



## Newsletter

Dear colleagues,

First, receive our best wishes for 2023. Now that the pandemic seems to be moving away, USF's international activities seem to be picking up, and many actions are being negotiated in both Africa and Latin America regarding student and researcher training. Once these are in place, we will inform you of the results achieved. For a variety of reasons ranging from slow decision-making to shifting priorities and seeking funding, things can long on for several months.

In this issue, three aspects will be addressed: the establishment of a professional Bachelor system on waste and wastewater treatment in Benin followed by the appointment of a rector for a Guinean university. Finally, our sister-association Animath presents its various activities in Africa.

Wishing you a good read.

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Prof. Robert Laurini, Editor of the USF-AWB Newsletter.

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### **Commitment of the first professional Bachelor program «Biology – Water treatment and waste management» in Benin**

The local authorities of Benin, companies specialized in waste management, others in water treatment are engaged in a sanitation strategy in this country. But the qualified staff is missing to accompany these actions. A first mission undertaken in 2021 by USF and the University of Nantes, France, had made it possible to establish exchanges with several professional entities concerned in Benin. They confirmed their great interest in a new cycle of university training in biology (water treatment and waste management) and their willingness to support it.

### **The need for training in ministerial empowerment**

The need for university vocational training is there. It is now involved the École Supérieure

Le Faucon in a multi-year project with the support of USF and the University of Nantes. However, as this vocational training is quite new in Benin, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has decided that an Enabling Commission should be set up to assess a new Bachelor program. This commission gave a favorable opinion with the authorization of the ES le Faucon to prepare this new professional license, and the Ministry of Higher Education published on 6 April 2022 a decree authorizing the ES le Faucon to engage this training.



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The opinion of the National Advisory Commission and the ministerial order having been given after the closing of the students' registration, and the first re-entry, initially planned in October 2021, was therefore postponed for a year in October 2022. It was therefore considered that two preparatory activities would be undertaken in the first year of the project: the training of trainers and the commitment to acquire laboratory equipment for this new academic specialty.

### **Training of trainers**

Three trainers of the ES le Faucon, Dr TOPANOU Nikita, Dr Espérance KOUGNIMON and Ms Roseline ZODEOUGAN carried out a training mission of trainers at the University of Nantes from 27 September 27, October 7, 2022. It enabled the Beninese teachers and the laboratory technician to become familiar with the pedagogical practices implemented in the Department of Biological Engineering Environmental Sciences and Environmental Technologies of the French university. In addition, meetings with French professionals and companies were organized during their stay.



### **Acquisition of laboratory equipment**

A list of laboratory equipment has been established in order to meet the needs of the practical experimentations foreseen in the new professional Bachelor program "Biology - water treatment and waste management". Several suppliers in Benin were asked to draw up proposals. On this basis, a selection has been made to initiate the ordering process.

### **The late commitment of September 2022/2023**

The number of students enrolled in November 2022 is still low for the first academic year 2022/2023. This can be explained by a late decision to authorize the Ministry of Higher Education, but also by the uncertainty of the students to embark on a novel program that did not yet exist in Benin, and of which they have a poor understanding of the vocational

prospects. ES le Faucon is aware of these provisional limits and maintains the opening of the industry. However, it was agreed that new information would be effective well in advance of the October 2023 academic year. It was therefore agreed that a new communication strategy on the new channel should be put in place. This is based on a series of steps towards future students and towards the companies concerned in the sector.

With regard to future students, conferences and presentations of this new stream and its opportunities will allow them to better understand the interest of this new stream.

### **Strengthen links with relevant companies and local authorities**

Links will also be strengthened with companies in the sector in Benin. The objective is to establish partnerships to plan and plan their cooperation in the training of students in the new stream. This is based on lectures given to students, visits to companies, water treatment and waste management sites, participation in courses, proposals for tutored projects in the form of partnerships, hosting trainees, provisions to facilitate the professional integration of students who have completed their training. These companies will be involved in the training, and it has been planned that initial initiatives (professional conferences, field visits, etc.) will be undertaken for students before March 2023.



An educational council of the Department "Biology - water treatment and waste management" will be organized in the last week of March 2023 at ES le Faucon. It will bring together the management of the school, the teachers of the Department and the companies of the professional sector in order to review the training plan of the first year, the initiatives undertaken by the professionals for students and any proposals aimed at strengthening the professionalization of committed training.

Finally, measures have been taken to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between teachers in this new stream and their French counterparts in the USF network.

For more information, contact Professor Xavier Alphaize, [xavier.alphaize@gmail.com](mailto:xavier.alphaize@gmail.com). ■

### **Appointment of a new Rector of the Kofi Annan University of Guinea following the international call for applications disseminated by USF's lists**

After the expiry of the mandate of the former Rector of UKAG, this institution asked the USF to disseminate the call for applications within its network. An invitation to tender was sent to nearly 7000 of our correspondents, and several applications were received. Finally, Professor Laskri Mohamed Tayeb was selected.



Recall that Prof. Mohamed Tayeb Laskri obtained a PhD in computer science (France, 1987) and then a State PhD in computer science at the University of Annaba (Algeria, 1995). He was Head of the Artificial Intelligence Research Group GRIA within the Computer Science Research Laboratory. He was the Rector of Annaba University and President of the Scientific Council of Annaba University 2002-2010. Since 2010, he has been a member of the Nation Council (Senate) in Algeria where he chaired the Foreign Affairs Committee. In addition, he was a member of the Pan-African Parliament from 2012 to 2017 where he chaired the North Africa Regional Group (2015-2017)

Good luck to him. For more details, contact Rector Laskri Mohamed Tayeb, [rectour@ukaguinee.org](mailto:rectour@ukaguinee.org). ■

### **Extracurricular Mathematics: Relaunching cooperation in Africa**

After the interruptions since 2020 due to Covid, Animath<sup>2</sup> supported by Campus-France, for extracurricular activities in sub-Saharan Africa has resumed in five countries: Djibouti,

Cameroon, Madagascar, Senegal, and Congo-DRC. Promising contacts are established in Niger.

In each country our local partner is an NGO created for the occasion and working with the academic authorities. Each has developed its roadmap for the academic year including the way in which high school clubs operate, the realization of a large «Math Forum», participation in some projects of Animath (cryptography competitions, introductory research workshops, training of Mathematicians, preparation for math competitions, etc.). At the end of 2022, one-week sessions with the participation of French mathematicians and computer scientists were organized in Fianarantsoa, Djibouti and Dakar. Others are scheduled for April and August in Yaoundé and Kinshasa.



In Djibouti, televised presentation of the December workshop: <https://youtu.be/n-h5a7E9epE>

In Senegal, two sessions co-supervised by three animators from X, including two Senegalese.

In other countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo-RC, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda, contact is maintained, and we hope to be able to continue what was successfully achieved in 2019.

### **«Forum», «Festival», «Restitution», «Subsidiarity»:**

The Kinshasa team is at the origin of several concepts born during the Animath sessions organized in Congo:

- Maths "Festival" (or Forum): Open the session broadly and get involved
- Club members to facilitate the various workshops.
- Restitution: In high schools, workshops held

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.animath.fr/>

during the session are then returned in the form of larger workshops led by students who attended this session.

- The “Subsidiarity” principle: Session facilitators do not do what can be done by participating high school students.

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