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Cameroon, Factor 17: Good Governance

### **Good Governance in Cameroon**

Cameroon has always been known about its agricultural potential but unfortunately, the past years have been tough for Cameroon as their war with Boko Haram impacts their food security. Food security has been decreasing since 2007. North Cameroon was the part that got impacted the most by the war. It becomes increasingly difficult to find food in northern Cameroon especially due to the insecurity caused by Boko Haram which has seriously damaged agriculture and cross-border trade. In North Cameroon over 615,000 people are hit by food insecurity even though the food is relatively available. Other parts of Cameroon got impacted by the war too but they didn't as much as the Northern part. The centre has a 3% food insecurity that in comparing with the Northern part that has a shocking over 17 % food insecurity is acceptable. The east part of Cameroon has a 10 % in growing food insecurity. The west part of Cameroon that connects to the Atlantic Ocean is the part with the most food security in Cameroon where the food insecurity is around 0.7 % - 2.4 %. The food insecurity has been impacting the North part of Cameroon by making people resort to less preferred food 47 % of them to be exact. WHO's standards indicate that the situation is very poor.

The Conflict has impacted rural places especially making more than the half of the population not being able to meet their basic needs (food) with a shocking more than 63 % in the rural places of the Northern part. Cameroon's rural places have always been known about being able to produce food that will last throughout the year but the war has made the stocks to last around 7 months. This is forcing the people to rely on markets for the months that are left. About 43 % of the household do not use inputs (fertilizers) and they don't do this out of will they do this cause they are forced by the lack of availability of accessing them which is another cause of the conflict between Boko Haram and Cameroon.

The lack of facilities to store the food that they cultivate forces them to sell it immediately. Only 30 % of the villages can store it. Having these conditions most of the people moved on to cities. Another reason is the poor transport. Most of the villages are hard to reach because of the bad infrastructure and especially during bad weather. The extreme north is the part that has been impacted the most. The villagers have to walk over an hour just to reach a hard road so that they can walk in it. The weather makes it hard to reach the rural places forcing them to cut off connections with the non-rural places.

More than 70 % of the farmers have abandoned their fields since last year. To make the situation even worse, the Nigerian refugees have occupied the fields that the farmers used for farming. This was manifested with the decrease of products such as crops by 50 % . **Only 132,000 tonnes of cereals were produced in 2014, which is far below the region's estimated annual need of 770,000 tonnes.** This has impacted families leaving them without sufficient stocks. This has made prices increase and a lot of people now can't afford it. Even when the north region is in peace from the war with Boko Haram North Cameroon is the region that has a harsh climate and water shortages. How can we solve the problem? Investment needs to be done, farmers need to develop the agriculture and the way to do it is by investing into farmers having fertilizers , pesticides and of course tools (modern ones).

As I said people cannot storage food cause they do not have facilities where they could storage the crops but with the right investment people could have facilities that would make the crops to last throughout the year not only 7 months. Food aid should be continuously provided to the most vulnerable while at the same time trying to prepare them to be food secured in the nearest future. On the other hand youths and children should be educated and trained to become prominent productive citizens in the future.

One of the problems was the poor infrastructure making it hard for farmers to be reached by people so a smart investment would be investing in building strong roads, bridges and also strengthening them. This has been a problem for a long time now because the war has been destroying the roads targeting the farmers and now they can't meet with traders. If this idea comes alive farmers would be simulated to produce more and more and this would secure more availability in markets.

The education of students should be something to be invested in too because as we know education is one of the indicators for food security and school attendance has been very low and school dropouts especially for girls have become normal now. The price of food is also one of the problems so based on the research I have made I would propose food price monitoring. The pressure and the demand keeps growing that is why the prices should not be growing. The north region is one of the most impacted regions and needs intervention as soon as possible. It has the worst indicators for food security, poverty, access to health, education and water.

The food insecurity in Cameroon is now unquestionable. If Cameroon has to escape this situation it needs immediate intervention. The first thing they should do is isolate the problem in the North region and invest there. The North region is the one that has been impacted the most so it should be given special attention. The intervention should be done by the state where they should provide all the necessary tools the farmers need by doing it in a fair way and an equal one. Farmers should also have access to basic things they need like fertilizers, the quantity of land cropped and also the techniques used. The rural part

of the population is the most vulnerable one so it should be a concern on how to make the food safe there. Even if the government does not take action, the community should be taking action by working with different international organizations, the government and stop the problems here before it affects more people. While the natural problem is being one of the most important ones, the government should keep in mind economic, socio-cultural and political conflict issues as these are foreseen to have a big impact on food insecurity in the near future.

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