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OBSOLETE PESTICIDES STOCKS IN CAMEROON

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INTRODUCTION

Cameroon is situated in the Central Africa and has more than 12 millions of inhabitant (Annexe1)

Agriculture is undoubtedly the back-bone of Cameroonian economy. Other economic activities would thrive only if production in and the general well being, of this sector is assured.

The agriculture sector contributes almost 50% to all activities. It accounts for about 25 % of the gross domestic product (GDP) and provides employment for over than 75 % of population. The food crop sub-sector is responsible for the population. The food crop sub-sector is responsible for the greater part of the public investment budget, representing as it does 54% of the added value generated by the agricultural section.

Despite the production of the oil in the country, Cameroon economy will still based on agriculture.

I-PESTICIDES IN CAMEROON AGRICULTURE

The Agriculture sector has been able to perform this feat¹ only as a result of the enormous efforts that government makes every year in order to increase production and improve on quality.

In this regard, the government considers pesticides as indispensable in agricultural production giving the same importance as fertilizer and improved seeds varieties.

The reason for this being that plant diseases reduce or wipe out many crop production in Cameroon. For instance, cocoa crop losses due to the black pod disease range from 30 to 100%. Coffee crop losses due to Scolytids are 30%. Sorghum crop losses due to striga 100% Cassava and yam crop losses caused by viral disease 80-100%, : granivorous birds, locusts and caterpillars in food crops in some provinces.

While waiting for on going research to come up with new farming methods and resistant varieties, the use of insecticides, fungicides and herbicides are for time being, the only means through which crop production and future harvests can be guaranteed. This, then justifies the considerable sacrifices that have been made by the government in plant protection.

Before 1989, most pesticides used were subsidised 100% by the government. The Sub-Directorate for crop protection, based in the Department of Agriculture, Yaounde was responsible for purchase, storage and distribute of the majority of pesticides used in Cameroon. Parastatal Institutions such as SODECAO, CAMDEV, SODECOTON... , also bought, stored and used chemicals that have been approved by the government.

Imported pesticides were stored by the Sub-Directorate for Crops Protection in ten (10) provincial Phytosanitary Bases prior to distribute to Divisional offices known as brigades (annex2)

In 1989, Because of the financial crisis that has hit the country, the government decided to set up a programme of liberalizing and privatising the pesticide sub-sector. ,

¹ Because of the enormous amount of crops losses , the Ministry of Agriculture organises free sensitisation campaigns every year to fight against the most harmful disease and pests such as:

- the blackpod disease and capsidae in cocoa
- anthracnosis and antestia in arabica coffee
- scolytids and difolating caterpillars in robusta coffee.
-

The objective here, was to make farmers responsible for purchasing, using pesticides .

This decision changed fundamentally the policy of crop protection in Cameroon.

II- SITUATION OF OBSOLETE PESTICIDES STOCKS IN CAMEROON IN 1990

One year after the government's decision, a survey of obsolete pesticide stocks in Cameroon was undertaken by the Sub-Directorate of crops protection (Ministry of Agriculture) with the assistance of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA).

Stocks in all government provincial stores were assessed for quantity, age , state of containers and storage conditions (Annex 3).

Stock piles of pesticides in deteriorating leaking containers were also recorded at three Provincial bases (Bamenda in North West, N'kongsamba in the Littoral and Abong-Mbang in the East Cameroon). All the chemicals were stored in the open and were causing considerable environmental pollution and risk to health.

The principal pesticides in this condition were :

Pesticides	Active Incridient (ai)	Quantities (liter)
Sumithion	Fenitrothion	92 510
Etrofolan HN 12	MipC	92 400
Gammophele 320	lindane	20 185
Dursban 240 ulv	ChlorpyriFos Ethyl	18 120
Callindim Fc 320	lindane	15 420
Sumicombi 183ulv	Fenitrothion + Fenvalerate	14 300
Diazinom	Diazinom	12 100
Aldrin	Aldrin	495 (kg)
Dieldrin	Dieldrin	9 750
Orthodifolatan	Orthodifolatan	92 250 kg

The last three products (Aldrin, Dieldrin and Orthodifolatan) were banned chemicals in the country (arrête n° 002/MINAGRI/DIRAGRI/SDPV on 17 january 1989).

In 1994, it was officially decided to transfer:

- Dursban 240 ulv to the North part of the country where it was used against locusts.
- Orthodifolatan to Cameroon development corporation (CDC) and HEVECAM, two companies dealing with rubber. So Orthodifolatan was used on rubber.

For the other pesticides, no official measure was taken. But we observe today that these pesticides do not exist in the provincial stores .Our investigations indicate that , after the CFA franc devaluation , these products were used.

III- ACTUAL SITUATION OF OBSOLETE PESTICIDES STOCKS IN CAMEROON

Today, it seems that the only obsolete pesticide stock existing in Cameroon is constituted of 6 425 litre of Dieldrin.

This figure will certainly increase in next few years with large quantities of products obtained threes (03) years ago for locusts control (annexe...).

In the Sub-Directorate of Crop Protection/Ministry of Agriculture, we think that it is necessary to launch another survey (like what we did in 1990) to determine not only pesticides stocks existing in the State structures, but also in the parastatal and Private Companies.

We estimate the cost of the project to around five (10) millions CFA (\approx 20000 \$) and we are looking for funding resources.

CONCLUSION

The decrease of obsolete pesticides stocks in Cameroon is not a result of political strategy implemented to eliminate them, but ,it is essentially due to the economic crisis and the CFA franc devaluation.

It is possible to think that if the economical situation of the country improves, The Government will start again to purchase and distribute large quantities of pesticides to provincial Divisions without taking in account the real needs of their farmers.

V-GENERAL PROBLEMS THAT LEAD TO OBSOLETE PESTICIDES STOCKS IN CAMEROON

a) lack of labour

Until 1988, the staff who applied pesticides in the field were paid by the agricultural bank FONADER. This Institution has gone into liquidation and the agents has been dismissed. As an emergency measure, The EEC which supported the purchase of pesticides for the 1989-1990 season, had provided funds for part time employment of a limited number of field workers .This program ended in 1992.

b) lack of a planned purchasing and distribution policy

one factor in the build up of unused stocks is apparently unplanned purchasing policy. In several instances, too many chemical were bought and then distributed to Bases which has not yet finished their previous year supply. This has led to an increase in the stock piles of pesticides at provincial bases.

C) Lack of diluents for Emulsifiable Concentrates

There were large stocks of chemicals in the country which had to be mixed, with gas oil (Paraffin) before they can be used (eg: Gammophele, Etrofolan and basudine). None of the Base had any gas oil and there was no budget to buy supplies.

d) Lack of Protective clothing and first aid equipment

In some bases, There was no protective clothing gloves, rubber boots and small face masks.

e) Lack of transport

Most Bases had no vehicle or lorries in working condition. This made difficult to distribute Pesticides and to send agents to the farmers fields.

f) Lack of spraying equipment

g) Lack of regulation or implementation measure (Decree, etc...)

IV- SUGGESTIONS

- National stock control procedures must be revised to ensure that only the correct amount of pesticides are bought (or received as gift) and distributed according to the real need of the Various Bases. This will avoid the excess stocks of pesticides.

- Proper stock control measure should be implemented in the country so that the Sub-Directorate for crops protection should act as a regulating authority over Parastatal and private companies.

ANNEX

Annex1 : Africa Map

Annex 2 : Cameroon Map and principal economic indicators

Annex 3: Poster taken in the different Phytosanitary Bases in 1990

Annex 4: Stock of Pesticides recorded in Phytosanitary Bases Stores in August 2000

Fenical 500 ulv (ai fenitrothion):	3000 liter
Adonis 2,4,6ulv (ai Friponil) :	24 540 liter
Propoxur :	2165 kg
Dieldrin: (obsolete)	6425 liter

Poster taken in Maroua Phytosanitary Base on August 2000