

### **Topic 5: Collaboration with developing countries**

France cannot be France without the "Francophonie", more precisely the International Organisation of the Francophonie, gathering French speaking nations and communities. Within a highly structured organisation (<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/francophonie/index.gb.html>), and in addition to ethical, political and cultural aspects, this Institution also aims at developing multilateral cooperations with a view to favour educational and economical progress.

The major tool available for Education is the Association of Partially or Wholly French-Language Universities – AUPELF, created in 1961. Its mission is to coordinate exchanges among its 391 members: universities, research institutes and centres. The UREF programme (University of French-speaking networks) was established in 1986 and created concrete scientific and technical information, training and research programmes. The AUPELF-UREF, now called the Agency of Francophonie Universities (AUF), has 17 regional offices and points of contact (<http://www.auf.org/>).

SFC is involved in some initiatives connected to AUPELF-UREF, which may concern chemical sciences and technologies (research networks, scientific documentation, organisation of seminars and workshops, etc.).

However its major concern is to provide information *via* Internet, its magazine *L'Actualité Chimique* and direct contacts with chemical societies of North Africa, West Africa, Madagascar, Vietnam, and in Europe, Romania:

- 1) The web site of SFC has a dedicated page for French-speaking areas (<http://www.sfc.fr/Francophonie.htm>),
- 2) All these chemical societies receive the bimonthly electronic newsletter "SFC Info en ligne" (On line SFC News) which also relay information proposed by these learning societies (<http://www.sfc.fr/SFCINFOENLIGNE/sfcinfo.html>), and copies of *L'Actualité Chimique* which are then dispatched within the Countries
- 3) Additional information is provided in *L'Actualité Chimique* where a "Francophonie" page is opened for specific news. Moreover, special issues have given a view of the activities in Chemistry and related fields in these countries. This was already the case for Algeria and Vietnam,
- 4) Efforts are made to provide series of interactive courses at the first level of higher education. This receives the support of the French Academy of Sciences and CNRS and it is planned to involve our colleagues from the Canadian Chemical Society,
- 5) Support for the organisation of local associations of students from developing nations (recently for Romanian students),
- 6) Invitation for students from Africa, North Africa, Roumania, Vietnam to attend the SFC meetings.
- 7) Special initiatives with the scientific attaché of French embassies, *e. g.* donations of scientific instruments, books and journals.

Finally, it should be said that the actual political and economical situations in most of the countries in touch with SFC do not favour the development of specific programmes. An additional problem is the bureaucratic barrier to many initiatives related to transfer of goods.