Working visit to Cameroon
Dr Jean-Baptiste Roungou building up high ranking decision-makers’ support to NTDs control

Started on 28 April, 2014, the working visit of the Director of the African Programme for onchocerciasis control (APOC), continued the next day with audiences granted by the President of the Senate, second personality of the country; the Prime Minister, Head of Government; the Secretary General of the National Assembly; the Minister of Social Welfare, and the Executive Secretary of the GICAM (Groupement interpatronal des entreprises du Cameroun).

To each of them, Dr. Jean-Baptiste Roungou, followed by the Representative of the WHO in Cameroon and by APOC local and headquarters staff, made a presentation on the causes and manifestations of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). He provided an overview of the epidemiological situation in Cameroon, the efforts made by the international community and the Government of Cameroon in disease treatment, before discussing the current challenges of the elimination and / or control of these affections.

Generally speaking, the guests of the Director of APOC showed great interest in the elimination of the so-called diseases of poverty as an objective. These diseases are the cause of much physical and mental suffering and serious obstacles to development. Each guest, according to their capacity, gave support to the objective of elimination through commitments.

Among other things, the promise of the President of the Senate, Mr. Marcel Nyat Njifendji, to develop special resources in the communes was noted. Prime Minister, Philémon Yang, worried about the ravages of NTDs within the population, committed himself to boost this fight by giving instructions for the organization of a consultation between the Ministry of Public Health, WHO and other stakeholders, with a view to increasing the budget of national health.

In turn, Mr. Victor Yéné Essomba, Secretary General of the National Assembly, who in 28 years in the territorial administration as a préfet then a governor has witnessed social tragedies caused by NTDs, promised to provide strong support to the presentation of a relevant budget of the Ministry of Public Health to the Parliament.
For her part, Mrs. Catherine Bakang Mbock, Minister of Social Welfare, proposed to get the social workers within her jurisdiction involved in increased sensitization in communities affected by NTDs.

The audience granted to the Director of APOC and his delegation by Mr Alain Blaise Batongué, Executive Secretary of GICAM, resulted in the suggestion of an identification of expenditure items related to Onchocerciasis and other NTDs control by the Ministry of Public Health for GICAM, to enable him to present them to some CEOs to maximize the chances of getting their contributions.