

**Promotion, protecting and development of Indigenous language**

**Intervention by delegation of Bangladesh at the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of UNFPII**

**Indigenous languages**

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**United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Thank you, Mr. / Madam Chair.

It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the Bangladesh delegation at this 18th Session of UN PFII.

**Mr/Madam Chair, and distinguished participants,**

The 1952 language movement is widely considered to have integrated the people of Bangladesh, which led to the liberation war in 1971 and ultimately the independence of Bangladesh. We, therefore, are at the forefront of promotion and protection of mother language. In 1999, the UNESCO declared 21 February as International Mother Language Day recognizing our unique sacrifice for mother language. Every year Bangladesh along with other member states are observing the day aimed at highlighting the importance of fraternity of languages and cultures in building a peaceful and inclusive world.

Bangladesh, a country of cultural and ethnic diversity, has 50 ethnic communities which constitutes more than two million people with diverse cultures and traditions. 40% of the aforesaid population consisting of eleven ethnic communities live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The Constitution of Bangladesh recognizes the fundamental right of all citizens irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. The 15th Amendment, with Article 23A has further upheld and protected the rights, language and religion of every ethnic community of Bangladesh.

The Government has established seven cultural institutes under the Small Ethnic Communities Cultural Institutions Act, 2010. Bangladesh is a party to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural

Expressions. The National Education Policy, 2010 introduced Multi-lingual Education (MLE) to ensure primary education of the children of ethnic communities in their own mother tongues. Books in five ethnic languages of Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo and Sadri children every year. As a special initiative of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, development assistance is provided to small ethnic communities living in plain land including through scholarships and training programmes. Moreover, Bangladesh has established International Mother Language Institute (IMLI) to foster research and scholarly activities for the preservation of languages.

**Mr/Madam Chair,**

The Government of Bangladesh has been implementing policies, programme and taken special measures to ensure peace, progress and prosperity of all our ethnic communities of CHT and plain land by integrating them into mainstream socio-economic development without undermining their ethnic and cultural identities so that no one is left behind.

I thank you.