THE 20 GUIDING PRINCIPLES
for a Post-Conflict
Southern Cameroons
For a Post-Conflict Southern Cameroons

These fundamental principles were debated and adopted by concerned Working Groups and presented at the plenary session.

1. The Negotiation Process

Negotiation is a process and for the people of the Southern Cameroons to get the best out of this process:

I.

a) Those to negotiate on behalf of the Southern Cameroons must be drawn from amongst the most qualified Southern Cameroonians or partners determined by Southern Cameroonians acting solely in the interest of the Southern Cameroons. As such, a clear, transparent process of selecting representatives to negotiate on behalf of Southern Cameroonians must be established. Such a process must be such that those negotiating on behalf of Southern Cameroonians must be answerable to the majority of Southern Cameroonians.

b) International mediation is critical in ending armed conflicts and multilateralism in mediation provides additional assurances to parties in conflict. Any international actor(s) serving as mediator or facilitator of a mediation process must conduct a thorough assessment of the armed conflict, apply standard international normative and best practice in mediation, and provide assurances that the negotiated peace agreement will be implemented within the specified timeframe.

2. Judiciary and Constitutional Affairs

Democracy or representative government only works when there is a judicial system to guarantee the rights, liberty, and freedoms of all people.

II.

The negotiated constitution, which shall be the supreme law of the land, shall guarantee and protect fundamental rights. The Constitution shall prohibit all forms of discrimination including gender, orientation, tribal affiliation, etc.

III.

The constitution shall guarantee the individual rights and freedoms of all citizens which include, inter alia, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of information, right to privacy, due process, criminal procedural rights, equal protection, private property rights and voting rights.
IV.
The judiciary shall be independent and impartial and shall have the power and jurisdiction to safeguard and enforce the Constitution and all fundamental rights. It shall ensure the equality of all before the law and an equitable legal process.

V.
Appointment of judges and magistrates must be free of political influence. There should be a judicial services commission that is responsible for appointment of judges and supreme court justices. This commission shall be independent from Parliament or the Executive branches.

Nominated judges and justices must be confirmed by the legislature and under no circumstances shall a supreme court justice be removed from office by the head of the executive branch. The head of the executive branch shall not have any authority to dissolve the legislature or the supreme court.

VI.
The constitution shall recognize and integrate customary laws. These customary laws should not be repugnant to natural justice. The constitution shall guarantee the right to a safe and healthy environment.

VII.
Amendments to the constitution shall be done through a national referendum, after each state legislature has approved the amendment by the specially defined majority. The amendment must be approved by the majority in each state.

3. Governance

Government only derives its right from the consent of the governed. The people must own the government and not vice-versa. Devolution of power into federal, state, and local government levels ensures that administration is brought closer to the people.

VIII.
There shall be a complete separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary, with specific checks and balances to ensure accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, and transparency.

IX.
Government shall be structured at the federal, state, and local government levels, all elected by Southern Cameroonians.
X.
The institutions, status, and role of traditional authorities, according to indigenous law, shall be recognized and protected in the Constitution. Indigenous law shall be recognized and applied by the courts, subject to the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution and to legislation dealing specifically therewith.

XI.
There shall be a construction of a unique Southern Cameroons identity based on a redefinition of citizenship aligned to our cultural heritage and as a people under international law.

4. Economic Reconstruction

Economic justice is sacrosanct to peace, development and social justice in every community and shall predicate the new southern Cameroons economic program.

XII.
Each level of government shall have a constitutional right to an equitable share of revenue collected nationally to ensure that states and local governments are able to perform their functions and provide basic services as expected.

XIII.
State and local governments shall be responsible for short- and medium-term economic development in their respective areas. They will also be allowed to impose and collect their own taxes, which includes but not limited to income taxes, sales taxes, and property taxes.

XIV.
The Constitution shall provide for and ensure an independent and impartial Attorney General, a Central Bank, an Auditor-General and a Civil Service Commission in order to maintain very high standards of professionalism. It shall also create a sovereign wealth fund to manage revenues from non-renewable natural resources for posterity.

5. Peacebuilding and Public Security

Law enforcement officers shall reflect the people they protect, be hired by and answerable to them.

XV.
Police powers shall be vested with states and local governments. There shall be no federal or centralized police force except for special purposes as shall be specified in the negotiated Constitution.
XVI.

Every member of the security services (police, military and intelligence) shall be required to perform their duties and exercise their powers in the national interest and shall be prohibited from acting in a manner that promotes the interests of a particular political party.

6. Education

Education is the most important investment of any society. The prosperity and sustainability of any nation depends on investments in education. All Southern Cameroonian deserve the quality of education that will enable them to become productive and successful citizens. Local control of the education curriculum is crucial to ensuring good quality education.

XVII.

The governance of education shall be the jurisdiction of individual states and local school boards. Where minimum standards are necessary the Federal or Central government shall, in consultation with states and local governments, provide such leadership and direction as shall be negotiated.

XVIII.

Education should reflect the socio-cultural aspects of the community, be relevant, vocational, and entrepreneurial focused, competency based, inclusive and standardized.

7. Healthcare and Humanitarian Relief

Healthcare is a right of every Southern Cameroonian and it is the duty of the state to provide quality, accessible and affordable healthcare to all its citizens.

XIX.

Local governance at state/regional level shall be primarily responsible for the delivery of healthcare to its citizens with the Federal / Central government having specific responsibilities as shall be negotiated.

XX.

Healthcare shall be free at the point of delivery and each citizen shall have basic health insurance coverage.

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