COUNTRY REPORT

# Cameroon

# Central African Republic

# Chad

**1st quarter 1997**

The Economist Intelligence Unit
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## The Economist Intelligence Unit

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London
The Economist Intelligence Unit
15 Regent Street
London
SW1Y 4LR
United Kingdom
Tel: (44.171) 830 1000
Fax: (44.171) 499 9767

New York
The Economist Intelligence Unit
The Economist Building
111 West 57th Street
New York
NY 10019, USA
Tel: (1.212) 554 0600
Fax: (1.212) 586 1181/2

Hong Kong
The Economist Intelligence Unit
25/F, Dah Sing Financial Centre
108 Gloucester Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2802 7288
Fax: (852) 2802 7638


## Electronic delivery

EIU Electronic
New York: Lou Celi or Lisa Hennessey Tel: (1.212) 554 0600 Fax: (1.212) 586 0248
London: Moya Veitch Tel: (44.171) 830 1007 Fax: (44.171) 830 1023

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*February 3, 1997*

# Summary

## 1st quarter 1997

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Outlook for 1997-98: As election year begins, Mr Biya and the RDPC will disregard all other considerations than his re-election. There is no chance of the opposition's demand for an independent election commission being met. Mr Mvodo's candidacy could divide Mr Biya's natural powerbase. The president is at his weakest in years and will preside over an economy that continues to drift, while the frontier dispute with neighbouring Nigeria will not go away. Relations with the IMF are not expected to improve soon. Growth will remain weak, as will the trade surplus. Cameroon remains vulnerable to disintegration.

Review: Mr Biya has denounced political opponents and appears to be preparing for a rigged election. Dissident strands have emerged within the RDPC, although opposition disunity remains a problem. Relations with France have cooled. There have been further attacks on opposition activists and independent journalists. The government has offered a tax amnesty. Hevecam has been sold and other privatisations have been promised. Farmers are moving out of cocoa as prices and quality fall. Marginal oilfields are coming on stream. Grants have been made available for fishing and infrastructure.

**Central African Republic**

Outlook for 1997-98: A weakened president, Ange-Félix Patassé, will remain crucial to progress in recovering from the mutinies of 1996. France's reputation will not recover easily. The economic situation will remain grave.

Review: A further mutiny has flared up, this time with distinct ethno-regional overtones, but a truce was secured in January. A retaliatory raid by French forces has backfired badly. Against this background the death of former dictator Jean-Bedel Bokassa has provoked little domestic comment. Hopes of a fresh agreement with the IMF have been wrecked by the mutiny.

**Chad**

Outlook for 1997-98: After the legislative elections the president, Idriss Déby, appears to be in control of Chad's political future. Both the political and armed opposition will remain marginalised. The south will remain crucial to national unity as the start of oil production nears.

Review: Chad's lengthy transition has dragged into 1997, with the second round of legislative elections expected in February. Politicians have been more enthusiastic than voters about the polls. Some dissidents have returned from Niger. The IMF has approved a new ESAF. The fiscal situation has improved. Privatisations and state-sector reforms have been planned. Further protocols have been signed over the Doba basin oil project. An appeal has been made for food aid.

**Franc Zone news**

France's continuing policy problems have been highlighted at the Franco-African summit of heads of state, held at Ouagadougou in December. Guinea-Bissau is to enter the Franc Zone in March. The zone's banking system looks healthier.

Editor: Andrew Manley
All queries: Tel: (44.171) 830 1007 Fax: (44.171) 830 1023

# Cameroon

## Political structure

| | |
|---|---|
| Official name | République du Cameroun |
| Form of state | Unitary republic |
| Legal system | Based on English common law and the Code Napoléon |
| National legislature | Assemblée nationale; 180 members, elected by universal suffrage, sit twice yearly and serve a five-year term |
| National elections | March 1992 (legislative) and October 1992 (presidential); next elections due by March 1997 (legislative) and October 1997 (presidential) |
| Head of state | President, elected by universal suffrage, serves a five-year term and is re-electable |
| National government | It consists of the prime minister and his Council of Ministers. Includes representatives of the ruling RDPC, the UPC, the MDR and the ANDP. Last reshuffled September 1996 |
| Main political parties | A law authorising multiparty politics was published in December 1990. There are more than 70 registered parties. The Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais (RDPC) holds 88 seats in parliament. The Union nationale pour la démocratie et le progrès (UNDP) has 68 seats, the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) has 18 and the Mouvement pour la défense de la république (MDR) six |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | President | Paul Biya |
| | Prime minister | Peter Mafany Musonge (RDPC) |
| | Vice-prime minister, minister of territorial administration | Gilbert Andzé Tsoungui (RDPC) |
| | Vice prime minister, minister of housing & town planning | Hamadou Moustapha (ANDP) |
| Ministers of state | Agriculture | Augustin Frédéric Kodock (UPC) |
| | Communication | Augustin Kontchou Koumegni (RDPC) |
| | Economy & finance | Edouard Akame Mfoumou (RDPC) |
| | Telecommunications | Dakole Daïssala (MDR) |
| Key ministers | Foreign relations | Ferdinand Léopold Oyono (RDPC) |
| | Higher education | Peter Agbor Tabi (RDPC) |
| | Industrial & commercial development | Justin Ndioro (RDPC) |
| | Labour & social insurance | Simon Mbila (UPC) |
| | Livestock, fisheries & animal industries | Hamadjoda Adjoudji (RDPC) |
| | Mines & energy | André Mbele Bello (RDPC) |
| | National education | Robert Mbella Mbappe (RDPC) |
| | Public health | Titus Edzoa (RDPC) |
| | Public service & administrative reforms | Sali Dahirou (RDPC) |
| | Scientific & technical research | Bava Djingoer (MDR) |
| | State audit | Joseph Owona (RDPC) |
| | Transport | Joseph Tanga Abanda (RDPC) |
| BEAC governor | Jean-Félix Mamalepot | |

# Economic structure

*Latest available figures*

| Economic indicators | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GDP at market prices[b] CFAfr bn | 3,103 | 3,425 | 4,131 | 4,571 | n/a |
| Real GDP growth[b] % | –3.2 | –2.6 | 3.2 | 5.2 | 3.5 |
| Consumer price inflation[b] % | –3.7 | 12.7 | 26.9 | 8.0 | 6.0 |
| Population m | 12.2 | 12.6 | 12.9 | 13.2 | 13.5 |
| Exports fob $ m | 1,934 | 1,508 | 1,963[c] | 1,932[c] | 1,850 |
| Imports fob $ m | 983 | 1,005 | 1,194[c] | 1,296[c] | 1,200 |
| Current account $ m | –338 | –565 | –390[c] | –568[c] | –425 |
| Reserves excl gold $ m | 20 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2[d] |
| Total external debt $ m | 6,707 | 6,818 | 7,275 | 8,405[a] | n/a |
| External debt-service ratio % | 15.4 | 19.9 | 16.5 | 13.6[a] | n/a |
| Crude oil production '000 b/d | 136 | 132 | 116 | 95[a] | 90 |
| Coffee production[e] '000 tons | 47.9 | 75.9 | 56.7 | 64.9 | n/a |
| Cocoa production[f] '000 tons | 96.0 | 110.9 | 109.0 | 132.0 | n/a |
| Exchange rate (av) CFAfr:$ | 264.7 | 283.2 | 555.2 | 499.2 | 509.6 |

January 27, 1997 CFAfr548.5:$1

| Origins of gross domestic product 1994[b] | % of total |
|---|---|
| Agriculture | 28.6 |
| Industry | 24.9 |
| —Manufacturing | 11.3 |
| Services | 46.5 |
| GDP at factor cost | 100.0 |

| Components of gross domestic product 1994[b] | % of total |
|---|---|
| Private consumption | 71.3 |
| Government consumption | 7.2 |
| Gross domestic investment | 16.8 |
| Exports of goods & services | 30.0 |
| Imports of goods & services | –25.3 |
| GDP at market prices | 100.0 |

| Principal exports 1994[bc] | $ m |
|---|---|
| Crude oil | 565 |
| Timber | 296 |
| Cocoa | 118 |
| Coffee | 116 |

| Principal imports cif 1994 | $ m |
|---|---|
| Capital goods | 190 |
| Food | 89 |
| Fuel | 7 |

| Main destinations of exports 1995[g] | % of total |
|---|---|
| France | 22 |
| Italy | 15 |
| Spain | 13 |
| Netherlands | 8 |

| Main origins of imports 1995[g] | % of total |
|---|---|
| France | 42 |
| Belgium-Luxembourg | 6 |
| Italy | 5 |
| USA | 4 |

[a] EIU estimates. [b] Fiscal years starting July 1. [c] Official estimates. [d] End-August actual. [e] Crop years starting December 1. [f] Crop years starting October 1. [g] Drawn from partners' trade returns, subject to a wide margin of error.

# Outlook for 1997-98

The election campaign begins—

As the election campaign for the legislative contest in March and the presidential vote in October gets under way, the political survival of the president, Paul Biya, will be the dominant concern, taking precedence over all other matters of state. There are nonetheless a few, albeit small, seeds of hope that changes are afoot on the Cameroonian political landscape. First, the president's unpopularity has become manifest even within his own ruling Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais (RDPC), with defections of party stalwarts, one of whom has declared his candidacy, and criticisms of Mr Biya being aired publicly. Among other party members, there is said to be a genuine desire to clean up the party's image in this election year and for them, public recrimination is a positive development.

—with the opposition beginning to talk

In addition, the opposition appears to have a new sense of urgency about the need to get its act together or risk losing out yet again. John Fru Ndi of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), Mr Biya's strongest opponent, is beginning to focus greater attention on issues and policy than he has done before (for the first time he has an identifiable economic programme) and he and other leading opponents recognise the need to achieve unity as the presidential campaign gets under way. Talks have begun on fielding a single candidate against Mr Biya, the only chance the opposition has of unseating him in elections whose outcome is highly likely to be tampered with.

There will be no electoral commission—

Despite heavy lobbying by Western governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the opposition, the government remains adamant in its refusal to allow the creation of an independent electoral commission. However, with numbers of Cameroonians being trained in voter observation and the likely presence of external observers as well, electoral shenanigans will not go unnoticed. This is not to say that the ruling party will not resort to the same vote-rigging tactics it used in 1992: it almost certainly will.

—but a new candidate joins the running—

The entry into the political race of Victor Ayissi Mvodo, a former cabinet minister under Mr Biya's predecessor, Ahmidou Ahidjo, and long-time member of the president's party, has injected a new element into the presidential contest. Mr Mvodo, from the same ethnic group as Mr Biya, was the latter's chief rival for the presidency in 1982, and has long harboured hopes of gaining the highest office. His major difficulty will be finding a political party to affiliate himself with, after breaking with the RDPC. His candidacy is, however, being taken seriously within ruling circles.

—who may divide Mr Biya's support

The opposition hopes that Mr Mvodo's candidacy will serve to divide Mr Biya's traditional base of support. But there is also talk that Mr Mvodo might represent the divided opposition's best option as a unity candidate, were Mr Fru Ndi and Bello Bouba Maigari of the Union national pour la démocratie et le progrès (UNDP) willing to support him. This option is unlikely, however, especially in Mr Fru Ndi's case: he feels that he has been strengthened by the results of the municipal elections of January 1996.

**Time is short—**

Time is nonetheless running out for the opposition. It needs to seize the moment (at a time when Mr Biya is facing a mountain of domestic problems) and further its agenda by putting real issues up for discussion, instead of turning the race into a personality contest, where Mr Biya has shown himself capable of putting up a competent fight. Mr Biya's principal handicap is a worse-than-mediocre managerial record which shows signs of deteriorating further. In this situation, at the least, the opposition should be able to deny the RDPC a parliamentary majority.

**—as opponents grow in number**

It has been said, only half-facetiously, that 90% of Cameroonians are in the opposition, including 60% of the current government. The only problem is trying to gauge the extent of their frustration. Even members of the president's own party are said to be embarrassed by a corrupt government, a non-functioning legal system, and the mismanagement of what could be a fairly strong economy. If there is a plethora of opposition candidates to choose from on a less-than-level playing field, however, Mr Biya will probably squeeze through to another term.

**Mr Biya is at his weakest—**

The irony is that Mr Biya enters this election year at perhaps his weakest in recent history, a point his opponents should be able to exploit. Relations with France are at an all-time low, after a series of incidents on the diplomatic front. There is also French displeasure over Mr Biya's inability to take the necessary steps to get back into the IMF's good books, as well as bad blood over French companies losing out in the sale of two parastatals, Intelcam and Hevecam.

**—with Bakassi still unresolved**

The Cameroonian president also faces a time-bomb on Bakassi, with Nigeria seemingly set on taking *de facto* possession of the disputed peninsula no matter what course international mediators recommend. While sabre-rattling at an unpopular neighbour may be a good diversionary strategy during an election year, any intensification of the conflict holds potential to exacerbate an already impossible budgetary situation. The government is overspent to the tune of some $400m, at least part of which is due to unbudgeted military expenditure.

**Relations with the IMF are critical—**

But by far the most serious issue facing Mr Biya this year is his government's damaged relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions. In some senses, the elections could not have come at a worse time, because the government's long-standing inability to keep to the letter of the economic reform programmes. This has been responsible for the failure of four consecutive IMF stand-by agreements, and things are unlikely to improve this year. Even in the best-managed of economies, an election year is not the time to expect fiscal responsibility, and especially not in a country with a large, restive opposition.

**—as transparency is lacking—**

An IMF team will visit Cameroon again in February, but as it found on its last trip in December 1996, the government is not likely to have focused on meeting the necessary fiscal and structural targets to obtain an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). The government must "come clean" on the fiscal front, reveal what it has done with oil revenue, for example, if it hopes to bridge the credibility gap with creditors. This lack of transparency is unacceptable to the World Bank and the Fund.

**—and targets are missed**

Cameroon's compliance problems are even more difficult now because it has failed to meet the targets of its current staff-monitored, non-disbursing programme with the Fund. The question remains how long the IMF will be prepared to continue to try to get Cameroon's programme back on track; in other words, when the calculation will be made that the political and economic interests that will have to be sacrificed in a total break in relations are an acceptable price to pay.

**Debt becomes more unsustainable—**

Meanwhile, Cameroon's external debt, already at an unsustainable level, continues to mount as the budgetary gap is financed by non-payment of Paris Club arrears to official bilateral creditors. There is no likelihood of a further deal with the Paris Club until at least next year, assuming a Fund programme gets off the ground by then. World Bank structural adjustment lending is also tied up until then. Revenue is not being mobilised or is being diverted elsewhere and growth, weak at 3.5%, remains fuelled primarily by primary commodity exports only. The recipe for disaster is clear.

**—as the situation borders on collapse**

Mr Biya is sitting atop a precarious house of cards, with any one of them, the elections, the Bretton Woods institutions, a bellicose Nigeria, capable of collapsing the entire structure. Mr Biya has an unenviable year ahead of him. Neither his new government nor his longstanding closeness with the Elysée will be able to rescue him from the hole he has dug for himself. Our macroeconomic forecast remains unchanged: despite estimates from the World Bank that real GDP growth may have reached 6.8%, we retain our view that reflation was far more limited. 5.2%, a figure quoted by regional authorities and tentatively accepted by us, seems the practical maximum. Inflation will stay low, averaging 3% in fiscal 1997/98, while the weak external trade position will exacerbate an already unrealistic debt burden. Both politically and economically, Cameroon remains vulnerable to disintegration.

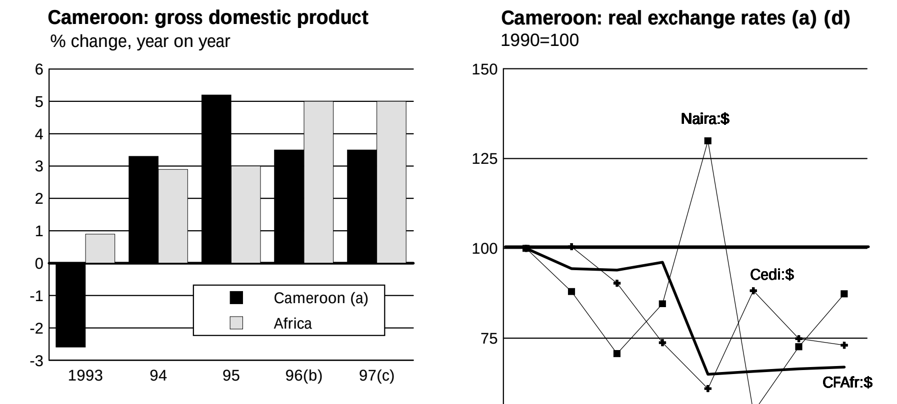
### Cameroon: forecast summary

($ m unless otherwise indicated; fiscal years beginning Jul 1)

| | 1994/95[a] | 1995/96[a] | 1996/97[b] | 1997/98[c] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Real GDP growth (%) | 3.2[d] | 5.2[d] | 3.5 | 3.5 |
| Consumer price inflation (%) | 26.9[d] | 8.0[d] | 6.0 | 3.0 |
| Merchandise exports | 1,963 | 1,932 | 1,850 | 1,900 |
| of which: | | | | |
| timber | 296 | 310[e] | 340 | 350 |
| petroleum | 565 | 375[e] | 325 | 250 |
| cocoa & coffee beans | 235 | 230[e] | 180 | 190 |
| Merchandise imports | 1,194 | 1,296 | 1,200 | 1,250 |
| Current-account balance | –390 | –568 | –425 | –300 |
| Average exchange rate (CFAfr:$)[f] | 518.6 | 501.8 | 512 | 508 |

[a] Official estimates. [b] EIU estimates. [c] EIU forecasts. [d] Actual. [e] EIU estimates. [f] Extrapolated from IMF quarterly average figures and EIU quarterly forecasts.




(a) Fiscal years beginning July 1. (b) EIU estimates. (c) EIU forecasts.
(d) Nominal exchange rates adjusted for changes in relative consumer prices.
Sources: EIU; IMF, *International Financial Statistics; World Economic Outlook.*

# Review

## The political scene

**Elections are promised—**

Emerging invigorated from December's ruling party congress the president, Paul Biya, started the new year by affirming in an address to the nation that legislative and presidential elections will be held in March and October this year, a year that he said will be "doubly decisive for the process of democratisation of life on a national level". While Mr Biya pledged that the elections will take place "dispassionately and in a climate of tolerance", he also said this represents "a challenge for political and opinion leaders, as well as those in the media". If the experience of recent elections is anything to go by, there is little likelihood of a calm year ahead.

**—but opponents are warned**

In fact, Mr Biya's government has begun making good on this veiled threat by attacking its opponents, stepping up harassment of the media and promising to go to any extreme, even barring aspiring competitors from running, to ensure an election outcome in its favour. Among the schemes concocted by the ruling Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais (RDPC) was a draft law which circulated in the Assemblée nationale in October to bar candidates to the presidency who had not worked at least ten years in the public service or headed a legalised political party for at least one year. The draft bill was an opening salvo in what promises to be a series of heated clashes between government and opposition in coming months.

**Mr Fru Ndi is expected to run—**

There was no doubt at whom the bill's first criterion was directed. John Fru Ndi, the leader of the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), and a former businessman, has never worked in the public service. He poses the greatest threat to Mr Biya as the only other political leader with a claim to a national following, particularly after his party's strong country-wide showing in the municipal elections of January 1996. Even Bello Bouba Maigari, head of the main parliamentary opposition party, the Union nationale pour le démocratie et le progrès (UNDP), and also a long-time presidential aspirant, seems to be leaning towards the SDF leader's camp. The two men made professions of unity before UNDP militants at the party congress in Ngaoundere in January.

—although an RDPC stalwart is first to declare

The second of the draft law's criteria seemed directed at Victor Ayissi Mvodo, a member of Mr Biya's own party and former minister of territorial administration under the late president, Ahmadou Ahidjo, who declared his presidential candidacy in October. Mr Mvodo's announcement must have caused tremors at the Etoudi Palace; he is not only an RDPC veteran, but is from the same ethnic background (Beti) as Mr Biya, and could conceivably split the president's support base. Needless to say, Mr Mvodo is no longer a member of the RDPC and is cultivating ties with the opposition. He attended the SDF congress in Buea in mid-December in his personal capacity as "the voice of the voiceless".

Mr Biya launches his campaign—

Mr Biya, for his part, launched his re-election campaign "with his claws out", as the Paris-based weekly magazine *Jeune Afrique* put it. Roused from his characteristic torpor, the president went on the offensive in a speech before the RDPC congress which gave him the party's presidential nomination. "Demogogues who have built nothing," "sterile propagandists", "conservatives who have miraculously become ultra-democrats", and "irresponsible leaders" who have pushed "innocents into the streets" with no political programme other than "gaining power"—these were among Mr Biya's words for Mr Fru Ndi, Mr Mvodo or anyone else who challenges Cameroon's "democracy". Mr Biya said his party had successfully fended off regionalism, federalism and separatism and called on militants to undertake a "mobilisation without precedent" to win in the two electoral rounds.

—as dissidents emerge in his own party

But the president failed to paper over the cracks that have begun to emerge in the ruling party, with Mr Mvodo's candidacy, and the defections of the RDPC vice-president, Simon Pierre Tchoungui, Albert Dzongang (a deputy) and Delphine Tsanga. Ms Tsanga, an Ahidjo-era cabinet minister and long-serving RDPC member, published an open letter to the president in a Yaoundé weekly, *La Nouvelle Expression,* in mid-December, in which she stated that Mr Biya's speech "insulted the entire Cameroonian people" by its attacks on those who seek to participate in the democratic process. She reminded the self-proclaimed "artisan" of the "democratic transition" that he had not become head of state "by the will of the people following an election", but rather after "power was served" to him "on a platter". (Mr Biya was groomed by Mr Ahidjo as his successor.)

Will the opposition unite?

The key question nonetheless remains whether the political opposition will be able to exploit such ruling-party fissures. Few doubt the RDPC's determination to win at all costs, and the necessity to present as strong a candidate as possible. It is as yet unclear how Mr Biya's leading opponents, Mr Fru Ndi, Mr Maigari and now Mr Mvodo, plan to contest the elections, or whether any of them are willing to shelve their egos in the common interest of defeating Mr Biya.

**Mr Fru Ndi hedges—**

During its mid-October congress in Toulouse, the SDF's French wing urged a single opposition presidential candidate. On a subsequent visit to France in early November, Mr Fru Ndi said that his party was ready to take part in any election, but hedged on the more important question, saying if his longstanding demand for an independent electoral commission were met, the opposition would have "a good chance of winning", even if it was not united. Claiming that between 6-8 million people should be on the electoral roll, but that only 1.5 million currently are, mainly in regions that support Mr Biya, Mr Fru Ndi said he would be surprised if Cameroonians who do not find their names on the electoral register the day of the vote would accept such "fraud and cheating".

**—and an electoral commission is not on the cards—**

Mr Fru Ndi knows that there will be no such independent commission to monitor the results, with the RDPC having officially pronounced itself against the idea in December. A draft bill for a commission, put forward by the UNDP in early November, was condemned as anti-constitutional by RDPC deputies who claimed that the yet-to-be-created constitutional court should play this a role. The RDPC also rejected a petition from opposition deputies to extend the term of office of the current legislature, which expires in March, for another 18 months, in view of "the high cost of an electoral campaign at a time when the country is undergoing economic difficulties".

**—but election observers are being trained**

With an electoral commission an effective non-starter, efforts began heating up late last year to find alternative options. Western embassies were pushing ahead with a programme to train young Cameroonians, some 20,000 of whom signed up for 2,000 places, in the techniques of election observation. In November a German non-governmental organisation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, organised workshops and seminars on independent election monitoring, and in December the Union of Cameroonian Journalists launched a programme titled "Media for Democracy", to train 250 journalists in the concepts of democracy and surveillance of the electoral process. Foreign election observers can also be expected to police the polls.

**The SDF begins to outline a programme—**

A point which has been repeatedly raised with him by Western governments and well-wishers is that Mr Fru Ndi needs to counter the government's lacklustre record with a programme of his own, thereby raising the level of discourse from personalities to policies. There are signs of this beginning to happen. Mr Fru Ndi told the SDF party congress in Buea that once in office, he will revise the new Constitution, which does not meet the expectations of Cameroonians. He specifically denounced the excessive powers it gives the president and its delimitation of Cameroonians into "natives" and "non-natives" as the "Rwandisation" of the country. After three decades of totalitarianism, he said, Cameroonians dreamt of the open and democratic society that the SDF would put in place once in power. Mr Fru Ndi has drawn up an economic programme as well.

**—and woos the French**

The SDF leader is also being urged to work on his other main problem, improving his stature among francophones as well as in France itself, where 8,000-10,000 Cameroonians are resident, in order to avoid being tainted with a strictly anglophone identification. While acknowledging to French journalists that there had been a misunderstanding, he said it was unfairly thought that he was anti-French because he does not speak the language. Claiming that French and Cameroonian officials who were afraid of him were people with “skeletons in their cupboards”, he assured francophones and France they have nothing to fear from a Fru Ndi presidency.

Franco-Cameroonian relations cool—

Interestingly, a series of incidents over the past few months have led to a chill in relations between France and the Biya government. This could be troublesome for the RDPC in an election year, when it needs to count on French support at a variety of levels, particularly in relations with the IMF, where Cameroon remains out of favour. France’s past willingness to apply its seal of approval to less than perfect elections could also be useful. But Paris has grown impatient with the perpetual delinquent, after the collapse of Cameroon’s fourth IMF stand-by arrangement and an economic programme which remains woefully off track (see The economy). France is also unhappy with Cameroonian diplomacy on several fronts.

—and Mr Biya nurses a grudge

Mr Biya, for his part, has been nursing a grudge over France’s unwillingness to take a stronger military role in Cameroon’s dispute with Nigeria over the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula, given the existence of a Franco-Cameroonian defence pact. The French government has stated its preference for a diplomatic solution, whether by mediation or a decision from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. But this posture may have more to do with France’s commercial ties with Nigeria, currently its largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa, than with gun-shyness. A tête-á-tête between the Nigerian leader, Sani Abacha, who was a surprise guest at December’s Franco-African summit of heads of state in Ouagadougou, and the French president, Jacques Chirac, no doubt touched upon the conflict. The French were also unimpressed by Mr Biya’s failure to attend the meeting. He was said to have cancelled his attendance upon learning of General Abacha’s presence, and a rumoured mediation effort.

Support is abandoned for Mr Boutros-Ghali—

Another reason for his absence may have been a wish by Mr Biya, the current chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), to avoid confronting other francophone leaders at a time when, under considerable lobbying from the USA, he parted company with France and authorised OAU member states to submit candidates other than Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the post of UN secretary-general. In the face of the US veto on Mr Boutros-Ghali serving a second term, France was exerting pressure on Mr Biya to maintain the OAU’s official line in support of him, obviously miscalculating the extent of the latter’s unpopularity in Africa.

—as the Bakassi question remains unresolved

Mr Biya may have had his own reasons for distancing himself from the incumbent. Nothing came of Mr Boutros-Ghali’s goodwill mission to Bakassi in September. The dispute itself, meanwhile, continued, with Nigeria accusing Cameroonian troops of resuming attacks in mid-December. Some governments were warning that Nigeria may be planning to take *de facto* possession of the peninsula, whatever ruling might come from the ICJ, and may want to put in place elements of a civil administration.

**Rwandans are finally extradited**

Cameroon announced in mid-January it would go ahead with the extradition of Colonel Théoneste Bagosora and three other Rwandans indicted on genocide charges by the UN criminal tribunal in Tanzania. Mr Biya had been dallying over releasing the alleged war criminals for trial since their arrests in Cameroon in March 1996. On January 23 the tribunal gained custody of: Mr Bagosora, the alleged coordinator of the April 1994 massacres and the highest-ranking former official in custody; the director of the extremist radio station Radio télévision libre mille collines, Ferdinand Nahimana; a former minister, André Ntagerura; and a former regional military commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Anatole Nsengiyumva. The fate of the remaining eight Rwandans in Cameroonian custody is unclear; their extradition has not yet been formally requested by the tribunal, although they are said to be wanted by the Rwandan government.

**Opponents clash with authorities—**

Meanwhile, the domestic situation remained tense, as the authorities continued their harassment of the opposition. An SDF official was arrested in Kribi, in the south of the country, in early November for organising an "illegal" public meeting, and the personal guard of the *lamido* (traditional chief) of Rey Bouba in the North province attacked the entourage of a UNDP deputy as it attempted to hold a meeting at the deputy's home. Two people were killed and some 30 others injured. The *lamido* of Rey Bouba is one of Cameroon's most powerful traditional chiefs and a stalwart RDPC supporter. Traditional rulers in Cameroon inherit their positions, but must be confirmed in their status by the government. Meanwhile five students from Yaoundé university were arrested in late October for having incited fellow students to strike.

**—and the independent press is attacked**

The independent media also continued to come under attack. In December, *La Nouvelle Expression* was twice seized from kiosks in Yaoundé and Douala for having published a critical report on the recent RDPC congress. The *Nouvel Indépendant* was suspended by the government in early November for violating the public order, on claims it was operating illegally with its director, Ndzama Seme, having fled the country to avoid a jail sentence. Two journalists with the paper, Evariste Menouga and Peter William Mandio, were arrested in late November and early December over an article which criticised the minister of public works.

**Journalists are jailed—**

After having been sentenced to six months' imprisonment in October for insulting the head of state and a member of the national assembly and having spent 17 days in jail, Pius Njawe, the embattled editor of another independent weekly, *Le Messager*, was released on bail from Douala central prison by the supreme court on November 15. There were concerns for the health of Mr Njawe, who was named a prisoner of conscience by the independent human rights organisation Amnesty International, as he was denied access to a doctor and to his medication for diabetes. His colleague on the paper, Eyoum Nguangue, was sentenced to a year in prison.

**—and more repression is expected**

Amnesty has predicted that the repression of the press will intensify as the elections approach, and has warned that the legal system is being used to prosecute people "solely because of their opposition to the government and for exercising their right to freedom of expression". Two other watchdog organisations, Reporters sans frontières and the Committee to Protect Journalists, also issued appeals to Mr Biya on Mr Njawe's behalf. The London-based anti-censorship organisation Article 19 released a severely critical report during the quarter.

## The economy

The World Bank president snubs Cameroon—

Cameroon was not one of the countries on the itinerary of the World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, on an African trip in February, despite Mr Biya's status as chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Bank's keen interest in building up its Central African portfolio. Mr Wolfensohn's cold shoulder is indicative of the current state of relations between the Bretton Woods institutions and one of their poorest pupils, and in sharp contrast with relations with those countries the Bank president will visit: Ghana, Senegal, Mozambique and South Africa.

—as an ESAF is far off—

There is currently no good news from Washington, despite Mr Biya's desperate effort to dress up a sorry reform record with the placement of competent technocrats in key ministries in last September's cabinet reshuffle. The newly appointed prime minister, Peter Mafany Musonge, had made it his top priority to get the Bretton Woods cash flow restarted in the form of an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). However, the government's hopes were dashed yet again after an IMF mission visited in December. Four consecutive stand-by agreements with the Fund have broken down. The most recent of these was converted into a year-long, non-disbursing "staff-monitored programme" in July 1996, but its conditions have in turn gone unmet.

—with conditions going unmet

The government failed to convince the IMF team of the sincerity of its commitment to reform. Neither the fiscal nor the structural targets of the shadow programme have been met, with the result that the ESAF has been put on hold indefinitely. Among the major fiscal difficulties is a higher budget gap than anticipated, which is being financed by non-payment of Paris Club debt with a consequent build-up of arrears to official creditors. Secondly, revenue mobilisation remains unsatisfactory; for as yet unexplained reasons, oil receipts have not been transferred to the national account since the first quarter of fiscal 1996/97 (July-June), leading to speculation that the revenue is being squirreled away for electoral purposes. Tax revenue has not kept pace either; the turnover tax (TCA) on business and direct taxes has been left uncollected. This may also be connected to the government's wish to gain favour in an election year.

A tax moratorium is offered—

The government nevertheless kept up a public image of reform. In December the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (Minefi) launched an operation to recover CFAfr250bn ($488m) in unpaid taxes, some of which date back ten years and are owed by both individuals and businesses. The state was offering an 18-month moratorium for those who cooperated with authorities, but other defaulters would be pursued and have their property confiscated or liquidated. While state radio blamed the tax shortfall on the civil disobedience campaign launched by the opposition between April and October 1991, Minefi pointed out that less than CFAfr30bn in taxes was withheld during the *villes mortes* (ghost towns) campaign, compared with more than CFAfr60bn owing from 1994.

—but progress on structural reform is slow

For the World Bank to resume its lending, which includes a suspended $150m Structural Adjustment Loan (SAL), Cameroon will have to come to an agreement with the IMF. But progress on structural conditions, public-sector and banking reforms, and the privatisation of state-owned corporations, also remains insufficient in the view of the Bank, with the notable exception of the successful sale in December of the state rubber firm (see below). While the minister of public works, Sali Dairou, put a positive interpretation on civil service reform, claiming that the numbers had been reduced by 15% to 160,000 since 1992, the Bank maintains that less than 13,000 employees, contrary to the 20,000 promised by the government, have been cut from the public rolls since April 1994.

Hevecam is sold—

The Bank has also pointed out that it took two years from the announcement of the planned privatisations of the transport companies (Camair, Camship, Regifercam) for the government to publish invitations to tender. The most significant privatisation thus far was the sale in December of 90% of the equity in the state rubber firm, Hévéa-Cameroun (Hevecam), whose market value was estimated at CFAfr15bn, to Panwell, a company comprised of Chinese interests based in Singapore, for CFAfr23bn. Hevecam maintains some 15,100 ha of rubber plantations in the south-east of Cameroon. Panwell will take over Hevecam’s CFAfr22bn debt to the World Bank, the EU and the Caisse française de développement (CFD, the French state development bank), to be repaid over 28 years at an interest rate of 3.5%. The company will also invest CFAfr31bn in developing the rubber industry, create 3,000 jobs and support the development of 11,000 ha of village plantations.

—but the French lose out

The privatisation, considered a boost to the government’s image for the transparent manner in which it was handled, was a setback for French interests. Terres Rouges, of the Rivaud-Bollore group, which for 20 years managed Hevecam under a technical assistance contract, had tabled an offer with the participation of Proparco (the CFD’s private-sector lending affiliate), as well as Hevecam’s major client, Michelin. Considered likely to win the contract during the four months of negotiations, the French continued to lobby Mr Biya’s government even after a protocol agreement was signed with Panwell. However, desperately needed cash was the decisive factor: Panwell reportedly paid twice what the French group was offering.

Other companies are to be sold this year—

Among the other companies on the auction block are Intelcam (telecommunications), Société nationale d’électricité du Cameroun (Sonel, electricity), Société nationale des eaux du Cameroun (SNEC, water), Société camoerounaise des palmeraies (Socapalm, palm oil), Régie nationale des chemins de fer du Cameroun (Regifercam, railways) and Cameroon Airlines. But controversy continues over the manner in which the government attempts to rid itself of the parastatals, many of which are financial albatrosses. Intelcam, for example, was nearly given away to France-Telecom in a secretive and hurried debt-for-equity deal on the eve of the OAU summit in July when France threatened to shut down telephone lines because the Yaoundé government had not paid its bills. The deal was later nullified. In November a France-Telecom affiliate, France radio et câbles, suspended telephone links between France and Cameroon over non-payment of some CFAfr40bn in debts. Intelcam has reportedly concluded an agreement with American Telephone and Telegraph to re-establish the telephone lines.

—but progress may stall

And privatisations may slow even further in 1997 (an election year), particularly for politically delicate enterprises, such as the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and the Société de développement du coton au Cameroun (Sodecoton; cotton). In ruling circles, there are fears that the Bamilékés, in the political camp of Paul Biya's main political challenger, John Fru Ndi, have their eyes trained on possession of as many of the "family jewels" as possible; hence the official ambivalence over the privatisation programme.

Sodecoton is overhauled—

Sodecoton, which was at the centre of another privatisation scandal in early 1996, is today "a very attractive candidate" for sale, according to its general manager, Mohamed Iya, after a record 1995/96 yield of 195,000 tons of raw cotton, against the previous year's 165,000 tons. Sodecoton made a profit of CFAfr6m in the 1995/96 season after being CFAfr60bn in debt the previous year, thanks to the government setting seed prices artificially high for 1995/96 and absorbing part of Sodecoton's debt, as well as the government's decision to halve its staff and reduce the wage bill. Sodecoton is 30% owned by the French Compagnie française pour le développement des fibres textiles, but the state's 70% holding is to be sold by the end of June, according to Mr Iya.

—but Camair is in trouble—

Camair provides another unhappy example. The company's debt totals CFAfr47bn, with losses of CFAfr8 bn in 1993, more than CFAfr10bn in 1994 and more than CFAfr5 bn in 1995, due to "laxity, embezzlement and corruption", according to its recently appointed director-general, Samuel Minko. Mr Minko, who convened an emergency meeting upon taking over to try to save the enterprise, said a new pricing schedule and a reduction in staffing were among the measures he would take to bring the company back into solvency.

—as is the economy overall

The problems with the parastatals are but one example of the deep-seated and complex problems plaguing the Cameroonian economy, which under normal circumstances could be fairly robust compared with its regional neighbours. Instead it is anaemic, choked by a corrupt and inefficient administration, saddled with a massive, increasing external debt, no new inflows of funds and a continued lack of transparency in the budgetary process. The latter problem has deepened a fundamental credibility gap with the Bretton Woods institutions and other donors.

The EU faults the government—

The EU, for example, commissioned in 1996 an evaluation of its structural adjustment support to Cameroon, according to a report in the usually well-informed Paris-based newsletter *La Lettre du continent*. It concluded that the root of the problem with structural adjustment is political in nature or a shortage of "good governance". This was responsible for slow restructuring of public enterprises, absence of consensus on reforms, tax avoidance, a weak budgetary process and lack of fiscal control. Because of the prevailing situation, the principal donors, including the EU, were being forced to manage their aid directly, contrary to the purpose of the aid itself, a mode of operation which must be brought to an end.

—as the debt crisis mounts

Since there is no IMF agreement in sight, a rescheduling of Cameroon's astronomical external debt—at approximately $9.4bn at the end of calendar 1996, equalling 426% of exports—with service due accounting for some 51% of the budget, will be put off at least until early 1998. Meanwhile indebtedness will continue to mount and what is increasingly a non-oil economy will have to be fuelled primarily and precariously by volatile primary commodity exports. The spark needed to jump-start domestic demand and propel the economy out of its recessionary mode has not been ignited, nor is it likely to be in a year which holds the real possibility of social unrest. Maintenance of a weak real GDP growth rate of 3.5% in fiscal 1996/97 and the following year is thus the best that can be hoped for.

Business issues a warning

The country's principal business forum, the Groupement interprofessionel pour l'étude et la co-ordination des intérêts économiques du Cameroun (GICAM), offered an unusually upbeat assessment of the economy at its year-end general assembly in December, parroting the government's figure of 5% real growth rate in 1996 compared with an earlier prediction of 2.5%, and noting an increase in business turnover of 7.5% and an inflation rate maintained at 5%. GICAM's president, André Siaka, did acknowledge, however, that domestic demand remained feeble due to the "ridiculous salaries" of the public sector, which he recommended should be raised. (Salaries were slashed by up to 80% in two rounds of pay cuts in late 1993, which were in turn aggravated by the effects of devaluation in early 1994.) GICAM also criticised the fact that the majority of the state budget was dedicated to paying off Cameroon's external debt at the expense of domestic debt, penalising local businesses. This, GICAM stated, could compromise economic recovery.

## Agriculture and forestry

Farmers are quitting cocoa—

With oil production, now at 90,000 barrels/day (b/d), continuing to decline, the economy remains dependent on primary commodity exports, principally cocoa, coffee, timber, cotton and bananas, to fuel growth, and there is therefore little hope for a major boost to the economy. The current position of coffee and cocoa is illustrative. The agriculture minister, Augustin Frédéric Kodock, told a year-end meeting that cocoa and coffee farmers may abandon their crops to switch to more lucrative agricultural products because of declining prices. Over the year, he said, average prices for cocoa had fallen from CFAfr495/kg to CFAfr340/kg, although production had increased from 109,000 tons in 1994/95 to 130,000 tons in 1995/96. Large quantities were smuggled to Nigeria, where prices were higher.

—as quality falls—

The quality rating for Cameroon's cocoa has fallen from good to fair on the London Commodity Exchange, due to a series of free-market reforms since the closure of the National Produce Marketing Board in 1991. These abolished quality checks and relaxed export control measures. Farmers were finding it difficult to access regular supplies of pesticides, which were previously subsidised, at affordable prices. The head of the cocoa and coffee board, Hope Sona Ebai, said he expected 1996/97 cocoa production to reach approximately 120,000 tons.

—and the EU steps in to help

In October the EU signed an agreement to open a CFAfr11bn line of credit, under its Stabilisation of Export Earnings (Stabex) scheme, to facilitate the marketing of Cameroonian cocoa and coffee. The line of credit has been provided to four banks, SCB Crédit Lyonnais, Amity Bank, CCEI Bank and Standard Chartered, to lend money to the sector at a low interest rate of 9%, roughly half the average rate of 17%. Since the liberalisation, private operators in the sector have also faced barriers getting commercial bank financing, including prohibitively high interest rates.

Coffee prices and production are also declining—

Declining global coffee prices are also affecting African producers, as an executive with the Inter-African Coffee Organisation, Donald Kaberuka, said in January. Over the past two years African countries have been earning an average $2.8bn in total from coffee exports, but with current price trends this could drop to $1.5bn in the current crop year. An emergency meeting of the Association of Coffee Producing Countries was scheduled for late January to discuss how to reverse this situation. A current retention plan has not had much success so far, according to Mr Kaberuka. Although it reduced inventories held in consumer countries, it failed to maintain market prices at remunerative levels for producers. According to the *International Coffee Report*, coffee production in Cameroon has fallen to less than 1m 60-kg bags in the past year, after reaching nearly 2m bags earlier in the decade, with exports of less than 400,000 bags in 1995/96, and little expectation of change in 1996/97.

—while cotton output is up

Cotton production, meanwhile, has been steadily increasing, expected to rise from 80,000 tons in 1995/96 to between 88,000 tons and 94,000 tons in 1996/97. But excess production in the world cotton market is expected to lead to falling prices in the medium term.

## Energy and industry

Marginal oilfields go on stream

The Paris-based industry newsletter *Africa Energy and Mining* reported in December that production would start up at the end of 1996 in two small oilfields with 1.9m tons of proven reserves which are southern extensions of the Kole field. The fields, Kole Complementaire, have been developed by Elf. Production from the Kribi field was scheduled to begin the end of January after the installation of a drilling rig by Perenco. Exploitation of these fields are apparently in response to legislation in 1995 to lower taxes on development of marine oilfields. However, given the continuing decline in output of established fields, the new fields are not expected to make much difference in overall average production of 90,000 barrels/day in 1997.

## Foreign trade and payments

Infrastructure is to be refurbished—

In November the EU provided a CFAfr4bn ($7.8m) grant to Cameroon for the construction and maintenance of 1,000 km of feeder roads in five of the country's ten provinces, Centre, Littoral, South-west, North-west and West. The work will be carried out exclusively by Cameroonian private contractors, according to the minister of public works, Jean-Baptiste Bokam. The Caisse française de développement (CFD, the French state development bank) has given a loan of CFAfr3.62bn to finance a project to rehabilitate urban infrastructure in Yaoundé , as well as a loan of FFr21m to finance the strengthening of a railway bridge outside Douala. This particular railway line is economically significant, permitting the daily transport of 5,000 tons of merchandise between Douala port and northern Cameroon, as well as other landlocked countries in the region. The Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund will finance the modernisation of terminal containers at Douala port, it was announced in early November.

—and the fishing sector is to get a boost

In late October Spain opened a CFAfr20bn line of credit for Cameroon's fishing industry, which will allow the acquisition of 20 fishing boats by private entrepreneurs. This is expected to increase Cameroon's fish production by 15,000 tons and create 1,000 jobs. Cameroon currently imports 60,000 tons of fish annually to satisfy demand estimated at 150,000 tons.

# Central African Republic

## Political structure

| | |
|---|---|
| Official name | République centrafricaine |
| Form of state | Unitary republic |
| Legal system | Based on 1986 constitution |
| National legislature | Assemblée nationale, 85 members elected by universal suffrage serve a five-year term |
| National elections | August-September 1993 (presidential and legislative); next elections due by August-September 1998 (legislative) and 1999 (presidential) |
| Head of state | President, elected by universal suffrage to serve a six-year term |
| National government | The prime minister (nominated by the president) and his nominated Council of Ministers; the government is dominated by the MLPC. Last cabinet reshuffle: June 1996 |
| Main political parties | The presidential majority includes: Mouvement pour la libération du peuple centrafricain (MLPC); Parti libéral démocrate (PLD); Convention nationale (CN); Mouvement d'évolution sociale de l'Afrique noire (MESAN) and the Rassemblement démocratique centrafricain (RDC). The seven member parties of the opposition Conseil démocratique de l'opposition centrafricaine (Codepo) alliance include: Alliance pour la démocratie et le progrès (ADP); Front patriotique pour le progrès (FPP); Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement (MDD, formerly Mouvance David Dacko) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | President | Ange-Félix Patassé |
| | Prime minister | Michel Gbezera-Bria |
| Key ministers | Civil service, labour & social security | Eloi Anguimate (CN) |
| | Commerce, industry & agriculture | Joseph Agbo (MLPC) |
| | Communications | Maurice Amaye (MESAN) |
| | Defence | Jean Mette Yapende (MLPC) |
| | Education | Albert Mberio (MLPC) |
| | Energy & mines | Renaldy Sioket (RDC) |
| | Foreign affairs | Vacant |
| | Health & population | Cécile Fara Frond (RDC) |
| | Justice | Aristide Sokambi (independent) |
| | Parliamentary relations | Michel Docko (independent) |
| | Post & telecommunications | Théophile Touba (RDC) |
| | Public service & employment | David Dofara (independent) |
| | Public works | Dieudonné Beket (MLPC) |
| | Territorial administration & national security | Jean Wilbiro Sacko (independent) |
| | Tourism & the environment | Daniel Emery Dede |
| | Transport | Eloi Anguimate (CN) |
| | Water, forests & the environment | Pierre Lakouetene (RDC) |
| BEAC governor | Jean-Félix Mamalepot | |

# Economic structure

*Latest available figures*

| Economic indicators | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GDP at market prices CFAfr bn | 365 | 354 | 483 | 582 | n/a |
| Real GDP growth % | –2.6 | 2.6 | 3.9 | 4.7 | n/a |
| Consumer price inflation % | –1.4 | –2.9 | 24.6 | 19.4 | n/a |
| Population m | 3.08 | 3.16 | 3.30 | 3.40 | 3.5 |
| Exports fob $ m | 116 | 133 | 146 | 181 | n/a |
| Imports fob $ m | 189 | 158 | 131 | 176 | n/a |
| Current account $ m | –83 | –13 | –25 | –9 | n/a |
| Reserves excl gold $ m | 100 | 112 | 210 | 234 | 243[a] |
| Total external debt $ m | 826 | 885 | 891 | n/a | n/a |
| External debt-service ratio % | 8.4 | 4.9 | 12.5 | n/a | n/a |
| Diamond production '000 carats | 414 | 495 | 529 | 484 | n/a |
| Seed cotton production[b] '000 tons | 12.0 | 15.9 | 27.5 | 32.0[c] | n/a |
| Timber production '000 cu metres | 211 | 311 | 299 | 326 | n/a |
| Exchange rate (av) CFAfr:$ | 264.7 | 283.2 | 555.2 | 499.2 | 509.6[d] |

January 27, 1997 CFAfr548.5:$1

| Origins of gross domestic product 1994 | % of total |
|---|---|
| Agriculture | 43.7 |
| Industry | 13.4 |
| Services | 42.9 |
| GDP at factor cost | 100.0 |

| Components of gross domestic product 1995 | % of total |
|---|---|
| Private consumption | 83.8 |
| Government consumption | 9.9 |
| Gross domestic investment | 11.7 |
| Exports of goods & services | 20.8 |
| Imports of goods & services | –26.3 |
| GDP at market prices | 100.0 |

| Principal exports 1995 | $ m |
|---|---|
| Diamonds | 90 |
| Coffee | 28 |
| Timber | 27 |
| Cotton | 22 |

| Principal imports 1995[c] | $ m |
|---|---|
| Miscellaneous | 129 |
| Capital goods | 31 |
| Fuel & energy | 16 |

| Main destinations of exports 1995[e] | % of total |
|---|---|
| Belgium-Luxembourg | 40 |
| France | 16 |
| Zaire | 1 |
| Congo | 1 |

| Main origins of imports 1995[e] | % of total |
|---|---|
| France | 37 |
| Japan | 24 |
| Cameroon | 6 |
| Germany | 4 |

[a] January-September average. [b] Crop years starting December 1. [c] Official estimates. [d] End-August. [e] Drawn from partners' trade returns, subject to a wide margin of error.

# Outlook for 1997-98

**Mr Patassé may yet derail a new government—**

Amid the talk of a government of national unity to solve the continuing crisis in the army, it is easy to lose sight of the central role that the president, Ange-Félix Patassé, is playing. A few months ago hopes were high that the reformist prime minister at the time, Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, could press ahead with a programme of political consensus and economic reconstruction. But strong external support from France has not helped in the face of continual obstruction by his own president. Unless Mr Patassé is prepared to take a back seat and allow the government to carry through policies such as army and media reform, it is hard to see how progress can be made.

**—and the key may lie with MLPC parlamentarians**

Ultimately, the key may lie with the president's own partisans in parliament. There have long been signs that many deputies and grass-roots activists in Mr Patassé's Mouvement pour la libération du peuple centrafricain (MLPC) are tired of the president's reliance on friends. The parliamentary speaker, Hugues Dobozendi, a key MLPC figure, has indicated that he might welcome a debate on Mr Patassé's role, and MLPC deputies have shown they can unmake Patassé favourites, by pushing out the then prime minister, Jean-Luc Mandaba, in 1995. Much may now hang on whether they are prepared to go after the president himself, eventually forcing him to resign and allow fresh elections. Such an outcome may be ruled out by MLPC deputies' antipathy to the hardline opposition in the Conseil démocratique de l'opposition centrafricaine (Codepo).

**France will struggle to regain credibility**

French policy in the Central African Republic (CAR) can never be the same after the bloody helicopter raid of early January. Whether or not it could be justified in narrow military terms, in political terms the raid scandalised many, both in the CAR and elsewhere. The apparent disregard for risks to civilians damaged France's already tarnished image among Africans. The affair has been widely viewed as an intervention to crush the rebels and keep Mr Patassé in power; and press coverage has stressed the importance of French military interests in the CAR, its old friendships with past dictators in the region and Mr Patassé's poor public image. All this seems likely to sharpen the divide in Paris between advocates of a traditional paternalist 1960s-style relationship with Africa and those pushing for reform. In particular, as scheduled French legislative elections approach, the Parti socialiste has been given a platform to demand sweeping reforms. The French president, Jacques Chirac, may well sense the way the wind is blowing and adapt Africa policy accordingly. This development could have an importance spreading well beyond the CAR's borders, as could the successful deployment of a promised African peacekeeping force, from which French personnel have been specifically excluded.

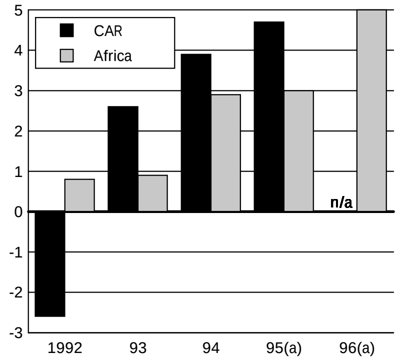
**The economic situation will remain grave**

Although the CAR is still in desperate need of support from the IMF, without which effective treatment of its debts to the Paris Club cannot proceed, the latest mutiny and the behaviour of Mr Patassé have once again torpedoed any prospect of an early settlement. The peace agreement of late January is good news but, after three mutinies, sceptics will wait for a fourth, and the further economic and administrative disruption it could bring. Previous growth projections for 1996 have been rendered meaningless and it is difficult to say what the picture is likely to be in 1997. However, the upheavals have affected Bangui alone. Agricultural and extractive sectors will remain fairly unaffected, whatever happens in the near future.

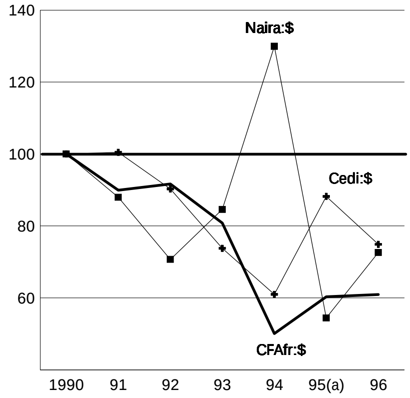
Late note

At the end of January a new prime minister was appointed. Michel Gbezira-Bria was previously foreign minister under Mr Ngoupandé. He belongs to no political party but rebel spokesmen condemned the move, alleging that he was too close to Mr Patassé.

**CAR: gross domestic product**
% change, year on year




**CAR: real exchange rates (b)**
1990=100




(a) Estimates. (b) Nominal exchange rates adjusted for changes in relative consumer prices.
Sources: EIU; IMF, *World Economic Outlook.*

# Review

## The political scene

Yet another mutiny flares up at Kasai baracks—

The Central African Republic (CAR) paid the price for the continuing failure of the president, Ange-Félix Patassé, to address regional grievances and commit himself to credible reform when soldiers mutinied for the third time in a year. The rebellion broke out on the night of November 15-16 at the Kasai barracks 3 km from downtown Bangui, after soldiers from the Regiment pour la défense operationelle du territoire (RDOT) broke into the armoury at around midnight. Initially, some 200 soldiers seemed to be involved. Firing broke out and the dissidents made brief forays to hunt down armed supporters of Mr Patassé. Two people were admitted to hospital and there were reports that the rebels had taken hostage both the national police chief, Ernest Latakpi, and Joseph Vermond Tchendo, the general secretary of Mr Patassé's ruling Mouvement pour la libération du peuple centrafricain (MLPC). But the government appeared to remain in firm control of Bangui, via loyalist soldiers from the presidential guard. France also deployed some of its troops stationed in Bangui to keep calm on the streets.

—as Mr Ngoupandé appeals for consensus and dialogue

Mr Patassé, in Rome for the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s food summit, dismissed the revolt as an escape by common-law prisoners. The then prime minister, Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, took a much more realistic and non-partisan line; he went on national radio to call on all sides to hold fire and return weapons to armouries, stressed the need to solve problems through dialogue and pointed to the progress towards economic recovery that had been achieved by his crossparty government since June. The new unrest must have come as a bitter blow for a man who has struggled to rebuild confidence in the CAR. Less than a week before the rebellion, France had approved a CFAfr3bn ($5.9m) package of budget aid, to help the government get its finances in order and secure new programmes with the IMF and World Bank.

Regional and ethnic tensions play a greater role—

The RDOT was at the centre of the previous uprisings, in April and May 1996 and RDOT members remained unhappy at the government's failure to settle pay arrears dating back to 1992-93. The latest revolt, however, appeared to be much more concerned with ethnic and regional issues than longstanding complaints over pay and conditions. The rebels said they wanted faster implementation of measures promised at the special conference on the future of the army held in August 1996 (4th quarter 1996, page 29). A key recommendation of that meeting had been the recruitment of soldiers on a nationwide basis, rather than the regional quotas favoured by Mr Patassé. Many RDOT soldiers are from two southern ethnic groups: the Yakoma (to which the former president, André Kolingba, belongs), and the Gbaka, from which Mr Bokassa came. Both have resented the privileged position occupied by the troops of Mr Patassé's presidential guard, drawn from the Baya people in his home area in the north-west. Moreover, in contrast to Mr Ngoupandé, Mr Patassé has made little effort to build bridges across traditional ethnic, factional or regional boundaries.

—and MPLC militias are rumoured

There have been repeated claims that Mr Patassé has encouraged the creation of an unofficial militia of MLPC supporters, and even brought in fighters from nearby southern Chad. As this latest mutiny progressed, it became clear that this was a prime grievance for the rebels. In a statement issued on November 20, after five days of tense stand off, the mutineers' leader, Captain Anicet Saulet, claimed that the mutiny's purpose was to disarm the alleged civilian militias and Chadian and Sudanian “codos” (hired guns). He added that RDOT personnel would not lay down their arms until the completion of this “mission”. (Mr Saulet is of Yakoma-Mbandja parentage and was a key figure in the later Kolingba years.) RDOT soldiers have bitterly opposed government plans to transfer them to Bouar, in the far west and the site of a big French base, as this would have left pro-Patassé units dominant in Bangui. A parliamentary commission had been trying to broker a compromise agreement over this issue since October 20.

Mr Ngoupandé secures support but fears the mutineers' motives

Mr Patassé, still abroad at this stage, kept fairly quiet after his initial outburst. Back in Bangui, Mr Ngoupandé maintained a moderate stance that secured a measure of crossparty support. Opposition parties condemned Mr Patassé's allegedly “tribalist” policies, but Codepo also publicly condemned the rebellion; back in May it had equivocated over the mutineers' right to act.

The rebels call for Mr Patassé's resignation—

When the archbishop of Bangui, Mgr Joachim Ndayen, hosted peace talks, beginning on November 23, the rebels toughened their stand, demanding the impeachment of Mr Patassé. By this stage Mr Ngoupandé was also implicitly criticising Mr Patassé's approach to politics, setting out an alternative agenda of consensus and reconciliation.

—and France is a target of growing resentment

Meanwhile France was emerging as a direct target of rebel criticism. The bitterness was not surprising: the strong French presence in the CAR has been resented for decades and events from May onwards have only reinforced the perception that Paris is not willing to surrender real control of the country. Mr Ngoupandé was well aware of the dangers of this, stressing that he did not want to rely on French intervention and that CAR troops and police should be used to keep the peace.

Returning at last on November 26, Mr Patassé publicly thanked France for intervening to help maintain order, both now and earlier in the year which was perhaps unwise in the context of domestic politics.

There is no sign of an early settlement—

Fighting flared up again on November 30. One woman died and 20 people were injured in crossfire in the capital's Petevo district; many locals fled north to the quartier of Malimaka, where young militants from Mr Patassé's MLPC were mobilising. The president ordered a night-time curfew. Both sides began to establish areas of control, with French troops attempting to act as a buffer. The rebels controlled Bangui's sixth arrondissement, the Petevo district, as well as Kasai barracks. And their supporters also held the military bases at Lobaye, in the south, and Bangassou and Boubari in the east. Mr Patassé held talks with Mr Kolingba, who as a fellow Yakoma carried clout with the rebels.

—as ethnic conflict claims a prominent victim

Just how far the situation had deteriorated became apparent when troops loyal to Mr Patassé raided the home of the former military strongman and interior minister of the Kolingba regime, Christophe Grelombe. Mr Grelombe, a Yakoma like the former president, was closely associated with the most authoritarian aspects of the Kolingba era and was responsible for a vicious crackdown on northerners in 1982. He and his son were seized and their bodies were later found (on December 5) in a field 2 km away. With violence worsening, the UN evacuated its staff to Côte d'Ivoire; meanwhile, hundreds of Central Africans crossed the southern border into Congo.

Francophone leaders mediate—

With the Franco-African summit of heads of state about to take place in Burkina Faso, Mr Patassé indicated his hope that francophone leaders might intervene. The presidents of Gabon (Omar Bongo), Mali (Alpha Oumar Konare), Burkina (Blaise Compaoré) and Chad (Idriss Déby) announced plans for a mediation mission to Bangui, after the Ouagadougou summit and, on December 7, the four presidents held talks with all parties in the conflict. Undoubtedly, at a time when the USA has been promoting the idea of a new peacekeeping force for Africa, the leaders were anxious to demonstrate that the Franc Zone had the capacity to negotiate peaceful settlements of its own problems.

—and secure a fragile truce

On December 10 the visiting presidents finally secured the assent of all sides to a truce, under which both sides would maintain their positions but open some barricades; the rebels would free access to Bangui's vital riverside oil port. It was agreed that Mali's General Amadou Toumani Touré would chair a committee to supervise implementation of the truce. Mr Touré is respected across West Africa as the soldier who overthrew Moussa Traoré's 23-year dictatorship then stood aside while a civilian president was chosen in a free election. As the end of the 15-day truce approached, further mediation by Mr Touré produced a one-month extension (to January 23). The two sides also agreed to form a joint commission on security.

Mr Chirac tries to maintain a neutral stance—

Initially, France maintained a neutral stance throughout the mutiny affair. French troops limited their activities to acting as a buffer group and guarding French property; but this became increasingly difficult. On December 4 they finally became directly involved when rebels fired rockets into downtown Bangui, slightly damaging the French-run Sofitel hotel and imperilling the safety of guests and staff. French troops shot back. But at this stage the French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, was still attempting to keep France out of the political limelight, leaving the peace mediation to the African leaders. A subsequent visit to Bangui by General Jeannou Lacaze, chief-of-staff under the French presidents Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and the late François Mitterrand (and a longstanding contact of Mr Kolingba), suggested that Paris was engaged in some low-key diplomacy to try to defuse tensions.

—but slips into active defence of the government

But France's post-colonial involvement in the CAR has been such that its attempt to appear neutral, whether genuine or not, carried little credibility with local people or the outside world. Moreover, the continuing crisis appeared to be strengthening the hand of those favouring a tough, interventionist line. Hardline rebels unhappy with the truce extension had detained Captain Saulet by this stage. The opposition political parties appeared to be shifting ground, calling for a special session of the Assemblée nationale to debate the mutineer' complaints against Mr Patassé. Then the Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement (MDD), the Front patriotique pour le progrés (FPP) and the Alliance pour la démocratie et le progrès (ADP) allied themselves with Mr Kolingba's Rassemblement démocratique centrafricain (RDC), which is actually a partner in government, to propose charging him with high treason. A moderate New Year's speech from Mr Patassé, proposing an amnesty and national reconciliation, failed to defuse the pressure.

A shock helicopter raid shatters France's image

A decisive moment came on the night of January 3-4 when civilian supporters of the rebels tried to march towards the centre of Bangui down Avenue Boganda and the French attempted to block their path by firing in the air. A Central African was killed under unclear circumstances. Then two French soldiers were shot dead. Although the rebels disclaimed blame for the deaths, they came as a big shock in Paris. France insisted it would stick to a peacekeeping stance, but then, on January 5, staged a fierce revenge attack, using armed helicopter gunships. At least ten mutineers died and 30 were injured: rebels claimed 21 soldiers and 11 civilians had been killed, and humanitarian groups also put the death toll higher than official French figures.

The attack was apparently ordered by aides to the French president, Jacques Chirac, although he told the Ouagadougou summit in December that "the period of unilateral interventions in Africa is over".

**A new negotiating forum is set up—**

After this latest shock Mr Touré managed to get the main political parties to join with trade union, church and human rights leaders in holding a national debate to discuss ways forward. As January went on there was a growing belief that a national unity government should be formed, perhaps led by a new prime minister. While Mr Ngoupandé's moderation retains respect, his credibility has been undermined by his inability to impose this line on loyalist troops and prevent them indulging in violence and victimisation. An incident in mid-January saw Mr Ngoupandé's *chef de cabinet*, Karim Meckassoua, arrested and threatened by members of Mr Patassé's military entourage: Mr Meckassoua had made the mistake of too publicly supporting a démarche to opposition political forces.

**—and a formal peace finally signed—**

A peace accord, brokered by Mr Touré and apparently bringing the mutiny to an end, was finally signed on January 26, by Captain Saulet, Mr Patassé and leading politicians, in the presence of Mr Bongo and Mr Déby. The rebels abandoned demands for Mr Patassé's removal but kept the right to carry weapons, as well as their control of two districts of Bangui. The agreement reaffirms democratic constitutional rule, provides for freedom of movement for civilians throughout Bangui and specifies the formation of a national government (which would, implicitly, involve members of Codepo).

**—to be monitored by an African force**

Peace is being supervised by a 500-strong force, drawn from Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Mali, Senegal and Togo. The Senegalese, with a considerable military tradition and experience of multinational peacekeeping efforts, such as those in Liberia and the Gulf War, should provide a crucial element of professionalism. French soldiers will provide technical and logistical back-up only for the force, after Mr Touré made it clear that French patrols were out of the question: Paris, endorsing the deal, put a brave face on this humiliation, congratulating the mediators. A key issue now is the collection of weaponry currently held by various factions.

**Mr Bokassa's death provokes much foreign comment—**

Before the mutiny broke out, the death on November 3 of the former dictator, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, provoked a flurry of international media attention, rather out of keeping with the low-key reaction to his death among Central Africans. The cruelty and bizarre extravagance of Mr Bokassa's rule, from 1966 to 1979, assured the one-time "emperor" of a place in the news pages as well as the obituary columns of the European press. His eccentric tyranny was widely seen, in Europe and the USA, as epitomising Africa's flaws in the two decades after independence. More telling was the French daily newspaper *Le Monde*'s view that Mr Bokassa's delusions of grandeur were inspired and encouraged by the French government of the day.

**—but little domestic reaction**

The reaction of ordinary Banguissois was fairly muted, as had been the case on Mr Bokassa's return to the CAR to face the courts in 1986: his trial, sentence and occasional public pronouncements provoked little interest beyond a small group of loyalist supporters. Most Central Africans would rather move on from the suffering and ridicule Mr Bokassa brought on the country in the 1960s and 1970s. News of the death was broken on the private Radio Notre-Dame. National radio delayed several hours before reporting it, presumably while editors tried to work out what line to take, given that the present head of state, Mr Patassé, was Mr Bokassa's prime minister in the late 1970s. Their eventual verdict was praise for his leadership, with cautious references to the "sins" of his rule and the "singular" nature of the foreign attention he had attracted. The government announced that it would organise an official funeral for Mr Bokassa, a move later postponed due to fresh military unrest (see above).

## The economy

A letter of intent is signed with a satisfied IMF—

By late October the efforts of the prime minister (and minister of finance and economics), Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, and reformist colleagues to rescue government finances and public-sector management were impressing the IMF, the World Bank and France. Hopes were rising that the country might eventually secure an agreement with the IMF for an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). Only with an ESAF in place can the Central African Republic (CAR) look forward to large-scale, longer-term economic aid commitments or the granting of debt relief from the Paris Club of its official bilateral creditors. Following a further successful round of talks, a Policy Framework Paper was drawn up with the Fund and on November 12 the president, Ange-Félix Patassé, formally committed the CAR to the deal by signing a letter of intent. A formal ESAF proposal was to go to the IMF board early in 1997. Bangui economic sources say that one priority for the IMF is to see the CAR raise the level of tax and customs collection from a derisory 6% of GDP to at least 8%.

—despite continued resistance from Mr Patasse—

Mr Patassé had attempted to obstruct Mr Ngoupandé's efforts to prepare for the ESAF at every step of the way. On October 9 he issued without warning a decree transferring control of all parastatal companies from the prime minister's office to the presidency. Three days later, Mr Ngoupandé hit back with a memo pointing out that this would deprive the government of effective control of the reforms that the IMF and World Bank were demanding as the price of fresh support. The Fund and Bank are believed to have made their dismay at Mr Patassé's move clear. Moreover, at this point the deputy finance minister, Augustin René Koyamba, and the deputy minister for economics and planning, Daniel Nditifei-Boyssembe, returned from the IMF and World Bank annual meetings in Washington, reportedly with the news that the donor community was "deeply sceptical" about the CAR's political will and determination.

—and warnings from the donors—

These pressures seem finally to have paid off, but Mr Patasse could not resist the temptation to make one further effort to undermine the prime minister: on November 5 he publicly declared that he was going to appoint a new government. An indication of the president's unwillingness to take account of the desperate spending pressures on the government came on November 13, the day after he had signed the IMF letter of intent. He set off to attend the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s food summit in Rome, and speak at an investment promotion seminar in France, flying with his entourage in a privately chartered Greek aircraft; he had demanded CFAfr70m ($137,000) in expenses for the trip, while the state treasury had budgeted a mere CFAfr20m.

—but another mutiny then wrecks everything

The outbreak of the third army mutiny (see The political scene) derailed progress towards a IMF programme. It caused serious disruption to economic activity in Bangui, and to the functioning of normal administration, and almost certainly added to public spending on loyalist elements in the army. The timing of the mutiny could hardly have been worse: it broke out on November 15, just as Mr Ngoupandé had finished briefing trade union leaders on how the adjustment programme would affect public-sector employment. It came as no surprise when Mr Ngoupandé revealed in late December that the IMF had suspended negotiations. The Fund is still waiting for the political situation to stabilise so that it could then take a fresh look at prospects for the ESAF.

Efforts are made to limit informal mining

The government has recently been lobbying in vain for aid under the EU's Sysmin programme which would be used to train assessors of precious minerals and draft a master plan for the gold industry, which operates only on a small scale. The EU has rejected requests for a specific programme for the CAR, preferring to reserve the aid allocation of a regional Sysmin programme for all central African countries. The government hopes that better training might bring more miners of diamonds and gold into the formal sector and make it easier to regulate. The environment minister, Pierre Lakouetene, has warned that uncontrolled diamond digging is opening up areas for slash and burn agriculture, and lasting environmental damage and desertification.

## Foreign trade and payments

Bangui's creditors are profiled

The second edition of the *World Credit Tables*, assembled by a non-governmental organisation, the European Network on Debt and Development (Eurodad), provides useful information on the Central African Republic (CAR)'s debt profile by individual creditor. France has been the major OECD creditor in recent years, although the impact of its write-off of development debt maturities in 1994 can clearly be seen. Most of the CAR's external debt is in any case owed to multilateral agencies: according to the World Bank's most recent *World Debt Tables*, this amounted to $590m of a total $807m at the end of 1994.

Central African Republic: official bilateral claims on the CAR
($ m)

| | 1993 | 1994 | 1995[a] | 1996[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| France | 64 | 19 | 9 | 8 |
| Germany | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Italy | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Japan | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Switzerland | 14 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| USA | 6 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| Total | 95 | 55 | 43 | 40 |

[a] Projections.

Source: European Network on Debt and Development, *World Credit Tables 1996. Creditors' Claims on Debtors Exposed.*

# Chad

## Political structure

| | |
|---|---|
| Official name | République du Tchad |
| Form of state | Unitary republic |
| Legal system | Based on the Code Napoléon. The 1989 constitution was suspended in December 1990. The national conference, held from January to April 1993, approved the transition charter, which was extended until April 1996, when a new constitution was adopted by referendum |
| National legislature | The 57-member Conseil supérieur de la transition is the interim legislature, elected by the national conference |
| National elections | June 1996 (presidential); January 1997 (legislative) |
| Head of state | President, elected by universal suffrage and sworn in on August 8, 1996 |
| National government | The prime minister and his appointed Council of Ministers, sworn in on August 12, 1996 |
| Main political parties | Mouvement patriotique du salut (MPS); Convention pour la démocratie sociale (CDS); Mouvement pour la démocratie et le socialisme au Tchad (MDST); Rassemblement pour la démocratie et le progrès (RDP); Union démocratique pour le progrès du Tchad (UDPT); Union pour le renouveau et la démocratie (URD) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | President | Idriss Déby |
| | Prime minister | Djimasta Koïbla |
| Key ministers | Armed forces | Youssouf Togoimi |
| | Civil service & labour | Ousmane Djidda |
| | Commerce & industry | Salibou Garba |
| | Communications | Youssouf Mboudou Mbami |
| | Culture, youth & sports | Abderamane Koulamallah |
| | Education | Nagoum Yamassoum |
| | Environment & tourism | Odering Goulaye Kelo |
| | Finance | Bichara Cherif Daoussa |
| | Foreign affairs | Saleh Kebzabo |
| | Interior | Mahamat Nimir Ahmat |
| | Justice | Abdelkerim Nadjo |
| | Livestock | Mahamat Nouri |
| | Mines, energy & petroleum | Ngargos Mosnda |
| | Planning & cooperation | Yamtebaye Nadjitangar |
| | Post & telecommunications | Ngarbaye Tombalbaye |
| | Public health | Younouss Kedallah |
| | Public works & habitat | Mamout Hissein Mamout |
| | Rural development | Ali Mahamat Zene Fadel |
| | Women, children & social affairs | Azia Ahmat Senoussi |
| BEAC governor | Jean-Félix Mamalepot | |

# Economic structure

## *Latest available figures*

| Economic indicators | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995[a] | 1996[b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GDP at market prices CFAfr bn | 351 | 291 | 425 | 463 | n/a |
| Real GDP growth % | 8.0 | –15.9 | 7.1 | 2.6 | 5.3 |
| Consumer price inflation % | –3.2 | –6.9 | 40.4 | 9.0 | 6.0 |
| Population m | 6.0 | 6.1 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 6.5 |
| Exports fob $ m | 182 | 152 | 150 | 226 | 250 |
| Imports fob $ m | 243 | 215 | 176 | 225 | 250 |
| Current account $ m | –86 | –113 | –28 | –34 | –57 |
| Reserves excl gold $ m | 80 | 39 | 76 | 150 | 176[c] |
| Total external debt $ m | 710 | 758 | 816 | 810 | n/a |
| External debt-service ratio % | 5.0 | 7.2 | 8.1 | 14.1 | n/a |
| Seed cotton production[d] '000 tons | 122 | 95 | 156 | 180 | n/a |
| Exchange rate (av) CFAfr:$ | 264.7 | 283.2 | 555.2 | 499.2 | 509.6[e] |

January 27, 1997 CFAfr548.5:$1

| Origins of gross domestic product 1995 | % of total |
|---|---|
| Agriculture | 48.8 |
| Industry | 17.7 |
| Manufacturing | 16.5 |
| Services | 33.5 |
| GDP at factor cost | 100.0 |

| Components of gross domestic product 1995 | % of total |
|---|---|
| Private consumption | 92.6 |
| Government consumption | 11.3 |
| Gross domestic investment | 10.6 |
| Exports of goods & services | 28.5 |
| Imports of goods & services | –43.0 |
| GDP at market prices | 100.0 |

| Principal exports 1995[a] | $ m |
|---|---|
| Cotton | 109 |
| Livestock & carcassing | 58 |

| Principal imports cif 1991 | $ m |
|---|---|
| Manufactures | 262 |
| Non-fuel primary products | 85 |

| Main destinations of exports 1995[f] | % of total |
|---|---|
| Portugal | 30 |
| Germany | 18 |
| South Africa | 16 |
| France | 7 |

| Main origins of imports 1995[f] | % of total |
|---|---|
| France | 34 |
| Cameroon | 24 |
| Nigeria | 7 |
| USA | 6 |

[a] Official estimates. [b] EIU estimates. [c] August actual. [d] Crop years starting December 1. [e] January-September average. [f] Drawn from partners' trade returns, subject to a wide margin of error.

# Outlook for 1997-98

**Mr Déby gives an optimistic forecast**

The New Year address of the president, Idriss Déby, gave an up-beat forecast for 1997, presenting Chadian prospects in a rosier light than for a long time. He claims to expect the strengthening of the electoral process with the establishment of a National Assembly and other constitutionally mandated bodies. However, Mr Déby went on to deplore embezzlement, corruption fraud and other ills, and to regret that the country still lacked the security and tranquillity of a law-abiding state. Mr Déby's message, nonetheless, is that of a leader who feels that he has passed a turning point. The next 18 months will be crucial in determining whether the same can be said of Chad as a whole.

The president's potential problems certainly appear to have diminished. The "politico-military" groups that lurk on Chad's borders appear to be marginalised, and may have had the ground cut from beneath them by the elections of 1996-97. The same appears to be the case for the domestic political opposition. Personal feuds, poor leadership and the willingness of many individual to collaborate with the regime, will continue to keep the opposition weak.

**The army problem will continue to tax the French**

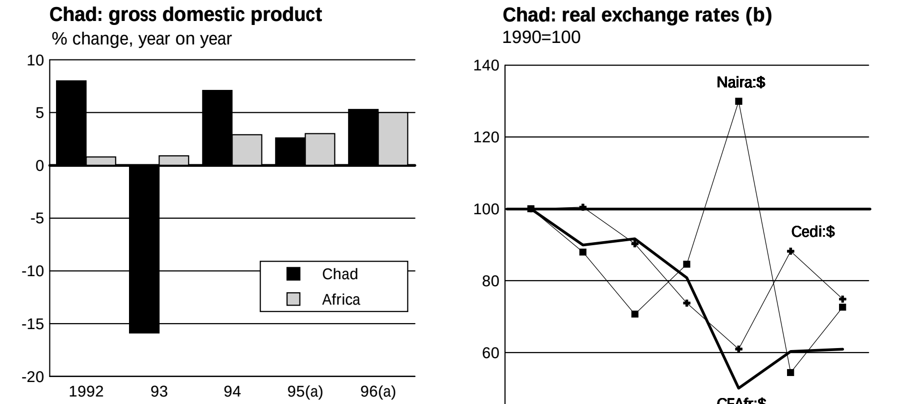
The stiffening of Mr Déby's resolve appears to some extent to be due to French advice, just as the qualified success of the electoral process was due in no small measure to the direct logistical involvement of French troops stationed in the country. Arguably one of the tests of 1997 will be whether the French advisers, supported by additional funds from the World Bank, can bring about the further necessary reduction in the size of the army, still swollen by Mr Déby's irregular supporters. The president's longer-term credibility, among both Chadians and outsiders, depends in part on achieving this objective and of being seen to have the capacity to control his supporters.

**The south still holds the key—**

The slow neutralisation of soldiers' obstructive role in custom administration has been one of the most encouraging recent developments, as the substantial rise in customs revenue in 1996 bears witness. But Mr Déby faces the wider issue of how to implement a convincing law and order policy when his own supporters are part of the problem. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the south, where dissident movements are still in evidence, and the republican guard, still packed with Déby loyalists, equate them with bandits. Heavy billeting of security forces at the southern centre of Moundou is seen by Mr Déby as a possible solution. Unconvinced southerners see it, however, as a foretaste of the high-security protection measures for the oil installations and pipeline in the Doba Basin, which will become an increasingly sensitive issue in the run-up to oil coming on stream in the year 2000.

**—and the honeymoon won't last forever**

Modest macroeconomic improvements and improved financial administration should be of some help to Mr Déby, even if only in keeping workers paid regularly: in the past salary delays have been a source of considerable instability. The opposition's post-electoral disarray may give the president a honeymoon period, but this will not last forever. Allies from the south such as the foreign minister, Saleh Kebzabo, whose stock is currently very high, may be handy, but such alliances tend to exhaust their usefulness. Mr Déby's challenge is to quench southern revolt and reassure southerners that they will not suffer blanket discrimination. He may be able to ignore other "politico-military groups" in the east and west, especially now that the government in neighbouring Niger is actively cooperating in persuading members of these groups to go home.



(a) Estimates. (b) Nominal exchange rates adjusted for changes in relative consumer prices.
Sources: EIU; IMF, *World Economic Outlook*.

# Review

## The political scene

**The transition drags on into 1997—**

Even at the end of the year, Chad's drawn-out political transition had still not come to an end, despite the original intention of a full return to civilian rule by the end of 1996. Although the presidential elections had been as long ago as June-July 1996 (3rd quarter 1996, pages 36-39), the parliamentary elections which had been scheduled for November-December of that year were put off twice: first to December 22 for the first round; then to January 5, 1997, with the second round only on February 23. Nomads began voting on January 2, three days before the main poll.

**—as logistical problems hold up parliamentary elections**

No official reason was given for these postponements, at the request of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), but it was thought to have been related to the logistical difficulties of holding elections in Chad. There was no obvious political reason for any further postponement, since the political cards had been largely dealt in the presidential elections which returned Idriss Déby as president. These were apparent during the presidential poll, where the support of the French military was vital, especially in outlying areas.

**Politicians still rush to contest—**

The parliamentary elections proved popular with the political class: there were 650 candidates from more than 30 political parties for 125 seats in 59 constituencies. Mr Déby's ruling Mouvement patriotique du salut (MPS) was the only party to field a candidate in virtually every constituency, and some candidates represented more than one party ticket. Campaigning began in mid-December and, on the day itself, voting was reportedly calm.

—but voters are less enthusiastic

The turnout was, however, much lower than the 77% officially recorded in the presidential poll, with some polling stations registering less than a 30% turnout and others closing early for want of voters. The CENI gave the final attendance figure as 48.5% of Chad's 3.5 million-strong electorate. The main cause was thought to be election fatigue, after a referendum and two rounds of presidential elections in 1996. The election of Mr Déby in July also diminished enthusiasm, as the real contest seemed over. But the independent weekly newspaper *Ndjamena Hebdo* commented, even before the parliamentary vote: "Chadians in their immense majority no longer believe in their political class."

Mr Déby's party leads in the first round

According to the CENI, the ruling MPS obtained 44 seats outright in the first round, and the opposition parties 20, so that 61 seats are to be the subject of voting in the second round on February 23. Among opposition leaders elected in the first round were: a former president, Lol Mahamat Choua of the Rassemblement démocratique du peuple (RDP) who stood in his home area of Mao, in the Kanem *préfecture*; and the present foreign minister and former presidential candidate of 1996, Saleh Kebzabo. The Union républicaine démocratique (URD) of another former presidential candidate, Abdelkader Wadal Kamougué, also gained several seats in the south, and was expected to win more in the second round.

At the end of January 1997 the Supreme Court annulled six of the MPS's election wins, leaving the party with the 37 seats after the first round of legislative polls.

A furore breaks out over "extrajudicial executions"—

The first results caused little surprise after Mr Déby's victory in the presidential elections of 1996 and there were fewer allegations of fraud. This was not to say that Mr Déby was having an easy ride, as reverberations continued from a highly critical report on human rights violations in Chad, published in October by the international human rights organisation Amnesty International (4th quarter 1996, pages 40-41). These were followed by a new furore in November over a decree permitting the extra-judicial executions of "presumed robbers". In an interview with *Ndjamena Hébdo*, Mr Déby strongly supported the executions due to the present state of insecurity. He claimed that the campaign against the measure was for electoral purposes.

—which is picked up internationally—

The issue was taken up by the country's main human rights organisation, the Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'homme (LTDH) which complained that there had been dozens of such executions since the decree, including street children. The matter came to international attention in January, when the LTDH's Paris-based international equivalent, the Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme (FIDH), issued a statement of concern at the "increase in summary executions in the past few weeks in Chad", questioning the effectiveness of the training given by the French to the Chad armed forces. The FIDH said that these executions were taking place on the express instructions of the president and the prime minister, Djimasta Koïbla. Mr Kebzabo said that the policy was "recognised and justified", while acknowledging that it had become necessary in part because of the inefficiency and corruption of the justice system.

—as the French distance themselves

Although the Chadian government did not initially react to criticisms of France made in the Amnesty report, it subsequently stated that French forces had never witnessed the human rights violations cited, notably in Moundou in the south. The soldiers have the role of advisers, and "in no cases have they been associated with military or *gendarmerie* operations". The ministry spokesman claimed that France had not furnished arms to the Chadian army for several years. He recalled that Mr Déby had publicly given the assurance that Amnesty would have "very little to say" about Chad by the end of 1996.

Mr Déby warns over abuses

In his New Year broadcast to the nation Mr Déby recognised that, while important progress had been made in the establishment of "security and tranquillity" in the country, incidents were still occurring. He added that 1997 would mark "an all-out fight against all kinds of abuse that is a gangrene for the national economy". Mr Déby added that he was referring to embezzlement, corruption, fraud and waste, which he described as rampant.

Dissident groups stay quiet—

Although Chad's "politico-military" groups kept a low profile throughout 1996 there was still no sign of a return to the fold of the most significant southern rebel movement, the Front d'action pour une république fédérale (FARF), despite continued reports that a deal had been negotiated with its leader, Laokeïn Frisson Barde. Mr Barde was not present at a meeting involving such well-known insurgent figures as Acheikh Ibn Oumar, Mahamat Garfa, Idriss Bichara and Adoum Yacoub. According to the usually well-informed Paris-based newsletter *La Lettre du continent*, the encounter took place in November in Cotonou, Benin, traditionally a gathering place for Chadian rebels. Reports that those present discussed possible disruption of the parliamentary elections were not borne out by events.

—and some drift back from Niger

A peace agreement was also reportedly signed in Zinder with some members of one of the Niger-based factions of the Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement (MDD). As a result of this 56 people crossed the border on January 9, accompanied by Nigérien officials. An agreement in December with another group, allegedly partisans of the former president, Hissène Habre, meant that more returnees were reportedly assembling in the eastern Nigérien centre of Diffa.

There are absentees from the Lake Chad summit—

The difficulties of inter-state relations among Chad's neighbours was well-demonstrated at the summit of the Lake Chad Basin Commission held on October 30 in Ndjamena. Mr Déby was joined by the president of Niger, Ibrahim Bare Mainassara, and of the Central African Republic (CAR), Ange-Félix Patassé, but two of the most significant members, Paul Biya of Cameroon and General Sani Abacha of Nigeria, both found themselves unable to attend, although both were represented at ministerial level. Mr Biya subsequently stayed away from the Franco-African summit of heads of state, in Ouagadougou in December, when it was known that General Abacha would be attending. Nigeria and

Cameroon have been in a state of near-conflict for months over the disputed Bakassi peninsula on the two countries' border.

**—as a cooperation agreement is signed with Nigeria**

Despite General Abacha's absence it was stressed that the meeting had been preceded by a satisfactory reunion of the Nigeria-Chad Mixed Commission, which ended in the signing of a cooperation agreement touching trade, education, security and immigration. It was thought unlikely that discussions touched on the difficult border question of ownership of new islands that have developed in Lake Chad because of the dangerous lowering of the water level. (The area of the lake has shrunk from 25,000 sq km to 2,000 sq km in the space of two years.)

**Mr Patassé offers Central African water—**

Mr Patassé, the president of the CAR, a new member of the Lake Chad grouping, drew the summit's attention to the possibilities of transferring water from the Oubangui basin to the Chari river to help increase water levels of Lake Chad. The absence of Mr Biya was more ominous in that it pointed to continuing disagreements over the establishment of the Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC, the regional grouping that is to replace the existing economic and customs union of the Central African subregion of the Franc Zone).

**—but borders are not discussed at the summit**

The summit approved unanimously the reinforcement of security in frontier zones by stepping up mixed patrols. The principal of a common security force for borders had been agreed at a summit in Abuja in 1994, but no further progress has been made on the subject. The question of delimitation of frontiers, originally on the agenda, was not discussed because of Nigerian objections.

**French troops go from Chad to CAR**

Following indications from France's defence minister, Charles Millon, that Opération Epervier, the contingent of French troops based in Chad, would be reviewed (4th quarter 1996, page 41), its continuing role in France's African military operations was demonstrated when a company of troops from Ndjamena was despatched to the CAR in November, to reinforce the contingent there in the face of renewed army mutiny (see CAR: The political scene). In January it was announced that two companies (120 men) from the Marine Infantry parachute regiment would move from Carcassonne in south-western France to Ndjamena to make up numbers.

The French foreign ministry confirmed in October that the French force in Chad currently comprised 825 paratroopers, plus a military assistance mission of 150 military experts, and that it was planned to reduce this to a smaller and less costly permanent structure. According to *Ndjamena Hébdo* this will total 500-600 men and will be similar to those in Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon. The French military base at Abeche, near the Sudan border, will continue to function. The newspaper also estimated that the Chadian economy benefits to the tune of CFAFr6bn ($11.8m) per year from the French military presence.

**Cameroon expulsions are condemned**

At the end of December a government communiqué condemned the expulsion of more than 1,000 Chadians from Cameroon, following "massive arrests". The Chadians were said to have been living in the area of Madingrin in the Tchollire region of northern Cameroon and were deported without possessions into southern Chad. The deportees said that the Cameroonian police action followed a frontier incident in which the Cameroonian security forces fought with bandits. The Chad government deplored the Cameroonian attitude, and requested that a proper investigation be carried out to find the real culprits.

## The economy

**The IMF approves a new ESAF—**

Relations with the Bretton Woods institutions were still demonstrably on course when the second tranche of the loan under the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) agreement with the IMF was approved in October. Total credit under the ESAF (agreed in September 1995) is SDR49.6m ($71m) and the second tranche is equivalent to about $24m. It is to support the government's 1996-97 macroeconomic and structural adjustment programme. The money will be made available in two equal instalments.

**—and outlines 1996-99 objectives—**

Objectives for 1996-99 include achieving annual average real GDP growth of more than 5.5% and lowering the rate of inflation. Average inflation stood at 10% in 1996 and it is planned to get it under 3.5% by 1999. Another goal is to reduce the current-account deficit (excluding official transfers) from an estimated 17% of GDP in 1996 to just under 13% in 1999. Specific objectives for 1996-97 include real GDP growth of 6% in 1996 (the Banque des états de l'Afrique centrale—BEAC, the regional central bank—estimates growth for the year at 5.3%) and 5% the following year; average inflation of 10% in 1996 and 4% in 1997; and a current-account deficit standing at 15.7% of GDP in 1997.

**—including strengthened government finances**

To achieve these objectives the 1996-97 programme calls for continued consolidation of government finances, to reduce the overall fiscal deficit from 14% of GDP in 1996 to 12.1% in 1997. According to the Fund, this will be done by reorganising the tax directorate and further improving the efficiency of customs collection. Limits are to be placed on overall spending, including the salaries bill. BEAC will continue to maintain a prudent credit stance to prevent the resurgence of excess demand pressures.

**Budget surpluses are forecast—**

Although the budget was not immediately released at the beginning of the year, the government is hoping to record a primary budget surplus of CFAfr4.3bn ($8.4m) in 1996. This should increase to CFAfr7.9bn in 1997, compared with a deficit of CFAfr12bn in 1995. In theory, the overall budget deficit (CFAfr20bn in 1995 once debt servicing is included) should come down to CFAfr12bn in 1996 and stand at zero by 1997.

**—as the fiscal situation improves**

The linchpin of these projected improvements will be an upturn in customs receipts. These were expected to reach CFAfr62bn in 1996, an increase of 26% over the preceding year. The target for 1997 is CFAfr70.5bn. Apart from the reforms of the customs service already in course, a single turnover tax apparently was to operate from January 1, 1997, along with other measures to tighten budgetary procedures. According to BEAC's balance-of-payments committee, the external accounts for 1995, just approved, register a CFAfr3.4bn surplus, after a series of deficits recorded since 1990.

**Reforms are planned at state enterprises—**

According to the IMF, building on the experience of the 1995-96 privatisation programme, the government is in the position to undertake reforms to Chad's largest state-owned enterprises. These would include the cotton parastatal, Société cotonniére du Tchad (Cotontchad, see below) and the sugar company, Société nationale sucrière du Tchad (Sonasut), as well as the utility, Société tchadien d'eau et électricite (STEE). The country's post and telecommunications companies will be restructured in anticipation of privatisation.

Thus Sonasut is to lose its monopoly on sugar marketing from January 1, 1997. To prepare the enterprise for total liberalisation of the market, there is to be a year's transition to the beginning of 1998, during which period sugar imports will be taxed according to a reference value. The two communications companies will be restructured as separate entities. Postal and financial services will remain in the public sector, while national and international telecommunications will be privatised within one company.

**—and in the public service**

Reform of the civil service is also to be continued, bringing the cost of civil service salaries down from 50% to 35% of the government's own revenue before the end of the current IMF programme in 1998. This is expected to come from retrenchment, the cleaning up of staff lists to remove phantom employees and the promulgation of a new civil service statute. Reduction in the numbers of the military (4th quarter 1996, page 43) remains a priority.

**The Doba Basin protocol is signed—**

In late November the independent weekly newspaper *Ndjamena Hébdo* reported the signing of a protocol between the consortium headed by Exxon (with Shell and the French state oil company Elf) and the Chadian government, setting out the terms for the development of oil production in the Doba Basin in southern Chad. It is estimated that reserves total 800m barrels. The president of Exxon's exploration and production arm, Dean L Guttormson, said that the signing of the accord was an important milestone for the eventual development of these resources. A further memorandum of understanding was signed in January covering, among other things the ownership of the pipeline between Doba and the Cameroonian port of Kribi: the pipeline will be owned by Exxon (32%), Shell (32%), Elf (16%), Chad (5%) and Cameroon (15%).

**—and Sedigui is there too—**

There remained a few more stages, notably the ratification of the pipeline accord by Chad and Cameroon needed for finalising the financing plan, although a bilateral treaty had already been signed. The Doba Basin, Mr Guttormson said, comprised three main oilfields. It is envisaged that 300 wells will be sunk, with a maximum production of 250,000 barrels/day, beginning in the year 2000. The protocol also envisages a second project, the development of the Sedigui field to the north of Lake Chad, with the construction of a pipeline to supply a refinery in the capital.

**—but politicians are worried**

Many Chadian opinion leaders have gone on record to worry about the impact Doba could have on the wider Chadian socio-economic landscape. Speaking to Reuters in January the foreign minister, Saleh Kebzabo, declared pessimistically that "the experience of other African countries shows that [oil revenue] is always mismanaged". Looking at Chad's regional neighbours, Nigeria and Cameroon, a former prime minister, Jean Bawayou Alingué, noted: "Oil has not made people's lives much better in those countries ... Our oil should not also disappear abroad." After having watched the experience of other African producers Chad may be in a position to avoid the worst petroleum-related abuses seen in places like Nigeria, but far greater political and economic stability will have to be achieved in the meantime.

### Mr Déby appeals for food aid

At the end of November the president, Idriss Déby, made an emergency appeal for food aid, saying that Chad was in danger of famine because of a cereal deficit of 200,000 tons. He repeated the appeal in his New Year message. Due to disappointing rains in both the east and the west, food shortages were already affecting certain zones of the country, Mr Déby told the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s food summit in Rome. Chad's cereal needs totalled 1.1m tons and estimated production in the 1996 crop year was 840,000 tons, compared with 908,000 tons the previous year.

### Cotton prices are increased

Cotontchad has announced that the producer price for top grade seed cotton is to be increased to CFAfr170/kg in 1996/97, from CFAfr140/kg last season. The second grade cotton price is also to be increased. Cotton production for 1996/97 is officially estimated at 305,000 tons, compared with 156,000 tons for the previous season. Exports of cotton fibre are expected to remain at around 60,000 tons.

# Franc Zone news

Mr Compaoré reaches the top table—

Ouagadougou hosted the 19th Franco-African summit of heads of state in December, after a months-long orgy of villa-building, road-repairing and obsessive attention to protocol details. The event, which went off flawlessly, confirmed Blaise Compaoré as one of France's leading interlocutors in West African subregion of the Franc Zone, thus putting him on a par with Senegal's Abdou Diouf and Gabon's Omar Bongo. Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo, who was the official representative of the 26 African heads of state present, is technically the *doyen* of the zone, having seized power in 1963, but he is an embarrassing friend to the French: a few weeks after the Ouagadougou meeting the French president, Jacques Chirac, was one of the many foreign leaders who decided not to accept Mr Eyadéma's invitation to celebrations of his 30th anniversary as president.

—as one devaluation-era governance message is repeated—

The official theme of the meeting was "good governance and development" and the opening speeches underlined the changing relationship between France and her former African colonies. Mr Compaoré spoke of the challenge of globalisation and of the relative values of economic development and democracy, the latter being highly conditional upon the former, which in turn depended upon (largely undefined) governance criteria. Mr Chirac's more interesting speech warned Africans that, as OECD aid flows declined, good governance would be the key to attracting necessary investment flows, adding that investment was no longer a question of personal deals at high level, but of providing the necessary conditions for businesspeople worldwide to "convince themselves that Africa is heading in the right direction". This remark was another sign that, despite the apparent chaos in French policy-making at departmental level (see below), one of the two major policy innovations of recent years, the "Abidjan line" of the former prime minister, Edouard Balladur, is still being held. To retain French support in international fora, African countries must therefore stay on good terms with the IMF and World Bank and pursue policies of economic liberalisation. Although Mr Chirac is an old-school Gaullist in many respects, he clearly has neither the intention or the ability to return to the days when France supported incompetent governments in return for pre-eminence in the region.

The French president's line on investment had an added subtext: the traditional French trading-oriented businesses, still referred to by their colonial name of *les comptoirs*, have lost all influence over their own government's policies towards the zone. In the past the *comptoirs* could exert pressure on tied-aid contracts or particular bilateral initiatives to their advantage, via their lobby, the Conseil des investisseurs en Afrique (CIAN). Not only is this no longer the case, as US and Far East competition combine with a dilution in the French ownership of firms such as Société commerciale ouest-africaine (SCOA) and Optorg, but French business as a whole looks well beyond the zone, to countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe and the East African Cooperation members, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. CIAN is rapidly losing its rationale, despite maintaining links with government.

*—and another is quietly overlooked*

In both the statements for public consumption and, apparently, in the closed sessions, the question of democratisation was studiously avoided, leading some commentators to argue that both the letter and spirit of the late French leader François Mitterrand's declaration at the La Baule summit of 1990, were now dead. At La Baule Mr Mitterrand explicitly linked continuing aid to the establishment of multiparty democracy, to the consternation of many zone leaders of the time. Mr Chirac, then the mayor of Paris, argued that multiparty democracy was a luxury Africans could not yet afford, and since becoming president has clearly been happier discussing other concepts, such as development and fiscal reform. This is in part an expression of his personal priorities in Africa, and in part *realpolitik*: the fact that heads of state such as Paul Biya of Cameroon, Mr Eyadéma, Mr Bongo, Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara of Niger and Idriss Déby of Chad, have all manipulated less-than-transparent "democratic" processes to their advantage since La Baule, has convinced many in French policy circles that agitating for democratic reform is pointless under current circumstances. Indeed, many in Paris favour the rather different concept of "stability" which, it is argued, is best provided by strong, centralising leaders at least partly insulated from public opinion.

*Zone leaders still have currency worries—*

On the African side, the major preoccupation was the approach of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), currently scheduled for January 1999, despite the highly publicised doubts of the managing director of the IMF, Michel Camdessus, about this timetable. Repeated French assertions that the move to the euro will not affect the current relationship (or exchange rate) between the French and CFA francs, have failed to quell African leaders' fears of a second devaluation, or worse, an end to the French guarantee of the CFA franc that renders it effectively a hard currency. According to the usually well-informed Paris-based newsletter *La Lettre du continent*, Mr Chirac undertook at the summit's final press conference to confirm in writing the continuation of the guarantee after his departure from Ouagadougou. Rather mischievously, the newsletter pointed out that zone leaders were still waiting for the postman in early January.

*—but acquire a lusophone colleague*

Guinea-Bissau's entry into the Franc Zone, long a subject of speculation, is now confirmed. The country will become the eighth member of the Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA) on March 1. As with many other African issues, Guinea's wish to join has provoked sharp differences of opinion among Paris policy-makers. While the Elysée, the political departments and the leadership of *la Francophonie* (the worldwide grouping of countries using the French language) were in favour, the Treasury and the Banque de France (the central bank) were strongly opposed. This is largely due to the highly fragile nature of the Guinean economy and administration: French financial technocrats feel that the Guinean government will fail to meet the criteria for zone membership, especially where budgetary and inflation policies are concerned. In the end, the Elysée overrode the Treasury after Senegal, which has much to gain from its neighbour joining the UEMOA, applied considerable political pressure. Guinea-Bissau's accession to full membership could be long and difficult even if these points are addressed: once it has introduced the CFA franc, Guinea-Bissau will then have to catch up with the other UEMOA members' drive to full economic and monetary union, which is being steadily pursued by the regional central bank, the Banque des états de l'Afrique de l'ouest (BCEAO). At the same time, the announcement by Nigeria that it was adopting French as its second official language after English, was further cause for cheer in Paris, which has seen its Africa diplomacy strongly challenged by the USA in recent months.

Policy incoherence continues—

In the aftermath of Ouagadougou and more than two years after the French prime minister, Alain Juppé, promised to slim down and rationalise France's byzantine cooperation, aid and diplomacy network in sub-Saharan Africa, it is apparent that the proposed revolution has stalled. There are arguably major consequences for several Franc Zone countries. Of the main institutions of state dealing with Africa only the Treasury, and to a lesser extent the Caisse française de développement (CFD, the state development bank) have maintained the reformist zeal that characterised the era of the devaluation of the CFA franc in January 1994. At the Elysée, traditions of parallel diplomacy have been incorporated into the heart of government: for more than a year there have been two *cellules africaines* to advise Mr Chirac.

—as hardline Gaullists make a spectacular comeback—

One of the principal results of this has been the recapture of the Ministry of Cooperation (long known as the "Ministry for Africa") by the neo-Gaullist traditionalists, under Mr Foccart's guidance. The minister, Jacques Godfrain, and the director of development, Serge Arnaud, are both products of the Foccartian system. Mr Godfrain's recently appointed *directeur de cabinet*, Xavier Donnadieu, shares the minister's background.

—under a harassed prime minister—

That the Foccart wing of the French Africanist policy establishment has been able to bounce back so effectively from what appeared to be near-complete marginalisation after the devaluation, is due in large part to the ambiguous Afro-Gaullism of the current president, but more especially to Mr Juppé's domestic difficulties in the wake of the social upheavals in France. He is thought to have taken a decision not to risk further alienating the deputies of his and Mr Chirac's political party, the Gaullist Rassemblement pour la république (RPR), over what one leading French foreign policy analyst has called "a subject as derisory as Africa".

—a situation which will persist—

This more or less complete policy incoherence towards the zone and other African spheres of influence can be expected to continue until the legislative elections of 1998. This situation will be a relief to veteran zone politicians such as Messrs Bongo, Diouf, Eyadéma and Denis Sassou-Nguesso (the past—and possibly future—Congolese head of state), all of whom are past masters in playing Paris's factions off against each other.

—but not for ever

However, the current situation represents Mr Foccart's swansong. The possibility of a *cohabitation* between Mr Chirac and a left-dominated government after the next elections would probably guarantee the definitive return to power of younger reformist technocrats, aided by the disappearance from the scene of many of Mr Foccart's elderly lieutenants. The long-term belt-tightening that will accompany any permutation of EMU will guarantee further cuts to the cooperation budget, with a corresponding further loss of influence within wider government circles. In addition, recent pronouncements by the defence minister, Charles Millon, about the need to rationalise the French military commitment south of the Sahara, will have come as a nasty surprise to leaders such as Mr Bongo and Henri Konan-Bédié of Côte d'Ivoire, who feel reassured by the presence on their soil of small but heavily armed French detachments.

The Banque de France is optimistic—

The latest edition of the Paris-based zone secretariat's *La Zone franc, Rapport annuel*, is basically optimistic about the progress of the zone economies two years after devaluation. It projects UEMOA real growth at 6% this year (unchanged from 1995) and Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC) growth at 5.5% (3%). Lending to the private sector increased by 15.6% in the UEMOA, and 9.6% in CEMAC last year.

—as zone banks recover their health—

At a press conference in Abidjan in late September the BCEAO governor, Charles Konan Banny, noted that commercial banks in the UEMOA were again in good health. Their combined losses of CFAfr3.4bn ($12m) in 1993 had been transformed into profits of CFAfr6bn in 1994 and CFAfr65bn ($130m) in 1995. At the end of 1995 there were 53 commercial banks and 15 financial institutions in the UEMOA, with some new players entering the market and some French banks withdrawing. Banks' deposit bases have swollen as result of capital repatriation since the devaluation of January 1995. However, borrowing by the private sector remains restrained, even in Côte d'Ivoire which accounted for 55% of commercial bank lending to business in the union in September 1995. This is despite falling interest rates. The BCEAO cut its discount rate from 7.25% to 7% in mid-August, its second reduction in ten days. Bankers tend to give the impression that their lending to the private sector has been constrained by a shortage of viable proposals, while business points to the high cost of borrowing and the reluctance of the banks to think long term.

UEMOA: the current account
(CFAfr bn)

| | 1993 | 1994[a] | 1995[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Merchandise exports | 1,347.3 | 2,914.8 | 3,379.2 |
| Merchandise imports | –1,431.3 | –2.344.6 | –2.842.3 |
| Trade balance | –84.0 | 570.2 | 536.9 |
| Net services | –667.0 | –1,138.2 | –1,257.0 |
| of which: | | | |
| interest payments on external debt | –308.7 | –477.6 | –483.6 |
| Net transfers | 353.2 | 686.5 | 532.5 |
| of which: | | | |
| public | 381.9 | 726.5 | 596.0 |
| private | –28.7 | –40.0 | –63.5 |
| Current-account balance | –397.8 | 118.5 | –187.6 |

[a] Provisional.

Source: BCEAO and national governments, in Secretariat du comité monétaire de la Zone franc, *La Zone franc, Rapport annuel 1995.*

—but the UEMOA's current account goes back into the red—

After showing a collective current-account surplus of CFAfr118.5bn in 1994, the seven UEMOA economies went into the red in 1995, to the tune of CFAfr188bn, largely due to imports re-expanding (in dollar terms) to near their pre-devaluation levels. This growth in imports, combined with a dip in the net balance on transfers due to their decline after the one-off surge that accompanied devaluation, was more than enough to counteract a 17% rise in merchandise exports by CFA franc-demoninated value, to CFAfr3.38trn. Interest payments due on external debt remained roughly steady, largely due to Côte d'Ivoire's continuing high level of indebtedness, which dwarfs the effects of Paris Club reschedulings for the smaller economies of the Sahel.

—and UDEAC's stays firmly there

In the Central African subregion of the Franc Zone, however, the problems of Cameroon make for a considerably grimmer picture. Standing at CFAfr414.8bn in 1994, the current-account deficit across the six countries was barely changed at CFAfr419.4bn in 1995. Two-thirds of this total is accounted for by Cameroon. In contrast, Gabon's current account was just over CFAfr100bn in the black on the back of a wide trade surplus and heavy rescheduling obtained the previous year. As expected, given that most members of the Union douanière des états de l'Afrique centrale (UDEAC, the regional, and barely functional, customs union) are petroeconomies to one extent or another, mineral sector exports accounted for over 60% of merchandise exports. The services balance was slightly further in deficit than in 1994, reflecting the high levels of indebtedness in UDEAC countries. (Congo, for example, is one of the most highly indebted economies per head in the world while Cameroon's external debt is unsustainable according to most criteria.) Interest payments due on external debt approached the CFAfr1trn level, despite massive reschedulings the year before (Gabon alone had the equivalent of $1.45bn of debts rescheduled after the devaluation). Once again, Cameroon was the main reason for this worrying trend.

UDEAC: the current account
(CFAfr bn)

| | 1993 | 1994[a] | 1995[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Merchandise exports | 1,508.5 | 2,882.6 | 3,243.2 |
| of which: | | | |
| petroleum & other minerals | 1,036.6 | 1,853.7 | 2,002.4 |
| Merchandise imports | –772.4 | –1,557.1 | –1,631.7 |
| Trade balance | 736.1 | 1,325.5 | 1,611.5 |
| Net services | –1,122.3 | –1,840.4 | –2,020.7 |
| of which: | | | |
| interest payments on external debt | –488.0 | –772.2 | –988.5 |
| Net transfers | 32.9 | 100.1 | –10.2 |
| of which: | | | |
| public | 130.6 | 255.4 | 157.9 |
| private | –97.7 | –155.3 | –168.1 |
| Current-account balance | –353.3 | –414.8 | –419.4 |

[a] Provisional.

Source: BEAC and national governments, in Secretariat du comité monétaire de la Zone franc, *La Zone franc, Rapport annuel 1995.*

Small CEMAC states are losing patience with Cameroon

Against this background, the smaller economies in the Central African subregion of the zone are becoming impatient with Cameroon's procrastination over final implementation of plans to create a regional economic union and single market. The Cameroonians have been procrastinating over various points partly due to a wrangle with Gabon over the share-out of jobs in the secretariat of the CEMAC. The delay is a major problem for the other members, particularly the landlocked Central African Republic and Chad, most of whose external trade passes through Cameroon and whose general level of economic activity is heavily influenced by conditions in the zone's dominant member economy. High-level sources in some of the smaller CEMAC country governments are hinting that if Cameroon fails to agree on implementation soon, they will press ahead on their own with moves towards economic union. Such a move would have little serious economic impact until Cameroon joins. If Yaoundé joined late it would have less say over the rules of the new club, and certainly a smaller share of the plum jobs, but domestic political considerations may hinder such a move in the short term.

# Quarterly indicators and trade data

## Cameroon: quarterly indicators of economic activity

| | | 1994 | | | 1995 | | | | 1996 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr | 4 Qtr | 1 Qtr | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr | 4 Qtr | 1 Qtr | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr |
| Mining production | Prodn/day | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crude petroleum | '000 barrels | 108 | 110 | 110 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 90 | 90 | 90[a] |
| Prices | Monthly av | | | | | | | | | | |
| Consumer prices: | 1990=100 | 126.8 | 136.6 | 143.1 | 148.0 | 147.1 | 148.4 | 152.7 | 154.6 | 153.9 | n/a |
| change year on year | % | 32.6 | 39.4 | 46.8 | 26.7 | 16.0 | 8.6 | 6.7 | 4.5 | 4.6 | n/a |
| Money | End-Qtr | | | | | | | | | | |
| M1, seasonally, adj: | CFAfr bn | 312.5 | 330.3 | 358.8 | 341.1 | 326.9 | 293.4 | 316.7 | 332.8 | 308.4 | 327.2[b] |
| change year on year | % | 23.6 | 34.0 | 34.7 | 16.6 | 4.6 | –11.0 | –11.7 | –2.4 | –5.7 | n/a |
| Foreign trade[c] | Annual totals | | | | | | | | | | |
| Exports fob | $ m | ( | 2,062 | ) | ( | | 2,245 | ) | ( | n/a | ) |
| Imports cif | " | ( | 956 | ) | ( | | 1,141 | ) | ( | n/a | ) |
| Foreign exchange | End-Qtr | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Bank | $ m | 1.4 | 0.5 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 3.2 | 1.9 | 1.2 | 0.9[b] |
| Exchange rate | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Market rate | CFAfr:$ | 547.2 | 528.2 | 534.6 | 484.9 | 485.3 | 491.5 | 490.0 | 503.2 | 515.3 | 517.2[d] |

Note. Annual figures of most of the series shown above will be found in the Country Profile.
[a] Figure for October, 100. [b] End-August. [c] *DOTS* estimate. [d] End-November, 521.5.

## Central African Republic: quarterly indicators of economic activity

| | | 1994 | | | 1995 | | | | 1996 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr | 4 Qtr | 1 Qtr | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr | 4 Qtr | 1 Qtr | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr |
| Prices | Monthly av | | | | | | | | | | |
| Consumer prices[a]: | 1990=100 | 113.7 | 125.0 | 129.4 | 139.7 | 138.7 | 137.9 | 140.0 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| change year on year | % | 22.1 | 34.6 | 40.0 | 41.7 | 22.0 | 10.3 | 8.2 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Money | End-Qtr | | | | | | | | | | |
| M1, seasonally adj: | CFAfr bn | 86.99 | 95.91 | 107.59 | 118.49 | 114.10 | 115.07 | 115.99 | 101.89 | 111.12 | 117.18[b] |
| change year on year | % | 63.2 | 65.2 | 74.9 | 66.7 | 31.2 | 20.0 | 7.8 | –14.0 | –2.6 | n/a |
| Foreign trade[c] | Annual totals | | | | | | | | | | |
| Exports fob | $ m | ( | 140 | ) | ( | | 187 | ) | ( | n/a | ) |
| Imports cif | " | ( | 472 | ) | ( | | 189 | ) | ( | n/a | ) |
| Foreign exchange | End-Qtr | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Bank | $ m | 190.43 | 208.92 | 209.86 | 248.00 | 252.29 | 244.90 | 233.48 | 210.32 | 230.76 | 242.46[b] |
| Exchange rate | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Market rate | CFAfr:$ | 547.2 | 528.2 | 534.6 | 484.9 | 485.3 | 491.5 | 490.0 | 503.2 | 515.3 | 517.2[d] |

Note. Annual figures of most of the series shown above will be found in the Country Profile.
[a] "African" households, Bangui. [b] End-August. [c] *DOTS* estimate. [d] End-November, 521.5.

## Chad: quarterly indicators of economic activity

| | | 1994 | | | 1995 | | | | 1996 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr | 4 Qtr | 1 Qtr | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr | 4 Qtr | 1 Qtr | 2 Qtr | 3 Qtr |
| Prices | Monthly av | | | | | | | | | | |
| Consumer prices: | 1990=100 | 136.9 | 142.6 | 137.6 | 139.0 | 139.7 | 146.9 | 149.0 | 148.2 | 161.2 | 170.1[a] |
| change year on year | % | 52.3 | 50.7 | 46.4 | 26.7 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 8.3 | 6.6 | 15.4 | n/a |
| Money | End-Qtr | | | | | | | | | | |
| M1, seasonally adj: | CFAfr bn | 76.96 | 74.09 | 62.48 | 51.95 | 52.82 | 69.13 | 89.26 | 104.02 | 105.30 | 102.92[b] |
| change year on year | % | 36.1 | 19.8 | 31.2 | –23.7 | –31.4 | –6.7 | 42.9 | 99.3 | 99.4 | n/a |
| Foreign trade[b] | Annual totals | | | | | | | | | | |
| Exports fob | $ m | ( | 82 | ) | ( | | 99 | ) | ( | n/a | ) |
| Imports cif | “ | ( | 143 | ) | ( | | 184 | ) | ( | n/a | ) |
| Exchange holdings | End-Qtr | | | | | | | | | | |
| Foreign exchange | $ m | 113.58 | 126.51 | 75.60 | 40.94 | 61.31 | 101.58 | 142.07 | 189.10 | 180.72 | 175.85[b] |
| Exchange rate | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Market rate | CFAfr:$ | 547.2 | 528.2 | 534.6 | 484.9 | 485.3 | 491.5 | 490.0 | 503.2 | 515.3 | 517.2[d] |

Note. Annual figures of most of the series shown above will be found in the Country Profile.
[a] Average for July-August. [b] End-August. [c] *DOTS* estimate. [d] End-November, 521.5.

## Chad: direction of trade[a]
($ m)

| Exports fob | Jan-Dec 1992 | Jan-Dec 1993 | Jan-Dec 1994 | Jan-Dec 1995 | Imports cif | Jan-Dec 1992 | Jan-Dec 1993 | Jan-Dec 1994 | Jan-Dec 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Portugal | 23 | 18 | 18 | 42 | France | 94 | 61 | 56 | 64 |
| Germany | 16 | 13 | 13 | 25 | Cameroon | 22 | 29 | 37 | 44 |
| South Africa | n/a | 6 | 19 | 23 | USA | 6 | 9 | 8 | 12 |
| France | 4 | 7 | 8 | 10 | Nigeria | 10 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Costa Rica | n/a | 4 | 5 | 6 | Belgium-Luxembourg | 2 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| UK | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 | Japan | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Total incl others | 74 | 67 | 83 | 140 | Total incl others | 164 | 141 | 143 | 186 |

[a] *DOTS* estimate.

## Cameroon: foreign trade

| | $ | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imports cif[ab] | Jan-Dec 1987 | Jan-Mar 1988 | Jan-Dec 1989 | Jan-Dec 1991 |
| Food | 202.68 | 54.80 | 179.57 | 314.29 |
| Beverages & tobacco | 47.42 | 9.08 | 21.03 | 27.45 |
| Crude materials | 42.65 | 12.20 | 47.88 | 162.63 |
| Chemicals | 258.91 | 47.16 | 193.89 | 339.62 |
| Paper etc & manufactures | 43.96 | 7.75 | 36.27 | 81.50 |
| Textile yarn, cloth & manufactures | 94.16 | 19.87 | 41.03 | 80.42 |
| Non-metallic mineral manufactures | 70.59 | 11.37 | 49.04 | 69.67 |
| Iron & steel | 36.57 | 8.91 | 41.87 | 105.97 |
| Metal manufactures | 89.87 | 17.78 | 78.42 | 163.97 |
| Machinery incl electric | 362.62 | 70.99 | 233.42 | 469.03 |
| Transport equipment | 263.90 | 45.94 | 158.52 | 156.81 |
| Total incl others | 1,749.02 | 352.36 | 1,273.33 | 2,306.23 |

| | CFAfr bn | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exports fob | Jul/Jun 1991/92 | Jul/Jun 1992/93 | Jul/Jun 1993/94 | Jul/Jun 1994/95 |
| Coffee | 31.5 | 13.1 | 38.0 | 60.5 |
| Cocoa & products | 34.1 | 25.9 | 55.8 | 61.5 |
| Wood | 37.5 | 49.9 | 104.7 | 153.5 |
| Cotton, raw | 19.8 | 20.2 | 27.0 | 37.9 |
| Petroleum, crude | 262.1 | 195.6 | 253.4 | 293.2 |
| Total incl others | 543.0 | 444.0 | 825.2 | 1,018.2 |

| | $ | | | | | $ | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exports fob[c] | Jan-Dec 1992 | Jan-Dec 1993 | Jan-Dec 1994 | Jan-Dec 1995 | Imports cif[c] | Jan-Dec 1992 | Jan-Dec 1993 | Jan-Dec 1994 | Jan-Dec 1995 |
| France | 464 | 342 | 383 | 466 | France | 517 | 378 | 338 | 476 |
| Italy | 203 | 200 | 286 | 330 | Belgium-Luxembourg | 69 | 59 | 63 | 67 |
| Spain | 302 | 288 | 285 | 277 | Germany | 108 | 48 | 54 | 65 |
| Netherlands | 153 | 129 | 119 | 163 | Italy | 52 | 39 | 37 | 57 |
| Germany | 94 | 98 | 106 | 102 | USA | 63 | 50 | 59 | 50 |
| Nigeria | 49 | 62 | 75 | 89 | Japan | 56 | 54 | 38 | 48 |
| USA | 82 | 101 | 55 | 48 | UK | 37 | 27 | 38 | 44 |
| Total incl others | 1,730 | 1,683 | 1,826 | 2,138 | Total incl others | 1,304 | 987 | 893 | 1,144 |

[a] Source, UN. [b] Figures for 1990 are not available. [c] *DOTS* estimate.

## Central African Republic: foreign trade

| | $ '000 | |
|---|---|---|
| Imports cif | Jan-Dec 1980 | Jan-Dec 1989 |
| Meat & products | 758 | 1,156 |
| Dairy products | 2,005 | 2,788 |
| Fish & products | 718 | 1,423 |
| Cereals & products | 5,400 | 8,192 |
| Fruit, vegetables & products | 820 | 1,105 |
| Sugar & products | 901 | 6,232 |
| Beverages | 4,396 | 1,991 |
| Tobacco & manufactures | 739 | 3,715 |
| Petroleum & products | 1,184 | 10,390 |
| Chemicals | 9,490 | 22,239 |
| Rubber manufactures | 1,525 | 2,412 |
| Paper & manufactures | 1,813 | 3,325 |
| Textile fibres & manufactures, incl clothing | 4,589 | 7,118 |
| Miscellaneous non-metallic mineral manufactures | 3,418 | 6,780 |
| Iron & steel | 1,187 | 1,852 |
| Metal manufactures | 4,764 | 5,939 |
| Machinery incl electric | 14,090 | 28,491 |
| Transport equipment | 13,153 | 24,385 |
| of which: | | |
| road vehicles | 13,120 | 23,638 |
| Total incl others | 80,461 | 159,124 |

| | CFAfr bn | |
|---|---|---|
| | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec |
| Exports fob | 1989 | 1990 |
| Coffee | 8.5 | 2.7 |
| Wood & cork & manufactures | 6.3 | 9.2 |
| Cotton, raw | 3.9 | 4.5 |
| Diamonds | 22.6 | 19.7 |
| Total incl others | 47.2 | 41.2 |

| | $ m | | | | | $ m | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec |
| Exports fob[a] | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | Imports cif[a] | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 |
| Belgium-Luxembourg | 69 | 77 | 86 | 75 | France | 67 | 48 | 58 | 70 |
| France | 3 | 4 | 8 | 30 | Japan | 8 | 6 | 7 | 46 |
| Spain | 12 | 7 | 12 | 0 | Cameroon | 21 | 21 | 21 | 12 |
| Iran | 8 | 8 | 8 | n/a | Namibia | 7 | 8 | 10 | n/a |
| Germany | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | Germany | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 |
| Taiwan | 4 | 22 | 1 | n/a | Belgium-Luxembourg | 6 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Total incl others | 200 | 132 | 140 | 187 | USA | 1 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| | | | | | Total incl others | 392 | 422 | 472 | 189 |

[a] *DOTS* estimate.

## Cameroon, Central African Republic and Chad: French trade

($ '000)

| | Cameroon | | | CAR | | | Chad | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec | Jan-Dec |
| | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 |
| French exports fob | | | | | | | | | |
| Cereals & preparations | 22,728 | 22,725 | 33,646 | 7,292 | 5,797 | 7,544 | 5,549 | 5,072 | 5,188 |
| Sugar & preparations | 3,237 | 7,336 | 4,255 | 0 | 15 | 32 | 0 | 621 | 1,575 |
| Beverages | 4,265 | 3,748 | 5,841 | 553 | 554 | 590 | 266 | 239 | 392 |
| Chemicals | 94,413 | 66,889 | 85,137 | 11,998 | 12,189 | 10,859 | 11,654 | 9,720 | 6,222 |
| Rubber manufactures | 4,460 | 5,075 | 5,242 | 451 | 685 | 741 | 546 | 818 | 1,171 |
| Paper etc & manufactures | 10,608 | 7,852 | 13,424 | 1,023 | 1,322 | 1,263 | 1,250 | 1,363 | 1,626 |
| Textile fibres & manufactures, incl clothing | 11,100 | 8,845 | 11,585 | 954 | 981 | 1,358 | 628 | 486 | 692 |
| Non-metallic mineral manufactures | 8,235 | 6,983 | 9,122 | 285 | 163 | 407 | 788 | 466 | 471 |
| Iron & steel | 3,794 | 2,025 | 5,060 | 273 | 308 | 224 | 433 | 932 | 601 |
| Non-ferrous metals | 4,704 | 2,690 | 7,160 | 0 | 138 | 544 | 341 | 110 | 153 |
| Metal manufactures | 18,417 | 15,002 | 20,189 | 1,237 | 1,976 | 2,134 | 2,255 | 1,984 | 2,241 |
| Machinery incl electric | 87,647 | 80,406 | 123,718 | 11,029 | 14,928 | 17,000 | 18,789 | 14,919 | 22,378 |
| Road vehicles | 20,068 | 26,883 | 30,462 | 3,248 | 6,561 | 7,805 | 5,449 | 8,806 | 6,966 |
| Other transport equipment | 6,527 | 8,820 | 7,247 | 0 | 717 | 119 | 0 | 163 | 309 |
| Scientific instruments etc | 7,921 | 5,484 | 8,273 | 1,262 | 1,232 | 1,203 | 1,002 | 1,840 | 1,557 |
| Total incl others | 360,418 | 305,143 | 431,713 | 46,277 | 52,546 | 59,649 | 58,503 | 51,829 | 57,521 |
| French imports cif | | | | | | | | | |
| Fruit & vegetables | 97,407 | 106,490 | 114,071 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 52 |
| Coffee, cocoa, tea & spices | 41,827 | 45,694 | 62,029 | 1,938 | 5,241 | 13,824 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tobacco, unmanufactured | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,895 | 608 | 138 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rubber, crude | 20,292 | 16,097 | 16,944 | 0 | 21 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wood & cork & manufactures | 53,144 | 107,144 | 103,162 | 110 | 312 | 276 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Textile fibres & waste | 956 | 1,164 | 0 | 138 | 109 | 616 | 318 | 196 | 1,200 |
| Petroleum & products | 135,731 | 73,930 | 113,231 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Textile yarn & manufactures | 1,258 | 4,933 | 4,527 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Non-ferrous metals | 37,889 | 68,309 | 105,418 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total incl others | 394,676 | 431,252 | 526,164 | 4,660 | 8,457 | 15,276 | 8,148 | 9,236 | 10,462 |