Respected Chair,

I am presenting this statement on behalf of Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus

The commitment to self-determination enshrined in the Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples is yet to be realized in Asia.

While some states in the region have enacted provisions to support the recognition of Indigenous Peoples, it is far from realizing the spectrum of rights enshrined under the UNDRIP and other relevant international standards. Even the watered-down agreements and peace accords signed are ignored or poorly implemented. In the Northeast region of India alone, the government has signed twelve peace accords with five different Indigenous Peoples, but it has been a history of broken accords. Other examples include the non-implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord (1997), breakdown of the democratic transition in Myanmar and the abuse of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of the Philippines, etc.

The failure of states to ensure lasting peace, justice and accountability is one of the main causes of conflict and violence. This is also reflective of the failure to see UNDRIP as an instrument to build democratic and inclusive institutions by member states.

We reiterate that states must recognize the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and their governance systems in accordance with their rights as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We urge:

- States to engage with Indigenous Peoples in good faith for building trust and create enabling conditions for unconditional dialogue and negotiations based on universal principles of human rights and democracy and invite the EMRIP and SRIP to provide expert advice to the negotiating parties as well as seek the involvement of third-party mediators in the negotiating table.
• States to consider Indigenous Peoples as genuine partners in building pluralistic society and democratizing governance systems and take immediate action towards implementing the existing constructive agreements signed with Indigenous Peoples as well as initiate political dialogues with Indigenous Peoples in all countries for ushering in long-term peace and justice.
• The recommendations issued by the Special Rapporteur Alfonso Martinez and those made at the three United Nations expert seminars should be followed up and implemented, including the one asking for the establishment of an international mechanism to handle disputes related to treaties, agreements and constructive arrangements.
• EMRIP to conduct specific study on Peace Accords to understand the nature and weaknesses of those accords in Asia rendering them ineffective and provide concrete recommendations to both states and Indigenous Peoples for transcending the structural barriers and limitations towards meaningful autonomy and self-government.

Thank you

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