

Excellencies,

Thank you so much for this opportunity to make my contribution. My name is Adikanda Singh, and I represent Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD).

My intervention focuses on discriminatory practices based on social hierarchies and caste structures based on descent and ancestral occupation. These practices affect approximately 270 million people globally. The caste system in Asia is the most commonly known example of work and descent-based discrimination, which is also prevalent in Africa, Latin America, and Europe, and is enforced through complex cultural beliefs and behavioural systems.

The Haratins in Africa, the Roma people across the globe, the Burakumin in Japan, and the Quilombolas in Brazil are some examples of communities that experience oppression, discrimination and violence on the basis of notions on purity and pollution regarding to their occupations and descent. Women and girls belonging to CDWD are further subject to intersectional forms of marginalisation resulting in gender-based violence and enslavement and violations of reproductive rights as a form of imposed “social order”.

I would like to highlight the following specific demands and recommendations to address this issue:

- Discrimination based on Work and Descent should be recognised and addressed holistically for all groups rather than individuals, bearing in mind the considerable commonalities in the lived experiences and discrimination faced by affected communities.
- The Human Rights Council should consider adopting the Draft Resolution on the Rights of Communities Discriminated based on Work and Descent.
- The creation of a UN Special Procedures mandate on the rights of CDWD, in the form of a Special Rapporteur or Working Group, would go a long way towards addressing the urgent need for accountability for human rights abuses against CDWD globally and existing gaps in protection.