



REPORT ON VISIT OF C3T MEDIA DIALOGUE TEAM TO BAFOUSSAM

(Tuesday 7th & Wednesday 8th February, 2017)

Introduction

In Cameroon, 2,700 people die yearly from tobacco related causes. The 2013 Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Cameroon shows that approximately 1,100,000 adults are regular consumers of tobacco products in the country while the 2014 Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) reveals that at least 300,000 students between the ages of 13 and 15 consume tobacco products. The bad news here is that at least half of all these people are sure to die as a result of their tobacco consumption.

With such a disturbing situation, it becomes imperative to voice out the dangers of tobacco consumption, but more importantly, adopt regulations that will control the production and consumption of tobacco products in the country.

Because of weak tobacco control policies in Cameroon, the tobacco industry easily dodges existing regulations and carries out activities that defy the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Cameroon ratified the FCTC in 2006. As a party to the convention therefore, the country is expected to embark on policies that protect its citizens from tobacco control.

It is in a bid to sensitize Cameroonians on the dangers of tobacco consumption, and existing but poorly implemented measures to protect citizens from the tobacco industry, that the **Media Dialogue Team** of the Cameroonians Coalition for Tobacco Control (C3T) visited the town of Bafoussam on Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th February, 2017.

Objectives

The Bafoussam visit by C3T's Media Dialogue Team had two general objectives;

- I. To sensitise the press on tobacco and tobacco control issues through a media Dialogue.
- II. To carry out advocacy visits to administrative and political authorities.

These general objectives were greatly met given that the team effectively carried out the Media Dialogue and also succeeded to visit some authorities or their representatives.

THE MEDIA DIALOGUE

The Media Dialogue took place on Wednesday 8th February, 2017 at the Mbatkam Hotel in Bafoussam. It had the following specific objectives;

1. To equip journalists of the West Region with the right information so they could adequately report on tobacco control issues.
2. To get the journalists interested in tobacco control issues by letting them know of the manoeuvres of the tobacco industry.

3. To “recruit” journalists who can serve as tobacco control focal points in the West Region.

The Bafoussam media dialogue drilled journalists on tobacco and tobacco control policies that can improve the lives of Cameroonians.

The following issues were discussed during the press talk;

- Tobacco and its dangers on human health.
- The general tobacco situation in the world, in Africa and in Cameroon.
- Interference of tobacco control policies by the tobacco industry
- Dealing with the tobacco problem by following the guidelines of the FCTC with the enforcement of a National Tobacco Control law.
- Components of a good tobacco control law
 - ✓ A comprehensive ban on Tobacco Advertising Promotion and Sponsorship.
 - ✓ Graphic Health Warnings on Packs of Tobacco Products
 - ✓ Smoke-free environments
- The National Cancer Institute-WHO Latest Report: The Economics of Tobacco and Tobacco Control.
- The Tobacco Industry Accountability Project (TIA)
- The 2014 GYTS Cameroon

The journalists asked questions ranging from what the coalition is doing to counter the tobacco industry to why we do not stop the production and importation of tobacco products all together. Some participants sought to know the strategies the coalition is taking to get the information to remote areas given that a lot of tobacco consumption takes place in such areas. Adequate answers were given to all questions asked.



Journalists listening to C3T Media Dialogue Team Member talk about tobacco industry interference

Attendance

The Bafoussam media dialogue was attended by 30 journalists from 21 media organs. The media organs that attended the deliberations include;

1. CRTV West
2. RUT FM
3. Radio Batcham
4. Radio Bonne Nouvelle
5. Radio Nanfah
6. Pouala FM
7. Dunamis FM
8. DBS
9. STV
10. Afrique Media
11. MGTV
12. Cameroon Tribune
13. Le Soir
14. Le Medium
15. Le Messenger
16. La Nouvelle Expression
17. Mutations
18. Le Héraut National
19. l'Action Directe
20. Ouest Echos
21. Le Jour.

ADVOCACY VISITS

The specific objectives of the Advocacy visits were;

- ✓ To sensitise local administrative and political authorities on tobacco, and tobacco control policies.
- ✓ To galvanise support for the adoption of tobacco control policies.
- ✓ To create contacts that can facilitate the organisation of other activities C3T may subsequently plan in the West Region.

The visits took place on the 7th and the 8th February, 2017.

Visit to Honourable Joseph KANKEU

At about 2 pm on Tuesday 7th February 2017, the C3T Media Dialogue Team carried out the first advocacy visit in Bafoussam. Hon. Joseph KANKEU, was visibly happy that the team chose to visit him. He noted that he was sufficiently informed on tobacco control and the Network of Parliamentarians on Tobacco Control (OXYGENE) at the National Assembly.

He noted that despite not being a member of the network, he has advocated and he will continue to advocate for tobacco control policies. He pledged his full support for a National Tobacco Control Law whenever that is brought to the National Assembly, promising to also galvanise support from his colleagues. Before leaving, the C3T team handed an advocacy kit to the MP.

Visit to the Bafoussam 1 Council

At 9 am on Wednesday 8th February 2017, the C3T Media Dialogue Team visited the premise of the Bafoussam 1 Council where they had been scheduled to meet Mr. Hypolitte Tchoutezo, the 1st Deputy Mayor of the Council. Unfortunately, the official could not make it for the meeting at the scheduled time. He however asked his secretary Mr. Claude to receive the team on his behalf.

For about 20 minutes, the C3T team and the secretary discussed the dangers of tobacco consumption. Using Bamenda 1 Council as a reference, both parties discussed the importance and the possibilities of making Bafoussam 1 a smoke free council area. An advocacy kit was handed to Mr. Claude for onward transmission to the Deputy Mayor. “No Smoking” stickers were also handed to the council official who immediately affixed some of them on doors and walls of the council.



The C3T Media Dialogue Team parting ways with Mr. Claude, council secretary

Courtesy Telephone Calls to the SDO of the Mifi Division

One key personality who was to be visited was Mr. Joseph Tangwa, Senior Divisional Officer of the Mifi Division. Upon arrival in Bafoussam on the 7th February 2017, the team contacted the SDO and fixed a meeting at 1 pm the following day. Unfortunately, the administrative official could not receive the team because he took ill and had to go for medical attention.

Mr. Tangwa was however happy with the initiative of wanting to visit him. He sincerely apologized for not being able to meet up with the scheduled meeting and expressed his wish to have the team visit again in the near future; a clear indication of his commitment to the tobacco control fight.

With the SDO unavoidably absent, the C3T Media Dialogue Team left Bafoussam for Yaoundé at exactly 2 pm.