



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION
MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

Intensifying awareness-raising on vaccination against COVID-19

MINCOM-MINSANTE

JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

BY

H.E. RENE EMMANUEL SADI

MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION

GOVERNMENT'S SPOKESPERSON

Yaoundé, June 16, 2021

The Minister of Public Health;

The Resident Representative of the World Health Organization;

The Secretary-General of the Ministry of Communication;

Madam President of the National Scientific Council;

Distinguished Media Professionals;

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am particularly delighted to welcome you here in the Auditorium of the Ministry of Communication for this press conference, which will focus on some aspects of the national response to the coronavirus pandemic.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Minister of Public Health, Mr MANAOUNDA Malachie, who has kindly accepted to join me for this communication with the national press.

Mr Minister of Public Health;

Distinguished Media Professionals;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you know, as soon as the first cases of coronavirus infection were declared in March 2020, Cameroon developed and implemented a national response against this serious pandemic, under the Esteemed Impetus of the Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA, and the executive coordination of the Prime Minister, Head of Government.

This two-fold response which included both prevention and provision of care to infected people, with strict directives as

to the respect of barrier measures prescribed and recommended jointly by the Government of the Republic and the World Health Organisation, initially made it possible to curb the spread of the disease and preserve many lives among our populations.

At the outbreak of the second wave of infections recorded in the second quarter of this year, the Government took a set of measures to step up the fight against the pandemic, protect the national territory and methodically treat patients infected by the virus.

This immediate and strong reaction made it possible for us to significantly curb the curve of contamination and lethality of the pandemic, which is now at a more than moderate level.

As a matter of fact, statistics from the Ministry of Public Health show that as of 11 June 2021, our country recorded 80,090 confirmed cases including 77,305 people recovered, 1,310 deaths and 1,475 active cases. Among these active cases, 152 were receiving care, including 23 on oxygen. The recovery rate then stood at the same date at 96%, the

lethality rate was 1.6% and the severity rate was 0.7%, with a 4.8% bed occupancy rate.

Even though we can, to a certain extent, be satisfied with this positive evolution of the overall situation at the national level, we do agree that we should remain vigilant, for there is no doubt as to the fact that the spread of the virus is far from being completely under control.

That is why, having reached this stage and taking advantage of the fact that the research carried out by high-level laboratories throughout the world for the development of various vaccines appear to be successful, with the formal approval of the said vaccines, the Government took a firm and appropriate option for a mass vaccination strategy, with the ultimate objective to ensure in our country a herd immunity capable of offering a prospect of appropriate resistance to all our populations.

It should be recalled that this approach has been approved and backed by the appropriate scientific authorities at national level, notably, the Scientific Council for Emergencies and the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group.

Meanwhile, it should also be noted that this government option is in line with that of most countries around the world who opted for the use of vaccine to launch a crusade against this dreadful pandemic.

In fact, and in general, it is now clearly established that vaccination is and remains one of the most effective means of preventing and even treating diseases.

With regard to the specific case of Covid-19, the various expert opinions gathered worldwide unequivocally emphasise that, to date, the vaccine is the only way of not only slowing down the spread of this pandemic, but also, in the long term, providing herd immunity to the population.

And it is with this strong assurance in mind that many countries in Europe, America, Asia and even Africa, opted, without delay and reserve to vaccinate their populations. This has to date, led to a significant drop in the spread of the disease and has enabled a gradual return to normal life in each of these countries.

In a global context that is highly interdependent, Cameroon could not take the risk of staying away from such a health initiative that is implemented world-wide with the prospects

of finally eradicating the disease to the good of all the nations and all peoples of the world.

In the same vein, the Government initiated, on April 12, 2021, a national vaccination campaign against the coronavirus pandemic in Cameroon.

Moreover, in addition to its own resources, our country has benefited from the facilities offered by the COVAX initiative that is placed under the auspices of WHO at the multilateral level and other facilities issued from the bilateral cooperation with friendly countries. Allow me to avail myself of this opportunity to once again express our gratitude to these partners and friendly countries.

However, although the stock available to date can cover a great part of the projected vaccination needs, it has surprisingly been observed that the expected vaccination rate is relatively low, notably due to a poor adherence of the populations. This is undoubtedly due to disinformation insidiously orchestrated by certain actors and opinion leaders, sometimes spread by some conventional media, and especially, aggravated by the pernicious influence of social media.

The various opinions backing this state of affairs develop backward theses that go against the opinions of high-level and trustworthy experts, on the efficacy of vaccines despite the fact that they are genuinely approved and sometimes on their alleged side effects, which are said to be systematic and even harmful to health.

The truth is that, what most scientists say, and those present here will affirm or deny it, if we agree that the vaccines can cause side effects, it should be noted that these side effects have minor consequences that minimize any harmfulness thereof.

It is also important to clarify here that, though voluntary and optional, vaccination of each and every person is an imperative need, which calls on the duty of citizenship and responsibility of each and every one of us.

This is the reason why the Government wishes to buttress here and through my voice, its strong resolve to work in this direction, the only one, for that matter, capable of preserving the populations living on the national territory from this serious disease that changes our everyday lives,

disorganise our communities and continues to cause anguish and despair in families.

In other words, and based on the generally accepted opinion, I should say it once again that: vaccination against the coronavirus disease is the only way to guarantee herd immunity, and eventually, a certain victory over this pandemic.

I therefore call on national media of all leanings, to fully commit to and support the implementation of this major objective that, I must say, is undoubtedly a major national cause.

Distinguished Media Professionals;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is through your both individual, collective and unreserved action that people will be the more sensitized on the need to be vaccinated against coronavirus, first to protect themselves and eventually protect all those with whom they come into contact, so as to finally put an end to the spread of this disease.

For its part, the Government, as usual, will leave no stone unturned so that the doses of vaccine required for the individual protection of citizens be supplied and made available to each and everyone, on the basis of equal access and, consequently, no discrimination.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

At the time when I am about to end my introductory statement, I would like once again to welcome the presence of the Minister of Public Health, Mr Malachie MANOUADA, at this important Press Conference, who has kindly agreed to be assisted by the eminent experts of the Scientific Council, to whom I would also like to extend a very warm welcome.

It goes without saying that the Minister of Public Health, to whom I will now give the floor, and his experts, if necessary, will provide us with all the information necessary for a proper understanding and perception of the vaccine, in order not only to edify, but also to reassure each one of us, as well as all of our fellow citizens, as to the validity, safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.

Thank you for your kind attention. /.