UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES
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ASIA CAUCUS STATEMENT:
Agenda item 4: Human Rights
(a) Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The indigenous peoples in Asia welcomes this particular agenda on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are pleased to inform the Permanent Forum of the Asia Regional Seminar for the Implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was held in Nepal. This important event was jointly organized by the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Nepal (NEFDIN) and the UNDP-Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme. Ninety participants from indigenous organizations, governments, national Human Rights Institutions, UN agencies, donors and advocates attended this seminar. This seminar had presentations and interactive workshops on good practices, lessons learned and concrete recommendations on the implementation of indigenous peoples’ rights based on ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This event has facilitated initial dialogue between governments and indigenous peoples of some countries on how to implement the rights of indigenous peoples at the national level.

Much is yet to be done in Asia for the implementation of the UNDRIP. Most governments in the region have yet to legally recognize the existence of indigenous peoples with inherent collective rights. While we are called or referred to in different names, we share common features as indigenous peoples and are entitled to the recognition of our collective rights based on the UNDRIP. As most of the states in Asia voted favorably for the adoption of the UNDRIP by the UN General Assembly, the next step should then be for states to pave the way for the recognition of indigenous peoples at the national level.

In this regard, we strongly call for the establishment of a national mechanism for the recognition of indigenous peoples involving the state, indigenous peoples, National Human Rights Institutions and UN agencies. This mechanism can be the forum for meaningful dialogues on the specificities and particular circumstances of indigenous peoples at the local and national levels, and to address the concerns of states in the recognition of indigenous peoples. We believe this will facilitate greater and mutual understanding on how the UNDRIP can be implemented at the national level, with due consideration to the national context of indigenous peoples and states.
Contrary to the fear of many states, the implementation of the UNDRIP can achieve the resolution of outstanding conflicts, instead of aggravating it. Further, this will benefit, not only the indigenous peoples, but also states and the rest of the population towards the achievement of national peace and sustainable development.

In the context of the above, we also welcome and support the report of the Expert Meeting on the implementation of article 42 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). We fully endorse the recommendations of this Expert Meeting. In addition, we strongly recommend the establishment of a national mechanism for the recognition of indigenous peoples beyond the establishment of national dialogues of indigenous peoples and states. This mechanism should ensure the effective and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples. We, thereby, call on the UNPFII to endorse this recommendation, and to actively encourage the Asian states to implement this recommendation.

Indigenous Peoples in Asia have always been demanding a national mechanism for the recognition of indigenous peoples and are thereby extending their full cooperation for this to be realized.

Thank you.