



Cameroonian private sector's involvement for ensuring Cameroonian's children appropriate nutrition

The first **Business Forum for nutrition** on the theme "*the private sector in his role as an engine for the investment and the scale of nutrition interventions in Cameroon*" was held in Douala in May last in the conference room of Groupement Inter patronal du Cameroun – GICAM.

Some 30 representatives of the private sector in the areas of telecommunication, transportation, agri-food, oil distribution and the buildings and public works were present at the invitation ensured by UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health.

The figures on the situation of malnutrition in Cameroon, requested the participants consideration.

The first part of this meeting was devoted to a presentation on the situation and the various forms of malnutrition in Cameroon that affect definitely too many children:

- 178,140 children under five suffering from global acute malnutrition are expected in 2014 in the four most affected regions. The nutrition survey figures of 2013 showed a prevalence of 8.6 percent of global acute malnutrition in the Extreme North region, 5.8 percent in the North, 4.3 percent in Adamawa and 3 percent in the East region the emaciated children are nine times more likely to die than other children.
- More than a million of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, an invisible and insidious form of malnutrition. One child of less than five years out of three. This form of malnutrition delays permanent outcomes linked to cognitive and physical development if it is not prevented by the age of 2 years

Economic losses due to malnutrition cost each year 354 billion CFA to Cameroon

In addition losses in productivity, reduction of human capital is a real restraint to the development and the economic emergence of the country.

A presentation of the SUN (Scaling up nutrition) movement Cameroon joined in 2013, has put forward the role that the private sector can play in reducing significant and lasting undernutrition through the increasing of financing for development and the scaling of the multisectoral nutrition interventions.



Initiatives as large scale food fortification, the financial support of private sector for drugs for people living with HIV have already been supported in Cameroon. The discussions around this shared experiences allowed the participants to reflect on how their industry could contribute to the fight against malnutrition

A win- win partnership



In Cameroon if, nothing is done rapidly the next generation who will fit into the world of work in 19 years, nearly a million of Cameroon, will be less productive because having suffered from chronic malnutrition over the years 2010-2020.

This situation should be a major concern for policy makers as well as for the private sector that needs a trained workforce, but also potential consumers while we know that chronic malnutrition

reduces the individual from 22 to 45 percent in economic gain in adulthood.

These private companies at the forum have become aware of the importance of the problem and the need to engage in activities related to nutrition and sustainable way and invest in the social responsibility of companies with a focus on children as future generations.

At the end of the Business Forum for nutrition, a roadmap was issued and represented private companies engaged in the manufacture of complementary foods for young children, the use of mobile as a vector of communication and data exchange, the strengthening of communication for development for the benefit of the communities as well as to contribute financially to the benefit of an investment fund for nutrition which should be rapidly put in place.

The involvement of the private sector also includes the identification of the enterprises 'ambassadors' who can be locomotives for the sector and which will be advocacy for Cameroon for domestic resource optimization and appropriate nutrition for their children.