

## PRESS RELEASE

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Under the chairmanship of the **Prime Minister, Head of Government, H.E. Joseph DION NGUTE**, this Thursday, 27 August 2020, the 21st weekly meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee in charge of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of Government's response strategy against the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon was held.

The following items featured on the agenda:

1. the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon;
2. Community mobilisation around prevention for socially vulnerable people in the context of the fight against COVID-19;
3. the reopening of European borders to Cameroonian nationals.

In his report, the Minister of Public Health stated that **19,142** people have tested positive for COVID-19 since the outbreak of this disease in Cameroon. To date, **17,651** patients have been cured and **411** deaths have been reported, representing a recovery rate of **92.2%**, compared to **91.4%** last week. With a view to limiting the spread of the virus, 102 screening sites have been set up and mobile caravans are being organized in administrations and places of mass gatherings. In addition to the system in place at ports and airports, 35 health units are now operational at various border posts, with a view to strengthening the country's health security.

In addition, the specialised services of the Ministry of Public Health are working, in liaison with the competent administrations, to draw up health protocols to be implemented as soon as the sports season resumes and the school and university academic year 2020/2021 begins.

With regard to community mobilization around prevention for socially vulnerable people in the fight against COVID-19, especially children, the elderly and the disabled, the Minister of Social Affairs indicated that the initiatives undertaken include the launch, as of 1 April 2020, of the operation to confine street children. 102 of the 162 enlisted have been reintegrated into their families, while 43 have been placed at the *Institution Camerounaise de l'Enfance* in Betamba.

Emphasis was also laid on the development and implementation of an Operational Action Plan for the protection of disabled persons against COVID-19, the conduct of a special awareness-raising and information

campaign to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among indigenes, and the psychosocial support of infected and affected persons through the deployment of social workers alongside medical personnel. These actions are to be intensified in order to strengthen the prevention system set up for socially vulnerable people.

With regard to the reopening of European borders to Cameroonian nationals, it was revealed from the report presented by the Minister of External Relations that negotiations are continuing with the Ambassadors of the countries concerned. Government is working to provide European Union authorities with real-time information on the strategy implemented in response to COVID-19, the results of which over the weeks attest to good management of this pandemic in Cameroon. As for the Ambassadors concerned, they have committed themselves to continue to advocate for Cameroon with the competent European authorities.

During the discussions, the Delegate General for National Security reported on the state of execution of the instructions that were given to him during the previous meetings. The Minister of Youth and Civic Education, for his part, gave an update on the launch of the 5th edition of the citizen and patriotic holidays, in the context of the fight against COVID-19. At the end of the discussions, the Head of Government instructed:

- the **Minister of Social Affairs**, to continue and intensify the initiatives undertaken, with a view to better protecting socially vulnerable groups against the coronavirus;
- the **Minister of External Relations**, to maintain dialogue with the Ambassadors of the Member States of the European Union, so that they can resolutely ensure Cameroon's advocacy with the competent bodies of this community. He was also told to examine, in conjunction with the Ministers of Transport and Public Health, the possibility of extending the validity period of COVID-19 screening certificates from three to five days, for the benefit of passengers coming from distant countries such as Canada, the United States, or China;
- the **Minister of Public Health**, to maintain units of one hundred (100) beds for COVID-19 patients in health facilities and dedicated sites, following the dismantling the health facilities installed at the Yaounde military and Douala Mbappe Leppe stadiums, in prelude to CHAN2021.

The objective is to enable Cameroon to cope with a possible new outbreak of the pandemic;

- the **Minister of Communication**, to inform public opinion that the dismantling of the health facilities at the stadiums are exclusively part of the preparations for the organisation of CHAN 2021, scheduled to take place in Cameroon next January. They do not mean in any way

that the COVID-19 pandemic has been overcome, to the point of no longer observing the prescribed precautionary measures.

To conclude, the Prime Minister conveyed, to the competent Ministers, the instructions of the President of the Republic to intensify and refocus communication on COVID-19:

- by reminding the population and the different stakeholders in the response chain that the coronavirus pandemic is still present in our country and continues to claim lives worldwide;
- by inviting our compatriots to scrupulously respect the precautionary measures adopted by Government, in particular the systematic wearing of masks in public places and social distancing, in order to curb the spread of this virus;
- by regularly reminding them of government measures to combat this pandemic;
- by providing regular updates on the status of the screening operations.-

*Yaounde, the \_\_\_\_\_*

**FOUDA Séraphin Magloire  
Secretary General,  
Prime Minister's Office**