**United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

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Statement by:

Swarna Chakma

CHT\* Indigenous Peoples’ Council of Canada

E-mail: swarnachakma@gmail.com, cipcc.cht@gmail.com

Honorable Chair,

The languages of the indigenous people are on the verge of extinction in every country. Bangladesh is also no exception in this regard.

There are 45 languages spoken by more than 54 indigenous ethnic groups in Bangladesh Among them, 14 languages have been identified as endangered by the International Mother Language Institute.

The International Mother Language Institute has taken up a project to preserve and develop indigenous languages. But due to lack of manpower, funds and resources, this project is running through extreme crisis.

In 2017, the government took the initiative to publish textbooks in 6 indigenous languages. But though textbooks have been published in 6 indigenous languages, teachers have not been trained. As a result, this initiative of the government is going to end in failure today. Besides, the government has no plan as to when initiatives will be taken to publish textbooks in the languages of the remaining indigenous ethnic groups.

Indigenous children are not getting education in their own mother tongue and are being deprived of quality education. A lot of inconsistent information is presented in textbooks about the identity and lifestyle of the indigenous people. But the Bangladesh government is not paying attention to this problem.

Preservation of indigenous language and culture is related to their self-governance and their right to forests, hills, land and natural resources. If the indigenous peoples do not have political and cultural autonomy, then it is not possible to preserve the language and culture of indigenous peoples.

Therefore, in order to preserve and develop the language and culture of the indigenous people in Bangladesh, it is very important to properly introduce special self-government system through the implementation of CHT Accord of 1997 and to introduce a cultural self-governance system for the indigenous peoples of the plains.