

# NEWS FROM THE NETWORK: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NOODLES CAMEROON

After the monitoring and the supervision of the NOODLES Cameroonian team in its activities since 2010, the organization NOODLES. Cameroon has been finally registered in Yaoundé in 2016.

The activities of Noodles Cameroon are mainly based on the promotion of a movement supporting science-society dialogue and transferring science-based evidence to risk management and decision making.

Other NOODLES country teams are effective in Nigeria (Port Harcourt) and Vietnam (Hanoi), whereas new teams are grouping in Senegal (Dakar) and Chad (Njamena).

## **NOODLES Cameroon activities to strengthen emerging African civil society's involvement in food safety**

With the globalization of food trade and multiplication of food scandals, African consumers are gradually taking these concerns more seriously and are getting involved in advocacy for better food policies, food standards elaboration and official controls at local levels.

In many countries, consumers' voices are carried only by national consumers association: these associations so far defend consumer's right, among which the right for the satisfaction of basic needs (access to health care, acceptable habitat, education, foods).

Consumer's participation is now accepted in many governmental and international organizations, to make sure their voices and heart and take in considerations during the process of policy formulation.

Past experiences showed that participation of consumers' representative in policy making instances remains poor and inefficient, also because of their difficulties to propose sound and science-based contribution, especially when specific matters call for basics knowledge.

Food safety concerns on the continent have been for long time ignored by different parties: law makers, private organizations and civil societies. These last

decades have seen some improvements: African civil societies are showing more engagement for networking to better advocate and become a driver of changes. Civil societies are considered as a key pillar in food safety systems: their roles are crucial to ensure protection of populations

Although insufficient, the increasing number of civil societies engaged in addressing food safety concerns is a hope for the entire African continent. The presence and implication of consumers can serve as a major driver to catalyze the policy making process. To potentiate their impact, these organizations working across different regions of the continent should network in order to benefit from each other actions and expertise. Noodles Cameroon is working to strengthen current experience of food safety associations on the continent, for instance: recruitment of new members, creation of working team in others countries, capacities building, joint field research, data collection and assessment, report writing and dissemination for local authorities, knowledge sharing and social media interactions

**The African association of microbiology and food hygiene**

Created in 1985 under the initiative of African researchers from 23 countries, the association aims at disseminating information related to food microbiology and hygiene, training stakeholders and coordinating related research works. The association is present in many regional activities, assists industries in putting in place effective food safety management systems, and organizes international symposium and workshops.

**The Maghrebine association of food safety (AMSSA)**

The Maghrebine association of food safety (AMSSA, <http://www.amssa-tunisie.org/index.html>) is a science- base association register in Tunisia in 2011. The mission of AMSSA is to reduce impacts of food-borne disease through promotion of hygiene and food safety in Mahgrebine countries.



>> AMSSA conference during the 2015 international consumers day on food safety

The objective is to serve as a discussion platform for scientists, health professionals and consumers in Tunisia and in the Maghreb. AMSSA carries out research on food safety concerns, risk analysis and training for stakeholders. AMSSA works to establish strong network with all stakeholders, and advocate for harmonizing food standards and surveillance methods in the Maghreb. There is a strong collaboration between the association and others international organization (WHO, FAO and OIE). AMSSA periodically organize events related to food safety (e.g. food safety system, risk assessment of residues in foods) for enterprises, government officials and non-governmental organization. Currently, Tunisia food law is in preparation and public contributions are going on, including those from other food safety associations working across the continent, like NOODLES Cameroon. A draft of the law in discussion in Tunisia was sent to the sister association in Cameroon for technical comments.

Propositions made were appreciated and published in the report of the conference and on the AMSSA website.

**Ivory Coast association of food safety (AISSA)**

The Ivory Coast association of food safety (AISSA) is newly created, with only one years of existence. AISSA is created by the Ivoirian former Minister of reconciliation, HAMZA BAMBA. Association mission is to promote consumption of safe food in Ivory Coast and West Africa region. Association members are mainly professionals, with a background in food technology, quality control and nutrition. To mark is launching in 2016, the association organized a seminar for journalist to provide them with basics food safety concepts and principle, as well as improving their report on food safety related issues for better communication

The ambition is to see in a short term, science journalists specialized on the nexus of public health, nutrition and food safety.



>> HAMSAM BAMBA (president of AISSA during the seminar with journalist)



>> Noodles Cameroon team after a working session