CAMEROON: COVID-19 Emergency
Situation Report No.20
1 September to 31 October 2021

This report is produced by OCHA Cameroon in collaboration with the COVID-19 Task Force. It covers the period from 1 September to 30 October 2021. The next report will be issued in January 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Between 15 and 22 September 2021, the Minister of Public Health (MoH) reported 2,974 new COVID-19 cases and 83 deaths. As of 27 October, the country has recorded 104,348 cumulative cases and 1,774 deaths, with a fatality rate of 1.7 per cent.

- Due to the lack of COVID-19 vaccines for a large-scale vaccination operation, the third COVID-19 immunization campaign has been postponed to 17 November (regular vaccination is however still available in most facilities).

- As of 18 October, only 490,604 COVID-19 vaccine doses, with the rate of 1,812 doses per 100,000 inhabitants, have been administered, representing 1.2 per cent of the target population. The MoH attributed the low vaccination rate by the small number of health staff administering vaccines, and the reluctance of the population to get vaccinated.

- The Human Rights and Freedoms Commission of the Cameroon Bar Council has expressed its concern about Government pressure to force citizens and civil servants to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The number of people that tested positive during the epidemiological weeks from 9 to 16 October and from 25 October to 1 November respectively increased from 1,736 to 4,124 cases.

The Ministry of Public Health has postponed the third COVID-19 vaccination campaign initially scheduled from 27 to 31 October, to 17-21 November. The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) attributed the delay to the insufficient number of vaccines to cover the target population and carry out this large-scale operation.
Gaps & constraints

- Lack of health personnel dedicated to vaccination.
- Astra Zeneca vaccine shortages in some health facilities, and almost all vaccines will expire by 31 October.

CASE MANAGEMENT, INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC)

Response:

- According to the MoH, about 150,000 people in Cameroon, representing more than 1.2 per cent of the target population are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Despite various awareness campaigns, vaccination continues to incite fear, doubt, and skepticism among the population. This situation is the consequence of misinformation and rumors on social media.

Vaccination coverage by region as of 18 October 2021:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Eligible persons (+18)</th>
<th>Multiple dose vaccines (Astra Zeneca, Sinopharm)</th>
<th>Single dose vaccine</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dose 1</td>
<td>Dose 2</td>
<td>Dose J&amp;J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>1,518,189</td>
<td>781,867</td>
<td>27,921</td>
<td>9,058</td>
<td>8,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>4,965,861</td>
<td>2,557,419</td>
<td>43,348</td>
<td>18,039</td>
<td>16,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>1,360,451</td>
<td>700,632</td>
<td>32,231</td>
<td>4,362</td>
<td>2,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>4,967,788</td>
<td>2,558,411</td>
<td>97,253</td>
<td>17,004</td>
<td>8,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>4,277,464</td>
<td>2,202,894</td>
<td>23,683</td>
<td>10,556</td>
<td>15,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>2,996,271</td>
<td>1,543,080</td>
<td>40,629</td>
<td>8,303</td>
<td>6,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>1,868,031</td>
<td>962,036</td>
<td>23,515</td>
<td>6,018</td>
<td>8,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>2,327,807</td>
<td>1,198,821</td>
<td>29,206</td>
<td>5,616</td>
<td>2,611</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>894,878</td>
<td>460,862</td>
<td>14,339</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>1,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>1,899,941</td>
<td>978,469</td>
<td>10,435</td>
<td>3,302</td>
<td>2,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,076,681</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,944,491</strong></td>
<td><strong>342,560</strong></td>
<td><strong>86,508</strong></td>
<td><strong>74,295</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cameroon COVID-19 n.100 (from 21 to 27 October 2021)

Gaps & Constraints:

- Low vaccination coverage although the demand is increasing.
- Vaccines out of stock (Astra Zeneca and Sinopharm vaccines are expired and many people are waiting for the delivery of new vaccines to be able to receive their second vaccination dose).
- Insufficient communication/awareness on preventive measures at the community level.
- Weak monitoring and surveillance system for the pandemic.
- Difficulty in maintaining achieved actions and milestones (trained health care providers, health infrastructure, hand washing point, medical equipment, etc.) due to lack of financial resources to continue activities.

RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)

Needs:

- Intensification outreach and vaccination to businesses and organized groups.
- Increase community awareness of vaccine adherence.
- Resume screening activities in prisons and sensitize the prison community about the vaccination.
- Information and awareness campaign on COVID-19, in preparation for the next African Cup of Nations (AFCON) which will take place from 9 January to 6 February 2022.
Response:

The MoH and its communication partners including UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) have undertaken several actions to strengthen communication and increase immunization rate:

- Finalization of the communication tools on COVID-19 vaccination (audiovisual spots and microprograms, print materials);
- Facilitation of a workshop to develop modules for the training of call center operators responding to 1510 alert calls;
- Conducting a COVID-19 seroprevalence survey in the ten regional capitals;
- Development of an operational communication plan for the COVID-19 seroprevalence survey;
- In September and October, under the UNICEF leadership, the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Group (RCCE) organized 105 focus group discussions on vaccination against COVID-19 with personnel in health facilities.

The RCCE Group has also developed a plan to increase COVID-19 awareness in the upcoming AFCON sites. This includes:

- The development of health situation reports during the competition;
- The development of an AFCON health manual, in the COVID-19 context. The manual targets hospitals, duty pharmacies, screening sites, vaccination sites, and care sites. The group also organized rapid surveys and perception polls.

On 25 October, the RCCE group organized a meeting to review the implementation of community radio platforms activities, with priority given to communication on COVID-19.

UNHCR continued the implementation of its awareness raising activities on COVID-19 vaccine among refugee communities, while UNICEF and the RCCE group conducted the digital campaign on Facebook and Twitter.