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Madagascar shows off Horeb system



Madagascan lychee exporters were in France and Belgium last month to present their sustainable growing practices to prospective European buyers

A delegation of Madagascan exporters last month completed a ten-day visit to France and Belgium on the eve of the lychee campaign.

The aim of the trip, including attendance at the Sial exhibition in Paris, was to familiarise European buyers with the sustainable approach practised by the island's producers, who follow the Horeb reference system.

The goal of Horeb (which stands for hygiene, organisation, restoration of the environment, and biodiversity) is to provide a better quality of life for all who live and work in the area through corporate social responsibility, to work transparently using the Kaizen method of continuous incremental progress, to reduce food insecurity by creating income-generating activities, and to look for balance in terms of biodiversity.

"Unlike other standards

on the market, Horeb goes beyond a simple verification procedure before the start of campaigns," stated Coleacp, the association that supports African, Caribbean and Pacific exporters. "Horeb assumes that year-round good hygiene practices in the rural world are well assimilated and adopted to become a real way of life. Horeb is one of the few standards that combine commercial activities and the Sustainable Development Goals."

Under hygiene, Horeb demands affordable, equitable, universal access to drinking water, through the distribution of manual water pumps, tap water jerry cans and water treatment products in every household or producer organisation. Producers are also given training in the construction of latrine toilets to improve health and safety.

In terms of organisation, Horeb takes gender into account, since around

60 per cent of agricultural employees are female, and promotes decent work and sustainable economic growth.

The system also promotes the sustainable management of forests, the fight against malaria and other waterborne diseases, provision of healthcare and responsible production. Meanwhile, CSR activities help to open up production areas through rehabilitating roads and bridges, improve access to schools through building new classrooms and increase access to healthcare through the construction of dispensaries.

Horeb also supports diversification, since the lychee harvest for Europe lasts just five days, encouraging producers to explore fish farming and market gardening, for example, allowing growers to spread their income across the year.