



24/05/05, #4(a), 211

Statement by

Mr. Tamla Ukyab, delegate of Nepal and Member Secretary of  
National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities  
at the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
(24 May 2005)

Madam Chairperson,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to join others in expressing my sincere congratulations to you on your unanimous and well-deserved election to the chair of the fourth session of the Forum. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the bureau for their well-deserved elections.

My delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the secretariat for preparing the documents of the session for our deliberations.

Madam Chairperson,

His Majesty's Government of Nepal attaches great importance to the work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Forum has been making progress in its mandated areas by protecting the rights and promoting the advancement of indigenous nationalities. We are delighted to note that the recommendations made by the previous session of the Forum and the numerous activities undertaken for the implementation of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People have significantly contributed to raising awareness and promoting the well-being of indigenous nationalities around the world. We believe that the deliberations by the Forum on this year's special themes of the Millennium Development Goals 1 and 2, poverty eradication and education, have been timely and appropriate and would provide substantive inputs to the forthcoming review of the progress made in achieving the MDGs by the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly due to be held in September this year.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal has prepared responses to the recommendations made by the third session of Forum that will be submitted to the Secretariat in due course. The responses of Nepal provide detailed information on legal, administrative, institutional measures and development programmes undertaken by His Majesty's Government of Nepal in the fields of education, health, human rights, culture and social and economic advancement of indigenous nationalities in the country. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste or ideological conviction. No person will be denied the equal protection of law. Each community has the right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture. Everyone has the freedom to practice his or her religion, handed down from tradition.

Madam Chairperson,

Inclusiveness of the indigenous nationalities in the political process of the country is evident also by the fact that two representatives of indigenous nationalities are nominated for local bodies such as the village development committees, municipalities and district development committees throughout the country. Gender balance is also taken into account. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal in Article 11 states, among others, that special arrangements may be made, by law, for the protection and promotion of more vulnerable sections, such as women, children, the aged, or economically, socially and educationally marginalized groups. His Majesty's Government is positively considering to allocate special quotas to the vulnerable sectors of society in order to make them represented in the Civil Service of the country.

Since its establishment by the Act in 2002, the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities, of which I am the Member Secretary, has been vigorously pursuing the interests of indigenous nationalities, known as "Adibasi Janajati" in the country. Fifty nine groups have been identified by the Act as indigenous nationalities taking into account the mother language, traditional rites and customs, distinct cultural identity and social structure as well as written or unwritten history.

The current tenth five year development plan has continued and strengthened the programmes for the advancement of indigenous nationalities through poverty alleviation. A number of programmes such as free education up to the primary level, free textbooks for the disadvantaged groups and girls, scholarships to students from indigenous nationalities up to higher studies are being implemented that would help eliminate existing inequalities faced by the indigenous nationalities, particularly in rural and remote areas of the country. His Majesty's Government of Nepal has launched school enrollment campaign throughout the country under the "Education for All" programme of MDG. The indigenous children have also been taking advantage of this scheme.

Madam Chairperson,

Despite the national efforts mentioned above, Nepal has been facing daunting challenge of peace and development due to violence and terrorist activities. His Majesty's Government is fully committed to protect the life and property of people. In order to complement national efforts, the international community should extend its cooperation to support the policies and programmes undertaken at the national level.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.