

**Small Business Administration  
Interview with Marguerite-Marie Limagnack of Cameroon**

Ron Johnson: Situated on the Western Coast of Africa sits Cameroon, an emerging export market somewhat larger than our State of California. Cameroon, where both English and French are official languages was the colony of both the United Kingdom and France. Hello, I'm Ron Johnson with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Your Small Business Resource.

With 97 percent of the world's customers outside the U.S., small businesses looking to grow need to think beyond its borders. And with me today to discuss exporting opportunities to Cameroon is Dr. Marguerite-Marie Limagnack, a dental surgeon and epidemiologist, who owns and manages a dental practice in Cameroon. She also represents Cameroon on the African Women's Business Network, a leading businesswomen's network accelerating economic growth for women to improve the quality of life in Africa. Welcome, Marguerite.

Marguerite-Marie Limagnack: Thank you.

Ron Johnson: U.S. exports to Africa increased 29 percent to \$18.5 billion in 2008. Now, Cameroon is considered to be an emerging market for U.S. export. Marguerite, can you tell us a little bit about your country that would encourage U.S. small businesses to export.

Marguerite-Marie Limagnack: Oh, yes. Recently, the Cameroonian government has brought two new agencies in Cameroon to make the business environment more friendly. The first one is the creation of a one-stop shop for new companies. That means instead of needing three to six months to create your company, you can do that now in three to five days. Another agency, the investment and promotion agency that facilitates all the processes businesses have to go through when they want to do business in Cameroon. So, for example, the agreements, even the facilities like for electricity, water, they can take care of that so that the business person just cares about meeting people. So these are two agencies that have been created which improved the business climate.

Ron Johnson: What are the marketing opportunities for exporting to your country and what type of U.S. products or services are in demand?

Marguerite-Marie Limagnack: Well, for example in the health sector, there would be opportunities to export to Cameroon solutions for rural areas because we have big hospitals but they are all in big cities and the majority of the population is in the rural area. We are also having the mining sector needing expertise and equipment, as well as in the agricultural and energy sector.

Ron Johnson: And Marguerite, are there particular business customs in Cameroon that U.S. company should be aware of when considering exporting?

Marguerite-Marie Limagnack: Well, as I've said before with that agency for the promotion, I mean the investment promotion agency, all those types [sounds like] are facilitated. So this agency is created by the government but it is run like a private business and they really, really want to promote the country to help investors to feel really better in Cameroon. That is why all those customs things, they facilitate that. So it's just having the information and then it's not complicated. I mean things have really improved.

Ron Johnson: Now, since you serve as president of the Cameroon Businesswomen's Network would you explain how your organization can assist U.S. Small Businesses interested in learning more about exporting to your country?

Marguerite-Marie Limagnack: Yes, we can be a reference point for information for business. On the business community that means we can locate the right business people from our organization or from other organization. We can screen them in terms of checking that they are serious. We can help in contacting authorities. So we can really, really facilitate that because the objective of the Cameroon Businesswomen's

Network is to help our members to grow but also facilitate access to the business community.

Ron Johnson: Marguerite, thank you for providing us a great introduction to doing business in Cameroon. For more information on exporting, you can go to [www.sba.gov/international](http://www.sba.gov/international) or [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov). So until next time, this is Ron Johnson encouraging you to take your business global.

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