



*Le Secrétaire Général*

# Conférence Épiscopale Nationale du Cameroun National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon

Code postal : B.P : 1963 Adresse : 7624 Avenue Mgr Henri Vieter, Yaoundé 3  
Tél. : 00 (237) 222 31 15 92/222 31 49 10 Fax : (237) 22 31 49 15 E-mail : [cenc20042003@yahoo.ca](mailto:cenc20042003@yahoo.ca)  
Pays : Cameroun Ville : Yaoundé - Mvolyé

## **47<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar of the Bishops of Cameroon FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

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From 06 to 13 January, 2024, the Bishops of Cameroon held their 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar in Maroua on the theme: **"A Synodal Church on Mission"**.

The Seminar was chaired by His Grace, Andrew FUANYA NKEA, Archbishop of Bamenda and President of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (NECC).

Three key moments marked the opening of the Seminar:

- ✓ The Solemn Pontifical Mass celebrated at the Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral, Maroua on Sunday, 07 January, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, presided at by His Lordship Bruno ATEBA EDO, Bishop of Maroua-Mokolo, with a massive participation of the faithful of the Diocese;
- ✓ The Spiritual Recollection for the Bishops on 08 January, facilitated by His Grace Faustin AMBASSA NDJODO, Archbishop of Garoua;
- ✓ The solemn Opening Ceremony on Tuesday, 09 January at the "Woïla Vision" Multi-media Center, in the presence of the Governor of the Far North Region, the Lamido of Maroua and numerous administrative, civil, traditional and religious authorities.

Three speeches were delivered during this ceremony:

First, an address by Dr. Sali BABANI, Mayor of Maroua, in which he welcomed the Bishops and thanked them for choosing Maroua as the venue for their Seminar. He lauded the efforts of the National Episcopal Conference which, through the Association for Interreligious Dialogue in Cameroon (ACADIR), is sparing no effort to consolidate peace and harmony in the Far North Region. He praised the social and charitable works carried out by Catholic missionaries in the Region, citing BABA Simon as an example.

In his address, His Lordship Bruno ATEBA EDO expressed deep gratitude to his fellow-bishops for accepting to mark the closing of the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese with their Annual Seminar. He gave thanks to God and expressed the wish that the coming of the Bishops would bring many blessings to the Diocese.

Finally, in his opening address, the President of the National Episcopal Conference praised the hospitality and dynamism of the faithful of the Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo, and their Bishop, who has given this Diocese a new face lift through a missionary drive, exemplified in the construction of the magnificent Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption.

He recalled the importance of the theme of the Seminar, inspired by the Synod on Synodality, in line with the mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel.

During the working session of the seminar, the Bishops listened attentively to the reports of their delegates to the first phase of the Sixteenth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, held in Rome in October 2023. In this way, the Bishops broadened their understanding of the notion of a Synodal Church on mission, in preparation for the next phase in October 2024.

The Bishops denounce the horrendous acts perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect in the Far North Region and they express deep compassion for the victims. They also deplore all forms of violence in the country, especially the atrocities committed in the North-West and South-West Regions. They express their constant paternal solicitude and continual prayer for all.

The Bishops are particularly concerned by the growing and yawning poverty among the population. They appeal for greater justice, solidarity, hard work and continuous trust in God.

The Bishops were delighted to welcome His Grace José Avelino BETTENCOURT, Apostolic Nuncio to Cameroon. They also listened attentively to the presentation of the mission of the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), by Madam Caroline AGALHEIR, Country Representative of CRS, who has come to the end of her mandate in Cameroon.


One of the highlights of this seminar was the pilgrimage to Tokombéré along the footsteps of the Venerable Baba Simon. The Bishops praised the immense work of Fr. Simon MPEKE, the *"barefoot messenger"* who left everything behind to go and proclaim the Good News in the heart of the local traditions of the mountains of North Cameroon. The Bishops urge all the People of God to pray fervently for his canonization.

At the close of the Seminar, the Bishops expressed their thanks to His Lordship Bruno ATEBA EDO, his presbyterium, all the religious communities, the lay faithful and all the people of good will, for the warm welcome and excellent organization which facilitated the smooth running of the Seminar. They appreciated the diversity and cultural richness of the Diocese.

They also express their profound gratitude to all the administrative authorities, the media and the faithful for their mobilization and total involvement in the organization and success of the Seminar.

The next Annual Seminar of the Bishops of Cameroon will be held in the Diocese of Buea from 4 to 11 January, 2025.

Done in Maroua, 13 January, 2024

  
**Mgr. Jervis KEBE KEWI**  
**Secretary General NECC**

