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The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and has the honour to refer to the "draft concluding observations" of the Human Rights Committee on the Initial report of Bangladesh under ICCPR.

In this regard, the Government of Bangladesh would like to mention its reflection that the country context, realities and the limitations of Bangladesh may not have been adequately appreciated in the draft concluding observations. Also, the efforts of the Government in the implementation of the ICCPR provisions in Bangladesh might not have been recognized enough. It appears that the information provided by the Government during the interactive dialogue held in Geneva at the consideration of the initial report during 6-7 March 2017 was not duly reflected in the concluding observations.

The Government would, therefore, like to provide responses to certain observations, cited below, that call for factual correction:

Para 12(c) of the draft Concluding observations: "indigenous people"

Correction/Explanation by State Party:

As enshrined in Article 27 of the ICCPR, the Constitution of Bangladesh in Article 27 and 28 guarantees civil and political rights of all people irrespective of their religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. In this regard, the Committee may specify the ICCPR provision that has express reference to 'indigenous people'.

In fact, there is no 'indigenous' communities in Bangladesh, but some ethnic minorities. In this regard, we would like the Committee to specify the legal and factual bases on which it advises the State Party to 'recognize legal status of indigenous peoples'.

Para 13 of the draft Concluding Observations: Statistical error

Correction/Explanation by State Party:

According to the data published by UNICEF, the prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh under the age of 15 is 18% and under the age of 18 is 52%. (<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>)

Para 20(c) of the draft Concluding Observations: Criminalization of enforced disappearance

Correction/Explanation by State Party:

Although 'Enforced disappearances', as a terminology, does not exist in the penal laws of Bangladesh, the crimes have been covered by the laws under 'abduction' and

'kidnapping' which apply equally to the official belonging to law enforcement agencies.

Para 29 of the draft Concluding Observations:

Correction/Explanation by State Party:

During 2014 general election, some major political parties decided to boycott the election. In order prevent the voters from exercising their right to vote; those parties resorted to street violence and vandalism. The police used force only to thwart such acts of violence and vandalism and in effect helped the voters to exercise their rights.

Para 31 of the draft Concluding Observations: ... "at times large numbers of asylum seekers fleeing violence in Myanmar were returned to Myanmar" ...

Correction/Explanation by State Party:

The State party is fully respectful to the principle of non-refoulement despite not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention. It is further mentioned that no Myanmar refugee has been returned from Bangladesh to Myanmar involuntarily.

In view of the foregoing, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh would like to request if the Committee could make necessary amendments to its concluding observations based on the above responses.

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 27 March 2017

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