

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar, Chair of Indigenous Nationalities
Commission of Nepal at the 20th United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

27 April 2021, New York

**Agenda Item 4: Discussion on the six mandate areas of the Permanent Forum with
reference to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for convening the 20th Session of the Forum despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since holding its first session in 2002, the Forum has relentlessly called attention to raise awareness and promote integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system.

In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Forum for its constructive role in getting 2022–2032 proclaimed as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages by the UN General Assembly. We are confident that the Decade will contribute to raising further global awareness about the importance of indigenous languages for sustainable development and peace building.

The Forum's six mandated areas- economic and social development, culture, education, health, environment, and human rights- resonate very well with the vision of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Declaration is a blueprint of the rights of indigenous peoples, with a resolve to end their marginalization and discrimination, and move towards the path of development, human rights, and justice for all.

To translate this resolve into reality, participatory development approaches on six mandated areas will be critical. Full respect for diversity and meaningful partnership must be at the core of such approaches.

Madam Chair,

In line with its commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, Nepal voted in favour of the Declaration when it was adopted in 2007.

In the same year, Nepal also ratified the ILO Convention 169.

These aspirations of these instruments have informed Nepal's legislations, policies and programmes.

In 2015, Nepal promulgated an inclusive Constitution that guarantees the rights and freedoms of ethnically and culturally diverse population including the Indigenous Peoples.

The Constitution establishes the principle of inclusion and proportional representation in the State structure as a fundamental right of the Indigenous Peoples.

Two independent and empowered entities - the Indigenous Nationalities Commission, a constitutional body, and the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous People, a statutory body, are active in protecting and promoting the rights and interests of the indigenous people.

Over the years, Nepal has come a long way in promoting the human rights and development of indigenous people.

We remain committed to building on the progress achieved thus far and establishing a more prosperous, just, and equitable society.

I conclude, Madam Chair, by expressing our solidarity with the indigenous peoples around the world. We are confident that the Forum will continue to give a strong voice to the indigenous peoples and encourage Member States and UN agencies to include indigenous peoples on their agendas.

Thank you.