



## Aid to Development of Traditional Medicine

No-governmental no-profit organisation

BP 9279 - Badalabougou SEMA I via 98 porta 280- Bamako - Mali

Phone and fax : 00223.20232903 – Mobile : 66746534 ; 76131273

E-mail : [aidemet@afribonemali.net](mailto:aidemet@afribonemali.net) ; Web site: [www.aidemet.org](http://www.aidemet.org)

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### **Aidemet NGO resumes its activities in support of Women Herbalists in Mali**

#### **1. Why and how this resumption?**

The action-research project "Autonomy and economic empowerment of women through the promotion of local knowledge about plants," in abbreviated "Women and plants," funded by the Italian Cooperation through UNOPS, has completed its activities since November 2012. It was expected that a new project co-funded by the Italian Cooperation and the Region of Umbria (Italy) would allow the continuation of activities. Unfortunately, due to security issues and political crisis that rocked the Mali, the project not yet started again, even if the contacts for the release of funds are still in progress. Meanwhile, *Aidemet* NGO has launched a campaign for raising private funds to support the herbalists of Mali. The campaign is still open. The funds collected to date are listed in the following table:

Donors	Country	Amount in €	Amount in F CFA
Friend of Sergio Giani	Geneva (Switzerland)	2 000	1 310 000
Friends of A.M. Scifo	Catania (Italia)	1 500	982 500
Luisa Roffaré	Venezia (Italia)	150	98 250
Roberto Scivoletto	Modica (Italia)	100	65 500
<b>Total</b>		<b>3 750</b>	<b>2 456 250</b>

These funds allowed to resume the contacts with women herbalists in Bamako and in Ségou, and to discuss with them on the targeted mini-actions to carry out. Two meetings have been prepared and implemented for this purpose: the first in Ségou in February 22, 2014 and the second in Bamako in March 15, 2014.

#### **2. The meetings with women herbalists :**

The first objective of the meetings was to ensure that women herbalists realize that *Aidemet* Ong had not forgotten them. This goal has been achieved: the women herbalists, in Segou and in Bamako, massively rallied, enthusiastically participated in the



Photo n° 1: Meeting with women herbalists in Ségou, February 22, 2014

meetings, and expressed their full satisfaction with the resumption of activities. During the meetings, it was made of the situation of microloans funds that had been set up during the first project.

In Segou, most women herbalists had paid off their debts, except for a few who have made specific commitments to quickly settle the amounts due. Measures have been taken for a quick release of funds and for the resumption of lending to women herbalists who have already paid their debt. The agreement was also taken, in order to organize the herbalists of Segou in association.

In Bamako, the women herbalists had fully repaid the loans, but microloans were also blocked, as the maturity dates of repayments, which had been decided at the time, were too close together: every fortnight. For this reason, most of the women herbalists had decided not to renew their loans. The decision was made to make the repayments over 12 months, with monthly instalments.



Photo n° 2 Meeting with women herbalists in Segou, March 15, 2014

Regarding the targeted actions to be programmed, it was decided for the moment to supply four women herbalists (two to Bamako and two to Segou) of kiosks for the sale of medicinal plants. The contacts with the artisans for the construction of kiosks are in progress. Reflection on other priority actions to be implemented is currently being conducted, according to the availability of funds.

### 3. Outlooks:

Looking ahead, *Aidemet* NGO is committed to continue contacts with the Region of Umbria and the Italian Cooperation, but also with other donors, to broaden the areas of intervention and increase the number of herbalists involved. Moreover, it was decided that the beneficiaries of the new kiosks will undertake to refund the value over time. The amounts recovered so allow other women herbalists to be equipped with kiosks. In addition, the reflections will be conducted in order to increase the funds available for microloans. *Aidemet* NGO is also committed to continue to raise funds to support women herbalists of Mali.

**Bamako, March 15, 2014**