

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

SERVICES DU PREMIER MINISTRE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE FOLLOWING CABINET MEETING OF THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2021

The **Prime Minister, Head of Government, His Excellency Joseph DION NGUTE**, chaired a Cabinet Meeting this Thursday, 25 February 2021 at 3 p.m. at the Auditorium of the Prime Minister's Office. It was attended by Ministers of State, Ministers, Ministers-Delegate and Secretaries of State.

The statements made during this Cabinet Meeting focused on reforms in the forestry and wildlife sub-sector, as well as strategies for promoting local development within the context of decentralisation. The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon was also discussed.

At the end of the introductory address by the Head of Government, the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife gave an overview of this sub-sector, before dwelling on the modalities for implementing reforms in this area of activity. Reforms already underway include the status of the Eco Guards corps, the restructuring of the National School of Water and Forestry and the establishment of the Wildlife Office. As for the planned reforms, they include a ban on the export of timber in the form of logs as from 1 January 2022, the revision of the forestry law and the strengthening of repressive provisions.

The Minister of Forestry and Wildlife insisted on the need to rehabilitate the Special Fund for Forest Development as established by the decree of 10 April 1996 to lay down the modalities of operation of Special Funds. The aim is to optimise the financing of the National Programme for the Development of Forest Plantations, the implementation of management plans for protected areas and the fight against poaching and wildlife crime.

With regard to the promotion of local development, the Minister in charge of Decentralisation presented the strategies at work to ensure better planning and harmonious implementation. In this respect, he stressed the importance of anchoring local planning in the corpus of competences transferred to the Regions and Municipalities, but also its linkage to the national development strategy 2030 and international agendas. The local development planning enshrined in the municipal plans is to be continued in the context of the preparation of regional development plans.

Referring to the strategies relating to the financing of local development, the Minister in charge of Decentralisation stated that they are backed by the option of modernising local finances, with an emphasis on strengthening the financial autonomy of Regional and Local Authorities, optimising budget and accounting management, and increasing financial inclusion at local level. Other complementary strategies are at work to promote local development, such as the establishment of a local civil service, the training of Regional and Local Authority staff, the strengthening of local governance and the functional reform of decentralised State services.

Finally, the Meeting followed the report of the Minister of Public Health on the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon. According to the report, 35,714 positive cases of COVID-19 have been recorded in Cameroon since the outbreak of this pandemic, among which are 32,594 patients cured and 551 deaths. The Minister of Public Health noted that the pandemic curve has been clearly on the rise since December 2020, due in particular to the laxity observed in the respect of safety measures and the multiplication of large gatherings. The Minister indicated that measures have been taken, in liaison with the World Health Organisation, to identify possible variants of COVID-19 in Cameroon. A platform of laboratories has been set up for this purpose.

At the end of the discussions that followed these presentations, the Prime Minister instructed an in-depth examination, within the framework of an inter-ministerial body, of the reforms undertaken and those envisaged in the forestry and wildlife sub-sector. He instructed the Minister in charge of Decentralisation to ensure that council and regional development plans are linked to the national development strategy. With regard to the fight against COVID-19, the Head of Government instructed the Minister of Public Health to invest in the detection of new variants of COVID-19 in order to break the transmission chain, and to intensify screening and ensure the optimal functioning of all COVID-19 patient management centres.

Finally, the Prime Minister urged all members of Government concerned to take an active role in raising awareness among the population about the need to comply with safety measures.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5.30 p.m. –

Yaounde, the 25 FEV 2021

Séraphin Magloire FOUADA
Secretary General,
Prime Minister's Office

