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WIPO/GRTKF/IC/13/INF/5(a)

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: October 13, 2008

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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

GENEVA

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

**Thirteenth Session
Geneva, October 13 to 17, 2008**

**WIPO PANEL ON, "INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES'
CONCERNS AND EXPERIENCES IN PROMOTING, SUSTAINING
AND SAFEGUARDING THEIR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE,
TRADITIONAL CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS AND GENETIC
RESOURCES"**

A BRIEF ACCOUNT ON THE WORK OF THE ELMOLO ECO-TOURISM RIGHTS AND
DEVELOPMENT FORUM AMONG THE ELMOLO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF LAKE
TURKANA, NORTHERN KENYA

OCTOBER 13, 2008

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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.

INTRODUCTION

The Elmolo Eco-Tourism, Rights and Development Forum is a human and peoples rights based organization serving the Elmolo people of northern Kenya and to some extent those they co-exist with.

Our core activities include Advocacy for Human and Peoples Rights, Strengthening livelihoods, Environmental and Gender Issues as well as promotion of traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and genetic resources.

On promotion, conservation and protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions we endeavor to:

EMPOWER THE ELMOLO COMMUNITY THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING:

- Appreciate, conserve, protect and promote their traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources
- Use their traditional knowledge and cultural expressions to enhance livelihoods and reduce poverty.
- Our major livelihoods include
 - Fisheries
 - Livestock
 - and to a lesser extent Eco-Tourism

TO ACHIEVE THE ABOVE IN THE CASE OF FISHERIES THROUGH WORKSHOPS/ REGULAR GROUP MEETINGS, WE HIGHLIGHT AND ENCOURAGE THE STUDY AND USE OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE TO MAP OUT AREAS AND TIMES ABUNDANT HARVEST CAN BE REALIZED AND OF WHAT SPECIES. THIS INVOLVES THE STUDY AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE DIFFERENT FACTORS INVOLVED SUCH AS: -

- Winds (Lyeen, Parkan, Jiike and Kayeuru)
- The darkness and brightness of the moon
- The stars (Ngakwa)
- Fishing grounds surface - whether it is rough or calm, sandy, muddy or stony
- Encourage rotational or nomadic fishing to allow other areas to heal as well as preserving and protecting breeding grounds
- Appropriate fishing gear and equipment
- Taboos and stories that discourage harvesting of undersize fishes and damaging of breeding and fishing grounds
- Processing, presentation and marketing of fishery products

LIVESTOCK

- Rotational/nomadic pastoralism
- Use of the head system in watering places away from the lake
- Use of traditional knowledge to process, preserve, market livestock products
- Use of the seasons and grazing patterns to maximize returns

ECO – TOURISM

- Use of traditional cultural expression in the production of artifacts sold to tourists (Dimo/Lkiripa, sarad, sila etc) and in Rock art (Animal prints)
- Cultural tourism – involves visits to villages to observe and experience the rich cultures (folklore, dances, stories and history)
- Watch and listen to stories about the beautiful scenery and spectacular sunrise and sunsets by the lake

CHALLENGES

- Lack of legal protection of our Traditional knowledge and cultural expressions – patent rights.
- Customary law not documented and recognized
- Similar items (and patenting not only from external business forces but also amongst IPs)
- Loss of biodiversity, desertification
- Climatic change
- Evolving cultures
- Borrowed cultures and knowledge in that modern/western technologies and knowledge is taken to be more superior and well appreciated
- Young generations not keen on learning, appreciating and using their traditional knowledge
- Lack of quality products that can compete in other markets
- Lack of funds for intensive capacity building, exchange visit and acquisition of materials or expertise

LESSONS LEARNT / WAY FORWARD

- There is a great need for carrying out intensive capacity building (amongst the different target groups) that can positively impart the knowledge, skills, expressions and wisdom of our people for the enjoyment and improvement of man and environment
- It is essential that we salvage and document our traditional knowledge (including customary law) and cultural expressions for our own benefit and for the benefits of the generations to come that we don't lose who we are as a people
- Regular showcasing of our traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and genetic resources

- Acquire legal/patent rights of our products and services based on traditional knowledge and cultural expression
- Adequate funding is required to enable us carry out the our activities effectively

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