

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 26 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Yaounde, 26 September 2019

The **Prime Minister, Head of Government, His Excellency Joseph DION NGUTE**, this Thursday 26 September 2019 at 10 a.m., chaired this month's Cabinet Meeting at the Prime Minister's Office devoted to the start of the 2019/2020 school year. The meeting was attended by Ministers of State, Ministers, Ministers Delegate and Secretaries of State

Three items featured on the agenda, namely:

1. *Statement by the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education on "The preparations for the resumption of the 2019/2020 academic year in state universities and private higher institutes of learning" ;*
2. *Statement by the Minister of Basic Education on "The progress of the resumption of the 2019/2020 academic year in nursery and primary schools" ;*
3. *Statement by the Minister of Secondary Education on the "The progress of the resumption of the 2019/2020 academic year in secondary schools".*

At the end of the introductory statement by the Head of Government, the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, first of all assessed the 2018/2019 academic year. He indicated that it had been completed under generally satisfactory conditions and that the academic calendar had been respected in general, including in the Far North, North-West and South-West Regions, which were facing security challenges. The Minister of State noted that the student enrolment curve has increased significantly over the past three years and stood at 319,554 students at the end of 2018/2019. This increase was also observed in the Private Institutes of Higher Learning and the State Universities of Bamenda, Buea and Maroua, where a total of 77,763 students were enrolled during the 2018/2019 academic year, compared to 66,220 students the previous year, on the basis of which the total number of both old and new students in these three state universities could reach 85,000 for the 2019/2020 academic year.

With regard to the actual preparations for the 2019/2020 academic year, the Minister of State informed that the administrative year began in all higher education institutions on 2 September 2019 and that pre-registration began in State Universities on 9 September 2019. According to the calendar published on 20 June 2019, the academic year started on 24 September 2019 and will end on 24 July 2020. A total of 75,000 new students are expected to attend this academic year in the various public and private institutions of higher learning, including approximately 2,320 new students in Maroua, 2,300 in Buea and 1,600 in Bamenda.

In view of the security challenges facing academic institutions in the Far North, North-West and South-West Regions, special measures have been taken to ensure that the academic year runs smoothly. These include the establishment of early warning and information mechanisms for members of the academic community, the widespread biometric identification of students and the strengthening of formal and informal preventive security measures on campuses and university residence areas. The Minister of State concluded his remarks by formulating proposals for actions to strengthen the achievements of the national higher education system.

On his heels, the Minister of Basic Education indicated that the new academic year has been effective since 2 September 2019 and is running smoothly in primary and nursery schools, with a resumption rate of around 77.42% in general. In addition to the consultations that preceded the start of classes, about 20,000 teachers were trained in the application of new curricula.

With a view to modernizing the national education system, the Minister of Basic Education announced the construction of on-call housing in remote areas and the improvement of school management. At the pedagogic level, the transition to a monthly assessment, replacing sequential assessments every six weeks, is the main innovation in primary and nursery education.

Referring to the specific cases of the Far-North, North-West and South-West Regions, the Minister informed that the actions envisaged to normalise the situation in the field of basic education were part of the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan currently being implemented. In this regard, there will be stronger security measures around and within primary and nursery schools.

Speaking after this, the Minister of Secondary Education recalled the activities carried out in preparation for the start of the 2019/2020 school year, which have enabled a smooth resumption of classes in secondary schools; in this respect, the publication on 23 September 2019 of the decree defining the conditions and procedures for the domiciliation with a commercial bank of required contributions and fees for official secondary education examinations and competitive examinations, contributes to strengthening serenity in the course of the current school year.

With regard to the Far North Region in particular, the Minister noted with satisfaction the reopening of 10 of the 12 secondary schools closed for security reasons. As for the North-West and South-West Regions, the situation is improving on a daily basis. Thus, almost three weeks after the start of the school year, the number of students rose from 2,632 to 24,819 in the South-West, and from 1,299 to 6,118 in the North-West. In addition, special measures have been taken to provide schooling for the 18,019 internally displaced students identified in the various regions of the country.

In conclusion, the Minister of Secondary Education noted the need to strengthen the security of schools and to continue the construction and equipment of classrooms in overcrowded schools.

At the end of the discussions that followed these statements, the Head of Government instructed the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, to continue the implementation of the policy of densification of the university fabric throughout the national territory. He instructed the Minister of Basic Education and the Minister of Secondary Education to respect the school calendar and the effective coverage of validated education programmes.

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm.-

Yaounde, **26 SEPT 2019**

FOUDA Séraphin Magbire
Secretary General,
Prime Minister's Office

