

CAMEROON - SAUDI ARABIA COOPERATION: ISSUES, PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to analyze the diplomatic cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia. This type of bilateral cooperation between Cameroon and this Emirate aims to improve the rapprochement of diplomatic cooperation between Africa with the Maghreb countries and other countries of the Arabian Gulf, notably that of Cameroon-Arab cooperation, which has started since 1966. This strengthens Cameroon's presence in the diverse universe of the Arab world. However, despite the upheavals, Cameroon and Saudi Arabia will have experienced diplomatic relations based on the Islamic religion. It is therefore the Islamic religion that has enabled Cameroon and Saudi Arabia to establish diplomatic relations, based on human factors, to expand and develop to commercial and human factors. But after the reestablishment of diplomatic relations broken down in 1973, following the war in Kippur, Cameroon and the Hebrew State decided to review their cooperation. Meanwhile, Arab countries in conflict with Israel needed the support of African countries for Arab causes. But this cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia has been reversed by the movement shaking the Arab world following the Yom Kippur war with the oil crisis of the 1980s. Thus, Cameroon Saudi Arabia cooperation will be affected when the Cameroon and the Hebrew State decide to review their cooperation. Therefore, the restoration of relations between Cameroon and the Hebrew State will provoke hostile reactions between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia, but Faced with the restoration of relations between Cameroon and the Hebrew State, Saudi Arabia is in a position of reconquest and ended up taking an interest in Cameroon and opened its diplomatic representation in Cameroon.

Keywords: Cooperation, Diplomacy, Cameroon, Saudi Arabia, FSD, Achievements

INTRODUCTION

Long time seduced by possible help; Cameroon has been aligned with the Saudi position about the Israel. This diplomatic cooperation was reversed from the early 1980s, consolidating Israel's economic and security presence. (Dogo, 2016, 50-68). If the objective of the Cameroonian leaders remains according to the Arab authorities a negotiating status with the Arab States, it is not significant given that Saudi Arabia has personal motivations to get closer to Cameroon. However, the history of Afro-Arab cooperation is not very far-reaching and is slow to materialize. Despite the asymmetrical and multifaceted nature of these relations, the partnership between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia is holding back from taking off, when it should be dynamic in this period of international health crisis. However, the willingness of the two parties to cooperate, observed recently, is a source of hope for seeing a much more positive dimension in relations between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia. Like other African countries, it has enjoyed multifaceted relationships for decades with these Gulf Emirates. The economic boom recorded in recent years by this oil emirate, which has become the center of business, is bringing Cameroon to open up to the Arab world. As part of this diverse partnership, multifaceted support from Saudi Arabia and Arab institutions is being received to support development efforts.

These relations were materialized by the creation of resident and non-resident diplomatic missions on both sides, but also Arab institutions such as the FSD (Saudi Development Fund) which is the Saudi agency responsible for administering and award projects brought to Saudi Arabia's attention. This cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia is also linked to the religious context of which Saudi Arabia is the cradle. However, it is necessary to specify the context and the foundations.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE FOUNDATION OF CAMEROON AND SAUDI ARABIA COOPERATION

We can say the foundations of relations between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia are identical to those known as Afro-Arab. This cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia is comparable to that known as asymmetrical observed between Arab and African which several

reasons stated, in particular the introduction of the camel which goes back before the Christian era, will allow the development of the trans-Saharan exchanges between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia (Grégoire and Schmitz, 2000,7). This camel, well suited to the climatic context, is not only used for the movement of freight networks but also for warlike purposes. This camel was introduced shortly before the Christian era and it is this introduction which will allow the development of trans-Saharan exchanges between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia as well as the Muslim states of Arab origin very territorialized coming from the end of the corridor. Meridian of the trans-Saharan trade from the years 1968 (Grégoire, 2000, 87). These exchanges between Africa and the Arab States are ancient because very old cities like Timbuktu and Djenné have acquired a cultural and Islamic reputation (Grégoire and Schmitz, 2000, 12). The pilgrimage to Mecca (Coulon, 1983) was the most edifying factor of cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia because their relations were limited until a period when Cameroonian nationals went to these holy places of Islam in this case in Saudi Arabia. It was during this period that relations between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia, however far apart and without close contact in the past, began to develop.

They intensified after Cameroon's independence. The oil shocks of the 1970s increased them very significantly so that countries like Saudi Arabia eventually became interested in Cameroon and opened its diplomatic representation there, the aim was to increase the influence of Islam in Cameroon, in particular the current of Wahhabi thought of which Saudi Arabia was the cradle. In this way, Saudi Arabia undertook some development operations, among which, the Saudi Development Fund, including Saudi Arabia with its oil revenues, adopted a united attitude to create a bilateral joint commission with Cameroon.

This cooperation is also based on the religious factor of which Islam is the bearer. Islam appeared in Cameroon seven years after the death of the prophet Mohamed in 639, but its presence into Africa is done in a latent way, because it borrowed two trajectories, one by Egypt and the Maghreb and the other by West Africa where the Arabs founded trading posts (Grégoire and Schmitz, 2000, 12). While stating that it is difficult to conclude a subject as relevant as that of Islam in Cameroon, we can nevertheless make a few observations: the pilgrimage to Mecca is becoming the oldest network for the exchange of cooperation between Cameroon and the 'Saudi Arabia since the Islamic religion was the first contact between Cameroon and Saudi

Arabia. Islam is the second religion in Cameroon after Christianity (Nguimba, 2009). From this religious factor, was born a complex but beneficial cooperation for Cameroon.

The country will thus have benefited from the assistance of the Arab Funds in various fields. Thus, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Amougou, 2006) has constantly supported political, educational and even socio-economic and cultural development projects in Cameroon. In this context, we can cite the financial support from Riyadh for the construction of the Song-Loulou hydroelectric dam in 1977, for an amount of \$ 30.2 million (Zarour, 1989) for the section of the railway, the Trance-Cameroonien, Eséka-Maloume, the extension of the University of Ngaoundéré, as well as the support projects for the asphalted roads of the Tchintchin-Guider roads. The Tsinga Islamic Complex in Yaoundé, officially handed over on June 19, 1997, through the Saudi fund which contributes 45 million Saudi Riyadh, or 6.04 billion CFA francs, (Nguimba, 2009) remains a significant donation from Saudi government in the interest of the Cameroonian Muslim community. In addition, on the political debris form a dust of the state in which the Saudi game is played through the system of Islamic expansion as well as the involvement of the Arabic language in the Cameroonian education system giving way to an Arab-Cameroonian culture about local population.

But from the 1980s, the presence of Israel seemed to be noticeable. This cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia will be reversed in 1986, when Cameroon and the Hebrew State decide to review the establishment of diplomatic relations severed in 1973 with the war of Yon Kippour in particular that of 6 days of 1967, associated with the oil shock.

THE SAUDI DEVELOPMENT FUND IN THE RAPPROCHEMENT OF COOPERATION

Created in 1974, this Fund aims to promote development and carry out Saudi projects in Africa and in the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It is an independent organization under the authority of the Saudi Minister of Finance and the state sometimes manages and appoints those responsible to guarantee the law in order to ensure its organization. Its role is not limited only to Saudi Arabia. It covers several areas of the territory. Especially in Africa. The benefiting countries must in reality cooperate with the kingdom on various plans,

it deals with the cooperating states thus its capital comes directly from the Saudi government. But its operation depends on sharia.

This Islamic organization is a mark of support given to the underdeveloped countries. The main objective of this fund is to finance projects engaged in the construction of infrastructure, schools, health centers, socio-cultural projects, Islamic centers, mosques as well as projects that are supposed to have priority. For this, Saudi Arabia is providing this Development Fund with a considerable sum to be able to finance the projects. In addition, beyond the objectives of this Fund, we also note religious objectives because the Saudi Development Fund also participated in the development of several projects and defense to support Arab causes, including the Palestinian cause in the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts.

This justifies the Saudi position not only to the Arab states but its image in Africa, because Saudi Arabia sought to have a positive image within the international Arab community. This Saudi policy is part of the data and receive policy because in international relations only interest can justify this intervention. This courageous position places Saudi Arabia in the context of the developing world. In Cameroon, it was since the establishment of the 1966 agreements that this fund began to carry out development projects. For this project carried out in Cameroon, we can note the first. Among these projects we can cite; The construction project of the hydroelectric dam of its loulou carried out in 1977, The financing of the wheat development company, The construction project of the Douala business school, The railway construction project between Yaoundé and Douala; The diplomatic tour in the Arabian peninsula carried out by the honorable president of the Cameroonian assembly of 1998; The diplomatic tour carried out by the Cameroonian Minister of Development and the Commercial Industry in 2001.

On this subject, it should be noted that this fund is not in reality the only means of Saudi funding, because the kingdom can sometimes directly finance the projects through the diplomatic actors involved. As a reminder, the Islamic University Center of Ngaoundéré which is today erected as a state university with the shape of 1993 is a very edifying observation. This Saudi Fund does not carry out a project in the form of a zakat, but in the form of exchanges or repayable loans relating to a given period. In Cameroon proper, it is a repayable loan, the period granted is generally 25 years and having a grace period sometimes ranging to 7 years.

To do this, there is a predisposition to guarantee the funding of projects undertaken. This Saudi Development Fund (FSD) is the Kingdom's instrument for bilateral cooperation. The objective of this Fund is to promote the economic and social development of developing countries through the financing of development projects and to grant financing to Cameroon through: Concessional loans; Donations / technical assistance.

Since April 1999, the FSD has used the "Saudi Export Program" to finance operations involving foreign organizations (public or private) wishing to import Saudi goods and services. This Saudi Fund has contributed to the realization of important projects in Cameroon. It should also be noted that this FSD supports development efforts through other Institutions of the Islamic World in which it participates in the capital, like the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa. To date, the active portfolio of the Saudi Fund comprises four (4) projects for a global envelope of US \$ 49 million, or CFAF 25.016 billion. With a view to developing the economic partnership between Cameroon and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a draft framework agreement and agreement aimed at encouraging and protecting investments, promoting economic relations between Cameroon and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is under investigation.

THE GEOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Saudi Arabia occupies a very variable area. However, its south-eastern and southern borders are not precisely delimited and are the subject of disputes with neighboring countries. Sparsely populated but with very large oil reserves, Saudi Arabia is one of the richest countries in the Middle East. Administratively it is divided into 13 provinces, subdivided into 118 Governorates. The Wahhabi Kingdom shares its borders with Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and is bordered by the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Its area is 2 253 000 km² and having a population density is estimated at around 25100000hhbts, its capital is Riyadh, having as main cities: Jeddah, Mecca, Medina, Damman, Buraydah, Abha and its official language is Arabic (Ghazi and Tawal, 2009). The Saudi state finds its origin in 1750, when a local tribal chief, Mohammed Ibn Saoud, associated with the founder of a rigorous ideological current, Wahhabism, Mohammed Ibn Abdel Wahhab, for create a new political entity. The discovery of oil in March 1938 transformed the country economically and

marked the start of a strategic alliance with the United States of America, which had become the armed protector of the dynasty. The political system is monarchical and Islamic. Its national holiday has been officially celebrated since September 23, 2005.

Since the Basic Law of 1992, the Executive has been made up of the King, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. The Parliament consists of a 90-member Advisory Council and a President appointed by the King for four years. The Head of State and Head of Government has been King Abdullah Ben Abdel Aziz-Al Saoud since August 12, 2005 (Ibid). He also has a Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs under the responsibility of Saoud Al-Faycal. Saudi Arabia operates a legal system based on "Sharia" or "Muslim Law" and the religion is Islam with 95% Sunnis.

According to the gross domestic product, the Kingdom of Arabia had in 2006, an amount of 351 billion. This rate places the kingdom at the 10th commercial power in the world. It is the world's leading oil producer and its currency is the Saudi Riyal. Constitutionally, Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy controlled by the Saoud family (Ghazi and Tawal, 2009). The country's constitution is based on Muslim law (Sharia). No demonstration or worship of another religion is accepted and those who express a different opinion on this basis are declared apostate and liable to the death penalty. Wahhabism, strong in Saudi Arabia, is a rigorous form of Sunni Islam, recalls the daily Asharq Al-Awsat. On February 10, 2005 the first 'democratic' by-elections were held in this country, the aim being to elect 50% of the municipal councilors of Riyadh and its province, the others being appointed by the government. But women are excluded for the moment from the electorate. According to the newspaper the Word of February 9, 2005, American pressure since September 11 (Rigoulo-Rose, 2005), encouraging Saudi Arabia to embark on the path of reform, and played a large part in the decision to organize these elections, retorts for its part the word newspaper of February 9, 2005.

Economically, agriculture in Saudi Arabia employs 9% of the working population and represented 3.96% of the gross domestic product in the early 2000s, the main crops are wheat, watermelons, dates and tomatoes. The other important crops are barley, sorghum, dairy products, onions, grapes. It was in 1938 that the Saudi oil industry was born. It currently represents the main national wealth, one third of the P.I.B. However, it only employs 2% of the active population. In 2002, Saudi Arabia produced 417.3 million tonnes of crude oil and its

confirmed reserves exceed 250 billion barrels (Ibid). Currently, Saudi Arabia is the world's largest producer and exporter of petroleum, which is the main source of income. Its immense reserves (a quarter of the world's reserves) and the high level of its oil production have made it a powerful interlocutor in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which plays an important role in fixing world oil prices. Saudi Arabia also produces considerable quantities of natural gas (56.7 billion m³ in 2002). With the exception of petroleum and petroleum products, limestone, gypsum, marble, clay, salt and gold are the only major minerals mined in Saudi Arabia. Since the 1970s, and especially after the Yom Kippur War, the processing industry has been diversified. The main products are refined petroleum, petrochemical

THE RESTORATION OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND COMPLEX RELATIONS FROM 1986

From 1986 onwards, a major upheaval took place in Afro-Arab relations, following the wave of reestablishment of diplomatic relations between other African countries and the Hebrew State (Dogo,2016). This action by African states will greatly disrupt Afro-Arab cooperation. Cameroon-Saudi Arabia cooperation will also be affected, when in 1986 Cameroon decides to restore relations with the Hebrew state. This process of diplomatic relations between Israel and the African states is based, according to Leon César Codo Dogo, to the economic and security contexts of the African space itself because the 1960s saw the birth of this cooperation between Africa and Tel-Avis. To this, is also added the African observation because during the glorious stays, where the African States obtained their independence had charismatic leaders and convinced that the world belonged to them, the edifying observation is it is him of Mouboutou who had in his time an almost lamidale structure, to see a media posture which owed its drawing to Israel, but for a long time, these Israelis who annexed the African territory like pioneers, and making believe in the Black continent a religious posture of peace, have almost disappeared. César's finding shows a recent trajectory, that of pragmatic affairs where pragmatism has replaced romanticism, and diplomacy only follows private entrepreneurs (Dogo, 2016, 50-68). Cameroon experienced the advent of renewal in 1982 with the accession to the supreme magistracy of President Paul Biya. Cameroon's foreign policy is then oriented towards

openness. It is in this context that on August 26, 1986, the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Pérès paid a visit to Cameroon.

On this occasion, Cameroon and the Hebrew State announce the reestablishment of their diplomatic relations, which broke down in 1973 following the war in Kippur (Ibid). The reestablishment of relations between Cameroon and the Hebrew State has aroused reactions from Saudi Arabia but also from the authorities in Yaoundé. Faced with the reestablishment of relations between Cameroon and the Hebrew State, the reactions of the Arab countries were not long in coming. Hostile reactions one after the other characterized Saudi Arabia's speeches. Thus, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) described the Cameroonian decision as negative. Colonel Gaddafi replied by calling other African states that have reestablished relations with Israel as well as Cameroon "traitors" (Dogo, 2016, 50-68). Some more extremist Arab states have even called for breaking diplomatic ties with Cameroon. Critics also flare from the OIC.

The member countries of this Islamic organization also retort, and remind Cameroon, to depart from the principle dictated by the Islamic Summit in Rabat, in the Kingdom of Morocco, of September 25, 1969, following the fire criminal of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and whose concern of the Arab leaders gathered in Rabat, was the liberation of the territories occupied by Israel in particular Al Quds Al Sharif (Holy Sanctuary), that is to say Jerusalem, sheltering the Mosque of 'Al Aqsa considered as the 3rd Holy Place of Islam as well as the objectives of this one, relating to the solidarity of cooperation between the member states (Summit of Rabat, 1969). The authorities of Yaoundé, for their part, oppose this claim by the Arab states and consider that its decision to cooperate with Tel Aviv was dictated by diplomatic considerations, as well as the normalization of Egypt post Gamal, since this historic trip. of Anouar El Sadate in Jerusalem in 197 and in the Peace Treaty of 1979, preceded by the Camp David agreements of 1978 including the Israeli-Egyptian Summits. (The Camp David Accord, 1978). Then, the evacuation of the Sinai by the Israeli army in the years 1982.

Finally, the exchange of ambassadors between Cairo and Tel Aviv and even the reasons why Cameroon broke off its relations with Israel have become obsolete. when Egypt, for which these relations were broken, itself normalized its cooperation with Tel-Avis (Dogo, 2016). Cameroon demonstrates by this gesture its will to diversify its partners. At the eighth summit

of non-aligned countries in Zimbabwe in September 1986, the Cameroonian delegation and those of other African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Zaire, denounced the hostility of the Libyan guide and the other Arab states, even as their interference in the affairs of other states. They believe that they are only asserting their personality internationally. However, this situation was not without consequences for Cameroon. Indeed, the Arab countries have suspended their aid towards the Cameroon

THE IMPROVEMENT OF POLITICAL-DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CAMEROON AND SAUDI ARABIA IN THE EARLY 2000S

The 2000s seem to accelerate this cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia. Although these are not comparable to the asymmetrical one observed in the years 1973 following Kippour, (Dogo, 216, 50-68), current cooperation is, bilaterally. It appears that Cameroon and Saudi Arabia have unfortunately not broken off this diplomatic cooperation. Despite the presence of Tel Aviv and the misunderstandings observed in the 1986s. The cooperation between the Kingdom and Cameroon of the 2000s illustrates it very aptly and can even be explained by at least two reasons: with in particular the arrival at the head of the kingdom of Abdallah Iben Saoud and his new vision of foreign diplomacy after the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Rigoulet, 2005, 312) and by the will of Cameroon to cooperate with these Arab partners. However, it was in 2005 that King Abdullah was enthroned as head of the Kingdom. It was this enthronement that facilitated the opening to Cameroon. The opening advocated by the King seems to be an answer for the African continents in general including those of the horn. This enthronement was accompanied in a short time by multiple achievements, notably in Cameroon with the signing of the Islamic University Center of Ngaoundéré (Current University), as well as related agreements. The Saudi presence is as evident in diplomatic, military, cultural, economic and health terms.

THE DIPLOMATIC CONTEXT

Diplomatically, relations between Saudi Arabia and Cameroon have existed since 1966 and

have resulted in the creation of resident diplomatic missions on both sides. The new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Cameroon, Mohammed Siliman Mohammed Al-Mussher successor to Ambassador Mahmoud Bin Hussein Qattan (2009-2013), presented figurative copies of his Credentials in Cameroon on July 02, 2013 and the Credentials to the Head of State on November 07, 2013. On the occasion of the presentation of the figured copies in Cameroon, he affirmed the will and commitment of his country to invest more in strengthening the cooperation through such varied projects in the fields of health, education, agriculture, and infrastructure. Its mission, he said on another occasion, is to finalize the Framework Cooperation Agreement between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia which will further develop trade, in accordance with the aspirations of the Servant of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Ibn Abdel Aziz Al Saud and the Cameroonian government. While Cameroon's Ambassador to Riyadh Iya Tidjani presented his Credentials to the Servant of the Two Holy Mosques on January 11, 2009, as well as Issa Oumarou was appointed Consul General of Cameroon in Jeddah on April 08, 2008. It is worth noting the exchanges of visits as well as messages from personalities of the two countries.

From 05 to 08 May 1998 the stay in Saudi Arabia of a Cameroonian delegation led by Cavaye Yeguie Djibril. This visit will be preceded by that carried out in May 1999, by a Saudi special envoy, in this case Prince Turki Bin Mohamed who stayed in Cameroon in search of Cameroon's support for his candidacy for elections to the Directorate General of the UNESCO. From 02 to 05 March 2005, At the invitation of his Cameroonian counterpart, the President of the Saudi National Assembly (Majlis Al Shura), Saleh Bin Abdullah Bin Humaid, stayed in Yaoundé. It should therefore be noted that on this occasion the Cameroon-Saudi friendship group was created.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

In economic terms, this cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia is materialized through the Saudi Development Fund (FSD). The intervention sectors of the FSD which is an instrument of bilateral cooperation of the Kingdom are: infrastructure, hydraulics, education, health, agriculture, energy, housing and trade finance. It should be noted that the main problems

to be raised relate to the difficulties of communication, the slowness in the reaction of this partner and the low level of funding granted to our country.

Saudi Arabia has financed, through the Saudi Development Fund, economic development projects in Cameroon such as the cultivation of wheat at Wassandé in the Adamawa region, the Chontchi-guide route in the North, the financing of the Foubam-Manki-Magbé-Bridge over the Mape of the Trans-African connecting the Western Region to the Northern part of Cameroon, the funding of 4.3 billion CFA francs from the Ayos-Bonis road in the Eastern Region, Douala Business School, song - loulou dam, the Douala-Yaoundé railway, the University Center of Ngaoundéré, primary schools and several mosques. Construction of housing and other structures within the Tsinga Islamic Complex.

There is also Saudi funding in Cameroonian sport with in particular the case of the Al-Madinah Sports Academy professional training center in the Arrondissement of Yaoundé V. Cameroon and Saudi Arabia maintain fruitful economic cooperation relations within the framework of the organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), of which Saudi Arabia is one of the influential members. At the Dakar Islamic Summit in December 1991 (Dakar Summit, 1991), Saudi Arabia canceled Cameroon's debt. Thus, Saudi Arabia exports various articles to Cameroon and imports from Cameroon mainly agricultural and forestry products. We note the visit to Yaoundé from April 26 to 27, 2004 of HRH Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal Abdul Aziz Al Saud on an economic prospecting tour. His areas of interest were tourism and services, mining, petroleum. He was also interested in projects of sub-regional scope.

CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

In terms of culture and science, Saudi Arabia offers a dozen scholarships each year to Cameroonians to study at the Islamic University of Medina. These scholarships, which are managed by private religious organizations, should be handed over to the Ministry of Higher Education of Cameroon. Two Cameroonian students were admitted to King Saud University for the 2008/2009 academic year. We also note the admission of 18 Cameroonian students to the Islamic universities of Medina and Imam Muhammad Bin Saud of Riyadh for the academic year 2009/2010. For the academic year 2011-2012, 19 students Cameroonians have been

admitted to the universities of Medina and the King in Riyadh. Since 2013, the offer of Saudi scholarships has continued to diversify and the number awarded has increased significantly.

It is also in the sense of an intensification of cultural cooperation that we must situate the recent visit to Yaoundé in March 2004, of the President of the Saudi Olympic Committee, Prince NAWAF, who came to express the desire of his country to count on Cameroon's support during the first games of the OIC member countries that the Kingdom organized during the year 2005. It should also be noted that since 2007, within the framework of the relations of friendship and cooperation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Cameroon, the Saudi Government offers to the Government Cameroonian donated dates for the Muslim and non-Muslim community. In 2009 and 2010, 150 tonnes were granted to Cameroon. In 2011, the reception ceremony for said dates took place at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the presence of public and private media. It must be said that unlike in previous years, 100 tonnes of dates have been granted to the Cameroonian government. This gesture of friendship is highly appreciated by the authorities and the people.

COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH

This cooperation is marked by the surgical operation to separate the Cameroonian Siamese twins on April 21, 2007 by a high-level medical team led by the Ministry of Health on the recommendation of the King of Saudi Arabia. Following this medical feat, the government of Yaoundé sent a message of gratitude to His Majesty, Abdallah Ibn Abdel Aziz Al Saud, Sovereign of Saudi Arabia, Servant of the two holy mosques. We also note the delivery of a donation of 8 tonnes of anti-cholera sera to the Cameroonian Government on September 19, 2012, at the Yaoundé-Nsimalen International Airport in the presence of the Minister of Public Health, André Mama Fouda and the acting representative of the United Nations system, Ms. Fatou Ndiaye, Ambassador Qattan and officials responsible for monitoring cooperation with Saudi Arabia. The delivery of a food donation to help disaster victims in the Northern Region (Far North, North, Adamaoua) following the floods in September 2012. 205 tonnes of food arrived on December 13 and 14, 2012 will have been distributed across the different areas affected as of December 17, 2012.

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

Cameroon and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are both members of the UN and the OIC. They exchange mutual support within the framework of these organizations. Relations between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia are insignificant compared to their real potential. Indeed, despite the ups and downs of low-intensity cooperation, the overcoming of reciprocal susceptibilities should encourage the resumption and strengthening of high-level meetings at the bilateral level. Note the recent creation of an Islamic Complex, a gift from the Saudi government to the people of Babanki in the North West region which includes, in addition to a mosque, a health center and a primary school. This important project was inaugurated in early March 2013 in the presence of the Minister of Basic Education, the Governor of the North West Region, the Director of Asian Affairs who represented MINREX and numerous personalities. Furthermore, the geostrategic and economic importance of Saudi Arabia makes it necessary to intensify his cooperative relations with this country. Thus, for a redeployment of said relationships, large-scale actions should be envisaged without delay. Among these, we can propose the finalization of the Framework Cooperation Agreement between Cameroon and the Kingdom, which could take place within the framework of interstate rapprochement and revitalization. Decisions relating to the management of the Islamic Center of Tsinga as well as negotiations for the signing of an agreement establishing a joint Cameroon / Saudi Arabia commission could be retained. This revitalization system can envisage the organization of visits exchanges, promotion of sports exchanges, in particular in football matters and the settlement of debt arrears with the Saudi Development Fund followed by other members of Government visits, in particular strategic administrations for a real and effective revitalization of economic cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia should be envisaged through exchanges of visits at the level of the consular chambers.

CONCLUSION

Bilateral cooperation between Cameroon and Saudi Arabia has not only experienced periods of intense relations, but also difficult times. These moments today testify to perfect collaboration and today are the sign of a perfect cooperation supposedly beneficial and having

a lively leitmotif representation between the two States. These moments show us that the two States strongly maintain perfect cooperation punctuated by visibilities as striking as the distance between the cooperating countries, so the trajectory is today suffering negative repercussions linked to the influence of politico-diplomatic attractions. In addition, it appears that despite the upheavals, Cameroon and Saudi Arabia maintain diplomatic relations based on political, economic, social, educational and even cultural visibilities. Therefore, it is appropriate to appreciate and highlight this cooperation as a glance at the rear-view mirror to measure the will and capacity of the kingdom in the conduct of diplomatic affairs in Cameroon.

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