

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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The **Prime Minister, Head of Government, H.E. Joseph DION NGUTE**, this Thursday 13 August 2020, presided over the weekly meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee in charge of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of the Government's response strategy against the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon.

Three items featured on the agenda namely:

1. the evolution of the pandemic and the issue of the effectiveness of the care protocol administered to COVID-19 patients in Cameroon;
2. clarification of the concept of public space with a view to greater involvement of municipal authorities in the systematic wearing of masks;
3. the availability of locally manufactured personal masks and their compliance with ANOR standards.

On the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon, the Minister of Public Health indicated that out of the 18,118 cases recorded to date, 16,540 people have been cured and 401 have died, a case-fatality rate of 2.1%. The strategy of early detection of persons with COVID-19 is continuing, with the deployment of mobile caravans on the field, which have already carried out over 200,000 tests.

The Minister of Public Health also stressed that hydroxichloroquine is one of the molecules selected in the treatment protocol validated by the Cameroonian Scientific Council. Its therapeutic efficiency for COVID-19 patients in our country is proven, as evidenced by the cure rate of 91.2%. However, scientific watch still has to be observed and a review of the different cases is underway to assess the side effects of this molecule.

With regard to the clarification of the concept of public space with a view to greater involvement of municipal authorities in the systematization of the wearing of masks, the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development indicated that the borderline is not watertight between public space falling under the public domain and private space, which is open to the public. Moreover, public space refers to all places intended for the use of all citizens, without restriction. It can thus be any space for circulation or gathering, such as parks, cultural centres or shopping areas.

Under the terms of the law of 24 December 2019 on the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, and taking into account the current health crisis, the action of municipal authorities in favour of the systematization of the wearing



of masks must be understood in the light of the competences transferred by the State to the municipalities in terms of the management of public spaces, such as communal parks, houses of worship, bars, markets, bus stations and slaughterhouses.

With regard to the availability of masks and their compliance with standards, the Minister of Industry reported that local production of masks had increased, thanks in particular to the dynamism of craftsmen, even though some masks did not always meet the minimum standards set by the Standards and Quality Agency. There are plans, among other things, to reorganise the stakeholders in this sector, in order to guarantee a better quality of masks and personal protective equipment available to the public.

At the end of the discussions, the Head of Government instructed:

- the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development to instruct municipal authorities to ensure the systematic wearing of masks in public spaces under their jurisdiction;
- the Minister of Territorial Administration, in collaboration with the Delegate General for National Security and the Secretary of State for Defence in charge of the Gendarmerie, to reinforce the actions of the administrative police on the wearing of masks in all areas open to the public;
- the Minister of Communication, in liaison with the Minister of Decentralization, to specify, within the framework of the current communication strategy, the public places where masks are systematically worn, in order to avoid possible abuses;
- the Minister of Mines, Industry and Technological Development, in liaison with the Minister in charge of Handicrafts, to continue to sensitize craftsmen on the need for locally produced masks to conform to the standards laid down, in order to guarantee maximum protection for those who use them. He should also ensure the availability of personal protective equipment in the structures under his authority;
- Finally, to the Minister of Public Health, the Prime Minister instructed the continuation of ongoing actions in the area of epidemiological surveillance and the strengthening of the operational capacities of the health services involved in the fight against COVID-19.-

Yaounde, the 13 AOUT 2020

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