

Agenda Item 4

Statement by organisations representing the Mbororo people of Cameroon, Chad and Niger (MBOSCUDA, Lelewal, AFPAT, AREN)

Thank you Mr. chair and congratulations to your election.

As far as the Mbororo people of Cameroon, Chad and Niger are concerned, education ranks first among human rights and development issues, as most Mbororo are still illiterate.

For instance, in Cameroon, 98% of Mbororo children and adults have never gone to school. As pastoralists, most of them live on hill tops in their grazing areas, far away from village centres and schools. Mbororo children are thus disadvantaged from going to school because of the distances they have to cover on a daily basis. Similarly, in Chad most Mbororo families undertake seasonal transhumance with the effect that, only during dry season, their children are able to regularly attend schools, while during rainy season they are away with their cattle and thus cut off from educational facilities.

Moreover, because of their cultural difference from the dominant societies in Cameroon, Chad and Niger, Mbororo children face a lot of discrimination and ridicule in school, both from teachers and school mates. School curricula and the languages of instruction (which differ from their mother tongue) are not conducive to the children's personal development and effective learning. Many parents are worried that their children will lose their sense of identity and become increasingly assimilated into the culture and language of the dominant society. Parents are also afraid their children's contamination with contagious diseases in school.

All these factors contribute to the fact that the educational situation of the Mbororo people in Cameroon, Chad and Niger is precarious. We therefore urge the Expert Mechanism to include the Mbororo people in studies or research on indigenous education. We also ask them to recommend to governments different schemes of education, taking into account the distinct lifestyle and culture of the Mbororo people.

Our organisations are ready and happy to provide further inputs and assistance to realise the goal of suitable education for indigenous peoples.