

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

U N Headquarters, New York, April 24 – 5 May, 2017

Statement made by: Dr. Anjali Probha Daimari, President Boro Women's Justice Forum

On

Agenda Item 4: Culture

Madam Chair,

First of all I would like to thank UN Voluntary Fund for supporting me to travel to 16th Session of UNPFII, here in New York on behalf of my People.

It is my great pleasure to be here and I represent the Boro indigenous people from the North East India. Boro is the single largest indigenous community in the entire region of the North East India. An estimated 483 different tribes/indigenous peoples with a comparable number of languages and dialects encompass the region, reflecting the enormous diversity of the people. It reflects the variegated ethno-cultural mosaic of the region. The region presents a mixed and varied population of diverse linguistic groups, each group having a distinct life-style and cultural heritage. Boro indigenous people also have distinct and very rich cultural heritage.

Madam Chair, against their will the Boro people have been forced to assimilate and integrate culturally, socially and politically. Our distinctiveness is being ignored and eroded by the **one nation, one culture** policy of the government which is utterly disrespecting the diversity and distinctiveness of the indigenous Boro people. Due to tacit policy of the government the actual Boro population dwindled drastically as they were forced to assimilate with main stream society, a dominant group of people in the state of Assam. Our language, culture and tradition are not allowed to flourish freely. Though the government is responsible for development and safeguarding of every culture in the country constitutionally, the government is only doing so for the majority culture at the cost of culture of minority indigenous people.

Madam Chair, as an indigenous people our customary laws are not recognized and our social system is interfered by imposition of alien culture which is destroying very essence of the life of the indigenous Boro people. It is enshrined in the article 8 of UNDRIP that Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture. Therefore, indigenous peoples should have the right to live with their culture which is their pride.

Madam Chair, this is a matter of great concern and if this policy of the government is not reversed our culture, tradition, language and Boro people as a whole will become extinct in coming days.

Recommendations:

1. The government of India must stop discrimination against the language, culture, tradition of the Boro and other indigenous peoples.
2. Government should act according to constitution of the nation and safeguard the culture of minority and all other indigenous people as enshrined in the constitution.
3. The government must take measures to help flourish the culture of the indigenous and minority people.
4. The government must combat a propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against indigenous and tribal people in India.

Thank you for your kind attention madam chair!