

Sir Chair,

We, Indigenous Women of Asia express gratitude for this opportunity as well as acknowledge the contribution of the United Nation Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and the many progress it has made on the behalf of our individual and collective rights.

However, despite the decades of progress that has been made at the international level, we still have a long road ahead of us at regional, national and local level. We assert this because in the Asian region, we, as Indigenous Peoples continue to suffer the brunt of discrimination, violence, resulting in economic and cultural poverty as our land, territories are invaded, dismantled and our people dispossessed. As indicated by some of the report outcomes on development, Indigenous women are even more affected and are at various types of risks including sexual exploitation and discriminations. The prolonged suffering imposed on indigenous people by these invasive processes on our land and territories, and the loss of dignity, cultural identity, and spirituality, we make the following recommendations.

We urge those present here today to take note and to consider the guidelines, particularly article number 10, 11, 40, 41 and 42 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to ensure that the indigenous rights towards their land and territories are fully protected. We also urge the representatives of the State, United Nations, and civil society to reinforce, and implement the following recommendations:

1. Human Rights of IPs In context to the aggressive development initiatives taking place in our region of Nepal, India and Indonesia, we urge the States to meaningfully adopt the UNDRIP mechanism. Before any projects are designed and developed in the indigenous territories, we urge the Member State to carefully consider the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in its entirety and to effectively follow the FPIC protocols. Article 40 of UNDRIP highlights the “right of IPs to access and prompt decision through fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and States and that decisions shall be given in consideration to the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the IPs concerned and international human rights” and we seek the States to meaningfully integrate and implement these guidelines in any development-related projects that touch upon the indigenous land and territories.

2. Cultural Rights and Access of IPs connected to their ancestral Land In many of the development related projects of the State and private sectors in the Asia region, the cultural rights, considerations and continued access of IPs to the natural resources have been denied. Forests, and rivers apart from having economic value and environmental balance, are vital places of historical and spiritual sites where people carry out their respects and traditions from and to their ancestors. As seen in recent times, the aggressive development policy and activities in our region IPs are losing their right to the management of the natural resources, livelihood and collective culture. Therefore, against this background, we recommend UNESCO to facilitate the State to ensure the protection of cultural access and heritage to preserve the greater diversity that IPs contribute to the world and to encourage and emphasize the use of indigenous languages in all FPIC consultation processes, in alignment with the Decade of Indigenous Languages framework.

3. Indigenous Women and Decision making We express our concerns regarding the lack of indigenous womens’ meaningful participation and inclusion in the decision-making of the development-related work in our region. While formulating laws, policies and programs of state, federal and local government in context to any development related projects, effective integration of Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples are missing. Furthermore, use of non-indigenous language in transmitting information during the FPIC process also hugely disadvantages the IPs. Because of this limitation, IPs are unable to effectively exercise FPIC and participate

effectively in all consultation processes of business, development etc. Within this context, we encourage the Member States to incorporate the participation of indigenous language, and of women in projects that relate to development in the indigenous territories. Indigenous women are closely connected to and actively involved in their land so the States must ensure that the IWs are consulted in the planning, implementing and monitoring of development projects that are undertaken in the IPs territories.

Therefore, we call upon the Member States to uphold the Right to Self Determination (article 3 of UNDRIP), for indigenous peoples to freely determine their political, socio-economic and cultural development. Thank you for your attention.

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