Celebrating 10 Years of Implementation of the UNDRIP and 25 Years of AIPP on
The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 2017

“Reaffirming our roots, Embracing our future”

Statement of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

9th August 2017

This year, the 13th of September 2017 will mark the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by the UN General Assembly. Further, the year 2017 is also an auspiciously year for Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) as it is its 25th Anniversary.

Over the past 25 years, alongside many other indigenous communities in Asia, AIPP has come together to discuss, propagate, and assert our own agenda towards: our inherent right to self determination and self-governance; our human rights and customary laws; the control of our lands, territories and resources; our unique culture, practices, science and intellectual property.

We have made great strides in 25 years, and we have taken on new and emerging challenges with strength and solidarity along with other movements across the globe in our dream to build a more just world. Despite historical and contemporary threats to our survival, we take the time on our 25th Anniversary to reflect on the progress made towards our collective aspirations and vision, especially on the 10 years of the implementation of UNDRIP.

There is no doubt that there is increased recognition of our rights in the international and regional arenas, and acceptance of our rights as legitimate universal human rights among governments and CSOs have significantly improved. At the country level, the adoption of UNDRIP has led to several achievements. Among other achievements, there are now five countries where indigenous peoples are recognized in the state law i.e. Nepal, Cambodia, Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines.

There are also two significant developments regarding Myanmar and Indonesia. In Myanmar, the government has adopted a New Land Use Policy that recognizes the customary land tenure of indigenous peoples. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Home Affairs has adopted guidelines for the identification of customary people (masyarakat adat) and recognition of their customary territory.
and indigenous objects in line with international standards. Implementation of these policy and guideline have the potential to change the lives of our indigenous brothers and sisters in Myanmar and Indonesia in a significant way. In this regard, while appreciating the initiatives, we call on the two governments to take actions towards their implementation in the true spirit and intent of the agreements. Furthermore, in Bangladesh, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Disputes Resolution Commission Act 2001 was amended based upon the advice of the Regional Council to recognize traditional land systems.

However, the continuity of our existence through our intrinsic relationship with our land, territories and natural resources, and the preservation of our identity remains under threat by militarization, development aggression, displacement and cultural domination. Our traditional institutions and governance systems, which are firmly rooted in our worldview and ethos have been greatly weakened by the imposition of state structures and external legal systems.

Most governments in Asia are reluctant to recognize our identity and our right to self-determination. We reiterate that our assertion for our system of self-government is for deepening democracy that encompasses universal human rights principles and indigenous worldviews. In this regard, we call on Governments in Asia and CSOs to strengthen dialogue and partnership with Indigenous Peoples for building a more democratic and just society.

We take pride in the increasing growth of indigenous organizations, including indigenous youth, at the country and sub-country level. And we recognize the increasing strength of our movement with the growing participation and leadership of women.

On this day, the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples Day, we reaffirm that AIPP is fully committed in realizing the rights of indigenous peoples in Asia as enshrined in the UNDRIP. We also recognize that minority groups within our communities such as youth, elders, persons with disabilities and LGBTI have distinctive needs and rights and we are committed in addressing them.