



Aidemet Ong

Aid to the Development of the Traditional Medicine

Non-Governmental No-Profit Organization

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The 6th Week of the African Traditional Medicine.

June 2007, from 20th to 27th the 6th edition of the International Week of the African Traditional Medicine (SIMTA) was carried out in the Stadium Omnisport "Modibo Keita" of Bamako.

Organized by the Malian Federation of the Associations of Traditional Healers and Herbalists (FEMATH), the 6th SIMTA has recorded the participation of about 230 traditional healers, among which about twenty women, coming from all the regions of Mali and from Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo etc.

The opening ceremony happened under the presidency of Professor Boubacar Cissé, Technical Adviser representative of the Minister of the Health, in presence, among the others, of Dr Lamine Cissé Sarr, Representative of WHO in Mali. The different discourses underlined that the Traditional Medicine is still the first resort for the majority of our populations. In fact, according to the World Health Organization, about 80% of the population of the developing countries uses the Traditional Medicine. The improvement of the health of our populations passes therefore necessarily by the promotion of this medicine, particularly through a best organization of its resources, both human as material.



Photo n° : The opening ceremony.

The SIMTA became a consolidated point of contact among all the traditional healers and herbalists of Mali and, at the same time, an important international meeting of exchanges of ideas, knowledge and experiences among the actors of the West Africa Traditional Medicine.

The present edition of SIMTA, as all the preceding, offered to the participants not only the opportunity to expose and to commercialize their traditional medicines, but also to exchange between them and with the experts of the modern medicine on important matters as the chronic illnesses (arterial hypertension, diabetes) and malaria. A day has also been devoted to the discussion on the Rights of Intellectual Ownership related to the traditional knowledge. The sessions of formation have been animated, among the others, by the professor Mamadou Koumaré, President of the Malian Society of Phytotherapy, by Dr. Kassoum Sanogo, Cardiologist of the Hospital Gabriel Touré, by Dr Boukanem and Niantao of the Antidiabetic Center, by Aboua Simaga, of the National Program of Fight against Malaria and by the professor Drissa Diallo, Head of the Department of Traditional Medicine and expert of OAPI.



Photo n° : The stand of the Association N°Ko.

The SIMTA has also been the occasion for carrying out the statutory meeting of the FEMATH, that discussed on the associative life, and on the realization for the associations members of centers of herbalist's markets and groves of medicinal plants.

Aidemet Ngo participated in the 6th SIMTA not only assuring the intercultural communication during the sessions of formation, but also with a stand of information on the activities of the Ngo. This presence allowed to crossed visits and fruitful daily exchanges with the other participants on their

worries, particularly on:

- ✓ As to valorize and to modernize the Traditional Medicine, without losing the essence and the social and cultural roots, so as the economic accessibility for the local populations;
- ✓ As to establish a mutual collaboration with the modern medicine, valorizing the contribution and the positive results of the traditional medicine;
- ✓ As to evaluate the effectiveness of the traditional medicines, safeguarding at the same time the rights of intellectual ownership and the economic benefits for the holders of the traditional knowledge;
- ✓ As to try to do the effective and sure traditional medicines being available for the needing sick people.

The 6th SIMTA was also the occasion to expose a prototype of the kiosks for sale of medicinal plants, in the frame of the project of support to the Bamako's herbalists that *Aidemet Ong* is realizing in partnership with the *ATTHB-Keneya Iriwaton*, and with the financial support of AEMETRA (Italy) and of Hope Foundation (Switzerland).



Photo n° : The participants.



Photo n° : The kiosk for the herbalists

The closing ceremony happened under the presidency of Professor Flabou Bougoudogo, General Manager of the National Institute of Research in Public Health, in presence, among the others, of the Doctor Ossy Kasilo, Advisor for the Traditional Medicine in the WHO Office for the African Region. Mohammed Fall, president of the FEMATH, thanked the authorities and the participants and introduced the recommendations, elaborated during the meeting of the FEMATH, concerning:

- ✓ The participation of the organized Traditional Healers to all decision making concerning the Traditional Medicine;
- ✓ The development of the collaboration between Traditional and Modern Medicine, with an equitable division of the benefits and in respect of the rights of intellectual ownership;
- ✓ The use of the New Technologies of Information and Communication in the valorization of the Traditional Medicine resources;
- ✓ The realization of the next SIMTA out of the raining season.

The Doctor Kasilo underlined the importance that the WHO-Afro assigns to the Traditional Medicine; she has put the accent on the implication of the Traditional Healers in the fight against the illnesses, improving their collaboration with the modern system of health. She remembered that the WHO has just elaborated, for this, the formation tools. The WHO-Afro shares the worries of the actors of the Traditional Medicine for the respect of the rights of intellectual ownership: it is important to assure some equitable economic benefits on the holders of the traditional knowledge of health. The Doctor Kasilo finally affirmed not to doubt that the issued recommendations would have put in work by the Department of Traditional Medicine of the INRSP, with the support of the Ministry of Health and WHO.

Text compiled by Dr Rokia Sanogo and Dr Sergio Giani, *Aidemet Ong*,

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