



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION
MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

**ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
NATIONAL RESPONSE STRATEGY AGAINST THE
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC IN CAMEROON**

MINCOM - MINSANTE – MINDDEVEL – DGSN
JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

OF

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MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION

Yaounde, 16 September 2020

- **The Delegate General For National Security;**
- **The Representative of the Minister of Public Health;**
- **The Representative of the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Distinguished Media Professionals;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

In accordance with the Very High Directives of THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, His Excellency Paul BIYA, echoed by the Prime Minister, Head of Government, His Excellency Joseph DION NGUTE, relating to the intensification of actions to sensitize the people and to engage the various actors in the response chain against the coronavirus pandemic in Cameroon, we deemed it necessary to invite you to this joint press conference, at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic continues to claim lives throughout the world. It should be indicated that the pandemic remains a major concern for the Government of the Republic; needless to remind that the coronavirus is still present in our country.

Allow me to thank you all for responding to my invitation to take part in this important meeting, which should enable all of you to be sufficiently enlightened on Government's strategy to fight against the coronavirus, and particularly, with the various actions undertaken, whose results recorded by our country since March 2020 are in general terms considered satisfactory.

The Government also avails itself of this Communication to appeal to the civic mindfulness of our fellow citizens with regard to both strict compliance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and strict observance of the main barrier measures prescribed by the Government, such as the systematic wearing of masks in public places and social distancing.

With regard to the importance and nature of issues to be addressed within the framework of this semi-annual assessment of the fight against the coronavirus in Cameroon, I am particularly pleased to welcome in this Auditorium of the Ministry of Communication, several High-ranking State Officials from the various administrations tasked in different capacities with implementing

the National Response Strategy against the coronavirus pandemic.

They are: the Delegate General for National Security, Mr Martin MBARGA NGUELE, the Secretary General of MINSANTE, Representing the Minister of Public Health, Professor Louis Richard NDJOCK, the Inspector General of MINDEVEL, Representing the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development, Professor Jean Claude TCHEUWA.

I acknowledge their presence here and wish them a warm welcome.

➤ Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you all know, like in most countries in the world, Cameroon has, for couple of months now, been facing the coronavirus pandemic.

The National Response Strategy prescribed by the Head of State has enabled our country to effectively respond, at least up till now, to the health and socio-economic setbacks resulting from this serious public health issue.

Indeed, it is worth recalling that since the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon, when the first cases were detected between

March 6 and 7, 2020, the Government put in place a set of barrier measures to protect the population from contamination and from the spread of this pandemic.

In this regard, on 17 March 2020, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, His Excellency Joseph DION NGUTE, in a Special Communication prescribed the first barrier measures set by the Government, thirteen in total, including the closure of airports and the closure of recreation centres and drinking spots, as well as the closure of all nursery, primary, secondary and higher education schools throughout the national territory.

This set of measures with constraints considerably slowed down socio-economic activities and had a negative impact on several sectors of national life.

After several weeks of the mobilization of all State actors and the deployment of the health personnel involved in the response, with the support of various bilateral and multilateral partners, and, in the light of the results recorded we can say that the progression of the coronavirus

pandemic in Cameroon has been satisfactorily curtailed.

Consequently, the Government took the bull by the horns to reduce the impact on households, preserve the national economic fabric and ensure the training of young learners, particularly at secondary and higher education levels, by ordering the resumption of a number of activities important for the well-being of our fellow citizens.

These include:

- The reopening of drinking spots and leisure facilities;**
- The completion of the school and academic year with the effective holding of official examinations;**
- The gradual resumption of economic activities throughout the country.**

With regard to the health response itself, the control of the pandemic has resulted in the stabilization of data on the number of patients under treatment and the rate of contamination. In general terms, the results are particularly encouraging, with a recovery rate of over 94.12% and a case-fatality rate of 2.08%.

Similarly, the experimentation of massive coronavirus testing in the main epidemic focuses, using an approach consisting of tracking, testing and treatment, and the creation in all the country's regions of dedicated screening and care centres, as well as local screening through mobile operations, are all practical actions carried out as part of the implementation of the national response strategy against COVID-19.

Such relevant operations have, in the same way as the treatment protocol implemented, enabled our country to optimize the results achieved so far.

As of September 10, 2020, the figures were as follows:

- Twenty Thousand nine (20,009) confirmed COVID-19 cases in Cameroon;**
- Eighteen Thousand eight Hundred and Thirty-seven (18,837) people have recovered;**
- With, unfortunately, Four Hundred and fifteen deaths recorded (415).**

From these statistics, we can happily say that our Country was able to contain the situation and can be considered in Africa and beyond, as one of the

countries where the response was of remarkable relevance and efficiency.

In addition, building on the good results achieved, the Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA, in his usual foresight and great wisdom, ordered the softening of the measures that were initially taken, hence the set of easing measures that I mentioned earlier.

Though these easing measures that were made necessary by the need to account for impact of the pandemic on the national socio-economic fabric were hailed by the majority of our compatriots, they also, unfortunately, gave rise to other forms of interpretations that distorted or misrepresented their intended meaning, hence the laxity noticed in the respect for barrier measures, which further led the Prime Minister, Head of Government, to remind the populations of these measures.

In any case, the implementation of the national response strategy against COVID-19 has enabled us to keep the situation under control. From all indications, we are away from the apocalypse that many renowned specialists, not to say Afro-pessimists, predicted at the dawn of the pandemic.

However, though we can be proud of such outcome, we should not tend to believe that having the situation under control means that Cameroon has already won the battle against COVID-19, far from that.

In other words, the coronavirus pandemic, though under control, has so far neither been overcome, nor eradicated.

That is why, while we are all rejoicing with the results we have obtained in the fierce fight against coronavirus, the Government, through my voice, is asking Cameroonians to remain vigilant, that is, on the one hand continue to observe the key measures prescribed by the WHO on the one hand, and on the other hand by the Government, namely:

- The compulsory and routine wearing of face mask in public places;**
- The respect of social distancing;**
- The regular washing of hands with clean water or use of hydro-alcoholic rub.**

The Government of the Republic insists all the more on the respect by all of these barrier measures, given that the pandemic has resurfaced in other

regions of the world, particularly in Europe and America.

Moreover, according to the prognosis of experts in the field, the coronavirus pandemic may be a long-term disease. This eventuality, which is more and more prevalent, therefore calls on all Nations to prepare to live with the disease, for a duration that no one, at this stage, could assess or estimate.

Also, in this decisive moment for the consolidation of achievements, certain measures need to be put in place in the area of health, administration, and security.

This is a set of behaviours that presupposes the individual and collective involvement of our fellow citizens, who are invited to demonstrate, as I said earlier, responsibility, seriousness and, above all, civic-mindedness, in accordance with the constant exhortation of the **PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, who has never ceased to say, and I quote:**

“The wearing of face masks in public places will be mandatory until further notice (...) Everyone must feel concerned and contribute their quota to the fight against the spread of the virus. We should bear in mind that negligence by a single individual can seriously harm the entire community. We

should therefore not be complacent (...) During this difficult period, we must remain a united, supportive and disciplined people (...) Let us channel all our energies towards fighting this common enemy.”

It is also a horizontal action whose implementation will require the involvement of the powers that be, including the Ministries in charge of Public Health, Decentralization and Local Development, as well as the General Delegation for National Security.

That is the reason why the representatives of the said Ministries, notably MINSANTE and MINDEVEL, as well as the Delegate General for National Security in person, are taking part in this joint press conference.

Naturally, I once again wish them welcome to this Auditorium of the Ministry of Communication.

They will respectively be able to provide details on all the measures they recommend in their areas of competence, but also to say what they expect from the populations, within the framework of the implementation of the Very High Directives of the Head of State, in particular with regard to the

systematic and compulsory wearing of masks in public places, and social distancing.

It is therefore my pleasure now to give them the floor, starting, naturally with the Minister of Public Health.

Thank you for your kind attention.

The Minister of Communication,