

Enobrahim Oxx

**STATEMENT BY Mr. IBRAHIM NJOBDI from the Mbororo pastoralits community of Cameroon, president of LELEWAL at the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the UN ~~Special~~<sup>Expert</sup> mechanism on the rights of indigenous people-Geneva 1-3 October 2008.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to first of all thank the U N human rights council and the office of the high commissioner for human rights for replacing the working group on indigenous people with the special mechanism that is holding its first session today.

I am of the opinion that the strong capability of indigenous experts elected to lead this body will enable it not only succeed in its task but go further than the defunct working group with innovations and new ideas to further foster the rights of indigenous people all over the world especially with the implementation of the U N declaration on the rights of indigenous people.

One of the major challenges of this new body is to ensure that the declaration is implemented by states in partnership with indigenous people.

The Mbororo pastoralist community of Cameroon to which I belong is hopeful that this will happen in the near future and we are counting on the good faith of the states vis- vis indigenous people.

Despite all our efforts at the national and international level to advocate for the rights and dignity of our people, very little have changed. The gov't is still reluctant to carry out institutional and socio-political changes to integrate us into the full Cameroonian society.

The Mbororo and the pygmies are still marginalised and discriminated upon by both the gov't and the other dominant groups from the mainstream Cameroonian society.

We continue to loose our traditional grazing land on daily bases from stronger forces. The illiteracy level among Mbororo and pygmies is alarming. The of lack basic social amenities like schools and hospital in our villages is a serious hindrance to our development. We are excluded in decision making bodies in Cameroon, be it at the executive or legislative structures of our country.

These dwindling livelihood has made Mbororo youth to migrate to the cities where they are facing more problems- unemployment, prostitution, bandity and stavartion.

My presence in Geneva today is part of my struggle to lobby my government and the U N to intervene and save my people from extinction. I am of the opinion that with a strong networking with UN agencies through the Special Mechanism and the Permanent Forum and other indigenous partners and stakeholders here present, I am sure something will change but the road is still long.

I would also want to seize this opportunity to appeal to funders including U N agencies and programs to consider young and grassroots indigenous organizations who are always left out with the fear that they do not have enough capacity to manage funds. Funding micro projects of small grassroots indigenous organizations with relatively small amounts may create more impact on the field than funding large NGO networks.

Last but not the least, I wish to thank the UN voluntary fund for funding my participation and that of other indigenous representatives attending this meeting. This will give us an opportunity to network and share ideas in order to achieve our goal in partnership.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.