

Indigenous Peoples' Statement on;

Agenda item 6: Protecting our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific

Roundtable 1: "Strengthening regional collaboration to protect our planet"

Thank you, Sir Chair, for giving the opportunity

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, and Ladies and Gentlemen

I am Prem Singh Tharu from Tharu Indigenous community of Nepal, representing Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and Indigenous Peoples Major Group.

We are very pleased to learn various environmental challenges as well as lots of progresses made by the states in their respective countries on environmental protection and planet.

However, based on presentations and sharing from honorable government delegates, we didn't hear very much about strengthening regional collaboration and partnership with Indigenous Peoples' Organizations, organizations of women, youths and other civil societies. We believe that civil societies are also very important contributors to the environment and development in their communities, countries, region and in globe also. This important Committee on Environment and Development (CED) needs to be serious and respectful in acknowledging and recognizing the contributions of the civil societies in overall.

We call on all states for necessary collaboration and partnership with the organizations of Indigenous Peoples, Women, Youths and other civil societies for inclusive participation and contribution to the protection of the planet and ensure the environmental human rights for all.

Moreover, we would also like to flag here that in "**Strengthening the environment-health nexus and One Health in Asia and the Pacific**" document, indigenous communities, women, youths and local communities are considered as vulnerable groups. This narrative needs to be improved because Indigenous Peoples, women, youths and local communities are important knowledge holders who hold lots of knowledge on herbal and traditional medicines and contributing to One Health Approach in their communities as well as playing crucial roles as the environmental defenders and safeguards in protection of the biodiversity, land, forest, resources and ecosystem. So, Indigenous Knowledge, and Knowledge holders and practitioners must be acknowledged and recognized in strengthening the environment-health nexus and One Health in Asia and Pacific.

Thank you very much for your attention

1st December 2022