COUNTRY: CAMEROON

INSTITUTION: NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS (NCHRF)

Current Accreditation Status:

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1. FOUNDATION

Mission Statement:
“Independent Institution for Consultation, Monitoring, Evaluation, Concerted Action, Promotion and Protection in the Area of Human Rights”

Founding Laws:
The NCHRF Founding laws are based on a law – No. 2004/016 of July 2004 which set up the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms

The NCHRF in Cameroon is a commission with National jurisdiction which was established in 1990 by a decree and has been operational since then; it was then later founded on a law in the year 2004.

2. COMPOSITION

Summary of the NCHRF Governing Body:
The NCHRF has 30 members on its governing body. 2 of them are full time employees and 28 of them are on a part time basis engagement.

The founding laws of the NCHRF require pluralism in the composition of the institutions governing body. These are clearly spelt out in Section 6(1) of the Founding Law
It has persons drawn from the following fields and backgrounds:
- NGOs
- Trade Unions
- Academics
- Legal Profession
- Health Profession
- Parliament
- Government
- Religious Denominations
- Journalists/Media

3. APPLICATION, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

In accordance with The Paris Principles and ICC General Observations the composition of a NHRI should be broadly representative and capable of representing the society in which it operates.
The application, selection and appointment process for members of the NCHRF are founded on: The founding law; Sections 6(2), 7 and 8 clearly spell out how the representatives to the governing body are chosen and from which backgrounds

I. Application: Processes for seeking nominations and/or applications for vacancies in the NCHRF require consultation with key Stakeholder groups; Section 6(2) of the Law stipulates the various provisions that are taken into consideration during the process

II. Nominations: according to Section 6(2) of the founding laws; the NCHRF also accepts nominations from:
- Parliament
- The Government of Cameroon
- The judiciary
- The Civil Society

III. Selection: The assessment of applications and recommendations of candidates to the NCHRF is undertaken by the Chairperson of the Commission
There are no specified criteria used in selection of candidates so long as they belong to the stipulated categories or bodies to be represented

IV. Appointment:
The Cameroonian NCHRF has no formal appointment process specified within its laws. The Head of State is responsible for the appointments.
Members of the NCHRF governing body are appointed for a term not exceeding five years which is renewable only once more.
The independence and Security of tenure of members of NCHRF governing body are provided for in the following ways:
- A member’s independence is specified in the founding law
• Members are protected against legal liability for actions undertaken in good faith in their official capacity
• An independent procedure for dismissal is specified in the founding law or other law grounds for dismissal are clearly defined in the founding or other law.

4. **FINANCIAL AUTONOMY**
The Paris Principles and ICC General Observations require that a NHRI should have sufficient funding to allow it to undertake its mandated responsibilities. Funding should enable it to have its own staff and premises.
The NCHRF founding laws require the Cameroonian Government to provide it with funding and it also allows the Institution to fund raise from other sources.
Approximately 95% of the NCHRF’s funding comes from the National Government. The Commissions’ current annual budget is USD 2.44 million

5. **STAFFING**
a. The total number of staff including the Governing body of the NCHRF are 120

b. In harmony with the Paris Principles that call for pluralism in the representation of social diversity/social groups within National Institutions; the composition of the NCHRF reflects this by employing staff who are recruited from all the ten regions of the country.

c. The following is a summary of NCHRF’s staff composition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CADRE/category</th>
<th>% MEN</th>
<th>% WOMEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commissioners</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Level Staff</td>
<td>Not Clear</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior level staff</td>
<td>Not clear</td>
<td>Not clear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **WORKING METHODS:**
The NCHRF governing board meetings are held monthly and quarterly while they are in session.
Cameroon’s NCHRF has dedicated specialist/thematic units which are:

i. Working Group on Civil and Political Rights

ii. Working Group on ECOSOC Rights

iii. Working Group on Vulnerable Groups

iv. Special Issues

The Commission uses the Working groups mentioned above to provide it with expert assistance.
The NCHRF has 7 Regional Offices in the following locations:

- Center
- Littoral South
- Adamawa
- North
- North West
- South West

The NCHRF does not have an appointed contact person for interactions with regional and international organizations and networks; rather it uses the Cooperation service and specific individuals for different purposes and interactions.

7. **MANDATE:**

None of the’ human rights’ are defined in the founding law of the NCHRF hence none of the internationally recognized human rights excluded from its mandate.

The following table is a summary of legal Mandates undertaken by NCHRF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandate</th>
<th>Relevant section(s) in the founding Law of NCHRF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Make recommendations to the Government, Parliament and any other competent body on matters concerning:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proposed legislative or administrative provisions</td>
<td>Any (\text{Section 2} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment of existing legislation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of administrative measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Report without restriction:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate and report on the national human rights situation or on more specific matters, either directly (to the Government, Parliament, and concerned authorities), or through annual or thematic reports</td>
<td>Section 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate and report on any violation of human rights it decides to take up</td>
<td>Section 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicize its opinions, recommendations and reports (directly or through any press/ Broadcasting outlet)</td>
<td>Section 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III. Promote and advocate for the:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmonization of national laws and practices with the international Instruments to which the State is a party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of recommendations of International human rights mechanisms to which the State is a party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratification of international human rights Instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV. Engage with the International Human Rights system:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the State’s periodic treaty body reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express an opinion on the State’s reports to the UN treaty bodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cooperate with the UN and any other Organization in the UN systems, regional Institutions and NHRIs of other countries  

Assist in the formulation and Implementation of programs for teaching and researching human rights  

V. Education and awareness raising:

Assist in the formulation and implementation of programmes for teaching and researching human rights  

Carry out public awareness activities (especially through education initiatives and by making use of the press)

8. POWERS:

a. The following is a summary of the powers vested unto NCHRF as per the founding law:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Receive and handle complaints and conduct investigations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obtain any information and any document necessary for assessing situations falling within Its competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make recommendations to the competent Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain information and any document necessary for assessing situations falling within its competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit and enter places of detention Including</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 2

Section 5

Section 3.

Section 3

Section 2
prisons and places of confinement (i.e. Mental health facilities, privately run institutions, facilities for housing children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No requirement to announce, or request permission to enter, prior to the visit</td>
<td>Section 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make recommendations to the competent authorities</td>
<td>Section 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect witnesses from victimization, provide compensation and/or</td>
<td>Section 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek compensation through a court or specialist tribunal</td>
<td>Section 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervene or assist in court proceedings related to human rights (with permission of the court)</td>
<td>Section 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide remedies to victims of discrimination and/or human rights violations</td>
<td>Section 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NCHRF can receive complaints from individuals and further has the right to receive any complaint against any state party.

The Cameroonian NCHRF is also able to:

- Seek an amicable settlement through conciliation or mediation
- Make binding decisions
- Inform complainants of their rights, available remedies and promote access to these
- Transmit complaints to any other competent authority
- Ensure that communications to and from the NHRI remain confidential

9. **RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

Government bodies are not formally required to respond to the NCHRF’s resolutions, reports or recommendations, and neither is the Commission able to report directly to Parliament.

The founding laws of the NCHRF provide it with the capacity to establish formal relationships with civil society. This has enabled the NCHRF to develop formal relationships and engagements with the civil society. These engagements are done through:

- Engaging with relevant CSOs on thematic issues
- Engaging with relevant CSOs in conducting inquiries
There are more than 200 NGOs affiliated with and collaborating with the NCHRF. The NCHRF has also assisted in the setting up of 2 networks; one with Journalists and another one with Human Rights Associations

**10. ACCREDITATION**
The Cameroonian National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms is accredited as an ICC “A” status institution
The last accreditation review by ICC was in 2010.

**11. PRIORITY THEMATIC AREAS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Area</th>
<th>Level of Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture Prevention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Human Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights of Persons with Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Minority Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Human Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration and human rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Torture: systematic training of judicial police officers and gendarmerie officers as well as interventions in detention centers

Business and human rights: the carrying out of field visits to companies and to project development sites in the country

Persons with disabilities in partnership with some NGOs; a lot of sensitization is done in connection with the right to vote, no discrimination and other related issues

Sexual minority/ though the practice of homosexuality is outlawed in Cameroon, the NCHRF intervenes in cases of the abuse of the rights of suspects.

Gender and human rights: the NCHRF has worked a lot with government, the UN and other partners in advancing parity, the fight against violence on women and girls, etc

Migration and human rights: the NCHRF is represented in the state inter-departmental committee in charge of migration issues.
12. INTERACTION WITH THE AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISM

The level of engagement of NCHRF with the African Human Rights Mechanisms is high

13. THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Cameroon is due for the next UPR in 2016

During the last UPR for Cameroon, the NCHRF was an active stakeholder. This was done in the following ways:

- Organized meetings with civil society organizations on the recommendations made to Cameroon in 2009
- Participated in state inter-departmental meetings on the implementation of the recommendations
- Participated in the two sessions of Cameroon's review in Geneva where the chairperson made an oral statement.