

## 16<sup>th</sup> United Nations Forum on Minority Issues

Thank you, Mr/s President

I'm Sultan Md Salauddin Siddique from Bangladesh. I represent the Bangladeshi human rights and development organization 'Nagorik Uddyog'. I am also associated with the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent.

I would like to focus our attention on the Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent. The Dalits in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries, the Haratins in Africa, the Romas in Europe, the Burakumins in Japan, and the Kilambolas in Brazil are a section of these communities of 270 million who experience social exclusion due to their caste-based and occupational identity.

There is no official data about the number of Dalits in Bangladesh. From different sources, it is known that the Dalit population in Bangladesh is near about 6.5 million which is more than 3% of the country's population.

Due to 'untouchability' practices, structural discrimination, and social segregation, Dalits in Bangladesh have unequal access to resources and opportunities. They are left behind in all of the socio-economic development indicators. There is a lack of legal and institutional mechanisms in Bangladesh to protect Dalits from this structural discrimination. Moreover, the social protection program targeted for them is also not sufficient.

Therefore, we recommend that the government of Bangladesh ensure intersectional and disaggregated data on Dalits, enact the long-awaited anti-discrimination law with no delay and undertake a social protection program explicitly targeting the Dalits.

I thank you all.

*Statement prepared by*

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