

CAMEROON

General Information

From 1885 to 1914 Cameroon was a German protectorate. After the First World War, Cameroon was placed under a League of Nations mandate and, subsequently, the aegis of the United Nations. France administered one part of the country while Britain administered the other part. The two Cameroons achieved independence in 1960 and 1961 respectively. In 1961 they were re-united under a federal system. Following a referendum, a unitary state replaced the federal state in June 1972.

Domestic Situation

President Ahidjo has led the country since independence. He has successfully dealt with numerous problems arising from the reunification of the two Cameroons and the bringing together of a number of ethnic groups within a single country. He has likewise forged a unified political party, the Cameroonian National Union (which he directs), out of diverse political groups.

The development of a stable economy remains the major objective. Inflation, a limited infrastructure, a high birth rate and the exodus of young people from the countryside are the main economic obstacles.

Agriculture is the primary economic activity. The traditional cash crops and sources of foreign exchange are coffee, cocoa, cotton and peanuts.

Cameroon is a country with many natural resources and considerable economic potential. The government intends to develop an economic infrastructure in certain priority areas -- a railway system, a highway system, and port facilities -- which will permit access to the natural resources situated in the interior (forests, minerals, hydro power).