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POPULATIONS

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**Statement Paper Presented
By Ms. Lucky Sherpa
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Under Agenda item 4 a(General Debate)**

Madam Chair, Distinguished Members of the WGIP, indigenous brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Lucky Sherpa representing Himalayan Indigenous Women Network a network of 18 Himalayan indigenous minorities of Nepal as recognized by the Gov't of Nepal. On behalf of indigenous women of Nepal and Himalayan Indigenous Women Network I would like to provide you all my warm greetings and love.

Nepal is a multi-ethnic state, comprised of a great social and cultural diversity. Along with the diversity, the country is characterized by widespread inequalities and discrimination in terms of ethnicity, gender and geography. Exclusion is rampant in Nepal. We should not forget that for 237 years, the majority of the population has been excluded from the mainstream. Only about 25 percent of the population of the dominant group has captured most of the state power and resources. Such exclusion is the main reason behind the recent insurgencies, including the Maoists. Likewise, there are many identity movements, though not very successful. No women, indigenous peoples can be seen participating in the mainstream today.

The status of women is considered as one of the factors that influence a nation's social, economic and cultural development. Due to increasing brunt of poverty, social oppression, ethnic and gender discrimination, killings, violence, trafficking and Peoples' War, women from indigenous nationalities are leading miserable lives. Indigenous women of Nepal's participation in the decision Making bodies related to economic, professional and business affairs and other policy executive is almost negligible. Due to gender and ethnic discrimination in the state, half of the work force has become incapacitated.

Since 1970, there has been many approaches implemented as women in development approaches, gender and development and most of the NGOs and INGOs have implemented the programs in the name of gender mainstreaming neglecting half of the indigenous women population. Therefore the programs have failed to make any positive sign in the name of gender mainstreaming. These programs have benefited only mere NGOs and INGOs led by so called high caste elite women.

Women's participation in the various levels of decision making process is an essential prerequisite for the establishment of equality, development and peace. The Nations Mainstream cannot be formed without the full participation of Indigenous women. In

response to this situation, civil societies, INGOs and government agencies must implement programs and policies to address the problem and increase the participation of indigenous women in decision-making.

Indigenous Women group, in their struggle for gaining rights provided by the any international laws would like to recommend the following.

- > We urge and support for the Continuation of UNWGIP more effectively by involving the indigenous community of the different region which ensures gender balance.
- > Sincerely implement "ask first" principle of consultation and participation, including by GO, INGOs and NGOs;
- > Rights of Indigenous Women should be respected and recognized their roles in peace building and conflict resolution enhanced.
- > Participation of Indigenous women in the formation of policy. Plan and Programs should be ensured.
- > Incorporate Indigenous Women's Issues in implementing BPFA, CEDAW and MDG.
- > Recognize diversity among women and give equal access opportunity, control and benefits to indigenous women, including by women's rights movement.
- > Draw Attention on International community also toward the victimization of Indigenous Women and girls in girls trafficking.
- > Recognize the Important role of Indigenous Women in Conflict Resolution and peace process.
- > Despite government assurances there is a lack of concrete policies that specifically address the difficulties faced by Indigenous women. The government therefore needs to be pressurized to formulate policies and programmes that direct address these issues.
- > Ensure the Participations of Indigenous Women in Mainstream of Development Process.
- > Autonomy with Right to self determination for the Indigenous nationalities.

Thank you very much for your attention.