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Daily Press Briefing by the Minister of Public Health on the Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Yaounde – 03 April 2020, Public health Emergency
Operations Centre

- **media professionals;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

First of all, I would like to welcome you to this fifth daily press briefing of the week to give you the up-to-date situation regarding the management of the new coronavirus pandemic.

Before I do so, allow me to have a thought for one of our brave soldiers, who fell on the battlefield early this morning as a result of this outbreak. I would also like to recognize in him a relentless professional who has worked tirelessly to ensure that patients and citizens can live healthy lives.

Although he was not directly involved with the treatment of COVID 19 cases, I will like to put emphasis on the protection of health personnel.

As I have been announcing since the beginning of this week, because of the progression of the epidemic, we have taken care to revise our strategy, better our pandemic response plan for the new coronavirus (COVID-19).

This strategy is based on four main lines of action, the first being the active search for cases, in particular through massive testing of populations. The second line of action is the optimal management of confirmed positive cases, from the point of view of protocols, hospital care and equipment supply. The third line of action is social regulation, the objective of which is to limit community contamination, notably through awareness raising and regulation of the flow of people in crowded areas. Finally, the fourth line of action focuses on governance and accountability, in order to better coordinate actions between sectors, ensure efficient management of human resources and guarantee transparency in the management of resources made available.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to end my list of actions undertaken in line with this strategy with the first line of action, for you to have convincing results of our action.

Thus, concerning the management of cases, actions undertaken since the beginning of the week aim to increase the hospital care for COVID-19 confirmed positive cases. In this respect, work on the development of

certain facilities has made significant progress. Comforts made on this site help to reduce stress caused by isolation.

It would also be useful to recall that medical and sanitary team is committed to the management of these patients, thus far from their families, friends and relatives.

In the same vein, two other large-capacity care centres are being set up at the Yaounde military stadium and at Carrefour Zoé. This will increase our management capacity to more than 1 000 beds. At the same time, the specialised management centres in charge of severe cases, continue to increase their reception capacity and quality health care.

I would also like to point out that a massive acquisition and redistribution operation in all regions is under way. The first contingents are expected to arrive in the regions in the coming days.

Similarly, there is a large order for respiratory assistance equipment through the central procurement office of the United Nations Development Programme.

With regard to social regulation, there is no need for me to recall the extension of the measures enacted by the Government, on the very high instructions of the President of the Republic, with an emphasis on their implementation, as instructed by the Prime Minister, Head of Government following the evaluation meeting he chaired on Thursday, 02 April 2020.

With regard to governance, we have taken the option of devolving COVID-19 event management system and placing it under the responsibility of the Governors of the Regions.

Moreover, I have also ordered the provision of financial means to act, within the limits of available resources.

As regards resources, while thanking the President of the Republic for the resources that he was kind enough to make available to the Special National Solidarity Fund for the fight against the Coronavirus, I would like to let you know that a delegated authorising officer and an administrator of the said account have been formally appointed.

For the sake of transparency, let me tell you that we have received from corporates and people of good will, the cumulative sum of seven hundred and seventy million one hundred and fifty thousand francs, five hundred million of which are awaiting transfer to the dedicated account.

These resources, as well as those contributed by the State have enabled us to take charge of the hotels in which passengers arriving in Cameroon were confined, the management of field teams in the context of the management of this outbreak, the acquisition of personal protection and sanitation equipment, the development of management centres in health facilities, the development of special high-capacity management centres, including the Olembe site with comforts such as refrigerators, televisions, cutlery and kitchen utensils, subscription televisions, and an on-site laundry cleaning service.

Ladies and Gentlemen

With regard to the focus on active case finding, our action in the field is perceptible with the launch of the massive testing campaign in Douala, involving our community health workers, who go round the quarters to get potentially positive cases.

In this connection, I would like to point out that during this week we took samples from eight hundred people who were considered to be suspect cases. The result of this large-scale sampling and testing approach has so far enabled us to get from the community more than 306 positive cases, which, although asymptomatic, have a high potential for contamination.

To date, 509 cases have been reported positive in Cameroon of which 203 cases reported today, for a total of 08 deaths and 17 people recovered. It should be pointed out that patients treated at the Yaounde General Hospital will also be declared cured soon.

In any case, let us remember that each of us can and must contribute to block the way to COVID-19, or at least prevent its spread. In order to do so, we must strictly adhere to the barrier measures enacted by the Government.

Moreover, each of us must avoid spreading rumours or misinformation that could create confusion and panic in the minds of our brothers and sisters. It is also necessary to rigorously apply the usual hygiene rules of such as:

- **regularly wash 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 a bent elbow;**
- **respecting social distancing measures.**

However, in order to keep up the fight against COVID-19, we encourage people to limit travelling as much as possible and make arrangements to cover their mouth and nose each time we leave. In other words, it would be advisable to stay at home.

Thank you for your kind attention,
God bless Cameroon. /-