Haissam Chraiteh – President & Director General, Sanofi Morocco



16.04.2015

Tags: Sanofi, Investment, R&D

The president and director general of Sanofi Morocco talks about the impact of public/private partnerships for the development of the Moroccan health sector, explains why 2013 was the African year for Sanofi and stresses the importance of visibility if Sanofi is to continue investing in large regional projects in the country.

You returned to Morocco as general manager of Sanofi Morocco in 2013, a year we could dub “the African year” for Sanofi with the visit of the CEO Mr. Viehbacher to Morocco and Algeria. What can you tell me about the mission you have been given as the new GM in Morocco?

My mission, and Sanofi´s aim, is always to offer an integrated solution of care via our different platform whether through vaccines, treatments for rare diseases, or through more conventional products such as treatment for diabetes and the central nervous system. Our desire is also to remain a strong local actor: not only to develop an activity in Morocco for the Moroccan market but also to leverage Morocco as a hub for our wider African practice, particularly for anti-malaria products.

2013 was an important year for Sanofi Morocco because it was the year during which we launched a new distribution platform demonstrating our strong desire to continue investing in Morocco. The

visit of our CEO, who opened this platform alongside the minister of health as well as representatives from industry was the opportunity to sign a number of public/private collaboration agreements with the Moroccan authorities in diabetes as well as in mental health and also in terms of training on good distribution practices.

It was a year with numerous events for Sanofi and our partnership with the authorities marked our strong commitment to the country and the wider region.



Sanofi stands out amongst its peers by the breadth and depth of its engagement in Morocco. How do you explain this?

Sanofi has a historic presence in Morocco going back 60 years. We were the first pharmaceutical company in Morocco with two affiliates, our own business, namely Sanofi, and a twin company, Maphar, which acts as a service provider and partner for a certain number of multinational laboratories. Hence this historical presence allows us to develop lasting relations within the country. And we also continuously provide significant investments that make us a real driving force on the Moroccan market.

Not only are you a driving force but you are also by some distance the leading player in Morocco with around 20 percent market share. What are your aspirations and how do you stay motivated as the leading pharma company in the country?

As the leading player in the market we are always motivated because of course, we want to retain our place. We face numerous challengers, so if we do not always strive to maintain a positive approach in terms of development, then we will be surpassed. Our desire is to fulfill our obligations within this market and to have the possibility to keep performing in all areas, not only in terms of partnerships but also in terms of ethical practices, good disease management, by offering innovative approaches and also by extending our reach to the entire Moroccan population, with good quality affordable care. For example, as mentioned earlier, we have a partnership for diabetes, and mental illnesses, a topic on which we have already been working for many years. We also strive to eradicate Leishmaniasis, a neglected tropical disease from the country. This is of utmost importance to us because our global vocation is not only to offer an integrated service but also to develop a true and strong partnership with the authorities to address public health issues.

On the topic of diabetes, Morocco is a country where today, few people are diagnosed, and even fewer have access to treatments. What is the impact of Sanofi´s partnership with the authorities?

We seek to improve the quality of patients' lives and to improve the support that those patients receive. We are not there to replace health sector, but rather to use our know-how, our expertise, to support the country in improving its ability to tackle illnesses, and therefore allow for an improvement in the public health situation. We offer a support service, at the scientific level, via our expertise in disease management, and via training of medical staff, via an innovative approach on a certain number of practices using our global experience. We are here for support. We have no intention to lead or give particular guidelines, but if the authorities give their consent, to pass on some of our experience. Do you know that according to recent studies, 50 percent of diabetic population in Morocco are not diagnosed? Diabetes is a tricky disease. It is not a disease that hurts at first, but when it settles, it can lead to very serious complications such as cardiovascular issues, blindness, or even amputations. Our desire is to create this awareness, and educate the patients and their families, as well as the overall population of Morocco about the disease – and therefore reduce its impact on public health. Furthermore, if treated early, the associated costs of the disease become controllable, and represents considerable savings for public funds.

The second component of your partnership is raising awareness around mental illnesses. How would you describe the situation in Morocco today?

This is something that Sanofi has been working on for several years already, in partnership with associations and NGOs. The statistics given by the Ministry of Health show that overall, mental illness in Morocco has a prevalence of 40 percent of the population. There is an important

psychological aspect behind mental illnesses. Mental illnesses are poorly understood by the population and are stigmatized because they scare people. They also break families, who sometimes fear aggression from the patient, and also fear the reactions from the community. It is important to remember that these illnesses do not only affect well educated citizens, they also touch rural areas with low levels of education, which can lead to a lack of understanding of the symptoms of mental illnesses. So we need to go beyond the training of psychiatrists to have a better disease management, better diagnosis at GP level, especially in rural areas. Mental health is one of the development pillars of the health policies of our country, and again, we are present as a partner to bring our global expertise to the Moroccan authorities and patients.

Do you think Morocco, which still has an incomplete health coverage, is ready to do more in terms of covering chronic illnesses?

The authorities have the required political will. The Ministry of Health has a strong desire to develop the national health coverage. There is a significant amount of the population that needs better coverage, the rural population as well as the population that cannot afford treatments. For the authorities, the challenges are twofold. Do we have the finances to provide a system that effectively covers such illnesses? That’s the first challenge. The second includes the difficulties associated with the implementation of this medical coverage. There is a strong, clear, political desire that has been around for a very long time. AMO and RAMED constitute a subject that has been discussed for a while now but the difficulty remains in their implementation, deployment and practical use for the patient.

Morocco is often seen as the gateway to Africa. Can the large distribution center opened by Sanofi in 2013 be explained in this light?

The opening of the distribution center was the result of a previous decision: to modernize our production plant in Morocco. Our production plant in Morocco remains Sanofi´s biggest production site in Africa.



Ten years ago, Sanofi developed an innovative treatment for malaria. We have been working on the treatment of tropical diseases since a very long time, following our logic of being a healthcare partner. We also created partnerships in Africa to deliver treatments at affordable prices. These programs did develop well and at a certain point we needed to increase our production capacities. We chose Morocco as the place to do this as Morocco is an African country in which we already had a base and that was starting to develop in terms of regional importance. Ten years ago, we invested enormously in the production site and later in the development of export activity. We needed to modernize our distribution capacity and hence the development of the new distribution centre that allowed us to manage both our local production needs and our ambitions in Africa.

If we were to look into the future, in the next five years what can we expect of Sanofi Morocco?

In terms of investors, we always need to have some stability and predictability in order to secure our investments. With the recent reforms we have somehow lost predictability on what will happen in the future. The price cuts have taken place: the Moroccan authorities have the right to regulate the system of pricing in the country. Nevertheless, there were numerous measures which were not very well understood by the industry, such as the transfer of profits from the laboratories to the pharmacists, and had an enormous impact on products. Also, promises were made in terms of accompanying and modernization measures. However, today, we do not have enough certainty on what will happen. This is what makes a five-year vision rather unclear, which in turn affects the

improvement of health policies in Morocco, as well as other investments from the pharmaceutical community.

Will Sanofi Morocco continue with its significant investments in the Moroccan market?

Again, this matter is linked to market certainties. We are always in the process of investing. We have constructed a distribution centre and we continue to invest daily in medical training. We have 150 medical representatives who work on the ground with medics, to train them in certain pathologies. We continue to launch new products,. We recently launched a new vaccine and continue to work on rare illnesses.

Larger regional projects will require further certainty and security with regards to our activities. And this will only happen with accompanying measures that the authorities have promised, and we calmly and respectfully await them.

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