



EITD Research

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Your reference:

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The Legislative and Economic Advisory Services (LEAS) Programme

To: All Members of Parliament, Cameroon

Attention: _____

Subject: **Awesome and Urgent State Budget Issues**

Right Honourable/Honourable,

As required by law, the executive arm of our government will be seeking your approval of its draft state budget for 2010 during this November ordinary session of Parliament. The whole country, and especially the vast majority of the population with poorly guaranteed rights and freedoms, is looking to see whether or how your involvement makes a difference in the life of individuals and the nation.

Given the ongoing global economy downturn, and our fixed exchange rate monetary policy, the draft state budget – how our government intends to tax and spend – is probably our only independent line of defence and opportunity to bring our country out of crisis into prosperity for all. The continuing resources base depletion, and urgent need to combat it, requires effective ways for the state budget to enable people in our country to make significant gains in productivity and competitiveness by achieving more with available resources.

Hence the great importance of what and how you do in reviewing the draft state budget, and ensuring that our government improves the budget's formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Please review and discuss the draft state budget numbers alongside contents of services, their objectives and output that the funds were or are intended to trigger or deliver. Avoid the assumption that the services so desired or programmed are or would become operational and deliver as expected if, and only if, money to settle their costs is or was found and disbursed.

Here are some examples of what you can and should investigate and insist on having clear answers to achieve more with the help of our state budget, in the services of our Public Health Department, Judiciary, and Prime Ministry:

- 1) **Underperformance in our Public Health Services:** “A patient (name and other identification details withheld) who had been suffering from fever, vomiting, insomnia, and other discomforting symptoms for three consecutive days, visited our government run Preventive Health Centre in Kumba on 12/10/09. Blood and stool specimens were taken and tested in the laboratory at the Centre. Results were negative for malaria parasites and typhoid fever. Nothing unusual was seen in the stool specimen. Blood pressure was recorded as high. Antibiotics, anti-malaria, paracetamol, anti-worms, vitamins and rest were prescribed. ...

“The patient returned home feeling no better and deteriorated in subsequent days. On 15/10/09, the patient (now, hardly able to move or talk) was rushed to a privately run clinic in Kumba. Blood, stool and urine specimens were again taken and tested in the laboratory there. Results for

malaria parasites and typhoid fever were all positive. Gastric was also diagnosed and blood pressure was recorded as normal. The patient was swiftly admitted and only discharged to continue treatment at home on 19/10/09. ...

“How come, the huge discrepancy in performance? Why the apparent wastage of resources and putting of human life in jeopardy in our public health centre? Such performance lapses appear widespread in our public health service system. The time is now to put an end to the performance lapses and bring about improvements in the competitiveness of our public health services.”

The foregoing quote is from our letter (dated 25/10/09) to the honourable Minister of Public Health, requesting him to “urgently and thoroughly investigate the case of this patient in Kumba, and do all within [his] power to increase public trust in our public health services and related government policies”. (See attachments A1, A2 and A3). **Will the honourable Minister care to respond urgently and thoroughly as the circumstance warrants, to increase returns from funds allocated to our public health services?**

- 2) **Mute or harassing, menacing, intimidating, resources wasting, and public trust jeopardising, Judiciary Services:** The EITD Research Public Policy Briefings (October 2008) on the theme *Water for All – How Helpful is Our Judicial System?* used “our test case before the courts in Kumba, Cameroon, to: (1) illustrate challenges in the judicial system; (2) seek clarifications from authorities; and, (3) generate debate on the role of the judiciary in efforts to get water and other vital utility services to everybody without delay.” The report was broadly disseminated (is still available at: www.cpunf.eitdr.org) and was served with some specific requests in letters to some key judiciary services personnel including the right honourable Minister of Justice. These have been followed-up with reminders. (See attachments B1, B2, B3, and B4). **No word has been heard from the officials. Why? Will they respond? When?**

Judgment on the test case (Suit No. HCK/31/2008) was delivered in open court (High Court, Kumba) on 22/04/09. The judgment, which was written in longhand, needs to be typed, signed and handed to litigants for execution proceedings. Several inquiries were made to get the typed and signed judgment to no avail. After nearly five months, on 21/09/09, the EITD Research Revival of Justice and Judiciary Reform (RJJR) Programme (Website address: www.rjrr.eitdr.org) decided to write to the sitting Judge, on the subject of his “Judgment on Suit No. HCK/31/2008 and related matters in his High Court Registry”. (See attachment B5 and B6).

The Judge invited us to his office and gave us a thorough battering. He asked us what moral authority we have to think we should make others do their jobs well when we aren’t doing ours well either! He said our letter to him shows that we are irresponsible, and promised to teach us a lesson. He gave us convocations to appear before him a number of times, and complained to the State Counsel, requesting him to investigate and consider prosecuting us for alleged defamation in our letter to the Judge. For over a week, we were made to appear before the Judge, the State Counsel, the Central Police Commissioner, the State Counsel and Police together, and the State Counsel again. (See attachments B7, B8, B9, B10, B11, and B12).

All through the ordeals, and even as I write to you, the where about of the said judgment and outcome of the State Counsel’s investigations are unknown to us! Why is it so difficult or impossible to have a judgment, which has already been given in open court, typed, signed and handed to litigants as law and public interest requires? Why so much time and other resources wastage in defiance of law, and jeopardising public trust in judiciary services and related government policies? What would any new or less money from the state budget for the judiciary services do to deliver or expedite delivery of the typed signed judgment, and resolve the related issues in accordance with law? When?

- 3) **Apparent incompetence in our Prime Ministry Services:** On 17/07/09, we sent out information packs on the forthcoming EITD Research State Budget Issues Conference holding in Yaounde, Cameroon, April 19-21, 2010. (Website address: www.sbic.eitdr.org). One of the

Conference information packs was sent to the Secretary General in the Prime Minister's Office. The information pack consisted of a Call for Papers, Press Release, Sponsorship Prospectus, and a forwarding letter indicating and inviting various ways of collaboration to increase discussion of the awesome, urgent and all affecting state budget issues. (*See attachment C1*).

On 18/10/09, we received a letter (dated 12/08/09) from Professor Dontsi (Agrégé des Sciences Economiques), Technical Adviser of the Secretary General in the Prime Minister's Office, acknowledging receipt of our correspondence and requesting us "to get in touch with the Ministry of Finance, where [our] file has been forwarded to, for competence". (*See attachment C2*). **Which or what competence, and to whom or which department in the Ministry of Finance has the file been forwarded to? How quickly can we trace the file in the Ministry of Finance with Professor Dontsi's letter? Why can't the Prime Ministry deal with state budget issues competently? When will, and how should, the state budget help the Prime Ministry to gain the necessary competence to deal effectively with the awesome and urgent State Budget Issues the forthcoming EITD Research Conference is raising?**

Mishaps such as the foregoing are sadly becoming too common in our society, but often go undocumented systematically or followed up adequately, and grow our country's reputation for being corrupt, and failing as a state. **You can and should act decisively, to put an end to the issues during this all important budget session of Parliament. Raise the issues, demand and insist on getting clear answers, and follow them up with your own independent parliamentary investigations in depth, on the range of issues facing our country.**

Should you need any additional information or advice from us, do not hesitate to ask. I am trustful that you will do all within your power to have a great session of Parliament this November. Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

With great regards,

Mbwoge Daniel Mbong
Director, EITD Research

Attachments:

- A1: RJJR Programme letter to the Minister of Public Health, H.E. André Mama Fouda
- A2: Copy of patient's consultation records from our government run Preventive Health Centre
- A3: Copy of patient's consultation records from a privately run clinic
- B1: RJJR Programme letter to the Minister of Justice, H.E. Amadou Ali
- B2: RJJR Programme letter to the President, Court of First Instance, Magistrate Ngassa Vera
- B3: RJJR Programme letter to the Registrar-in-Chief, CFI, Ms. Apongwa Nji Elizabeth
- B4: RJJR Programme letter to Sherriff Bailiff, Mbutchin Chambers
- B5: RJJR Programme letter to Justice Evande Mwambo Paul
- B6: RJJR Programme letter to the High Court Registrar, Mme. Tiku Mariana
- B7: Report of Meeting with Justice Evande
- B8: Report of Meeting which the Judge avoided and ordered adjournment
- B9: Report, Judge complains to State Counsel for investigation
- B10: Report, State Counsel orders Police to investigate letter to Judge and others
- B11: Report of Meeting with State Counsel and Police
- B12: Report of Meeting with State Counsel
- C1: Forwarding letter, State Budget Issues Conference Information Pack
- C2: Letter from Professor Dontsi, Secretariat General, Prime Minister's Office
- D1: Press Release – State Budget Issues Conference, April 19-21, 2010
- D2: 2nd Call for Papers for the forthcoming State Budget Issues Conference