

Adivasi/Janajati *Vrihat Morcha* (Indigenous Peoples' Mega Front), Nepal

Press Communiqué

Respected Journalists/Media persons friends,

Adivasi/Janajati *Vrihat Morcha*, (Indigenous Peoples' Mega Front) Nepal has been formed on 2066 Mangsir 6 (21 November 2009, N.S. 1130 Thinlathwa 5) with an objective to launch a powerful struggle in order to ensure the immediate implementation of the agreements signed between the State and Adivasi/Janajati parties and organizations regarding the rights of the Adivasi/Janajatis in the new Constitution being drafted by the Constituent Assembly, such as federalism, democratic republic, right to self-determination, ethnic autonomy and self-governance, secularism, polynational state, linguistic equality, distinct identity of the Adivasi/Janajatis along with their land, political preferential rights and gender equality on the basis of the future restructuring of the State, based on historic and ethnic, linguistic and regional grounds and as has been ensured by such documents as United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 to which Nepal is a State party.

The powerful struggle also aims at ensuring ethnic autonomy and self-governance along with self-determination on the basis of ethnic historical backgrounds and languages as we have wished, as well as the natural rights and interests of the Adivasi/Janajatis while assembling and organizing the movement of the Adivasi/Janajatis on a national level.

The Adivasi/Janajati *Vrihat* Assembly, organized at Chumlung Him, Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, Tikhedewal, Lalitpur on 21 November 2009 (2066 Mangsir 6, Saturday, N.S. 1130 Thinlathwa 5) prepared a Letter of Basic Agreement (attached herewith). The Letter of Basic Agreement has endorsed such issues as identifying 22-point common issues of the Adivasi/Janajatis, ensuring 13-points in the new Constitution and ensuring the rights of the Adivasi/Janajatis in the process of constitution building.

In the process of constitution building, a thematic committee and other appropriate mechanisms should be established in the Constituent Assembly by 2066 Mangsir 19 in accordance with the provisions of international law, the early warning letter sent to the Government of Nepal on 13 March 2009 and the follow-up letter sent on 28 September 2009 by the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the recommendations forwarded on 20 July 2009 by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, in order to seek prior and informed consent of the Adivasi/Janajatis and to ensure meaningful and effective representation of the Adivasi/Janajatis. Moreover, the constitutional principles, Preamble, Articles, Clauses, Appendices and other provisions related with, and instrumental to the issues of, the Adivasi/Janajatis should be endorsed as well as separate provisions should be made regarding the identity and collective rights of the Adivasi/Janajatis only after obtaining free, prior and informed consent through the said mechanism. In addition, as recommended by the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial

Discrimination, the mechanism and process of obtaining free, prior and informed consent through the representatives selected in accordance with the traditions of the Adivasi/Janajatis should be established and ensured within the given deadline. Besides, the Government should endorse the Plan of Action (POA) submitted by the Task Force of the Government in order to implement the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 by 2066 Mangsir 19.

A letter of memorandum regarding the common issues of the Adivasi/Janajatis mentioned above, rights to be ensured in the process of constitution building and issues to be compulsorily incorporated in the new constitution has already been submitted to the Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly on 2066 Mangsir 11 and to the Prime Minister of the Government of Nepal on 2066 Mangsir 12 (both the letters of memorandum are attached herewith). We are compelled to declare the programmes of the first phase of struggle of the Adivasi/Janajati Vrihat Morcha, Nepal (Indigenous People's Forum, Nepal) from Mangsir 21, 2066 [6 December 2009] to Paush 14, 2066 [29 December 2009] if the Government of Nepal, which has always been illiberal and indifferent towards the issues of the Adivasi/Janajatis, fails to address our genuine, just and legal demands as mentioned in the letters of memorandum, by Mangsir 19 [4 December 2009]. (Attached herewith are the programmes of the first phase of struggle.)

Struggle Committee:

1. Secretary - Dr. Krishna Bhattachan, Adivasi/Janajati Intellectual **Sd**
2. Member Struggle Committee - Pasang Sherpa, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
3. Member Struggle Committee - Soma Rai, National Federation of Adivasi/Janajati Women **Sd**
4. Member Struggle Committee - Naresh Tamrakar, Newa: Deya Dabu (Representative, Jatiya Samstha (Hills))
5. Member Struggle Committee - Basant Sherchan, Thakali Sewa Samiti (Representative, Jatiya Samstha (Himalayas))
6. Member Struggle Committee - Dhan Bahadur Majhi, Nepal Majhi Utthan Sangh (Representative, Jatiya Samstha (Terai)) for **Sd**
7. Member Struggle Committee - Virsu Lal Uranw, Nepal Jhangad (Uranw) Kodem Sudhara (Representative, Jatiya Samstha (Terai))
8. Member Struggle Committee - Laxman Tharu, Tharuhat Autonomy State Council (Federal Democratic Republic Forum) **Sd**
9. Member Struggle Committee - Kumar Lingden, Federal Limbuwan State Council (Federal Democratic Republic Forum) **Sd**
10. Member Struggle Committee - Kumar Rai, Adivasi/Janajati Sabhasad Sabha **Sd**
11. Member Struggle Committee - Suresh Ale Magar, Adivasi-Jatiya-Chhetriya Mahasangh, Nepal (Representative, Political Parties Sister Organizations)
12. Member Struggle Committee - Vijay Sainju, Nepa: National Party
13. Member Struggle Committee - Sanjuhang Palungwa, Federal Limbuwan State Council **Sd**
14. Member Struggle Committee - Minraj Chaudhari, Nepal Adivasi/Janajati Students Federation
15. Member Struggle Committee - Sopa Magar, Adivasi Students Society **Sd**
16. Member Struggle Committee - Anjana Tamli, National Federation of Adivasi/Janajati Women, District Coordination Council **Sd**

17. Member Struggle Committee - Shukra Bahadur Majhi, Nepal Adivasi/Janajati Federation, District Coordination Council **Sd**
18. Member Struggle Committee - Nagendra Kumal, Adivasi/Janajati Highly Marginalised Community **Sd**
19. Member Struggle Committee - Lokendra Jero Kirati, Adivasi/Janajati Community Due to be Registered
20. Member Struggle Committee - Dinesh Ghale, Adivasi/Janajati Professional and Vocational Organization (Lahurnip) **Sd**
21. Member Struggle Committee - Bharat Shrestha, Nepal Adivasi/Janajati Youth Federation **Sd**
22. Member Struggle Committee - Yam Bahadur Kulung, Federation of Adivasi/Janajati Nongovernmental Organizations **Sd**

Date: Sunday, Magsir 14, 2066 (29 November 2009) (N.S. 1130 Thinlathwa 12).

Venue: Centre for Constitutional Dialogue, Hall, New Baneshwore, Kathmandu.

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