CAMEROON
(Additional Contribution)

Rethinking Forest Regulations 2015
Montana, U.S.A.

An experience from Traditional Chiefs in Cameroon

by His Majesty MVONDO Bruno
Traditional Chief of Cameroon
Coordinator of the ReCTrad
Phone: ***237 677 81 09 44***
Email: ***smbmvondo@yahoo.fr***

WHY TRADITIONAL CHIEFS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED?

- They benefit from a natural and customary legitimacy with communities and populations
- Some chiefs have great expertise and experience in natural resources governance and community rights
- Traditional rulers need tribunes to express their leadership and knowledge
- Claims of civil society were blocked and could not go any further without other interventions such as the one of the Traditional Chiefs

HOW DID TRADITIONAL CHIEFS MANAGE TO ORGANIZE THEMSELBES AND HAVE A CREDIBLE VOICE, RECOGNIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT?

- The National Council of Traditional Chiefs (*Conseil National des Chefs Traditionnels*, CNCTC) was an opportunity
- Strategic Approach of the Chiefs' Network for sustainable and participatory management of natural resources (*Réseau des Chefs pour la gestion durable et participative des ressources naturelles*, RecTrad)
- Groundwork done with the RRI coalition in Cameroon and civil society to assess the situation, identify possible solutions and put forward appropriate proposals
- Technical support provided by CED, consultants and university experts
- Advocacy and Traditional Chiefs' training
- Production of position papers relaying the real problems affecting community rights
- Meetings with decision makers to discuss proposals
- Wide media coverage at each meeting

HOW WERE WE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING PROCESS ON THE LAND AND FOREST REFORM?

- ***Focus on decision makers in their villages*** *(we worked with the Chiefs of the villages where the main decision makers were from to defend our positions, because everyone comes from a village, and every village has a leader, who is respected and feared by the local elite)*
- ***Gain trust from all sectors*** *(we reached out to various ministries and high level officials to explain what we wanted to do and promote confidence and trust)*
- ***Public hearings in the Senate*** *(with the President of the Senate), and* ***the National Assembly*** *(with the President of the National Assembly)*
- ***Close collaboration with the President Office and the Prime Minister Office*** *(one Traditional Chief was involved in each decision making process)*

RESULTS

- *More commitment from Traditional Chiefs for similar actions*
- *Traditional Chiefs' role is increasingly recognized by decision makers* (Chiefs are now invited to all fora and pay more attention to natural resources management | they have received more support from external actors (RRI, GIZ…)
- *Traditional Chiefs are increasingly sensitive to emerging issues* (i.e. gender, indigenous peoples, climate change) *and new concepts* (inclusion, participation, profit sharing…)
- *The Prime Minister's decision to create a "Special Committee" in order to include the Traditional Chiefs' proposals in various legislations*

OUR CHALLENGES

- Reaching out to more Traditional Chiefs in Cameroon, mobilize them for joint high level interventions
- Share our experience in Africa and around the world
- Bring constructive civil society proposals to higher levels, beyond what they can do alone, and achieve results (to improve community rights over natural resources)
- Working with high level experts to develop recognized studies

EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS WORKSHOP?

1. *To congratulate RRI and tell you about our achievements* *(RRI Coalition - CED - Traditional Chiefs - CSOs - Administration - Private sector …)*
2. *Share and project ourselves with the others*
3. *Develop partnerships to improve community rights in the world*
4. *Give more energy to the ReCTrad Network* *(network of Traditional Chiefs)*

MANY THANKS

MAJESTILLY YOURS!

.