



Building and bottle in plastic : pay attention to BPA !

Scientific Research : new coopération between DRC and Italy

AEC reinforce the capacities of its agents in Kinshasa

To the discovery of ecologic Poubob in plastic bottle



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Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA
NSC President

I draw your attention

Here it is, a plea for quality and perseverance in scientific research in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Science Week, celebrated last April in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), highlighted the importance of scientific research in the country's development. However, it is crucial to question the quality and relevance of the research carried out in the country.

While quantifying research is sometimes tempting, it is more important to focus on the quality of the results obtained. Scientific research, faced with major financial challenges, must not lose sight of its major objectives. The quality of research and the output of researchers remain the compass that must guide efforts despite the obstacles encountered. Faced with this situation, the Chairman of the National Scientific Council (NSC), Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA, makes a solemn appeal to Congolese researchers: "I draw your attention". This appeal is not a reprimand, but rather an encouragement to perseverance and excellence. Time is precious and must be used wisely to achieve research goals. Science Week should serve as a wake-

up call for researchers, encouraging them to redouble their efforts to achieve concrete results. Science must become a passion, an everyday commodity and a permanent dream. The DRC has an immense need to attract talented researchers if it is to become a powerful country capable of competing with other nations. The results of Congolese research are essential to propel society towards a scientific revolution. Without research, the population is exposed to many dangers and technological progress is impossible.

The DRC is going through a period conducive to the blossoming of talent. It's time to put an end to the paralysis of Congolese laboratories and research centers. All players in the scientific sec-

tor must commit to working tirelessly. Professor TSHIMANKINDA makes an urgent appeal to all researchers: "I call on you all to dig deeper into our research". "I call your attention" is a strong, motivating message that must resonate in the minds of all Congolese researchers. It's a call to action, perseverance and excellence. Together, Congolese researchers can contribute to the emergence of a prosperous and internationally respected DRC.



Activities of the Minister of SRTI

Minister of SRTI Gilbert KABANDA meets Italian Ambassador to the DRC Alberto PETRANGELI

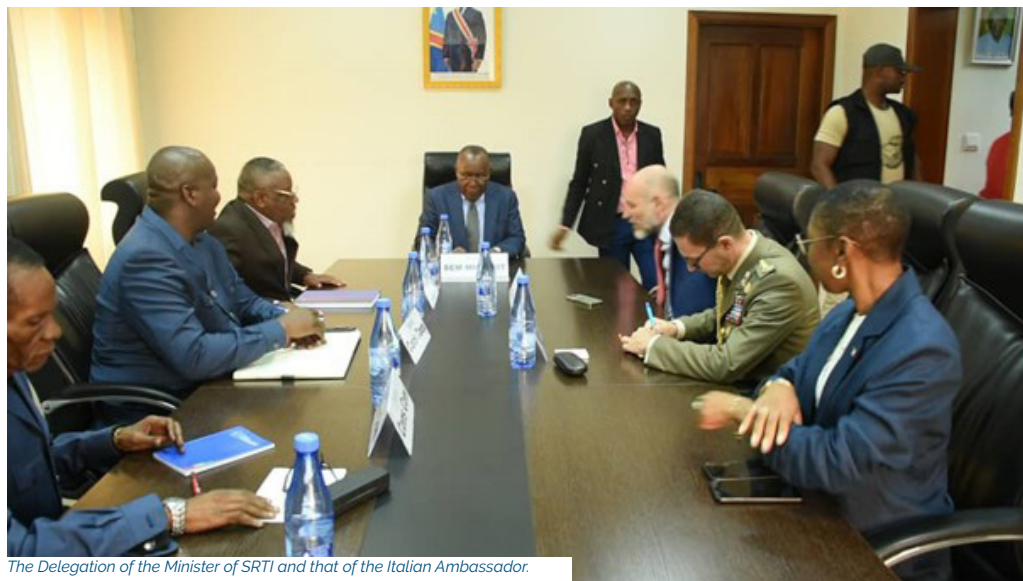
Scientific Research and Technological Innovation: new cooperation between the DRC and Italy

In a move aimed at boosting bilateral relations between Italy and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Minister for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGA, met the Italian Ambassador to the DRC, Alberto PETRANGELI, in Kinshasa on Wednesday June 05, 2024. The aim of the meeting was to reaffirm the partnership between Italy and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the scientific research sector, considered crucial to the country's economic growth..

During the meeting, Dr Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGA listened attentively to the Italian diplomat's non-exhaustive list of needs for Congolese scientific research. Minister KABANDA, very interested in all the projects presented by the Italian Ambassador, jumped at the opportunity to express his concern to see the DRC emerge from the torpor of recent decades the axis of cooperation, especially in scientific research between Kinshasa and Rome. For the Minister, it was an opportune moment to recall the good relations between the two countries in the 70s, 80s and 90s.

Minister KABANDA recalled that in those days, in the field of military aviation, many of our military pilots were trained in Italy, not forgetting that he himself had been trained in Italy in aerospace medicine. And during the interview, the Minister did not refrain from speaking Italian with his distinguished guest.

Finally, the head of scientific research promised the Italian ambassador in Kinshasa to wait for the Congolese parliament to swear in the new government before making a precise statement in favor of re-launching Congolese-Italian cooperation in



The Delegation of the Minister of SRTI and that of the Italian Ambassador.

the field of scientific research. However, the head of research expressed the hope that the two countries would capitalize on the new opportunities available to both parties.

In passing, he told his Italian interlocutor that he had had two children during his stay in Italy, without necessarily having acquired Italian nationality, although they were eligible under the law of the host country. The Minister intends to give a boost to the development of the DRC, based on scientific research into a better model of devel-

opment in the world, but adapted to national particularities.

In this spirit, he expressed to his distinguished guest his wish to visit Italy in order to explore the local scientific potential and form an accurate opinion. The Italian Ambassador agreed with Minister KABANDA's approach, and even proposed certain dates for the trip, the schedule for which would be set at a later date by mutual agreement.

Pour sa part, l'Ambassadeur d'Ital-

ie, Alberto Pierantoni, makes a number of interesting announcements for the Democratic Republic of Congo. These include the imminent installation of an agricultural technology center on the outskirts of Kinshasa at the end of June. This center will of course contribute to the development of the DRC, including in the field of tropical medicine. The Ambassador also recalled some of his country's achievements on the national territory. These include collaboration with NIASR at Yangambi in Tshopo province, the Observatoire Vulcanologique at Goma in North Kivu, and the Institut Géographique du Congo in Kinshasa.

For his part, Italian Ambassador Alberto made a number of interesting announce-

ments for the Democratic Republic of Congo, including the imminent installation on the outskirts of Kinshasa, the capital, of an agricultural technology center, at the end of June, which will of course contribute to the development of the DRC, even in the field of tropical medicine. He also recalled some of his country's achievements in collaboration with NIASR in Yangambi, Tshopo province, the Volcanic Observatory in Goma, North Kivu, and the Institut Géographique du Congo in Kinshasa.

For the sake of the cause, the Italian Ambassador announced the imminent arrival in Kinshasa of a delegation of Italian scientists to put their words into action, the best way for Italy to make itself more useful to the Congo.

The Italian diplomat was accompanied by the Military Defense Attaché, Colonel Antonio Arivella, his patriot from neighboring Angola.

Communication Unit of the Minister of SRTI

NSC Activity



NSC organizes remedial training modules for researchers

From May 29 to 31, 2024, the National Scientific Council (NSC) organized remedial training modules for researchers from Research Centers and Institutes at the RCMG in Kinshasa.

The ceremony was honored by the presence of five (5) distinguished speakers: Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA, President of Nsc; Professor WUFELA YAK'OKOLINGO André; Professor Benjamin ZOAWÉ; Maître Freddy IPUKA; Mr Georges MABIALA and Mr Reagen NGOTO.

On the first day, the floor was given to Professor André WUFELA, who captivated the audience with his presentation on "Researchers and research careers". According to Professor WUFELA, an accomplished researcher is one who knows how to combine individual work with collaboration with peers. Untiring and passionate, he devotes a large part of his time to research, whether in the laboratory, the field or the library, constantly confronting theories with the realities of the world. Professor WUFELA concluded his speech by emphasizing the vital importance of scientific publications. As windows on the

world, they provide invaluable visibility for researchers and their research centers, contributing to their scientific recognition and even bringing them material rewards.

The second speaker, Mr. IPUKA BADJE, Director of Research and Technological Innovation at SP/CSN, captivated the audience with his presentation on the theme of "The Functioning of a Research Institution: Role, Place and Mission of Researchers". Mr. IPUKA BADJE began by defining a research institution as an establishment, laboratory or organization specializing in scientific research. He specified that it is a public insti-

tution with legal personality. Turning then to the role of researchers within this institution, he highlighted their main missions :

- Scientific production: Carrying out original, high-quality research, thereby contributing to the advancement of knowledge in their field.
- Commercialization of research results: Transforming research findings into concrete applications that benefit society, whether in the form of patents, technological innovations or scientific publications.
- Spreading scientific information: Share their knowledge and discoveries with the scientific community and the general public, through conferences, scientific articles and popularization tools.
- Training through scientific research: Mentoring and training the next generation of researchers, passing on their expertise and guiding them in their research work.

The speaker listed eleven main qualities that a

researcher must possess, including: creativity, honesty, rigor, patience, openness, etc...

The first day was closed by Mr George MABIALA, le pélagianisme detector, la gestion responsable des données de la recherche ".

The second day included presentations on Mendel software, scientific reputation, visibility and marketing of researchers based on bibliometric indicators.

Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA, President of the NSC, also gave a presentation on the writing of scientific articles in the natural sciences.

He pointed out that the writing of a scientific article is governed by a set of rules called "Instructions to Authors" and that this depends on each journal or newspaper. It contains the following elements: title, authors' names (+affiliations+orcid id), abstract, keywords, introduction, materials & methods, results, discussion, conclusion, acknowledgements and bibliographical references. The second day of training end-

ed with a capacity-building workshop for researchers on best practices for a successful PowerPoint presentation, led by Professor Benjamin ZOAWÉ. On the final day, trainer George MABIALA spoke about responsible management of research data and writing a research project. The day also featured another highly practical notion: "From scientist to entrepreneur". The President of the NSC, Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA, closed the day with a presentation on research project outlines and funding sources. Several researchers from research centers and institutes praised the initiatives taken by NSC. President Prof. Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA. They also made recommendations and suggestions during the training session.

At the end of the ceremony, a training certificate was awarded to each participant to mark the end of the researchers' seminar.

MAZONO Christian and BELESI Consort/ NSC

Government Activities



Prime Minister Judith SUMINWA and the Ministers at the investiture of the Government on June 11, 2024

The 6 pillars of action of the SUMINWA government program

« Building a diversified and competitive economy to create more jobs and protect household purchasing power, protecting the national territory and securing people and their property, developing the national territory with a view to maximum connectivity, guaranteeing access to basic social services, strengthening the capacities of Congolese to participate in building the country, managing the DRC's

ecosystem sustainably and responsibly in the face of climate change". These were the six (6) pillars of action of the Suminwa Government's 2024-2028 program, presented and approved by the National Deputies of the Democratic Republic of Congo on June 12 in Kinshasa.

According to the Chief Executive, these six pillars will, through their synergies

and their complementary and cumulative effects, accelerate the economic and social development of the DR Congo. These pillars are broken down into 52 strategic axes corresponding to the different areas of intervention. During the plenary debates that followed the presentation of this program, the deputies made recommendations to the Head of Government with a view to enriching it.

The Prime Minister, Judith SUMINWA, showed exemplary responsiveness to the concerns expressed by the national deputies. In less than 30 minutes, she was able to identify the issues and grievances raised by the elected representatives. The conciseness and relevance of her answers won her the investiture of her government. The government's action program for the period 2024-2028 will serve as a roadmap for ministries, structures and state agencies. It will also constitute the frame of reference for the elaboration and implementation of the State budget during this period.

The Prime Minister did not require 24 or even 48 hours to return to respond to the various concerns expressed by the

national deputies. Thirty minutes was enough for Judith Suminwa to bring together the concerns of the people's elected representatives expressed through the various questions. Following her answers, her Government was sworn in.

The Government's 2024-2028 action program will serve as the basis for programming the activities of ministries, structures and agencies, as well as for drawing up and implementing the State budget over the period indicated.

« Given the scale of these structural constraints, the Government's 2024-2028 action program reflects the Congolese government's firm determination to achieve a

twofold objective, namely: to consolidate the achievements of the first mandate, with a view to completing the advent of a more united, more secure, more forward-looking, more sovereign and more prosperous Congo, and to definitively lay the foundations for an emerging Congo in which the authority of the State is consolidated, solidarity strengthened and cities connected for the better», summarized the Prime Minister of the DRC..

Christian MAZONO/NSC

Echos of Research Institutions



NIBR: Annual meeting of the Clinical Research Center (CRC)

The Clinical Research Center (CRC) of the National Institute for Biomedical Research (NIBR) held its annual meeting from June 4 to 6, 2024 at the NIBR amphitheater, under the leadership of its Director, Professor Placide Mbala.

This event brought together several partners with the aim of reviewing CRC's progress, gathering feedback on priorities for the coming years, and learning from the experiences of other clinical research orga-

nizations in Africa. Participants also identified new lines of study for the future.

Interventions from partners were crucial in enriching and guiding the exchanges. These included presentations on the disease situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and their contributions to the fight against these diseases.

CRC's vision, mission, values and global strategies were then outlined.

In addition, the meeting benefited from the sharing of experiences from other clinical research organizations in Africa, providing valuable insights.

The closing of the meeting included an overview of CRC's priority diseases, a discussion of global priorities, and a renewed commitment from partners to support the center's future initiatives..

www.inrb.cd

AEC strengthens the skills of its agents in Kinshasa

As part of its socio-economic development, research and support missions, the Commissariat Général à l’Energie Atomique (AEC) organized a training course from May 20 to 24, 2024, on the determination of antibiotic residues and other products in food using high-performance chromatography. The course took place in the Biochemistry and Food Technology Laboratory.

During this scientific activity, the creators revealed that animals and fish, essential links in the human food chain, can be affected by diseases requiring treatment with antibiotics and other veterinary molecules.

Under no circumstances should an animal or fish treated with these products be consumed until all drug residues have been completely eliminated.

Against this backdrop, three Senegalese experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) provided invaluable training in the determination of veterinary drug residues in foodstuffs.

The training provided participants with



the knowledge and skills they need to guarantee the safety of food of animal origin. The closing ceremony was marked by a family photo, immortalizing this important moment of sharing and learning.

Mélanie MUAMINI/AEC

To the discovery of ecological plastic bottle Poubob

Poubob is the ecological plastic bottle garbage can. This brand of garbage can is a very special way of recycling Polyethylene Terephthalate/PET plastic bottles. As a waste garbage can, it encourages anyone to get close enough to dispose of their waste.

As part of the circular economy, it teaches anyone about the economic value of plastic waste, nothing is created, nothing is lost, everything is transformed. In the context of jobs, poubob can hire many employees, in the context of sanitation, poubob has demonstrated its effects in several geographical areas where they have been used correctly as a valuable product. For recycling and disposal, it is easily recycled at the end of its life. It is also a work of art, a culturally Congolese product, and no other such product has been commercialized on the world market.





It's shock-resistant, easy to move, highly hygienic to the point where the user can't be contaminated when depositing his waste; in this context, poubob limits the spread of contagious diseases caused by the handling of common garbage cans. Imitating or copying and pasting poubob is not easy, because the notion of absolute

and relative errors, polymerization, environmental engineering, mathematics, physics and so many other subjects are poubob's foundations.

There are many future prospects for poubob, such as making it an intelligent waste garbage can, to determine the weight of waste that could be contained and the charac-

terization of waste that could be collected. Poubob's weakness lies mainly in its ability to raise awareness of its use. Poubob can last a minimum of 5 years if used properly.

Consort BELESI/NSC

Reflections of our researchers

SSRC Bandundu: Researchers lead a captivating scientific conference

L On June 7, 2024, two researchers from the Social Sciences Research Center (SSRC Bandundu) captivated audiences in the town of Bandundu with a thought-provoking scientific conference.

Research Associate AMBO AVANGO opened the ball with a captivating presentation on the theme of "Conflicts over inheritance arising from the death of a polygamist". Aware of the serious consequences

suffered by the children of the deceased, born both in and out of wedlock, faced with deep divisions that can even lead to death,

Mr. AMBO AVANGO plunged the audience into the heart of this worrying social reality. "It's a real situation that affects our society", he emphasized forcefully. The speaker concluded his talk by asserting that the married man does not have carte blanche and must respect the principle of fidelity to his wife.

He also pleaded for a better control of instincts to avoid the multiplication of children out of wedlock. The conference continued with the intervention of the second researcher, whose subject and development will be presented in a future article.

SSRC/ Bandundu



CBRNEC/DRC

Building and plastic bottles: beware of BPA!

«The use of plastic bottles containing Bisphenol A (BPA) in construction can cause health and safety risks due to the gas emissions and chemical compounds released»- said Mr SEKE VANGU Max, Researcher at the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centre of Excellence (CBRNEC), in Kinshasa..

The author outlines the consequences of off-gassing on Bisphenol A (BPA)-containing plastic bottles used as structural wall elements.

According to him, the use of BPA-containing plastic bottles as structural elements in walls can lead to a number of negative consequences due to off-gassing. It is essential to implement adequate protective measures, such as fire prevention, effective ventilation and the use of protective coatings, to minimize these negative impacts.

Plastic bottles can contain several types of endocrine disruptors, chemical substances that can interfere with the hormonal system.

Researcher SEKE VANGU Max presented a detailed analysis of the potential impacts, which include: Release of Bisphenol A (BPA); Plastic bottles containing BPA can release this chemical compound when exposed to high temperatures, UV light or chemical degradation.

BPA is an endocrine disruptor that can have adverse effects on human health, including reproductive problems, hormonal disorders, an increased risk of hormone-dependent cancers, and effects on child development. Release of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) Plastics can release VOCs when degraded or exposed to heat. VOCs can cause irritation to Plastics can release VOCs when degraded or exposed to heat. VOCs can cause eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches, allergic reactions and, in the long term, respiratory disorders and an increased risk of cancer.

Phthalates release

In addition to BPA, plastic bottles can contain

phthalates, which are also released by heat or degradation. Phthalates are also endocrine disruptors, and are associated with negative effects on reproduction, development and chronic health.

Toxic gas formation in case of fire

Plastic bottles can melt and release toxic gases such as carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO₂), hydrogen chloride (HCl) and hydrogen cyanide (HCN) during a fire. These gases can cause acute poisoning, chemical burns and even death when exposed to high concentrations.

Degradation and Emission of Microplastics

Over time, under the action of UV rays and temperature variations, plastics can degrade and release microplastics into the air. Inhalation of these microplastics can have adverse effects on respiratory health, causing inflammation and lung disease.

With time and exposure to UV rays and temperature variations, plastics can degrade and release microplastics into the air. Inhaling microplastics can have negative effects on respiratory health, causing inflammation and lung disease.

Means of prevention

• Fire protection

Incorporate flame retardants into wall construction and use fireproof materials to minimize fire risks.

• Adequate ventilation

Ensure good ventilation of interior spaces to reduce the build-up of VOCs, BPA and other gases potentially released by plastics.

• Protective coatings

Apply waterproof coatings or barriers to walls containing plastic bottles to limit the release of gases into the indoor environment.

bottles to limit the release of gases into the indoor environment. Bisphenol A (abbreviated to BPA) is a chemical compound used in the synthesis of plastics

and resins used in the manufacture of many everyday products (food and non-food). It has the ability to migrate from its containers into the food or drink it comes into contact with, enabling it to be ingested by the human body.

BPA is estrogeno-mimetic, i.e. it has the ability to bind to alpha and beta estrogen receptors.

The question of the risks associated with exposure to low doses of bisphenol A (BPA) in everyday consumer products has been hotly debated in the scientific community for several years

As an endocrine disruptor, BPA is suspected of being involved in the development of various health problems, such as reproductive disorders, obesity, diabetes, thyroid dysfunction, and breast and prostate cancer. Nevertheless, current scientific data do not allow us to conclude definitively that it is carcinogenic.

Bisphenol A, with the chemical formula 4,4' Isopropylidenediphenol, belongs to the family of hydroxylated diphenylalkanes, or bisphenols. Before processing, it appears as a white solid, which can be found as powder, flakes or crystals with little odor.

Christian MAZONO/NSC

Bienvenue

au vernissage du livre :

" RD Congo : la prochaine frontière pour l'industrie de l'huile de palme "



Professor MPOKO BOKANGA has written a book entitled : « The Next Frontier for the Palm Oil Industry ».

Professor MPOKO BOKANGA has written a book in the Democratic Republic of Congo entitled : « The Next Frontier for the Palm Oil Industry ». The book was launched on Tuesday May 28, 2024 in Kinshasa.

In this book, Professor MPOKO BOKANGA highlights the central role played by the Democratic Republic of Congo in the development of the palm oil industry.

He showed that the country played a very important scientific and technological role in the development of palm oil plant varieties, in the management of plantations and even in palm oil mills. And that was in the years before independence.

After independence, it was Asia that developed this crop," he said. After an in-depth study of the Plantation and Oil mills of the Congo (PHC) company, Professor MPOKO BOKANGA felt that the DRC was capable of winning back the palm oil market currently dominated by Asians.

Now, I think we have everything we need to catch up with the Asian countries and even overtake them.

The technological and scientific knowledge needed to develop the palm oil industry exists. Now, as a country, we need a plan and a strategy to develop this industry," he added.

The publication of this book, which explores the world of palm oil production in the Democratic Republic of Congo, coincides with the commemoration of 133 years of existence of the largest palm oil production plant, Plantations and Oil mills of the Congo (PHC). Taking part in the ceremony, the Managing Director of this mixed-economy company, Madame Monique GIESKE, said that "this book is the fruit of rigorous research and in-



Mrs Monique GIESKE, CEO of Plantation and Oil mills of the Congo

depth reflection, highlighting the immense potential of the DRC in this strategic sector". "It is a great honor to welcome you today to the Fleuve Congo Hôtel to celebrate together the 113th anniversary of our beloved company "Plantations et Huilleries du Congo" (PHC), through the vernissage of the chapter written by Dr. MPOKO BOKANGA entitled "Congo: the next frontier of the palm oil industry".

This chapter, which we have been authorized by the publisher to print in book form, is the fruit of rigorous research and in-depth reflection, highlighting our country's immense potential in this strategic sector. This book is a true source of inspiration for us all. I am convinced that it will have a positive influence on the policies and practices of the palm oil industry", she noted.

PHC's Managing Director took the opportunity to review the history of this private company governed by the OHADA treaty's Uniform Act on Commercial Companies and Economic Interest Groups(AUSCGIE). She noted that PHC has two shareholders:

Straight KKM2, the majority shareholder, and the Congolese state, the minority shareholder. The structure has been able to increase production by over 20% each year, and the number of employees has risen from 6,500 in 2021 to 10,000 in 2023, making PHC the largest direct employer in the DRC after the government. The PHC boss also pointed out that spending on social clauses, or the company's commitments to the surrounding communities, had increased fivefold.

"Our four hospitals, with a total of 460 beds, care for over 150,000 patients a year, record 4,420 births and perform 1,300 major surgeries. Equipped with medical imaging



equipment, incubators for newborn babies, well-stocked laboratories and pharmacies. They are the reference hospitals in the region.

The 24 schools we have built and made available to the state offer over 7,000 children a comfortable learning environment. We are also investing in energy efficiency to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and increase the availability of renewable energies, some of which will be made available to local entrepreneurs for the development of small and medium-sized businesses around PHC," she added. For her, the commemoration of the company's 113 years of existence is not just a celebration of history, but rather the rebirth of a great company at the service of the DRC.

"Today, we celebrate not only our rich history, but also the rebirth of a great company and our commitment to a better, sustain-

able future. A future that benefits investors, ensures the prosperity and well-being of our people, and contributes to the preservation of our planet", she concluded.

Dr MPOKO BOKANGA, author of the book "Congo, the next frontier of the palm industry", has 35 years' experience in international agricultural development, particularly in Africa. He holds a PhD in Food Technology from Cornell University (1989), and has held various positions with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), culminating as representative in Kenya, Eritrea and South Sudan. Prior to this, he headed the Agro-Industry Development Unit in Vienna, and was Senior Technical Advisor to the West Africa Quality Program (WAQP) in Abuja, Nigeria.

He has also worked for WESTRECO Inc (Nestlé, USA) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Ni-

geria, as well as teaching at Alabama A&M University.

Zoom.Eco and Christian MAZONO/NSC

ADVERTISEMENT

Banking performance, innovation and financial inclusiveness

Rawbank wins "Best Regional Bank in Central Africa" at the African Banker Awards 2024

Rawbank was honored as the best regional bank in Central Africa at the African Banker Awards, organized on May 30, 2024 by the African Development Bank (AfDB). The award recognizes Rawbank's commitment to banking performance, innovation and financial inclusiveness.

Below is the full Rawbank press release.

Press release from Rawbank

Rawbank wins "Best Regional Bank in Central Africa" at the African Banker Awards 2024.

Kinshasa, May 30, 2024 - Rawbank, the leading bank in the Democratic Republic of Congo, has been named 'Best Regional Bank in Central Africa' at the African Banker Awards, organized by the African Development Bank (AfDB). The award recognizes Rawbank's

commitment to banking performance, innovation and financial inclusiveness. Held as part of the AfDB's Annual General Meetings, the African Banker Awards celebrate the continent's financial institutions that stand out for their ability to expand their customer base, introduce new services and adopt new technologies.

Rawbank was recognized for its innovative financial solutions and its key role in the economic development of Central Africa. During the evening, Rawbank was nominated for the Afawa (Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa) awards, which recognize banking institutions working to close the \$42 billion financing gap for women in Africa.



This testifies to Rawbank's commitment to the economic empowerment of women on the continent through its flagship initiatives such as "Lady's First". "This recognition confirms our commitment to excellence and our strategic approach in Central Africa".

It reinforces our determination to innovate and always serve our customers better. I would like to express our deep gratitude to the African Development Bank for its continued support of Rawbank's efforts and of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It is with great pride that we welcome this award. Every member of our teams has made a significant contribution to this

success, and we are extremely grateful to them", says Mustafa Rawji, Rawbank's Managing Director.

Zoom.Eco



Obstetric fistula: estimated incidence of between 5,000 and 7,000 cases per year in the DRC

« The incidence of obstetric fistula is estimated at between 5,000 and 7,000 cases per year in the Democratic Republic of the Congo », said BAPITANI BASUANA, Representative of the Minister of Public Health, during the celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Obstetric Fistula, held in Kinshasa on May 23, 2024.

In 2023, more than 5,500 cases of obstetric fistula were reported in Congo-Kinshasa, with North Kivu the most affected province. "According to the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 0.3% of women reported ever having experienced fistula symptoms. Its prevalence is not well known, and its incidence is estimated at 5,000 - 7,000 cases per year. It should be noted that in 2023, 5,591 cases were notified and reported in the DHIS2 by all fistula cases out of 34,445 deliveries with post-partum complications, with a high peak in North Kivu (3,008 cases), Haut-Lomami (302 cases) and Kasai Central (294 cases) at the top of the list. Only 176 diagnosed cases of post-rape urogenital fistula were treated", he reported.

aking part in the event, the deputy country representative of the United Nations

Population Fund (UNFPA) recalled that this UN agency supports the campaign for the elimination of this scourge launched in the country in 2006. Referring to other UNFPA initiatives, notably the training of service providers, Kenneth EHOZOU reiterated his institution's commitment to supporting DR-Congo in improving universal health coverage.

«I reiterate UNFPA's commitment to continuing its support to improve universal health coverage in reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health in general, and in particular to continuing the campaign to eliminate obstetric fistula. There can be no sustainable development as long as thousands of women and girls live in exclusion and disrespect for human dignity. This is why the eradication of obstetric fistula must be our common priority,

and why we must remain committed and determined until we achieve the expected results, namely the elimination of obstetric fistula», he emphasized.

In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/67/147, decided to proclaim May 23 as the International Day for the Eradication of Obstetric Fistula, in order to significantly step up measures to eradicate this scourge. This year's theme was : « Breaking the cycle, preventing obstetric fistula in women and girls ».

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DRC: Launch of the forum on health financing and universal health coverage

The Ministry of Health, Hygiene and Prevention in collaboration with the National Council for Universal Health Coverage (NCUHC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo launched the forum on financing and universal health coverage on Tuesday May 14, 2024 in Kinshasa, with the aim of strengthening the partnership to put an end to the morbidity and mortality threatening the Congolese population.

Focusing mainly on the theme of "Strategic purchasing of primary healthcare in the DRC", this forum was attended by a wide range of stakeholders from both national and provincial levels. Various themes were addressed during these 4-day exchanges, from May 14 to 17, 2024, including:

- Key concepts in health financing;

- The challenges of mobilizing resources for health ;
- The challenges of mobilizing the informal sector;
- The challenges of pooling resources;
- How to move towards more strategic purchasing;
- How to protect resources for primary healthcare.

In his speech, NCUHC National Coordinator Polydor MBUNGANI emphasized the importance of access to primary healthcare, as advocated by the NCUHC steering committee.

"Primary healthcare is part of universal health coverage. It's a bottom-up policy.



Instead, for example, of investing heavily in large-scale infrastructures such as hospitals and centers at that level, we're going to focus first on investments that target the population at grassroots level, at the level of health zones, health centers and referral hospitals, and finally move up into larger centers, but with a particular emphasis on

primary healthcare, which is essential care that people need when they access the health system," he informed.

« As for the overall amount of health financing, in the current health system, it's about \$2 billion for universal health coverage in general, most of which comes from households, but there's also support from partners, which is the second part of the financing. We now want to improve funding from the State itself, to exceed even this billion mark, so as to be more efficient in terms of universal health coverage », he said.

According to Dr. Sylvain YUMA RAMAZANI, Secretary General at the Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene and Prevention, the ultimate aim of these discussions is to provide

the population with quality healthcare.

« This forum is of the utmost importance, because we are discussing an essential issue relating to health financing, while we are looking ahead to the full operationalization of universal health coverage, which means that everyone living in this country will have no difficulty in accessing quality care and services wherever they are, and that this will not lead to total ruin,» he declared.

These exchanges bring together a number of technical and financial partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank in the DRC and the GFF.

As a reminder, the NCUHC is made up of a

steering committee chaired by the Head of State himself, and its main aim is to ensure that all Congolese have access to the basic healthcare and services they need, without incurring financial or economic ruin.

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Kinshasa hosts high-level emergency regional meeting on Monkeypox in Africa

The African continent has been hit by Monkeypox disease, otherwise known as monkeypox. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 14,000 cases, including 354 deaths, were recorded in Africa last year.

This year, adds this international organization, more than 4,500 cases of the disease, including almost 300 deaths, have been recorded on the continent. Among the African countries hit by Monkeypox is the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the provinces of Kinshasa, Tshopo, Maniema and Kwango are the worst affected..

To respond to this worrying monkeypox situation in Africa, a high-level emergency regional meeting on Mpox in Africa has been convened in Kinshasa. The meeting was attended by 11 countries, including Ghana, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria and Uganda..

The Congolese Minister of Public Health, Hygiene and Prevention, who opened the meeting, hinted that Mpox is on the rise and is becoming a real public health problem not only in DR-Congo but also in the region. "Unfortunately, we have noticed that, for several years now, Mpox has been on the rise and is becoming a real public health problem, not only for the population of the DRC, but also becoming a regional threat. That's why I'm so pleased and proud to welcome my ministerial colleagues from the region this Saturday, as well as their experts. And so this regional problem is ultimately becoming a global one. The mobilization we're seeing today makes us

proud, as Minister of Health, to say that we have international support that will enable us to make the best decisions", declared Dr. Samuel-Roger Kamba.

This member of the government also urged the experts from the countries taking part in this meeting to take decisions that will enable an orderly response to monkeypox,

the risk of the DRC becoming the source of transmission of this disease, and called for it to be stopped.

« Someone said to me in Washington: 'Aren't we talking about the second HIV virus? We take it very seriously. That's why we're in the DRC, so that we can see how together we can stop this trend, especially as this transmission also takes place with people who engage in sexual activities to earn money. So there's a big risk of the DRC becoming the source of infection transmission from other neighboring countries, and we have to stop this,' he emphasized.

The high-level emergency regional meeting on Monkeypox in Africa will run for 3 days, from April 11 to 13. The first two days will be devoted to the work of experts from the 11 participating countries,

and the last day will see the strategic meeting of the Ministers of Public Health of the aforementioned countries.

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with a view to its eradication.

« We're not going to use ideology to respond to a health problem. We're going to respond in an orderly fashion, based on what the scientists tell us is the best method to follow. We don't have any preconceived ideas about the best treatment or vaccination, but we do want the response to be directed not only at Mpox as a virus, but also at the healthcare system, because a non-resilient healthcare system will not allow the right decisions to be taken in relation to the virus," asserted Dr Kamba.

For his part, Dr Jean KASEYA, Director General of the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Africa), warned of

PUBLIC-SECTOR RESEARCH CENTERS AND INSTITUTES IN THE D.R. CONGO

<p>RIHS (Research Institute in Health Science) <i>Objective: To improve the state of health of the population through research in the following fields: pharmaceutical, medical, anthropological, psychological or socio-cultural.</i> Address: 9, Av. Lukusa C/Gombe; E-mail: dnyembo@gmail.com; Tel: 0824580211</p>	<p>SSRC (Social Science Research Center / Bandunduville) <i>Objective: To carry out practical scientific research into major socio-economic and cultural issues.</i> To promote sustainable aquatic development. Address: 29, Av. de la mission, Q/Salongo, C/Basoko. BANDUNDUVILLE, BP. 223; E-mail: akuzituka@gmail.com; Tel: 0815898971</p>
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<p>RCHS (Research Center in Human Sciences) <i>Objective: To ensure the human development of the Congolese people through the study of its social, economic and political dimensions with a view to identifying the factors that have a positive or negative influence on its development.</i> Address: 33, Av. comité urbain C/ Gombe; E-mail: mingashang@yahoo.fr; Tel: 0819377821</p>	<p>NDRC (Nutritional Diseases Research Center/Gemena) <i>Objective: Research into diseases linked to malnutrition, such as related diseases by isolating certain molecules, such as SYZYSIUM GUINESIE to combat amoebic yeasts and diarrhea in South Ubangi.</i> Address: Mobutu n° 220/A. GEMENA/ SOUTH UBANGI PROVINCE; E-mail: cherusangi@yahoo.fr; 0992416091</p>
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<p>GRC (Geophysical Research Center) <i>Objective: To provide the country with a national geophysical observation network, for the global study of the internal behavior of the earth in the DRC.</i> Address: 44, Av. de la démocratie, C/ Gombe(within GMRC); E-mail:tondozi@gmail.com; Tel: 0854426228</p>	<p>MDRC (Multidisciplinary Development Research Center /Bunia) <i>Objective: To carry out operational research in the north-east of the DRC in the fields of applied linguistics, African cultures and applied sciences.</i> Study of nature, fauna, flora and protection of endangered species. Address: BUNIA/ITURI; E-mail: Kermwathomas@gmail.com; Tel: 0997717070</p>
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