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#### WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

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

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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** 

Document prepared by Mr. Musa Usman NDAMBA, Mbororo-Fulani Pastoralists of Cameroon\*

<sup>\*</sup> 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/Exprssion of Folklore,TCEs.

The case of the Mbororo-Fulani Pastoralists of Cameroon

By Musa Usman Ndamba



## Background



- Mbororo-Fulani are a subgroup of the wider Fulani ethnic group.
- The are dispersedly settled across West and Central Africa
- The Mbororo-Fulani pastoralists are an indigenous people who migrated into Cameroon in the late 18 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 knowleageable 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 it 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
- Frienship 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**



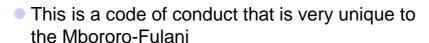
- Mbororo Fulani Pastoralists have a unique custom and code of conduct. This is expressed through the following:
  - Cousinhood (dendiraaku)
  - Pulaaku



## 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, relationship 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



- 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 biding 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

E-mail: <u>musandamba@yahoo.com/mboscudanec@yahoo.com</u>
Website:www.mboscuda.org