

Committed to Djibouti

By MAGDA RÉMON COUBÈCHE

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MAGDA RÉMON COUBÈCHE

is a graduate in International Business from the European Business School, Paris. Upon graduation she worked with the McCaen Erickson advertising agency in London and The Coca-Cola Company in Madrid before returning to Djibouti to lead the family group. She is an active member of the Djibouti Chamber of Commerce since 2003, and was elected the Chamber's Vice-President in 2008.

The Coubèche Group dates back to 1885, when Mohamed Saleh Coubèche set up a small ship's chandler in Obock, moving to Djibouti in 1893. Among the first products our company began making was block ice. Today, five generations later, the Coubèche Group of companies occupy a 28,000 square-meter property near the capital's port, and directly employ some 630 people. During its more-than a century of existence, Coubèche has played a key role in the development of Djibouti, weathering good times and bad, and is the country's leading private enterprise.

The group is involved in two main activities: industrial and commercial. Etablissements Coubèche Sarl represents our industrial activities, and has held the Coca Cola franchise since 1964, specializing in producing and bottling carbonated soft drinks, as well as CRYSTAL mineral water – a brand included in the series of products approved by The Coca-Cola Company.

Etablissements Coubèche Sarl has always worked toward improving the country's economic development through investment in industry. Its industrial unit consists of two production lines for Coca-Cola and Crystal mineral water), as well as a CO2 plant and an ice production plant.

Based on an exceptional nationwide distribution network of 120 wholesalers and close to 3,000 sales outlets, Glacière Coubèche Sarl generates a whole network of transport, wholesale and retail activities, creating many jobs indirectly, and adding significant value to the economy.

Looking to the future, as we have always done, Glacière has several large projects underway to increase our industrial capacity and to develop and diversify our networks of major food brands managed by Glacières Coubèche Sarl. These projects will further consolidate the Group, the future of which is inextricably inherently tied to the development of Djibouti.

Glacières Coubèche Sarl is a major importer, retailer, and distributor of many internationally renowned food products. To support its commercial activities, the company owns a logistics platform offering 4,300 CBM of cold room storage capacity and storage space for more than 3,000 pallets, as well as three supermarkets.

The Group's commitment to excellence has been recognized by The Coca-Cola Company, as well as other renowned international organisations. The

Coca-Cola and Crystal mineral water production lines are HACCP, ISO, and FSSC 2200 certified. They are also in the process of receiving Environmental Security certification.

I believe in setting an example through leadership. As the Coubèche Group's first female CEO, and the only woman to head a company of this size in Djibouti, I hope to serve as a model to other women in this country. The environment facilitated notably by the First Lady, HE Mme Kadra Mahamoud Haïd, has helped lay the ground for a greater role for women in Djiboutian society.

A commitment to corporate social responsibility

The company takes its corporate social responsibility commitments seriously, and has long been active in a range of areas.

The Franco Islamic School was set up in the early 1930s, and while remaining outside the school system of the colonial administration of those days, was the first to provide bilingual teaching in Arabic and French in Djibouti.

The company has also adopted an active policy for the employment of physically disabled persons.

The company is also working to its carbon footprint and has built a state-of-the art wastewater treatment plant. Treated water is injected with chlorine to kill any remaining bacteria before joining with the sea (or be used for other purposes) in compliance with the strictest Coca-Cola Company requirements, while sludge is further thickened by addition of polymer and a electromechanical dewatering system and discharged in an environmentally friendly manner.

We are also organizing a project for the collection of recyclable waste to allow their recycling: crushing of scrap Coca-Cola PVC crates, collection of glass, compression of aluminium cans and PET bottles in order to export them to waste recycling plants.

Developing the potential of the industrial sector is at the heart of the Government of Djibouti's policies, especially in the field of energy, water supply water and youth training and employment.

The launch of a Higher Council for dialogue between the public and private sectors also shows the strong commitment of the Head of State HE Ismail Omar Guelleh to strengthen industry, a key sector of the economy with a promising future for Djibouti and the Coubèche Group.