

17th Session of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UN Headquarters, New York, 16-27 April 2018

Agenda Item 8: Special Item: “Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and resources”

Statement of National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF), National Indigenous Women’s Federation (NIWF), Indigenous Women Legal Awareness Group (INWOLAG), and Thakali Women Association (TWA)

Mr./Madame Chair, distinguished representatives, indigenous sisters and brothers,

I am Yasso Kanti Bhattachan from Nepal. This statement refers to Agenda Item 8: Special Item: “Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and resources.”

Aggressive development has displaced many Indigenous Peoples from our lands, territories and resources, resulting in food insecurity, and loss of sacred sites, cultural heritage and means of livelihood. Newar Indigenous Peoples, the victims of road expansion projects, are protesting against cultural genocide. Government security forces use excessive forces against Indigenous Peoples. Legal cases are subdue and dialogue between the Nepal Army and the Indigenous Newars is ongoing. ILO is in communication with the Nepal Government on the issue of violation of rights due to road expansion project in the Kathmandu Valley.

Therefore, our recommendations to UNPFII are:

- To call upon the Nepal Government and International Development Partners, specially the World Bank, ADB, IUCN, and WWF, working in Nepal to stop aggressive development in the lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples, and immediately establish a mechanism to get Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples.
- To call upon the Nepal Government to make upcoming federal, provincial and local body laws and policies to ensure ownership and control of lands, territories and resources by Indigenous Peoples in accordance to UNDRIP and Convention No. 169 of ILO.
- To call upon International Development Partners, including UNDP, to comply with international standards of human rights as per UNDRIP and Convention No. 169 of ILO, while supporting the Nepal Government in any development project in the lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples.
- To call upon UNDP, IFAD, FAO, and other UN Agencies and International Development Partners to recognize diversity among women and implement targeted indigenous women’s economic empowerment programs based on indigenous knowledge and skills.
- To call upon the Nepal Government to legalize Indigenous Judicial system.
- To call upon National Human Rights Commission of Nepal to have a separate unit on collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and have a Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights.
- Suggest UNPFII audit on situation of lands, territories and resources in every five years.

Thank you!