

**Joint Statement to the 25th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Agenda Item 3 Discussion on the theme “Ensuring Indigenous Peoples’ health, including
in the context of conflict”**

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Statement by: Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus
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Thank you, Madam/Mr Chair.

I speak on behalf of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus. We congratulate the new UN Permanent Forum members and recognize your vital role in advancing Indigenous rights across Asia and globally.

We commend ASEAN for adopting declarations on environmental rights, development, and peace at the 47th ASEAN Summit. However, these do not fully reflect Indigenous Peoples’ rights as outlined in UNDRIP. Across Asia, many states lack legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples, and even where it exists, like in the Philippines and Malaysia, policies often undermine Indigenous land rights and self-governance—critical for our health and wellbeing.

The development of ASEAN’s Regional Plan of Action must include meaningful Indigenous participation and respect for our rights to ensure a clean, healthy environment for all. Indigenous voices cannot be sidelined in sustainability efforts.

Land, resource and human rights violations cause conflicts that worsen health disparities, hitting Indigenous women, children, youth, and persons with disabilities hardest. For example, in March 2026 in Madhupur, Bangladesh, Indigenous communities faced violence disrupting their access to traditional medicines and healing.

We highlight the importance of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 39, which addresses the multiple forms of violence Indigenous women face and how these harm their health. Persistent barriers exist, including limited access to culturally appropriate healthcare and the lack of support for Indigenous health systems.

We thereby call on states to

- Explore how the UN Security Council can address conflicts in Indigenous territories with Indigenous women, youth, and persons with disabilities meaningfully involved.
- Strengthen cooperation between the UN, Permanent Forum, and Peacebuilding Affairs for Indigenous-inclusive peace processes.
- Fully implement UNDRIP and UNCRPD articles affirming Indigenous rights to health and wellbeing.
- Include Indigenous territorial data in all UN peace, development, and humanitarian work.
- Promote National Action Plans on CEDAW General Recommendation 39, ensuring Indigenous women’s full participation and adequate resources.

Indigenous Peoples of Asia seek full recognition and respect for our rights to live with dignity on our ancestral lands. We urge ASEAN, the global community, and all stakeholders to uphold these commitments urgently and sincerely.

Thank you.