

**SPEECH OF DR JOSEPH DION NGUTE,
PRIME MINISTER, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT,**

**AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY
OF THE MAJOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE**

**Conference Centre,
Friday, 4 October 2019**

- **The 1st Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly,**
- **The President of the Economic and Social Council,**
- **The President of the Constitutional Council,**
- **The Procureur General of the Supreme Court,**
- **Members of Government,**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions,**
- **Distinguished Participants in the Major National Dialogue from the Ten Regions of Cameroon and Abroad,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have come to the end of these four days of the Major National Dialogue convened by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA, and have discussed at length different themes linked to the resolution of the socio-political crisis that has rocked the North-West and South-West Regions for close to four years now.

I would like to seize this opportunity to once more sincerely thank and congratulate you all who accepted to participate in this four days' brain storming exercise until the last day to look for ways of improving our living-together and restoring peace among brothers and sisters of the same country.

I say "thank you" to each and every one of you for your personal involvement and valuable contribution.

I wish to particularly applaud the serene atmosphere and the spirit of concord and mutual respect that prevailed throughout the entire process.

These attributes are a clear reflection of the maturity and patriotism of all participants but also of all Cameroonians who followed our deliberations with genuine interest through various media outfits.

More importantly, they reflect the capacity of Cameroonians to come together in a united front to solve their problems themselves at a time most critical in the life of our country.

Those who spoke during the plenary and commission sessions expressed themselves freely and made specific proposals related to the concerns of our fellow compatriots from these two Regions, and from other components of the Nation in general.

Throughout our proceedings, the discussions were rich, intense, and sometimes passionate. Undoubtedly, they also revealed the enthusiasm with which Cameroonians received the decision of the Head of State to organize this Major National Dialogue.

The lively exchanges were also proof that each participant was very conscious of the high sense of historic responsibility with which he or she has been invested to look for well thought-out solutions to the current challenges before us.

These four days have certainly not been enough to exhaust all the subjects on the table, much less to hear all participants who would have liked to contribute to this Major National Dialogue. However, they will forever mark our common history, just like the other historical dates in the life of our country.

In that regard, those wishing to continue the dialogue with Government, in any form, can still submit their written contributions via the website created for that purpose, namely www.nationaldialogue.cm, or deposit same directly at the Prime Minister's Office.

So far, since the convening of the Major National Dialogue on 10 September, over a thousand written contributions have been registered and processed.

This trend is expected to continue beyond our current proceedings so that some aspects of the selected themes which have not been dealt with in-depth during our deliberations can be examined in an appropriate manner.

At this juncture, permit me to congratulate all the teams who worked assiduously and selflessly within tight deadlines to prepare and organize this important gathering.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During my opening speech on 30 September, I recalled the road map of this meeting, as defined by the President of the Republic.

Indeed, our task was to examine, within the confines of the Constitution, likely ways and means of responding to the profound aspirations of our brothers

and sisters of the North-West and South-West Regions, and those of the other components of the nation.

The General Report, we have just followed – the fruit of a collective endeavour – brings out a good number of these aspirations.

I am pleased to note that these aspirations have been coined as recommendations, which will be submitted for the consideration of the Head of State at the end of our proceedings.

I also observe that these recommendations, whose relevance and rationale cannot be over-emphasized, are squarely in line with the goals of President Paul Biya's Economic and Social Programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The informed proposals made during these past four days can only be truly implemented in a climate of peace and security.

I therefore take advantage of this forum and all your well-meaning contributions, to renew the Head of State's peace offer to all our compatriots and particularly those who have chosen to resort to blind violence and terror to assert their opinions.

Re-echoing the President of the Republic, let me repeat to them that the path they have chosen is a blind alley. It is within the Republic of our country that they will find the place for their happiness and fulfilment.

Therefore, I call on them to lay down their arms, to leave the bushes in which they have been living for years and to join the disarmament and demobilization centres for their re-socialization and re-integration in civil life.

I also urge the participants in this Major National Dialogue, particularly our compatriots of the diaspora, as well as the delegations coming from all Regions, to be true "*ambassadors of peace*", both within and outside our country.

The return of peace and tranquility in the North-West and South-West Regions cannot be the work of one person.

The return of peace and tranquility in these two Regions cannot rest exclusively with the Head of State, Government, or a few socio-political organizations. It is a matter for all Cameroonians and for each Cameroonian.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the return of peace and tranquility in the North-West and South-West Regions is one of the prerequisites for our common development and our path towards the emergence to which every country legitimately aspires for the welfare of its population.

Therefore, we should all work together and support initiatives championed by the President of the Republic, to achieve a three-fold objective after this Major National Dialogue:

Let our children in all our villages and towns in the North West and South West regions peacefully resume schools;

Let business activities resume in those two regions;

May our brothers and sisters who have become refugees and internally displaced persons go back to their villages resume their regular activities again.

Such is our common wish. Such is our common mission.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As our proceedings draw to a close, it is my bounden duty to faithfully report to the President of the Republic their contents and the conclusions arrived at.

I appeal to you to have faith in the Republic and in its leader, that your words will be translated into actions of peace and development.

I urge you to be real children of the Republic, promoters of peace, equity and justice.

I urge you to turn your backs on the darksome hate speech which has put us asunder in the past.

I know I can count on each and every one of you.

I now declare closed the proceedings of the Major National Dialogue.

Long live Cameroon.

Long live His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic, Head of State.

Thank you for your kind attention.