

# Ending Poverty and Ensuring Prosperity for Caste and Decent based communities in the World



Asia Dalit Rights Forum  
(ADRF) in High Level Political  
Forum (HLPF) in 2017

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## Asia Dalit Rights Forum's (ADRF) Interventions in High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017

### Executive Summary

***“The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should address the discrimination and exclusion suffered by descent-based communities and their experiences of inter-generational poverty. To achieve this aim, the UN and member states must place addressing inequalities and non-discrimination at the heart of its efforts to support the implementation of the SDGs and targets”. UN Guidance Tool on Work and Descent (Caste) based Discrimination.***

High Level Political Forum is the platform for the follow up and reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals by the member states through Voluntary National Review (VNR) and the other stakeholders to engage with the member states and their representatives on the effective and inclusive implementation of the SDGs. This year HLPF featured VNR by South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India and Nepal, with other countries like Brazil, Japan, Malaysia and many European countries presenting their progress in the implementation of the SDGs.

This HLPF also seen Asia Dalit Rights Forum following up their actions from last year by organising two events; Roundtable discussion on the discrimination based on Work and Descent and Side event on Intersectionality of Gender, caste and descent based discrimination in implementation of SDGs- Moving towards a poverty free world. ADRF also brought representatives from other discriminated communities from Africa and Latin America.

The ADRF team also were part of various main and side events, making interventions on the issue of discrimination based on work and descent. ADRF members also participated in lobby meetings with Missions of Norway, European Union and UN Women for addressing the issue of Descent and caste based discrimination in SDG and other UN platforms.

The ADRF members also met with UN officials and other member state representatives to highlight the issue, as well as lobbied with the major stakeholders for the addressing the issues of caste and descent based discrimination, which resulted in reference to caste in the presentations of the women major groups and Persons with disability major groups in the VNR presentations.

## Introduction

Ensuring No one is left behind in the developmental planning and implementation has captured the world attention and gravitated towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Targets. The focus on the people centric approach and principles of accountability, transparency and participation ensures SDGs as a near perfect model of holistic development. With all the positive signs through this paradigm shifting global developmental agenda, there are concerns its reach and impact on the traditionally marginalised and socially excluded communities.

SDGs globally, regionally and nationally focuses on development of the farthest behind first, for this to be realistic a special/targeted focus and mainstreaming of the traditionally marginalized and socially excluded populations are paramount and consistent inclusion of and their progress in debates on the stages of development and economic progress in the global platforms. With 260 million (approx) people worldwide, such structurally excluded communities if hypothetically reside at one state, it would be 6<sup>th</sup> largest populous country in the world. These communities are the victims of exclusion based on their caste, work, descent and identity are considered as lower (status) or impure and polluting the society thus isolated physically, socially and politically from other castes/communities of the society. Thus they are victims of colossal amount of violence and other forms of atrocities, perpetuated by other (higher status) communities and state. Apart from the gross violence, these communities are also excluded from various public and private resources and services for development and welfare.

Discrimination based on work and descent (DWD) is a global phenomenon which continues to be one of the most wide-ranging human rights violations affecting almost 260 million people globally<sup>1</sup>. DWD is a term is used to address various forms of discrimination, including caste-, work- and birth-based discrimination and whilst the highest numbers of affected communities are concentrated in South Asia,<sup>2</sup> it also manifests across a vast number of communities from Japan to Yemen, Brazil and Mali. It is used as a mechanism to subordinate certain groups who are then severely discriminated against and restricted in accessing social, economic and political resources and opportunities.

The women from DWD communities continue to face further exclusion on the basis of their gender thereby threatening the achievement of SDG 5.1 in one of the most populous regions of the world. When patriarchal social norms intersect with other forms of inequality like caste and class, this can compound to create a complex set of disadvantages for Dalit women. These multiple forms of discrimination restrict Dalit's women's economic rights and reinforce dependence on men and non-dalit women. Because of this economic entrapment, Dalit women also face various other kinds of exclusion, namely socio-political, civil and judicial discrimination and violence which will not be eradicated through addressing poverty alone and are vital for promoting prosperity. Dalit women have little opportunity for upward mobility as they are often

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<sup>1</sup> 260 Million according to UN Mechanism and Caste, 2015, Asia Dalit Right Forum <http://bit.ly/2q13Jli>

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/31/56 January 2016 Human Rights Council – Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues Rita Izsak

bound by norms in society which force them into positions of manual labour and traditional jobs, and do not provide opportunity for education and skills development. This perpetuates the poverty and illiteracy that prevents their empowerment.

Eradicating poverty and ensuring prosperity for all is an ambitious tagline which HLPF has adopted for the second year of the Voluntary National Reviews as the follow up and review of the national implementation of the SDGs. With the member states in the first stage of embracing the SDG process, the expectations from the member states were high towards an inclusive and effective implementation with the principles of good governance; accountability, transparency and participation.

### *High Level Political Forum*

Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF) has been working on SDG since 2013, when the idea of Post 2015 was been discussed at the end of Millennium Development Goals 2015. With various interventions in the Intergovernmental meetings and SDG related summits and meetings pre and post 2015 SDG Summit. ADRF has participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> High Level Political Forum in 2016 with organizing an Official Side Event with Civicus and Stakeholders Forum UK on the SDG and Dalit Women's Economic Rights.

The High-level Political Forum, United Nations central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, provides for the full and effective participation of all States Members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies.

High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017 featured 44 countries agreeing for VNRs as opposed to 22 countries from the HLPF 2016. HLPF 2017 initiated with the SDG reviews from 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 till 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and resumed with Voluntary National Reviews on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017 till 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017. Among the 44 countries represented in the VNR were Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal and Nigeria where elements of DWD existed.

Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF) took responsibility to bring representatives from different communities who faces work, descent and caste based discrimination to highlight and address their exclusion from the overarching global developmental programmes of SDGs. Many countries follow the format which has been agreed in the United Nation by the nation states for the country wide implementation of the SDGs. Thus absence of the DWD and caste from the SDGs and its indicators has validated the exclusion based on work, descent and caste. Thus ADRF has brought together community representatives from various parts of the world to address this issue in a unified manner.

The representatives from Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Mauritania, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal and Sri Lanka as well as Diaspora from United States and Solidarity groups from Europe and Asia participated in the HLPF 2017 under the banner of ADRF. The ADRF Programme where supported by UN Women Fund for Gender Equality, Misereor and Open Society Foundations (OSF).

### *Events Organized and Associates Programmes*

ADRF has organized and participated in various events outside the HLPF summit in UN HQ, New York. These are the events organized by ADRF according to the chronological order:

1. 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Orientation of the ADRF members and participants on the HLPF and Side events (Amnesty International UN Office)
2. 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Roundtable Discussion on the Descent Based Discriminated Communities and Global Caste (Baha'i International Community)
3. 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017: ADRF members meeting with the Permanent Mission of Norway to UN New York (Permanent Mission of Norway to UN New York)
4. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Side Event on Intersectionality of Gender, Caste and Descent based Discrimination in the Implementation of the SDGs- Moving towards Poverty free World (UN Church Centre)
5. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017: ADRF Members meeting with Delegate from European Union (Permanent Mission of the European Union to UN New York)
6. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017: ADRF Core Committee Meeting ( )
7. 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017: ADRF members meeting with UN Women officials (UN Women Head Office, New York)

Other events supported or attended by ADRF representatives:

1. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Release of 'Civil Society Report on SDGs : Agenda 2030' of INDIA, 2017 by WNTA (Baha'i International Community)
2. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Side Event on Means of Implementation by APRCEM (UN Church Centre)
3. 15<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Ground Level Peoples Forum (GLPF) by APRCEM (Migrant Centre, NY)
4. 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Side Event by NITI Aayog on Implementation of the SDGs in India (UN HQ)
5. 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Side Event by Research and Information System in Developing Countries (RIS) at UN
6. 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Breakfast Meeting at UNDESA (UNHQ)

## The Events organized by ADRF during HLPF

### 1. Orientation of the ADRF members and participants on the HLPF and Side Events

<b>Date</b>	09 July 2017
<b>Location</b>	Amnesty International UN Office (6 <sup>th</sup> Floor, UNCC)
<b>Participants</b>	N. Paul Divakar (Chair, ADRF), Durga Sob (Vice Chair), Sono Khangharani (Pakistan), Abdarahmane Wone (Senegal), Carmela Zigoni (Brazil), P. Logeswary (Sri Lanka) Beena Pallical VA Rameshnathan, Deepak Nikarthil (India), Bhakta Bishwakarma, Renu Sijapati, Kala Swarnakar (Nepal), Raj Cherukonda (USA) and Zakir Hossain (Bangladesh)

The Orientation Meeting for the ADRF members and participants was organized towards welcoming all the participants and providing information and guidance on the procedures of the HLPF and Events including Side Events planned for the week of Activities. This also provide the space for the representatives for understanding various UN procedures like getting the ground pass for the UN and the directions to various locations of the events.



Mr. Paul Divakar (Chair, ADRF) initiated the process with welcoming the participants and their introductions. Ms. Durga Sob (Vice Chair, ADRF) followed up with ADRF work for the Dalit community especially that of the Dalit Women in South Asia and in Nepal. Mr. Sono Khangharani explained briefly the conditions of the Dalits in Pakistan, while Ms. Logeswary explained their conditions in Sri Lanka. Dr. Rameshnathan and Mr. Zakir Hossain further add to the conditions of the Dalits in India and Bangladesh respectively. Dr. Abdarahmane Wone explained the situation of the excluded communities in Africa, especially in Mali, Senegal, Mauritania and Nigeria. Ms. Carmela Zigoni explained the conditions of Quilombolas in Brazil and their struggle for inclusion.

Ms. Beena Palical and Dr. Deepak Nikarhil have gone through the major topics of discussions for the events and the logistics for the week long programmes. Mr. Divakar thanked everyone and wished best wishes for the HLPF 2017.

## 2. Roundtable Discussion on the Descent Based Discriminated Communities and Global Caste

<b>Date</b>	10 July 2017
<b>Location</b>	Baha'i International Community
<b>Participants</b>	N. Paul Divakar, Smita Narula, Tawanda Mutasah, Durga Sob, Sono Khangharani , Abdarahmane Wone, Carmela Zigoni , P. Logeswary, Beena Pallical VA Rameshnathan, Deepak Nikarhil , Bhakta Bishwakarma, Renu Sijapati, Kala Swarnakar, Zakir Hossain, Reem Abdulla, Rajan Bishwakarma, Erica Carlino-Landau, Asha Kowtal, Suraj Yengde, Jud Nirenberg, Raj Cherukonda, Bakary Tandia, Rahul Dangde, Seema Gupta, Marlijn Lelieveld, Sushil Raj, Sandra Petersen, Preeti Mangala Shekar, Gideon Jebamani, Rozana Majumdar, Mandeep Tiwara, Ingo Ritz and Katie Tobin

Roundtable discussion on the descent based discriminated communities and caste was held in the Bahai International Community on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The roundtable expects the communities and its leaders to discuss various strategies to be commonly adopt towards addressing the issue nationally through national implementation and globally through systemic interventions to address the issue of DWD. The roundtable will also be focusing on possible platform building for cooperative engagement to address the issue in UN and worldwide for further publicizing the issue as a major stakeholder in SDGs.

Dr. Deepak Nikarhil welcomes the participants on behalf of the Asia Dalit Rights Forum and introduced Mr. Paul Divakar and Prof. Smita Narula as the moderators for the first session. Mr. Divakar has introduced the publication on Towards a Unifying Global Identity, which states more than 260 million people faces discrimination based on work, descent and caste in the world, which is not specific to any country or region but spread among 5 continents in the world. He said “This publication takes us forward with the demographics of who share membership in this inherited status that face extreme violence and denied to feel and belong in their own communities”.

Dr. Abdarahmane Wone (Senegal) talked about the impact of the descent based in the African continent. In Mauritania, he describes how people birth is crucial factor for the future of the person as people who born in the slave family is expected to grow up to be a slave and is the property of the masters rather than the slave parents. There is a vast gap between the rich (Arab Africans) and the slave (Black Africans) populations. In Niger and Mauritania, the Auritanis, Haratins and Wolof are not expected to own lands and basic lands rights are been denied as the government owns these land. Dr. Wone

suggests only way to rectify this is through creating awareness among the people of these gross injustice and basic human rights as human rights are for all not just for selected few.

Ms. Carmela Zigoni (Brazil), Quilombolas in Brazil face a distinct discrimination based on their colour and descent. They usually live in the forest areas of the country, thus there is a lack of access to the services and state also is not able to reach them. There is significant lack of the representation of these communities in the places of power, thus making one of the most vulnerable communities in Brazil. These communities also is vulnerable to various forms of psychological, physical and sexual violence especially the women in these communities. The economic conditions of these communities are very backward, thus there is a needs for specific targeted policies for their development.



Adv. Bakary Tandia (Mauritania), speaks about the Haratin communities of Mauritania who consists of 4.2 million people (all are Muslims), even though they are the majority population, they are been ruled by the white Arab populations. The Haratins are the former slaves and still 20 percent of them live as slaves, they are adapted to their poor economic status and living conditions. They are unaware of their rights and which has been taken advantage by the ruling class (white Arabs) and curb their rightful services and entitlements including land rights. The anti slavery movement by the government has favoured the white masters thus not providing legal identity and deportation of many haratins people, thus making them stateless within their country. Adv. Tandia believes that highlighting the issue in the international platform and creating awareness among the Haratin is the two steps towards bringing the issue in the forefront.

Mr. Jud Nirenberg (USA/Romani) states that even though there are around 10-12 million Romani/Roma population in Europe (2 million more around the world), they are the most hated population in the world, more than Jews and immigrants. The

literacy rate among them are very low, they live in segregation from the society. 1 percent of them are nomadic tribe. There is wide exclusion like they are taught in segregation (within class rooms), dropout among Romani are very high and there is vast discrimination in the labour market against them. The main problem within the Roma community is the tactical vision for their development. The main focus should be raising their issues in the EU parliament and bodies as well as UN bodies.



Mr. Suraj Yengde (USA/India) states that the entire discourse of discrimination based on caste, work and descent need to be visualized through the lens of purity-pollution. The segregation, discrimination and exclusion are due to the concept of the master and slave and caste hierarchy could be seen side by side and see both have similar origins and characteristics. The colonial masters have further nailed down the concepts for their effective ruling, this could be seen as another forms of the divide and rule strategy. This system has followed in the post colonial rulers who continued to practice similar structure in South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa. Human rights framework was denied to uphold the privileges ensured by the social systems. There is a need for transatlantic anthropological study to identify and recognize these communities and towards highlighting the issue in a global level. The major problem is the denial by the state, society, civil society and even the social movement itself.

Mr. Sono Khangharani (Pakistan) states in Pakistan the first Law Minister was Jogendra Nath Mandal was a Dalit, thus there was specific reservation provided to the Scheduled Caste of 6% in the federal government. The conditions of the Dalit deteriorated after the reservation law was taken out and their recognition as SC was denied with the explanation that being a Muslim state, Pakistan doesn't recognize caste. However recent census has recognized SC population in Pakistan and thus given validity first time after independence. However there are forced conversions of small girls, Job insecurity and landlessness are concerns for SC population in Pakistan. The basic dignity of these communities is in question, thus a global framework within the UN is crucial for establishing dignified and happy life for these communities.

Mr. Bhakta Biswakarma (Nepal) states that in Nepal, 3.5-4 million Dalits consisting 20 percent of the total population. The non participation and inclusion is the major cause

for our population only, 6 percent of our representation is in the parliament. Even though Dalit rights are accepted as fundamental right under Nepal Constitution, there is exclusion in terms of land rights, shelter, and health and education sectors.

Dr Rameshnathan (India) states official data of SC/Dalits are 16.6 percent, but these only consists of the Hindu Dalits, however if we consider Muslim and Christian Dalits it would be more than 20 percent. Untouchability is illegal but still practiced in the rural India. The violence against the community is has enormous as inter caste marriages are seen as a crime, the community are forced to do indecent work like manual scavenging, and women in these community have to face multiple forms of violence as 6 Dalit women are raped every day. There is a need for addressing this issue in the national and international arena. Thus the need for brining global common identity towards bringing further notice to these issues and concerns of the Dalit communities.

Mr. Raj Cherukonda (USA) states that being Dalit entrepreneur in United States has been a challenge as on the surface there are no visible discrimination, but within we can see various forms of discrimination by the Indian diaspora. It's like the saying you can take Indian out of India, but you can't take caste out of these Indians.



Prof Smita Narula (USA) states that the main issue is the denial, denial of the resources, denial of the rights, and denial of the entitlements. Denial of participation, education, position, employment, identity, gender issues which leads to violence as a tool of super imposing. People are faced with lack of access and impunity and state sponsored exclusion, considered as impure and filthy and economic underdevelopment. There are remedies raised towards fighting the slavery, denial, segregation, ignorance of existence and rise of right wing ideologies throughout the world which denies change of these systems. The way forward is towards strategically challenging them through facts, creating awareness, ample documentation, creating a platform for addressing these issues and everyone has equal responsibility towards creating it together.

The second session of the discussion was moderated by Dr. Tawanda Mutasah (UK), who questions the reality of the working of the human rights framework. There is a

need for imminent change as we look back after a decade the issue should not be at the same point. There are three major highlights need to be addressed (1) No more isolating the issue, but recognizing it as a global issue; (2) A collective ownership of the issue for building a solid framework for reimagining a global framework for DWD; and (3) envisaging the norms, standards, law and commitment from all for this framework.

Fr. Gideon Jebamani (USA) expressed that we need to bring the 'other' also in this meeting for knowing and understanding their point of view on the issue.

Ms. Erica Carlino (USA) expressed there is a need for reconstructing the gender dialogue within the DWD communities.

Mr. Mandeep Tiwana (USA/CIVICUS) stated that we should open up to other communities and get solidarity for the cause and in turn give solidarity to theirs. In order to tackle the emerging political order, discriminated communities should come together for supporting each other for enhancing change.

Ms. Asha Kowtal (India) presents three main points (1) The platform to come together and address these issues are provided by SDGs, we should exploit this platform for expressing our international and human rights mechanisms; (2) These mechanism could be used to challenge the states who has ignored our development; and (3) we should raise ourselves from the trap of homogeneity and connect with other discriminated communities and create support and solidarity with them.

Mr. Paul Divakar (India) said that today we know we are not alone in this quest and there are many communities who faces similar kind of discrimination, we not only need to bring all DWD groups together, but we need to connect with other communities who faces discrimination in various levels. If we can achieve this we could realize the dream of having a UN Convention for DWD.

Mr. Tawanda Mutasah concluded with these points: (1) We need to build active support and solidarity for the cause at hand; (2) need to bring various constituencies together to address the issue; (3) To bring the issue into forefront through making standards and norms of DWD and proposing it for a declaration or convention to give DWD a global identity and legal recognition.

### 3. ADRF members meeting with the Permanent Mission of Norway to UN New York

<b>Date</b>	11 July 2017
<b>Location</b>	Permanent Mission of Norway to UN Office (825 Third Avenue, 38 <sup>th</sup> Floor)
<b>Participants</b>	N. Paul Divakar (Chair, ADRF), Durga Sob (Vice Chair), Sandra Petersen (Norway), Sono Khangharani (Pakistan), Abdarahmane Wone (Senegal), Carmela Zigoni (Brazil), VA Rameshnathan, Deepak Nikarhil (both India), Bhakta Bishwakarma (Nepal)

Mr. Martin Torbergsen has welcomed the participants and provided small introduction about him and his role in the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations. Asia Dalit Rights Forum Chairperson initiated the introduction of the participants and discussions on the issue of the Discrimination based on Work and Descent (DWD) and Caste.

Mr. Abdarahmane Wone explained the lack of recognition given to descent based communities in Mali, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mauritania etc. Thus has been ignored in data disaggregation as a separate and distinguish sections, as a result lacking in any special/targeted provisions for the communities. Ms. Carmela Zigoni, expressed the segregations of Quilombolas in Brazil in the developmental policies and programmes because of their skin tone and birth identities. Ms. Durga Sob explained the conditions of

Dalits in Nepal, generally considering them as untouchables to their struggle towards touchability and the progress they achieved in the struggle for progress and development, with



special focus on Dalit Women. Mr. Sono Khangharani, Mr. Bhakta Biswakarma and Dr. Rameshnathan, explained the situation in Pakistan, Nepal and India respectively. Dr. Nikarthil gave impact of DWD not featuring in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) would lead to further exclusionary practices. Mr. Paul Divakar rounded discussion with focus on main points and requests/ recommendations to the Mission. The main discussion points were:

1. Caste or DWD is one of the most degrading forms of discrimination, which socially, economically and politically handicaps the communities from positive development or growth.
2. Caste or DWD is not region specific problem, as it has often associated with South Asia. The DWD according to various UN special rapporteurs including Hon. Ambassador Rita Izsac Ndiaye in 2016 (then Sp. Rapporteur, Minority Issues) states that Caste is a global phenomenon spread throughout various continents including Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe and North America (through Diaspora) with over 260 million people faces such discrimination
3. Even though Caste and DWD is the one of the main catalyst for poverty and underdevelopment, there is a conscious effort from the international

communities to address this issue in the UN mechanisms especially in Sustainable Development Goals.

The requests or recommendations put forward towards the missions were:

1. The SDG or its Global Indicators did not feature DWD or Caste as an exclusionary mechanism or variable to be avoided. As the SDG Indicators were still to be finalized, requesting the Norwegian mission to raise the question of exclusion of DWD and Caste and strive for the inclusion of DWD in the final set of global indicators.
2. We request the Mission of Norway to propose for a research study on the Descent based countries with special focus on the social and systemic hierarchical structures in the HRC.
3. Towards bringing in a resolution in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly on the issue of Discrimination based on Work and Descent (DWD). Linking with Austria on the Administrative Justice resolution with providing statement for the provision on DWD to be included within the framework.

Mr. Martin Torbergson responded to issues and requests with positive and encouraging statements and while there are some restrictions for Norway to get directly involve in the bringing in the resolutions due to its nomination for the Security Council in 2020. The main responses from Martin Torbergson are given below:

1. With Norway nominating itself for the Security Council in 2020, they will be unable to bring resolutions which could hinder in this chance. However, Norway will give its strong support to the resolution once brought in the UN.
2. In 2<sup>nd</sup> committee and 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee there is no information on the DWD related resolutions. If a resolution can passed to study discrimination based on work and descent so that the Third Committee is better informed on how to address this as a global phenomenon. We should try to link with the Belgium on the issue Decent Work, who strongly advocates for the ILO conventions.
3. Should link with the previous resolutions with linking with Austria's resolutions on Administrative Justice. However ADRF should take an instrumental approach to bring more than 3 members from different region to together bring the issue in front of the 3<sup>rd</sup> committee, to get it featured in the committee.
4. ADRF should try to lobby with countries from different regions and continents to address this issue of inclusion of DWD in SDG indicators, also try to contact with the New High Commissioner of Norway on the issues of SDG and exclusion of DWD in the Global indicators.

4. Side Event on Intersectionality of Gender, Caste and Descent based Discrimination in the Implementation of the SDGs- Moving towards Poverty free World

<b>Date</b>	12 July 2017
<b>Location</b>	UN Church Centre
<b>Participants</b>	N. Paul Divakar, Jeffery Huffins, Thomas Pallithanam, Tawanda Mutasah, Durga Sob, Sono Khangharani , Abdarahmane Wone, Carmela Zigoni , P. Logeswary, Beena Pallical VA Rameshnathan, Deepak Nikarhil , Bhakta Bishwakarma, Renu Sijapati, Kala Swarnakar, Zakir Hossain, Reem Abdulla, Silvia Hordosch, Rajan Bishwakarma, Erica Carlino-Landau, Rebecca May, Dayasagar Shrestha, Asha Kowtal, Suraj Yengde, Amitabh Beher, Raj Cherukonda, Bakary Tandia, Rahul Dangde, Seema Gupta, Marlijn Lelieveld, Sushil Raj, Sandra Petersen, Preeti Mangala Shekar, Gideon Jebamani, Rozana Majumdar, Diyana Yahaya, Jyotsana Pandey, Sharad Joshi, Ajay Jha, Mandeep Tiwara, Anita Nayar and Rizal Rozhan

Side Event on Intersectionality of Gender, Caste and Descent based Discrimination in Implementation of SDGs- Moving towards poverty free world was organized at UN Church Centre on 12 July 2017.

Ms. Beena Pallical (ADRF/NCDHR) welcomed the distinguish guests and introduced the first Panellists, which would be moderated by Ms. Durga Sob (ADRF V.Chair) joined by Ms. Renu Sejapati (Nepal), Ms. Logeswary Ponnaih (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Zakir Hossian (Bangladesh).



Ms. Durga Sob stated that Dalit women from Nepal and South Asia faces multiple discrimination and exclusion, not just from gender and class but caste plays an invaluable role in suppressing them from any forms of development. They fail to get any kind of legal, political, economic and social elevation because of multiple forms of discrimination they face in the region. She also adds that this is not a unique feature of the South Asia, but similar forms of exclusion is found in the different parts of the world from Africa to Latin America and from Far East Asia to Europe, we see such similarities.

Ms. Renu Sejapati explained the conditions Dalit Women face in Nepal. Dalit Women in Nepal faces discrimination from birth till death as they are discriminated not only in the

society but first taste subjugation from the family. Women in Nepal have very low education level, while Dalit women are mostly illiterate and in school they are made to sit separately. They are often landless and it has been found that less than 1% of Dalit Women owns any form of land.

Ms. Logeswary Ponnaih describes the conditions of the Plantation women (dalit) as one of the most disheartening experience. The plantation women are not given full citizenship benefits like others as they are ruled by Plantation management laws, which are made to keep these people within the plantation. Thus plantation women are very less educated and have mostly limited to the plantation based jobs. They have no rights to own land and often discriminated by the other people even when they leave plantation and migrate to main lands, as they doesn't have any formal skill trainings.



Mr. Zakir Hossian explains the conditions of the Dalit women in Bangladesh are one more struggle than India and Nepal. While India and Nepal, Dalit women faces triple discrimination, in Bangladesh, they faces 4 folded discrimination, on the basis of gender, class, caste and religion. The main problem is lack of official recognition, while there has been some recognition lately; their conditions have not improved much in general. However many Universities in Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh has started providing reservations to the Dalit children, which could be seen as positive steps for the future.

The first session ended with the release of the Dalit Shadow report on SDG implementation in India titled *Progress towards Inclusive Sustainable Development in India: A Study of Dalit and Adivasis in 2030 Agenda 2017*.

Ms. Beena Pallical chaired the second session and started with her experience of working with Dalit women, she stated that Dalit women are one of the most under developed constituencies in the world. They have been consciously excluded with multiple hurdles put forward by social and systemic mechanisms. Economically they are

the most vulnerable as they have no material or sustainable possessions, and lack of targeted policies on their welfare has left them completely marginalized. SDGs also have overlooked the descent and caste based discrimination which has validated the states to also push them to margins.

Ms. Asha Kowtal (India) reinstated the multiple forms of discrimination faced by the Dalit women and explained their social, economic, political and cultural marginalization in various countries. She described the evolution of the internationalization of the Dalit women issue starting since 2007, while there has been various reference been made in caste in UN, HRC, and human rights bodies, the existence of concrete dialogue was missing. IDSN has marked all the UN events where caste has been referenced. She further states that SDGs provides a unique platform for raising this issue in a larger spectrum, while national implementation of SDGs are vague, Dalit women need to be involved in the implementation and monitoring process in order to ensure accountability, participation and transparency.

Ms. Diyana Yahaya (Thailand/APRCM) states that SDG are surrounded by structural barriers and systemic barriers, which needs to be broken towards true inclusive and participatory policies for women and marginalized communities. Need to establish more inclusive and effective indicators for addressing these of women and vulnerable communities. Autonomous feminist movement is the key to change for stopping violence and crimes in countries.



Ms Sandra Petersen (Norway/IDSN) brings attention of the wide effects of caste based discrimination in the various countries and continents. IDSN has been working in many countries for effective elimination of caste based discrimination. One of the most important steps is taken by the UN OHCHR through the introduction of the Guidance Tool on Elimination of the Discrimination based on Work and Descent. The SDGs should develop specific indicators on caste and gender for reaching the intended populations like Dalit women. It's crucial for the success of the SDGs to reach the grass root women; Dalit women should take leadership of creating awareness and work cordially with other groups for SDGs successfully reaching the grass root level. International and

national organisations should work together for mainstreaming and localizing the SDGs for better working and understanding of it.

Ms Carmela Zigoni (Brazil) speaks about the lack of consciousness within the state and majority society for the quilombolas women. She states that the violence in Brazil has gone down in last 10 years, but the violence against quilumbola women has significantly increased in this time period. There has been large protest from the community to fight against discrimination based on race and descent and SDGs should address this with careful and specific reference to Women.

Ms Silvia Hordosch (UN Women) states that SDG at the core was people centric approach to development, while it has watered down in the cause of the journey. There is an urgent need to address the principle of accountability, transparency and participation. There is isolation in the working environment in UN which is in contrast to integration of all people including CSOs. 2030 agenda challenges the country states in addressing the intersectionalities among the constituencies. Principles and guidelines on DWD and Guidance tool on DWD should be used to address the caste based discrimination in SDGs. SDG main focus is on equality, discrimination (eradicate any discriminatory laws), equity, inequalities and inclusive participation, civil society especially Multi-stakeholder partnerships despite shrinking space has a strong role to play for success of the SDG in the countries.

Mr Tawanda Mutasah (Amnesty International) states that making SDG inclusive for all, especially to the excluded communities like Dalits women is the crucial factor, and participation, non discrimination and substantive equality is the key for achieving the goals and targets.

## 5. ADRF Members meeting with Delegate from European Union

<b>Date</b>	13 July 2017
<b>Location</b>	Permanent Mission of European Union to UN Office (825 Third Avenue, 38 <sup>th</sup> Floor)
<b>Participants</b>	N. Paul Divakar (Chair, ADRF), Durga Sob (Vice Chair), Sono Khangharani (Pakistan), Carmela Zigoni (Brazil), VA Rameshnathan, Beena Pallical, Deepak Nikarthil (both India), Bhakta Bishwakarma, Kala Swarnakar, Renu Sijapati (Nepal) and Raj Cherukonda (USA)

Ms. Suvi Supplein, Officer for Human Rights and Democracy in the Permanent Mission of European Union to UN New York welcomed ADRF to the interactive meeting for discussing DWD and its global role. Ms. Beena Pallical introduced the participants and thanked Ms. Supplein for the opportunity to bring the issue to the EU mission.

Ms. Durga Sob (Nepal) expressed her concerns for the Dalit community in Nepal. She stated that even though Nepal government has worked tremendously towards welfare



and upliftment of rights and entitlements of the Dalits in Nepal, there are enormous amount of poverty and persistence of untouchability in various parts of the country. Dalit Women is one constituency who faces the ugly consequences of these practices within house hold and society.

Mr. Zakir Hossain (Bangladesh) painted the picture of the Harijan/Dalits and their position in Bangladesh societies. He emphasized on the lack of recognition on the Harijan/Dalits in the society because of the religion of Islam does not recognize caste and thus Hindu/Christian and Muslim Dalits are identified legally as belonging to caste affected groups.

Ms. Carmela Zigoni (Brazil) describes the role of INESC on their working with the Quilombolas community in Brazil. The government is backing the regressive rights for the community while the human rights are been in shambles. This is also when the government is passing regressive ordinance on the labour reforms, which is reducing women's rest or leisure time to a minimum, which is propelling the women to work continuously without rest for providing for their families. Quilumbolas is been socially segregated and discriminated far more than other communities, thus these laws will be inversely affect them more than others.

Mr. Sono Khangharani (Pakistan) states that the Dalit Women in Pakistan are often been not allowed to study with the literacy rate among them is about 1%. Even with the girls who go to school, drop out because of the kidnapping and forced conversion with the conditionalities of marrying them off without their consent.

Ms. P. Logeswary (Sri Lanka) brings forward the process of State Delivery vs Plantation welfare programme. The majority of the plantation workers are from the oppressed communities like Dalits and others. They are ruled by Plantation Welfare Programmes than State delivery thus limiting their progress and access to socio-economic rights.

There is a lack of political participation and leadership from these communities thus they are underrepresented in the parliament. This has led to various under development like MMR and IMR are significantly lower in plantation population in comparison to the other population and the under nourishment in child birth is a common phenomenon.

Mr. Raj Cherukonda (United States of America) in United States, being a Dalit Entrepreneur has been a challenge as on the surface there is no visible discrimination, but within we can see various forms of discrimination by the Indian diaspora. In India, the condition are worse, the segregation in Schools and villages, while the services like education and health are refused by the dominant caste people.

Mr. Paul Divakar (India) said the internationalizing the caste has been a major problem as there has been significant hurdles and lack of consensus within the international community. While caste is a global phenomenon, which has been represented in UK Parliament in their *Equality Bill* and EU parliament has recognized Caste based discrimination as a major form of exclusion. The UN OHCHR has recently released the *UN Guidance Tool on Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent* in Kathmandu, Nepal. While here representatives from Latin America, North America, Africa, Asia and Europe has intervened on the issue of Caste discrimination in UN SDGs.

He requested opinion and suggestion for the two major requests:

1. We request the Mission of EU to propose for a research study on the Descent based countries with special focus on the social and systemic hierarchical structures in the HRC.
2. Towards bringing in a resolution in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly on the issue of Discrimination based on Work and Descent (DWD).

Ms. Suvi Supplein responded by thanking the team and expressed her views on the issues.

1. The Third Committee of the UN General Assembly is an intelligent approach but it is also very tough process to actually bringing the resolution. The third committee resolution could be linked with the Human Right Council in Geneva, and with support of the four to five countries from different region would be helpful in successfully bringing the resolution. The main focus should be on building a strong support base towards bringing the issue into forefront and get support from various countries to support it.
2. Commission of Status of Women is organising a meeting in March on the condition of the women in the rural areas in March 2018. We could bring in the issue of the discrimination based on caste in the rural areas as one of the focal topic in the meet. The focus should be on the domesticating the issue thus it would be very integral to addressing the issue.

3. EU is currently looking for a Multiyear Programme on Violence against Women, the study on Dalit Women could be a stepping stone for starting a partnership with the EU for addressing the issue of Access to Justice.

## 6. ADRF Core Committee Meeting

<b>Date</b>	13 July 2017
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Participants</b>	N. Paul Divakar (Chair, ADRF), Durga Sob (Vice Chair), Sono Khangharani (Pakistan) VA Rameshnathan, Beena Pallical, Deepak Nikarthil (both India), Bhakta Bishwakarma (Nepal) Thomas Pallithanam (India) and Raj Cherukonda (USA)

ADRF Chair Mr Paul Divakar and Vice Chair Durga Sob welcomed the executive members and associates to the ADRF core committee meeting. He requested for the reflections from the week long events organised and supported by ADRF, especially on Global Caste event, Side Event on Intersectionalities of Caste and Gender, Interactions with the Missions and Overall experience in HLPF.

Mr Sono started the reflections (which were echoed by the other members also), he said that Missions in New York are more welcoming than Geneva. He said that the organisations and missions are very receptive here as well as they are more warm towards the issue. He also emphasized on lobbying and fundraising opportunities should be concentrated more in New York for highlighting the issue of caste and descent.

Mr Zakir Hossain expressed similar sentiment with highlighted the solidarity shown by other groups in New York as well as connecting with EU missions and UN women are easier here and we should approach them for assistance in the process.

Ms P. Logeswary highlighted that there are much more awareness on the issue of caste in New York and the issues of Dalit women was very well addressed in the side event and had great audience for reception.

Mr Bhakta Biswakarma pointed out the past events by ADRF in New York has been very successful, but with bringing representation Africa and Latin America has taken our intervention to next level. We should also focus in bringing the decision makers and officials in our event and also should branch out to other missions for solidarity and support. We should engage more with Mission of Nepal as they might be one solid support for our cause.

Dr VA Rameshnathan expressed his concern over disconnect between mission meetings and the follow up. There is also a lack of bridge of connectivity between UN events and side events. He emphasized that planning the global process to the ground level is very important. He also expressed his concern on evolving the common identity and said he is not fully sure about the caste to be dissolved in DWD framework.

Ms Asha Kowtal echoed the similar feelings that the untouchability and such forms are unique to caste and dissolving it would demean many issues which we are fighting for. Focus of the process, reflections should be focused than doing some big events. The issue of Dalit Women should be brought forward and highlighted in the paradigm of SDGs.



Mr Raj Cherukonda raises the question of how to effectively engage with the diaspora and how to capacitate them for the working on the DWD issues? Raj took responsibility to work in USA diaspora on the issue of DWD. He also suggested bringing in the diaspora of the other caste affected nations especially from South Asia.

Mr Paul Divakar summerize the meeting and put down the important points going forward:

1. Bringing in Diaspora for the supporting the cause and showing strength:- planning and strategizing needed.
2. Need to have a sound strategies for going forward for addressing global caste with inclusion of all the communités and their concerns
3. More strategic meetings need to be organized for decoding the SDGs for going forward
4. Planning for the entry into 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly for the study of discrimination based on work and descent (caste)
5. Dalit women agenda and issue to be promoted in various platforms

6. OSF has provided a one time off grant to ADRF
7. Registration of ADRF will be done in Washington DC or Geneva.

Next ADRF meeting will be conducted soon (within 4 months)

## 7. ADRF members meeting with UN Women officials

<b>Date</b>	14 July 2017
<b>Location</b>	UN Women Office, UN New York
<b>Participants</b>	N. Paul Divakar (Chair, ADRF), Durga Sob (Vice Chair), Zakir Hossain (Bangladesh) VA Rameshnathan, Beena Pallical, Deepak Nikarthil (India), Renu Sejepati, Kala Swarnakar (Nepal), Logeswary Ponnaih (Sri Lanka)

Ms Nancy Kwaiss welcomed the ADRF team to the UN Women (Fund for Equality) meeting. She introduced the participants and gave a brief on the UN Women support to Dalit Women's economic right in South Asia programme.

Ms Beena Pallical, who is heading this project, thanked the support provided by UN Women for empowering economic entitlements of Dalit Women in South Asia. She described the conditions of the Dalit women as one of the most vulnerable communities in the world with lack of access to education, land and skilled employment.

Ms Durga Sob stated that Dalit women faced more discrimination in comparison to the other women and also Dalit men, as they face multiple forms of discrimination based on class, gender and caste (also religion). She expressed that we need more support in national, regional and global level from UN Women.



Ms P. Logeswary explained the Dalit/plantation women are provided citizenship only in 2013 which has legitimated their claim for the state sponsored programmes. But still they are farther below the average in most of the human and socio-economic development indicators in Sri Lanka.

Mr Zakir Hossain stated the progress made by Bangladesh government on the issue of the Dalits by giving quota in the Universities and introducing the word Dalit in their documents in 2009. In 2010, the budgetary allocation was provided to the community. Dalit women and girls were given more visibility and capacity building trainings and one Dalit women was elected in the local elections.

Dr Deepak Nikarthil, who headed the research on Dalit women in the four countries, explained the current situation of access and discrimination exists in South Asia. He explained the amount of Dalit women who have access to higher education is about 1 percent and most of the girls are dropped out in primary and secondary schools. Dalit women have no access to skill development for livelihood and there is no supporting system available to ensuring neither their trainings nor any Redressal mechanisms. Land is a further cause of contention as Dalit women own less than 0.5 percent of land in the region, especially in Sri Lanka no Dalit women owns any forms of land.

Dr VA Rameshnathan explained the situation that the discrimination works in open and can identify Dalits through their surnames or through birth certificates. He also expressed the discrimination on the work as many Dalit women have to work as manual scavengers.

Mr Paul Divakar stated that Dalit women is the most marginalized constituency in the world with many of them have not provided with basic rights and access to justice and services. They face incredible amount of physical, psychological and sexual violence as they are seen as the soft target of caste violence. In India, every day 5 women are victims of rape according to the government records and every hour one women or girls are attacked. Thus they are put in the lowest considerate when designing any development programmes and plans.



Ms Nancy Kwaiss provided her support and solidarity for highlighting the issue of Dalit Women and their access to developmental programmes will be raised and followed up in the international, national and local levels.

### Events supported and attended by ADRF members

1. Release of 'Civil Society Report on SDGs : Agenda 2030' of INDIA, 2017 by WNTA (12<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Baha'i International Community)



Wada Na Thodo Andholan has released the Civil Society Report on India's 2030 Agenda in New York.

2. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Side Event on Means of Implementation by APRCEM (UN Church Centre)

Various constituencies from Asia Pacific region came together to discuss the



inclusive and effective implementation of the SDG in the region

3. Ground Level Peoples Forum (GLPF) by APRCEM (15<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Migrant Centre, NY)



Alternative peoples initiative to High Level Political Forum, Ground Level People's Forum took place with representation of communities.

4. Side Event by NITI Aayog on Implementation of the SDGs in India (17<sup>th</sup> July 2017: UN HQ)



Government of India and NITI Aayog has organized a side event on the India's progress on the issue of SDGs and 2030 Agenda as a whole

5. 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Side Event by Research and Information System in Developing Countries (RIS) at UN



Research and Information System in Developing Countries (RIS) India organised a meeting on the implementation on SDG and partnership towards the global prosperity through eliminating poverty. Inclusion and effective implementation needs to have equal participation in realizing these goals.

6. 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017: Breakfast Meeting at UNDESA (UNHQ)



### Publications:

- 1) Progress towards Inclusive Sustainable Development in India: A Study of Dalits and Adivasis in 2030 Agenda (2017): Asia Dalit Rights Forum: <http://bit.ly/2uvYfP1>
- 2) Towards a Unifying Global Identity: A Framework on Discrimination Based on Work and Descent, Including Caste: Asia Dalit Rights Forum: <http://bit.ly/2w1kgOS>

