

PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC
SECRETARIAT GENERAL
SERVICE DU FICHIER LEGISLATIF ET REGLEMENTAIRE
LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY AFFAIRS CARD INDEX SERVICE
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LAW N. 2024/018 OF 23 DEC 2024

RELATING TO THE ORGANIZATION AND PRACTICE OF
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN CAMEROON

*The Parliament deliberated and adopted,
the President of the Republic hereby
enacts the law set out below:*

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION

Section 1: (1) This bill relates to the organization and practice of traditional medicine in Cameroon.

(2) Its purpose is to foster the development of traditional medicine and thereby ensure public access to health care. As such, it shall:

- regulate the practice of traditional medicine;
- establish the rights and duties of traditional health practitioners;
- regulate the practice of traditional medicine;
- establish a body responsible for the development of traditional medicine.

Section 2: (1) Traditional medicine shall form an integral part of Cameroon's health care system.

(2) It shall contribute to universal access to quality health care and services.

Section 3: (1) This bill shall apply to whoever is recognized by his/her community, as well as by the competent authorities, as qualified to:

- diagnose prevailing illnesses and disabilities;
- provide health care or maintain well-being through spiritual treatments, manual techniques and exercises and/or use of plant, animal and mineral substances proven safe for humans or the environment.

(2) The categories of traditional health practitioners referred to in this Law include, in particular, persons practising as:

- traditional birth attendants;
- bonesetters;
- tradi-ancestralists;
- tradi-spiritualists;
- radiesthesists;
- herbalists.



(3) The criteria and conditions for registration in each category shall be laid down by a separate instrument.

Section 4: Research relating to traditional medicine shall be governed by the laws in force.

II. DEFINITIONS

Section 5: For the purposes of this law and subsequent implementing instruments, the following definitions shall apply:

Traditional birth attendant: person recognized as qualified to deliver health care to a couple or a single woman before, during and after childbirth, based on the concepts prevailing in his/her geographical community. Such care may extend to the new-born.

Centre for traditional medicine: establishment wherein the traditional health practitioners referred to under this law diagnose, prevent, stabilize or eliminate a physical, mental, psychic or social imbalance, for the treatment of patients.

Traditional medicine: sum total of the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used to maintain health, as well as to prevent, diagnose, improve or treat physical and mental illnesses. It refers to health practices, methods, knowledge and beliefs that involve the medical use of plants, animal parts and minerals, spiritual therapies, techniques and manual exercises - separately or in combination - to treat, diagnose and prevent disease or preserve health.

Traditional pharmacopoeia: collection of knowledge, skills, practices, preparation techniques and use of recipes or products from traditional medicine, of plant, animal and mineral origin, used to diagnose, prevent and/or cure a physical, mental or social imbalance.

Traditional preparation: preparation made by a traditional health practitioner for a patient, based on knowledge or information drawn from traditional knowledge.

Bonesetter: person who uses special, natural techniques to heal fractures, sprains and dislocations.

Tradi-ancestralist: person who draws on ancestral customs, cultures, sacred places and the ancestral past to provide health care.

Traditional health practitioner: person recognized by his/her community as qualified to diagnose prevailing illnesses and disabilities, and provide health care or well-being through spiritual treatments, manual techniques and exercises and/or the use of substances of plant, animal and mineral origin proven to be safe for the human person or the environment.

Tradi-spiritualist: person who treats mental disorders and establishes spiritual balance using medicinal plants and immaterial knowledge.

Spiritual treatment: a form of affirmative and scientific prayer, based on the teachings of the science of the spirit, to improve the patient's state of mind.

CHAPTER II

THE PRACTICE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

I. PRINCIPLES OF THE PRACTICE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Section 6: (1) The practice of traditional medicine shall comply with the laws in force, subject to the provisions of this law.

(2) The practice of traditional medicine shall comply with the principles of safety, efficacy and quality of the services it offers, as well as respect for human dignity and life.

Section 7: (1) With regard to the practice of traditional medicine, all traditional health practitioners shall be bound to:

- act in all circumstances to preserve patient safety, dignity and human life;
- collaborate, where appropriate, with conventional medical professionals and health facilities in the locality where they practice;
- ensure the hygiene and cleanliness of all staff, the tools used and the premises where they practice;
- comply with laws and regulations on environmental protection;
- refer, without delay, to another health care practitioner or conventional medicine practitioner qualified, when necessary, in the exercise of good practices in this field;
- refrain from committing any immoral act contrary to the ethics of the profession.

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(2) The traditional health practitioner shall be bound to confidentiality and professional secrecy.

Section 8: (1) The health care practitioner shall be bound to practise in compliance with the code of ethics and conduct, as well as good practice in the field.

(2) The code of ethics and conduct of health care practitioners shall specify in particular:

- the general principles and ethical values that should guide the day-to-day practice of traditional medicine;
- the minimum requirements for assessing the safety, efficacy and quality of traditional medicine services;
- the specific rights and duties of traditional health practitioners in the exercise of their profession, as well as their rights and obligations towards the patient, other traditional practitioners, members of the conventional medical, medico-health and paramedical professions, and the public, in particular with regard to sexual violence against women and minors. The code of ethics shall also specify the rules to be observed with regard to herbal medicines.

(3) The provisions of the code of ethics and conduct referred to in paragraph (1) above shall be laid down by regulation.

Section 9: (1) The exploitation of the knowledge, recipes, formulas and traditional skills of traditional health practitioners by a third party must comply with international, regional and national intellectual property standards.

(2) Any traditional health practitioner who consents, without constraint, to deliver his traditional knowledge, recipe or formula of one of his discoveries for scientific research or other purposes, shall receive, where applicable, a traditional knowledge rights and royalties in accordance with the laws and regulations in force.

(3) The conditions for exploiting the knowledge, recipes and traditional knowledge referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2) above shall be laid down by regulation.



II. CONDITIONS FOR PRACTISING TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Section 10: (1) The practice of traditional medicine shall be limited to a specific number of pathologies to be treated and/or procedures to be performed in the health care unit of the traditional practitioner or according to the skills available in the traditional medicine centre. The same shall apply to the extension of the said practice to other pathologies or procedures to be performed.

(2) All traditional health practitioners shall submit a written statement to the territorially competent authorities on the number and location of the treatments and/or procedures for which they are qualified.

(3) The practice of traditional medicine shall be subject to an authorization issued by the Minister of Public Health.

(4) The conditions for issuing the authorization referred to in paragraph (3) above, as well as the other terms and conditions for practising traditional medicine, shall be laid down by regulation.

Section 11: (1) A traditional practitioner may be assisted or replaced by a colleague registered with the National Order of Traditional Health Practitioners, provided the latter is located in the same health area.

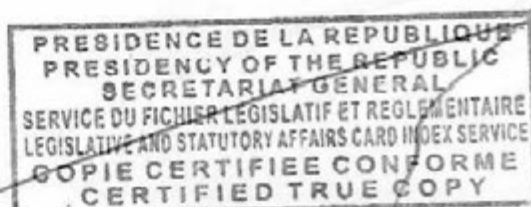
(2) All traditional practitioners shall ensure that their assistants are registered with the body referred to in paragraph (1) above.

Section 12: The charges for services and procedures performed by health care practitioners is set by regulation, in consultation with the National Order of Health Care Practitioners.

Section 13: All traditional health practitioners shall be required to ensure the traceability of procedures and consultations carried out in the exercise of their profession. They shall contribute to the national health information system.

To this end, they shall keep an activity register containing the following information:

- the name, age, gender and address of patients;
- diagnoses made
- treatments administered
- products dispensed;



- lifestyle advice;
- any references.

Section 14: In the exercise of their profession, traditional health practitioners shall enjoy the same protection as other health professionals, in accordance with the regulations in force.

Section 15: Traditional health practitioners shall be civilly and criminally liable for all acts performed by them.

Section 16: Unless there is a reciprocal agreement, a traditional health practitioner of foreign nationality may not practise privately in Cameroon.

Section 17: (1) Traditional medicine shall be practised in a health care unit and/or a traditional medicine centre.

(2) Traditional medicine centres are traditional consultation and care establishments.

Section 18: Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 17 above, traditional medicine may be practised in public health facilities.

Section 19: The conditions for practising traditional medicine in public health facilities shall be defined by regulation.

Section 20: (1) The opening of a traditional medicine centre shall be subject to an authorization issued by the Minister of Public Health. Such authorization shall be revocable, personal and non-transferable.

(2) The conditions for issuing the authorization referred to in paragraph (1) above shall be laid down by regulation.

Section 21: Authorization to open a traditional medicine centre may be granted to a legally constituted traditional health practitioner or association of traditional health practitioners, following inspection by the relevant departments of the Ministry in charge of public health.

Section 22: Authorizations issued by the Minister in charge of public health must comply with the health map established by regulation.

Section 23: The treatment, care or sale of traditional preparations shall be carried out in traditional medicine consultation establishments approved by the Minister in charge of public health.

Section 24: (1) In the event of the death of a traditional health practitioner working in private practice, his/her rightful claimants may keep the



establishment in operation for a period of three (3) years, renewable once, by having it managed by a replacement duly authorized by the Minister in charge of public health.

(2) The terms and conditions of assistance and replacement, as well as those relating to the establishment of a private practice, shall be laid down by regulation.

CHAPTER III

COLLABORATION AND CONTROL OF THE PRACTICE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

I. COLLABORATION BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND CONVENTIONAL MEDICINE

Section 25: The traditional health practitioner shall collaborate with other practitioners of traditional medicine, professionals of conventional medicine, research institutes or health establishments, whether in the public or private sector.

Section 26: When circumstances so require, the traditional health practitioner shall refer the patient to the nearest conventional medical facility.

Section 27: The conditions for collaboration referred to in Articles 25 and 26 above shall be laid down by regulation.

II. CONTROL OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE CENTRES

Section 28: Inspections shall be conducted in traditional medicine centres to ensure compliance with the regulations in force and good practices in this area.

Section 29: (1) The traditional health practitioner shall submit to any control or inspection ordered by the Minister of Public Health, the National Order of Traditional Health Practitioners and the relevant authorities.

(2) The conditions for inspecting traditional medicine centres shall be laid down by regulation.



CHAPTER IV
PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TRADITIONAL
MEDICINE AND ASSOCIATED TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

I. PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TRADITIONAL
MEDICINE

Section 30: The following shall be subject to prior authorization by the competent authority, in accordance with the laws in force:

- industrial harvesting and export of medicinal plants, locally manufactured raw materials or any other product from traditional pharmacopoeia intended for the foreign pharmaceutical industry;
- establishment of collaboration, evaluation or export agreements with foreign bodies with a view to developing a medicinal plant or any other traditional pharmacopoeia product.

Section 31: The industrial harvesting and slaughter of any medicinal species shall be subject to strict compliance with the laws and regulations in force.

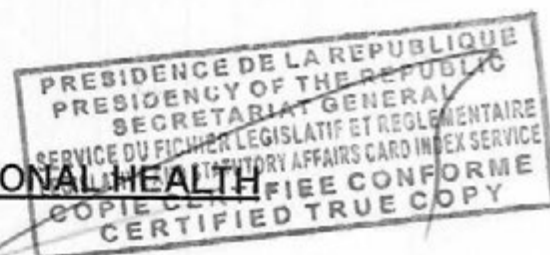
II. PROTECTION OF ASSOCIATED TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Section 32: Access to and use of associated traditional knowledge shall be subject to the provisions of the law relating to access to genetic resources, their derivatives, associated traditional knowledge and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.

Section 33: Associated traditional knowledge and innovations derived from traditional pharmacopoeia shall be protected by laws and regulations relating to intellectual property.

CHAPTER V
THE NATIONAL ORDER OF TRADITIONAL HEALTH
PRACTITIONERS

Section 34: The National Order of Traditional Health Practitioners of Cameroon, hereinafter referred to as 'the Order', shall be responsible for



the development of traditional medicine. It shall ensure the promotion of traditional medicine and ensure compliance with the rules of ethics and professional conduct, as well as the protection of the rights of traditional health practitioners. As such, its duties shall include:

- ensuring compliance with the rules laid down in the code of ethics and professional conduct ;
- enhancing, preserving and protecting intellectual property rights over traditional knowledge and the sharing of benefits arising from its use with the indigenous and local communities holding the said knowledge;
- contributing to the development and implementation of national policy and regulations on traditional medicine;
- ensuring compliance with the principles of ethics and dedication necessary for the practice of the profession;
- ensuring strict compliance with the professional obligations of traditional health practitioners;
- contributing to the promotion and sustainability of natural resources used in traditional medicine;
- establishing a framework for information and experience-sharing;
- issuing an opinion on the authorization to practise the profession of traditional health practitioner.

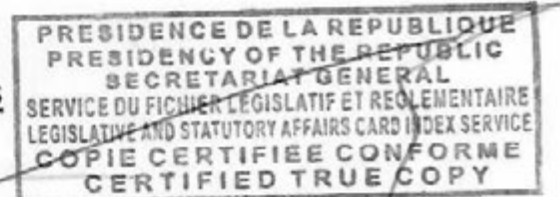
Section 35: The conditions for the organization and operation of the National Order of Traditional Health Practitioners shall be laid down by regulation.

CHAPTER VI **Offences and Penalties**

I. OFFENCES

Section 36: Any person or traditional health practitioner shall be prohibited from:

- using a pseudonym or impersonal title in the practice of traditional medicine, other than the name authorized by the National Order of Traditional Health Practitioners;
- providing consultations, treatment or traditional medicines without prior authorization from the competent authority;
- practising traditional medicine under a temporary or permanent ban;
- administering treatment in a traditional medicine centre that has not been approved by the competent authority;



- practising fairground medicine;
- forcing a patient in any way to have recourse to traditional medicine;
- collecting medicinal species for the benefit of a third party without prior authorization;
- advertising the effectiveness of his practice and his remedies in a mercantile and misleading manner;
- resorting to practices that are immoral and contrary to professional ethics, in particular the use of human organs, as well as mutilation for the purposes of practising traditional medicine, extra-professional relations between the patient and the traditional health practitioner and the use of illicit objects or products.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES

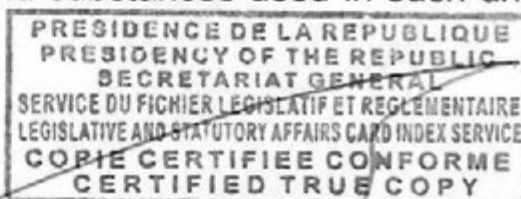
Section 37: (1) Whoever breaches the provisions of this law, in particular those referred to in Section 36 above, shall be liable to the following administrative penalties, imposed by the Minister for Public Health or the National Order of Traditional Health Practitioners, as the case may be:

- a) immediate cessation of activity;
- b) temporary confiscation of all objects, medicines and substances used in such unlawful activity;
- c) temporary suspension of the authorization to practise traditional medicine;
- d) withdrawal of the licence to practise traditional medicine;
- e) temporary or permanent closure of the traditional medicine centre concerned.

(2) In addition to the sanctions listed in paragraph (1) above, other administrative penalties may be provided for by the code of ethics and professional conduct of traditional practitioner.

Section 38: (1) Whoever is found guilty of illegally practising traditional medicine shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of between one (1) year and ten (10) years or a fine of between five million (5,000,000) and twenty million (20,000,000) CFAF or both such imprisonment and fine.

(2) The judge may also order whoever is found guilty of practicing illegally to close down the establishment concerned and/or confiscate all objects, medicines and substances used in such unlawful activity.



(3) In the event of a further offence, the penalty referred to in paragraph (1) above shall be doubled and the court seized may impose a permanent ban on practising traditional medicine.

CHAPTER VII
MISCELLANEOUS, TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 39 : The National Order of Traditional Health Practitioners of Cameroon shall ensure the continuing education of its members, in collaboration with approved entities, and in accordance with the regulations in force.

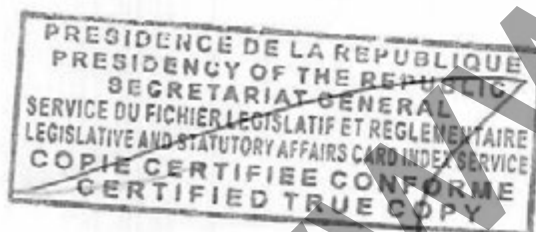
Section 40 : The conditions for the creation of traditional medicine services, departments or units in public health facilities shall be laid down by regulation.

Section 41 : Subject to separate instruments, the practice of the profession of traditional health practitioner in private and public practice shall be incompatible with that of other health professions.

Section 42 : Traditional health practitioners shall have a period of twenty-four (24) months to comply with the provisions of this law.

Section 43 : Separate instruments shall lay down as and when necessary, conditions for implementing this law.

Section 44 : This law shall be registered, published in accordance with the procedure of urgency, and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and French./-



YAOUNDE, 23 DEC 2024

