

14/07/11

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**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
Fourth session, 11–15 July 2011  
United Nations Office, Geneva, Switzerland

**Item. 5 of the provisional agenda:**  
Right of Indigenous Peoples

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Date: 14/07/2011

Mr. Chairperson, honorable indigenous brothers and sisters.

The Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh are one of the most deprived groups in many aspects of economic, social, cultural and political rights mainly due to their status of ethnic minority. Evidences show that the indigenous people of the country have very limited access to basic human rights including right to basic public services.

As per verdict of Supreme Court, very recently Awami League-led present grand alliance government amended constitution of Bangladesh by passing Fifteen Constitution (Amendment) Bill on 30 June 2011. But the government did not provide constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples as indigenous peoples (Adivasi); rather, termed tribals, small nationalities, ethnic group and communities. These terminologies are not accepted by the indigenous peoples.

Fifteen Amendment provides that the People of Bangladesh shall be known as Bengali as a nation and the citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangladeshis. Indigenous peoples rejected this provision saying that they are Bangladeshi as citizens, but they are not "Bengali" as a nation. They all are a separate nation possessing separate identity, culture, customs, language and society apart from Bengalis. Indigenous peoples rejected the Fifteen Amendment of Constitution saying that it undermined the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples set out the standards for the protection of indigenous peoples and their rights. We call upon the state to adhere to its message and work towards the implementation of its principles. However, the State machineries continue to violate the civil and political rights and collective rights of indigenous peoples with impunity and there is no effective mechanism available for redress in addressing these violations. Numerous cases of human rights violations committed by State Forces are contrary to its national laws and its international human rights obligations. Further, the government being a member of the Human Rights Council should make itself more transparent and accountable to its international human rights obligations.

Since signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Accord between the Government of Bangladesh and the PCJSS in 1997, only a little of the Accord was implemented during last 13 years. Though present government took few steps to have initiative about implementation of the Accord after assuming state power in January 2009, but these were basically reconstitution of some committees and appointment of some posts. Despite commitment to