

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 MARCH 2020**

Yaounde, 26 March 2020

The **Prime Minister, Head of Government, His Excellency Joseph DION NGUTE**, today Thursday 26 March 2020 as from 10:00 a.m. chaired a Cabinet Meeting at the auditorium of the Prime Minister's Office, which was attended by Ministers of State and Ministers.

Two items featured on the agenda, namely:

1. *Statement by the Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development on "general review of projects concluded as part of cooperation between china and Cameroon";*
2. *Updated report from the Minister of Public Health on "progress in implementing the strategy to stem the spread of the coronavirus (covid-19) in Cameroon".*

Invited to take the floor at the end of the introductory statement of the Head of Government, the Minister of Economy indicated that cooperation between Cameroon and China is old and diversified. It knew significant growth since 2007 after Cameroon attained the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), thanks to the financing of several major projects through different channels, especially in the sectors of water, energy, roads, telecommunications, transport and higher education.

The portfolio of China-Cameroon cooperation consists of about fifteen active projects valued at about CFAF 3,300 billion, with the most outstanding being the construction of the Kribi deep-sea port, the Yaounde-Douala motorway (phase I), the supply of drinking water from the Sanaga River, the electrification of 350 localities by solar photovoltaic systems and the establishment of a national emergency telecommunications network. A recent evaluation of this portfolio revealed that the lack of maturity of some projects has often led to implementation difficulties, resulting in longer completion periods and higher costs. These difficulties are due to the delay in evacuating rights-of-way, delays in the disbursement of funds for works to start, non-compliance with certain contractual clauses and insufficient consideration of additional works required for infrastructure to be operational.

In order to correct the operational shortcomings observed in the implementation of projects under China-Cameroon cooperation, the Minister of Economy indicated that emphasis would be laid on strengthening the strategic planning and anchoring of projects in general, and those with external funding in particular. In addition, the prerequisites for the maturation of projects and their registration in the State's project bank must also be respected for adequate budgetary programming. Furthermore, the mobilization of concessional resources offering more advantageous conditions will be favoured, as well as the use of public-private partnerships in order to reduce the pressure on the State budget.

Speaking on the second item on the agenda, the Minister of Public Health first recalled that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which started in China at the end of December 2019, is now considered by the World Health Organization as a public health emergency at the international level.

In Cameroon, the investigations carried out by the technical teams deployed on the field have so far led to the testing of 88 positive cases of coronavirus, including two deaths and two patients declared cured, after examination of their viral load.

The Minister of Public Health stressed that the growing increase in the number of patients recorded since 6 March 2020, when the first two cases of COVID-19 were

diagnosed in Cameroon, confirms the rapid progression of this pandemic, whose hotbeds are currently Yaounde, Douala and Bafoussam.

Presenting the response mechanism put in place to deal with the epidemiological situation in Cameroon, the Minister said that it is structured around eight main pillars, namely: (i) multisectoral and international coordination of actions to combat COVID-19; (ii) active surveillance for early detection of cases; (iii) deployment of investigation and rapid intervention teams; (iv) strengthening of laboratory capacities; (v) activation of infection prevention and control measures in hospitals and in the community; (vi) management of detected cases; (vii) communication on the risks of contamination and (viii) logistical mobilization. In this respect, a call centre hosting the toll-free number **1510** is operational and a digital platform to improve the management of the call flow is being set up. In addition, there are plans to set up at least one isolation centre in each Region, field hospitals and quarantine facilities for suspicious cases and minors who do not require special hospitalization.

Finally, the Minister of Public Health indicated that the new strategic approach at work to strengthen the fight against the spread of COVID-19 in Cameroon emphasizes the active search for cases, their management through the specialization and deconcentration of isolation centres, social regulation through the respect of prescribed gestures, as well as the mobilization of various necessary resources, including the health reserve.

At the end of the discussions that followed these two presentations, the Prime Minister instructed the Minister of Economy, in liaison with the Minister of Finance, to submit, within the shortest possible time, a plan for the rapid clearance of the funds that are hindering the continuation and completion of the projects underway. He reiterated the directives of the Head of State to give priority to concessional loans and public-private partnerships for the implementation of investment projects in our country.

With regard to the Coronavirus Response Plan, the Head of Government instructed the Minister of Public Health to closely monitor its implementation and to report regularly on the progress made, as well as the difficulties encountered on the ground. He instructed the Minister in charge of Defence, in conjunction with the Delegate General for National Security, to strengthen the security measures around hotels accommodating confined persons, as well as day and night patrols to ensure the strict application of the restrictive measures decided by the President of the Republic. The Minister of Territorial Administration shall instruct administrative authorities to ensure compliance with the restrictive measures prescribed on 17 March 2020 and that appropriate sanctions are meted out on offenders. As for the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development, he shall work closely with the municipal authorities to improve the management of open markets.

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.-

Yaounde, the 26 MARS 2020



FOUDA Séraphin Magloire
Secretary General,
Prime Minister's Office

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Fouda', written over a horizontal line.