

# **Urbanization and sustainable development: proposal for a strategy for the development and sustainable development of the yaounde vii borough community**

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## **Biography:**

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The world is urbanizing and becoming urban. In 1950, just under 30% of the world's inhabitants lived in cities; today it is the case of one in two inhabitants and, according to the United Nations, city dwellers will represent more than 70% of the world population in 2050. The "urban question" thus becomes central for all societies, from the north as the South, and the relationship between urbanization and sustainable development is becoming increasingly important. The term "sustainable city", as well as the expression "sustainable urban development", are now frequently used to designate planning and urban planning practices that are intended to be innovative (Da Cunha et al., 2005, Mathieu and Guermond , 2005).

With an urbanization rate that crossed the 50% threshold in 2003<sup>1</sup>, Cameroon's Central African country is one of the most urbanized in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, this urbanization is not mastered, and instead of being a lever for economic growth, it has resulted in the anarchic expansion of housing, inadequate infrastructure and basic urban services, illustrated by an unprecedented development of shantytowns, with consequential promiscuity, insalubrity and social fracture. The result is the many dysfunctions that lead to a decline in production, the stagnation or even decline in urban income, the exposure of populations to various risks and the worsening of poverty<sup>2</sup>.

With an annual growth rate of 5.6%<sup>3</sup> and a population increased from 649,252 inhabitants in 1987 to over 3,500,000 today<sup>4</sup>, Yaoundé Cameroon's political capital systematically responds to this almost chaotic development pattern. Indeed, it is one of the two largest cities in the country and is experiencing population growth and rapid spatial expansion. With an estimated population of about 3,534,923 inhabitants<sup>5</sup>, Yaoundé is made up of 7 boroughs and has a metropolitan area composed of 7 peripheral cities grouped within a radius of 30 km, and between which are articulated various interactions which confirm the status metropolitan of Yaoundé. Implicitly this population growth leads to an unbridled consumption of space (between 1980 and 2001 Yaounde quadrupled in size to reach 15,900 ha<sup>6</sup>) and numerous economic, social, and environmental impacts. Indeed, in the six (6) oldest districts of Yaoundé urban development is characterized by a rapid spatial expansion that has already exceeded the administrative limits, with an average urbanization of 75% for all of these communes (more than 90% for Yaoundé IV, V and VI). This extension is nevertheless characterized by the presence of numerous sub-structured neighborhoods with 70% to 80% of the city's population living in so-called spontaneous neighborhoods<sup>7</sup>. In addition, there is a strong lack of infrastructure and poor road conditions (900 km of

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<sup>1</sup> Cameroon urban profile

<sup>2</sup> Statement by HE Jean Claude MBWENTCHOU, Minister of Housing and Urban Development of Cameroon (Habitat III)

<sup>3</sup> PNUD - Cameroun rapport national sur le développement humain

<sup>4</sup> Final report presentation of the RGPH 2005

<sup>5</sup> Projection from the results of the 2005 RGPH

<sup>6</sup> Planning Master Plan Yaoundé 2020

<sup>7</sup> Urban Profile of Yaoundé 2007 which was the first phase of the 2010 participatory slum upgrading program initiated by UN-Habitat ;

roads for roads, of which 435 covers about 3.8% of Yaounde's surface area)<sup>8</sup>. In this urban anarchy there is no subsequent economic development and we are witnessing the proliferation of informal activities. In addition, the difficulty of accessing urban services for a large part of the population and urban poverty (5.9%)<sup>9</sup> leads to inequalities and segregation between the different social strata. This type of urbanization has many negative impacts on the environment with the proliferation of insalubrity, the occupation of riverbanks (causing many floods during periods of heavy rainfall), deforestation, pollution of wastewater, urban pollution, lack of structured green fields, etc. Roughly speaking, the first six district communes of Yaoundé find themselves trapped in a disaster scenario with anarchic urban development and without subsequent economic development, with the creation of social disparities due to difficult access to basic urban services and environmental degradation, all because of the inefficiency of urban policies coupled with the lack of prior planning based on a vision of sustainable development.

In addition, the Yaounde VII district municipality, which is the youngest of the Yaoundé communes, has a slightly wider margin of maneuver to guide its development over the long term. Indeed, created in 2007 it occupies an area of 34.9 km<sup>2</sup> with an estimated population of 193,934 inhabitants in 2017<sup>10</sup>. Many potentialities on various levels make the charm of this district municipality. First of all in terms of mining, it has a great potential for rocks used for construction or public works. On the natural level it has forests, agricultural land, and a lake which is the largest in Yaoundé or even the metropolitan area and which provides drinking water to nearly 30,000 households while constituting a tourism potential. highlighted for the moment. With an urbanization rate of 48%, Yaoundé VII is a growing municipality in a metropolitan territory itself growing. Still almost rural at its creation in 2007, Yaoundé VII is today due to the expansion of Yaoundé, a rapidly changing urban space that has multiplied its surface area by 2 in 15 years. In addition, the absence of town planning documents at the scale of the municipality is to deplore. Indeed, Yaounde VII is currently covered by 02 planning documents, namely the Yaoundé 2020 PDU which is coming to an end and the CDS horizon 2035, but does not have any documents at the local level to guide and sustainably control its development. Given the youth of Yaoundé VII, its land availability and the many natural assets at its disposal, it is imperative to oversee its rapid development and focus it on a sustainable development approach to ensure sustainable development. the economic development of the territory, the quality of social life, the preservation of the environment and a coherent urban development in order to prevent falling into the same scenarios of anarchy as Yaoundé as a whole and the other borough communes in particular.

### **Sustainable urban development strategy**

It is based on 04 main indicators to know which takes root in the pillars of sustainable development namely the economy, the social, and the environment. To these is added the urban development aspect to guarantee sustainable urban development. In the context of sustainable urban development for Yaoundé VII, various issues stem from territorial issues related to the territorial performance of the municipality in the metropolitan area, urban issues that refer to the control and planning of the urban development of the city. the regulation of land use and land use, the establishment of adapted infrastructure and basic equipment. The issues of sustainable development must also be taken into account with the implementation of a local economy that guarantees sustainable economic growth, in a healthy social environment offering social services that guarantee a better quality of social life for all, all in environmental framework protected and preserving natural areas. The vision of development is here to make by 2035, the Commune of YAOUNDE VII is a major pole of attraction, a city prosperous and open to the creation and redistribution of wealth. This vision is divided into 18 orientations grouped around six major strategic axes namely: To integrate Yaoundé VII for the Yaoundé's metropolitan development for the long term; Master the urbanization of the municipality of Yaounde VII; Provide attractive and modern equipment and infrastructure; Ensure the economic growth of the territory; Strengthen the quality of life and promote smart land management; Develop a green municipality

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<sup>8</sup> In the cities of the North, roads generally cover 15 to 30% of the total area of cities, while in cities in the South, this percentage is less than 10%. Source World Bank

<sup>9</sup> INS/ECAM 3, 2007

<sup>10</sup> Number obtained from the 2005 RGPH data and the projection formula  $P_n = P_0 (1 + a)^n$  (with  $P_0$ : the starting population,  $P_n$ : the population after  $n$  years,  $n$ : the number of years considered,  $a$ : the rate of natural increase)

respectful of its environment; these axes and orientations are followed by specific actions in coherence with the global vision of development, and in respect of the identified stakes.

### **Regulation of use**

Depending on the specificities of each area, 04 major zones are identified and each zone type has been assigned a specific regulation to ensure the sustainable urban development of the municipality.

- The natural areas include the whole of the blue frame and the green network of the municipality apart from the agricultural land. They constitute hearts of biodiversity that must be protected from urbanization in order to guarantee the sustainable development of Yaoundé VII.
- Agricultural areas. The town is currently occupied by nearly 220 ha of cultivated areas. The agricultural zones include all the areas whose only way of use up to the year 2035 is agriculture. These areas are made up of current agricultural lands, to which are added all the wetlands, flood plains, and easements linked to the zones.
- Urban areas, which include all the urbanized areas of the territory and spread over the entire municipality. According to their specificities and in order to propose adequate orientations, we have divided them into urban areas to restructure, rehabilitate and densify.
- Areas to be urbanized which are essentially peripheral areas constituting future areas of extension of the municipality. The delimitation of these zones aims to control spatial development through a rational occupation of space.

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### **Specific arrangements**

These are ad hoc actions (urban development, road works, land development, housing, etc.) to be carried out for the effective implementation of the development and sustainable development strategy. These different arrangements are in total conformity with the strategic orientations and the specificities of each space. Thus, 11 specific developments have been identified covering the entire municipal area.

### **Conclusion**

Ensuring the transition to sustainable cities requires sustainable urban planning specific to each territory. In the case of Yaoundé VII, it is a strategic approach that starts from a global vision based on a territorial diagnosis, in order to define strategic axes of development. These strategic areas are broken down into orientations and actions that respond to all identified development issues. From this strategy is achieved a zone assignment that assigns sustainable functions taking into account the specificities of each space. At the end of the chain, there are specific arrangements that embody the various orientations in operations. It is therefore a funneling process that relies on the principles of sustainable development to enable sustainable urban development for a territory. The implementation of this approach has a cost and mobilizes different groups of actors throughout the long-term approach (20 years). These different actors are grouped around the Yaounde VII City Council and the State of Cameroon, namely financial institutions, institutional partners, economic operators, etc.