

4th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
United Nations Headquarters, New York
16-27 May, 2005

Agenda Item 4(b)(c)
Data Collection and Disaggregation of Data on Indigenous Peoples

Statement by Albert Mankin
on behalf of

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples' Forum, Garo Women's Association, CIPRAD (tcraft@dhaka.net), Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS)(pcjss@hotmail.com), Jumma Peoples' Network International, Peace Campaign Group (pcgoffice@vsnl.net), Justice and Peace, Integration of Creation (JPIC) (gomesjomi@yahoo.com), and Taungya (taungya_cht@bttb.net.bd)

Chairperson,

Information and data on indigenous peoples in Bangladesh are generally not available in a disaggregated manner in official statistics, such as in the decennial national census reports, including the report of 2001. Of course, this makes it more difficult for planned development interventions on education, health and so forth. We feel that such a situation is the direct result of acute policy neglect and discriminatory attitudes of the government. We do not even know how much of the data and information is available to the general public, and how much is secretly preserved.

The 1991 Census, as made public, for example, contains data on many of the different ethnic groups of Bangladesh, including that on indigenous peoples, but the figures are inaccurate, and in the case of some of the peoples, gross underestimates. This results, amongst others, in lower resource allocations in development budgets. Then again, when it comes to literacy and education status of communities, the data follows religious criteria, rather than ethnicity, making it impossible for indigenous peoples to know their actual status of educational advancement. The 2001 census, as made public so far. Appears to contain no ethnically disaggregated data at all. This is a case of clear discrimination and mala fide purposes.

Official statistics with regard to public job allocations for indigenous peoples, as in the case of resource allocations in an ethnically disaggregated manner, is not available. This means, at the very least, planned interventions to improve the health, education and other sectors of the indigenous population are piece-meal, ad hoc and inadequate at best.

We therefore strongly recommend that the state government become more sensitive in the area of data collection and data disaggregation for the integral development of

Indigenous peoples. We also strongly recommend that UN Agencies take measures in considering Indigenous Peoples Issues and concerns while engaged with the state government in data collection and disaggregation.

Thank you madam chair.