

## **NEPAL**

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### **Statement by Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal on agenda item 3 : Indigenous Peoples : Development with Culture and Identity**

**(New York, April 20, 2010)**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Representatives of Indigenous Peoples,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the delegation of Nepal, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair of the Ninth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples was a landmark event in the direction towards promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples globally. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues has an important advisory role to play in this regard. The reports, resolutions and recommendations of the Permanent Forum and other UN bodies dealing with indigenous issues have proved instrumental in raising global awareness about the need to protect the rights and promote the development of ethnic and indigenous communities worldwide.

The declaration of the United Nations Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples from 2005 to 2015 exhibits the importance the international community attaches to this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal is a country of great diversity. There are more than hundred ethnic groups speaking more than 92 different languages. Among them, 59 different ethnic groups have been recognized as indigenous nationalities. The government of Nepal has taken several significant measures towards promoting the rights of the indigenous peoples. Nepal has ratified the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No 169

in August 2007. The Government of Nepal is in the process of formulating a comprehensive action plan for the implementation of the Convention. Nepal is also committed to implementing the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Government has instituted several administrative and legal measures with a view to ensuring the representation of Indigenous people in all state machineries including the reservation of Indigenous peoples in Government bureaucracy, police and Army.

In line with its commitment to indigenous issues, the Government of Nepal invited Professor James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples for a visit to Nepal in November 2008.

One of the main themes of Nepal's Interim Development Plan (2007-2010) is "Inclusive Development". This involves targeted programmes for indigenous peoples. One of its objectives is to promote economic and cultural development of indigenous peoples by increasing their access to administrative, social and economic resources. The government has recently introduced a social security scheme for the indigenous peoples who have been identified as endangered groups.

Mr. Chairman,

Programs have been developed within the overall framework of socio-economic development that aim at uplifting and empowering marginalized groups, indigenous people, oppressed, *Dalits* and other communities. Under the inclusive and broad-based development process that Nepal has embraced various ethnic groups and communities, including indigenous peoples, are taking active participation in the formulation and execution of plans and programmes that affect them. In this context, we would like to underscore the important role that various communities, including indigenous peoples, have been playing in the conservation of their natural environment and resources. Nepal's highly successful community forestry programs owe its success to the active participation of various ethnic and indigenous people in the management of forests and forests-based resources. There is a great scope for further utilizing their creative potentials and skills in this field. The Government has adopted policies and programs for social justice and affirmative action for women, *Dalits*, indigenous groups and other marginalized or disadvantaged groups.

National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) is also implementing several projects for socio-economic development of marginalized indigenous peoples.

Mr. Chairman,

The Interim Constitution of Nepal defines Nepal as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religion and multi-cultural country. The Constitution recognizes all languages spoken in Nepal as mother tongue are national languages which can be used in the local bodies. The Interim Constitution of Nepal guarantees the civil liberties and fundamental freedoms to all people, including the indigenous peoples.

The election to the Constituent Assembly was held successfully in April 2008. The new political landscape in Nepal has created new opportunities for inclusive governance. The Interim Constitution has guaranteed to the indigenous tribes, among others, the right to social justice under which they have the right to participate in the state mechanism on the basis of proportional inclusive principles. Nepal's Constituent Assembly stands as one of the most- inclusive assemblies in the world with a greater representation of people from various ethnic and geographic regions. It is hoped that the new Constitution, which is in the making, will further consolidate the gains achieved so far.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Nepal is committed to safeguarding the interests of various ethnic groups and indigenous peoples. We fully reiterate our commitment to protecting and promoting human right and fundamental freedoms of all people, including that of ethnic and indigenous peoples. My delegation stresses on the urgent need for the concerted and coherent efforts for speeding up social and political inclusion of the indigenous peoples and promoting their education, health, employment all over the world.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.