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Agenda Item: 4(C) Indigenous Peoples and conflict  
prevention and resolution

Statement by Binota Moy Dhamai  
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, distinguished Government delegates, honorable indigenous sisters and brothers,

For centuries the indigenous peoples or Adivasis of Bangladesh have been living in Bangladesh with a distinct culture, social system and way of life. They are the first descendants of the area where they live. The British rule adopted several provisions for indigenous peoples in recognition of their 'separate identity'. The British Government adopted the '1900 Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation' in which the region was recognised as an excluded area. In this regulation, the indigenous peoples of CHT enjoyed their rights in their own way. All outsiders were prohibited from entering the area. The border area of Mymensingh district was also declared as a 'partially excluded area' in 1935 recognising their indigenous status and for the protection of the lands of Garos, Hajongs, Koch, Banai, Hodi, Dalu communities. After British rule the Pakistan Government partially recognised these safeguards laws in the constitution. But after Bangladesh became independent in 1971, the indigenous peoples were not acknowledged in the national Constitution, though general Bangladeshi and several laws acknowledge them as 'indigenous'.

For a long time the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh have been facing the severe effects of government policies including land grabbing, migration, human rights violation, extreme Bengali nationalist and extreme Islamic fanatic policy and even ethnic cleansing. All ruling government parties of Bangladesh have lacked sympathy towards the social and economic systems of the indigenous peoples, and this has been exacerbated by the disruptive policies of internal colonization. The state itself is liable for the destruction of indigenous communities within the country. The Bangladesh Government has yet no policy for the development of indigenous peoples. The main demand of indigenous peoples in the country is for constitutional recognition and the right to self-determination.

For the permanent solution of the CHT problem, indigenous Jumma people demanded regional autonomy for CHT region analysing their separate history, distinct culture, ethnic identity and centuries' old political, cultural and economic problem of CHT. All efforts of Jumma people ended in failure terming them as separatist and hostile to Bangladesh by the governments. Along with arms struggle,

the PCJSS, only political party of indigenous people in CHT, always kept door open to resolve the CHIT problem through political and peaceful means. Consequently after holding series of formal dialogues, an accord popularly known as CHT *Peace Accord* was signed on 2nd December of 1997 between the PUSS and government of Bangladesh.

The CHT Accord had ended the decades long fierce armed conflict in the region and opens up the way for overall development of the indigenous people. In the Accord, the Bangladesh Government has recognized the CHT region as a Jumma inhabited wca. h ,PQcizO admirti-51YHive -ii'r~inclltz-mtnr ~eY' CND' 1A05 i\_nWuce' Thoxrh lhj:~ government signed the Accord, but she has no sincerity to implement the Accord. As a result, the successive governments have been following dilly-dallying tactics into the proper implementation of the Accord. Though a few provisions had been implemented, but almost all the main issues remained fully unimplemented'.

Due to the non-implementation of the Accord, the situation in CHT is becoming more and more worse, and the common people are becoming gradually more and more vocal against the government policies. So there is no way for permanent resolution to the conflict except immediate implementation of the CHT Accord in letter and spirit.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.