Social sustainability in Africa:
The case of Cameroon

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Abstract:

The aim of this research is to examine how Africa can become a socially sustainable society by the year 2030 using a strategic leadership approach with Cameroon as a case study. Using a generic and whole systems view, the study would examine the possibility of a transition from a socially un-sustainable society to sustainable society.

The study analyses the current political, economic, social and environmental operations that undermines people’s ability to meet their basic needs. It also highlights some of the strengths and opportunities of the Cameroonian society that can help accelerate this transition. Threats and weaknesses are also identified and correctives measures are proposed. Agriculture and social capacity building amongst others stand out as prominent opportunities which could be use to further strategic progress towards sustainability.

The study concludes that, with a well defined vision, it is possible for Cameroon to strategically progress towards a socially sustainable society.

Keywords:

Socially, sustainable, strategic, leadership, Africa and Cameroon
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Executive Summary

This research examines how Africa can become a socially sustainable society by the year 2030.

My choice of Cameroon is due to the fact that Cameroon is known as “Africa in Miniature”, therefore Cameroon’s problems are very valid for Africa.

The statement of research problems were based on an evaluation of the violation of the four principles of sustainability. It was discovered that the violation of the fourth sustainability principle is especially alarming. Problems stemming from such violation are poverty and starvation, political instability, security risks, political abuse, economic abuse and environmental abuse. The research questions for this study were; a) In what ways do communities in Cameroon impact humans capacity to meet their needs? b) What are the obstacles in meeting these needs? c) What are the existing opportunities in meeting these needs? d) What are some first steps to be taken by these communities to move towards sustainability?

In response to this, the stated hypotheses to be tested were; a) Political, social and environmental abuse has obstructed people’s ability to meet their needs in communities of Cameroon, b) The inability of people to organise themselves into effective social structures inhibits the capacity of meeting needs and c) The destruction of the cultural fabric has lead to constraints to social cohesion which has in turn undermined the capacity of people to meet their needs. Furthermore, the main methods used during this study consisted of a strategic sustainability plan for Cameroon using backcasting from principles, literature review and case studies.

The second section of this study consisted of a description of the Continent of Africa, Cameroon, and an analysis of the 9 distinct basic needs by the Chilean Economists Manfred Max-Neef.

The Strategic sustainability plan revealed un-sustainable practices in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres. A look at the political, economic and social structure and the environment reveals that features such as fear, violence, marginalization, hyperinflation, huge external debt, unemployment, capital flight, corruption and misappropriation, frustration and environmental degradation are apparent in the society. These features serve as political, socio-economic and environmental abuses and stand as a stumbling block for people meeting their needs in the Cameroon society thereby degrading the social “fabric”. From the above, Political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental obstacles to meeting human needs in the Cameroonian communities were listed such as discrimination, marginalization, materialism, unemployment, embezzlement, capital flight, lack of freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of movement, lack of equal opportunities for both sexes and equal protection, over exploitation of natural resources, application of unsustainable fertilizers and pesticides, and over harvesting of food sources respectively. More so, a Swot analysis for Cameroon was also done, bringing out the strengths and opportunities against
the weaknesses and threats. Also included in this study was an analysis on an improved agriculture for a sustainable Cameroon.

In addition to the above, a structured sustainable vision of success for Cameroon was suggested and some measures which will move Cameroon strategically towards sustainability were proposed. Later, in the study, these proposed measures were prioritized using 3 key prioritization questions.- Is it going in the right direction, does it have a flexible platform, does it have a return on investment. This section involves a step by step approach towards the three constituent elements to social sustainability, the launching of “flexible platform” and the continuous feeding of required resources into the process while at the same time incorporating the golden rule as the generic guiding principle for analysis and scrutiny.

Here agriculture was identified as one of the opportunities which could be used as a great advantage to forward progress towards a sustainable society. One other prominent aspect was social capacity building. Building social capacity in communities is an important aspect which accelerates sustainable development. Capacity building is an essential step and a strategic element that will help create social change towards sustainability in the communities of Cameroon. Reference was made of the Green Belt Movement of Kenya and Seeds of Change of India as an inspiration to the communities of Cameroon.

Finally, the following recommendations were given:

- Politically, there should be the implementation of both ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ strategies to favour active participation of all those concerned in open negotiations, transparent decision-making mechanisms, and the formulation of urban-management policies.
- There should be the use of a strategic approach towards governance and management of Communities action-oriented projects on sustainable and integrated urban-development strategies geared towards a participatory approach and the revitalization of communities, training and capacity building.
- Efforts should be made to improve agriculture in Cameroon. Sustainable agriculture will greatly reduced unemployment, encouraged international trade and improved social services in the country.
- Social capacity building programs through education should be instituted and encouraged.

If these recommendations are implemented, it could accelerate strategic change towards sustainability. This study exemplifies how new challenges in the social arena continuously emerge that require a dynamic adaptation of the current strategies. For Cameroon to become a socially sustainable society, it has to meet up with today’s challenges while at the same time moving strategically towards sustainability.

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1 The golden rule is built on human capability for empathy. It encompasses participation, transparency, responsibility, accountability and honesty.
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1 Introduction

Sustainability is about the creation of new ways to live and prosper while ensuring an equitable, healthy future for all people and the planet. Sustainability in simple terms means preserving human life on Earth. In the terms of the 1987 Brundtland Report [1] sustainable development is a development that "Meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." In fact addressing human needs is an essential element for creating a sustainable society and therefore also for maintaining human life on Earth.

In this thesis the principles\(^\text{2}\) given below are used as a definition of sustainability [2]. According to this definition, there are four scientific principles that lead to a sustainable society. These principles, also known as “system conditions” must be met in order for us to have a sustainable society. The first three principles give a frame for ecological sustainability while the fourth principle describe the condition for social sustainability and this one is equally important since the societal use of resources must be efficient and fair enough to meet basic human needs worldwide. The principles are;

In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:

1. concentrations of substances extracted from the earth's crust;
2. concentrations of substances produced by society;
3. degradation by physical means

and, in that society . . .

4. people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs.

These principles provide an overall principle description of a sustainable society, and allows an analysis of present activities as well as of solutions and visions, from a sustainability perspective. The four sustainability principles are shown in relation to the natural cycles and human society as an integrated system where flows are balanced and “leftover matter” does not increase in concentration in nature. These principles can be used as a frame for finding strategies for sustainable development. They have successfully been translated in to objectives and guidelines for the individual, firm or municipality. [3], [4]. They describe the goals for sustainable development and define a certain favourable outcome in the ecosphere/societal system [5]. I am going to backcast from basic principles of ‘sustainability’\(^\text{3}\). Backcasting from basic principles differs from backcasting from scenarios. Backcasting from scenarios is a planning methodology built

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\(^\text{2}\) These principles are also called system conditions for a sustainable society. For example when used by The Natural Step. These principles are referred to as “principles” in this thesis.

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on envisioning a picture of what a sustainable society might look like and then looking back at the present from this ideal future. Backcasting from basic principles on the other hand does not try to prescribe what a sustainable society might look like, rather, the intent is to define conditions (sustainability principles) that must be met in a sustainable society. This open up for credibility in how to comply with the principles, so there are many possible future sustainable societies. In this thesis I want to backcast from a vision of a socially sustainable Cameroon in One generation by 2030. I return to backcasting from basic principles later in this thesis.

The system conditions specify how to avoid the destruction of the biosphere by adding a negation to the basic mechanisms for destruction. Together, these first three basic principles provide a mechanistic framework for ecological sustainability that implies a set of restrictions within which a fourth condition can be formulated- that human needs must be met. The whole creative tension then evolves from imagining a future where the global social fabric is capable of meeting human needs within ecological constraints [6]. This thesis focuses on the fourth sustainability principle because in order to comply with the first three sustainability principles, one obviously must rely on people and their social fabric. Taking in to consideration the bad state of the social fabric in Cameroon, I thought it wise to start with the fourth sustainability principle. However, some issues related to the first three sustainability principles are so demanding that they cannot wait. These issues ought to be turned into opportunities to gather people around while moving successfully towards progress. Some examples are biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, over extraction of metal, over harvesting of resources and unsustainable agriculture. More details will be provided later in this thesis.

Social sustainability is covered by the fourth sustainability principle and it focuses on the importance of meeting human needs worldwide. Four core elements of social sustainability are; a) the safeguarding of existence for all members of society, b) the maintenance and development of social resources c) equal opportunities concerning access to resources d) participation within social decision processes.

According to [7], there are 9 distinct basic needs that every society has to fulfill for its members to remain healthy socially, physically and mentally and these needs are subsistence, idleness, understanding, protection, creativity, identity, participation, affection, and freedom. Social sustainability stipulates the using of all our resources efficiently, fairly and responsibly so that the needs of all people on whom we have an impact and the future need of people who are not yet born stand the best chance of being met.

The human social system (social fabric) stands as a fundamental condition to meeting human needs and the 3 key attributes or fundamental constituents suggested by David Cook for every social system are people’s interdependence on one another, people’s capacity for self organization to be constructive parts of the system, and their diversity that empowers the system[8]. Social sustainable development is about moving relatively carefully towards a social sustainability goal. Social Sustainable Development for local communities is a development which is compatible with the harmonious evolution of
civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible contribution of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social integration with improvements in the quality of life of all people. It is also about the development of programs and processes that promote social interaction and cultural enrichment with emphasis on protecting the vulnerable and respecting social diversity.

1.1 Statement of Research problem

This research work is about how Africa can become a socially sustainable society by the year 2030 using a strategic leadership approach with Cameroon as the Case study.

There is violation of all four principles of sustainability in every African country [9]. This is due to the administration and formulation of policies. However, the violation of the fourth sustainability principle is especially alarming [10]. Some of the problems that stem from the violation of these principles (with emphasis on the fourth principle) includes poverty and starvation, wars, corruption, political instability, security risks, political abuse, economic abuse and environmental abuse. These problems go a long way to degrade the social fabric thus leading to un-sustainability. I believe these problems stand as a challenge and a change of behaviour is needed for us to reach sustainability.

The interest of the study can be observed from two perspectives. From the scientific perspective, this work is centred around many disciplines such as ecology, systems thinking (planning in complex systems), political science, social science, and this shows that the problem in communities are not only for the social sciences but interests all disciplines. From the sustainability perspective, the social system within communities presents opportunities for people meeting their needs. This is the reason why several human groups like NGO’s and small business can be found there. However, an uncontrolled abuse of social systems in these communities can lead to its degradation both socially and physically. We should therefore maintain the social and natural potentials of these communities if we want to achieve a sustainable society and promote long lasting development. This is only possible if we take the question of the environment into consideration, in the different maintenance policies of regions.

“If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production and resources depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity” Meadows [11].

The social and environmental consequences of socialist and capitalist growth models have generated skepticism and distrust in the global community [12]. However the price of this growth path is becoming evident as global awareness is spreading of the non negotiability of socio-ecological sustainability. The neoclassical economic model,[13] and its associate’s concentration of power in the hands of a few has led to unbalances and crises. The gap between the rich and poor, both in rich and poor nations alike has widened as the hopes of equalization that grew in the 1960 and 1970’s has faded.
Environmentally, the planet is on the way to catastrophe. The inherited “Natural Capital”[^4] which was accumulated by the planet for over 3.8 billion years has been ignored. There have been predictions that if we do not revert our present trends, not much will be left by the end of this century. [14]

### 1.2 Funnel

From a broader perspective, society through irresponsible socio-economic activities is pulling a lot of pressure on social and ecological systems and the situation is getting worse with decreasing room for manoeuvres. This systematically worsening societal path can be metaphorically illustrated with society moving into a closing window of opportunity as seen in figure 1.

![Figure 1.1. Resource funnel shows current reality, where societal margin for action narrows](image)

Combined with systems thinking [15], a “resource funnel paradigm”[^5], has the potential to shift human society’s paradigm. Sustainability is the fine art of balancing sustainable supply and sustainable demand. Figures 2 illustrates that current industrialized development has probably already suppressed sustainable limits. This comprehensive plan provides the rationale for the claim that there is a possibility of hitting the walls of the funnel soon if a strategic approach towards sustainability is not used. Cameroon is

[^4]: Natural capital refers to the mineral, plant, and animal formations of the Earth's biosphere when viewed as a means of production of oxygen, water filter, erosion preventer, or provider of other natural services. According to Hawkens and lovin,natural capital refers to the natural resources and ecosystem services that make possible all economic activity, indeed all life. These services are of immense economic value, some are literally priceless, since they have no known substitutes. Yet, natural capital is being degraded and liquidated by the wasteful use of such resources as energy, materials, water, fiber, and topsoil. Natural Capitalism1999-2005, The Rocky Mountain Institute.

[^5]: The resource funnel metaphor is used by The Natural Step
often referred to as “Africa in miniature” I will show why I support this view and why the problems in Cameroon are very valid for Africa. It is very important to note that for Cameroon to be a Sustainable Society there is great need to adopt a strategic leadership approach.

![Humanity's Footprint on the Planet](image)

*Figure 1.2. Increase of human demand on ecological systems [16.]*

1.3 Objectives of study

The study aimed at using a whole systems view and examining the possibility of a transition from a socially unsustainable society towards a sustainable society. The question is **“what can Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular do to become a socially sustainable society?”** The approach is to have a vision of success and then using backcasting from principles to strategically move towards this vision.

1.4 Research Questions

The previously highlighted issues clearly show that the current operations of Cameroon today are unsustainable, a situation that is similar to many other countries in Africa. From the above, the following research questions were developed:

1. In what ways do communities in Cameroon impact human’s capacity to meet their needs?
   a. What are the existing obstacles to meeting these needs?
   b. What are the existing strong points in meeting these needs?
2. What are the potential future opportunities in meeting these needs?
3. What are the first steps to be taken by these communities to move towards sustainability?
1.5 Hypotheses

As a starting point, this thesis worked with the following hypotheses;

1. Political, social and environmental abuse has undermined people not to meet their needs in communities of Cameroon.
2. The inability of people to organize themselves into effective social structures has undermine their capacity to meeting their needs.
3. The destruction of the cultural fabric has lead to constraints to social cohesion which has in turn undermined the capacity of people to meet their needs.
4. Sustainable agriculture and social capacity building within the Cameroonian communities are strategic in meeting needs.

1.1 Limitations

This thesis took place during a 3 months period. Due to the limited time and financial limits the main sources used were electronic, materials from reports, articles and newspapers, which of course cannot be substituted for the value of direct human interaction and field experience. Therefore, the data source can be improved, deepened or widened.

1.6 Research Methodology

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives a simple methodology was adopted, as it was not possible to visit Cameroon to collect primary data. Therefore, this study mostly relies on secondary data. The main sources of information, data and relevant materials from reports, articles and newspapers were collected and information was also received from Sustainable Development Initiative for Neem in Africa. In addition to this, my own experience was also used. In this way, the secondary data was collected and used to complete this research paper.

Details of the research designs are therefore:

1. Literature Review covering electronic sources including case studies. The literature sources were selected on the basis that they come from organisations with good reputation for being trustworthy and having a goal that was in line with the thesis goal- i.e. sustainability.
2. Making a strategic sustainability plan for Cameroon using backcasting from principles.

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6 Sustainable Development Initiative For Neem in Africa, a leading developmental N.G.O. in the area.
2 Investigations

2.1 Description of Africa

Africa is the second largest continent in size after Asia, and the third largest in population next to Asia and Europe. Africa covers almost one fifth of the world's land mass and is home to millions of the world's population. The population of Africa is over 700 million. The variety of people that inhabit Africa reflect the nature of the continent. Africans belong to a variety of racial, ethnic, language and religious groups. The continent contains fifty-one independent countries and several other political units. The World Book Encyclopedia described Africa as "a land of striking contrasts and great natural wonders." It contains vast areas of tropical rain forests, great tree tops and vegetation that shape into a "thick green canopy," the world's largest desert - the Sahara, the world's longest river - the Nile, and a great variety of animals and plants, some of which are native only to Africa (The World Bank).

Figure 2.1. Map of Africa
2.2 Description of Cameroon

Situated in West Africa, in the bight of biafra, Cameroon is triangular in shape with an area of about 183,567 square metres (475,440 sq km). It climate varies with terrain from tropical along coast to semiarid and hot in north. It has a population of about 16,063,678 (2004 estimate) with a growth rate of 2.0%, a birth rate of 3.5%, as infant mortality rate of 6.9% and a life expectancy of 48 years. A coastal strip 10 to 50 metres (16-80 km) wide in the southwest is covered with swamps and dense tropical rain forests; it has one of the wettest climates in the world, with an average annual rainfall of 152 in. (386 cm) on the coast. Near the coast are volcanic peaks, dominated by Mt. Cameroon (13,354 ft/4,070 m), the highest peak in the country. Beyond the coastal marshes and plains, the land rises to a densely forested plateau of 1,000 feet (300 m) above sea level. The interior of the country is a plateau of 2,500 to 4,000 ft (760-1,220 m) high, where forests give way to savanna. This plateau forms a barrier between the agricultural south and the pastoral north. The extreme northern regions, near Lake Chad, are dry thorn bush lands. Among the many rivers that drain Cameroon are the Bénoué, the Wuori, the Sanaga, and the Nyong. [17],

The country consists of the former French Cameroons and the southern portion of the former British Cameroons. The French, or eastern, section constitutes four fifths of the country and supports the bulk of the population. With about 250 ethnic groups, Cameroon has one of the most diverse populations in Africa. Agriculture is the country's economic mainstay, and it still contributes nearly a third of the country's gross domestic product. The principal subsistence crops are bananas, cassava, yams, plantains, peanuts, millet, and sorghum. (Climate Change and Agriculture in Africa)7

Cameroon is a unitary republic, multiparty presidential regime. Preponderance of power remains with the president. Imbedded with tradition, as evidenced by its famed folklore, art, music, and wide variety of family systems, Cameroon also integrates into its cultural mix three colonial heritages: French, British, and German. Today, social and economic developments are presenting unique challenges to Cameroon’s ethnic pluralism and traditional lifestyles. French and English serve as the country's official languages, and competition between speakers of each produces political conflict. Yet Cameroon is an intricate tapestry of cultures in which people identify with societies that are defined by local languages and customs. These customs are biomimic8 [18], in that their designs and processes are inspired by nature and maintain a close relationship with nature. Over 100 native languages fall into three basic groups: the Sudanic languages of the north, the Bantu languages of the south, and the semi-Bantu languages of the west. In the north the primary ethnic groups are the Fulani and Kirdi, while in the more densely populated

7 Climate Change And Agriculture in Africa is an International Organization which projects are implemented by the Agriculture and Rural Development Program, the World Bank Institute and the Africa Region of the World Bank and executed by the Centre for Environmental Economics and Policy in Africa (CEEPA) of the University of Pretoria, Pretoria 0002 South Africa http://www.ceepa.co.za/climate_change/index.html
8 Biomimicry is a new science that studies nature's models and then imitates or takes inspiration from these designs and processes to solve human problems. Biomimicry was popularized by Janine Benyus.
south are the Bamileke, Bulu, Bamoun, Ewondo, Beti, Bassa, and Douala. The Douala population also extends into the west along with the Bakweri and Tikar people of the grasslands. Islam claims the allegiance of 15% of the population and the rest is divided between Christianity and traditional African religions.

Every ethnic community has its own music and dances that form a vital part of local customs. The chants and flute music of the northern region with its Sahelian influence contrast with the abstract melodies of the rainforest pygmies in the far south. The official residences of Cameroon's principal chiefs reveal other aspects of regional distinctions. The Royal Palace of Foumban represents the loyalty that the Bamoun people have offered to a single dynasty since the 14th century. A 19th-century ruler from this dynasty, the sultan Njöya, devised an alphabet to record the Bamoun language and chronicle the group's history. The chefferie de Bandjoun is the official residence of the chief of the Bamileke people and is located near Bafoussam. This chefferie displays traditional architecture with tall conical roofs made of straw supported by tall wooden pillars carved with exuberant images. The Bamileke add bamboo walls woven in geometric patterns. Just outside the capital, Yaounde, is a Benedictine monastery that houses the Cameroon Museum of Art. This museum contains statues of bronze and wood, as well as exquisite masks of wood, fiber, ivory, and bronze that serve a strong ritual function and symbolize communication with the afterlife. In the north, at N'Gaoundere is the Lamido Palace, seat of a Muslim sultan. Here too the buildings have conical straw roofs, but the walls are of banco (mud brick) construction and are painted with colorful designs. These different cultures serve as a strong cohesive force among the different communities.
Viewing Cameroon, within the biosphere provides a whole systems perspective in space and time. Complex interconnections between the global, regional, national and local systems, and the links between the short-term and the long-term, become visible.

The special features of the African environment act as an indicator of global environmental impacts, such as socio-economic change. The world in general and scientists in particular are only beginning to understand the profound significance of the African Regions for environment, ecosystems and human society.

2.3 Definition of a community

A community can be defined as a group of people of any size whose members reside in a specific locality and share resources needed to survive. It can be a small rural community or a large metropolitan area. Size is not as important as understanding what all the 'shared resources' consist of, including who else uses the shared communities. An important aspect of communities is that they aim at achieving economic prosperity, social justice, and ecological health - the highest possible quality of life in the best possible
environment. In addition to the above, a community is important in that it contributes to individual and social well being by establishing and maintaining channels of communication, organizing resources to meet local needs, and providing a framework where the collective is more than the sum of its parts [19].

We form groups and communities to enable us to meet our needs. The origin and purpose of society including all its component parts like governments, laws, business organizations, health care systems, schools, etc is to enable us meet these needs we also build social relationships in order to meet both individual and collective needs. It has been suggested that there are three characteristics of a social system and they include Interdependence, self-organization and diversity [8].

2.4 Human Needs

The ultimate goal of every society is to meet individual human needs in the best possible way. Needs are fundamental to the quality of life for all of us. There is a difference between needs and satisfiers. Needs are the inborn universal requirements that need to be satisfied in order for people to remain health physically, mentally and socially while satisfiers are culture and context specific individual or collective ways of being, having, doing and interacting in order to actualize needs. The nine basic needs proposed by Manfred Max Neef are subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity and freedom [7]. In Cameroon these needs can be met by creating opportunities for people through the establishment of a free and fair democracy, a good economic policy. These needs are all important and cannot be substituted for one another. If one or several human need categories are not adequately satisfied, it leads to human “poverty” in those categories. The needs are presented in matrix below.

Table 2.1. Matrix of needs and satisfiers [7].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs according to existential categories</th>
<th>Being</th>
<th>Having</th>
<th>Doing</th>
<th>Interacting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subsistence</strong></td>
<td>Physical health, mental health, equilibrium, sense of humour, adaptability</td>
<td>Food, shelter and work</td>
<td>Feed, procreate, rest, work</td>
<td>Living environment, social setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protection</strong></td>
<td>Care, adaptability, autonomy, equilibrium, solidarity</td>
<td>Insurance systems, saving, social security, health systems, rights, family, work</td>
<td>Cooperate, prevent, plan, take care of, cure help</td>
<td>Living environment, social setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affection</strong></td>
<td>Self-esteem, solidarity, respect, tolerance, generosity, receptiveness, passion</td>
<td>Friendships, families, partnership, relationship with nature</td>
<td>Make love, caress, express emotions, share, take care of, cultivate, appreciate</td>
<td>Privacy, intimacy, home, space of togetherness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being</td>
<td>Having</td>
<td>Doing</td>
<td>Interacting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Critical conscience, receptiveness, curiosity, astonishment, discipline, intuition and rationality</td>
<td>Literature, teachers, method, educational policies, communication policies</td>
<td>Investigate, study, experiment, educate, analyze, meditate</td>
<td>Settings of formative interaction, schools, universities, academies, group, communities, family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Adaptability, receptiveness, solidarity, willingness, determination, dedication, respect, passion</td>
<td>Rights, responsibilities, duties, privileges, work</td>
<td>Become affiliated, cooperate, propose, share, dissent, obey, interact, agree on, express opinion</td>
<td>Setting of participative interaction, parties, associations, churches, communities, neighbourhoods, family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idleness</td>
<td>Curiosity, receptiveness, imagination, recklessness, sense of humour, tranquility, sensuality</td>
<td>Games, spectacles, clubs, parties, peace of mind</td>
<td>Daydream, brood, dream, recall old times, give away to fantasies, remember, relax, have good fun, play</td>
<td>Privacy, intimacy, spaces of closeness, free time, surroundings, landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Passion, determination, intuition</td>
<td>Abilities, skills, method, work</td>
<td>Work, invent, build, design</td>
<td>Productive and feedback settings, workshop, culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Sense of belonging, consistency, differentiation, self esteem, assertiveness</td>
<td>Symbols, language, religion, habits, customs, reference group, sexually, values, norms, historical, memory, work</td>
<td>Commit oneself, integrate oneself, confront, decide on, get to know oneself, recognize oneself, actualize oneself, grow</td>
<td>Social rhythms, everyday settings, settings which one belongs to, maturation stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Autonomy, self-esteem, determination, passion, assertiveness, open-mindedness, boldness, rebelliousness, tolerance</td>
<td>Equal rights</td>
<td>Dissent, choose, be different from, run risk, develop awareness, commit oneself, disobey</td>
<td>Temporal/ spatial plasticity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The column of “Being” registers personal and collective attributes. The column of “Having” registers institutions, norms, mechanisms, tools, law. The column of “Doing” registers personal and collective action. The column of “Interacting” registers locations and milieus. Communities may be one of the best providers of conditions that satisfy human needs because they contribute to individual and social well being by establishing and maintaining channels of communication and organizing resources to meet local needs.
3 ABCD Analysis of Cameroon

3.1 Workflow of ABCD

The Natural Step Foundation\(^9\), has in collaboration with universities and industry, developed a framework, the ABCD analysis\(^{10}\), which is used by many governments and municipalities and other organizations worldwide. [4], [20]. This framework involves backcasting from a future of success. As previously mentioned, in backcasting from Scenarios, future goals and objectives are defined and used to develop a future scenario (Robinson, 1990). Sustainability principles on the other hand, were created to define the minimum requirements that must apply in any sustainable society. Originally formulated and described by Karl-Henrik Robèrt and John Holmberg[21], they have been refined in cooperation with an international network of renowned scientist into the four sustainability principles previously stated above.

The ABCD process is a step by step method to build a strategy which provides a systematic way of guiding the operations of each country or individual organization. The ABCD analytical approach includes four elements: The A-step is awareness that is having a better understanding of what is going on around us and being aware of the bigger system within which our strategies operate. The B-step analyzes current operations in terms of the four system conditions. This step involves an assessment of the current situation conducted by listing all current flows and practices that are problematic from a sustainability perspective, as well as considering all the assets that are in place to deal with the problems. This allows for evaluation of performance. The C-step is creating a vision of how your country will look like a sustainable society. The process of backcasting helps to produce the answers. Solutions and visions for “tomorrow” are created and listed by applying the constraints of the system conditions, to scrutinize suggested solutions and trigger creativity. Finally, the D-step is down to action, where there is setting and managing of priorities.

Priorities for action, new investment and new strategies are selected from the c-list above. In this step, actions and changes that give identifiable and beneficial results are important and decisions made can now be judged with a better understanding of the bigger system, and with a vision of success to guide them towards sustainability. Finally measures from the c-list are prioritized using the following three key questions;

1. Does this measure proceed in the right direction with respect to all system conditions?
2. Does this measure provide a flexible platform for future improvements? and;
3. Is this measure likely to produce a sufficient return on investment to further analyze this process?

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9 The Natural Step is an international non-governmental organization founded in Sweden by Karl-Henrik Robèrt.
10 The ABCD analysis is a strategic tool in the TNS framework.
Measure that answers “yes” to all three questions provide the strategic element of the methodology. It is important to note that each suggested investment is scrutinized for its potential to i) move towards sustainability, ii) serve a flexible platform, and iii) bring financial resources to further development.

3.2 The A step-Awareness

Communities in Cameroon who intend to undertake the ABCD process needs to start with a general awareness of what is going on around them and of the bigger system within which they operate. An awareness of Cameroon was given in Section 2.2 above. An ABCD process begins with building awareness and a common understanding of what is meant by sustainability. The whole Cameroonian community needs to get a better understanding of their un-sustainable practices and the full consequences of their actions taking into consideration the wider system. The ABCD methodology and its relevance as a framework for sustainability and sustainable development are discussed. The steps that Cameroon has to take in order to develop a shared understanding of the framework are; introduction of The Natural Step Framework through awareness workshops or presentations using qualified presentation facilitators. Alternatively, members of the community should participate in community sustainability awareness workshop or building internal capacity in the community by having an individual or a team from each organization, company and household participate in the facilitator training.

Awareness training includes:

- An introduction of the concept of sustainability
- An introduction to the relevant basic science
- Introduction of the four sustainability principles of sustainability
- An introduction to backcasting
- Reinforcement of a shared understanding “shared mental model” about what sustainability means for the community
- Draft a set of sustainability objectives for The Cameroon Communities.

The creation of a high level implementation plan based on the understanding of sustainability to follow the process in the Cameroonian communities is necessary at this point. Responsibilities should be assigned, targets and deadlines set, resources identified and located, and an agreement made on how to assess the successful achievement of each step.

3.2.1 Envisioning a sustainable Cameroon

Envisioning success (“checkmate”) for Cameroon begins with an examination of the principles of sustainability (checkmate) based on knowledge of the system and framed

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11 Robert uses games theory metaphors to explain that "backcasting from a vision of success" is a dynamic process that resembles chess, where principles of success guide the game towards checkmate, and each moves takes current reality into account, while optimizing the possibility of winning.
with the four principles of sustainability [6]. A structured vision is the key to moving us strategically towards sustainability. According to the great American poet, William Blake[22], “as a man is, so he sees”. This structured vision for Cameroon illustrates the importance of a broad and inspiring vision which focuses on the future, rather than on solving problems using a manager’s mentality. The stakeholders in the communities must be engaged in a vision that is culturally appropriate. People need a meaningful system that allows them to connect and move forward in a productive way. Notwithstanding, strategic leadership is about avoiding reductionism, a structured vision, which incorporates a grasp of generational limitations in effecting change and focuses on avoiding the human tendency to procrastinate is important. An inspiring vision helps to overcome other challenges, including a general sense of personal helplessness, and the lack of motivation to effect change once the need is recognized.

A vision of Cameroon is to become a socially sustainable society in one generation where all resources are used efficiently, fairly and responsibly and are ‘not contributing’ to political abuse, economic abuse and environmental within interdependence, self-organization and diversity and the needs of all people are met without violation of the principles of sustainability previously mentioned. The vision is a socially sustainable society where all resources are used efficiently, fairly and responsibly and the needs of all people are met.

3.3 The B Step: Finding sustainability present problems

The current situation of Cameroon can be analyzed under political, socio-economic and environmental spheres. As already stated, there is the violation of all four principles of sustainability. The main question to be answered here is “In what way do the activities of Cameroonians contribute to society’s violation of the principles of sustainability and the above mentioned vision?” The analysis will provide the basis for setting and managing priorities and does not require a major assignment of resources. It will determine how the activities of the communities in Cameroon will measure up to the four sustainability principles.-A lens should be used to see where we are today with respect to those four sustainability principles. A causal loop diagram or system map12 could be used to help these communities to discover and illustrate the ways in which they are connected to the earth-crust and the biosphere thus helping them to make a complete current reality assessment of the sustainability effects of the current situation.

3.3.1 Social Problems (Sustainability principles 4)

In the context of this thesis, social problems include cultural decline, economic abuse and political abuse.

*Cultural decline:* Africa in general and Cameroon in particular is threatened by the potential for even graver if less quantifiable losses at the foundational level of socio-cultural identity. Socio-cultural identity, partially defined by the set of practices appears

12 A system map is a picture or representation that helps us see the connection and interrelationships among various elements of a given system.
to persevere in a rudimentary fashion despite ongoing ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, prolonged conflict is clearly capable of undermining traditional authority structures and eroding the symbolic framework of values, traditions, and beliefs. This dimension of socio-cultural identity is being replaced by identification with violence. Restoration of autonomy and the long-term survival of the populations should be conceived by aid agencies as contingent upon the revitalization of the survival strategies that ensure a people’s livelihood, both symbolically and materially. The vitality of a socio-cultural framework should be recognized as contributing to the survival of the individuals themselves, given the parity of self-sufficiency and the socio-cultural framework.

However, these different cultures and traditional belief systems in Cameroon which have existed for many generations are undergoing changes. The destruction of the cultural fabric is a result of globalization and other patterns of behaviour as summarized in the quotation below:

“Nature's secrets, locked away in the songs, stories, art and handicrafts of indigenous people, may be lost forever as a result of growing globalization” [23].

Globalization discards collective social relationships, cultural diversity and societies with “stories” of meaning. Losing these cultures and all it entails means destruction of the cultural fabric. The destruction of the cultural fabric has lead to constraints to social cohesion which has in turn undermined the capacity of people to meet the needs of subsistence, protection, creativity, identity, participation and affection.

The social environment in Cameroonian is characterized by lack of social cohesion. The lack of integration and communication between social movements, increasing division among Cameroonian, increasing fragmentation of socio-cultural identities, and increasing impoverishment and marginalization of the Anglophone intensify the conflict already existing and the consequences are social exclusion, fear, stress and frustration. Also the social bond or union is destroyed thereby making it difficult for people to self organized and sustain themselves. Furthermore, the overall social situation in Cameroon has continued to deteriorate. This is evidenced by the rapid rate of population growth and the pressure of urbanization and rural emigration, the decay in educational and health infrastructure, growing malnutrition and poverty and widespread unemployment. Severe cutbacks of expenditure on education and emphasis on cost recovery and cost sharing continue to affect adversely the education sector. The same is also true with the health sector; cost recovery programmes as well as pay disputes have interrupted the demand for health care in many communities in Cameroon.

**Political abuse:** (Political Governmental problems, sustainability principles 4.) The political atmosphere of Cameroon is characterized by fear, violence, marginalization and exile. In Cameroon, fear is caused by semantic confusions due to ideological manipulation, violence, exile or marginalization and frustration of life projects. There is the violation of human rights. The laws of Cameroon are quite clear, starting with the constitution about people’s freedom. A person is presumed innocent until he is proven guilty. By extension and by the practice of law a person in police custody has the right to

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13 Semantic confusion is used in this thesis as psychological manipulation.
a bail and to a fair and humane treatment. Despite the above laws, the human rights record of Cameroon is poor. Security forces commit numerous unlawful killings and are responsible for torture, beatings, and other abuses of persons, particularly detainees and prisoners.

One example is that of July 11 2002, where the anti-gang police unit of Kumba shot and killed university student by name David Nesoe as he tried to escape during a police search for suspects in the 2002 killing of a pregnant woman. No action was taken by the end of the year. In addition, Impunity is still a problem in Cameroon and Prison conditions are harsh and life threatening. In September 2002, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Prisons and the Conditions of Detention in Africa, Vera Mlangaziwa Chirwa, visited a sample of prisons in the country and personally interviewed 150 detainees. In her assessment of the visit, the Rapporteur said that overcrowding, poor nutrition, and lack of adequate health care were principal problems in the prisons. Furthermore, opposition politicians, local human rights monitors, and other citizens are arrested and detained arbitrarily often holding them for prolonged periods without charges or trials, and, at times, incommunicado.

It is a regular thing for the Government to infringe on citizens' privacy. The Government imposes limits on freedom of speech and press and harassed and threatened journalists. In July 2002, the Yaoundé Court of First Instance sentenced in absentia J. Remy Ngono, a journalist and commentator on Radio Television Siantou, to 6 months' imprisonment without parole for defamation of character. These examples are based on facts given by the United States Embassy [24].

The Government restricts freedom of assembly and association. Security forces limited freedom of movement. Violence and discrimination against women is also a serious problem. The Government still infringes on worker rights and restricts the activities of independent labor organizations. The population of Cameroon must comply obediently to the laws of the state. They cannot express themselves freely for fear of violence. Peaceful protest marchers are severely punished and imprisoned without being given a fair hearing while state terrorism has been accepted as law and order. Violence upsets the need for protection thus it induces intense anxiety, isolation, marginalization and political exile.

The marginalization of the Anglophones in Cameroon and the threat and violence they receive has lead to the creation of the SCNC-Southern Cameroon National Council (The SCNC was formed after the all Anglophone conference in 1993) with president the retired ambassador Henry Fossung. The recent march on January 3rd 2005 led to the arrest of hundreds of Anglophones who are being tortured in the Kodengui Prison. (Amnesty International, October 2002). This has been added to the number that has been there from the arrest of October 5th 1999 and other subsequent arrests [25]. Under Cameroonian law, detainees should be referred to a judicial authority to be either charged or released within 72 hours of arrest (The Cameroon penal code). No charges have yet been brought against any of the detainees. Political detainees and criminal suspects in Cameroon are routinely tortured or ill-treated. The conditions of detention in police stations, gendarmerie detention centres and prisons are extremely harsh. Severe
overcrowding, poor hygiene and ventilation, inadequate food and medical care results in a high mortality rate amongst these detainees [26]. The other SCNC members who were not arrest were exiled from the country. A consequence is that the Cameroonian are alienated from their country.

According to Manfred Max Neef:

“the crisis becomes very acute owing to the inefficiency of the existing representative political mechanism in coping with the actions of financial elite, the increasing internationalization of political decisions and the lack of control of the citizenry over public bureaucracies”.

Another aspect that makes the political situation or “universe” to be considered as not having an ethical foundation is the lack of a deep-rooted democratic culture and the increase in technological control over the Cameroonian society.

Economic Abuse; (Sustainability Principle 4, Economic Governance Problems.) Good economic performance is a prerequisite of every successful government. A majority of the population of Cameroon reside in rural areas, where agriculture is the main occupation. Agriculture accounts for 24 percent of gross domestic product. Gross national product growth has an average of 4 to 5 percent annually with less than 3 percent inflation. However, a rather large parastatal14 sector, excessive public-sector employment, and the Government's inability to deregulate the economy inhibited private investment and further economic recovery. Widespread corruption within the business sector and the Government also impeded growth. Members of the Beti ethnic group, including the Bulu subgroup, figured prominently in the Government, civil service, and the management of state-owned businesses thus treating state owned resources as their private properties[24]. This phenomenon has led to serious socio-economic problems. The needs of subsistence, protection, participation, creation, identity and freedom are not met because of this form of economic abuse.

i: External Debt. One of the serious problems faced by Cameroon is external debt and this is responsible for the poor living situation and it stand as an obstacle to people ability to meet their needs. According to the World Fact book, Cameroon external debts stands as $8,460,000,000( 2004 estimate). The international banking system is maintained at the expense of the health and well-being of the Cameroonian population. The massive growth of external debt in Cameroon over the past two decades has given rise to concerns about the detrimental effects of the debt on investment and growth, principally the well-known "debt overhang" effect. Furthermore, there is now considerable evidence that the buildup in Cameroon’s debt was accompanied by increasing capital flight. In other words, Cameroon is simultaneously an importer and an exporter of capital. John Gummer, in the Guardian says “Due to the prevailing circumstances the prevailing debtor countries must initiate an era based on the politics of hardship so as to maximize their revenue through exports”. The effect of this trend leads to the irreversible deprivation of many natural resources and the increasing impoverishment of the people.

14 A semi-autonomous, quasi-governmental, state-owned enterprise
A second problem faced by Cameroon is the phenomenon of hyperinflation. Hyperinflation is inflation which is "out of control", a condition in which prices of everything in the national territory increases rapidly as the currency loses its value. The most widely accepted definition of hyperinflation among economists is that by Philip Cagan [27], who, in his 1956 paper, classified hyperinflation as any inflation exceeding 50 percent per month (or 12,875 percent per year). The issue of hyperinflation has economic, social and psychological components. This problem is severe because it goes far beyond the economic field and affects all aspects of society thus undermining the ability of people to meet their needs. Hyperinflation leads to reduced investment and lower economic growth. Variable inflation rates create uncertainty that affects the level of economic output. Hyperinflation occurs when there is less currency stability. Bryan Tylor in his book “The Century of inflation” [28], states that inflation occurred because governments are unwilling to deal with the economic problems they faced.

One example is inflation caused by the high interest rate of commercial banks, a solution should be the reduction of these exorbitant interest rates but since the government would not want to reduce these taxes because they would not want to act for the benefit of the people. According to Tylor, governments must learn that the economic problems that lead to inflationary finance must be dealt with immediately. Inflation only delays and worsens these economic problems at the cost of economic investment and output. The introduction of the CFA Francs [15] has devastated the country both psychologically and socially. The economic consequences of the introduction of the CFA are the constant devaluations and inflations leading to the deterioration of wages, pessimism, and thus making the Cameroonian to lose faith in their country and rulers. In addition to the above, Cameroonians have little confidence in the CFA Francs which they use and this has given rise to uncertainty about the future.

This acute deterioration in confidence in a currency has been generally described by Manfred Max-Neef [7]. In the present situation in Cameroon, there is a sense of uncertainty and skepticism which has created a phenomenon which is difficult to reverse and an environment where innovative alternatives capable of overcoming an inflationary crisis are almost impossible to generate.

A third aspect of the current economic situation is unemployment. Unemployment refers to all people above a specified age who are not in paid employment or self-employed, but are available for work and have taken specific steps to seek paid employment or self-employment [29]. The target group which deserves special mention consists of young people and women, who constitute the bulk of the unemployed in Cameroon. There is also an increase in unemployment among university graduates.

Unemployment is caused by economic processes. The causes of unemployment in Cameroon include the worldwide recession, which has resulted in less demand for raw materials, cash crops and, to some extent, manufactured goods. This has led to decreased production and the eventual and unavoidable lay-offs. Furthermore, as a result of modern

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15 The CFA Francs stands for the franc de la Communauté financière de l’Afrique (CFA franc), issued by the Banque centrale des Etats de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (BCEAO)
technology, labour-intensive work, such as agricultural employment, has been drastically reduced as fewer people are needed to perform certain jobs.

Mention should also be made of the role played by the increasing population. The result has been that more job seekers have been thrown onto the labour market. Urban migration is yet another cause of unemployment in Cameroon, with people moving from rural areas to urban centres in search of greater opportunities. Lastly, the effect of the structural adjustment programme on the unemployment crisis in Cameroon cannot be overemphasised. Its result has been economic hardships. Working people are forced to work harder and longer for lower wages, and are laid off in large numbers.

It is important to note that unemployment has always existed in Cameroon but the percentage of unemployed people in Cameroon in the past few years has risen steadily. According to the Human Development Report for Cameroon, the unemployment rate in 2001 was 30%. Recent Statistics puts the number at 40%. Unemployment has physical, psychological and social effects. Physically, the unemployed in Cameroon experience rising rates of ill health and mortality, primarily as a result of poverty, which is accompanied by lack of sufficient funds to purchase nutritious foods and consequently by deficiencies in diet which might lead to death. Psychologically, unemployment leads to loss of confidence and self-esteem and this often develop into depression, a full-blown psychosis, even leading to suicide. Finally, at a social level, unemployment usually results in some form of social pathology, as reflected by an increased crime rate, violent agitation and destruction of family life through indulgement in bad behaviours such as excessive consumption of alcohol, prostitution and pick-pocketing.

According to Prof. Steve Fazzari, unemployment is a waste of resources. In the Article, Economics for supplementary reading, he points out that labour that people are willing to offer but are unable to expend is not "saved" to be used at some other time but is lost to society. Therefore the Cameroonian society is losing a huge amount of labour which could have been used for economic advancement.

The material economic losses due to unemployment are fairly obvious:

- People want to work more to consume more goods and services. If they are unemployed they will miss these material opportunities.
- Maintaining life styles during spells of unemployment is difficult if not impossible. The savings of the unemployed people in Cameroon are often depleted, lowering their sense of economic security.
- The unemployed people in Cameroon usually lose their fringe benefits, particularly their employer-paid health insurance.
- Since the Cameroonian society places much emphasis on material success and career status, an individuals' self esteem is often closely bound up with their job situations.
- In Cameroon, the work place is an important social environment for many people. It provides friendship and support. People are cut off from these links when they are out of work.
• Unemployment increases the chances of family breakup in Cameroon contributes to child and spouse abuse.
• Being unemployed in Cameroon hurts an individual's work record, making it more difficult for him or her to find another job.

When people are unemployed, they cannot meet the basic needs of subsistence, and this lead to poverty.

iv: Capital flight. Furthermore, capital flight is another aspect of the current economic situation in Cameroon. Capital flight has been regarded as a major factor contributing to the mounting foreign debts problem and inhibiting development efforts in the third world [30]. Capital flight is the movement of savings and liquid financial assets from one country to another and from one currency to another. Capital flight happens when there is a collapse of confidence in a country's economic policy and it leads people to try to pull their investments out of a country and invest them somewhere else. A majority of the top ranking officials in Cameroon transfer huge amounts of money abroad and store them in foreign banks like the Swiss Bank. There is a rapid flow of financial assets out of Cameroon’s economy into that of other countries. Capital flight is the end result of embezzlement and misappropriation of public and private funds. Corruption it should be noted have eaten deep into the fabric of the Cameroonian society and this is a result of non accountability, responsibility and transparency. Cameroon has recently been classified twice as the most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International (a non-governmental organization devoted to combating corruption). Top ranking officials in Cameroon siphon public funds with impunity and are instead promoted to higher post of responsibility. In response to fears of political risk Capital flight is associated with a sharp depreciation in the value of the currency, and poses very difficult economic policy choices. The effects are the alienation of foreign investors leading to a high rate of unemployment and people not meeting the need of subsistence. It breaks cohesion.

3.3.2 Environmental Problems (Sustainability principle 1, 2, 3)

Environmental damage is now threatening to snatch away conditions necessary for continued human prosperity and health and Cameroon is no exception to this phenomenon. Unsustainable environmental practices through consumption and production pose increasing threats to the Earth's water, forests, climate, biodiversity, food and energy supply. As concerns sustainability principle 1, Cameroon exploits its resources such as oil, coal, metals and gravel at a rate that limit choice available for coming generation. According to statistics from energy consumption from World trend, out of the total enery expenditure in Cameroon, 95% comes from fossil fuel mainly in traffic, industry and home consumption. The extraction of Petroleum around Limbe, kribi and other towns in the South west province is causing a lot of damage to the fertile croplands around these areas.

Furthermore, violation of sustainability principle 2 is shown from the fact that very little is done in the domain of recycling in Cameroon. Recycling is done only in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala. Recycling in Cameroon is done by Hysacam (a recycling company
based in Yaoundé and Douala) and it is not reliable because it does not function all year. In addition to the above, the application of pesticides and fertilizers go a long way to degrade the environment in the long run and this violates sustainability principle 3. In Cameroon, Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT)\textsuperscript{16} is used at the same time as pesticides in the farms and insecticides in some living quarters like in Douala and Yaoundé, DDT is still used to kill insects and mosquitoes which cause Malaria and other tropical illnesses. Again, the use of fertilizers by farmers destroys the fertility of the soil in the long run.

The uses of pesticides in agriculture of Cameroon have, according to the World Health Organisation, gone up since 1950 Pesticides and fertilizers do not only render land unfertile, they find their ways into the rivers and groundwater. By products and waste from industries are dumped into the waters and ocean leading to the destruction of aquatic ecosystems.

Furthermore, another violation of sustainability principle 3 comes from over harvesting of food sources (like fish and hunting of animals) and wood is very common in most areas in Cameroon. It is important to note wood is used in Cameroon for construction, production of papers and in the households. Due to the low income level of Cameroonian, many people especially those in rural areas still use firewood for cooking and this has led to over harvesting of wood. Finally, motorways, settlements and airports are constructed on fertile agricultural land rendering it unavailable for primary production.

3.3.3 Summary of obstacles in meeting needs and preserving the ecosystem.

From the foregoing, we can group the obstacles in meeting needs in the local communities of Cameroon into the political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental sphere as seen in table 2 below. Abuse of political and economic power is undermining the capacity of people to meet their needs in these societies and then indirectly the survival of the ecosystem that they depend upon is also threatened.

- Politically, discrimination, marginalization, exploitative supply contracts and exploitation of local communities leading to non participation, transparency, responsibility, accountability and dishonesty.

\textsuperscript{16} Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT) is a colorless, odorless insecticide that has toxic effects to people and animals when swallowed or absorbed through the skin. Therefore, atmospheric deposition is the current source of new DDT contamination in our Great Lakes. DDT, and its break-down products DDE and DDD, are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) pollutants. Some of the harmful effects are probable human carcinogen, damages the liver, temporarily damages the nervous system, reduces reproductive success, can cause liver cancer, and damage the reproductive system.
• Economic obstacles are materialism, domination, and monopoly, restrictions to investment in more sustainable technology through corruption, unemployment, embezzlement, and capital flight.
• Socio-culturally, the needs of self organization, diversity and interdependence are violated respectively through the lack of freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of movement, and freedom of thought, lack of equal opportunities for both sexes and equal protection, cultural and religious diversity and the freedom to be different, cohesion, reciprocity, trust, access to resources and education, failure to provide workers, families and local communities with safety and healthcare.

Environmental obstacles are overexploitation of natural resources such as oil, coal, metals and gravel, the application of fertilizers and pesticides such as the DDT, the over harvesting of food sources such as fish and animals and misuse of fertile agricultural land for the construction motorways, settlements and airports. The obstacles in meeting the needs of Cameroonians mentioned above can be illustrated using the following table.
### Table 3.1. Obstacles in meeting needs in Cameroon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Social - sustainability principle 4</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Satisfiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political abuse</td>
<td>Economic abuse</td>
<td>S.P.1 S.P.2 S.C:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-National security doctrine</td>
<td>-Emission of elements</td>
<td>-Emission of chemicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Bureaucracy</td>
<td>-Taylorist-type of production</td>
<td>-Excess use of elements like petroleum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Unemployment</td>
<td>-Use of pesticide and insecticide like DDT.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Materialism</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Corruption</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Embezzlement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Capital flight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>-Exile</td>
<td>-Emission of elements</td>
<td>-Use of pesticide and insecticide like DDT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Censorship</td>
<td>-Taylorist-type of production</td>
<td>-Materialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-National security doctrine</td>
<td>-Unemployment</td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Bureaucracy</td>
<td>-Materialism</td>
<td>-Corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
<td>-Embezzlement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Capital flight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participatio n</td>
<td>-National security doctrine</td>
<td>-Taylorist-type of production</td>
<td>-Materialism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Exile</td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Censorship</td>
<td>-Corruption</td>
<td>-Capital flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Bureaucracy</td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Materialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Golden rule</td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idleness</td>
<td>-Censorship</td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Taylorist-type of production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>-Censorship</td>
<td>-National security doctrine</td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>-Taylorist-type of production</td>
<td>-Exploitative supply contract</td>
<td>-Materialism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
<td>-Embezzlement</td>
<td>-Monopoly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Golden rule</td>
<td>-Capital flight</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Self-esteem
- Solidarity
- Tolerance
- Receptiveness
- Passion
- Determination
- Sensuality
### 3.4 The C-step-Finding measures towards sustainability

From section 3.3 above, it is glaring that the situation in Cameroon is unsustainable. Below are some possible solutions to the obstacles in meeting needs in Cameroon.

#### 3.4.1 Political measures

The overall goal is to ensure a fair democracy and good governance which allows political accountability, freedom of association, improved legal frameworks, bureaucratic transparency, and respect for human rights. Also, electoral processes should be credible and transparent, and elections should be conducted in a manner that is free and fair and uphold and respect "global standards of democracy" for development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance.

Public sector capacity building, which will need to be far-reaching and, most importantly, ensure that public servants earn a proper living wage. Other reforms should include training, rightsizing, strengthening of career structures, switching decision-making on key appointments from the incumbent government to Parliament, and re-engineering administrative procedures such as procurement procedures so that the "discretionary" role of officials is limited. Expanding capacity-building programmes related to political governance and improving administrative and civil services, strengthening parliamentary oversight, promoting participatory decision-making, and judicial reform.
By building momentum through the local administrations of the Centre, Littoral, Northwest and South west Provinces, and then use them as role models.

3.4.2 Economic Measures

Reconstruction of the economy and stamping out corruption through accountability in government, which ought to include such requirements as the disclosure of assets and income sources by elected officials upon taking office. Strengthening capacity-building programmes related to economic and corporate governance and implementing sound macro-economic strategies, strengthening public financial management and accountability, protecting the integrity of monetary and financial systems, strengthening accounting and auditing systems, and developing an effective corporate governance framework Encourage trade and direct growth-oriented investment by reducing taxes and creating employment opportunities in the long run.

In order to reduce the unemployment situation and meet the needs of the Cameroonian population, the following solutions are proposed:

- The Cameroon government should pay greater attention to internal resource mobilization, less external borrowing, fiscal discipline, a maintenance culture and indigenous entrepreneurial development.
- There should be increased resource allocation out of national budgets for employment promotion activities.
- High priority should be accorded to the promotion of rural employment through increased support for rural agro and cottage industries, the rural service sector and infrastructural development.
- Efforts should be intensified to increase productivity and income through the informal sector, and governments should increase their efforts to facilitate greater access of operators in the informal sector to the means of production such as land, capital and improved management technology and training in order to facilitate the marketing of their products.
- There should be an expansion of the primary health care programme to make provision for free health care for the unemployed and their family as part of a relief package. A health care delivery system should also be introduced into the informal sector.
- There should be measures to increase unemployment benefits and an expansion of social welfare programmes, including the subsidization of rents.
- Public work projects (such as food-for-work programmes which do not conflict with food production policies) and voluntary work should be provided to keep the unemployed occupied.
- The Cameroon Government should help people to cope by finding other ways of fulfilling the needs like giving subsidies to people to encourage them to be self-employed.
- The Cameroon government should encourage the development of new ways of producing materials which will be used to make clothes and other materials that is needed.
3.4.3 Social Measures

The use of all resources efficiently, fairly and responsibly so that the needs of all Cameroonians could be met, thereby bridging the gap between the rich and poor. Incorporation of the golden rule (participation, accountability, transparency, responsibility, respect and trust) in every sector of the society. Cut down embezzlement by conducting an effective anti-corruption campaign. Encourage equal participation of Cameroonian women in all aspects of the Cameroonian society and the application of gender main-streaming in all policies and programmes.

Build social capacity and pursue policies that spur economic growth and alleviate poverty through the inspiration of case studies like the Green Belt movement and seeds of change. Social capacity building and agriculture could be the smartest early moves to create the necessary momentum to provide the platforms for economic prosperity. Some of the measures that Cameroon should adopt as concerns the sustainability principles are listed below.

3.4.4 Environmental measures

The solutions provided below could be use for one or more sustainability principle. Concerning measure for sustainability principle 1, Cameroon should switch from the use of unsustainable energy resources to renewable energy sources such as solar, small-scale micro hydro, geothermal, biomass, biogas and even “pedal power”. Further more, the industries in Cameroon should Substitute metals and minerals that are scarce in nature with others that are more abundant. The building and housing companies should replace copper roofing with steel roofing during construction. Also all mined metals and minerals should be used efficiently. There should be the creation of sustainable hydro-dams. Finally, Cameroon should institute mass recycling of metals and materials extracted from the earth’s crust so as to keep them in technical cycles.

Concerning measures for sustainability principles 2, there is need for Cameroon should substitute certain persistent and unnatural compounds with others that are more abundant or that break down more easily in nature, while alternatively working and figuring out ways to eliminate their use altogether in the coming years. Furthermore, intensive pesticide use on land should be replaced with integrated pest management where possible. Agro forestry which includes diversifying farming systems, using new ways of production and moving towards the lower use of chemical inputs should be encouraged. In addition to the above, Cameroon should use organic fertilizers and move towards the lower use of pesticides and insecticides. Again, Cameroon should strive to eradicate the use of the Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT) through education of the harmful and toxic effect on the atmosphere and the population. Finally, Cameroon should use all substance it produces such as Petroleum, bauxite, and iron ore efficiently and in a sustainable manner.

Concerning sustainability principle 3, Cameroon should harvest its natural resources in a sustainable way and it should substitute materials that have been unsustainably harvested
from nature with those that are sustainably harvested (e.g. fish, wood, timber). Furthermore, there should be the use of all materials harvested from nature more efficiently and a reduction of the overall consumption of nature’s services altogether. The implementation of these proposed solutions by the Cameroon government could accelerate progress, meet the needs of the people and create a socially sustainable society.

3.5 The D-step: Prioritization and planning

The action part is very strategic and involves setting and managing priorities. We translate our vision into action items and measurable steps through which Cameroon can move from its current reality to the vision of success in a sustainable society. The strategy for success is built on backcasting and a step by step approach to selecting flexible platforms which are logical stepping stones, within this strategy. Using the backcasting perspective, planning towards strategic progress starts by translating and incorporating basic sustainability principles into the countries objectives. Translating these basic principles for a sustainable society would be to eliminate our contribution to these four basic principles of sustainability stated above.

Some tools that could be used to systematically keep track of the relative success of these measures are- The life cycle analysis, environmental management system, ecological footprinting, biomimicry, genuine progress indicators and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). This section of the thesis involves a step by step approach mainly towards the three constituent elements to social sustainability, the launching of “flexible platforms” and the continuous feeding of required resources into the process while at the same time incorporating the golden rule as a generic guiding principle to analyze practices and scrutinizing the process towards sustainability.

3.5.1 Prioritization of measures

Prioritizing of actions are early steps to take the Cameroonian society from today’s unsustainable society towards the vision of a sustainable Cameroon by 2030. The above mentioned measures are prioritized using the three key questions: Does the suggested change (i) move Cameroon in the right direction in relation to the four principles of sustainability? (ii) Provide a flexible platform for further development towards sustainability and (iii) have a good return on investment in the short run so as to lead us towards sustainability. In this section, some early steps to be prioritize are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed goals</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Prioritized - now or in the future</th>
<th>Some proposed Measures/ Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PM#1. To ensure a fair democracy and good governance.</td>
<td>This will move Cameroon in the right direction and eliminate obstacles for people meeting their needs.</td>
<td>Short-term.</td>
<td>Expanding capacity-building programmes related to political governance and improving administrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and civil services, strengthening parliamentary oversight, promoting participatory decision-making, and judicial reform. Ensure that laws are properly enforced and built capacity of people’s understanding on what democracy is all about.

| PM#2 | Public sector capacity building, which will need to be far-reaching and, most importantly, ensure that public servants earn a proper living wage. | Important element for compliance with the country’s vision Essential from overall sustainable perspective of the country. | Continuous process. |
| PM#3 | Reconstruction of the economy and stamping out corruption. | Will serve as a flexible platform for economic development which is needed to provide jobs for today’s unemployed and under-employed, and for the growing work forces. Important step to move the country towards a socially sustainable society. | Short term. |
| PM#4 | Strengthening capacity-building programmes related to economic and corporate governance and implementing sound macro-economic strategies. | Essential for the reconstructing the economy. | Short-term. |
| PM#5 | Encourage trade and direct growth-oriented investment. | Bring progress in the direction of social sustainability. | Short-term and continuous process. |

Reforms should include training, rightsizing, strengthening of career structures, switching decision-making on key appointments from the incumbent government to Parliament, and re-engineering administrative procedures such as procurement procedures so that the "discretionary" role of officials is limited. Accountability in government, which ought to include such requirements as the disclosure of assets and income sources by elected officials upon taking office. Strengthening public financial management and accountability, protecting the integrity of monetary and financial systems, strengthening accounting and auditing systems, and developing an effective corporate governance framework. Reducing taxes and creating employment opportunities in the long run.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PM#6</th>
<th>Incorporation of the participation, accountability, transparency, responsibility, respect and trust in every sector of the society.</th>
<th>Necessary to elevate the social situation.</th>
<th>Short-term.</th>
<th>Adopting the golden rule through education of the public.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PM#7</td>
<td>Building social capacity and pursue policies that spur economic growth and alleviate poverty.</td>
<td>Essential for social cohesion and the rebuilding of the social fabric.</td>
<td>Non-stop process.</td>
<td>Public sector capacity building with inspiration drawn from case studies like the Green Belt movement in Kenya and Seeds of change In India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM#8</td>
<td>Improve access to basic education in vocational and professional training.</td>
<td>Very important for building a solid social foundation and improving the economic by providing self employment.</td>
<td>Continuous process.</td>
<td>Through education and subsidizing education geared towards self employment and trade related fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM #9</td>
<td>Encourage equal participation of Cameroonian women in all aspects of the Cameroonian society.</td>
<td>Essential from overall sustainable perspective of the country.</td>
<td>Medium-term.</td>
<td>By the application of gender main-streaming in all policies and programmes and Create an enabling environment for the protection and harmonious development of individuals and family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM# 10-Sc1</td>
<td>Switch to renewable energy sources Substitute metals and minerals that are scarce in nature with others that are more abundant such as replacing copper roofing with steel roofing. -The use of all mined metals and minerals more efficiently - Recycling of metals and materials extracted from the earth’s crust to keep them in technical cycles.</td>
<td>Essential from overall sustainable perspective of the country For sustainable perspective, further improvement of recycling options for metals.</td>
<td>Continuous process.</td>
<td>Cameroon should develop initiatives towards the development of renewable energy sources such as solar, small-scale micro hydro, geothermal, biomass, biogas and even “pedal power” -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM# 11-SP2</td>
<td>Use all substance produces by society more efficiently. - Substitute certain persistent and unnatural compounds with others that are more abundant or that break down more easily in nature.</td>
<td>For sustainable perspective, this step is essential though rather complicated.</td>
<td>Medium-term.</td>
<td>Education on the negative effects of pesticides such as the DDT and work to subsequent eradication replace intensive pesticide and herbicide use on land scapes with integrated pest management where</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternatively, figure out ways to eliminate their use altogether.

PM# 12-SP3-Substitute materials that are unsustainably harvested from nature with those that are sustainably harvested (e.g. fish, wood) - Use all materials harvested from nature more efficiently. Reduce overall consumption of nature’s services altogether.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability principles</th>
<th>Sustainability principle 1</th>
<th>Sustainability principle 2</th>
<th>Sustainability principle 3</th>
<th>Sustainability principle 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing</td>
<td>Concentration of substances extracted from the earth’s crust</td>
<td>Concentration of substances produced by society</td>
<td>Degradation by physical means</td>
<td>Human needs are met worldwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability objectives</td>
<td>Eliminate our contribution to systematic increases in concentration of substances from the earth’s crust.</td>
<td>Eliminate our contribution to systematic increases in concentrations of substances produced by society</td>
<td>Eliminate our contribution to the physical degradation of nature through over-harvesting, introduction, and other forms of modification.</td>
<td>Contribute as much as possible to the meeting of human needs of the employees, community, region and globally, and to eliminate their contribution to systems and practices that undermine the ability of other communities to meet their human needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current reality Question</td>
<td>How is Cameroon contributing to the</td>
<td>How is Cameroon contributing to the</td>
<td>How is Cameroon contributing to the</td>
<td>How is Cameroon contributing to the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These prioritized measures are short term, medium term or long term depending on the urgency. Short term measures indicate that it is immediate. Prioritization is necessary. At this point, we proceed from a potentially decisive debate of “where we are going” to a constructive and focused review of “exactly how do we get there”. In course of the process, priority was given to those measures that shift the operation most quickly towards the vision, while at the same time flexibility was underlined in terms of continual improvement and generating a good return on investments. While prioritizing, we checked each proposed priority measure with the current reality imperatives, as well as with the questions for strategic prioritization.

Table 3.3. Matrix of Sustainability principles showing the objectives, violations and solutions to unsustainable practices in Cameroon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violations</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>systematic increase in the ecosphere of substances from the earth’s crust?</td>
<td>Prioritized Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>systematic increases in concentrations of substances produced by society?</td>
<td>1) Switch to renewable energy sources such as solar, small-scale micro hydro, geothermal, biomass, biogas and even “pedal power” 2) Substitute metals and minerals that are scarce in nature with others that are more abundant such as replacing copper roofing with steel roofing. 3) The use of all mined metals and minerals more efficiently 4) Recycling of metals and materials extracted from the earth’s crust to keep them in technical cycles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical degradation of nature through over-harvesting, introductions of foreign species and other forms of ecosystem modification?</td>
<td>1) Use all substance produces by society more efficiently. 2) Substitute certain persistent and unnatural compounds with others that are more abundant or that break down more easily in nature.(e.g. replace intensive pesticide and herbicide use on land scapes with integrated pest management where possible. use natural cleaning products instead of corrosive ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meeting basic needs in the community and the region, and how is it contributing to meeting human needs globally?</td>
<td>1) Substitute materials that are unsustainably harvested from nature with those that are sustainably harvested (e.g. fish, wood) 2) Use all materials harvested from nature more efficiently. 3) Reduce overall consumption of nature’s services altogether.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of fossil fuel unsustainable transportation Mining and misuse of scarce metals</td>
<td>1) The use of all resources efficiently, fairly and responsibly so that the needs of all Cameroonians could be met, thereby bridging the gap between the haves and the have-nots. 1)To ensure a fair democracy and good governance 3) The use of the golden rule in all sectors ( Public and private sector) of the society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of fungicide and insecticides such as DDT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over harvesting of food sources such as fish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political abuse-dictatorship, misuse of power Economic abuse debts hyperinflation Unemployment Capital flight Environmental abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 The sustainability vision in practice

How might the sustainability analysis above translate into concrete activities in the Cameroonian community?

4.1 Improvements through developed agriculture for a sustainable Cameroon

4.1.1 Background

I have chosen to take a closer look at agriculture due to the fact that it is the economic mainstay of Cameroon and therefore there is great need for this sector to become sustainable in the near future. Located in the Gulf of Guinea, in the “bight of Biafra”, Cameroon lies at the intersection of West Africa and Central Africa. The North of Cameroon is dry and contains vast savannas whereas the South is home to dense tropical forest. Ecologically and culturally, Cameroon is extremely rich. It contains more than 250 ethnic groups speaking dozens of different languages and a particularly high biodiversity, especially in terms of its flora.

Cameroon is especially endowed unusually with rich and diverse ecological, cultural and anthropological systems. In spite of the rapid pace of exploitation in the recent past, Cameroon’s forest still cover more than 22 million hectares, making it the second largest producer of forestry products in Africa behind the Democratic Republic of Congo and the first exporter of wood product from Africa.

Agriculture is the country’s economic mainstay. Economically, Cameroon is one of the wealthiest African countries with a gross national product similar to that of Nigeria, its powerful neighbour. Cameroon has one of the best endowed primary commodity economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is amongst the top twenty producers of goods like Manioca, Cocoa and coffee. Only 32% of the country is farmed, while 63% is covered in forest. Agricultural products include cocoa, coffee, banana cotton, rubber, oilseed, root starch, livestock and timber. Subsistence crops include plantains, sweet potatoes, cassava, corn and millet.

The agricultural sector has always been and remains the government's priority in its strategy for the development of the country. Before the oil crisis (1978), the agricultural sector engaged at least 70 % of its active population. Its GNP calculated on the basis of purchasing price from farmers was constant at more than 30 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It provides about 70 % of the country's revenue and also budgetary allocations of 30 and 40 %. Traditional agriculture strongly dominated the sector covering at least 90 % of surface area, producing 94 % of food crops and 90 % of total production. The traditional agricultural system is composed of small farms for family consumption of not more than 2 hectares, characterized by little use of agricultural inputs. Agro-industrial plantations take up 7 % of the cultivated surface area for about a 10 % production [31].
In like manner with the rest of the economy, agriculture has in recent years been going through a serious crisis due mainly to the lack of strategic policies and their implementation, high costs of inputs, e.g. fertilizers, pesticides, and the lack of markets for products which need to be processed. This had led to a steady increase of poverty that the recent economic recovering of the country could not alleviate that is the reason why poverty alleviation is the main objective of development policies in Cameroon. Such policies aim to reduce poverty by addressing its causes, among others which are population growth, low status of women in the society, insufficient level of productivity, and natural resources degradation. These factors affect the population directly and indirectly. Currently in Cameroon, as in other African countries, the poverty issue is analyzed in the context of a sustainable development framework of inter-linkages between population growth, environment degradation and food insecurity. As Cameroon’s economy slowly recovers, policy makers are faced with the crucial question of “how will the population environment agriculture nexus impinge on future economic growth?”.

Cameroon, presents an exceptional environmental diversity that gives the country opportunities for long-term development. However, the current exploitation of natural resources is detrimental for their regeneration and the country risks jeopardizing its opportunity for a sustainable development. The high population growth, and the subsistence labour activities, mainly agriculture and pastoral, affect the level of exploitation and exhaustion of the country’s natural resources. The forest has been over-exploited by families and firms without monitoring and protecting actions. Deforestation has been done at a rhythm 10-times superior to the regeneration capacity. According to the PEDA Advocacy Booklet [32], Cameroon lost 8 percent of its forest during the period from 1981 to 1990. Moreover, the environment has been negatively affected by an over-exploitation of the land and land fallow has been shortened, new lands are cultivated, detrimental agricultural practices are used, specially in the northern regions of the country that endangers the natural resources of Cameroon and the ecosystem of specific areas.

4.1.2 Problems

Furthermore, Cameroon had a population density of 31 people per km2 in year 2000 [33]. This is higher than the average for central Africa. Moreover, this density presents high regional differences. If some regions are almost empty, others have a density higher than 100 people per Km square. At the same time, the agricultural techniques employed are unsuited for intensive agriculture and as such land degradation is a serious problem. It is worthy of note that the economic recession was one of the main causes of the stagnation in agricultural mechanization and intensification.

The sustainability of land use in Cameroon has been lost through the clearing of species rich natural vegetation in favour of monocultures of improved food crops grown intensively with high inputs of agro chemicals. These intensive farming systems have indeed helped to feed growing human populations, but at a high cost to the surrounding environment. Non-sustainable agriculture has caused environmental degradation through
ecosystem destruction. Environmental degradation results from highly interactive processes involving numerous social, economic, and biophysical factors and consequential feedback loops that exacerbate and are reinforced as seen in the diagram below. This phenomenon defies the aim of sustainability which urges us to preserve the environment so we can meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The table below illustrates how the present unsustainable agricultural activities in Cameroon do not only violate sustainability principles 1, 2, 3 but also undermine the ability of people meeting their needs. (sustainability principle 4). Some examples of capacity of needs that are undermined are the needs for subsistence, protection, creation and identity. This is an example of the use of a system map or a causal loop diagram (CLD).

Below is a cycle of biophysical and socio-economic processes causing ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and the breakdown of ecosystem function, in agricultural land in many tropical countries including Cameroon.
Figure 4.1. Cycle of biophysical and socio-economic processes causing ecosystem degradation. 17

17 Adapted from World Bank, 1992; Tengberg and Stocking,
This figure shows the link between ecosystem degradation on the one hand and poverty on the other. It is glaring that unsustainable agriculture leads to poverty, deforestation, overgrazing, loss of biodiversity, and declining livelihoods.

4.1.3 Solutions

There is therefore a need to take an innovative approach to integrated natural resource management, aimed at simultaneously restoring resources, alleviating poverty and reversing the degradation processes in agricultural land. This has been dubbed as the Win:Win scenario [32], in which improved human welfare (sustainable rural livelihoods) and the causes of environmental degradation are tackled together.

From the above, it can be seen that there are many opportunities for Cameroon for more intensive and imaginative agriculture. Sustainable agriculture can be achieved by diversifying farming systems, using new ways of production and moving towards the lower use of chemical inputs thus agro-forestry. A sustainable agriculture can increase yields and maintain the ecosystem at the same time while bringing income into the economy. The development of the agricultural sector is key to strategic development of Cameroon on the whole.

4.2 Improvements through Social Capacity Building

4.2.1 Justification for social capacity

Building social capacity in communities is an important aspect which accelerates sustainable development. Capacity building is an essential step not only in preparing national sustainable development strategies but also serve as a strategic element that will help create social change towards sustainability in the communities of Cameroon. According to the United Nations Population Fund, Sustainable capacity-building encompasses the building of organizational and technical abilities, behaviours, relationships and values that enable individuals, groups and organizations to enhance their performance effectively and to achieve their development objectives over time. It includes both strengthening the processes, systems and rules that shape collective and individual behaviours and performance in all development endeavours as well as people's ability and willingness to play new developmental roles and to adapt to new demands and situations”.

Capacity building in this context refers to the development, empowerment fostering and support of resources and relationships at the systems levels. Building social capacity will allow participation at the community level in the protection and sustainable management of natural resources. An important aspect in social capacity building is empowering the local communities. A lot can be achieved through community-based learning centres for sustainable development. Building capacity allows communities to share their expertise
and enhance their capabilities thus meeting the needs of creation, affection and understanding.

In Cameroon social capacity building in communities should focus on poverty eradication which covers employment and sustainable livelihood, equality, creating an environment for social development and sustainable management of environmental resources. Social capacity building should inspire development in related areas such as sustainable tourism, infrastructure development thus opening the way for Cameroonians to be self-employed. Inspirations should be taken from Case studies such as The Kenyan “Green Belt Movement” founded by Wangari Maathai and the “Seed Of Change” Vandana Shiva.

**4.2.2 Case studies for social Capacity**

Vandana Shiva is one of the world's most powerful voices for global environmental justice and cultural and ecological diversity. In her book “sowing the seeds of change” she decries environmental exploitation in all forms and encourages biodiversity conservation and protection of people’s rights from threats to their livelihoods and environment by centralized systems of monoculture in forestry, agriculture and fisheries.

The Green Belt Movement (GBM) is a grassroots non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Kenya that focuses on environmental conservation, community development and capacity building. The vision is to create a society of people who consciously work for continued improvement of their environment, and a greener, cleaner Kenya. The Green Belt Movement mobilizes community consciousness for self-determination, equity, improved livelihoods securities and environmental conservation- using tree planting as an entry point. Building of social capacity in Cameroon with inspiration drawn from the Green Belt movement does not mean only the planting of trees, it means the revolutionarization of the agricultural sector. At this point it is important to make mention of the fact that agriculture contributes nearly a third of the country's gross domestic product. The present assessment of agricultural produce and environmental impacts show a decline in production and a loss of farmland biodiversity. Future trends project more decline. In order for Cameroon to sustainably increase production while protecting and conserving the environment, it needs enhance people’s capabilities and strategically implement some measures taken from successful Case studies with stories of meaning like the Green belt movement of Kenya and Seed of Change of India.

**4.2.3 Solution for social capacity building**

In Cameroon, social capacity building could be exemplified by the women’s grass roots movements supported by NGO’s in the various communities. In the South West province of Cameroon, NGO’s that could build capacity in communities are the GTZ and Organisation of Peace. The leverage points for this work are agriculture and social capacity building and this implies that aim is to alleviate poverty, political, economic and social abuse. Women play a great role in building capacity in communities therefore, empowering women through small projects are essential to build capacities in the communities of Cameroon. The reason for this is due to the fact that most tribes in
Cameroon are matrilineal and statistics have shown that women are influential at the local level. Other development projects that are already taking place at the grass root level that could be expanded are the recycling of compost from cow faeces done by the Tiko and Fako women groups, the rearing of snails and pigs by the Yoke and Bakundu women associations respectively. Small development projects that could build social capacity in the communities of Cameroon and at the same time be economically profitable are small organic gardens, compost recycling and reuse, and the planting of trees to restore biodiversity. Products from these sources could be sold and the money used for sustainable community development projects.
5 Discussion

At the beginning of this study, some hypotheses were formulated to investigate and analyze the activities of communities in Cameroon. I came out with the following results after testing these hypotheses.

The information got from this study shows that the current operations in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres in Cameroon are unsustainable. A look at the political, economic and social structure and the environment reveals that features such as fear, violence, marginalization, hyperinflation, huge external debt, unemployment, capital flight, corruption and misappropriation, frustration and environmental degradation are apparent in the society. These features serve as political, socio-economic and environmental abuses and stand as a stumbling block for people meeting their needs in the Cameroon society thereby degrading the social “fabric”.

This study also found out that, factors such as lack of freedom of speech and freedom of association restraint people in communities to organized themselves in effective social structures and undermine the capacity of meeting needs. This supports hypothesis two examined in chapter two of this study.

The matrix of the needs and satisfiers above (Table 2.1) shows that the needs of subsistence, protection, understanding, participation, creation, identify and freedom are not met in many of the communities in Cameroon. Obstacles to meeting these needs were brought out in Table 3.1

The linkage between local ecological degradation, global environmental stress, and adverse indirect effects of hazardous situations, and the events on poverty, employment, balance of trade and foreign indebtedness have become constraints to the development plans of Cameroon and many African countries. Indeed, they have become a significant negative influence on the poorest segments of the population which have limited spatial options to site investments, critical and lifeline facilities.

An economic system that causes global climate change, despoliation of rivers, and loss of topsoil is the same system that is causing poverty, suffering, and deracination of communities worldwide. To that end, Cameroon has to work towards the reinvention of how materials and resources are utilized in order to create a productivity revolution, one that will reduce our resource footprint nations by 90% in the next forty to fifty years while increasing the quality of life for all living beings. Dramatically reducing our ecological footprint will require that we use less of what we are running out of(resources and living systems) while creating dignified, living wage jobs for the one resource we have more of (human beings who want to add value to the world). The present economic system, one that marginalizes people and the environment, is the most costly system possible and moving towards restorative, sustainable practices is the least cost alternative. We need to strive to identify and work with others to reimagine our economic and social system to help people transform their lives, livelihoods, and economies.
Improving the health, income, education and living conditions of the poor majority should remain the top policy imperative for ensuring the political stability and social sustainability needed to move toward greater economic and environmental sustainability. While adopting the innovative approach of Agenda 21 for integrating environment and development, a third crucial element: equity should be added. Greater equity is needed throughout the region of Cameroon in the distribution of the opportunities and benefits of national economic development and international aid programmes. At present, too few national and international aid programmes reach or benefit the poor majority. On this account, Cameroon should develop a new policy and strategy for environmental and natural resources management for equitable and sustainable development which supports economic, social and environmental sustainable forms of development.

“The problems that exist in the world today cannot be solved with the same mindset that created it”
Albert Einstein18

There is need for us to change our mindsets towards preserving ourselves and earth systems. We should therefore maintain the social and natural potentials of these communities so that we can achieve a sustainable society and promote long lasting development.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, agriculture and social capacity building are strong leverage points for Cameroon which could be used to move strategically towards sustainability. The implementation of some key aspects in social capacity building like compost recycling, planting of trees, and organic farming in general will serve positive strides towards sustainability. By raising momentum through the World Bank and other international NGO’s like SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and Health Partners International by making them link demand on Cameroon administration especially to the local levels to their loans and knowledge.

In Cameroon just like in any system, there are leverage and choke points that allow relatively small initiatives to have a great influence over the entire system. On the surface, our ability to restore our social fabric and the environment are blocked by lack of money, political corruption, and corporate influence. We are told that sustainability and restoration are too expensive. I believe the strategy is a strategic approach and a change in the present system towards restorative, sustainable practices which is the least cost alternative. The benefits of this strategy are that today's problems are viewed from a future sustainability perspective. The question then becomes how we can move strategically toward our vision rather than solely being focused on solving problems.

Some smart early moves for Cameroon are the institution of a fair democracy, reconstruction of the economy by strengthening capacity-building programmes related to economic and corporate governance, incorporation of the golden rule in every sector of

18 A quote by Albert Einstein on the need to change mindsets over time. www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Albert Einstein/31
the society and building momentum in local communities through social capacity building. These moves are smart because they are flexible and possible already.

Some potential benefits include building social capacity and strengthening the social fabric, reduced expenses for resources and waste, avoidance of future liability, enhanced innovation, and improved internal morale and motivation.

In order to summarise the sustainability assessment, a SWOT analysis for Cameroon was also done showing the strengths and opportunities against the weaknesses and threats. Table 5.1 gives a detail analysis of this.

Analysis of current reality provides knowledge about aspects and relevant operations that significantly impact the possibilities for Cameroon to reach its vision. A summarized SWOT analysis for Cameroon is provided below.

5.1 Strengths

- One of the strong political strengths of Cameroon is that it has generally enjoyed stability which has permitted the development of agriculture.
- Economically, because of its favourable agricultural conditions, Cameroon has one of the best-endowed primary commodity economies in sub-Saharan Africa and it is blessed with a vibrant private sector. Furthermore, it is of importance to note that Cameroon is amongst the top twenty producers in the world for seven agricultural products (cocoa, coffee, banana cotton, rubber, oilseed, and timber) and this is thanks to the diversified agriculture and fertile soil.
- Socially, Cameroon is called “Africa in miniature” by many because it is blessed with great cultural, ethnic and geographic diversity and human resources in the fact that it has a relatively high school enrolment rate and a well educated labour force and industrious population. The abundance of natural resources and favourable climate for agriculture serves as an environmental strength to Cameroon.
- Cameroon is culturally diversified with approximately 250 ethnic groups with unique homes and lifestyles. There also exists a strong bond within the communities. Cultural unity comes through songs and stories of meaning leading to social cohesion within each community. Another social opportunity is that Cameroon has plenty of entrepreneur minded and hard working people and just a little need to be done us them to use these potentials. In addition to the above, the bilingual nature of Cameroon should be used to their advantage considering the fact that they are members of the Common wealth and Francophonie amongst other associations.
- Cameroon is blessed with a very rich biodiversity with four different functional ecological zones: the evergreen forest that covers the South and the Littoral provinces of Cameroon along the Atlantic coast; the inland humid forests that are a part of the Congo basin found in the Northwest, West and Adamawa provinces; the marine ecosystem in the coastal belt and finally the Sahel ecosystem in the Northern provinces of Cameroon.
5.2 Weaknesses

- A great weakness politically, is that despite the movements towards democratic reforms, political power remains firmly in the hands of an ethnic oligarchy.
- Economically, Cameroon just like some other African countries has an unfavourable climate for business enterprises.
- Socially, ethnic conflict exercised through tribalism, egoism, nepotism, sectionalism and corruption has led to lack of social cohesion between the different segments of the population in the country.

5.3 Opportunities

- Ability to ensure future political stability.
- Economically, richly endowed with agricultural products, Cameroon has ideal conditions to ensure its food security now and in future and thus achieve more effective agricultural exports. Another economic opportunity is the existence of the remnants of the green revolution which if used sustainably could be a great advantage. The green revolution therefore stands as a great opportunity for a positive stride towards social cohesion.
- Cameroon presents an exceptional environmental diversity that gives the country opportunities for long term development.
- Diversity if use positively could be used to strengthen future interaction.

5.4 Threats

- Political threats to Cameroon includes; extensive corruption, political assimilation, oppression and tribalism.
- Economically, unemployment, corruption and embezzlement amongst others stand as a threat to the economic prosperity of the country.
- One of the serious social problems faced by Cameroon is that of diseases such as HIV and Malaria which is taking a toll among the young population who are the leaders of tomorrow. Another threat is brain drain where many of the skilled personnel leave the country because of the poor working conditions, poor wages and lack of employment. More so, Cameroonian faced a threat from poverty and inequitable access to resources taking into consideration that majorities of the people are in the low income level.
- Environmentally, Cameroon is exacerbated by deforestation and soil erosion, extensive commercial logging, overgrazing, desertification, poaching and over fishing. As a result, several important ecosystems are rapidly deteriorating because of unsustainable exploitation. Similarly, because of intensive exploitation, Cameroon’s forest has been loosing 100,000hectares per year over the last two decades. Like many developing countries hit by economic crisis resulting in abject poverty, these rich ecosystems have come under threat from both local communities, logging companies and professional poachers.
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<td>Unfavourable climate for business enterprises</td>
<td>Ideal conditions to ensure food security now and in future to achieve effective agricultural exports. Existence of the remnants of the green revolution</td>
<td>Diseases such as HIV and Malaria Brain Drain Poverty and inequitable access to resources</td>
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<td>Social</td>
<td>Diversification in language, culture and people human resources and educational potentials in the fact that it has a relatively high school enrolment rate and a well educated labour force. Bilingual nature of Cameroon Strong bong within each community entrepreneur minded and hard working people. Africa in Miniature because of its diversity in culture, language, people and landscape.</td>
<td>Ethnic conflict exercised through tribalism, egoism, nepotism, sectionalism and corruption Lack of a strong social bond</td>
<td>Diversity if use positively could be used to strengthen future interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Abundant natural resources Favourable climate</td>
<td>Cameroon presents an exceptional environmental diversity that gives the country</td>
<td>Resource degradation through Deforestation and soil erosion</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
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Table 5.1. The SWOT Analysis
opportunities for long term development.

commercial logging, overgrazing, desertification, poaching and over fishing.

An important aspect in all communities is the social fabric. During this study it was found out that the circumstances within communities in Cameroon do not allow for social cohesion. It is very important for Cameroon to strategically build social capacity to strengthen the social fabric.

Concerning the agricultural sector, Information gathered showed that even though agriculture is the economic mainstay, it is undergoing serious crisis. Figure 3 shows the cycle of biophysical and socio-economic processes causing ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and the breakdown of ecosystem function, in agricultural land in Cameroon. This table illustrates the fact that deforestation does not only cause ecosystem degradation but lead to loss of income, malnutrition, declining livelihood, poverty and increase health risks. Furthermore, In spite of all great potentials that Cameroon possess, (being one of the wealthiest African countries having one of the best endowed primary commodity economies in Sub-Saharan Africa and is amongst the top twenty producers of seven agriculture products) it is facing an economic crisis. Some other serious problems it faces include a top-heavy civil service and a generally unfavourable climate for business enterprise. It was also discovered that since 1990, the government has embarked on various IMF and World Bank programs designed to spur business investment, increase efficiency in agriculture, improve trade, and recapitalize the nation's banks but all these initiatives do not ameliorate the situation.

Cameroon needs “social capital” which, if left unattended, will weaken the foundation for sustainable growth and undermine the country’s social fabric. Overall, indicators of human development have considerably deteriorated during the crisis years-1990-2001, particularly in education and health, and recent economic improvements have not yet been sufficient and sustained enough to fully remedy the situation.

These social problems have become acute with rapid growth (5 percent) of Cameroon’s urban population which places considerably pressure on social service and infrastructure. Without adequate and sustained attention, these developments may transform major urban centres into breeding grounds for poverty and insecurity eroding Cameroon’s social capital and undermining the very competitive assets it needs to integrate fully into the global economy.

By using principles for sustainability, and backcasting from a future sustainable reference situation, I observed negative social and ecological impacts and the present understanding of those. Emphasis was made that improvement proposal should not only deal with current problems, but should take a structured system’s view with a backcasting perspective which are fruitful steps in the path of sustainability. Cameroon should
systematically guide its development towards sustainability in this way so that it stands a fair chance of being affected less severely by unexpected risks and world trends.
6 Conclusion

The natural resources of Cameroon are the setting for some of today's most intense interactions between efforts to reduce poverty and efforts to conserve biodiversity. When these interactions go wrong, people go hungry and other species go extinct. While carrying out the strategic sustainability plan for Cameroon using backcasting from principles, I came out with the current unsustainable practices of Cameroon. The situation demands a change from un-sustainability to sustainability.

As a result, problems relating to the political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental arena were brought out. Furthermore, some strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were also uncovered. Agriculture stood as a great opportunity for Cameroon. Also, it was noted that, the key to development seems to be social capacity building and investment in sustainable agricultural practices with strategies drawn from examples of the social change initiatives from the Green Belt movement in Kenya and Seeds of Change in India. An implementation of policies are needed that spur development in directions that yield more sustainable systems of land use in nature, improving the well-being of people without degrading these unique and fragile environments to a point that they no longer support people or biodiversity.

Ensuring social and ecological sustainable development in Cameroon in the coming years will require considerable and continuing effort by all stakeholders. With the respect, cooperation and support of all stakeholders, the Cameroon population is likely to succeed in leading the effort towards achieving a healthy and sustainable society. If people work together to improve the society and environment, then we will be able to yield political, economic and social benefits while minimizing our environmental cost for the foreseeable future. To achieve a socially sustainable society, changes in policy and activities at all levels from the individual, national and international are needed. To this end, the government, communities and the whole society at large ought to cooperate promoting and facilitating sustainable development at the local, regional and national level.
7 Recommendations

It is of great importance for Cameroon to implement measures working towards a socially sustainable society. Socially sustainable measures will help advance the political, economic and social atmosphere while preserving the environment. Some of the recommendations that I came up with during the course of this study are;

7.1 Government

Politically, there should be the implementation of both ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ strategies to favour active participation of all those concerned in open negotiations, transparent decision-making mechanisms, and the formulation of urban-management policies.

There should be the use of a strategic approach towards governance and management of Communities action-oriented projects on sustainable and integrated urban-development strategies geared towards a participatory approach and the revitalization of communities, training and capacity building.

The Cameroon government should articulate around a stable micro-economic and sector strategies for accelerating growth, and poverty reduction in order to help Cameroon achieve sustainable development.

The government should diversify the economy in order to accelerate growth. The economic diversification strategy should rest on the following essential pillars:

- Support private operators to foster production and securing population revenue and food security in the rural areas.
- Promote competitiveness and support development of manufacturing industries like agro-industries, and textile manufacturing to increase the contribution of these industries to growth.
- Promote tourism\(^\text{19}\), information and communication technologies, sustainable transport and finances. Cameroon has important tourism assets which can be developed to increase value added, generate foreign exchange and create opportunities to the poor, especially in handicraft and related services. In this context a tourism sector strategy could include several programs such as:
  - Promoting tourism activities.
  - Develop priority sites, drafting an investment code for tourism.
  - Undertake studies for the integration of young graduates into the tourism sector thus creating employment.

\(^{19}\) Cameroon has 10 national parks, 6 fauna reserves, 1 fauna sanctuary, 3 zoological gardens, 35 hunting areas and 10 community managed hunting areas.
Implementing such actions plans will increase private investment in related activity sectors such as transport, financial services, agro-businesses, agro-industry and handicrafts and help to meet the needs of the people in society. The government should also:

- Strengthen the private sector and support growth by allocating adequate public resources to priority sectors.

The Cameroon government should accelerate the implementation of the forestry section reform agenda\(^{20}\), which will ensure sustainable exploitation and increase value added in the sector while at the same time preserving Cameroon’s heritage.

The government should institute measures to protect the soil against erosion. For instance, put up measures for the population to avoid entirely cutting down trees (deforestation) since powerful roots fix the soil and slow down the speed of running water. These trees also play the role of “wind breakers” and protect fragile plants like tea.

To combat pedological degradation the government should institute measures of protecting soil richness especially avoiding the poisoning of underground water sources by controlled use of chemical fertilizers.

### 7.2 Industry

The private sector which serves as the cornerstone will contribute to build a stronger domestic saving and become an effective partner for foreign investment drive towards economic growth. Reforms in specific areas should be taken such as:

- Improving the physical environment for business by accelerating the development of a sustainable transport system, telecommunication, sustainable energy supply and sustainable distribution of infrastructure.
- Improving the institutional and regulatory framework and delivery of more efficient public services to society and business.
- Enhance security for investment for improving the judiciary system and implementing a new business legal framework.
- Promote Cameroonian products on external markets.
- Promote dialogue and partnership with private sector organizations.

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\(^{20}\) The forestry section reform agenda is a reform that is suppose to a) promote sustainable exploitation while preserving the ecological stability, b) foster community participation in conserving and managing this national forestry heritage, c) enhance forest-based income opportunities for village communities and improve the livelihood of the rural population living in the forest zones by granting local communities priority rights to designate “community forest” and to remit quote-part of collected forestry tax revenues to local communities.
7.3 Government and industries together

Also the government and industries should support and use the private sector as the prime instrument for wealth creation and social services development and delivery. Specific target components for micro-enterprises should be reinforced and private sector participation in capacity building including the supplying of social services such as education and health. Hence there should be an effort to:

- Develop infrastructure to support production and social sectors. Priority should be given to infrastructure development to improving the road network in lengths and quality, improving access to drinking water, extending coverage in sustainable electricity power to remote rural areas and take immediate action to correct current deficiencies in overall power supply.
- Environmentally, a sustainable management of Cameroon’s important national resources will certainly contribute to enhancing growth in industries, export and tourism, thus generating foreign exchange while also significantly improving the livelihood of Cameroon’s population.
- The cornerstone of Cameroon’s social strategic should be capacity building and enhancing human resources. This priority will serve as a direct response to the challenge of a growing and increasingly young population. It will strengthen the social sphere and human capital formation thus laying out the strong foundation for medium and long term growth.
- The government and industry should create employment opportunities and integrate vulnerable groups into the economy. The promotion of incomes generating activities, including self-employment for the poor constitute a sustainable response to poverty and the meet of the needs of the Cameroon communities.

7.4 Community

Efforts should be made to improve agriculture in Cameroon. Sustainable agriculture will greatly reduced unemployment, encouraged international trade and improved social services in the country. Some recommendations in the agricultural sector are;

- The population should be initiated to the technique of compost so that they will be able to recycle their domestic waste.
- Responsible methods should be applied to utilize resources without exhausting them.
- Social capacity building programs through education should be instituted and encouraged.

The application of a strategic policy and a revision of attitudes will make Cameroon achieve success without putting in danger the ecological equilibrium of their environment and thereby maintaining long lasting development. To arrive at this objective, we should
first proceed in educating the masses, show them the degree of destructions that their unsustainable behaviour causes, and then the vision of a sustainable society.

8 Issues for further research

The outcome of this study suggests further exploration in the following areas:

- A comparative analysis should be made of the changes in governance, economy and social atmosphere, the issues of environment and gender in African communities and also the relationships between such changes and the underlying social, cultural, economic, and political processes.
- There is a need to carry out research analyzing the key constituents of a social system and how it functions in the African setting.
- Finally, a study should be carried out on the best methods and measurement to help monitor and report on the various aspect of sustainability in African society.
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