

**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
**12<sup>th</sup> Session, 15-19 July 2019, United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland**

**Agenda Item 8: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,  
including Study on Recognition, reparation and reconciliation**

Statement by:

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Thank you, Madam Chair,

I would like to thank the UN Voluntary Fund for providing the support to attend this EMRIP session. I am representing here on behalf of Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network to raise the voice for the indigenous women and girls of Bangladesh who are continually suffering the violence against them.

The Government of Bangladesh reaffirmed their commitment to indigenous peoples' rights during the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and also pledged in the 7th Five Year (2016-2020) that the Government would consider implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and consider to ratify the ILO Convention 169 both of which ensure the empowerment of indigenous women.

Bangladesh accepted the recommendations in UPR 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle to establish a plan of action to ensure full implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord and continue to implement the national social security strategy, prioritizing the situation of women, children, persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, Bangladesh is yet to implement the pledges and UPR recommendations in order to bring positive change in the conditions of indigenous peoples including women on the ground.

Madam Chair

Indigenous women and girls are one of the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the country's population. They stand deprived of basic human rights, such as lack of access to education at all levels and forms, health care, economic and political participation and control over material and intangible resources. Indigenous women in Bangladesh often face triple discrimination due to their status as members of religious minority, indigeneity and for their gendered position.

A total of 47 cases of violence against indigenous women were reported from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018. Out of 47 such cases, 19 were reported in the plains and 28 in the CHT. As of December 2018, 54 indigenous women were sexually or physically assaulted. At least 19 women were raped, 12 women and girls were killed after rape. Among other incidents recorded, 4 were gang raped and 5 were physically attacked and 3 were sexually assaulted. On the other hand, out of 67 alleged perpetrators, 59 were reported to be from the mainstream Bengali community and 08 from indigenous communities. The age of the victims was found to be in the range from 3 to 75 years. Unfortunately, the Government has not taken yet any special measure to ensure safety and security of the indigenous women and children against all forms of violence and discrimination

Madam Chair

The victims and victim families are very vulnerable. It is very hard for them to reconcile with their families and society after happening these kinds of heinous incidents in their life. They do not have any reparation, compensation. The incidents of violence against indigenous women and girls are increasing due to not proper justice against the perpetrators. We did not find the Hill Women Federation's leader Kalpana Chakma and any justice, investigation report on her who was kidnapped 23 years ago in the hilly area of Rangamati. The government is not following up the case nor taking any care of her family.

The indigenous women in Bangladesh do not have significant representation in the national political domain and at local government bodies. Moreover, systematic violence against indigenous women triggered their limited participation in the political spheres. Lack of political advocates for indigenous women undoubtedly makes it more difficult to bring national attention to the societal problem of violence against women, as well as to build focused political will and not to forget the political vision to find solutions to the problem and improve their social position.

Finally, I would like to put the following recommendations for pursuing government of Bangladesh:

1. To take special measure ending all kinds of violence against indigenous women and girls;
2. Ensuring access to justice for women and providing legal and financial supports to victims and their families;
3. To make the separate reservation for indigenous women in the national parliament and local government bodies;
4. To implement CHT Accord of 1997 properly and fully for the sake of empowerment and security of indigenous women in CHT.

Thank you.