

Ms. Valerie Julliand  
The UN Resident Coordinator  
UNDP Office  
UN House  
Pulchowk

9<sup>th</sup> Aug 2016

Subject: A Letter of Memorandum on the Occasion of International Day of the World's Indigenous People

Dear Ms. Julliand,

First of all, let me take this opportunity to welcome you to Nepal !

And also like to extend our Congratulations to you, on the occasion of International Day of the World's Indigenous People, August 09, 2016. As you are aware, this year's International Day of the World's Indigenous People is dedicated to the right to education. We, the indigenous people right promotion group, feel proud and privileged that the right of indigenous peoples to education is protected by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Article 14, states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education **in their own languages**, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning." Besides this, the right of indigenous peoples to education is also protected by a number of other international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also the CRC (The Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations.

Despite these instruments, the right to education has not been fully realized, again as you are aware, for most indigenous peoples are from rural and remote areas and marginalized communities in Nepal. Education data is still showing a critical education gap between indigenous peoples and the general population. Studies have proved that one of the factors for this kind of gap around the world is the use of instruction language in the school which is not familiar to children from indigenous communities. Language is not only a medium of communication but also a prime component of group identity , which calls for the importance of Mother Tongue, not only as a medium of instruction, but also as a subject to let them feel homely. Moreover, mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) is the need of Nepal as there is keen desire among the Nepalese citizens to promote it. So, on the occasion of this year's International Day of the World's Indigenous People, we would like to join hand with UN in implementing the declaration and other existing instruments on Indigenous People's rights to education, and to advocate, promote and take solid actions to translate these declarations to benefit all of indigenous peoples living in this country.

Besides, the Federal Republic Nepal, with a new constitution not only adopted its national feature as of multi-ethnicity, multi-religious and multi-lingual society but also given status of national language to all mother languages spoken in Nepal. Similarly, the constitution has also ensured rights to basic education in their own mother tongues.

But, apart from several International instruments and Nepalese constitutional provisions for education in mother tongue, in practices it is still far to realize. In one hand utmost desire for mother tongue education has been in national arena as an outcry of indigenous communities for long back of the history and on the other there are numbers of bureaucratic and administrative hurdles, which is not possible to over come unless the global body as

the UN plays a positive role. We are very obliged and thankful to the UN Body for selecting this year as **World Indigenous Day theme as Indigenous Rights to Education**, which is most appropriate for this point of time.

In a commemoration of 22<sup>nd</sup> International Day of the World's Indigenous People, Indigenous People Right Group of different communities are in a Mass Rally to bring awareness with school communities and general citizens in the morning which will end at the UN premises. And on behalf of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples, representative group from the mass is handing over the **Letter of Memorandum** to you, and we humbly urge the UNDP, Nepal, to be in role bringing respective Declarations and other existing instruments on Indigenous People's rights to education, with solid actions to translate these declarations to benefit 37.5 percentages of indigenous people living in this country.

We would also like to acknowledge our heartfelt appreciation for UN's initiatives to fulfill the rights of the Indigenous People in the world, by designating a special International Day to raise awareness on the vital issue and also to remind the accountability of the duty bearers.

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention and action,

**With best regards,**

- (01) Mall K. Sundar - Former MP and Human Rights Activist \_\_\_\_\_
- (02) Dr. Mahesh Man Shrestha - Mother Tongue Activist \_\_\_\_\_
- (03) Naresh Tamrakar - President Newa Dey Daboo  
(national level organization of Newar community of Nepal) \_\_\_\_\_
- (04) Dr. Suman Kamal Tuladhar - Educationist (former Education expert of UN) \_\_\_\_\_
- (05) Laxmi Das Manandhar - Former MP and Industrialist \_\_\_\_\_
- (06) Dipak Tuladhar - Director of Modern Newa English School  
(a privately owned and run multi-lingual pre-school) \_\_\_\_\_
- (07) Sujib Bajracharya - Newa Jagaran Manch \_\_\_\_\_
- (08) Subarna Chitrakar - Social worker \_\_\_\_\_
- (09) Satya Narayan Dangol - Social worker \_\_\_\_\_
- (10) Nirranjan Ratna Shakya - Social worker cum Businessman \_\_\_\_\_
- (11) Dr. Pushpa Raj Rajkarnikar - former Deputy Governor of Central Bank  
& former Member of National Planning Commission \_\_\_\_\_
- (12) Rabindra Sherstha - Social worker \_\_\_\_\_
- (13) Amrit Yonjan Tamang – Linguist \_\_\_\_\_
- (14) Toya Nath Bhattarai - Former Joint Secretary, Nepal Govt. \_\_\_\_\_
- (15) Amar Limbu – Lecturer Limbu language activist \_\_\_\_\_
- (16) Ganesh Rai - Wombule language activist cum journalist \_\_\_\_\_
- (17) Bikram Tripathy - Awadhi language activist cum writer \_\_\_\_\_