



Aidemet Ong

Aid to the Development of the Traditional Medicine

Non-Governmental No-Profit Organization

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The 7th International Week of the African Traditional Medicine.

The 7th edition of the International Week of the African Traditional Medicine (SIMTA) was carried out in June 2008 from 16th to 23rd in the Stadium Omnisport "Modibo Keita" of Bamako. Organized by the Federation of the Associations of Traditional Healers and Herbalists of Mali (FEMATH), the 7th SIMTA has recorded the participation of around 261 traditional healers and herbalists, about twenty of which were women, coming from all the regions of Mali and from Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo and Nigeria.



Photo n° 1 : The opening ceremony.

The opening ceremony was carried out under the presidency of the Dr Amara Traoré, Technical Adviser representing the Minister of the Health, in presence, among the others, of the Representative of the OMS in Mali, Dr Fatoumata Binta Tidiane Diallo. In his discourse of welcome, the President of FEMATH, M. Mohamed Fall, said thanks to the traditional healers for coming and to the

other discourses underlined that the Traditional Medicine is the first resort of the majority of African populations. Really, according to the World Health Organization, about 80% of the population of the developing countries uses the traditional medicine. So, the improvement of the state of health of Malian populations passes necessarily through the promotion of this medicine, particularly by a best organization of her resources, so much human that material. Therefore, it is un-avoidable to recognize the necessity of an organized and evaluated collaboration among the actors of the traditional medicine and those of the conventional one, for a rational use of all the available resources, in the frame of a complementary action.

Since 2002, the SIMTA has become an appointment of giving and receiving, a consolidated point of meeting among all the traditional healers and herbalists of Mali and, in the same time, an important international occasion of exchanges of ideas, knowledge and experiences among the actors of the Traditional Medicine of the West African Region. The edition 2008 of SIMTA, as all the precedents, offered to the participants the opportunity to expose and to commercialize their traditional medicines in 84 stands that have been visited by a numerous and attentive public during the whole week.



Photo n° 2 : The stands of the Fair.

The exchanges among the experts of the traditional medicine and the modern one concerned this year the diseases of the digestive apparatus, among others the gastro-duodenal ulcer, the functional colopathies, the hepatitis, the hemorrhoids, the intestinal occlusions, the dysentery and the diarrhea, and the diseases of the eyes, particularly the cataract, the conjunctivitis and the glaucoma. The accent has been put on the correspondences between the modern definitions and the traditional denominations of the different affections and symptoms. The traditional healers, which are in permanent contact with the population, play an important role in the struggle against these illnesses, particularly through the use of traditional medicines of quality, the awakening of population and the reference of the patients. The sessions of formation were animated, among the others, by the Prof. Mamadou Koumaré, President of the Malian Society of Phytotherapy, the Dr Chiaka Diakité of the Traditional Medicine Department of the INRSP, the

Dr Wotou Mallé and Mamadou Sangato of the Gabriel Touré Hospital, the Dr Adama I. Guindo and Aichata Diakité of the IOTA.

The 7th SIMTA has also been, as usual, the opportunity for carrying out the General Statutory Assembly of FEMATH. In this frame, the technique and financier reports of the year 2007 have been presented, discussed and approved by the members. Moreover, the Office of the FEMATH exposed the Report of the Auditing of the Accounts for the years form 2002 to 2007 as the External Evaluation of all the editions of SIMTA. The different recommendations have been underlined and commented. This exercise of transparency and good administration has been very appreciated by the participants to the meeting.



Photo n° 3 : The participants to the workshops of exchange of expediciencies.

Aidemet Ong participated in the 7th SIMTA with a stand of information on the activities of the Ngo. This presence allowed some cross visits and daily fruitful exchanges with the traditional healers of the different horizons on their worries. The accent has been put on the ambition of *Aidemet* Ong to participate in the valorization of the resources of the African Traditional Medicine, by the intercultural mediation, the accompaniment of the actors, and the support to the associative dynamics at the different levels. The principal approach is to emphasize the leadership of the traditional healers, without taking their place, in the relationships with the other actors of health and local development.



Photo n°4 : The OMS representative visiting the stand of *Aidemet* Ngo.

The closing ceremony was carried out under the presidency of the Prof. Amadou Touré, Assistant General Manager of the National Institute of Research in Public Health. M. Toumani Diakité, General Secretary of FEMATH, introduced the recommendations produced by the participant to the assembly:

- **To the traditional healers:** to strengthen their unity and the solidarity around the local associations, so as around the Town and Regional Coordinations, and the FEMATH.
- **To the Minister of the Health:** to more implicate the

FEMATH in the planning and the carrying out of the activities of health to the different levels of the sanitary pyramid. To accelerate the availability of the funds, in order to avoid to realize the next SIMTA during the season of the rains.

- **To the National Assembly:** to examine and to approve quickly the Document of National Politics of Traditional Medicine, adopted by the Government in October 2005.
- **To the Government and the Technical and Financial Partners:** To quicken the carrying out of the National Politics of Traditional Medicine, and relative Plan of Action, as well as the mobilization of adequate resources.



Photo n° 5 : Meeting of the President of *Aidemet* Ngo with some herbalist women.

A last recommendation concerned the effective struggle of authorities against the noisy publicities of certain self-styled traditional healers on the Radio's antennas.

To conclude, M. Mohammed Fall, president of the FEMATH, thanked the authorities and the participants, also wishing a good return to the respective countries and giving appointment for the next year. M. Fall has not forgotten the majority of the traditional healers being also farmer: so, he ended his allocution: "God, give us a good raining season in 2008".

Text compiled by Dr Sergio Giani, *Aidemet* Ong

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