

Deplastifying Urban Development in Cameroon through Stakeholder Policy and Regulation Applications in the North West Region

By

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Abstract

Plastic waste management is a global environmental problem nowadays. Policies and regulations have been variedly enacted to mitigate the waste plastic paper upsurge by many countries and cities of the world. This paper examines Cameroon's policies and regulations implemented to abate the use of plastics that ensue from urban development waste and probes into the level of compliance with and implementation of the ministerial order of 24th October 2012 and its related chapters in the North West Region from 2015 to 2018. It posits that strides made by stakeholders to curb production of urban plastic waste in the region and, notably within the context of the intensifying sociopolitical strife in the Region since 2016 have generally been insignificant. Primary and secondary data collection techniques were used through fieldwork, interviews and observation. Results thereof confirm that significant quantities of banned plastics were seized, totaling 11,954.3 kg by the Regional Delegation of Environment for the North West Region from 2015 - 2018. At the same time, varied fines were imposed on defaulters totaling 7,594,300 FCFA. There were 278 plastic control repressive missions carried out in 2015, 301 in 2016, 09 in 2018 and none in 2019. The implementation of the policy of plastic ban in the North West Region is failing as the years go by such that sales of banned plastics booms in markets and wreaks damage to the urban environment as the strife prolongs. There is urgent need for a robust and holistic stakeholder involvement between government and local councils' participation in the war destined to free the Cameroonian urban landscape of plastic waste.

Key words: *Environment, North West Region, plastic waste, regulatory policy, urban areas,*

Introduction

Plastics have risen to one of the world's most-used packaging materials especially in urban areas of the Developing World where they are shaped and sized to meet practically every desired use and income level. Progressively, therefore, there has been an increasing urban dweller propensity to use plastics perhaps as an urban indicator of vogue than ease of handling. For the most part, most of these plastics are single-purpose use and when discarded litter the urban green and infrastructural surfaces with large quantities of waste commensurate to the degree of human and economic activity concentration. This has thus raped the urban ecology and aesthetics to the extent that severely threatens urban system functioning since this waste does not yield to processes of biogeochemical cycle decomposition. Plastic waste has accumulated in their diversity so that ever since the 1950s, close to half of plastic waste has ended up in landfills or dumped into the wild and only 9% of used plastic has been recycled (Woldemar, 2019).

In 2016, the World generated 242 million tons of plastic waste being 12 percent of all municipal solid waste (World Bank, 2018). Such plastic waste enters the environment when it is poorly managed, such as through open dumping, open burning, and disposal in waterways. Unfortunately, with more than one-fourth of waste dumped openly and on disposal sites, plastic litter is increasing (World Bank, 2018). Such plastics in Cameroonian urban areas have replaced a wide array of traditional materials including glass, steel, wood, and even concrete

because plastic can adopt any shape or form, weighs less, costs less and offers outstanding technical properties. The amount of plastic used has significantly soared since the dawn of the 21st Century, reaching over 300 million metric tons in 2017 (Woldemar, 2019).

In mid-2019, the world woke to the scourge of indiscriminate use of plastic products. Daily news articles and viral videos show dead whales choked on plastic bags, fish with microplastics, and rivers of plastic flowing through the countryside, nowhere appears safe (World Bank, 2019). According to World Bank (2018), the visibility of plastic waste is increasing because of its accumulation in recent decades and its negative impact on the surrounding environment and human health. Unlike organic waste, plastics can take hundreds to thousands of years to decompose from nature. Plastic waste is causing the carpeting of urban streams (Fogwe, 2005), floods by clogging drains and damming urban streams (Fogwe, 2015) and, contaminating water bodies (Fogwe and Asue, 2016; World Bank, 2019), when dumped into channels, streams, rivers, and oceans. Under ultraviolet light from the sun, plastic degrades into “microplastics” that are almost impossible to recover and that are disrupting food chains and degrading natural habitat. The United Nations Environmental Program anticipated during the celebration of the 2018 World Environment Day that, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050.

Due to the negative effects of plastics in the environment and human health, in the year 2019, China banned plastic import and this ban brought a trans-boundary element to the trade??? on plastic waste with 111 million metric tons of plastic waste needing to find new disposal/ recycling options (World Bank Report, 2019). In Rwanda and Kenya, plastic ban has been implemented effectively with financial and other legal penalties. In 2018, the European Union launched a strategy called Plastic Waste that aimed to make all plastic packaging recyclable by 2030 (World Bank Report, 2019); but giant producers of plastics such as Nigeria, with its large market in Africa, are still producing and illegal plastic trade is still going on among these countries.

The Cameroon Government through the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Trade signed a Joint Ministerial Order No. 004/MINEPDED/MINCOMMERCE of 24th October 2012 banning the Importation, Commercialization and Production of Plastic packaging of less than 61 microns in thickness. In April 2014, the ban was operational and fines attributed to defaulters. This paper focuses on the level of implementation of these policies and the extent the usage of banned plastics has reduced in the North West Region.

Methodology

The North West Region that was chosen for the study is found within the Western Highlands of Cameroon having a surface area of 17,300 km² and a population of 1933358 inhabitants according to the 2014 estimate. It lies between latitudes 5°40' and 7° North and longitudes 9°45 and 11°10' East. The study area is bordered to the east by the West and Adamawa Regions, to the northwest by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to the south by the South West Region. The NorthWest Region has 7 out of the 58 Divisions in the country and 34 out of 361 Sub-Divisions. The headquarters Bamenda, situated in Mezam Division, while the other Divisions are Menchum, Bui, Boyo, Donga Mantung, Momo, and Ngoketunjia (Fig. 1).

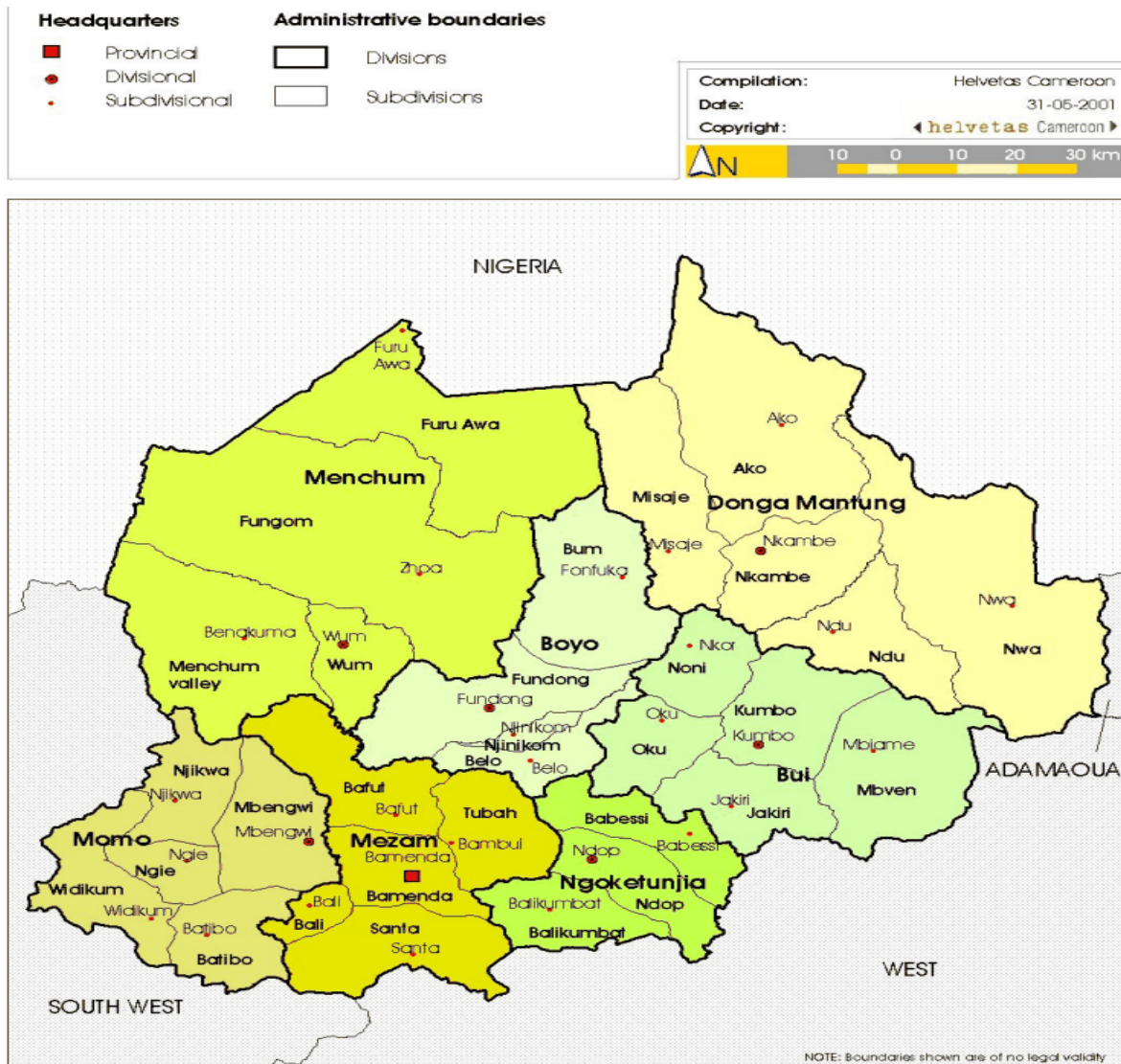


Figure 1: Administrative units of the North West Region showing the various urban and peri urban areas for the implementation of the plastic ban regulation
 Source: Heveltas Cameroon (2001), cited in NIS, Statistical Year Book for the NWR (2014)

Primary and secondary data were drawn from the field and documentary sources. Primary data was generated through field survey, observation and interview with administrators on enforcement environmental regulation, economic operators and technical personnel of the Regional Delegation of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development for the North West Region and the Bamenda City Council. Annual reports of the Regional Delegation from the year 2014, when the ban was enforced to 2018 were consulted. Such data obtained permitted an evaluation of the level of implementation of the plastic ban as well as the various strategies put in place by the Regional Delegation to execute the ban on plastics, the quantity of banned plastics seized per division and the amount of money collected as fines since 2014. Field data also permitted this study to appreciate the challenges faced by the Regional Delegation and Councils in implementing the ban. Economic operators were interviewed on the level of respect of the ban and the difficulties they face in executing the ban. Field surveys and observation were made at markets for the presence or not of banned plastics in the various markets especially in the city of Bamenda.

Results and Interpretation

1. New era of environmental policies regulating plastic paper use in Cameroon

The government of Cameroon through the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), and other technical ministries in 2012 signed several texts regulating the use of plastics in Cameroon. Table 1 provides some of such texts related to plastic management in Cameroon.

Table 1: Recent environmental policy texts on plastics management in Cameroon

No	Instrument	Environmental Text Number	Date of signature	Role
01	Joint Ministerial order	004/MINEPDED/MINCOMMERCE	24 October 2012	Regulating the production, importation and commercialization of non-biodegradable packaging.
02	Ministerial Order	001/MINEPDED	15 October 2012	Fixing the conditions for obtaining an environmental permit for the management of waste.
03	Ministerial Circular letter	096/C/CAB/MINEPDED	10 April 2014	To check compliance and punish offenders with regard to joint order 004/MINEPDED/MINCOMMERCE of 24 October 2012 on, inter alia, the ban of plastic packaging less than 61 microns in thickness.
04	Radio Press	106/N/MINEPDED/SG/DDPE.	24 April 2014	Warning economic operators distributing non biodegradable plastic packaging of less than or equal to 60 microns in the markets and that there is no biodegradable plastics packaging in Cameroon.

Source: Fieldwork compilation from Compendium of Legal Instruments on Environment, 2018

Chapter II, Article 7 (1) of joint order No. 004/MINEPDED/MINCOMMERCE of 24th October 2012, put a ban on the production, importation, storage and commercialization or distribution for free non-biodegradable plastic packaging less than or equal to 60 microns in thickness. The production, importation, storage and commercialization of these banned plastics require obtaining an environmental permit delivered by the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development. Holders of such environmental permits could freely produce, import, store, commercialized and freely distribute the recommended non-biodegradable plastic packaging above 60 microns. Ministerial Order No. 001/MINEPDED of 15 October 2012, Chapter IV, Article 11 (1, 2, 3, 4), spelled conditions for obtaining an environmental permit for the production, importation, commercialization or the distribution of non-biodegradable plastic packaging. Ministerial circular letter No. 096/C/CAB/MINEPDED of 10 April 2014 provided the operational phase regarding the implementation of joint order No. 004/MINEPDED/MINCOMMERCE of 24 October 2012 that banned plastic packaging less than 61 microns thick, especially in the repressive phase starting on 25 April 2014 and rendered the ban effective. Two operational teams were set up; one at the divisional level and the other at the regional level. At the divisional level, Senior Divisional Officers (SDOs), each at the level of their constituencies set up operational teams and Divisional Coordination Committees.

The Divisional Operational Team that is placed under the authority of the SDOs is made up of; the Sub-Divisional Officer of the Sub-Division of the site to be controlled or his representative, 1 (one) representative of the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, 1 (one) representative of the Ministry of Trade, 1 (one)

representative of the Ministry of Finance/Directorate General of Customs, 1 (one) representative of the Mayor of the Council in which the facilities to be controlled is located, 4 (four) gendarmes and/or police officers and 3 (three) drivers.

The Divisional Coordination Committee placed under the chairmanship of the SDO comprises the SDO's high command (Police boss, Commander of intelligence unit and Commander of Gendarmerie), the Divisional Delegate of MINEPDED (as Minute Secretary), the Divisional Delegate of Trade (Member), The Divisional Controller of Finance/ Head of Customs (Member) and the territorially competence public prosecutor (member).

The Regional Coordination Committee placed under the authority of the Governor is to supervise the work done by the operational teams and the Divisional coordination committee. The committee comprises of the Governor's high command team (Regional police boss, head of intelligence unit and regional Commander of Gendarmerie), the Regional Delegate of MINEPDED (Reporter), the Regional Delegate of MINCOMERCE (Member), The Regional Delegate of MINFI/ Chief of Customs (Member) and The Public Prosecutor (Member).

The Operational Team is deployed throughout the divisions and it makes at least one trip to each sub-division, to markets, and any other sales point possibly having and holding or warehouses for plastic packaging of less than 61 microns thick to control and if necessary, seize the stocks of the said plastic packaging. Control sessions are unannounced. The SDOs sign prefectural orders instituting fines from 4000 to 25000 FCFA for minor offenses committed by defaulters. Such Prefectural Orders are implemented by sworn-in Environmental Inspectors of the Divisional Delegation of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development.

These Operational Teams and Committees effectively functioned only in 2014 and gradually dysfunctioned with the buildup and full bloom of the social strife that has rocked the region since November 2016. The budget of MINEPDED funded the Operational Team and Committees only in the first year of their creation and ever since then no budgets exist to make them actively operational according to its legal specifications (RDMINEPDED NW 2019). This anti plastic waste regulatory stratagems recorded varied degrees of success in the implementation of this much needed environmental policy.

Evolving spatial trends in the plastic ban implementation in the North West Region

The Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development is the main institution that is to spearhead the implementation of the plastic ban in the North West Region. There are other related technical ministries to reinforce the ban viz. the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Forces of Law and Order (police and gendarmerie). The Ministry of Trade through its Regional and Divisional services collaborate and ensure that the banned plastics are not sold or imported into the markets. The Ministry of Finance through the Customs stops and seizes any imported banned plastics at the national borders and at the internal check points. The Ministry of Territorial Administration through the Governors, Senior Divisional Officers and Sub Divisional Officers reinforce and implement the ban within their administrative units of command with the Ministry in charge (MINEPDED). The Ministry of Justice implements the law on defaulters.

The first three years of the ban (October 2012 to April 2014) were to sensitize the population on the type of forbidden plastics and enable economic operators to clear their old stock and stop the importation and production. Effective repression started in April 2014 following a Ministerial Circular Letter No. 096/C/CAB/MINEPDED of 10th April 2014. Various Commissions were formed at the National, Regional, Divisional and Sub Divisional levels headed by the administrative heads and technically coordinated by the Regional and

Divisional Delegates at their jurisdictions. After the repression phase, the Senior Divisional Officers were authorized by the Minister of Environment to sign prefectural orders implementing fines to defaulters. The fines range from 4000 to 25000 FCFA depending on the quantity seized. Repetition of findings discussed under 1 (above) Defaulters with very large quantities are given an offence statement, summoned, arrested or taken to court. Table 2 (a-d), shows the quantity of banned plastic seized in the North West Region and the fines collected in the seven divisions from 2015 to 2018.

Table 2a: Defaulter returns from banned plastic in the North West Region in 2015

Divisions	Quantity seized (Kgs)	Fines collected (FCFA)	Total number			
			Field visits	Defaulters summoned	Defaulters arrested	Defaulters taken to court
Mezam	856	993.000	100	00	00	00
Momo	75	402.000	39	00	00	00
Bui	185.5	475000	40	00	00	00
Boyo	32	24200	20	08	00	00
Donga Mantung	185.5	523.500	16	00	00	00
Ngoketunjia	237	304.600	36	00	00	00
Menchum	86	441.000	21	23	00	00
Regional Delegation	2140	428.000	06	00	00	00
Total	3797	3,591,300	278	31	00	00

Source: RDMINEPDED NW, 2015 Annual Report.

From Table 2a, a total of 31 offense statements were issued to defaulters, 278 repressions visits were carried out and 3,591,300 FCFA collected as fines in the year 2015 in the region. The custom service contributed in the seizure of 1.7 tons of banned plastics and handed to the Regional Delegation. In the same year, no person was arrested or taken to court for defaulting in the region.

Table 2b: Returns from fines on banned plastic in the North West Region in 2016

Divisions	Quantity seized (kgs)	Fines collected	Total number			
			Field visits	Defaulters summoned	Defaulters arrested	Defaulters taken to court
Mezam	1650	1.013.000	97	40	15	00
Momo	50	512.000	45	01	00	00
Bui	120	565.000	34	00	01	00
Boyo	188.8	730.000	17	08	06	01
Donga Mantung	61.55	326.000	12	00	01	00
Ngoketunjia	72	269.000	52	13	02	00
Menchum	55	170.000	24	05	01	00
Regional Delegation	1261	349.000	14	02	08	00
Total	3458.35	3,934.000	295	69	34	01

Source: RDMINEPDED NW, 2016 Annual Report.

The seizure at the Regional Delegation of 1261 kgs was partly done by the Police and Gendarmes of Bamenda I and Bali in Mezam Division. The Forces of Law and Order assisted the staff of the Delegation of Environment to get the results obtained in 2016. Mezam Division had the highest quantity of banned plastic seized 1650 kgs and fines collected 1,013,000 FCFA due to the commercial nature of the city of Bamenda.

Table 2c: Returns from fines on banned plastic in the North West Region in 2017

Divisions	Quantity seized (kgs)	Fines collected	Total number			
			Field visits	Defaulters summoned	Defaulters arrested	Defaulters taken to court
Mezam	727	00	03	00	00	00
Momo	1162	10000	01	00	00	00
Bui	00	00	00	00	00	00
Boyo	00	30.000	00	00	00	01
Donga Mantung	05	15000	04	00	00	00
Ngoketunjia	05	14000	01	00	00	00
Menchum	00	00	00	00	00	00
Regional Delegation	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	1899	69.000	09	00	00	01

Source: RDMINEPDED NW, 2017 Annual Report.

Table 2c shows a significant drop in the level of implementation of the plastic ban in the year 2017. The insecurity due to the socio-political strife in the regions prevented the staff from venturing into any field visits for repression as reported by the Divisional Delegates of MINEPDED in the region. Some divisions such as Bui, Menchum had zero operations, no seizures and no fines collected as the war declared on the secessionists gained momentum. Only 1899 kgs of banned plastics were seized and only a mere 69.000 FCFA collected as fines. In the city of Bamenda, most of the economic operators who were most hard-hit victims of ghost towns closed up their businesses which explains the apparent stop in the use of these banned plastics.

Table 2d: Returns from fines on banned plastic in the North West Region in 2018

Divisions	Quantity seized (kgs)	Fines collected	Total number			
			Field visits	Defaulters summoned	Defaulters arrested	Defaulters taken to court
Mezam	1800	00	00	00	00	00
Momo	00	00	00	00	00	00
Bui	00	00	00	00	00	00
Boyo	00	00	00	00	00	00
Donga Mantung	00	00	00	00	00	00
Ngoketunjia	00	00	00	00	00	00
Menchum	00	00	00	00	00	00
Regional Delegation	1000	00	00	00	00	00
Total	2800	00	00	00	00	00

Source: RDMINEPDED NW, 2018 Annual Report.

Table 2d shows a sharp drop in the reinforcement of environmental policy for the plastic ban in 2018. The deepening situation of the socio-political crisis was the major hindrance to the reinforcement. Only a minimal quantity of 2800 kgs was seize for the entire region and zero returns collected from fines. This drastic drop cannot be attributed to the absence of the banned plastics in the region but to the state of insecurity. The Senior Divisional Officers could not enforce this ban for fear of instigating violence.

In order to reinforce the ban and ensure a plastic free environment, the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development supported some Councils in the region through the Public Investment Budget (PIB) with the sum of 4,000,000 (Four Million) FCFA. The money is to enhance sensitization, remove plastics from nature and

carryout repressions. The Mbengwi Council in Momo Division has benefited twice (2017 and 2018). The Wum Council in Menchum Division has benefited twice (2017 and 2018), the Fondong Council in Boyo Division has benefited twice (2017 and 2018), the Kumbo Council in Bui Division has benefited twice (2016 and 2017) and the three councils in Bamenda I, II, III have benefited once each (2016) and Bamenda I in 2019. Figure 2, shows the total evolution of the percentage quantity of seizure of the banned plastics for the North West Region from 2015 to 2018.

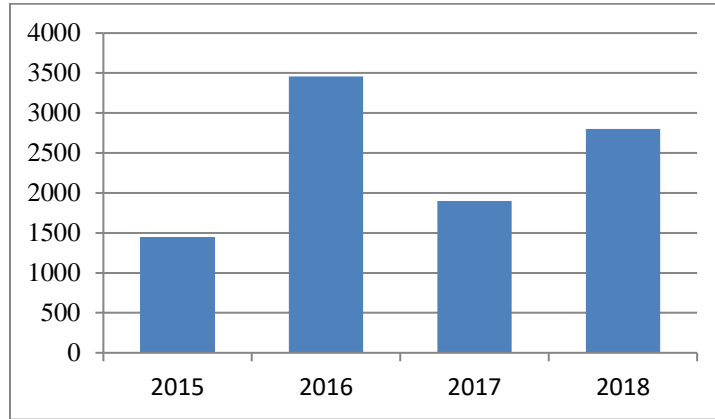


Figure 2: Evolution of banned plastic seizure from 2015 to 2018 for the North West.

Figure 2 shows that the greatest amount of banned plastics was seized in the year 2016, giving a 36% (3457 kgs) and the lowest in 2015 with a percentage of 15% (1439 kgs). In the year 2015, when the repression just started the process was slow and the methodology was still experimental even though more field visits were done in 2015 (278 visits) than 2017 and 2018 (9 field visits). In 2017 and 2018, the seizure was done by the forces of law and order through their routine checkpoints. The year 2016 had the greatest level of the plastic ban policy implementation with the greatest amount of seizure (3457 kgs), the highest fines collected (3,934,000 FCFA). This is because the strategy of implementation was understood by the staff as reported by the divisional delegates. The number of field visits increased from 278 in 2015 to 301 in 2016 for the entire region. The number of persons issued with administrative convocations moved from 31 in 2015 to 87 in 2016. This shows that the level of implementation was very high in 2016. The number of persons also arrested and taken to the police cell for defaulting the plastic ban also increased from zero in 2015 to 32 in 2016. One person was taken to court in Boyo Division for failing to comply with the ban. The plastic ban was poorly implemented in 2017 and 2018 by the Regional Delegation of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development for the North West Region as more banned plastics could be seen in the markets in the wake of daunting challenges of insecurity.

Major institutional challenges impeding effective implementation of plastic ban

The major challenges that forestall the effective implementation of the plastic ban in Cameroon can be perceived at the government services (RDMINEPDED-NW) and the economic operators who do business with the banned plastics. An interview conducted with the Regional Delegate and some Divisional Delegates of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development in the Region, as well as some economic operators, posits that:

- Challenges Faced by the Regional Delegation of MINEPDED

The main challenge is the no availability of alternatives of the banned plastics and poor sensitization at the grass root. The duration given for manufacturers and importers to clear their old stock was short therefore the ban came when much stock was still found in their warehouses. The availability of old stock which was cheaper than the alternatives in the market

made it difficult for the ban to be fully implemented. According to the Divisional Delegates of Environment and for Trade in Momo, the porous Cameroon long border (1,975km) with the Federal Republic of Nigeria which has not banned the use of plastics made it easier for the influx of banned plastics into the region. Also, very few economic operators have the permit to produce the alternatives; local producers could not meet up with the production of the alternatives thus making them scarce and unaffordable to many consumers in the region.

At the level of the Regional Delegation of Environment in the North West, staffing situation is poor. The absence of Environmental Inspectors and Controllers in some Divisional Delegations was mentioned. Some Divisional Delegations had just two (2) staff such as Bui Division and Momo, that is the Delegate and one other staff, thus making it difficult for an effective implementation of the ban plastic policy. Insufficient finances to motivate the stakeholders to accompany in the mission and fuel the vehicles of the Forces of Law and Order to accompany the team for repression, and inadequate logistics to penetrate all the subdivisions (enclave areas) for seizure (RDMINEPDED NW, 2016). The population was very aggressive to the repression team notifying that insufficient sensitization, poor understanding and non-acceptance of the policy.

Another challenge is the non-functionality of Environmental Control Post at the Region especially at the borders with Nigeria. As the control and seizure takes place, more stock enters through illegal entry points. Poor collaboration between the various stakeholders: the Administrative authorities, the Councils, and the technical ministries (Environment and Trade) were also identified as a challenge in the planning of repression as they were always busy with their own activities to the implementation of the ban plastic policy in the North West Region. All Delegates were unanimous that the current socio-political crisis in the North West Region is the greatest encumbrance to the implementation effort of the plastic ban policy in the region.

The Regional Delegation of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development for the North West has embarked on several campaigns with other stakeholders to combat the upsurge of plastics in the region especially in the City of Bamenda. Photo 1 shows a campaign against plastics in the city of Bamenda at Commercial Avenue.



Photo 1: Plastic anti-pollution campaign to create awareness by RDMINEPDED North West and other Stakeholders at the streets of Commercial Avenue in Bamenda. Photo 2018 RDMINEPDED North West Region

- *Challenges faced by the economic operators in the North West Region.*

According to interviews conducted with fifteen economic operators (Small business operators, local plastic producers, retailers and whole sellers) in the region, the greatest challenge has been the expensive nature of the alternatives and non-availability of the alternatives plastics in the market. Consumers appear not willing to purchase the alternatives because they are expensive and inadaptable to package smaller items. The small sizes are inflexible due to their thickness (> 61microns). The manufacturers of the alternatives in the region lack the technology and capital to produced biodegradable plastics recommended and plastic packaging above 61 microns and to sell cheap. Some regard that the policy was imposed on them by the government (top-down) at the local level; the period of sensitization was short for them to adapt as complained by a majority of them (80%). The imposition of fines on defaulters was so early by the economic operators as mentioned by 100% of them. Small scales retailers “*Bayam-sellam*” (95%) of them (fruit sellers...etc.) were often fined in amounts even far above their capital when caught with the banned plastics. This action made them aggressive to the team during controls, promoting civil disobedience in implementing the policy. The use of Forces of Law and Order to intimidate the population during repression was not also accepted rather than sensitizing them to understand the reasons to avoid the banned plastics.

Conclusion

The plastic ban policy in Cameroon only restricted the use of non-biodegradable plastic packaging less than 61 microns in thickness. Other non-biodegradable plastics packaging above 61 microns which were not banned such as plastic bottles from mineral water and soft drinks have continued to be a major problem in the urban centers in the North West Region because these plastic bottles exhibits thickness above 61microns. Cities need consistent services, safe and environmentally sound disposal, and consistent enforcement of policy before targeted interventions for plastic can be fully effective (World Bank Report, 2018). The population needs to be educated to take away ignorance and to make them environmentally conscious. Without effective basic waste management systems in the various administrative headquarters of the North West Region, plastic is likely to continue to be used and dumped thereby suffocating the urban ecology. To succeed with the plastic ban policy in Cameroon and the North West Region in particular, each local council should develop a waste management plan that will ensure an effective, safe and environmentally sound waste disposal strategy with funds made available. The council should write projects on plastics recycling which will help to make use of the banned plastics and generate income through the sales of the plastic bi products (Pavement tiles). Also the councils can develop small enterprises for the production of the recommended plastic packaging and make it cheaper to the population for affordability. The government cannot implement these policies in isolation and hope to succeed; there is need for a veritable win-win partnership with the private sector. This is a war that must be won and swiftly won, now, to avert a near predicament that would be no respecter of stakeholder status, meaning everybody must respect the law to deplastify the North West region from banned plastics. If this is not done, our urban environment will continue to be flooded with this plastics, agricultural land degraded and poor urban aesthetics.

The weapons for this war of victory would sound better that is the regulations enforced if the State subsidizes the production of the alternative packaging brands to make it affordable for the population to purchase. Such local production could be by small and medium size industries run by Local Councils. The effective operationalisation of the Environmental Control Post at the borders to work in collaboration with the customs and the Forces of law and Order to stop the massive influx of these banned plastics from neighbouring Nigeria. Local councils would steer the population awareness banner via the myriads how many of local operators that they know and treat with them best (Traditional rulers, Majors, church leaders, local associations). This paper on the avoid journalistic language in scientific write-ups that

innovative policies concerning plastic will not resolve the issue of plastics mismanagement without proper institutions, systems and incentives.

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