PRESS BRIEFING ON THE SPECIAL RECRUITMENT OF DOCTORATE DEGREE HOLDERS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- The Minister of Communication, Government Spokesperson,
- The Secretary General,
- Inspectors General,
- Technical Advisers,
- Inspectors
- Directors and Heads of Division,
- Journalists,
- Distinguished Invitees,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

To begin with, you are warmly welcome in this conference hall of the Ministry of Higher Education which is hosting our exchanges this day. I must also thank you for your prompt response to my invitation.

On a special note, permit me to express my gratitude to the Minister of Communication for his willingness to accompany me in this exercise despite his very tight schedule.

As you can guess, the meeting of today has as objective to enlighten you on the special recruitment process of doctorate degree holders in State universities, as prescribed by His Excellency PAUL BIYA, President of the Republic of Cameroon.

First and foremost, on behalf of the university community nationwide, I wish to address my profound gratitude to the President of the Republic, Head of State, His Excellency PAUL BIYA, apostle of new
university governance, for the special attention he has been paying to higher education since he began presiding over the destiny of our country. This constant and kind attention transpires today in the Press Release N° by which he authorizes a special recruitment of doctorate degree holders in Cameroon State universities.

As you know, the university system in Cameroon has been undergoing profound changes since 2007, the year when CEMAC Heads of State and Government launched the BMD reform. This reform is unfolding in universities through a considerable diversification of training offers and increasing professionalization of trainings and, hence, a complete reconfiguration of the university layout.

Given the new dispensation, coupled with the exponential increase in student population, wide ranging structural adjustments have become imperative. To brace the challenge, the Head of State ordered the creation of two new universities (Maroua and Bamenda), the setting-up and opening of new schools and faculties with special emphasis on the technological and professional component, the putting in place of PRO-ACTP (Support Programme for the technological and professional component of higher education), the institution of professional fields of study in classical faculties, the construction of university digital centres in all campuses in order to promote distant or remote-format teaching and evaluation. This measure is echoed in his decision to offer one computer to each Cameroonian student.

This whole setup, your questioning is obvious, necessitates not only appropriate infrastructure and equipment but also quality and sufficient teaching staff. While the infrastructure and financial aspects have been given substantial attention for many years now, the human capital is what has been lagging behind.
Of course yes! Our joy is immense in welcoming this presidential measure. I can guarantee you that it is happily welcome by heads of universities as well as students who will benefit from optimal training as required by the BMD system. What then would one say about the principal concerned, the young doctorate degree holders of our universities and the diaspora!

In concrete terms, the presidential decision offers 2000 new teaching jobs to our university system. It is a colossal operation to be effected in three years, in a way as to give a chance to students registered in the doctorate cycle or those who are about to defend their theses. This will entail recruiting 1000 Assistant Lecturers in 2019, 500 in 2020 and 500 in 2021; this will raise the number of teaching staffs to 6000 in Cameroon universities.

In order to ensure a serene evolution of this operation, a Central Commission for the coordination of this recruitment, overseen by the Prime Minister, Head of Government, shall be put in place to guarantee equity and objectivity in the entire operation. It shall be charged essentially with the following tasks:

- Elaborating the terms of reference and the recruitment schedule;
- Controlling the different phases of recruitment and carrying out measures necessary for its finalization;
- Studying complaints and validating the lists of candidates retained;
- Overseeing the communication strategy relating to the conduct of this recruitment.

The recruitment of 2000 Assistant Lecturers in State universities will be carried out through the usual mechanisms provided in Decree N° 93/35 of 19 January 1993 stipulating the special status of higher education staffs, viz:
- Study of files and interview of candidates in departmental boards;
- Study of files by the Faculty/School boards;
- Study of files by the Consultative Commission for the Recruitment of Assistant Lecturers (CCRA);
- Authorization to begin service by the MINESUP.

However, the Head of State's directives attaches to this special recruitment some modalities that are quite specific to it, namely:

- The recruitment is exclusively reserved for candidates who are holders of the Doctorate or Ph.D;
- The application of derogatory measure that fixes the recruitment age limit at 45 years;
- The opening of the recruitment to Cameroonians in the diaspora;
- The opening of the recruitment to civil servants who are holders of the Doctorate or Ph.D belonging to other corps, but wishing to teach in State Universities;
- Giving priority to newly created schools/faculties, as well as fields of study termed "orphan fields"

These are favourable and derogatory measures which permit wide net-casting and give maximum opportunity to our children. I therefore call on the latter to have confidence in the authorities in charge of the process as well as the commissions that have been put in place. These two bodies will strive to enforce objectivity, equity and transparency so that our higher education system is enriched with a competent and committed staff.

Once the Coordination and Supervisory Committee sits, we shall publish the distribution of posts per university and per school/faculty, as well as the required profiles. With all information in hand, candidates shall therefore submit their files at the mails office of the
Ministry of Higher Education. Files shall be later on forwarded to universities, with a dispatch slip, for a better follow-up of the operation.

At the end of deliberations by the statutory bodies, the Coordination and Supervisory Committee shall verify the regularity of the operations and decide on controversial cases. It shall close the procedure by publishing the lists of selected candidates per university and per school/faculty.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the initial information that I thought I should provide at the beginning of this operation which shall take off in the coming days, following a schedule that shall be published by tomorrow, 14th November 2018 and that will end on 25th January 2019, at least for the first phase.

Thank you for your kind attention.