

Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development in Africa: Case Study on Central Africa

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ABSTRACT In today's world, knowledge is a factor of production fuelling the knowledge economy characterised by patents, research and development. This presupposes that owners and providers of knowledge be adequately endowed for their treasure. The Central African region represents just one example of how existing property rights regimes have denigrated the value of indigenous wealth, largely due to lack of codification, documentation and adequate legal cover. Western pharmaceutical companies are sucking dry this knowledge for commercial exploitation through the use of patent rights without paying commensurate royalties to the true owners and discoverers of knowledge and invention in the region. This case study provides examples of indigenous knowledge systems that are being eroded due to internal and extraneous factors but which could be revitalised to ensure a proactive generation of the needed finance for sustainable development of Central Africa.