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Agenda Item 7: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: good practices and lessons learned. Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Chair of the UNPFII, the Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, and members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Human Rights Committee.

Thank you Mr. Chair.

My name is Shohel Chandra Hajang belonging to Hajong indigenous community. I am representing Bangladesh Jatiya Hajong Sangathon and Kapaeeng Foundation. I express my gratitude to the UN Voluntary Fund for allowing me to participate in this session.

After around 11 years of UNDRIP, the Declaration is reflected only in the thinking of indigenous peoples and civil societies in Bangladesh. The declaration has not reflected in the nation constitution and other policies of Bangladesh. However, in the 7th Five Year Plan of Bangladesh (2016-2020), the Government mentioned that it would consider implementing the UNDRIP and ratify the ILO Convention 169. While we take a positive sign of the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act 2001 amended in 2016 by the Government of Bangladesh, unfortunately, the work of the Commission is seriously impeded by its lack of sufficient human and financial resources and the absence of Rules of Procedures.

Most of human rights violations upon indigenous peoples in Bangladesh take place centering the land. According to Kapaeeng Foundation, in 2017 around 20,000 acres of lands belonging to indigenous peoples were under the process of acquisition, mostly for the establishment of the national park, special economic zones, tourist spots, military camps and reserve forests. Despite issuing a number of formal pledges, the government is yet to take any measures to address the issue of land alienation of indigenous peoples, especially those indigenous peoples living in the plains land.

Indigenous women in Bangladesh live in a fearful and insecure situation. According to our (*Kapaeeng Foundation*) report, more than 50 cases of violence against indigenous women with 58 victims in 2016 alone, 48 such cases with 57 victims in 2017 and there have been at least 24 indigenous women and girls were subjected to kill, rape, gang rape, attempt to rape, sexual harassment in Bangladesh from January to June 2018. Unfortunately, the Government have not taken yet any special measure to ensure safety and security of the indigenous women and children against all forms of violence and discrimination. Moreover, there is a growing trend of cases of arbitrary arrest, detention and enforced disappearance in the country, particularly indigenous human rights defenders and political activists by the security forces.

Given this backdrop, I would like to urge EMRIP, Special Rapporteur, and international

community, including States and the UN Agencies:

1. To recognize indigenous peoples' collective rights, in particular, the right to land, territories and natural resources including constitutional recognition as indigenous peoples;
2. Endorse the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
3. Ensure meaningful and effective engagement of indigenous peoples prior to formulating, amending or repealing any law concerning their rights and wellbeing;
4. To encourage the Government of Bangladesh to declare a timeframe road map for the speedy, proper and full implementation of the CHT Accord; and to take steps for adequate fund, manpower, office set-up and adoption of Rules of Business of the CHT Land Commission;
5. To ensure safety and security of indigenous women and girls and to bring the perpetrators to justice; To end the culture of impunity and to ensure access to justice of indigenous peoples including women and girls and to stop criminalization of indigenous activists;
6. To set up a separate Land Commission for the indigenous peoples in the plains to recover lands lost during the last 40 years and reinstate them to their original owners;
7. Ratify the 1989 ILO Convention No. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples;
8. Form a separate Ministry on Indigenous Peoples affairs for plain lands and provide adequate budget allocation for indigenous peoples of the plains;
9. Engage indigenous peoples, including indigenous women and youth, in implementing and reviewing the progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
10. Take special measure in order to ensure the right to education of indigenous peoples in the mother tongue.

Thank you Mr. Chair