

Statement by Bangladesh delegation
9th session of PFII, 29 April 2010, New York

Thank you Mr. Chair.

Although Bangladesh does not have any 'indigenous' population, we follow the deliberations of the Permanent forum on Indigenous Issues as an 'observer'. At times references are made to certain cases of Bangladesh and hence we would like to clarify about the Government's position.

As I have just mentioned, there are no 'indigenous people' in Bangladesh but some tribal people or people of different ethnic minorities living in different parts of the country. The majority of those people live in the three hill districts of Chittagong. There had been unrest in that region from the period 1975 to 1996. At the insistence of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord' was signed in 1997 during her previous term in office.

There had been stray incidents of clashes in that region at times. Following one such incident related to land and reserve forest, 3 people died in February this year. Government took immediate action and a number of culprits were arrested. The Government has taken necessary measures to make sure that the tribal people and non-tribal Bangalee people live there side by side with harmony.

Mr. Chair.

The present Government after assuming office in January 2009 resumed the process of full implementation of the Accord. As part of the process, a good number of military camps have been withdrawn from the hill districts. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Commission is now concentrating on surveying the lands with a view to ending the land disputes. The Government is focusing on providing more education and health facilities to the tribal minorities. The Government has special and targeted development programmes for all ethnic minority groups with a view to bringing them into the mainstream society while keeping their unique cultural and livelihood traditions intact.

I thank you Mr. Chair.