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Analysis Report

**Cameroon facing Covid-19 Pandemic:
Proposals towards a Rational Management
of Crisis**

By

The Group of Teaching Staff, holders of PhDs, of MINEDUB, MINESEC
and MINESUP

*Version 1.0 of 30/03/2020.
This document is bound to evolve.*

Summary:

In the face of the Corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic that is hitting hard on the entire planet, researchers and think tank commissions are looking for ways to counter it and limit the devastation. Africa, which experienced its first cases after the rest of the world, now faces many challenges in avoiding a disastrous scenario as described by the most critical observers. In the specific case of Cameroon, many measures have been taken, but they have come up against a certain negligence that further exposes the population. In a citizen's momentum, a group of PhD holders in service at the Ministries of Basic, Secondary and Higher Education (MINEDUB, MINESEC and MINESUP respectively) has offered to contribute by analysing, on the one hand, the measures that have been taken by the Cameroonian authorities and, on the other hand, by proposing complementary strategies that can be adapted to the Cameroonian context. Due to the injunction to stay at home, the members worked mainly on a WhatsApp platform. More than 5,000 messages were required to produce this document. For a rapid access to its content, it was decided to deliberately prune its references and to simplify the analysis as much as possible. The peculiarity of the proposals contained in this report is that they are flexible and contextualisable. The group could provide complementary information, if called upon, in accordance with its domains of expertise. The document is bound to evolve as the reflection continues to keep abreast with developments on the field.

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1. Background

The world is experiencing an unprecedented health crisis. The Corona virus (Covid-19) is transforming normal habits and sweeping away certainties. This phenomenon implies a mobilisation of all citizens to face the pandemic: each nation is concerned about its own case. Faithful to its republican logic, the Group of Teaching Staff, holders of PhDs, of MINEDUB, MINESEC and MINESUP has created a virtual platform to make a contextual analysis of the situation in order to constitute a vade-mecum of proposals likely to inspire decision-makers. It is a citizen contribution that shows that we are all concerned by this health issue that is likely to create havoc in families, in the economic fabric and to diminish considerably what remains of our socio-political stability.

The methodology followed can be summarized in four steps: (1) virtual discussions on the WhatsApp group, (2) contextual analysis of the problems posed by Covid-19 in Cameroon, (3) critical examination of the measures already taken by the government, (4) assessment and proposal of solutions if necessary. For three days (March 26-28, 2020), we debated day and night on the situation of our country in the face of the Covid-19 crisis. It can be estimated that more than 5000 interventions were made during this period and Dr Gilbert BABENA, was appointed as coordinator by the assembly. Many contents (articles, videos, diagrams, official documents, etc.) were shared and discussed, but the main concern was to bring the solutions back to Cameroonian realities. In spite of some strong dissensions, especially on the subject of containment, we managed to synthesise the exchanges and proposals.

Because of the urgency of the situation, we wanted the document to be easily accessible. It is the reason why we did not clutter it up with references. It can be read quickly and decision-makers can find their way around thanks to the summary. Compliance with government instructions is a value for our Group, but we believe that it is also our mission to examine their effectiveness and propose new avenues. In a bid to further prove this is a citizen commitment, the Group is willing to propose volunteer consultants available to decision-makers to explain the proposed measures and to accompany their implementation.

2. Communication surrounding Covid-19

Communication is a fundamental element in crisis management. It is all the more important as it is now taking place in various media, including social networks. In addition to carrying out its expected mission of sensitising, educating and training the population in compliance with Covid-19 prevention measures, the government must fiercely combat misinformation about this highly contagious disease. On the subject of communication, the Group wishes to make a statement on the management of the crisis by the government before setting out its proposals.

2.1. Communication on Covid-19 since the outbreak of the crisis

Despite a seemingly sluggish start, the Government was able to set the tone by communicating, through the Prime Minister, the flagship measures to deal with the global Covid-19 pandemic. This is a positive point that should be welcomed in the same way as the presence of the Minister of Health on social networks, especially Tweeter. The growing number of subscribers on his account lately shows that Cameroonians are eager to be informed on the evolution of the health situation related to this phenomenon which is even beyond the control of major nations.

Moreover, the use of audio visual means, such as the national radio and television (CRTV) and private media organs (Canal 2 International, Vision 4, Equinoxe, Info Tv, Radio Balafon, ...), the written press (Cameroon Tribune, Mutations, Santé Plus, the tribunes of the Regions ...), has greatly enhanced the government's efforts to communicate on the crisis. In particular, the use of CRTV posters announcing the evolution of the situation (number of contaminations, deaths, recovery) and the interventions of government members on the subject. However, it should be noted that these various actions contrast with unfortunate pre-crisis events, including the indictment of some private media and NGOs within the context of another crisis (The North West and South West) which has hit Cameroon since 2016. A deleterious climate that unfortunately continued with the controversy over a supposed non-invitation of a popular media house in an invitation to the press, the case Equinoxe TV, which has grown in popularity lately.

In addition to these elements, there is the war of opinions that took place mainly on social networks, on the one hand about the health of the President of the National Assembly upon his return from Europe and on the other hand about the death of Mr Achille Essome Moukouri, the uncle of former footballer Patrick Mboma. These two cases are indicative of a communication crisis within the government team on the Covid-19 issue. The Group wishes to mention the above because they have created a crisis of confidence among the subscribed percentage of the population which sometimes relays false information to the unsubscribed population. The transgression of the Head of State's instructions feeds on these suspicions, which give the impression of manipulation of the facts and undue favouritism of those who are supposed to set an example for the people.

2.2. Restoring the pact of trust with the media and the people

In a context where media wars further undermine the confidence of citizens, the Group proposes to the government to restore the pact of trust between the State and the various media outlets run by Cameroonians from the interior and the diaspora. This can be done through the Ministry of Communication which is the secular arm of the government or at a higher level: at the Prime Minister's Office or the Presidency of the Republic. We can imagine a dialogue at the top between the heads of the different media organs in order to agree on the media strategy to adopt, but it would be especially beneficial to involve influential bloggers (Steve Fah, Le Warman, L'Inconnue, etc.), because we are convinced that there is a patriotic fibre in each of these influencers. Web TVs such as Journal du Cameroun TV, Afrik-Info, JMTV and administrators of Facebook pages that bring together a diversity of Cameroonians can also be invited. It is not a question of dictating from above, but of putting everyone face to face with their responsibilities. By informing in unison, Cameroonians of different sensitivities would find themselves behind their favourite media. Above all, the strategy has the advantage that these same Cameroonians will be blamed by these channels of information in case of transgression of the policies set by the government.

2.3. Towards a communication of proximity

The level of internet penetration in our country, the access to traditional media, the power outages or unavailability of electricity in our towns and villages reveal that part of the population is not really informed about the evolution of the pandemic and the measures to be taken. The spread of fake news further complicates the problem. However, local communication would certainly tilt the balance if it is in line with the common strategy advocated upstream.

Proximity communication means the dissemination of government measures, awareness raising and training of the population in Covid-19 prevention measures at all media levels in

both official languages (this is already the case) and in all national languages. The last dimension should not be neglected, since the grandmother who lives in Batibo understands only pidgin, the grandmother of Okala speaks only Eton, and the grandmother of Idool speaks only Fulfulde. We should not be mistaken either, linguistic insecurity is not only the fact of the elderly: all ages (adults, young people and children) are equally concerned because of the disparities observed at the level of education.

In practical terms, the Group advocates a comprehensive approach that involves the major stakeholders in the daily lives of Cameroonians. It ranges from traditional media to social networks, from national radio to community radio, from wall billboards to mobile and motorised communication with the use of sound amplifiers, from the governor's office to the courts of neighbouring chiefs who will mandate town-criers to caution the population, from civil servants to representatives of shopkeepers, from travel agency managers to commercial bike riders and cab drivers, etc. It is everyone's business and it is everyone's war against an invisible virus that is already causing enormous devastation elsewhere and at home.

The messages produced should be short, but as informative as possible. They must be adapted to the local population and use all channels: audio, visuals, WhatsApp, WhatsApp posters, Facebook, YouTube videos, radio spots, campaign vehicles, etc. They could be approved quickly, but we will be careful not to overburden the system and avoid bureaucracy. Initiatives can be citizen-friendly, but they must be given express approval upon verification. The initiators must be few in number and trained to answer basic questions, but above all to protect themselves during awareness campaigns. For the success of the scheme, police units can check the identities of the same people as those of the police. Above all, we expect to see a citizen force that advises rather than represses. We will come back to the potential missions that could be assigned to it.

2.4. The setting up of a unit to fight against fake news and incivility

This unit could be lodged in the Ministry of Health. It will be responsible for tracking down false information circulating on social networks about the disease. Its role will be to build a denial that it will circulate in the same networks and in the traditional media as well. In this time of crisis, we must go as far as to flush out the perpetrators of the fakes and crack down on them so they can serve as examples. Citizens can also send their requests for verification to the unit that will be in charge of providing answers. This unit must be open and proactive 24 hours a day with a relay service. This will ensure that the unit's interlocutors are provided with truthful information and will be able to re-establish the truth on the ground.

2.5. Increasing awareness via mobile communication

In addition to awareness by SMS, the government could ask mobile phone operators (Camtel, MTN, Orange, Nexttel) to impose an awareness message on all mobile phone users about the fight against Covid-19 instead of the traditional call waiting tone. This message may vary depending on the time of day and the number of calls made by a caller.

3. Psychological measures

Crises are always accompanied by panic, and panic is precisely the thing that hinders the measures currently being taken by the political and health authorities. Just as the people

cannot be blamed for worrying, care should be taken to ensure the psychological state of the medical "troops".

3.1. For a psychological Counselling Unit for health personnel

In the Covid-19 crisis, health-care workers are the first line of defence. It is therefore important to ensure the good morale of the troops. The Group recommends the urgent opening of a counselling unit for health personnel. This would be a toll-free number that nurses and doctors, laboratory technicians, hospital administrators, pharmacists, etc. could call to reassure themselves in case of doubt or mental fatigue. The counsellors will be able to listen to them express themselves, take into account their grievances and gently remind them of the major role they have to play for the safeguard of the Cameroonian nation. At the same time, these personnel should avoid communicating with relatives or family members about the status of ongoing cases or the identity of persons who they have taken samples from or tested for Covid-19.

3.2. Strengthening the 1510 hotline team

Some Cameroonians report that the toll-free number 1510 does not always answer. One can understand the workload of the 1510 hotline team. We believe that a team should be created to provide a preliminary diagnosis (see the consultation sheet of the Laquintinie Hospital in circulation) and a team of volunteer psychologists who listen to Cameroonians in distress and fear 24 hours a day. We could even multiply the 1510 teams to allow traffic to flow smoothly and respond quickly to Cameroonians. Mobile phone operators must make their contribution to help the state in this fight against fear.

3.3. Combatting fear to better lead the fight

The Group has observed that there is an urgent need for a change in attitude among Cameroonians; it is a change that is needed to successfully fight against the Corona virus. But, it also makes known that this will not be possible by stirring up fear. In fact, it is known in social psychology that fear has contrary effects in the involvement of the masses. Rather, it is preferable to stop stirring up fear and replace it with collaborative strategies. This change of direction assumes that people will be brought to understand the beneficial effects of government actions. The audience receiving the various messages will have to stop being treated as passive. A way should be found to give them a ROLE or STATUS of DECISION-MAKER so that they can participate in the change of mentality. It is the adhesion effect that must be activated, since it leads people to adhere to points of view that appear to be their own decisions even though they are in fact those of a third party observer. From a psychological point of view, the Group stresses, for the benefit of those in power, that any policy of changing social attitudes that does not make the beneficiaries responsible is bound to be slow and certainly fail in the short term. The experience of HIV-AIDS communication has taught us that the failure of fright communication has been replaced by responsible communication that creates hope and eradicates stigma. This is the place to challenge MINJEC and its civically trained staff. These young people, trained to raise awareness on other issues, can be put to good use. Faced with the idea that confinement is a matter for the rich and the middle classes, communication strategies must be devised to get poor families who seek their pittance daily to take ownership of government measures. And obviously, total containment would be a major difficulty in the daily lives of the populations and the measures to deal with such a situation

have not been thought out in advance: the management of total containment could be difficult or even impossible and the consequences would be drastic.

4. The management of gatherings such as markets, shops, banks, etc.

Crowded areas and the opening of markets and shops is the big problem that the government is facing in managing the Covid-19 crisis. Our economic model makes it difficult to have total containment. However, within the Group, some opinions have pointed out that this is a measure that the Cameroonian people have already experienced in the course of their history. The ghost town scenarios of 1992, the hunger riots in 2008, the Boko Haram phenomenon in the Far North and the war in the North West and South West attest to our capacity for resilience. Without making it a flagship proposal, we are nonetheless discussing the effectiveness of such a measure in enlightening decision-makers in this time of crisis. But, it should be known from the outset that our objective is to propose measures that will be applicable to our context and that would above all enable the ordinary Cameroonian to earn his pittance without exposing himself and his compatriots. As no model is perfect, we hope to make up for these shortcomings with appropriate measures.

4.1. The premise of total containment

Throughout the world where the pandemic has taken off, containment has been adopted as a solution. Containment can be general (as in South Korea, where screening has been routine) or partial, depending on the state's capacity. The STAY AT HOME injunction from China has been taken up in Italy, France, Spain and all countries where Covid-19 has been detected. The example of China suggests that the best way to control the pandemic is to confine people to their homes. Within the Group and in view of the opinions sampled in the field from ordinary Cameroonians, the idea of total containment is acceptable at the cost of great sacrifice. Recurrently, it has come back that it will be necessary to impose confinement measures by mobilising the forces of law and order, ensuring food rations for the most destitute, punishing offenders, subsidising the sectors of the economy that will be affected by the decision of total confinement, etc. This will have a significant cost for a result that could be mitigated in the event of mismanagement. The reluctance of the United States to totally confine its population reveals the fear of the collapse of the economic fabric. Since the risk of extreme fragility of the Cameroonian State and population seems high, the Group strongly advocates a methodical but decisive containment.

4.2. Towards the implementation of methodical containment

The threat from Covid-19 is too great not to take decisive action towards containment. If the idea of total containment seems difficult to implement in view of the country's economic situation, the idea of methodical containment seems to be firmly established. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis in Cameroon, the number of cases has been growing. The escape of passengers on a flight from Europe on 17 March 2020, despite being quarantined, does not bode well for a better future either. After the discovery of the first two cases in Yaoundé, the virus seems to be spreading its tentacles to Douala and Bafoussam. It can be hypothesised that the movement of people from the far south to the north increases the risk of the disease spreading throughout Cameroon. From observation, not all regions of the country are able to manage the disease independently. In addition, there is the thorny problem of

screening which induces a lot of uncertainty and confusion among health-care personnel in the periphery. The Group has identified a number of important limitations in the initial measures taken to manage the crisis. In view of the evolution of the disease in countries that have a better health system than ours, the Group insists on the instant application of methodical and decisive containment. It is a set of measures that draws on our collective memory of occasional confinement, acquired during the ghost towns of 1992 up to the crisis in the North West and South West. They are designed to limit the flow of movement and ensure minimum service so as not to ground the economy and to enable low-income earners to stockpile sporadically for periods when they are not allowed to move. In practical terms, the Group proposes:

- a ban on travel between regions for two weeks: only trucks carrying goods will be allowed to travel, and this, apart from the 03 (three) ghost town days. This ban can be renewed if necessary;
- 03 ghost town days during the week (from Friday to Sunday): during this period, all businesses must close with the exception of pharmacies, hospitals, police stations, ambulances, army rescue, HYSACAM, filling stations, etc. and law enforcement forces will be deployed to ensure the effective application of the measures ;
- a ban on the use of cars in the vicinity of markets;
- the setting up of municipal police in every market;
- the opening of the markets from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm from Monday to Thursday;
- the institution of a sales programme according to the type of product: for example, Monday could be devoted to the opening of shops and food, Tuesday to the sale of fresh food (vegetables, plantains, yams, etc.), Wednesday to body care items (second-hand clothes, hairdressing salon, etc.), Thursday to the general opening of all shops;
- the prohibition to create gatherings of more than three persons in public places;
- the prohibition of religious services and associative gatherings: we know for example that the Islamic religion allows the faithful to pray at home in times of pandemic (a measure already applied in the Arabian Gulf);
- the compulsory curfew for everyone from 5pm: immobilize all offenders except health personnel, police, etc. and authorised persons (pregnant women, the sick, medical guards) to go out;
- psychological and material assistance to affected families and the destitute;
- the setting up of an urban transport service (commercial motor bikes, cabs) in City councils in collaboration with private transport professionals (commercial motor bikes, cabs): this will be used to deal with emergencies of a medical nature.

The Group remains willing to provide more details on the implementation of these measures.

4.2.1. The management of market squares according to methodical containment

The markets will be managed by the services of the City council: sanitation services, municipal police, and administrative services. They will be open from Monday to Thursday from 8am to 2pm. Vendors will be allowed to set up shop from 6am, but customers will only be able to access them at 8am. Local taxes will be reduced to a third and will have to be paid daily at the entrance of the markets. Vendors will be able to offer a range of products or services according to the official programme which will have been established according to the principle of "every day, a range of products or services". The municipal police will pose at the entrance to the markets and inside to regulate traffic and prevent crowds. The shops will be marked with social distancing zones marked by our city councils and adapted to the architecture of our markets. Market entrances will be limited to 1pm to allow customers to return home and shopkeepers

to tidy up their stalls. Police units will ensure the protection of traders during the day and will patrol during curfew hours.

4.2.2. Provision stores in the neighbourhoods

In the neighbourhoods, the provision stores will have the same hours as those of the markets. However, store owners will be required to mark the areas of social distancing. The municipal police and quarter heads could ensure compliance with these measures and will sanction offenders.

4.2.3. Banks

Employers (public or formal private), whose employees receive salaries from banks or the general treasury, could be offered a gradual transfer to avoid bottlenecks at the bank level. For example, they could start paying on the 15th of the month and sequentially in alphabetical order. Here is a small illustration:

- April 15th: employees whose names start with A and B;
- April 16th: C and D;
- and so on and so forth...
- ... until April 25: Y and Z.

This will reduce the risk of contamination since some days will not be opened during the week and there is a mandatory curfew. Mobile phone agents will stand at the banks to subscribe customers on their e-money platforms.

4.2.4. Restaurants

Restaurants should be opened from 8am to 3pm. They will have to put a water container (with tap) and soap at their entrances, but they will have to put some distance between the tables to be able to welcome the customers.

4.2.5. Transport services

City councils should create a transport service in collaboration with individuals (commercial motor bikes, cabs) who have been duly identified. They will be on call and will be able to work on the three days of ghost towns. This service should be free of charge for pregnant women, and city councils will ensure that prices are kept under control. Businesses will be encouraged to set up a transport service if they do not have one. City councils will be able to act as intermediaries between themselves and certified professionals.

Trucks carrying goods will be able to bypass the ban on moving from one region to another from Monday to Thursday by simply picking up a sign-up sheet at the City council of departure. The report form must be conditioned by a certificate of consultation of Covid-19 obtained from a health centre approved to issue this certificate.

5. How to train young Cameroonians in times of crisis?

It is with the systematic closure of schools at all levels, that public opinion has been able to realise the real threat that the Coronavirus represents for the populations. The State of

Cameroon, like all the others that have been hit by the crisis, is anxious to protect its population in general and the young ones in particular. However, the desire to make educational structures work in times of crisis, while aiming to ensure the right to education, raises ethical questions. Several African countries, such as Cameroon, must also face their technological backwardness and take up the challenge of providing the 900 hours of annual training per pupil recommended by UNESCO.

5.1. Traditional media at the service of training

The circulars of the ministries in charge of education have given preference to radio and television in order to continue the educational mission assigned to the State. This is not a new measure in itself, since there were programmes designed to supplement classroom training. The Group suggests accelerating and intensifying these measures, which are slow to take shape.

5.2. On-line training

According to the majority opinion, it appears more appropriate for higher education, since a large proportion of learners at lower levels suffer from a problem of digital literacy. Internet costs should still be reduced to facilitate access, but it would be even simpler to cover campuses with a free WiFi connection. This may seem a daring measure, but Universities can have agreements with mobile phone operators. In concrete terms, they would gain exclusivity in the market for online payment of university rights and in return offer a quality WiFi connection. In spite of the hesitation and the technical and economic difficulties, the mastery of the technological tools of on-line training, both for the trainers and for the learners, will be achieved by trial and error, but one can hope for a lasting appropriation of the skills acquired. Proposals already exist for the case of MINESEC regarding the use of applications (WhatsApp, Télégram, Google Classroom, Moodle, Zoom): it will only be necessary to accompany them, as they do not require heavy investment.

5.3. Training in the villages

To address the problems of electricity, internet connection and lack of computer equipment that are acute in the villages and hamper e-learning projects, the government can adopt another strategy to continue training young Cameroonians while keeping them at home. The simplest would be to create an educational unit in City councils. The role of this unit would be to develop teaching sheets and handouts that would complement the lessons received at the beginning of the year up till the outbreak of the crisis. The City council agents will therefore be responsible for distributing the handouts at each home in the company of the health personnel. For the latter, this will be the place to make home diagnosis in view of detecting suspicious cases of Covid-19 that have not been declared: they will thus be able to be assured of rapid care. In this operation, priority will have to be given to pupils in examination classes. After the episode of the crisis, light face-to-face sessions may be organised to consolidate the knowledge acquired individually and in the family.

5.4. The school and academic calendar

Depending on the evolution of the crisis, the school and academic calendar could be adjusted according to the principle of "exceptional circumstances, exceptional measures". The boredom and anxiety generated by the long periods of confinement will only really disappear when the

usual routine is resumed. In addition, the pupils should be quickly re-educated in the taste for work and effort: remedial classes will be an excellent outlet. Classes should be resumed smoothly, especially in primary and secondary school: a third of the time in a restricted 3-hour wave is recommended. In order to do this, the ministries should be able to provide the necessary support. To do so, the ministries in charge of education should prepare the opinion for this eventuality so as not to make the measure appear abrupt. The State will once again have to appeal to the sense of patriotic duty of civil servants (teachers, police officers, administrators, etc.) to avoid demands that would hamper the smooth running of the process. In order to prevent this kind of situation, it is advisable to reflect on measures to manage the school calendar in times of crisis. This could just be adjusted to adapt it to all contingencies.

5.5. School and academic examinations

While the Group agrees that school and academic examinations should be held so as not to delay the academic and school curriculum of the learners, it nevertheless advocates great caution. School and academic examinations should be held after the crisis or at a time when it is contained. In the latter case, care should be taken not to schedule several examinations at the same time, to ensure social distancing in the examination rooms, and to make short programmes that do not require breaks, which are the best times for mixing. Preventive measures must be strictly applied.

6. Recommendations regarding resources and polemics in the medical field

The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the weaknesses of our health-care system. While we wait for better days, we can hope that it will give us a surge of pride that will allow us to "come out of the big night". But in the meantime, the Group encourages the media efforts of the Ministry of Health. Here are a few opinions concerning the polemics in the medical field.

6.1. On chloroquine

The hope raised by the molecule also goes hand in glove with a number of uncertainties, the first of which is the real efficacy of the drug. Scientists around the world are currently working on this. The Group is particularly sensitive to the popular unrest surrounding chloroquine and fears that it could lead to dangerous self-medication, resulting in fake drugs or uncontrolled shortages. It should already be pointed out that this product is available in very small quantities on the market, since it has been banned by WHO for several years. The most appropriate solution would certainly be to produce it by local laboratories, but basic measures can already be taken to control overflow:

- an official ban on the sale of chloroquine without a prescription;
- the control of smuggling networks;
- collaboration with Nigeria, China or India in the supply of drugs;
- the provision of an emergency fund to speed up herbal quick fixes.

6.2. On the shortage of medical staff

The Group supports the initiative to recruit temporary medical staff and the initiative to invite personnel undergoing integration to join the medical units on the ground to combat the rise of

Covid-19. In addition to these measures, we believe that students enrolled in medical school or nursing students can be called upon to join the outreach teams or to do pre-screening. It is a resource that is willing to understand the challenges of the day. It could be of great assistance if the situation becomes unbearable for contract or government health-care workers.

6.3. On the shortage of beds

Drawing inspiration from measures taken in other countries, containment rooms could be set up in stadiums, medical schools and faculties, schools... The express development track for still uninhabited social housing has been mentioned in the citizen proposals: the Group believes that it is an adequate solution because of its architecture. The requisitioned places will have to be protected from the general public and offer minimum comfort to the sick, the caretakers and the nursing staff.

6.4. Disinfection of water points

In addition to the measures taken by the Ministry of Public Health, the disinfection of water points financed by the crisis fund and placed under the responsibility of the quarter heads could be carried out. The latter would also be involved in the detection of new comers in their neighbourhoods.

7. The Situation of prisoners

Considered to be in involuntary confinement, the inmates of our prisons are apparently isolated from the surrounding epidemic. However, particular attention must be paid to the state of health of the prison guards and the meals brought to the prisoners. Thus, prison staff and new inmates should be tested for Covid-19. In addition, food should be brought in by visitors and a prison service will reheat it before consumption. Courthouses should have areas reserved for prisoners during trials and contact between the public and prisoners should be restricted.

According to an alert from RFI (week of March 30, 2020), the UN, through its High Commissioner for Human Rights Michèle BACHELET, recommends studying the conditional release of certain prisoners subject to short prison terms. We believe that a case-by-case study, with the presentation of legal guarantees, would make it possible to release many prisoners on parole and thus relieve congestion in our prisons and cells. Prisoners who have already served their sentences or who are at 70 percent completion of their prison terms could be released under the emergency procedure.

8. Some ways to forestall an economic shipwreck

The Group recommends that the Government introduces a system of checks and balances that can range from suspending or reducing taxes to subsidising fuel to reduce costs and minimise loss. Municipalities should support city councils in the management of commercial spaces. City councils could buy non-perishable foodstuffs from certain traders (notably petty traders i.e “bayam-sallams”) to support the needy. Quarter heads could be co-opted to organise distribution days.

In addition, Cameroon could mobilise its disaster fund to support the economy. It is true that the country faces wars on both sides, but it could consider seeking the help and expertise of

Chinese partners in a system of equal partnership that does not harm the interests of future generations.

The compulsory confinement of Cameroonians returning to the country could also be financed through the introduction of a confinement tax. It may be nothing, but it can be a deterrent and call for everyone to take it more seriously.

Executives and administrators will have to accept to lose 50% of their benefits: reduction by half of fuel costs, freeze on the purchase of service cars, suspension of internal and external missions, suspension of food and miscellaneous expenses placed at the discretion of the executive, etc. This is a national effort; it would be better if everyone contributed to it.

9. Resource persons

The persons mentioned below have been mandated by the Group to comment on the content of this analysis report. The Group is ready to contribute voluntarily towards the implementation of these proposals if it is consulted.

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