

‘Surge of solidarity’ can halt spread of poverty, Cameroon’s President tells UN Assembly

22 September 2017 – The first speaker to take the podium on the fourth day of the United Nations General Assembly annual high-level debate, President Paul Biya of Cameroon, underscored that peace, essential for the survival of humanity and sustainable development, “is dangerously under threat,” notably from terrorism, conflicts, poverty and climate disruptions.

“Today, I would say, we are all ‘beggars for peace.” And such persistent threats are of utmost concern to us all,” he said, pointing to terrorist attacks around the globe.

Mr. Biya condemned ongoing conflicts in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East that are wreaking hardships, deaths, refugees and displaced persons. Noting that his country – hosting thousands of refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria – understands their struggles, he urged policies, behaviours and actions to re-focus attention on people.

Turning to climate change, he cited the two main challenges for Africa: the ongoing forest degradation in Central Africa, calling it “the earth’s second lung;” and the desertification affecting Lake Chad, “which is essential for the survival of communities and biodiversity.”

Despite the numerous UN declarations and resolutions, as well as ‘development decades,’ plans of action and other agendas, the result, noted Mr. Biya has been that poverty persists and the gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen. “Let us all mobilize in a powerful surge of solidarity to roll back poverty. Let us match our actions with our words,” he pressed. To provide conditions for a decent life, “let us thus focus on People!” urged President Biya.

[Full statement available here](#)