

#### **Item 4 (3 May 2017)**

#### **Implementing of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the UNDRIP**

For the protection and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights, especially the right to personal legal status and citizenship of indigenous peoples in Thailand, in Thailand, at least 20,000 indigenous elders are facing personal legal statuses with hardships for the accessibility to their basic human rights. They all are seated with vulnerability. They live in traditional ways of life, full of wisdom, living in harmony with mother earth. They speak their own indigenous language, do not speak Thai and certainly do not understand Thai law. When the Government surveyed people into civil registration system, the elders missed their opportunities, they then missed the process to develop legal statuses and getting the Thai citizenship.

These indigenous elders have been perceived as non-Thais and some are even stateless without registration. They cannot get benefits from all services including accessible social welfare provided in accordance with "the elderly law" that provides monthly allowance to all Thai elders aging over 60 years old.

I propose that the Thai Government shall initiate special policies to grant Thai citizenship for the indigenous elderly whom have been living in Thailand more than 30 years and their children and their grandchildren have been completely integrated into Thai society in accordance with Article 33 of UNDRIP, stipulated that: "the rights of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the state in which they live."

I wish there would be a link with cooperation among (i) indigenous communities; (ii) National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT); (iii) Ministry of Interiors; (iv) human rightsresponsive NGOs; (v) professors and academicians with expertise on nationality and all relevant laws; and (vi) UN agencies, especially the UNHCR under the flagship program on #IBelong with closing of the gaps on statelessness in Thailand and worldwide by or before 2024. The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, as an national entity with mandates on protection and protection of human rights in Thailand, gives the strong commitment in this regard.

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The Royal Thai Government adopted the goal of "zero statelessness" in Thailand, and became one of the leading members of the group of Friends of the #IBELONG Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024.