

The 17th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The UN Headquarters, New York, 16-27 April 2018

Agenda Item-12: Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues

Statement by:

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Thank you Madam Chair,

On behalf of the indigenous peoples' organization of Bangladesh, I would like to recommend following proposals for the future work of the Permanent Forum during the second decade on indigenous peoples:

Permanent Forum should formulate mechanisms for monitoring the implementation processes of treaties, accords, agreements and other legal arrangements, made between governments and indigenous peoples. In Chittagong Hill Tracts, a 'Peace' Accord signed between the indigenous Jumma people and Government of Bangladesh, like most other treaties etc made between the governments and the indigenous peoples in all over the world, are not properly implemented by the governments.

For example, one of the crucial issues of the Accord is land disputes. After 15 years of intensive lobby and movements, the government amended the anti-Accord provisions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act 2001 in Parliament on October 6th 2016.

However, the functions of the Commission have remained confined to meetings. The government is yet to allocate adequate funds, approve adequate manpower and set up two sub-offices in Rangamati and Bandarban district, although a decision has been taken in this regard. The Rules of the Commission has not been framed as of today. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council submitted a set of draft Rules to the government on 1st January 2017, but no substantial progress has been. It would be difficult for the Commission to start processing cases without supplementary Rules.

It is mentionable that in sustainable resolution of land disputes in Chittagong Hill Tracts, the rehabilitation of Bengali settlers outside the Chittagong Hill Tracts is a must. In this regards, a strategic plan should be taken to relocate the Bengali settlers who were settled down in Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1979 and onwards by the then governments. Due non-resolution of land disputes, communal attack and land grabbing by Bengali settlers with the direct help of army and local administration continues unabated with an aim to evict indigenous villagers their ancestral lands.

Thanks Madam Chair