

**12th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
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Agenda Item 6: Country Engagement

Thank you, Madam Chair,

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

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum, as a member of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, is pleased to see the Expert Mechanism continue to give more effect to the new mandate and strengthen the role in supporting indigenous peoples in the global, regional and national level. Bangladesh government has ratified almost all the international human rights treaties, adopted a number of recommendations in the UPR process on the promotion and protection of human rights including the implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Accord 1997.

Bangladesh is yet to implement the provisions of this convention properly in order to bring positive change in the conditions of indigenous peoples including women on the ground. The 7th Five Year Plan (FY 2016-20) of the Government of Bangladesh pledges, “Legal protection ensured by: 1) implementation the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007 and ratify the ILO Convention No. 169; 2) formulating a land policy to deal with land disputes involving ethnic communities and finally; 3) ensuring the participation of local governments in the management of natural resources”. On the other hand, the Govt. also targeted to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 while ensuring the participation of indigenous peoples in policy making level and developing their socio-economic condition by engaging them in different development and income generating activities as well as respecting their traditional knowledge.

However, the indigenous peoples are left behind and not included during the implementation of SDGs. Meaningful participation of indigenous peoples has not been ensured especially the indigenous youth are being neglected in every sector of the country. The Govt. also failed to filled the gaps in terms of providing quality education, providing safe water and sanitation, protecting

natural resources, creating employment, promoting and protecting of Human Rights and implementing CHT Accord.

Given this, we urge EMRIP to provide technical advice on how our Bangladesh government can take initiative to constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh, to ratify the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 (No. 169), implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Accord 1997, and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in the process of achieving SDGs.

We would like to recommend the Expert Members to consider visiting Bangladesh in coming years. Your country visit and expert advice would support in developing policies, laws and national action plans and advancing indigenous peoples human rights in Bangladesh.

Thank you