INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND GENETIC RESOURCES,
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FOLKLORE

Fifteenth Session
Geneva, December 7 to 11, 2009

WIPO PANEL ON “INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES’
CONCERNS AND EXPERIENCES IN PROMOTING, SUSTAINING
AND SAFEGUARDING THEIR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE,
TRADITIONAL CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS AND GENETIC
RESOURCES”

EXPERIENCES FROM CAMEROON

DECEMBER 7, 2009

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* This document comprises the presentation in the form received from the presenter. Any views expressed in the presentation are not necessarily those of WIPO or any of its Member States.
Traditional Knowledge TK, and Traditional Cultural Expression/Expression of Folklore, TCEs.

The case of the Mbororo-Fulani Pastoralists of Cameroon

By Musa Usman Ndamba

Map of Cameroon and Africa
Background

- Mbororo-Fulani are a subgroup of the wider Fulani ethnic group.
- They are dispersedly settled across West and Central Africa.
- The Mbororo-Fulani pastoralists are an indigenous people who migrated into Cameroon in the late 18th century.
- In Cameroon they are found in 8 of the 10 provinces.
- They are cattle pastoralists who depend on natural resources for their livelihood.

- Cattle rearing constitute the main occupation of the Mbororo-Fulani.
- Recently Mbororo-Fulani had evolved from nomadism to semi-nomadism or transhumance.
- Mbororo-Fulani are very knowledgeable in ethno-veterinary medicine.
- This knowledge is however not promoted because the role they play is not acknowledged.
Some medicinal plants are fast disappearing due to:

- Climate Challenge and population pressure
- The elders are dyeing without transferring knowledge.
- The young generation are moving to settle in town.
- Lack adequate skill to properly record TK.
- Lack support from National Government.

Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) and Folklore

- This area comprises three main components:
  - Proverbs
  - Music
  - Ethics
Proverbs

Mbororo Fulani expressed their culture sometimes through the use of proverbs that are divided into the following categories:

- **Common sense** e.g the elephant and the tiger do not go hunting on the same pasture

- **Honesty** e.g the bottom of wealth is sometimes a dirty thing to behold

- **Thoughtfulness** e.g a fowl does not forget where it lays its eggs

- **Generosity** e.g every little tree gives its little bit of shade

- **Humility** e.g a good name is better than gold

- **Good behaviour** e.g when a ripe fruit sees an honest man it drops

- **Consequences** e.g it is the fear of tomorrow that makes the tortoise to carry his house along with him wherever he goes

- **Wisdom and age** e.g if you come to the village of the blind, close an eye until you leave

- **Courage** e.g he who does not look ahead always remain behind

- **Friendship** e.g the eyes can see what they do not want to but the legs will go only to place they want

- **Leadership** e.g what affects the nose must also affects the eyes that must weep for it
Music

- Music is at times performed by griots, *yoiks*.
- The main instrument are drums (*mbaggu)*.
- Content of songs: history, adulthood secrets, praises of important figures and religious preaching.

Occasions characterized by singing and dancing are naming ceremonies, weddings, graduations.

Ethics

- Mbororo Fulani Pastoralists have a unique custom and code of conduct. This is expressed through the following:

  - Cousinhood (*dendiraaku*)
  - Pulaaku
Cousinhood (*dendiraaku*)

- It is a tool to express friendly and fun relationship
- It is used to govern not only the relationships between individuals, but also between communities
- The first level of this concerns particularly the link between the respective descendants of a brother and a sister (cousins).
- The second level concerns certain clans within the Mbororo-Fulani society
- The third level concerns certain ethnic groups across central and west Africa
- At any of these levels, relationships are expressed through poking or joking by teasing each other.
- This kind of behaviour can be found even between strangers who discover that they are cousins

Pulaaku

- This is a code of conduct that is very unique to the Mbororo-Fulani
- It comprises four main principles:
  - *Munyal* = patience, self control, discipline
  - *Semteende* = modesty, respect
  - *Hakkiilo* = wisdom, forethought, managing one’s own
  - *Tiidal* = courage, hard work
Recommendation

➢ Call on WIPO IGC to accelerate the adoption of an International legally binding Instrument for the protection of TK, TCEs and GR.
➢ Encourage WIPO to provide adequate funding to record and documents indigenous TK, TCEs and GR.
➢ Call on WIPO members state to increase their contribution to the VF.

Thanks for kind attention
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