

## Bills recently submitted

Within the last days, Members of Parliament have been looking at two important bills. One from the Ministry of Mines, Industry and Technological Development defended last Monday June 28 by Minister Ndanga Ndinga Badel. The bill is aimed at amending and supplementing certain provisions of the Mining Code put in place by Law No 2001/1 of 16 April 2001.

As a matter of fact, the bill seeks to promote and encourage mining of mineral resources necessary for Cameroon's socioeconomic development. At a time when several mineral resources have been discovered in our country (Gold, Bauxite, Iron, etc), the bill opens up the mining sector to free enterprises, clearly defining the role of each stakeholder. As well, it defines a specific fiscal regime in order to make the mining sector attractive, competitive and non-discriminatory.

On the basis of what precedes, the issues that need to be amended include requirements to show evidence of technical and financial capacities, an increase in the mining revenue by introducing added value or bonuses, increasing the state's share in mining projects and a change of the nomenclatures in use in the domain. As well, the bill envisages an introduction of pre-emptive rights of the state, an obligation to start work one or two years after signing of final documents, a reduction of the surface area of exploration permit and duration, the possibility to conclude interim agreements with mining investors, introduction of measures to encourage emergence and perpetuation of national enterprises. Moreover, the bill makes provision for the promotion of development of local processing industries as well as the adoption of fiscal arrangements related to the establishment of a mineral deposit rehabilitation fund.

The second bill recently submitted to the people's representatives came from the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication, that on cyber crimes. This bill is centered on securing the electronic communication networks and information systems. As a matter of fact, the development and emergence of information and communication technologies require a legal framework to govern activities of the sector. More so, the proliferation of electronic communication in Cameroon (and elsewhere in the world) requires the powers that be to take necessary measures aimed at quelling new forms of "soft criminality" (internet scams, prostitution via the internet, etc) that are taking centre stage in our country. On this score, the 97 section bill defines the most deterrent criminal charges and penalties against those using new technologies to undermine morality, dignity and security of persons as well their properties. The bill further makes a difference between deterrence to be taken by electronic communication networks operators and providers of related services. Also important is the fact that the bill seeks to set up a cyber police force, define major cyber crimes, determine legal procedures to help ascertain them and formulate general principles of cooperation and mutual international legal assistance. From a practical perspective therefore, the Ministry charged with the follow up of Telecommunications will develop and implement an electronic communication security policy while the National Agency for Information and Communication Technologies will regulate electronic security activities. Along similar lines, the bill seeks to institute a fee to be paid by approved certification authorities and used to finance cybersecurity and cyber crime research, development and training. By and large, the adoption of the bill will build confident electronic communication networks and information systems and better protect basic human rights, including the right to human dignity, honour and respect of privacy, as well as the legitimate interest of legal persons. Manyaye Ikome