

**Statement by the Delegation of Thailand**

**Mr. Worawut Smuthkalin**

**Minister - Counsellor**

**Item 3: ID with SR on the rights of indigenous peoples**

**at 45th Session of the Human Rights Council**

**on 24 September 2020**

**(Speaking Time: 1 Minute and 30 Seconds)**

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Madam President,

Thailand thanks the SR for her tireless contributions to the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' rights worldwide.

Thailand has put in place the relevant legislation and policies to guarantee the basic rights of people of various ethnic groups. Notably, these laws also ensure their rights to live in the society according to their identity, traditional culture and way of life.

We share the SR's view that meaningful consultation and the consent of those affected contribute in a critical manner to ensuring the rights and interests of all, particularly ethnic groups and local communities.

The Government has, therefore, purposefully tried to ensure that the nomination of Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex as a World Heritage Site is the shared effort of all stakeholders. Consultations and public hearings have been conducted with the villagers, including Karen communities, on a regular basis since 2015. To date, 42 out of 55 villages have expressed their full consent for the nomination. As for the others, the Government continues to address their concerns, taking to heart their rights and wellbeing.

Steadfast efforts are being pursued to enhance the quality of life of the villagers without compromising their traditional way of life. The newly adopted National Park Act is a legislative milestone to ensure the sustainability of local communities' livelihoods through resolving land ownership issues and permitting the legal harvesting of natural resources within the protected areas. A land survey has been completed, and land claims are thus under verification for final allocation. Villagers are encouraged to join the Protected Area Committees to work with other stakeholders in the management of these areas.

Regarding the case of Mr. Pholachi, in August this year, the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) has challenged the decision of the Office of the Attorney General to drop the charges against the suspects, by asserting the adequacy of existing evidence to pursue the case. The Attorney-General will consider the DSI's position in due course.

Thank you.