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Statement of Ms. Tuly Labanna Mrong, Representative of Indigenous Peoples' Organization,
Bangladesh

Human Rights Council
Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Agenda Item - 4

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Members of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
Delegates of Member States,
Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples and Organizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am grateful to the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples for supporting me to attend this Session.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has recognized a wide range of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms to indigenous peoples, including the right to self-determination, an inalienable collective right to the ownership, use and control of lands, territories and other natural resources.

Indigenous peoples of Bangladesh have been using the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for establishing their fundamental rights, including civil and political rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in their advocacy programmes. I have the pleasure that the present government has made some commitments to ensure indigenous peoples' development and rights publicly. But the reality is not the same. Even indigenous peoples still face discrimination and violation of human rights in their daily life. Even there is no clear recognition about the existence, identity and culture of indigenous peoples in the Constitution. The article 33 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is very important for indigenous peoples and their identity. It states, "Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions." At country level, the non-indigenous communities have very little knowledge about the Declaration. Even many indigenous communities also do not know about this Declaration and rights given for their existence and development.

Mr. Chairperson,

I recommend the following:

- 1) Conduct a study and research on identity and culture of indigenous peoples in countries where indigenous peoples are not recognized in the Constitution and in the law;
- 2) Take an initiative for conducting research and review how the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is being implemented or addressed in countries where indigenous peoples are vulnerable and marginalized;
- 3) Support indigenous peoples' organizations, civil society and NGOs to run advocacy programme to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at local and national level;
- 4) Take initiative to sensitize and aware other UN agencies, like UNDP, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNEP etc. about UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at national level.

Thank you.

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