

**IMPHAL DECLARATION
(EASTERN HIMALAYAN PEOPLES' CONVENTION ON
PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND NATURAL RESOURCES),
6TH SEPTEMBER 2017, IMPHAL, MANIPUR**

Organized by: SAVE SIKKIM, ACTION COMMITTEE ON TEESTA, BOROK PEOPLES' HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION, KARBI HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, NORTH EAST DIALOGUE FORUM, CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY, MANIPUR, KHASI STUDENTS' UNION, PEOPLES RIGHT FOR SUBANSIRI VALLEY, MANIPURI YOUTH FRONT ASSAM, YOUTH FORUM FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SIANG PEOPLES FORUM, KARBI STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER CSOs

Affirmed that indigenous peoples' land, forest, water and natural resources are sources for our spiritual and physical survival and existence as peoples with dignity and rights. Indigenous peoples of Eastern Himalayas have the right to self-determination and self-determined rights to develop their own land and natural resources, which is our future.

Express serious concern with the increased 'development' onslaught on indigenous peoples' land and resources in the aggressive pursuance of India's Look East or Act East policy towards fostering trade and connectivity with South and South East Asian Nations.

Concerned with the increased targeting of the Rivers in the Eastern Himalayas for construction of mega hydel projects and the signing of more than Two Hundred (200) Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between the Government with dam building companies without the peoples' free, prior and informed consent

Express concern with the proposed mining plan in the region, especially the exploratory mining and further plan to commercially mine Uranium in Meghalaya.

Further concerned with perpetuation of land grabbing, rights violations, restrictions on communities and arbitration of forest and customary laws.

Further concerned with the increased oil exploration plan by Jubilant Energy, Oil India Limited, Asian Oilfield Service Ltd etc without recognizing indigenous peoples' rights over their land and resources and not taking their free, prior and informed consent, especially in Manipur, Assam etc. The absence of safeguard measures to hold these companies accountable for plunder of resources and violations is an additional concern.

Express concern that the pursuance of such unsustainable development projects, oil exploration, mega dams, mining etc, will clearly undermine and go against the provisions of Sustainable Development Goals of UN.

Express concern with the formulation of policies, such as the North East Hydrocarbon Vision, 2030, the Manipur Hydro Power Policy, 2012, the New Land Use Policy etc, to intensify oil exploration, mega dams building and the commercialization of community land and their resources through force and coercion by so called legal sanctions.

Take serious note of the intrusion and the financing by international financial institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency in financing infrastructure projects that will lead to exploitation of peoples' land and resources in the region.

Express concern with the extensive militarization of the region and the continued imposition of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 that actually facilitate corporate bodies to expropriate the land and resources in the region without recognizing indigenous peoples' rights.

Express concern with the increased targeting of human rights defenders in North East India

Express concern with the continued refusal of the Government of India to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 and other set of international laws and standards that guarantee human rights of indigenous peoples.

The participants hereby resolved:

To recognize indigenous peoples self-determined rights over their land and resources in accordance with the provisions of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 and accordingly all development process affecting their land and resources fully respect and accept their self-determination and right to free, prior and informed consent.

Resolved to stand against all mega dams in North East and to urge the Government of India to revoke all MoUs and rescind all plans to build mega dams all over the Rivers of Eastern Himalayas, such as the 1500 MW Tipaimukh Dam and 190 MW Pabram Dam over the Barak River, the 2000 MW Lower Subansiri Dam, the 2700 Lower Demwe Hydroelectric Project, Siang Lower HEP (2700MW), Siang Upper II (3750 MW), Siang Upper I (6000 MW), Tawang Stage I, Stage II and irresponsible planning of dams on the Kameng.

Decommission failed, underperformed and unsustainable mega dams like the Ithai Barrage of 105 MW Loktak Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project, Khuga dam, the Dumbur Dam, Ranganadi Hydroelectric project. Stop the commissioning plan of Mapithel dam and release water from Mapithel dam reservoir.

Rescind all plans of the UCIL to commercially mine uranium in Meghalaya including exploratory mining by AMD and stop all mining plans like Chromium and limestone mining in Manipur, Assam etc. Further resolve to urge upon the UCIL and other companies to withdraw from Meghalaya and North East India.

The Government of India should stop all oil exploration and drilling across North East States and to revoke all contracts and licenses awarded to oil companies like Jubilant Oil and Gas Private Limited, the Oil India Limited, the Asian Oilfields, CANARO etc for failing to respect indigenous peoples rights.

Repeal policies like the North East Hydrocarbon Vision, 2030, the Manipur Hydro Power Policy, 2012, Indian Oilfield Act, 1948 etc that facilitate extensive corporation, privatization and exploitation of indigenous peoples land, resources and territories. India's Act East Policy should also stop causing harm and destruction of peoples land and resources and violation of their human rights.

Urge the International Financial Institutions to respect indigenous peoples' human rights and also to stop financing projects whose intention is to plunder land and resources in the region.

Reviewing and rescinding unsustainable and destructive development projects and policies, recognizing indigenous peoples' rights over their land and ensuring their rightful involvement in development decision making processes in the region would be crucial step to realize sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Stop all forms of militarization of indigenous peoples land and repeal emergency legislations like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 that lead to human rights violations with impunity while also facilitating the plunder of indigenous peoples land and resources by the State and corporations in North East India. Stop targeting human rights defenders promoting defending of land and resources in Eastern Himalayas.

The Government of India should fully implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 in all development related decision making processes.

Forge stronger unity among the indigenous peoples of Eastern Himalayas and strive collectively to defend our land and resources from all corporate expansion, privatization and exploitation of our land and resources and undermining of indigenous peoples rights in the region. The participants committed to work for empowering local communities for decision making to assert their rights over their land and resources.