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4<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
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Agenda Item: 4c  
Indigenous Women, Children and Youth

Statement by Ina Hume

On behalf of the Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Organisations, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS), Jumma Peoples' Network International and Land is Life

Firstly let me begin by congratulating you, Madame Chair on your appointment as Chairperson of the Permanent Forum. This has given a very positive message for indigenous women, and especially your sisters from Asia, who are very proud to see you representing us.

We support the recommendations to the Permanent Forum of the Indigenous Women's Caucus, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus at this session on human rights and Women, children and youth.

The situation faced by many indigenous women, children and youth in Bangladesh is critical due to ongoing militarization and exploitation of natural resources on our ancestral lands.

Rather than make new recommendations we demand the following regarding the implementation of the previous recommendations to this forum:

- The Permanent Forum should develop mechanisms to review and monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the PFII on indigenous women, children and youth. In this regard we recommend that indigenous women, children and youth be considered as a separate sub item of the agenda of PFII
- PFII shall request UN agencies, governments and indigenous peoples to submit progress reports on the implementation of recommendations contained in the reports of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the PFII.
- In order to effectively tackle the cross cutting issues faced by indigenous women, youth and children, the problem of disaggregated data must be addressed by UN agencies, programmes, member states and indigenous peoples themselves towards mainstreaming their issues throughout the UN system and in member states.
- As a first step a lead UN agency should be assigned to take on this role. Resources should be committed by the UN agencies, multinational financial institutions and member states. In the case of Asia, such a mechanism exists, with the recent establishment of a UNDP Regional Indigenous People Programme, with a lead

coordinator who is an indigenous woman. The RIPP should be extended to other Asian countries and also be established in other regions to facilitate indigenous peoples policies for development into UN agencies and ensure equity among the regions.

- To strictly monitor and screen the human rights records of national army personnel, prior to allowing them to participate in Peacekeeping duties under the auspices of the United Nations Peacekeeping force.
- To implement a Zero tolerance policy to sexual exploitation by Peacekeepers both in their home countries and abroad whilst representing the United Nations Peacekeeping force.

Madame Chairperson, in 1993, the UN General Assembly approved a Code of Conduct in operation for all UN peacekeeping missions. Rule four states that they should "not indulge in immoral acts of sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population or United Nations staff, especially women and children".

A Bangladeshi Peacekeeper allegedly raped a 14-year-old boy in Jui, a transit camp near Freetown, Sierra Leone, in June 2002. The Peacekeeper was immediately repatriated. Bangladeshi Army personnel returning from peacekeeping duties were involved in the arson attacks and rapes of nine indigenous women in Mahalchari in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 2003.

Few U.N. peacekeepers, who are shielded from prosecution by military agreements, have faced legal action for sex crimes. The military personnel involved in the rape of nine women in Mahalchari and countless others accused of rape and sexual abuse throughout the Hill Tracts have never faced prosecution for their actions.

Where Madame Chair is the justice for these women and children, who continue to be abused at the hands of the military, who are above the law of their own lands and continue to serve as Peacekeepers as representatives of the United Nations?

Thank you Madame Chair.