

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix – Travail – Patrie

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MINISTERE DE LA SANTE PUBLIQUE

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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace – Work – Fatherland

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MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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MINISTER'S OFFICE

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## COVID-19 Pandemic Control

# PRESS DECLARATION OF THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

*Yaounde, 06 April 2020*

- **Media professionals;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen.**

Cameroon's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic under the dynamic and permanent leadership of the **President of the Republic**, has reached the end of the first operational phase. Since the notification of the first confirmed positive case of this pandemic, this phase has enabled us to test our response strategy and provide elements for its improvement, at the challenges in the field of operations. Lessons learned during this period require us to anticipate and act effectively to deal with the pandemic in a relevant manner, over and above the need for ongoing adaptation. Last week, I had the opportunity to outline the line of action of our revised response strategy to COVID-19, supervised by the **Prime Minister, Head of Government**.

I would therefore like to point out that the active search for cases, particularly through the massive testing launched in Douala, has indeed begun and is producing satisfactory results in terms of identifying cases and isolating them in order to protect everyone. As far as Yaounde is concerned, our action has first of all made it possible to quickly identify positive cases among people quarantined in hotels when they returned home from foreign countries, the vast majority of whom are in a real epidemic situation.

Furthermore, it is important to capitalize on the encouraging results already achieved so far by our system of tracing and actively searching for cases in our communities and to consider strengthening the teams and their means of action. This will help, in particular, to ensure **an early and efficient management** for all infected persons. The latter will require better medical regulation of dedicated health facilities.

Allow me also to remind you that, from the point of view of coordination, our strategy sufficiently integrates the local level, notably the administrative authorities in collaboration with the Regional and Local Authorities, to which communities who are able to facilitate the active search for cases, awareness-raising and hygiene. This involves mobilizing and gaining the support of all the stakeholders in our country in order to carry out this fight.

In terms of training, priority remains the ongoing capacity building of **health personnel**, who are on the front line in the fight against this pandemic and who, to date, have been carrying out their mission with **dedication, commitment and a high sense of sacrifice and public service**. In this regard, training is being conducted daily at both central and devolved levels to ensure that our staff are ready to respond effectively and continuously to this pandemic.

In terms of awareness and communication, and in view of the evolving situation, the revised strategy has also opted for an intensification of community awareness messages and the involvement of Community Health Workers.

In terms of case management, the **Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA, who follows the evolution of the Government's response on a daily basis**, has authorized the requisition of a greater number of sites dedicated to COVID-19 patients. To this end, the Minister of State, Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic, last Saturday conducted an evaluation visit to 2 identified sites capable of receiving new cases. These sites are already being refurbished and will be delivered in the coming days. This is mainly the case of the Yaounde Military Stadium and the former ORCA site, located at the “Carrefour Zoé” in Yaounde. The identification of available space is also continuing for the other cities in the country.

Regarding the treatment protocol, the scientific council is working to find several other protocols to be applied depending on the case. I would like to make it clear, however, that for us, treating COVID-19 is of paramount importance, but what is more recommended is to **avoid it absolutely**. Only then can we break the chain of spread, stop its transmission at the community level and overcome the virus.

I take this opportunity to pay homage to the valiant health workers whose efforts and professionalism made it possible to give birth to the first baby girl weighing **2 015 grams** in this case, born to a COVID-19 positive teenager, about 48 hours ago, at the Yaounde Central Hospital.

This is an opportunity for me to recognize the bravery, sacrifice and unwavering determination of these health care workers who are on the front line of this fight against COVID-19. It is therefore important for us to

remember that tomorrow is World Health Day, under theme “**Support Nurses and Midwives**”, and we must support them without restraint.

In order to block the way to this pandemic which is practically affecting all countries in the world, we must always, each and every one of us, respect these usual rules of hygiene as well as all the barrier measures enacted, namely:

- **washing hands with clean running water and soap or use an alcohol-based solution;**
- **covering your nose and mouth with a handkerchief when coughing, sneezing or using the crease a bent elbow;**
- **avoiding close contact with anyone with flu symptoms or with farmed and wild animals;**
- **Cook meat and other food thoroughly before eating them.**

To date, Cameroon has unfortunately recorded **eight (08) new cases**. This amounts to **658 cases**. The number of recoveries to date has remained at **17**, compared to **9 deaths**.

I would not fail to remind you of the urgency of **observing all the prescribed barrier measures, without any exceptions**, and to urge all of our fellow citizens to systematically wear a mask when going out. Otherwise, it is clearly indicated that we should stay at home. The next few weeks could be particularly difficult for everyone.

Thank you for your kind attention.