



Aidemet Ong

Aid to the Development of the Traditional Medicine

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Editorial August 2007

The Chronicle of the Traditional Medicine in Mali.

Since Independence, Mali adopted a politics of valorization of the traditional medicine, according to the recommendations of the OMS.

The first collection of Malian ("Sudanese") medicinal prescriptions was elaborated by Dominique Traoré in 1920, and in 1957, the future Minister of Health, the Dr Sominé Dolo, defended an innovating approach consisting in not exclusively carrying out a sanitary politics based on the resources of the "western" medicine, but rather in trying to integrate the traditional healers.

This idea has been brought out by some pioneers, among which we can mention the Professor Mamadou Koumaré, who developed the scientific research on the traditional medicine of Mali.

The creation of the National Institute of Phototherapy and Traditional Medicine, within the Section Research and Control of the Division of Pharmaceutical Supply, dates from 1968. In 1973, this structure became National Institute of Research on the Pharmacopoeia and the Traditional Medicine (INRPMT) having for mission the study of the medicinal plants and all other products and proceedings used in the traditional medicine. L'INRPMT was set under the authority of the Minister entrusted of the Public Health. In 1981, with the creation of the Malian Office of Pharmacy, the INRPMT became Division of Traditional Medicine in this structure. In 1986, the Division of Traditional Medicine was attached to the National Institute of Research in Public Health and is currently a Department of the same Institute. The Department Traditional Medicine (DMT) is a Collaborating Center of WHO in matter of traditional medicine since 1981.

The DMT is in charge of the activities of medical and pharmaceutical research in the fields of traditional medicine and pharmacopoeia, of the elaboration of the pharmacopoeia and formularies, of the production of the Improved Traditional Medicines, and of the promotion of the traditional medicine (Decree n° 168/PG-RM of 29/05/1986 and Law n° 93-014 of

11/02/1993). The DMT includes a service of the medical sciences, a service of pharmaceutical sciences and a service of the ethno-botany and raw materials.

Beginning from 1990, several Associations of Traditional Healers were created. In March 2002, a meeting of the delegates of the different associations decided to create the Malian Federation of Traditional Healers and Herbalists (FEMATH).

Definitions of some terms concerning the Traditional Medicine.

1. The Traditional Medicine is the whole of knowledge and practices, explainable or not, transmitted from generation to generation, orally or in writing, used in a human society to diagnose, to prevent or to eliminate an unbalance of the physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.
2. The Traditional Pharmacopoeia is the inventory of the whole of vegetable, animals and mineral substances, employed in a human community to diagnose, to prevent or to eliminate an unbalance of the physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.
3. The Traditional Healer is a person recognized by the collectivity in which he is living, as competent to distribute health cares, by the use of vegetable, animals and mineral substances, and of other methods, based on the socio-cultural and religious background, as well on knowledge, behaviors and beliefs, connected to the physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing, so as to the causes of illnesses and invalidities prevailing in the collectivity.
4. The Traditional Midwife is a person reputed in her environment for helping the women in labour, which competency originates from a family inheritance or from its apprenticeship near to other traditional midwives.
5. The Traditional Herbalist is a person holding some knowledge on the medicinal plants, who practices their commerce in a fixed place, of preference in a market.
6. The Medicinal Plants are the plants used in traditional medicine, which at least a part possesses some therapeutic properties.
7. The Improved Traditional Medicines are medicines coming from the local traditional pharmacopoeia, having determined limits of toxicity, pharmacological activity confirmed by the scientific research, quantified dosage and checked quality at the time of their commercialization.

Extracts from the document of National Politics of Traditional Medicine, adopted by the Government of Mali in October 12th 2005.