

Esteemed Colleagues and Delegates.

I'm Mary James Gill, founder of Pakistan's first digital advocacy campaign, "Sweepers are Superheroes", and head of Center for Law & Justice, an organization dedicated to marginalized religious minorities in Pakistan. Despite Pakistan's constitutional commitment to equality, a glaring lack of anti-discrimination law persist, even though we have ratified CERD. Authorities and companies frequently issue discriminatory job adverts targeting low pay, hazardous sanitation jobs only for non-Muslims. CLJ has documented around 300 such instances, propelling this issue to Pakistan's supreme court. Our legal challenge has spurred the national commission of human rights into action, yet we await more substantial legal outcomes. Beyond these adverts, the impact of discrimination is a matter of life and death. Over 80 sanitation workers in recent year, mostly from Christian and Hindu communities, have lost their lives due to appalling safety conditions. The case of [inaudible], a 15-year-old Christian boy, heartbreakingly illustrates this, having lost his life in a sewer, without safety gear. We urgently call to eliminate direct discrimination in sanitation job adverts to address racial discrimination. Classify sanitation work as hazardous in labour policies, enact and enforce comprehensive anti-discrimination and protection laws for sanitation workers. We also seek ILO support in extending essential labour rights to sanitation workers, including dignity, safety, job security, and the right to association, recognizing their wider societal contributions. And call on UNICEF, UN Women, and UNFPA to empower and educate women and children affected by these discriminatory practices. The time to act is now. We owe it to every worker and child who has lost their lives while striving to provide us with a clean and healthy environment. Thank you.