

Cameroon agriculture testing its paradoxes: The need for a strategic planning policy

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Abstract

Agriculture plays an important role in the development of Cameroon, having regard to the place it generally occupied in economic policy guidelines, and more to its significant contribution to the growth of national income. However, the immense agro-ecological potential which the country has is not very profitable, in particular because of inconsistencies that hinder the proper articulation of its agricultural policies. This article uses a descriptive and explanatory approach to analyze these obstacles to the emergence of Cameroonian agriculture. It then shows how operational solutions can be articulated through rearmament in strategic planning, strategic alignment and reorientation of production supply.

Keywords: agricultural policy, inconsistency, paradoxes, strategic planning, strategic alignment, value chains.

Introduction

"Indeed, Cameroon relies above all on the primary sector, particularly agriculture, livestock, fishing and crafts, to become, by 2035, an emerging country... Agriculture, I repeat, is our real wealth" (P. Biya, 2011). This excerpt from the speech delivered by the President of the Republic on the occasion of the opening of the agro-pastoral fair in Ebolowa, on June 17, 2011, is striking, as it expresses a political commitment to lead the fight for development, by using of the most effective weapons available to Cameroon. But on analysis, the political discourse since the accession of our country to international sovereignty has always been constant in this commitment, expressed differently under the prisms of the "green revolution" under the era of planned liberalism; the "New Agricultural Policy" against the backdrop of the modernization of production in

a period of structural adjustment; or even "second generation agriculture" after this adjustment and as a substrate for the emergence plan. Beyond the conceptual dressing, it would ultimately be lyrics of a beautiful melody that Cameroon has composed since its accession to independence, but on which the setting to music has proved difficult: the country still depends largely imports to meet its food needs, which seriously unbalances its current account.

This implacable reality calls for questioning on the congruence between political intentions and actions, better still, on the coherence in the structuring and operationalization of public policies which aim to get this key sector of the economy off the ground. In other words, what would be the breaking points in the planning process of this political thought, and how could a paradigm shift serve as a catalyst? The strategic planning that underlies

this new paradigm is strongly inspired by business management. Strategy is defined as the art of allocating resources, by definition available in limited quantities, so as to create a lasting advantage on the battlefield (Ducreux et al. 2009). Of military origin, the word is only used in the economic context, especially micro-economic, in the 1960s. It is now a question of seeking the competitive advantage, no longer by costs and prices, but by the potential value generated from the differentiations of quality, service or reliability. This new perspective seemed more fruitful in terms of sustainability. Strategic planning, for its part, refers to a coordinated and methodical process through which a company or an actor (the State in this case) mobilizes both its external and internal strengths and its organizational culture to establish orientations with a view to long term, and the means to implement to achieve them. This is corroborated by Gay Tall (2015), when he states that;

“The notion of strategic planning describes the process by which a rational analysis of the current situation and of future possibilities and dangers leads to the formulation of intentions, strategies, measures and goals [...] [which] indicate how the company, by making the best use of existing resources, controls the opportunities defined by its environment and avoids threats”.

Borrowing to the limit of the analogy) concerning the business leader and the conductor (Ducreux et al. 2009, we would then say that the state must be a designer of strategy, an orchestrator and a director.

This exploratory study examines, from the point of view of agricultural policies, the challenges underlying the necessary break with the development model applied so far. It follows a descriptive and explanatory approach to show to what extent strategic planning could, for this purpose, serve as a catalyst for Cameroonian agriculture.

Cameroonian agriculture put to the test of paradoxes

Although Cameroon has important advantages predisposing it to an agricultural vocation, its production has struggled to meet its food needs since its independence. Food security is therefore a challenge, due to the many inconsistencies in national agricultural policy that need to be addressed.

An ambiguous food security in a country yet endowed with immense natural potential

Located at the bottom of the Gulf of Guinea on the western coast of Africa, Cameroon benefits from a stretch in latitude and longitude which determines its agro-ecological diversity. It thus brings together most of the bioclimatic range of the intertropical zone (ERUC, 1981), a significant potential for the development of agricultural, livestock and fishing activities in rural areas. To this must be added the availability of agricultural land, ie 7.2 million ha, of which 240,000 ha are potentially irrigable (FAO, 2014). Due to these conditions there is hardly any totally hostile zone and the productions vary from one region to another. Agriculture is therefore one of the main engines of the Cameroonian economy. (Kom, 2001). In 1960, it already employed nearly 85% of the working population, or about 1.9 million people, and generated 30% of the GDP. Between 1960 and 1962, cumulative receipts from cocoa, coffee, timber, cotton, bananas, and peanuts accounted for 68% of total exports. In 1964, the value of exports amounted to 24.04 billion CFA francs out of a total of 30 billion, or 80%. (Kestemont, 1986). In addition, agriculture generated important outlets for industrial production. (Kom, 2001, p. 124). This contribution of agriculture to GDP has gradually diminished with the development of other sectors of the national economy, but it has remained significant, averaging around 20% over the past thirty years.

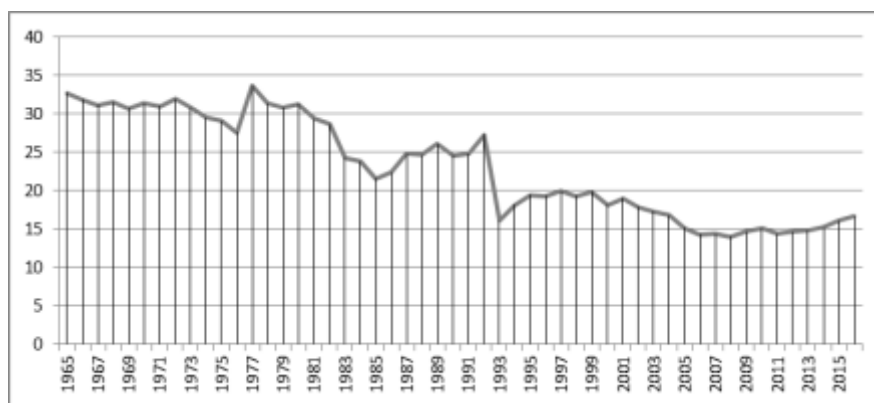


Figure 1: Contribution of agriculture to GDP from 1965 to 2015

Source: Produced using data from the World Bank, <https://donnees.banquemondiale.org>, accessed June 7, 2018

However, this contribution of agriculture to GDP is a tree that hides the forest, because the households most affected by food insecurity are those who cultivate plots of less than one hectare (11%); who do not use improved seeds (6.6%). (WFP, 2011). Food availability is very low, especially for cereals which constitute a third of the caloric intake in human food, which rapidly increases the rate of cereal imports. (MINADER, 2006). The cereal deficit thus fell from 565,000 to 682,000 tonnes between 2006 and 2011, ie an increase of 20.7%. (WFP, 2011). The gradual upturn in food production remained insufficient, and production of cash crops stagnated or declined.

This situation maintained the use of imports and an increase in the price level at the national level of around 28% between 2007 and 2014, mainly driven by the increase in the prices of food products and non-alcoholic beverages (40.8 %) (INS / ECAM 4). The rise in the cost of living was at the origin, in February 2008, of strong social tensions qualified as "hunger riots", especially since nearly 40% of the Cameroonian population in 2007 was poor and therefore found it difficult to meet basic needs; food insecure households spending proportionately more on food, i.e. 46.5% of their budget, compared to 38.5% for others (WFP, 2011).

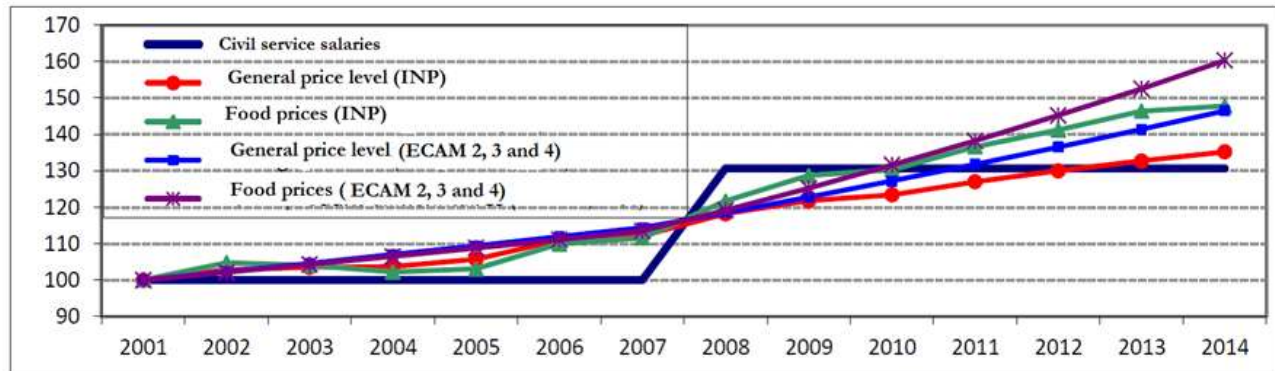


Figure 2: Household purchasing power from 2001 to 2014
Source: INS, ECAM 4. Poverty and changes in household purchasing power, p. 6

This paradox of a starving monkey, while sitting on a bunch of bananas, is explained by the difficulty that Cameroon has had to design and implement an efficient agricultural policy, capable of exploiting its immense potential. This is what we are expressing here in terms of inconsistencies.

Many inconsistencies in the articulation of agricultural policy

A review of the orientations of Cameroon's agricultural policy reveals four major inconsistencies: the choice to perpetuate a cash crop; the disengagement of the state from the agricultural sector; the lack of a coherent development vision; the inefficient use of available resources.

The first inconsistency is linked to the choice of cash farming instead of consumer agriculture. Under the presidency of Ahmadou Ahidjo, the Cameroonian economy was driven by the political philosophy of planned liberalism, the general objective of which was to double the standard of living of the populations in 20 years, by bringing the GNP to a relative value of 50 000 F CFA by 1980 (Ahidjo, 1976; ERUC, 1981). In the short term, the achievement of this objective required the promotion of local products and the improvement of the trade balance, the development and diversification of export agricultural production as the main source of monetary income for the rural population (L

Zang, 1977). The philosophy of community liberalism defended by his constitutional successor, Paul Biya, was part of the continuation and strengthening of this orientation (Biya, 1986). However, this prioritization of agriculture has seen a rapid shift towards a prioritization of export crops, the revenues of which, benefiting from "favorable" world prices, made it possible to replenish the state coffers. As a result, food production gradually collapsed. It has combined with the sustained fall in and instability of world prices for export crops, to keep the entire economy in a slump. By way of illustration, cocoa exports, which represented 94 billion CFA francs in 1984/1985, fell to 30 billion CFA francs in 1992/1993; those of coffee increased in the same period from 110 billion F CFA to nearly 20 billion F CFA. (Aerts et al, 2000). Despite the initiatives undertaken, the weight of cash crops exported in the raw state remains significant and the curve is struggling to be reversed.

The second inconsistency is due to the fact that since the crisis of the 1980s and the Structural Adjustment Programs (PAS) implemented under the constraint of the Bretton Woods institutions, the Cameroonian State has strongly withdrawn from the agricultural economy, in removing subsidies, liberalizing trade in inputs and privatizing state-owned companies that it had difficulty making profitable due to poor management (Njomgang, 1994). This hard blow to an agricultural sector already at

bay, delivered the farmers, very little prepared, to the voracious competition of the international market, to the great benefit of the international donors, more driven by the principle of satisfaction of their own interests. It is this "economic catechism" (Hibou, 1998.) which served as a backdrop to the development, in June 1990, of the New Agricultural Policy focused on the deregulation of the sector, the restructuring / privatization of structures. public, and the disengagement of the State in favor of private initiative; but for which it is clearly established that none of the five sectoral objectives (expected induced effects) had been reached before its abandonment and the implementation of the orientations of the Rural Sector Development Strategy Document (DSDSR) of 2003 (BM, 2014). The farmers' "sacrifice" at the Bretton Woods altar was therefore in vain, as it failed to appease the anger of the development gods. Quite the contrary! And except naivety on our part, it could not be otherwise.

Another constraint in the implementation of Cameroon's agricultural policy lies in the difficult coordination of the interplay between the various institutional actors, as well as the multiplicity of projects and programs for the development of the agricultural sector. The President of the Republic made the sad observation when he declared:

Very many actions have been taken to this end by the public authorities, actions which it would be tiresome to list all here. [...] Due to the large number and the extreme diversity of these actions and programs, it is difficult today to make an overall assessment of our strategy. While undeniable results have been obtained in certain areas, the overall impression is that of too much dispersion and a certain lack of consistency. (Biya, 2011).

From the point of view of institutional actors, it should be noted that the cross-cutting nature of agricultural and rural development issues, as well as the absence of a coherent overall vision of the development strategy of this key sector of the economy Cameroonian government has led to a costly and sometimes numbing multiplication of institutional actors. The financing and management of agricultural projects, for example, puts the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) in competition with the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Territorial Development (financing and management of the program agro poles); the Ministry of Youth; the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training and the National Employment Fund, to name a few, as well as most of the international donors involved in the sector; each one defining its priorities and its strategy. The resulting scattering does not allow us to capitalize on efforts to achieve government objectives.

The provisions of ministerial decisions N ° 00695 and 00696 / MINADER / CAB / UCSP of June 1, 2017 restructuring the programs managed by MINADER are an illustration of the excessive and ineffective nature of the programs hitherto implemented by this ministerial department. While there is generally a support program for each speculation, it should be noted by way of illustration that cocoa and coffee, whose sectors have not managed to get out of the rut since the crisis of the 1980s, are the subject of five specific parallel projects: the Cocoa / Coffee Seed Project (PSCC), the Support Project for the Use of Fertilizers in the Cocoa and Coffee Sectors (PAUEF2C), the Support Project for Antifungal Control in the Cocoa and Coffee Sectors (PALAF2C), the Cocoa and Coffee Plant Material Production and Distribution Project (PPDMVCC), and the Project for the Improvement and Quality Management in the Cocoa and Coffee Sectors (PAGQ2C).

This institutional obesity is aggravated by management that is not very results-oriented and leaves more room for counterproductive practices that are sometimes legitimized. In reality, this is the common denominator of the causes of the failure of projects and programs, or the bankruptcy of agro-industrial enterprises.

The fourth and last major inconsistency that we highlight relates to the lack of congruence between agricultural and rural development intentions and the allocation of budgetary resources. It thus appears that the cumulative share of public resources devoted to the two ministries mainly in charge of agricultural issues has so far remained very low. It hovered around 2% in the 1980s. It experienced an exceptional and occasional rise in 1990/91 (7.09%), certainly due to the adoption of the NPA, before stabilizing around 4% up to " in 2003, then to drop to 3.5% until 2017.

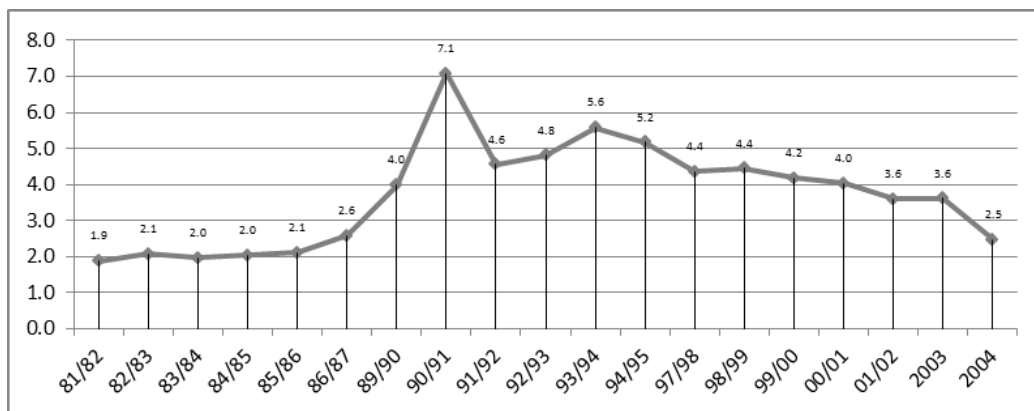


Figure 3: Share of agriculture in the national budget from 1965 to 2015 (%)
Source: Data compiled from the various finance laws of Cameroon

This low level of allocated resources was aggravated by the poor quality of spending, which was geared more towards operation than investment. In addition to the resulting inconsistencies, Cameroonian agriculture is plagued by other significant constraints, rightly identified in the Rural Sector Development Strategy Document in 2006.

Table 1: Some constraints of Cameroonian agriculture

Constraints	Manifestations
Low production and productivity of farms	The small size of farms; low use of high yield techniques; difficult access to land in some regions, especially for women and young people; the scarcity and low qualification of the workforce in rural areas; poor soil quality and difficult access to efficient inputs; the high prevalence of plant and animal diseases; poor water control; poor access to credit.
Difficulties in accessing markets	The poor state of the lines of communication; insufficient marketing infrastructure; low processing and storage capacity; lack of information on market opportunities; low competitiveness of products; the weak managerial capacities of the actors; the weak organization of the actors; the organization of markets.
The precariousness of living conditions	Low income for producers; the dilapidated and inadequate state of rural roads; the inadequacy and poor condition of socioeconomic infrastructure; poor quality of housing.
The weak organization of actors	The weak management capacity of organizations; the inadequacy of the supervision system; the quantitative and qualitative insufficiency of collective rural facilities; the aging of producers and the rural exodus; the inadequacy of training; the inadequacy of training structures.
A natural environment in full degradation,	Depletion and degradation of soils; strong demographic pressure; the low capacity to manage space and natural resources; poor water management capacity; low knowledge of the potential in natural resources.
An insufficiently adapted institutional environment	The insufficiency and poor quality of statistics; insufficient consultation and coordination capacity; the inadequacy of taxation; the inadequacy of land legislation; the incomplete legislative and regulatory framework.
Insufficient credit	The weakness of self-financing; the inadequacy of financing structures adapted to the rural sector; insufficient information on funding possibilities; low mobilization of rural savings; the weak involvement of local communities; the weak mobilization of external aid; reducing private financing flows; weak credit management capacity.

Source: MINADER, Rural Sector Development Strategy Document (RSDSD). Summary of the agriculture and rural development component, Yaoundé, July 2006, pp. 8-10

Thus, despite the paradigm shifts in agricultural policy discourse since independence, the reality has remained the same, namely that production stagnates and does not manage to meet national food needs, especially as the country produces little what he consumes. The import curve has not been reversed, underlying the 35-fold increase in the absolute value of basic necessities (wheat,

rice, sugar, dairy products and meats) (C. Awono and M. Havard, 2010) Inflation thus fuelled the vicious circle of poverty, particularly in rural areas (56.8%).

Strategic planning as a driving force for genuine agricultural emergence

Faced with the multiple constraints that have plagued the agricultural sector in Cameroon, the start of an effective take-off necessarily involves a break with the old order. The challenges that such a paradigm shift suggests revolve around strategic planning, and the challenges it suggests in terms of actor alignment and mastery of agricultural value chains.

The challenge of strategic planning

Planning is defined as a realistic anticipation of development prospects and an organized and concerted process of implementing the means available (or likely to be so with a high probability) to carry out structural transformations (Jacquemot and Raffinot, 1985). Concretely, to be efficient, planning must meet the development strategy, which determines the favorable conditions for the exploitation of resources and potential, as well as the harmonious combination of the play of the different actors, in order to simulate and support economic growth. Constants in strategic planning are therefore the objective to be achieved and the results, which brings it closer to the theory of new public management (UNDP, 2009; Veilleux, 2013).

Strategic planning is both a political and a social activity. (Jacquemot and Raffinot, 1985). From a political point of view, its product is an instrument of power which derives its legitimacy from the choices made and assumed by the government, and implemented by the various social actors who subscribe to the actions adopted. From a social point of view, it allows a permanent process of consultation, monitoring and evaluation having a real influence on the decision-making centers. The major stake is therefore that of realism, but also of flexibility, in the sense that the constant capacity for adaptation and innovation must enable all requirements to be met.

This theoretical framework allows us to deduce that strategic planning is essential, because it makes it possible to break with the development of catalogs of projects, poorly evaluated at the level of direct costs and recurrent costs, not hierarchical in relation to each other and presented in dispersed order in sectoral policies. Mazouz and Leclerc could thus affirm that "The main characteristic of a strategic plan is to have a clear mission, precise objectives and measurable results" (Veilleux, 2013).

For planning to be effective, four requirements could constitute Ariadne's sons (P. Jacquemot and M. Raffinot, 1985):

- Set up a robust, reliable and well-coordinated statistical apparatus with the needs of planning. This is important in order to identify the potentialities and analyze the constraining forces with

which the policies recommended by the plan are confronted;

- Prioritize planning operations, taking into account limited resources. The effort could thus be mobilized for priority programs, in an increasing and differentiated manner and according to the evolution of financial availability. This selective procedure, apart from having an operational advantage, strengthens the credibility of the plan both internally and externally;
- Maintain the planning activity on a permanent basis so that there is no hyphen or floating period between the development and execution of the plan;
- Ensure the congruence between the plan and the budget to ensure a minimum coherence between the planned programs and the financed programs.

Fall goes further in his analysis and emphasizes the principles likely to raise the strategic scope of planning. It therefore emphasizes flexibility / adaptability, to integrate the environmental changes that have occurred in an unexpected way; selectivity, to focus on the essentials and achieve the best decisions from the perspective of beneficiaries; participation, for the mobilization of all the actors concerned; and finally realism, which presupposes prioritization of actions given the scarcity of resources (Tall, 2015).

If we stick to the fact that since 2009 Cameroon has adopted a development vision for 2035, staggered in time and with specific sectorial orientations, it would be pushing an open door to recall these requirements of strategic planning. It should be noted, however, that the vision is only the first step in the strategic planning process, of which it, along with the missions and values, constitutes the frame of reference. Due to its still general character, it must still be tested and operationalized in the smallest detail within the framework of a strategic plan, and equipped with management tools such as effective processes, an efficient budget and evaluation instruments. It is in this that it can guarantee results close to the previously set objectives. (UNDP, 2009).

It therefore turns out that this necessary strategic alignment is still lacking in Cameroon. The weakness of the national statistical apparatus concerning up-to-date data on the agricultural sector may lead to questioning the bases of the preparation of projections and even the capacity to evaluate their implementation. In 2009, an FAO report concluded (FAO 2009):

In the agricultural sector, there is no permanent consultation mechanism between the various ministries which intervene alongside the INS in the production of agricultural and food

statistics. [...] Insufficient human, material and financial resources continue to plague the statistical apparatus in the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors in Cameroon. The structural data of these sectors are outdated and it is becoming urgent to organize a General Census of Agriculture and Livestock.

through the opening of the Agricultural Bank and the Banque des PME-PMI (Biya, 2011).

However, there is reason to question their sincerity with regard to what has actually been undertaken to modernize and accelerate agricultural growth, in this case by 2019, the first indicative step in the implementation of vision 2035. The last requirement of strategic planning, which is budgetary, indicates another axis of the necessary break with the past and the practices that have prevailed until then. Indeed, if the political discourse admits, in a recurring way since independence, that agriculture is the main engine of growth and the fight against poverty, it is necessary to revise upwards the share of public financing allocated to development of this sector. A study by the BEAC's research department concluded that "for each 1% increase in the budget allocated to agriculture, the agricultural product grows by 0.3%" (G.G.D. Biligil, 2017). However, she recommended a good articulation of private financing, "because of the high risks associated with agricultural activity and the lack of access of farmers to the collateral necessary for formal financing.

The challenge of the strategic alignment of institutional actors in the agricultural sector

To break the Indian sign of too much dispersion and a certain lack of consistency (P. Biya, 2011), it would be important to draw inspiration from modern business management techniques, to strategically align the various institutional players. This alignment suggests two things. First, that the number of institutions directly in charge of operationalizing the agricultural policy be revised downwards, as well as the number of projects and / or programs through which it is implemented, in order to reduce the strong dispersion. MINADER would thus become, by virtue of its technical competence, the main actor able to pilot actions in the field, regardless of their transversality. Second, and to complete this first provision, it would be necessary to redefine the specific objectives (components of the strategy) of each institutional actor, in line with the overall strategy, and for the sake of convergence. As Robert Kaplan and David Norton (2007) point out, strategic coherence can only be guaranteed "when the network of internal performance determinants is coherent and aligned with the customer and the desired financial results". The restructuring initiated in June 2017 by MINADER is part of this dynamic, but it would need to be extended and systematized.

For a better strategic alignment, the mechanisms allowing the government to work as a team, like the rowers of a dugout canoe, should be oiled so as to make the efforts of all converge towards the achievement of the common goal. Without this convergence of efforts, progress would be slow, if not zero, with high risks of loss of control and sinking.

This is arguably the first twist that should be corrected. The requirement for prioritization of planning operations is also that of realism based on own resources, especially in an international environment also driven by the preservation of special interests. From this point of view, the agricultural sector seems so diverse to us that it would have been important to prioritize the growth sectors and to put an emphasis on the development of their respective value chains.

The third requirement, evaluation - permanent adjustment, highlights another urgent break, because one should no longer wait until the end of a program or project to "see" its failure and consider adjustments. If there is reason to welcome the Yaoundé declaration of May 19, 2010, on the side-lines of the Africa 21 international conference, namely that "[...] the current African awakening must be based in particular on the development of subsistence farming. Africa must no longer import to eat, it must, if necessary, temporarily protect its agriculture "; or the orientations indicated by the President of the Republic in his opening speech at the Ebolowa agro-pastoral fair on January 17, 2011:

[...] Produce more of these commodities [rice, corn, sugar and fish] or substitute them with local products, such as plantain, cassava or other tubers. [...] Increasing production in deficit and improving our means of communication with rural areas must henceforth be considered as urgent priorities. [...] I urge the ministerial departments concerned in this direction, all cases ceasing and I want substantial results. [...] The establishment of a fertilizer production unit, the commissioning of the assembly plant for agricultural machinery, construction of which is underway here in Ebolowa, the rehabilitation of seed farms, the preparation of a land reform aimed at meeting the requirements of second-generation agriculture, the construction of markets and purchasing centers for agro-pastoral and fishery products, the reform of agricultural training and education, the strengthening of the system financing of rural activities

The challenge of mastering agricultural value chains

The major challenge for Cameroonian agriculture is certainly to develop its capacity to meet national food needs through sufficient production in quantity and quality, but also to conquer external markets, especially sub-regional ones. This call for deep reflection on the production supply: what should be produced, and how should we produce it?

The answer to the first question is that we must first produce in order to meet immediate consumption needs, while being aware that certain lingering eating habits of our colonial past, and which underpin imports, must be gradually modified. A new "food education" should thus accompany the promotion of food crops to encourage the consumption of local products and guarantee food security. Export crops, which still mobilize the bulk of domestic and foreign financing, should also be redefined according to their comparative advantages. Some studies in this direction have indicated that plantains have great potential, as well as cotton, even if its price has steadily declined on the world market. Local processing would undoubtedly make it possible to circumvent the international hypocrisy which controls the prices of agricultural raw materials, in order to significantly increase the margins on added value.

As for how to produce, the option of integrated agriculture according to the specificities of agro-ecological zones should resolutely be implemented. From this point of view, the agropolis development program led by MINEPAT represents an experience to be capitalized on, but it needs to be systematized for a good mastery of value chains. Indeed, the value chain of each sector should encompass input suppliers, producers, processors, actors involved in marketing and the end consumer, both at national, regional and international level (UN / ECA / BSR-AO, 2012). And since this is a "chain", each link is essential and contributes in a relationship of interdependence to increasing the value of the product at its level, at the same time as it derives the benefits of its activity. Compared to traditional agriculture, this organization promotes both "raising the standard of living of small producers, the development of entrepreneurship and SMEs, high productivity and controlled quality products [and taking into account] the expectations of potential consumers and market demand". At the same time, it represents an opportunity to correct the harmful effects of the disengagement of the State, by federating the efforts of stakeholders from each link in the chain, and by making them less vulnerable. In practice, value chains can be structured around farmer organizations, agro-business operations, or even, to favor speed, equity and inclusiveness, an agricultural co-entrepreneurship involving State or decentralized communities to technical or financial partners (UN / CEA / BSR-WA, 2012).

It is important to note on this point that the technological backwardness that Cameroon shows on the large farms of industrialized countries can in reality be used as an asset. Indeed, since the great industrial-agricultural revolution of

the middle of the 19th century, man has gone from progress to progress, unfortunately losing sight of the whole purpose of this progress. Excessive mechanization, the massive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, the harmful effects of which are jealously hidden, and unsupervised genetic manipulation, end up threatening the very survival of the human species. Toxic food without nutritional value, renewal of substitute food products, everything goes! The issues are now a kind of financial mafia. In this food chaos, the "backwardness" of Cameroonian agriculture with its archaic production methods now makes it more suitable for organic farming. The bet to be won would then be to "promote the emergence of second-generation production units", reconciling real traditional know-how with new techniques, to improve quantity while preserving quality. This is not only a goal of sustainable development, but a way to position itself in niche markets. Organic farming would also have the advantage of reducing dependence on external factors of production. It would however require, by refusal of naivety, that a label aligned with international standards be defined, but a label of its own.

Conclusion

The objective of this reflection was to examine the obstacles to the take-off of Cameroonian agriculture, as well as the challenges facing it if it wants, as is repeatedly emphasized in economic policy speeches, to constitute the main engine of emergence. It appears indeed that due to the immense natural potential with which Cameroon is endowed, the contribution of agriculture to the production of national wealth, and especially the numerical importance of the active population that it mobilizes, agriculture is an essential lever of development. However, this potential is very little exploited, and the agricultural sector is unable to meet national food needs, due to certain paralyzing inconsistencies in the articulation and operationalization of its development policy. This paradox is indicative of the challenges to be taken up, and which have as a common denominator a real break with the development model applied until then, without endogenous originality. These challenges, addressed here under the seal of a Cameroonian revolt, would then be articulated along three axes: strategic planning as an instrument for operationalizing the development vision; strategic alignment as an efficient management instrument, control of value chains as a realistic instrument of efficiency.

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