



Bangladesh Intervention at the 15th Session of Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by Mr. Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, Secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Government of Bangladesh at the UN HQs in New York on 19 May 2016.

Mr Chair/ Madame Chair,

Distinguished panelists and participants,

The fundamental rights of all our citizens, irrespective of race and religion, have been duly recognized in our Constitution framed and adopted immediately after independence in 1972. Bangladesh having thousand year old history and heritage considers all its citizens to be indigenous to its land. However, the policy of the Government underscores the importance of protecting, preserving and promoting the unique culture and tradition of our small ethnic communities who constitutes roughly 2% of our total population. Through 15th amendment of the Constitution, the State undertakes the responsibility.

As the direct outcome of the implementation of CHT Peace Accord, certain institutions like Ministry of CHT Affairs, CHT Regional Council, three Hill District Councils, CHT Task Force etc have been created in order to ensure political, social, educational and economic rights of the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Remarkably all these institutions are to be headed by the tribal or ethnic people which have been ensured by enactment. Law ensures that two third of the councils are to be elected from the ethnic communities.

Seizing the bright prospects and potentials that have been created for economic development as the aftermath of Peace Accord, Ministry of CHT Affairs have formulated comprehensive strategies based on a framework prepared for the sustainable development in Chittagong Hill Tracts in consultation with all stakeholders. A separate chapter on the Strategic goal and Policy direction for the all-round development of the ethnic minorities of Bangladesh has been

incorporated in the 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) of Bangladesh. We have mainstreamed SDGs into our national development strategy. It will allow us to ascertain that none of our citizens, within our multi-ethnic society, is left behind in our sustainable development pursuits.

In Bangladesh, cultural diversity is promoted. Traditional systems and practices of the ethnic people are officially recognized and honoured. We also have a very active and vibrant civil society among the ethnic people who regularly participate in different seminars and symposiums at home and abroad including the sessions of UNPFII. Government of Bangladesh has established at least six Cultural Institutions both in hills and plains for the preservation and promotion of cultural activities of the different ethnic groups. On 8 May Prime Minister laid the foundation of 10-million dollar project for Chittagong Hill Tracts Complex in the capital city of Dhaka.

Measures have been taken to ensure peace, stability, justice and good governance through implementing the remaining provisions of the Peace Accord, expediting the process of resolving land dispute, reducing conflict over land resources by increasing alternative sources of livelihoods, strengthening decentralization and devolution of activities to the CHT institutions and continuing dialogue and consultation.

Finally the stance of the Government of Bangladesh remained unchanged on the issue which has been stated in the World Conference on Indigenous People in 2014.

Government of Bangladesh actively supports the promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of the minorities, including indigenous and tribal people, anywhere in the world. In keeping with our principled position, it is a priority for the Government and the people of Bangladesh to preserve the land and resources of ethnic minorities that form an integral part of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious composition of our nation.

Thank you all.