



MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION

**COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF OCTOBER 15, 2015 AND
CAMEROON/UNITED STATES COOPERATION
IN FIGHTING BOKO HARAM**

PRESS CONFERENCE

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY
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MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION**

Yaoundé, October 17, 2015

Distinguished Journalists,

Just two days ago, I promised you that we would be meeting very soon for an update on the important Council of Ministers which was presided over last Thursday, by the **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, after the Cabinet reshuffle of October 02, 2015.

Thank you for responding so quickly to my invitation.

Distinguished Journalists,

On Thursday, the **Head of State** convened his Government, within the framework of a formal Council of Ministers, in order to set the course for action and give specific guidelines on the conduct of the major issues of national policy.

Before delivering his special statement on this occasion, the **President of the Republic** listened, together with the entire Government, to a presentation by the **Prime Minister, Head of Government**, on the execution of the Triennial Emergency Plan for the Acceleration of Economic Growth.

In his presentation, the **Prime Minister, Head of Government**, recalled that the said Emergency Plan, which is underway, was made up of several projects covering the entire national territory in the following sectors: Health, Urban development, Animal industries, Water, Energy, Roads, Agriculture, Regional development and Security.

No doubt that it was important for the **Head of Government** to give clear and specific details on the pre-operational phase of this plan.

Therefore, I will emphasize on this presentation by the **Prime Minister**, in order to give you some details on the procedures which preceded the effective implementation of projects on the field.

As a matter of fact, the earlier steps essentially involved the setting up of an institutional framework to specify the plan's execution modalities, to allow project owners to finalize the preparation of projects, to identify and secure the lands on which each project would be executed, and then carry out technical studies prior to the execution of the said projects.

With regard to the tender process, the aim was to ensure the observance of rules of good governance and transparency in the selection of contracting companies, on the one hand, and to ensure quality works at reasonable costs on the other hand. This step needed to be addressed with care and in a methodical way.

The general notice for expression of interest led to the pre-selection of **350** enterprises. To date, most preliminary administrative requirements have been met.

As far as the implementation status of the projects included in the Triennial Emergency Plan is concerned, several projects are underway.

In the healthcare sector, infrastructural rehabilitation works and the upgrading of the technical equipment of the Yaoundé and Douala referral hospitals as well as the Yaoundé Teaching Hospital will start in November 2015.

With regard to the construction of Regional Hospital Centres in regional chief-towns other than Yaoundé and Douala, the construction works of the Ebolowa, Bamenda and Bafoussam Hospital Centres are due to begin in January 2016. Those of Maroua, Garoua and Ngaoundéré will follow, then Bertoua and Buea; the expected duration of works is 18 months in each case.

As far as the urban component is concerned, the roads to be rehabilitated in Yaoundé and Douala have been selected, for a total stretch of over 232 kilometers. Rehabilitation works on secondary roads in Yaoundé started in June. The heavy works on highly degraded roads will be intensified in November 2015.

The housing sub-component on its part provides for the construction of 800 housing units, 100 per region, excluding Yaoundé and Douala.

As of this month of October 2015, the company responsible for the execution of works will be in Bertoua and in the Northern regions to be established in the identified sites. Also, construction works will begin in Ebolowa before the end of this year.

Within the framework of the development of animal industries, a modern slaughterhouse is due to be built and equipped in Ngaoundéré as well as 4 cold storage facilities in Yaoundé, Kribi, Ngaoundéré and Ebolowa. The construction works will start in Ngaoundéré and Yaoundé by the end of this month. The same will begin in Ebolowa and Kribi in November.

In the water sector, all contracts on the realization of 900 boreholes and 19 potable water supply facilities in the 10 Regions of our country have been awarded. The first structures will be delivered in November 2015, and delivery of all these boreholes will be accepted within the next six months.

The projects in the energy sector include the enhancement and stabilization of some power transport lines and the construction of the Bini dam at Warak. The search for funding is being actively pursued.

With regard to the road network, the 20 roads which are expected to open-up production areas, two per Region, have already been identified. Tender files for the execution of geotechnical control works on five stretches included in the first phase have already been drafted. They relate to the **Douala-Bonépoupa-Yabassi** road; the **Ekondo Titi-Kumba** road; the **Soa-Essé-Awae** road; the

Mandjou-Batouri and the **Maroua-Bogo** roads. Works will begin as soon as the necessary funding will be raised.

As far as the agricultural and regional development component is concerned, projects include the setting up of several “agropoles”, the development of 120 000 hectares of hydro-agricultural areas, support to agro-industries and the construction of major supply markets.

To date, 13 000 hectares of hydro-agricultural areas have been identified in the Far North Region, and the related tender process has already started.

As concerns the security component, 38 contracts related to the construction of security stations in border areas have been awarded: 20 for the National Security and 18 for the Gendarmerie. With regard to National Security specifically, works have started in the northern regions. As far as the Gendarmerie is concerned, works for units due to be built in Douala will begin this October.

Distinguished Journalists, that was the situational update of the implementation of the Emergency Plan, as presented by the **Prime Minister, Head of Government**, during the Council of Ministers of last October 15.

The Minister of Sports and Physical Education took the floor on his turn to dwell on the updates of preparations for the 2016 and 2019 African Cups of Nations which our country will be hosting.

To this effect, the Minister of Sports and Physical Education indicated that the 2016 African Women Football Cup would be played in the cities of Yaoundé and Limbe. It is expected that a stadium for the competition and five training grounds complying with the standards of the Confederation of African Football as well as appropriate hosting facilities will be made available in each of the selected towns. To achieve this, a profound renovation of the Yaoundé Omnisports Stadium and the rehabilitation of three training grounds including the two annex stadia of the Omnisports stadium and the Yaoundé Military Stadium will be required.

For Yaoundé, the contracts related to the fitting of seats, the rehabilitation of the playground and the athletics track of the Omnisports Stadium have already been awarded to the concerned contractors.

As far as Limbe is concerned, it should be recalled that the 20 000-seat Ngeme Omnisports Stadium has been completed and works accepted since September 2014 and all the contracts related to the construction of surrounding facilities such as accesses, bypass roads, and parking slots have been awarded.

With regard to 2019 AFCON, rehabilitation works will be done in the Garoua Roudé Adja Omnisports Stadium, the Douala Reunification Stadium and the fifteen training grounds selected in Douala, Bafoussam and Garoua corresponding to five per city.

Within the framework of facilities to be constructed for the preparation of the 2019 AFCON, we can point out a 60 000-seat Stadium in Yaoundé at the Olembe neighborhood with two annex playgrounds; a 50 000-seat Stadium in Douala at the Japoma neighborhood also with two annex playgrounds; a 20 000-seat Stadium in Bafoussam at the Kouekong neighborhood whose works progress is estimated at 92% and its temporal work acceptance is expected in the first quarter of 2016.

Taking the floor to deliver his special statement, **the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, began noting with satisfaction that the Emergency Plan is definitely underway. He went further to buttress on the uttermost importance he attaches to the implementation of this plan. This is reflected in his words and I quote; « **Indeed, our people would like to see Cameroon transformed into a vast construction site through the Emergency Plan and our traditional development agenda. The people hope for better living conditions** », end of quote.

Speaking directly to Members of Government, **the Head of State** recalled that it is an honour to serve one's country as a Member of Government but it is also and above all a responsibility, a huge responsibility, which he urged them to fully assume and make Government's action more effective and efficient.

The President of the Republic urged his Government to speed up the implementation of the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper which seeks to modernize our country by 2035.

With regard to the fight against Boko Haram, the **Head of State** indicated that it is obvious that the Government's top priorities will still be to preserve our internal security. To our Defence and Security Forces, **the President of the Republic, Head of State, and Commander-in Chief of the Army**, once again extended his appreciation for their commitment to protecting our territorial integrity.

The **Head of State** also extended his warm congratulation to our valiant populations for and I quote; « **their patriotism and resolve to keep the terrorists at bay**, » end of quote. He went further to assert and I quote; « **They have been providing valuable and effective assistance to our Defence and Security Forces through vigilante groups. We will continue to lend them our full support** », end of quote.

Under guidelines, **the President of the Republic** instructed the Government to correct lingering shortcomings here and there. It will be necessary to ensure better coordination between ministries; to ensure a better organization within ministries with greater involvement of Ministers Delegate,

Secretaries of State; to speed up project maturation and eliminate unjustified deadlocks; to address the issue of low-consumption of appropriations and to continue ensuring quality public spending.

Regarding the 2016 and 2019 AFCONs, the **Head of State** instructed the Government to make every effort to meet the challenge of their good organization on time.

Closing his Special Statement, the **President of the Republic** urged the Ministers to make every effort to respond to the legitimate concerns and expectations of the people of Cameroon, by reminding them, and I quote **"Not so long ago, I said that the Government team should see itself as a 'Government with a mission'. This meant that it was not appointed to deal with routine business, but to invent, create and implement."** end quote. Before ending his statement, he asserted once again and I quote: **"Today, more than ever before, I reiterate that instruction; because that is what the Cameroonian people expect and because that is what we owe the people,"** end quote.

Distinguished Journalists,

Just when the Council of Ministers of last October 15, 2015 was taking place, we learned that within the framework of the global mobilization against international terrorism and in particular the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist sect, the US and Cameroonian Governments had agreed to deploy a detachment of American Army made up of 300 personnel in our country to carry out intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations.

By this act, which will certainly not be the last of its kind, US **President, His Excellency Barack Obama**, undoubtedly responded to the call of his Cameroonian counterpart, **His Excellency Paul BIYA**, who, while responding to the 2015 New Year Wishes from the Diplomatic Corps, stated, and I quote **« A global threat calls for a global response (...) We must bear in mind that the distance separating a country from the combat zones is no sure-fire guarantee of safety (...) Personally, I still believe that the threat posed by Jihadists, Boko Haram and Shebabs may be defeated only through global mobilization. Many have understood this, but are yet to draw lessons from it »**.

The deployment decided by the Heads of State of Cameroon and the United States has already begun, with the effective presence of 90 US military personnel in our country. The entire detachment will be based in Garoua and will provide precious assistance to our Forces of Defence and Security in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group.

The President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA, has welcomed this support, which bears testimony to the excellent relations existing between the United States and Cameroon, as

well as the involvement of both countries in the concerted fight against terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin region.

A day just after the announcement of this news, **the Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, received in audience at Unity Palace, General David Rodriguez, Commander of US Africa Command who came for an update on the security situation in the sub-region.

The US General reaffirmed on this occasion, the determination of the United States to work alongside our country in its struggle against the criminal and barbaric Boko Haram horde. He paid tribute to the courage and professionalism of Cameroonian Defence and Security Forces in the fight against this terrorist group.

The General, Commander of US Africa Command, later met with the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in charge of Defence, for both parties to sign a memorandum of understanding on the provision of state-of-the- art military equipment and the training of Cameroonian soldiers in the technical management of the new equipment.

Distinguished Journalists, this is the substance of the communication I had to deliver to you today.

Thank you for your kind attention.