you are asked. For example, you may remember some things that have happened to you that are not pleasant to think about. If that happens, you can take a break from the interview or, if you want, you can stop the interview completely.

If you want to continue to talk about these things, that's fine, too. If you feel upset about these things, you can ask the monitor(s) for the name of someone you can talk to about



your feelings after the interview is over.

**Are there good things that might happen if you participate in this study?**

You may or may not receive any direct benefit from participation. You might find that it makes you feel better to talk about some of your experiences. Also, we hope that organizations of people with disabilities, the media and governments learn from the studies and reports that are made and take steps to improve the lives of people with disabilities in your country.

**Can you decide if you want to participate in the study?**

You are free to choose to participate or not to participate in the study and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your decision not to participate in the study will not influence your ongoing relationship with any of the study sponsors, monitors or any other person or group associated with the project.

**Can you stop participating if you don't want to continue participating?**

If, at *any* time during the study, you want to stop participating, for *any reason*, just let the monitor(s) know and they will stop asking you questions. If you want to answer some questions, but not others, you can do that, too. It is entirely your decision.

If you decide not to participate in the study, or if you decide to stop participating in the study, we will not use your information for our research. Any notes or recordings made up to the point you decided to stop will be destroyed. Also, if you decide to stop participating, you will still receive your honorarium for agreeing to take part in the project. Your decision to stop participating or to refuse to answer particular questions will not affect your relationship with any of the study sponsors, monitors or any other person

or group associated with the project. No one will treat you any differently if you decide that you do not want to participate in the study.

### **Will your information be kept confidential?**

The information you provide will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. Unless you specifically provide your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The notes and recordings of your interview will be safely stored in a place that is locked and will be destroyed at the end of the project. You should know that there are certain types of information that the monitors would be required by the laws of your country to tell the authorities about if you mention them in the interview.

### **Costs and Compensation**

You will be given an honorarium to cover your transportation to the interview location and the cost of any disability-related supports or assistance that you will need in order to participate in the interview. If you would need additional money to get the supports that you need to participate, please let the monitor(s) know the details. You will receive this honorarium within one month of your interview. You will receive this honorarium even if you decide to stop participating in the project at some point during the interview and/or decide not to answer certain questions.

### **Do you have questions concerning the study?**

If you have questions about the research in general or about your own role in the study, please feel free to contact:

**Cornelius Ojangole**

Project Coordinator

by regular mail: African Union of the Blind, North Airport Road, Embakasi

P.O. Box 72872-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

by telephone: 254-020-823989

by email: info@afub-uafa.org

OR

**Dr. Elly Macha**

Executive Director, AFUB

by regular mail: African Union of the Blind, North Airport Road, Embakasi

P.O. Box 72872-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

by telephone: 254-020-823989

by email: info@afub-uafa.org

OR

**Dr. Marcia Rioux**

Co-Director, Disability Rights Promotion International

Chair & Professor, School of Health Policy and Management, Atkinson

by regular mail: York University, 441 HNES Building, 4700 Keele Street

Toronto, ON, M3J 1P3 Canada

by telephone: +1-416-736-2100 extension 22112

by email: mrioux@yorku.ca

**Appendix D :**

**INTERVIEW CODE SHEET**

interview Code	Name of the interviewee	Contact and Follow-up remark 1		Contact and Follow-up remark 2		Contact and Follow-up remark 3	
		Name	Address	Name	Contact Information	Name	Address
CYA01							
CYA02							
CYA03							
CYA04							
CYA05							
CYA06							
CYA07							
CYA08							
CYA09							
CYA011							
CYA012							
CYA013							
CYA014							
CYA015							

## Appendix E

### FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the preceding pages of this Information Sheet and Free and Informed Consent form. The research procedures mentioned above have been explained to me and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and that, if I choose to do so, any data collected as a result of my participation will be destroyed. The potential discomforts that I might experience because I have participated in the study have been explained to me. I also understand the potential benefits of being a part of this study.

I know that I may ask now, or at any time in the future, any questions I have about the study. I have been assured that the records, transcripts, and tapes related to this study will be kept confidential to the limits of the law. I have also been assured that no information will be released or printed or made public that would disclose my personal identity unless I give permission for that to happen.

I hereby consent to participate

Printed Name of Participant:.....

Date:.....

Signature of Participant.....

I hereby consent to having my interview recorded

Signature of Participant.....

Date:.....

Signature of Principal Investigator ..... Date:.....

## Appendix F

### CODING SCHEME

To develop the coding scheme a sample of 15 interviews was selected:

- 5 from each monitoring site (Centre Province, west province and North west province)
- Sex: 8 females and 7 males
- Age ranks: below 26: 3, 26-40 : 5, 41 - 55: 4, 56 - 70: 2, 70 +: 1
- Type of disability: mobility: 4, visual impairment: 5, Hearing impairment: 4, Albinos: 2

The 15 interviews were then analyzed. 56 codes and sub-codes emerged from this analysis, covering 6 main areas or themes, as follows:

- Types and incidence of 'barriers' and obstacles experienced in daily life by the interviewees (including negative perceptions of disability, discriminatory attitudes, abuse and violence, poverty, and limited opportunities to participate in social and economic life)
- Ways in which barriers and obstacles experienced by interviewees translate into violations of the key principles of human rights ('human rights implications')
- Ways in which interviewees have dealt with or responded to situations of abuse and discrimination ('responses to discrimination')
- Reasons why interviewees have not reported situations of abuse and discrimination ('reasons for not reporting')
- Interviewees' ideas about the social, economic and political factors in Kenyan society that create or reinforce the discrimination they experience or have experienced in the past on the grounds of their disabilities ('systemic roots of discrimination')
- 'Recommendations' for future social and political action to prevent discrimination and abuse of people with disabilities.

In addition to these 6 areas, 3 themes were created to code interviewee's comments that alluded to intersections of 'gender and disability', 'ethnicity and disability' and 'class and disability'. It is likely that, as more interviews get coded, these themes will be expanded and new sub-codes created.

To ensure the reliability of the coding scheme, each of the fifteen interviews was then coded independently by three coders and results compared and discussed. These discussions led to further revisions of the coding scheme that included:

- creation of 3 new codes
- elimination of 4 codes (by merging previously distinct codes)
- changes in codes' names or expansion of codes' descriptions to make them more clear and accurate

This process resulted in a revised coding scheme which is presented here.

Code <sup>23</sup>	Definition
<b>SEX<sup>24</sup></b>	
<b>FEMALE</b>	
<b>MALE</b>	
<b>AGE RANGE</b>	
<b>Below 26</b>	
<b>26 - 40</b>	
<b>41 - 55</b>	
<b>56 - 70</b>	
<b>70 +</b>	
<b>TYPE OF DISABILITY</b>	
<b>MOBILITY</b>	
<b>BLIND</b>	
<b>DEAF</b>	
<b>ALBINOS</b>	
<b>BARRIERS</b>	
<b>TYPES OF BARRIERS<sup>25</sup></b>	barriers and obstacles experienced by interviewees throughout their lives

<sup>23</sup> Only the codes whose names appears in bold are to be used when coding interviews

<sup>24</sup> The variables **SEX**, **REGION**, **AGE RANGE** and **TYPE OF DISABILITY** should be coded in NVIVO as **ATTRIBUTES**, rather than **NODES**.

<sup>25</sup> If the barriers reported relate to experiences of people with disabilities other than the interviewee her/himself, create a new code with similar description and name, just adding the number 2 at the end. Ex.: **PERFAM2**, **PERSCHO2**, etc

DISCRIMINATORY ATTITUDES	Perceptions, images of disability and attitudes that the interviewee has faced in her/his life that isolate, exclude or discriminate against her/him
ATTFAM	Perceptions, images of disability and attitudes that the interviewee has faced in her/his family that isolate, exclude or discriminate against her/him
ATTSCHO	Perceptions, images of disability and attitudes that the interviewee has faced in school that isolate, exclude or discriminate against her/him
ATTWK	Perceptions, images of disability and attitudes that the interviewee has faced in the workplace that isolate, exclude or discriminate against her/him
ATTSOC	Perceptions, images of disability and attitudes that the interviewee has faced in the community or in society at large that isolate, exclude or discriminate against her/him
ATTGVT	Perceptions, images of disability and attitudes by public authorities that discriminated against the interviewee
ABUSE & VIOLENCE	situations of abuse and violence that the interviewee has experienced
ABFAM	situations of abuse and violence that the interviewee has experienced in the family context
ABSCHO	situations of abuse and violence that the interviewee has experienced at school
ABWK	situations of abuse and violence that the interviewee has experienced in the workplace
ABSOC	situations of abuse and violence that the interviewee has experienced in the community and in society at large
ABGVT	situations of abuse and discrimination that the interviewee has experienced in her/his relationship with public authorities



LIMITED ACCESS	lack of opportunities and barriers encountered by the interviewee in access to diverse contexts and settings
ACCPHYS	barriers and obstacles faced in accessing the physical environment (including transportation)
ACCCOM	barriers and obstacles faced by the interviewee to communicate with others
ACCEDU	barriers and obstacles faced by the interviewee in accessing education
ACCWK	barriers and obstacles faced by the interviewee in accessing work
ACCGVT	barriers and obstacles faced by the interviewee in accessing public services and authorities
POVERTY	economic deprivation experienced by the interviewee
RELIGION	obstacles, difficulties and negative experiences religion-related
INCIDENCE	frequency with which the interviewee reports experiencing discrimination in her/his life
POSITIVE EXPERIENCES <sup>26</sup>	
POSFAM	Positive life experiences reported by the interviewee
POSCH	Positive life experiences in the family context
POSWK	Positive life experiences in the school context
POSOC	Positive life experiences in the context of work

---

<sup>26</sup> If the positive experiences reported relate to persons other than the interviewee her/himself, create a new code with similar description and name, just adding the number 2 at the end. Ex.: POSFAM2, POSCHO2, etc

<sup>27</sup> If human rights implications reported relate to the lives of people with disabilities other than the interviewee her/himself, create a new code with similar description and name, just adding the number 2 at the end. Ex.: POS DIGNITY2, NEG DIGNITY2, etc

	POSGVT	Positive life experiences in the community/society
	POSRELIG	Positive life experiences with public authorities/ government  Positive life experiences religion-related
HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS <sup>27</sup>		Life experiences reported by the interviewee as they relate to key human rights principles
	DIGNITY	impact of particular life experiences on interviewees' perceptions of self-worth
	POS DIGNITY	interviewee reports being respected and valued in her/his experiences and opinions and able to form opinions without fear of physical, psychological and/or emotional harm
	NEG DIGNITY	interviewee reports feeling disrespected and devalued in her/his experiences and opinions and not able to form opinions without fear of physical, psychological and/or emotional harm in consequence of the disability
	AUTONOMY	ability to make choices and decisions on issues that affect one's own life (including choosing forms of supported decision-making)
	SELF- DETERMINATION	interviewee reports ability to make decisions on issues affecting her/his own life (including choosing forms of supported decision-making)
	LACK OF AUTONOMY	interviewee reports inability to make decisions on issues affecting own life and/or being forced into situations on the grounds of disability
	EQUALITY	having own differences respected and disadvantages addressed and being able to participate fully in equal terms

EQUALITY	interviewee reports being respected in her/his differences, having her/his disadvantages addressed and being able to participate fully in equal terms
INEQUALITY	Interviewee reports a lack of respect for her/his differences, a lack of consideration for her/his disadvantages and not being able to participate on equal terms.
INCLUSION	reports of being recognized and valued as an equal participant and having own needs understood as integral to the social and economic order and not identified as special needs
INCLUSION	interviewee reports being recognized and valued as an equal participant and/or supported in own needs
EXCLUSION	interviewee reports being segregated, isolated and/or not supported in own needs on the grounds of disability
RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE	reports of how society deals with difference
BEING RESPECTED	interviewee reports being respected regardless her/his differences
BEING LABELLED	Interviewee reports being labelled in consequence of disability
RESPONSES TO ABUSE & DISCRIMINATION	ways in which the interviewee responds or has responded in the past to situations of abuse and discrimination
DISTANCING	when the interviewee chooses to avoid or distance her/himself from situations and contexts in which she/he has experienced abuse and discrimination
RESISTANCE	when the interviewee chooses to keep returning to and or tries to change situations and contexts in which she/he has experienced abuse and discrimination
REPORT/LEGAL ACTION	when the interviewee chooses to report or complain about the situation or context in which she or he has experienced discrimination

REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING	reasons that the interviewee gives for not having reported situations or contexts in which she/he has experienced discrimination
'NOTHING WOULD HAVE HAPPENED'	when the interviewee is convinced that report and legal action would not have had any significant consequences in terms of changing situations and contexts of discrimination, including because she/he does not trust authorities.
LACK OF ACCESS	when the interviewee was prevented from reporting due to lack of access to appropriate administrative and/or legal structures or lack of access to information about how to proceed to make a claim
FEAR	when the interviewee was prevented from reporting for fear of its consequences
LACK OF FINANCIAL MEANS	when the interviewee was prevented from reporting due to lack of financial resources
CORRUPTION	interviewee did not report because she/he knew or thought that she/he would have to bribe the authorities
SELF-BLAME	interviewee did not report because she/he has interiorized feelings of shame and inferiority
SYSTEMIC ROOTS OF DISCRIMINATION	social, political and economic factors that create the discrimination interviewees experience or have experienced in the past on grounds of their disabilities
ECONOMIC	When the acts of exclusion and discrimination against people with disabilities are related to the ways in which economic (production) activities are organized and delivered
SOCIAL	acts of exclusion and discrimination against people with disabilities are related to the ways in which social (reproduction) activities and social relationships operate and are organized
LEGISLATIVE	acts of exclusion and discrimination against people with disabilities are related to the lack of adequate laws or policies to protect their rights and/or to the way existing laws and policies operate

RECOMMENDATIONS	suggestions to improve the situation of people with disabilities in Cameroon
RAISE AWARENESS	raise awareness and educate society about disability and how to deal with people with disabilities
ECONOMIC SUPPORTS	government supports to improve access to work for people with disabilities
SOCIAL SUPPORTS	government supports to improve the living conditions and income of people with disabilities and their families
REPRESENTATION	improve the participation and representation of people with disabilities in the government
RESPECT	government should show more respect and be considerate of the needs of people with disabilities
LEGISLATION	develop and implement new laws and policies to protect the rights of people with disabilities
PEER SUPPORT	people with disabilities should get together and support each other
GENDER & DISAB	ways in which gender and disability intersect to compound or protect from discrimination
ETHNICITY & DISAB	ways in which ethnicity and/or race interacts with disability to compound or protect from discrimination
CLASS & DISAB	ways in which class (being poor or rich) intersects with disability to compound or protect from discrimination

**Appendix G:**

**EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW NOTES**

Interview Code \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

Notes Drafted by \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

Signatures :

Monitor

Interviewee

## Appendix H:

### **BACKGROUND OF THE AFRICAN UNION OF THE BLIND (AFUB)**

The African Union of the Blind (UAFA) is a continent wide umbrella NGO of national organisations of/for the blind and partially sighted persons, formed in Tunisia in 1987 by OAU Resolution CM/Res. 944 (XL).

AFUB is now operational in 51 African States. In all actions of AFUB, the anticipated end is for an African Continent where blind and partially sighted persons enjoy equal rights, social inclusion and full participation in development.

AFUB contributes to this desired state by strengthening its member organisations and creating unity of purpose among them through capacity building and advocacy in partnership with government, international agencies and other stakeholders.

The following presidents have served the African Union of the Blind since its inception:

1. Mr. Ismaila KONATE from Mali, from 1987 to 1992;
2. Professor Sam TOREREI from Kenya, from 1992 to 1994;
3. Dr. Imed EDDINE CHAKER from Tunisia, from 1994 to 2000;
4. Mr. Paul TEZANOU from Cameroon served two consecutive terms from 2000 up to date.

The six General Assembly of the AFUB will be taking place in November 2008 in Morocco

## Appendix I:

### **MEMORUNDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION OF THE BLIND (AFUB) AND L'ASSOCIATION NATIONALE ES AVEUGLES DE CAMEROUN (ANAC)**

1. PROJECT TITLE: DISABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS (DHR) IN AFRICA
2. PROJECT THEME: "Blind and partially sighted People Using Human Rights Instruments as a tool for Achieving Equality and Development in Society"
3. PROJECT COUNTRY SCOPE: CAMEROON
4. PROJECT FINANCIERS: SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED (SRF)
5. PERIOD: NOVEMBER 2005 to OCTOBER 2006
6. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT:

- I. To conduct a stake holder's round table forum that will inaugurate a Disability and Human Rights Advocacy Network;
- II. To select a Disability and Human Rights Task Force that will administer activities of the DHR advocacy Network;
- III. To Identify and recruit a principal researcher;
- IV. To coordinate and conduct training of monitors and assistant monitors;
- V. To conduct individualized field research focused on monitoring Human Rights of visually impaired persons within the identified regions;
- VI. To effectively analyze, interpret, manage and disseminate report on research findings

MOU between African Union of the Blind (herein referred to as" AFUB")  
North Airport Road Embakasi  
P. O. Box 72872 00200 Nairobi, Kenya.  
Tel: +254-20-823989  
Fax: +254-20-823776  
E-mail: [info@afub-uafa.org](mailto:info@afub-uafa.org)  
Website: [www.afub-uafa.org](http://www.afub-uafa.org)

And

L'Association Nationale des Aveugles du Cameroun (hereafter referred to as "ANAC")  
Accueil Notre- Dame de la Paix  
B.P 190 Dschang  
Tel: +237 33 45 12 51  
Siege Sociale B.P. Yaoundé  
Email: [ptezanou@vahoo.fr](mailto:ptezanou@vahoo.fr)

In this MOU, IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED between AFUB and L'Association Nationale.



des Aveugles du Cameroon (ANAC) that both parties will work in collaboration on the Implementation of the Disability and Human Rights Project.

7. OBLIGATIONS OF AFUB:

- I. AFUB will provide the technical general project support;
- II. In collaboration with ANAC facilitate the establishment of a country DHR Stakeholders advocacy Network, selection of the DHR taskforce and the management team;
- III. Recruit a Principal Researcher to coordinate and consolidate key research outcomes / results of Disability and Human Rights Monitoring Activities;
- IV. Disburse activity budget support to ANAC;
- V. Locate DHR resource materials and facilitate their translation and transcription into accessible formats for visually impaired persons;
- VI. Collate reports/ samples from researches in collaboration with ANAC and disseminate them for future development work.

8. OBLIGATIONS OF ANAC:

- I. Assist in the selection of 10 visually impaired persons and other Disabled persons monitors, 10 assistant monitors;
- II. Organize a residential training seminar for monitors and assistant monitors;
- III. Conduct DHR monitoring activities within the identified regions;
- IV. Report to AFUB on the effectiveness of the DHR monitoring and testing tools, provide a report on what had been done well, what the challenges are and what could be done to improve future DHR monitoring activities;
- V. Put in place systems/ tools that will enhance DHR data Management within ANAC;
- VI. Be involved in promoting the program, raising general awareness on DHR in the media and other forums;
- VII. Ensure that funds received from AFUB are receipted and accounted for according to the specific reporting requirements provided by AFUB. Financier's requirements are that funds will only be submitted upon justification of the required reports and documentation.

9. DURATION OF THIS MOU:

This MOU is for one year, November 2005-October 2006  
Done this 20<sup>th</sup> February 2006

Mr. Paul Tezanou, ANAC President

Signature:.....

Elly Macha f\I) Executive Director,AFUB

Signature: .....

## Appendix J:

### **BILINGUAL ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS ON THE OCCASION OF THE SEMINAR IN YAOUNDÉ** **Dr Chemuta D. BANDA**

Official opening ceremony of the International Seminar on Disability and  
Human Rights  
Hotel Meumi, Yaoundé, 03 October, 2006

Honourable Members of Government,  
Your Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Guest,  
Dear participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be amongst you at this launching ceremony. In fact, this is a crucial meeting because it comes at a time when the International Community is turning its attention to the disabled. Work in ongoing on an International Convention on the Promotion and Protection on the Rights of Person with Disabilities at the United Nations.

The lofty objectives of the seminar are aimed at fostering the purposes of the UN decade for disables persons (1983-1992) and the African decade for disabled persons (1999-2009). The efforts of the Association Nationale des Aveugles du Cameroun (ANAC) and its associates and facilitators are therefore very commendable. Let me join those who have spoken before me in welcoming you to Yaoundé and in wishing you an enjoyable stay here and fruitful deliberations as I have seen it, there will be a lot to learn and a lot of inspiration to be drawn from this seminar. Participants will develop a better understanding of disability and should appreciate the human rights approach to disability.

Disability must be seen as an individual's problem. It must be seen as the problem of the person with the disability. Disability must be taken as a challenge for society. No persons are immune to disability and nobody should be left in perpetual disability. Able people do become disabled and some become disabled within a twinkling. It is therefore common sense for society to prepare itself to face the challenges of disability. There are abundant examples of geniuses among the disabled. Since charity begins at home, the current Cameroonian examples I know include, André Marie TALLA, Paul TEZANOU, ONDOUA Gabriel and NGWA CHE Francis. You can extend the list to many others in Cameroon, Africa and the World.

The human rights approach to disability call on society to stop looking at people with disabilities as inferior people or helpless victims who require care and protection and to take disability as an important dimension of human culture. It affirms that all human beings irrespective of their disabilities have certain rights which are alienable. Entitlement to rights should not be limited by individual differences. By emphasizing that people with disabilities are equally entitled to rights as others, the human rights approach builds upon the authority of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which recognises that all human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity.

From the perspective of the human rights approach to disability, the policy implication is that planning in society be adjusted to respond more effectively to the presence and needs of people with disabilities. Since disability is a stat of being rather than a tragic deviation from normalcy, empowerment and self-direction are fundamental to achieving equality and citizenship.

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms lauds the leadership of this seminar for their sustained at the empowerment and self-direction of the visually impaired. The Commission has made significant strides in the fight for non-discrimination and the promotion of the ideals of the human rights approach to disability, if you visit the Commission by the middle of next month, you will be pleased to note that all vulnerable groups in society are well represented in it.

Nos sociétés et nos gouvernements sont appelés à respecter les règles standard sur l'égalisation des opportunités des personnes handicapées car, c'est en les respectant qu'on contribue à leur épanouissement.

Le principe des droits implique un planning avec pour objectif l'utilisation des ressources de manière à donner à chaque individu une chance égale de participation. Ce principe contribue ainsi à l'insertion sociale des personnes handicapées qui doivent participer aussi pleinement que possible à la vie culturelle et sociale de leurs communautés.

Madame le ministre des Affaires Sociales peut confirmer que plusieurs départements ministériel aussi bien que les organisations du secteur privé et de la société civile au Cameroun comprennent de plus en plus l'importance que nous accordons à l'approche des droits de l'homme pour notre développement, et manifestent leur volonté de contribuer à la mise sur pied d'une culture de droits de l'homme au Cameroun qui se préoccupe des droits de tout le monde y compris les droits des personnes handicapées en général et ceux des malvoyants en particulier. La pleine intégration des personnes handicapées dans la société Camerounaise constitue notre objectif primordial.

Je vous remercie de votre attention./-

## Appendix K :

### PROJECT PERSONNEL

Cornélius Ojangole : Projet Coordinator

Adresse postale : African Union of the Blind, North Airport Road, Embakasi

P.O. Box 72872-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

Téléphone : 250-020-823989

Email : [info@afub-uafa.org](mailto:info@afub-uafa.org)

Pr. Marcia Rioux

Co-Director, Disability Rights Promotion International

Chair & Professor, School of Health Policy and Management, Atkinson

Adresse postale : York University, 441 HNES Building, 4700 Keele Street

Téléphone : +1-416-736-21000 extension 22112

Email : [mrioux@yorku.ca](mailto:mrioux@yorku.ca)

M. Erik Staaf

International Secretary, Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired

Adresse postale : SE-122 88 Enskede, Sweden. Visitors Sandborgsvagen 52

Téléphone : +46 (0)8-39 90 00 Mobil + 46 (0)708-39 21 47

Email : [erik.staaf@srfriks.org](mailto:erik.staaf@srfriks.org)/[erik.staaf@bonetmail.com](mailto:erik.staaf@bonetmail.com)

Dr Elly Macha

Directeur Executif

Adresse postale : African Union of the Blind, North Airport Road, Embakasi

P.O. Box 72872-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

Téléphone : +254-20-823989 (Office)/ +254-735421373 (Mobile)

Fax : +254-20-823776

Email : [info@afub-uafa.org](mailto:info@afub-uafa.org)

Mrs Rita Samson

Project Coordinator, Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI)

York University, 4700 Keele Street, 5021 TEL Building

Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3

Tel: +1 416 736 2100 ext. 20718

Fax: +1 416 736 5986

Email: [drpi@yorku.ca](mailto:drpi@yorku.ca)

website: [www.yorku.ca/drpi](http://www.yorku.ca/drpi)

Mrs Paula Pinto

PHD Candidate, Department of Sociology

York University, Toronto-Canada

## **The local team**

M. Paul TEZANOU

Président de l'Union Africaine des Aveugles et de l'Association Nationale des Aveugles du Cameroun

Adresse postale : B.P. 190, Dschang, Cameroun

Téléphone : +237 33 45 15 48(office)/+237 99 52 02 22/75 52 64 51 (Mobile)

Fax : + 237 33 45 19 55

Email : ptezanou@yahoo.fr

Mme Eva Jacqueline Etongue Mayer

Consultante

Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme et des Libertés du Cameroun

Chef de Division

Adresse postale : B.P. 20 317, Yaoundé, Cameroun

Téléphone : +237 22 22 61 17(office) /+ 237 77 67 12 89 (Mobile)

Fax : + 237 22 22 60 82

Email : mayereva@yahoo.fr

M. ETA Kelvin Ayuk

Assistant de recherche

Adresse postale : BP. 1020 Poste Centrale Yaoundé

Téléphone : +237 77 94 01 12 (Mobile)

Email: eta\_yuk@yahoo.com

Mme Caroline LEWE

Local project Coordinator

Mme TEZON Simonne

Membre et Représentante des autres catégories de personnes handicapées au Comité d'organisation locale

Maître ZEGA LAIN Gustav

Membre, Avocat au Barreau du Cameroun

Mme Sylvie Hortense MBAHIN

Secrétaire bilingue, Assistante

## Appendix L:

### **LIST OF ASSOCIATIONS OF/ FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN CAMEROON**

- Amicale Nationale des Handicapées du Cameroun ;
- Action de conscience sur les personnes handicapées (ACPH) ;
- Association des Etudiants Handicapés (AEH) ;
- Association Mondiale de Défense Intellectuelle et Morale des Albinos (ASMODISA) ;
- Association Nationale des Anciens Lépreux du Cameroun (ANALCAM) ;
- Association Nationale des Aveugles du Cam (ANAC) ;
- Association Nationale des Déficiants Auditifs du Cameroun (ANDAC) ;
- Association Nationale des Femmes Handicapées du Cameroun (ANAFHCAM) ;
- Association Nationale des Handicapés Moteurs et Amputés du Cameroun ;
- Association Nationale des Lépreux du Cameroun ;
- Association nationale des Sourds du Cameroun (ANHMC) ;
- Association Nationale des Sourds et Mal entendants du Cameroun (ANSMAC) ;
- Association Nationale des Sourds Muets du Cameroun (ASCAM) ;
- Association des Handicapés Moteurs et Amputés du Cameroun (AHMAC) ;
- Association des Parents et Amis des Enfants Différents du Cameroun (APAEDIC) ;
- Association des Parents d'Enfants Handicapés (COLOMBE) ;
- Association Sport et Loisirs pour Handicapés (ASLOH) ;
- Atelier Protégé pour Personnes Handicapées (PROMHANDICAM) ;
- Bobine d'Or ;
- Centre National des Réhabilitation des Handicapés (CNRH) ;
- Club des Jeunes Aveugles Réhabilités du Cameroun (CJARC) ;
- Comité des Amis et Sympathisants des Handicapés (CASA) ;
- Coordination des Etudiants Handicapés des universités du Cameroun (CAEHUCAM) ;
- Externat Médico Pédagogique « la Colombe » ;
- Fédération des Handicapés Sportifs du Cameroun ;
- Fédération d'Afrique centrale des associations pour la protection des droits des personnes handicapées (FACAPH) ;
- Fédération Nationale des Associations Handicapées du Cameroun (FENAHCAM) ;
- Fondation demain le sourd ;
- Fondation Petit DAN et SAHAH (Enfance déshéritée) ;
- Ligue de Solidarité des Femmes Handicapées du Cameroun (LISOFHAC) ;
- Services pour la Promotion des Handicapés au Cameroun (PROMHANDICAM);
- Union Générale des Grands Infirmes du Cameroun (UGAGIC) ;
- Union Mondiale des Aveugles (UMA) ;
- Union Nationale des Associations et Institutions de/et pour personnes Handicapées du Cameroun (UNAPHAC)
- Union National des Handicapés du Cameroun (UNACAM)

## Appendix M:

### **LIST OF NATIONAL TEXTS PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN CAMEROON**

- The Penal Code of law no 1966
- Decree no 77/495 of 07 December 1977 setting the conditions for the creation and functioning of private social services;
- Law no 83 /013, of 21 July 1983 relative to the protection of persons with disabilities,
- Decree no 90/1516 of 26 November 1990 setting the modalities of application of law no 83/013 relative to the protection of persons with disabilities;
- Law no 92-007 of 14 August 1992 creating the Labour Code;
- Arête no 0001 of 15 May 1993 setting the modalities of establishment and deliverance of the National Invalidity Card within the national territory;
- Decree no 94/199 of 7 October 1994 organising the public service statute, modified and completed by Decree no 2000/187 of October 2000;
- Decree no 96 /379 of 14 June 1996, of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, setting and organising the National Committee for the Socio-economic Rehabilitation and Reinsertion of Persons with Disabilities;
- The Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon (law no 96-06 of 18 January 1996);
- Decree no 98 /069 of 04 May 1998 organising the Ministry of Social Affairs;
- Law no 83 /13 of 21 July 1983 relative to the protection of persons with disabilities.

## Appendix N :

### **LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED**

- UNDP, World Bank, DGTPE ;
- World Fact Book 2002 (Oct.2002) ;
- <http://www.ambafrance-cm.org/> ;
- [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/YaoundÃ©](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yaound%C3%A9) ;
- Décennie des Nations Unies pour les personnes handicapées au Cameroun 1983-1992, Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Condition Féminine, Secrétariat Général, Direction de la Réinsertion Sociale, 107 p ;
- Livre blanc sur la condition des personnes handicapées au Cameroun, (UNAPHAC), Sous la direction de Ondoua Abah Gabriel, Presses Universitaires d'Afrique, 70p ;
- Rapport du séminaire national sur l'élaboration d'une politique multisectorielle d'intégration socio-économique des personnes handicapées, (Yaoundé du 11 au 14 juillet 1994), Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Condition Féminine, 138 p.



## Appendix O:

### LIST OF USEFUL ADDRESSES

- Association Nationale des Aveugles du Cameroun B.P. 190, Dschang, Cameroun.  
Téléphone : +237 33 45 15 48(office)/+237 99 52 02 22/75 52 64 51 (Mobile) Fax : + 237 33 45 19 55
- Association des Handicapés Monteurs et Amputés du Cameroun (AHMAC)  
BP.5349 Yaoundé, Téléphone / Télécopie: (237) 22 31 76 90 ;  
AHMAC), Adamawa Section, BP139 Ngaoundéré  
AHMAC) Bertoua Section, Téléphone (237) 22 24 22 46  
AHMAC) Far North Section BP. 258 Maroua  
AHMAC) Northern Section, BP.229 Garoua; Téléphone (237) 22 27 14 64  
AHMAC) North West Section a Bamenda  
AHMAC) Western Section BP. 961 Bafoussam  
AHMAC) Southern Section, BP. 307 Ebolowa, Téléphone (237) 22 28 42 12/22 28  
33 64 AHMAC) South West Section, BP.73 Tiko
  - Association Handicapés Services du Cameroun (SHSC), BP. 319 Sangmelima,  
Téléphone : (237) 22 28 84 84
  - Association des Parents et Amis des Enfants différents du Cameroun (APAEDIC)  
BP. 14035 Yaoundé
  - Association Nationales des Handicapés Anciens Lépreux blanchis du Cameroun  
(ANHALCAM) BP.786 Yaoundé, Téléphone : (237) 22 20 27 06
  - Association Sports et Loisirs pour Handicapés (ASLOH), BP 17102, Douala.
  - United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, BP.836  
Yaoundé, Telephone (237) 22 21 24 74 Telecopy : (237) 22 21 24 75
  - Centre de Rééducation et d'Appareillage des Handicapés Monteurs et Amputés  
Cameroun (CRAHMA). CRAHMA, BP.8631 Douala
  - Comité des Amis et Sympathisants des Handicapés (CASA), BP. 496 Yaoundé
  - Coordination des Etudiants Handicapés des Universités du Cameroun (CAEHUCAM)  
BP.14168 Yaoundé
  - Fondation demain le sourd (FDS).BP. 25022 Yaoundé
  - Groupement des Handicapés pour les Développement et la Solidarité du Cameroun  
(GHDS), BP.5691 Yaoundé
  - Groupe d'Initiatives Communes des Personne Handicapés Prestataires des  
Services Techniques du Cameroun (GIC-PHPHRESCAM), BP. 14384 Yaoundé
  - HANDISPORT Cameroun, BP.4207 Yaoundé
  - Institut Africain de Réadaptation (IAR) Bureau Afrique Centrale, BP 2467 Congo,  
Téléphone :(242)82 11 43
  - Organisation Mondiale des Personnes Handicapées (OMPH) 101, Evergreen,  
Winnipeg, R3L 2T3, Canada
  - Panafricaine des personnes Handicapés (PANAPH), BP. 2213-46, Herbert Chitepo  
St. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe ; e-mail : pafod@telconet.co.zw

- National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon, P.O box 20317, Yaoundé
- PROMHANDICAM - Association, P o box. 4018 Yaoundé
- Rehabilitation International (RI) 25 East 21st, New-York, NY, 10010USA
- UNAPHAC, the Mefou-Akono section, BP.08 Ngoumou
- UNAPHAC, the Ndikinemeki section, S/C de M. Le Maire de Ndikinemeki
- Union Nationale des Associations et Institutions de/et pour Personnes Handicapées du Cameroun (UNAPHAC), BP. 30515 Yaoundé, Téléphone : (237) 22317690, Telecopy : (237) 22221873 ; email : facaph@camnet.cm.