

**Statement by Nirmal Raj Kafle, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, at the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, on item 8: "Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration" 24April 2017**

**Madam Chair,**

It is our pleasure to participate in this important Forum, marking the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I wish to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election.

1. Nepal attaches a special significance to the theme of this session of the Forum, the “Tenth Anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration”. In the decade since, Nepal has made a number of achievements towards implementation of the Declaration. There are yet many challenges that still remain in its full and effective implementation.
2. Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural nation. Different languages and cultures exist in Nepal, which have created our rich and unique national identity of more than hundred ethnic groups and languages--nurtured with unity in diversity.
3. As a party to major Human Rights Conventions and ILO Conventions, including ILO 169, Nepal attaches utmost importance to the protection and promotion of the rights, cultures, and the knowledge of indigenous peoples.
4. The Constitution of Nepal recognizes all mother tongues as national language and provides for the protection and promotion of cultures, languages, arts and scripts of marginalized people, establishing dedicated and independent Commissions for the marginalized people, including indigenous nationalities.
5. The six mandated areas as identified by the Forum have been well incorporated in Nepal's constitutional, legal, institutional, and development policy frameworks, which are put into implementation in utmost priority and within the best national capacity.
6. The Government has secured reservation for Indigenous Nationalities in the public services. In all government services, including security forces, twenty-Seven percent

out of the reserved quota, which now stands at 45 percent of the total vacancy in a given year, are reserved for them.

7. The Government established the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities in 2002 with the main objectives of social, economic and cultural development of Indigenous Nationalities. Its highest policymaking body, the Governing Council, is chaired by the Prime Minister.
8. The Government has been integrating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into its plans, policies and programmes with particular focus on the Indigenous Nationalities along with different National Action Plans.
9. Indigenous women often face double discrimination as indigenous people and as women. Nepal believes that the rights of indigenous women should be recognized and they should be protected against the violations of their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

To conclude, **Madam Chairman**, my delegation takes pride in sharing that Nepal is a country with cultural diversity. The unity in a vast diversity has always been a source of strength in the nation-building. Nepal's recent political history has seen the Head of Government, Chief Justice, Speaker of the Parliament, Ministers, Chiefs of administrative or security agencies as members of various indigenous nationalities. The first Head of State in the republic Nepal was from a disadvantaged community, while his successor, the current President, is a female.

While we continue to take the measures for implementation of the Declaration, we are faced by various challenges like natural disasters, climate change, among others, which impacts the livelihood of the indigenous communities directly. The Government is committed to put indigenous issues high on agenda despite the challenges and constraints.

We look forward to engage constructively with the international community in the effective implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

**I thank you.**