

Chede Agric Project Coffee Farm in Muambong

The “**Chede Agric Project**” may finally receive robust government support for regeneration and expansion in the context of current national efforts to boost coffee production nation wide.

The Cameroon Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is at present working on ways and means of providing optimal support to that end. It may be recalled that the Chede Agric Project was launched in 1986 as an agricultural and community modernization initiative in Muambong, Bangem Subdivision of the Kupe Muanenguba Division in the South West Region. The Project established a Robusta coffee farm of 40 hectares, and sought to serve as role model and locomotive for coffee farming in the local community by demonstrating high quality farming standards through the use of improved seeds and best farming practices that would increase farm yields and prices as well as producer incomes.

After a decade of difficult gestation due mostly to rural infrastructure deficits and the difficulty of getting banks to invest in a rural agricultural development venture, namely the classic problems that constrain smallholder agricultural modernization in Cameroon, the original Chede Agric Project was nevertheless sufficiently successful to lead to the creation of Chede Muambong Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd (MUAFCOOP) in 1995, the Chede Project originally serving as its locomotive, as well as to the Chede Cooperative Union Ltd in 2003. This institutional evolution also stretched to the global level with the creation of Chede entities (NGOs) in Europe (France, Netherlands, Switzerland and UK) from 2004 onwards to promote village-sensitive development approaches as vehicle for modernizing smallholder agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Due to the lack of adequate capital over the years to optimize the Project’s significant pioneer investments from 1986 to 2000, and because of the protracted instability of coffee markets and slumping prices during that period, the Project experienced major maintenance difficulties along the way. An evaluation of the Project in 2009 by the Divisional Delegation Agriculture and Rural Development (DDARD/MINADER) Bangem established its financial value at over 500 million FCFA (€762’200), and made recommendations on how to revitalize the project, including in particular the need for infrastructure assets, logistics and human resource capacities.