

SODELCO and the North-West Ardo's Union: Confusion, contradictions and illegalities

The *Societe de Developpement d'Eleavage et du Commerce* (SODELCO) - Livestock Development and Trading Company, was created in 1993, in ELBA Ranch by Baba Ahmadou Danpullo after 'banning' MBOSCUDA in a public meeting. It was also to replace the North-West Cattle Breeders Cooperative Society created in 1982, and dissolved arbitrarily by Baba Ahmadou Danpullo in 1992. SODELCO and the NWAU have divided, impoverished, ridiculed and disempowered the Mbororo community across Cameroon.

A profit-making company that has never made a profit!

As the name and governing documents tell, SODELCO is a profit-making company which sells shares of between 25,000-100,000FCFA and a cow to each shareholder. Since its creation 18 years ago the shareholders have not received dividends. Assuming they have not made any profits they should have wound up – no business should go on trading for 18 years at a loss. They claim to be a 'socio-cultural association' but their Constitution and activities show clearly that they are a livestock business outfit. Their legal form and activities are wholly ultra vires because their set up does not conform to either company law or the law on associations.

Opaque and ad hoc governance structure

The governance of the organisation is very ad hoc with its leaders being hand-picked by Mr. Danpullo. The leaders do not understand their roles – they function like a political pressure group with some income-generating activities. People are hand-picked most of the time without their consent. People who were hand-picked in 1993, in their absence and without their consent still appear on their web site. For example, Manu Jaji, National President of MBOSCUDA and Sali One Buba who is on exile in the USA as a result of persecution from Baba Ahmadou Danpullo. There are also dead people on their list of leaders!

Influence peddling, amalgam, falsehood and mal-administration

SODELCO also interferes in the creation of Ardorates and the appointment and destitution of Ardos e.g. Sabga and Bertoua. This is outside the remit of an association or a company. SODELCO officials are at the same time leaders of the Ardos Union. For example, the President of SODELCO is also the Secretary General of the NWAU. The NWAU and SODELCO share the same office, address and branding, they share the same platform at events and DBS TV. Recently the Secretary General of SODELCO sent out a circular to international organisations and government officials but then claimed it was signed by all members of Ardos Union. One further proof of their falsehood, deceit and lack of due diligence is the listing of one Mr. Sardou Nana (my dad) as a signatory without his consent and he is not an Ardo and so not a member of the NWAU! As in everything they do, dividing families is one of their major strategies!

Slander, character assassination and blackmail

SODELCO also engages in slander and character assassination of people they perceive to be opposed Baba Ahmadou Danpullo's hegemonic agenda. In doing this they propagate falsehood and innuendo. For example, in 2005, they wrote a letter to the British High Commissioner copying other Ambassadors and Ministers, published in national newspapers claiming a number of former MBOSCUDA leaders have stolen funds and fled abroad. They repeat these false accusations in their meeting and recently on DBS TV. There are on-going legal actions to challenge these claims.

Racist propaganda, inciting hatred and discrimination against the 'Pygmy' and Mbororo indigenous peoples.

SODELCO and the NWAU have been attacking the 'Pygmies' in their public meetings, in national newspapers and recently on DBS TV calling them "primitive, backward, dwarfs, rat-eaters, infidels, worst ethnic group on earth and worthless" while stating that the only important ethnic groups in the world are "white people, Arabs and the Fulani". These are the most outrageous racist claims ever on TV in Cameroon! These attacks are because MBOSCUDA works in collaboration with this community and SODELCO believes this provides MBOSCUDA funding which strengthens the organisation. Their strategy is to use racial and religious superiority arguments to weep up emotions and turn Mbororo people against MBOSCUDA. They also claim there is no such ethnic group by the name Mbororo'en and that this is the name of a specie of cattle. The irony is that they use the name Mbororo in all their documentation, correspondences, website and even on DBS TV! For example, in a recent event in Bertoua their invitation bears the title 'Communaute Mbororo'. They also claim that the Mbororo are neither a minority nor indigenous community. This is a criminal offence under Cameroonian and international law and agreements. Their other claim that the Mbororo are wealthy people who are not marginalised – this cannot be further to the truth. They are confusing pride and racial superiority complex with poverty and development. The government of Cameroon recognises the Mbororo and the 'Pygmies' as minority indigenous communities. For example, Minister Dion Nguti made this clear in his written submission to the UN Committee on Racism in its 2010 session.

References

1. SODELCO web site: www.sodelco.net

2. NWAU web site: www.nwau.org/index.html

3. *The following excerpts are from independent research titled: **Framework for Development Interventions Targeting Mbororo Communities of the Northwest Region** by Dr. Michael VABI, Rural Sociologist, March 2009. (My highlights)*

[...] the organisation [SODELCO] was created in 1993, with support from four Mbororo traditional and political leaders - El Hadj Baba Ahmadou Danpullo, Ardo Bouba of Akweto, Ardo Demsa [of Mbot] and the late Lamido of Sabga. [...]

Though field offices of SODELCO are reported to be found in and out of Bamenda (including Bangangte in the West Region), only the Provincial Office located at SONAC Street in Bamenda is timidly active. Though the staff strength is estimated at about seven, no staff was found in any of the intervention sites and tailoring workshops purported to be located at least 14 sites including Wum, Kumbo, Jakiri, Bali, Mbiame, Sabga, etc. [...]

Apart from the conceptual and ideological differences with MBOSCUDA, SODELCO is currently facing a series of challenges arising from mutual distrust, self-interest, internal back-stabbing and inadequate understanding of the mission of the organisation, wrong perception/presentation of the mentor as provider and not facilitator.

[...] Unlike MBOSCUDA whose development funds are derived from in-country and international partners, SODELCO relies heavily on its principal mentor El hadj Baba Ahmadou Danpullo for subvention."

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