



International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT



2007
annual report

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I. Executive summary

The year of unfinished business

In 2007, UN lobby and advocacy efforts by IDSN focused mainly on treaty body examinations of caste-affected countries, and on securing the mandate on discrimination based on work and descent of the former Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the reform process of the charter-based bodies. While lobby efforts to influence relevant treaty body reviews resulted in strong recommendations, the ongoing reform process left no firm result of the efforts to preserve the mandate.

In the first part of 2007, IDSN focused its UN related work on providing assistance to the finalisation of the draft UN principles and guidelines for the effective elimination of discrimination based on work and descent. In the second part, efforts to secure the adoption of the report containing the principles and guidelines as well a continued mandate on this topic formerly located with the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, were at the forefront.

IDSN and its members provided substantial reports to treaty-based bodies on caste discrimination, including to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the occasion of the examination of India in March. Multiple reports and a series of interventions in Geneva contributed to the adoption of a strong set of concluding observations related to caste discrimination. Once again the government of India failed to acknowledge the substantive human rights violations pertaining to caste discrimination at the CERD examination. The examination clearly exposed the state's inability to effectively deal with untouchability, impunity for atrocities committed against Dalits and implementation of special measures to eliminate caste discrimination.

With the adoption on 1 February of a resolution on the human rights situation of Dalits in India, the European Parliament also called upon the government of India to take immediate action to stop the violence and other human rights abuses committed against Dalits and address continued impunity for perpetrators of these crimes. The Parliament further urged various EU institutions, including the Council and the Commission to take specific action to address caste-based discrimination within the institutional and programme frameworks.

Throughout 2007, IDSN facilitated and sponsored participation of Dalit leaders and resource persons in a series of events and interventions related to the UN and EU Programmes, international and regional consultations as well as IDSN meetings and working groups. Furthermore, UN experts, representatives of UN agencies, ILO, IDSN international associates and Dalit Solidarity Networks, researchers and others have been party to events or interventions. The total number of people involved in IDSN events was higher than ever before in 2007, illustrating the expansion of the network and an increased level of activities.

Interaction between Dalit groups and platforms in the region was enhanced through IDSN events and in particular with the establishment and activities of the Asia Dalit Rights Movement involving also regional human rights organisations. A regional research project led by the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies in association with IDSN helped form new ties between researchers and other actors at national and international level, and importantly stimulated formation of national level Dalit platforms and promotion of a Dalit agenda in Bangladesh, Pakistan and to some extent Sri Lanka. The initial research findings discussed in national consultations and at a regional seminar confirmed that caste discrimination and untouchability are seriously affecting the lives of millions of people, also in Muslim dominated countries, with either limited or no action at all by governments and civil society. The situation of Dalits in Nepal, which was also included in the study, is generally better documented and an organised Dalit movement has been able to influence the government for some policy changes. The research reports will be published in 2008.

A highlight in the year was the awarding of the prestigious human rights prize of the Rafto Foundation to the National Campaign of Dalit Human Rights of India, a founding member of IDSN.

II. IDSN background

In India and other South Asian countries, people have been systematically discriminated against on the basis of their work and descent for centuries. Also known as "untouchables", "Scheduled Castes" or "outcastes", Dalits



experience violence, discrimination, and social exclusion on a daily basis. Despite strong economic growth in India over the past decade, caste disparities are increasing.

The persistence of the caste system condemns Dalits to a life of poverty, deprivation and discrimination. Caste-based discrimination is one of the most severe global human rights problems, affecting at least 260 million people, including 170 million Dalits in India alone. Caste-discrimination, or discrimination based on work and descent (which is the formal United Nations (UN) definition), is also practised in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and analogous forms of discrimination are found in Japan, Yemen and a number of African countries.

Dalits are subjected to numerous forms of discrimination, including physical and social segregation, restrictions on occupation, the humiliating notion of pollution and purity, and physical abuse. Discriminatory practices exist in almost all spheres, and poverty and marginalisation characterise the Dalit communities who face seriously reduced access to land, water, employment, education, health care and other basic amenities.

Despite constitutional and legal provisions to abolish caste discrimination in India and other countries, the practice continues. Impunity for atrocities against Dalits in India is widespread and inequality at all levels of society persists also in other caste affected countries.

IDSN was founded in March 2000 to advocate for Dalit human rights and to raise consciousness of Dalit issues nationally and internationally. IDSN is a network of international human rights groups, development agencies, national Dalit solidarity networks (from Europe and the United States), and national platforms in caste-affected countries. Since it was founded, the network has had a significant impact on the work of the UN and the EU to reject untouchability and other human rights abuses against Dalits and other communities discriminated against on the basis of work and descent.

IDSN's main objectives include:

- advocating for Dalit rights by influencing the policies and practices of governments and international bodies and institutions;
- monitoring the enforcement and implementation of measures aimed at combating caste discrimination;
- working towards global recognition of Dalit Human Rights and contributing to the fight against caste discrimination globally by raising awareness and building solidarity;
- facilitating Dalit rights interventions internationally, including before the European Commission and European Parliament, UN human rights mechanisms, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and other forums;
- creating and maintaining a resource base that facilitates and strengthens solidarity and representative functions especially at the UN, ILO and other related multilateral bodies, and international financial institutions (such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank).

IDSN bases its work on contributions from its members and associates. Joint interventions in the United Nations and the EU constitute a major part of IDSN's activities and crucial input in the form of research, planning of strategic interventions and actual lobby actions are organised through IDSN working groups. Interaction between members bilaterally and in the working groups adds to the dynamics of the expanding network. Currently IDSN maintains an UN working group, an EU working groups, a private sector working group and in 2007 three new working groups were established; a Dalit Women's Working Group as well as two ad hoc groups; the Nepal Constitutional Working Group and a Governance and Structure working group.

DSN members and associates

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – India
The Dalit NGO Federation – Nepal
The Human Development Organisation – Sri Lanka
Dalit associates in Pakistan and Bangladesh

The Dalit Solidarity Network – UK
The Dalit Solidarity Platform – Germany
The Dalit Network – Netherlands
The Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark
The Dalit Solidarity Network – Sweden
The French Dalit Collectif – France
The Dalit Solidarity Forum – USA
The Dalit Solidarity Network- Belgium

Human Rights Watch
The Lutheran World Federation
The International Movement Against all Forms of
Discrimination and Racism
Anti-Slavery International
The Minority Rights Group International
The Asian Human Rights Commission
The Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice
The Asian Center for Human Rights
The Robert F. Kennedy Foundation
ICMICA/Pax Romana
FORUM-ASIA
The World Council of Churches
The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
Franciscans International

DSN formally registered as an organisation in October 2003. Its Secretariat, which coordinates the activities of the network, is located in Copenhagen.² In 2006 the Secretariat was staffed by two full time staff members, Coordinator Rikke Nöhrind and Programme Officer Maia Ingvarson, and a part time programme assistant, Gitte Dyrhagen.

III. United Nations and other multilateral bodies

UN lobby and advocacy efforts by IDSN in 2007 focused mainly on treaty body examinations of caste-affected countries, and on securing the mandate on discrimination based on work and descent of the former Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the reform process of the charter-based bodies. While lobby efforts to influence relevant treaty body reviews resulted in strong recommendations, the ongoing reform process left no firm result of the efforts to preserve the mandate. The institution-building process in the newly established Human Rights Council (hereafter “the Council”) took up most of the time in the Council. This process had a clear impact on the activities and interventions planned by IDSN. On the one hand, the main focus by the Council on

establishing modalities and procedures meant that substantive issues formed a small part of the Council’s work, which minimized the possibility for IDSN interventions. On the other hand, the lack of certainty and clarity on the modalities meant that strategies and options had to be revisited constantly. This led to extensive lobby efforts by IDSN with the main goal to preserve the pending mandate on discrimination based on work and descent. Efforts to save the mandate were therefore among the major activities this year.

A. Human Rights Council

General Assembly resolution 60/251 established the Human Rights Council as a replacement of the former Commission on Human Rights. Three important developments should be highlighted: The establishment of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, the creation of an Advisory Committee to replace the former Sub-Commission, and the review, rationalization and improvement (RRI) of the Special Procedures system. The latter will be dealt with in section 3.4.

1. Universal Periodic Review

The UPR mechanism is an innovation in the UN human rights system, under which each UN member state will be reviewed periodically every 4 years on its human rights

¹ IDSN also works in association with a number of other international human rights and development organisations.

² IDSN is not a funding body and is therefore not involved in direct aid or program support.

record. 48 countries will be reviewed each year, starting in 2008. In September 2007, the Council selected the order of review of countries for the first cycle of four years for the UPR mechanism. India was elected for the first session in April 2008, and Pakistan, Japan and Sri Lanka were elected for the second session in May 2008. In 2007, IDSN prepared an alternative report related to the review of India in association with the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) for a summary report prepared by OHCHR of "additional credible and reliable information" received from "other relevant stakeholders". Reports for the review of Sri Lanka and Pakistan were also prepared in 2007, with the inputs from national advocacy organisations and researchers who had been involved in a regional research project on caste discrimination. (See also section VI A)

2. Human Rights Council Advisory Committee

As a result of the reform process a Human Rights Council Advisory Committee (HRCAC) was established to support the Council's work as a replacement of the former Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The Advisory Committee will be made up of eighteen experts serving in their personal capacity to be elected by the Council in 2008. Functioning as a "think tank", the Committee is mandated to provide expertise and advice and conduct substantive research on thematic issues of interest to the Council at its request. It is unclear, however, whether the pending mandates from the former Sub-Commission, including the mandate on discrimination based on work and descent, will be transferred into the new body. Efforts to ensure this, with the ultimate aim of adopting the final report on discrimination based on work and descent, took up large parts of IDSN's work in 2007.

B. Draft UN principles and guidelines for the effective elimination of discrimination based on work and descent

The main focus in the first part of 2007 was to assist with the finalization of the draft UN principles and guidelines for the effective elimination of discrimination based on work and descent (hereafter "draft P&G"), and in the second part it was the efforts to ensure a process for its adoption. In April 2007, IDSN convened an expert consul-

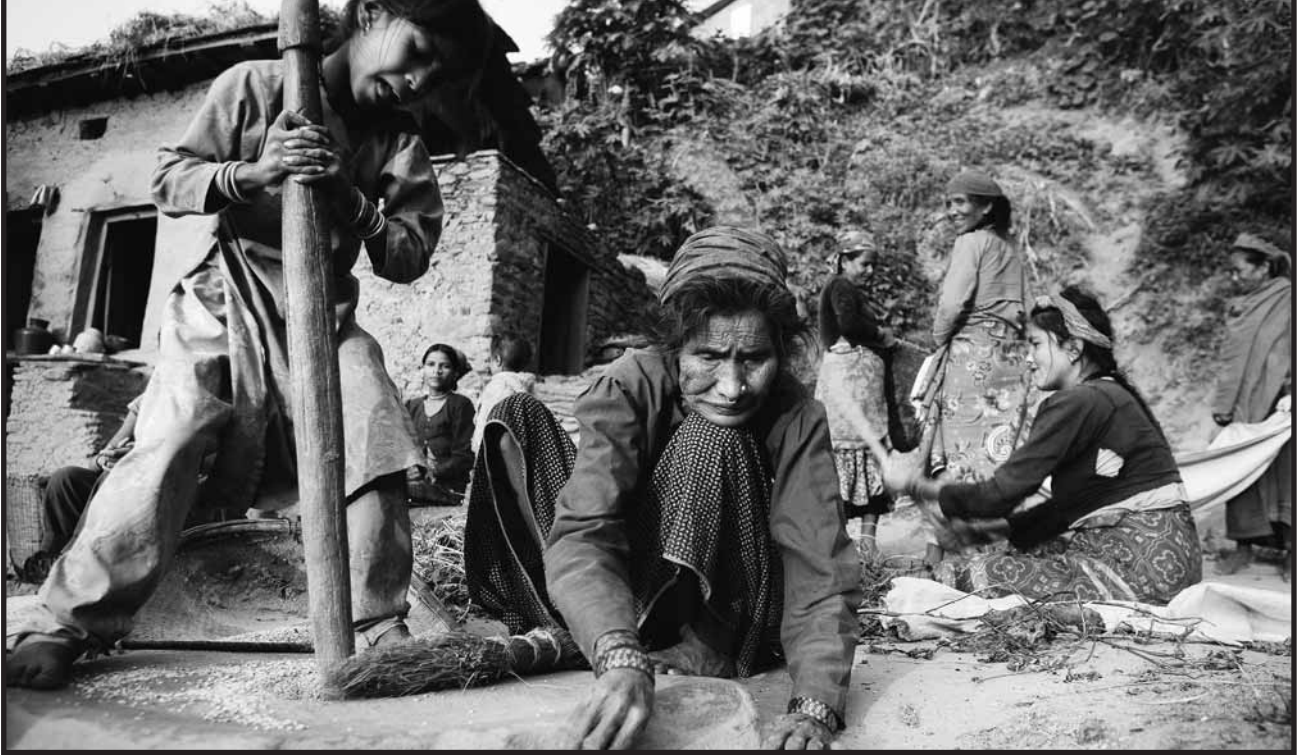
tation in Kathmandu on behalf of the two Special Rapporteurs of the former Sub-Commission, Prof. Chung and Prof. Yokota. The purpose of the consultation was to get advice and input from UN experts, UN agencies, and the ILO, and resource persons from INGOs and affected communities for the finalisation of the draft P&G.

In October 2007, the Special Rapporteurs submitted the final draft report, incl. the draft UN P&G, to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. With the abolishment of the Sub-Commission and lack of transitional arrangements in the institution-building process, however, there was no institution to receive the report. The report could not be considered by the Council as otherwise suggested in resolution 2006/14 from the 58th closing session of the Sub-Commission stating that the final report should be handed over "to the Sub-Commission or its successor body, or in the absence of either, to the Council". Therefore, the final report could not be considered as an official UN document.

After the submission of the report to the OHCHR, IDSN lobbied relevant UN missions to support the adoption of the draft P&G. After assessing different options, the final recommendation was to urge member states to support the referral of the mandate to be considered at the first session of the HRCAC in August 2008.

C. UN Treaty Bodies

2007 will be remembered for the strong UN treaty body recommendations made by the Expert Committees, where serious concerns were raised concerning caste-based discrimination in relation to the reviews of the Government of India and Nepal. In January 2007, the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) examined India. India was again examined by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in February 2007. Nepal was examined by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in May 2007, where the same Committee also prepared a list of issues for the review of India in 2008. Although Pakistan was examined by the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in August 2007, no references were made to gender discrimination on the basis of caste, work and descent in the Concluding Observations. This shows the need for IDSN to consistently address the issue



in UN treaty bodies; use the knowledge gained from country reviews where such form of discrimination is already recognised, e.g. Nepal and India; and mainstream this in reviews of other caste-affected countries where such form of discrimination is ignored or denied. In this context, the regional research project provides a valuable basis for turning well-documented research into shadow reports to the UN. (See also section VI A)

1. CEDAW Concluding Observations: India

In January 2007, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women examined the Government of India's implementation of the Convention. Comprehensive civil society reports documented the double forms of discrimination under which Dalit women suffer. The recipient of the Right Livelihood Award 2006, Ruth Manorama, voiced a strong concern to the Committee members about the grave situation facing Dalit women in India. In the Concluding Comments, the Committee noted in para. 12 that "while de jure equality for women has been realized in many spheres, there remain many impediments to the realization of de facto equality" and concluded that Dalit women in India suffer from "deeply rooted structural discrimination." The Committee called on the Government, in particular, "to review and monitor the fulfilment of the provisions of the Convention in respect of scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, backward class and minority women in all sectors" (para. 15). It also expressed its concern about the ongoing atrocities committed against Dalit women and the culture of impunity for perpetrators of such atrocities and recommended that the Government "put in place a mechanism to monitor effective enforcement of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act in order to ensure accountability and end impunity for crimes committed against Dalit women" (para. 29).

2. CERD Concluding Observations: India

CERD examined the Government of India's compliance with the International Convention of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 23 and 26 February 2007. IDSN had in association with NCDHR and international associates such as the NYU Centre for Global Justice and Human Rights (CHRGJ) and Human Rights Watch organised several events before, during and after the examination. Press releases with the findings of the shadow reports were published before the review, and at an NGO hearing representatives from NCDHR and CHRGJ spoke strongly about the realities on the ground to the Committee members. Immediately after the review, a press meeting was organised at the UN premises. Follow-up action included publication of a press release and the distribution of the Concluding Observations to relevant international and national stakeholders.

One of the outstanding debates during the hearings was the Government's denial that discrimination on the basis of caste falls under article 1 of the Convention.

Committee members uniformly regretted the Indian government's refusal to acknowledge this, and referred to General Recommendation no. XXIX prepared by CERD in 2002 which clearly stipulates that caste-based discrimination falls under discrimination based on "descent" in the Convention. CERD country rapporteur, Mr. Sicilianos, and other members of the Committee expressed their regret that the Indian delegation was unwilling to engage with the experts of the Committee on the issue and the widespread human rights violations against Dalit communities, which was vastly documented in NGO shadow reports as well as by official Indian sources, such as the National Human Rights Commission.

On 9th March 2008 the CERD issued the Concluding Observations (CERD/C/IND/CO/19), which found that “de facto segregation of Dalits persists” and highlighted systematic abuse against Dalits, including torture and extrajudicial killings, an “alarming extent” of sexual violence against Dalit women and caste-discrimination in post-tsunami relief. The Committee called for effective measures to implement laws on discrimination and affirmative action, and sought proper protection for Dalits and tribal communities against acts of “discrimination and violence” (see box). Many of the concerns raised in the Concluding Observations were a direct outcome of the written submissions and oral interventions undertaken by members of IDSN.

According to the CERD follow-up guidelines and pursuant to article 9§1 of the Convention, the Government of India should submit a report on measures taken to implement the recommendations to CERD within one year. In the Concluding Observations, the Committee requested the Government to respond to four of its recommendations,

including its recommendations on how to end widespread impunity for violence against Dalits, and Dalit women in particular. By March 2008, this request had not yet been met by the Government.

3. CESCR Concluding Observations: Nepal

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) examined the Government of Nepal's second periodic report on 1-2 May 2007 at its 38th session. The Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Coordination Committee (HRTMCC) – an umbrella organisation where organisations such as the Dalit NGO Federation, Nepal, contributes to the preparation of a national report – submitted a well-documented report which took up many issues related to discrimination against Dalits in Nepal. While the Committee welcomed the measures taken by the State Party to abolish discrimination based on caste in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, it expressed concern about the absence of detailed data disaggregated by caste, and of the denial of access to e.g. public wells. In particular, the Committee stated in paragraph 12 of the

CERD Concluding Observations: India

In the Concluding Observations, the Committee called for the Government of India to ensure effective measures to implement laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of caste and to implement affirmative action, including proper protection for Dalits and tribal communities against acts of “discrimination and violence.” The Committee called on the Government of India to:

- Introduce mandatory training on the application of India's Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act for police, judges and prosecutors, and take disciplinary measures against those who fail to implement this law.
- Ensure the protection of witnesses and victims to caste-based crimes and ensure their immediate access to effective remedies.
- Prosecute and punish perpetrators of sexual violence and sexual exploitation of Dalit women, and sanction anyone found preventing or discouraging victims from reporting such incidents, including public officials.
- Eradicate the social acceptance of caste-based discrimination through public education and awareness campaigns.
- Ensure equal access to health care, safe drinking water, and other public services.
- Investigate all alleged cases of discrimination against Dalits in post-tsunami relief and compensate or retroactively grant benefits to victims of such discrimination.
- Take effective measures to reduce dropout rates and increase enrolment rates among Dalits at all levels of schooling by providing scholarships and by ending classroom segregation.
- Ensure proper enforcement of reservations or quotas to counter the under-representation of Dalits and tribal communities in government and public services.
- Adopt measures to enhance Dalits' access to the labour market, including by extending the reservation policy to the private sector.

concluding observations that it "notes with concern that, in spite of the provisions in the Interim Constitution prohibiting caste-based discrimination, such discrimination persists with impunity. The Committee is particularly concerned about the obstacles that victims of caste-based discrimination reportedly face in accessing justice." The Committee also raised concern about the situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), poverty issues, unemployment rates and wages, child labour and discrimination against women.

4. CESCR Alternative report: India

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) prepared an alternate report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on India's implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in association with IDSN and a large number of Indian civil society organisations. The report was submitted to the pre-sessional working group one year before the examination of India, which takes place in May 2008.

The comprehensive report explains the lack of implementation by the Government of economic, social and cultural rights of approximately 167 million Dalits in India, in particular in relation to article 6 (right to work), article 7 (right to just and favourable conditions of work), article 11 (right to adequate standards of living) and article 13 and 14 (right to education). At the pre-sessional working group meeting, the committee members prepared a list of issues, which is to be considered by the Government in 2008, reflecting a number of issues raised in the alternate report prepared by NCDHR. Some of the concerns, such as the non-implementation of provisional guarantees for Dalits and lack of statistical data disaggregated by caste, are similar to the concerns raised by CERD in its review of India in February 2007.

D. Special Procedures

Several references were made by thematic mandate holders to caste-based discrimination in annual reports submitted to the Human Rights Council and/or in communications sent to governments in caste-affected countries in 2007.³ Contributions came from the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Doudou Diène;

the Special Rapporteur on Housing, Mr. Miloon Khotari; and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mr. Jean Ziegler. There is a clear tendency that Special Rapporteurs who have been approached and informed appropriately will be more responsive to these issues in their reports. IDSN maintains the view that due to the cross-cutting nature of caste discrimination the issue is relevant to most thematic mandates, and is encouraged that a more systematic approach strengthens the monitoring of human rights by Special Rapporteurs in caste-affected countries as a regional and global phenomenon.

The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Doudou Diène, consistently raised the issue of caste-based discrimination in his reports to the Human Rights Council and in communications sent to governments in caste-affected countries, in particular India and Nepal, in 2007. The reports submitted to the Council included an Updated Study on Political Platforms (A/HRC5/19) submitted before the 5th session in June 2007 and a report on the manifestations of defamation of religions (A/HRC/6/6) submitted before the 6th Council session.

In the report on the manifestations of defamation of religions (A/HRC/6/6), the Special Rapporteur confirms the interpretation made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that caste-based discrimination is a type of racial discrimination on the basis of the term "descent" contained in article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In 2007 Special Rapporteur Diène also requested country visits to India, Pakistan and Nepal to investigate forms of caste-based discrimination as previously inquired. The Special Rapporteur states that he intends to study the relations between Hinduism and Christianity further as well as the state of caste-based discrimination. By March 2008, Mr. Diène had not received invitations from any of the governments in question.

A number of individual cases were also submitted in 2007. In an addendum to the Updated Study on Political Platforms (A/HRC5/19), Mr. Diène made a summary of cases trans-

³ See a full overview of references to caste-based discrimination on IDSN's website (UN - Special Procedures): www.idsn.org

mitted to governments and replies received. The Special Rapporteur sent communications to the Government of India and Nepal, where he raised concern over violent attacks against Dalits and reminded the governments of their obligation to ensure an effective investigation and remedies to the victims and their relatives. Other mandate holders such as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and Special Rapporteur on Housing also brought a number of issues to the attention of the Government of India.

In the report on the right to food (A/HRC/4/30), Special Rapporteur Mr. Jean Ziegler analysed developments in realizing the right to food and situations of serious concern. In a study concerning children and their right to food, Mr. Ziegler mentions the issue of caste based discrimination and cites a study by Prof.

Thorat from the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies. The Special Rapporteur states in his report (para. 34) that: "In India, Dalit children are discriminated against in multiple ways that affect their right to food. These disparities, whether they are the direct or indirect consequences of governmental policies and practices, constitute violations of the prohibition of non-discrimination in the enjoyment of children's right to food."

As part of the UN reform process, the Council established in June 2007 a process for the continuing review, rationalization and improvement (RRI) of all special procedure mandates established by the Council and decided on a "Code of Conduct" for all mandate holders. The Special Procedure mandates will be renewed and in most cases new mandate holders will be appointed by the Human Rights Council in 2008.

References to caste-based discrimination in reports by the Special Rapporteur on Racism

In the study of political platforms (A/HRC5/19), the Special Rapporteur examined the situation of political platforms which promotes racial discrimination in a number of countries, including some visited or examined previously (e.g. Japan). In the section concerning racial discrimination and hate speech in Asia, the Special Rapporteur describes how caste discrimination remains deeply rooted in societies in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Japan. In para. 36 it is stated: "In India, the caste system remains a source of great inequality for millions, particularly the Dalits, in spite of constitutional and other legal instruments introduced over the years to fight it. While measures such as the quota system, introduced by law, have enabled many Dalits to access State institutions, discrimination remains culturally deep-rooted and a serious threat to social cohesion in India. [...] Its assertion of Hindu supremacy ignores deep-rooted caste, class, ethnic, linguistic and regional loyalties. In other countries of the region such as Pakistan and Nepal, caste-based discrimination continues to marginalize millions of individuals." Based on his country visit to Japan in 2005, the Special Rapporteur points out in para. 37 that "racial discrimination and xenophobia affects three categories of people: national minorities (the Buraku people, the Ainu and the people of Okinawa); people and descendants of former Japanese colonies (Koreans and Chinese); foreigners and migrants from other Asian countries and the rest of the world. [...]"

In the report on the manifestations of defamation of religions and in particular on the serious implications of Islamophobia on the enjoyment of all rights (A/HRC/6/6), the Special Rapporteur mentions the issue in relation to religious intolerance. In para. 54 it is stated that: "In the analysis of the defamation of Hinduism, prejudices leading to the reduction of a millenary spiritual practice to stereotypes and the identification of Hinduism with the caste system have to be taken into consideration. Regarding the latter, it is important to bear in mind that a number of Hindu analysts argue that the caste-based discrimination is a cultural characteristic of the subcontinent and has also been practised by some Muslim, Buddhist and even Christian believers. Furthermore, some neo-Hindu reformist trends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have considered the elimination of the caste-based system. But despite the reality of the political and legal strategy against the caste-based system, the marginalization, discrimination and continuous violence against Dalits is still a daily occurrence in some parts of India, in particular in the rural areas."



Sukhwinder Singh, a Dalit aged 14, is working in the fields of a landlord to pay of the debts of his deceased father.

E. The International Labour Organisation

The ILO has consistently addressed caste discrimination through its country level work in South Asia. Research on child labour, bonded and forced labour in the region clearly marks the correlation between those working under horrific conditions and bondage and members of the Dalit community.

An ILO representative contributed to the further development of the draft Principles and Guidelines at the IDSN consultation in Kathmandu and also participated in a regional research seminar on caste discrimination. ILO has developed a Dalit Resource Guide for the private sector in cooperation with IDSN and other organisations. The resource guide will be published in 2008.

The Global Report 2007 called "Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges" was prepared by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, in particular in relation to the principle of non-discrimination. The report contains a section describing how caste-based discrimination has a negative impact on the realisation of equality at work in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and particularly in South Asia (para. 130-136). The report explains in great detail that although abolished by law, the practise of "untouchability" remains a dominant factor in defining the economic and social status of Dalits in India and Nepal.

An annex to the global report called "Discrimination at Work in Asia" summarises the findings of the global report, where caste-based discrimination is referred to as a persistent form of discrimination which prevails in South Asia.

The report states that "[...] this form confines Dalits to occupations often involving the most menial tasks such as "manual scavenging" or the removal of dead animals. Dalits are generally not accepted for any work involving contact with water or food for non-Dalits or entering a non-Dalit residence. They are thus excluded from a wide range of work opportunities in the area of production, processing or sale of food items, domestic work and the provision of certain services in the private and public sectors (e.g. office helpers)."

1. The International Labour Conference 2007

At the 96th session of the International Labour Conference in June 2007, caste-based discrimination at the labour market was discussed both as a follow-up to the findings in the global report 2007 and in relation to member states' obligations contained in ILO Convention 111. At the conference, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which is a subsidiary body appointed by the Governing Body of the ILO, issued a general report and observations concerning particular countries. The Committee on the Application of Standards, which examined the report of the Committee of Experts at the June session, concluded that India needed to step up its efforts "to tackle the still widespread practices of exclusion and discrimination in employment and occupation on the basis of caste". The Committee was "particularly concerned that women often faced discriminatory treatment and violence due to both their sex and caste".⁴

⁴ References can be found in the Provisional Record of the Report of the Committee on the Application of Standards, Part II, p. 81. For more information go to IDSN's website (UN – ILO): www.idsn.org

Conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards, 96th session of the International Labour Conference:

“While the Committee welcomed the measures taken, it considered that it was important to tackle the still widespread practices of exclusion and discrimination in employment and occupation on the basis of caste, which constituted discrimination based on social origin within the meaning of the Convention. It was particularly concerned that women often faced discriminatory treatment and violence due to both their sex and caste. Such practices were not only contrary to human rights and dignity but were also an obstacle to social progress and economic growth.

The Committee recognized that the eradication of caste-based discrimination was an enormous task that had to be accomplished over time. However, given that those practices were deeply entrenched in the society, the Committee urged the Government to take continuing, decisive and effective action to promote and ensure equal treatment and equal opportunities. The Committee particularly stressed the need to ensure strict enforcement of the relevant legislation and the full implementation of policies to promote equal opportunities of Dalits and women in respect of access to education, training and employment. In particular, the Committee requested the Government to intensify the awareness-raising campaigns on the unacceptability of those forms of discrimination.

The Committee requested the Government to implement urgently a new time-bound programme to bring an end to the inhuman practice of manual scavenging which is carried out by Dalits.

Finally, the Committee emphasized the need to assess at regular intervals the impact of the action taken to eliminate discrimination against women and Dalits. In particular, the Committee requested the Government to supply information, including detailed statistical data, on the results of such action, as well as any obstacles encountered. The Committee requested the Government to provide to the Committee of Experts this year all the information requested, including on the implementation of the 2001 National Policy for the Empowerment of Women.”

IV. The European Union

A. The European Parliament

On 1 February 2007, the European Parliament (EP) adopted a resolution on the human rights situation of the Dalits in India (B6-0021/2007)⁵.

The Resolution came about as a follow up to a public hearing on the human rights situation of Dalits held by the Development Committee of the European Parliament on 18 December 2006⁶.

The Parliament called on the European Commission and the European Council to take action on the issue in their relations with India and pointed out that in spite of constitutional provisions the implementation of laws protecting the rights of Dalits remains grossly inadequate: atrocities, untouchability, illiteracy, inequality of opportunity, manual scavenging, underpayment of wages, bonded labour,

child labour and landlessness continue to blight the lives of India's Dalits. The Resolution urges the Indian government to improve its criminal justice system, to facilitate registration of charges against perpetrators of crimes against Dalits, to take urgent steps to ensure equal access for Dalits, and finally urges the Government of India to engage with the relevant UN human rights bodies on the effective elimination of caste-based discrimination.

The European Parliament further noted “with concern the lack of substantive EU engagement with the Indian Government ???on the vast problem of caste-based discrimination”; urged “the European members of the Joint Action Committee to develop dialogue on the problem of caste-based discrimination in terms of its discussions on democracy and human rights, social and employment policy and development cooperation”; and further “reiterated its expectation that EU development programmes in India include specific measures to ensure that minorities

such as Dalits and Adivasis and other marginalised communities, tribes and castes, are able to close the wide gap with the rest of the population regarding the attainment of the MDGs.”

The European Parliament in its Annual Human Rights Report 2006 welcomed the adoption of its resolution of 1 February 2007 on the human rights situation of the Dalits in India.

Inclusion of the issue of caste based discrimination in the human rights dialogue between the EU and India has been a standing request by IDSN, recently supplemented by a call to the Commission and the troika to pay full and adequate attention to relevant recommendations of the UN treaty bodies in general and specifically on caste based discrimination. In human rights and policy dialogues between the EU and caste-affected countries, such expert findings and recommendations can serve as a legitimate and constructive basis for discussion on human rights violations including caste-based discrimination. The CERD concluding observations on India adopted in March is a case in point. Although no records of the EU-India human rights dialogues are made public, it is understood that a discussion on caste discrimination based on CERD’s concluding observations on India formed part of the human rights dialogue meeting in January 2007 between the EU and India.

In response to the resolution of the EP on the human rights situation of Dalits in India the Commission submitted a formal note to the Parliament, in which the Commission reiterates it is “committed to fighting all forms of discrimination worldwide and is following the situation of Dalits in India closely”. In spite of giving recognition to the seriousness of the situation of Dalits the note bore little evidence of the Commission committing to new and adequate responses. In March, IDSN wrote to Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner and other officials of the Commission repeating its call for action with reference to the EP resolution as well as pointing attention to the report “Making Things Worse – How ‘caste blindness’ in Indian post-tsunami disaster recovery has exacerbated vulnerability and exclusion” and the aforementioned CERD examination of India.

⁷ Letter to the European Union: <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/11/28/india17424.htm>

On the occasion of the EU-India summit on November 30, 2007, Human Rights Watch appealed to the EU to increase its engagement with the Government of India on human rights issues, including on discrimination against marginalized groups.

Human Rights Watch pointed out that “... despite legislative measures to protect marginalized groups, discrimination based on caste, religion and gender continues to be widespread in practice. Local police often fail to implement laws set up to protect Dalits and Adivasis (members of tribal groups). As a result Dalits and Adivasis are denied their basic civil rights, discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions, and routinely abused at the hands of the police and of higher-caste groups that enjoy the state’s protection. Women remain highly vulnerable to abuse, both inside and outside the household.”

Indian law calls for affirmative action in government jobs, but with increasing privatisation, it is crucial for the European Union to encourage European companies operating in India to adopt equal opportunity policies that benefit Dalits, Adivasis, women and religious minorities.

The European Union should urge the Indian government to implement measures designed to ensure that states abolish the practice of “untouchability,” in compliance with Article 17 of India’s constitution, ensure strict implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and of laws to protect women including recent legislations aimed at ending domestic violence, sexual harassment in the work place and trafficking”⁷.

B. EU member states and the Council

IDSN and Dalit Solidarity Networks have pressed for collective efforts of EU member states, or a group of members, inter alia, for a proactive approach to secure the above mentioned UN Principles and Guidelines, coordinated through the Council’s Coordinating mechanism on human rights (COHOM). Whilst there is an interest among some members, a full discussion in COHOM, or a similarly relevant Council body, on EU’s position and action on countering caste-based discrimination globally is yet to come.

C. The European Commission

1. *Caste discrimination in the context of EC Development and humanitarian assistance*

IDSN has called for a process to develop a framework and operational tools to ensure that caste-based discrimination is comprehensively addressed in the EC's programmes and areas of cooperation. IDSN proposed to the Commission that a set of guidelines be designed specifically to help eliminate caste-based marginalisation and exclusion, human rights violations, various forms of untouchability, discrimination and poverty in the context of EC cooperation with third parties, including development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, political dialogue, trade agreements and other relations.

The human rights and development policies of the European Union aiming to reduce poverty, eliminate inequality and discrimination, and secure the rule of law and equal treatment before the law expresses the core values underpinning the proposed framework and operational guidelines for addressing caste-based discrimination and enhancing protection of caste-affected communities. The EU Human Rights policy and other EU instruments of cooperation are points of reference for this work also, pursuant to the principle of coherence and consistency in all EU areas of operation. Caste-based discrimination is not only a serious violation of human rights but also a major obstacle to achieving development goals. Inequalities inevitably retard development. Ineffective allocation of human resources due to discrimination based on work and descent also distorts the labour market and affects the efficiency of an economy.

Discrimination on the basis of caste is evident as a predictable type of discrimination occurring within and undermining the impact of both development and humanitarian assistance programmes if not addressed explicitly and systematically. So-called 'caste blindness' in any such operation in caste-affected countries automatically leads to a replication of the existing patterns of exclusion and marginalisation in society or may even exacerbate the effect of such patterns. As marginalisation of caste-affected groups is founded on structural injustices and denial of basic human rights, it is necessary to address the underlying causes to avoid distorting and/or undermining the impact of aid programmes intended to address poverty and marginalisation.

Experience shows that without a proactive approach in which Dalits and other caste-affected communities are specifically targeted in relief efforts they will be left out, denied access to shelter or even refused relief packages and eventually compensation to restore their livelihoods. Development efforts in e.g. education and health often fail to reach discriminated groups due to lack of consideration of caste dynamics in communities, such as the routine denial of access to health facilities for members of caste-affected groups in some places, or the fact that discrimination from teachers and fellow students is a principle cause of high drop-out rates among Dalit children.

Women of caste-affected communities suffer double discrimination, and special attention must be given to analysis of gender issues and planning programmes that address the particular problems faced by women in the intersection of gender and caste discrimination. Dalit children constitute a particularly vulnerable group with a relatively high mortality rate compared to Non-Dalits. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of child labourers in caste affected countries are thought to be Dalits.

Globalisation and market developments have diverse implications for caste-affected communities, which constitute the largest single group in South Asia subjected to forced and bonded labour and other forms of gross exploitation in the labour market. These forms of human rights violations do not appear to be diminishing in spite of the contemporary focus on corporate social responsibility, increasing international investment, and the growing number of agreements on economic and trade relations also between the EU and caste-affected countries.

Some of underlying reasons for the failure to overcome the above mentioned development challenges have been identified as pertaining to a lack of relevant strategies and tools, ranging from disaggregated data and appropriate analyses, tools to prepare caste analysis and power relations mapping, and benchmarking and monitoring mechanisms. Finally, the lack of involvement of Dalits/affected communities themselves in development processes and as staff is another barrier that needs to be addressed. A dialogue should be promoted between stakeholders at all levels of this important dimension in development cooperation.



The village development committee has build separate water taps for Dalits and non-Dalits in Tikapir Kailali village in the far Western Province of Nepal, and as a result the development efforts perpetuate patterns of caste discrimination.

2. Concept note for developing operations guidelines

In June, EuropeAid expressed the Commission's interest to develop a tool for the enhancement of the quality and impact of EC cooperation in relation to addressing caste-based discrimination and invited IDSN to prepare a draft concept note. In the drafting process various UN and bilateral agencies were approached for an assessment of their interest in contributing to a study and the development of guidelines. Affirmative responses indicated a solid potential for multiple stakeholders and eventually a wider application of a final set of tools. The draft concept note submitted in August to EuropeAid, was initially well received and subject to a discussion between an IDSN team and EuropeAid officials in Brussels in September. Though the Commission was of the opinion that the draft was too ambitious, their commitment was at the time unabated. Later communication from EuropeAid suggests a much more hesitant view on the operational guidelines leading to a conclusion that caste-based discrimination at least for the near future should be addressed within the broader 'minorities and vulnerable groups' cross cutting issue in the EC development cooperation.

It is in the view of IDSN far from sufficient in addressing the challenges facing the most vulnerable groups in South Asia, the Dalits. It has been documented time and again that without an overall encompassing framework with specific analytic and methodological tools, critical issues may not be addressed and interventions may not be sufficient or even detrimental to ensuring non-discrimination as well as equal and full development benefits for the Dalits. In pursuit of a continued dialogue, IDSN have reviewed the draft concept note and submitted a simplified version to EuropeAid.

The development of a set of operational guidelines would constitute a valuable and timely contribution of the EU to start effectuating recommendations contained in the draft Principles and Guidelines for Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent addressed to the international community. (See also section III A)

Making Things Worse

“The question remains: How persistently will the EU ensure that ‘hard-to-reach’ Dalits are integral to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of EU supported projects? In the light of the “Making Things Worse” report findings, it would be irresponsible to pretend such considerations will be taken care of automatically”.

Making Things Worse – How ‘caste blindness’ in Indian post-tsunami disaster recovery has exacerbated vulnerability and exclusion” was formally published by Dalit Network Netherlands (DNN) in January 2007.

The report presents the analyses, recommendations and findings of an in-depth study of caste-based discrimination in post-tsunami emergency, relief and rehabilitation operations in India. The findings are disturbing; Indians who were severely affected by the tsunami were denied assistance merely because of their caste status. Providers did not generally act to ensure that Dalits were assisted, and as a result they contributed to the caste divide by giving relief through dominant caste fishermen networks. These networks not only neglected Dalit victims; they actively prevented affected Dalit communities from receiving even the most basic aid. Agencies failed to ensure that Dalit communities – who are often exploited by caste fishermen in the coastal region of Tamil Nadu – were reached with assistance, given on the basis of need. Even one year after the scandal of caste discrimination in post-tsunami relief was brought to world attention, Dalit victims were still being ignored by most providers while many caste fishermen communities were receiving more assistance than they could use. Contrary to the most basic ethical humanitarian standards, agencies from all sectors did not do everything in their power to tackle the ‘discrimination by default’ that leads to exclusion of Dalits.

In the first months of the year IDSN and DNN made the report and specific recommendations available to a cross section of UN agencies, bilateral agencies, the World Bank, the European Commission and other development actors internationally.

D. Interaction with EU institutions

On several occasions, IDSN teams met with MEPs, Commission officials (DG RELEX and EuropeAid), Council officials, and representatives of a number of member states’ missions in Brussels. Most interventions involved Dalit Solidarity Networks in Europe and Dalit leaders from South Asia. Briefings on developments, sharing of reports and fact sheets on caste discrimination in several South Asian countries as well as recommendations for action have been conveyed to the above-mentioned officials, the Presidencies in 2007, all member state missions in Brussels and Geneva, and Troika missions in New Delhi.

The report “Making Things Worse”, the CERD concluding observations on India and NGO submissions for the Universal Periodic Review specifically on caste discrimination have been shared with the Commissioner of External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Ferrero-Waldner, Commission officials and member state missions. In June, IDSN addressed its concerns to the DCI (Development Cooperation Instrument) Working Group of the Commission that the draft country strategy paper for Nepal 2007-2013 did not sufficiently address the continued severe caste discrimination against Nepal’s Dalit population; and later alerted committee members to the lack of references to the rights of communities affected by caste-based discrimination in the draft Regional Strategy Paper on South Asia.

documentation on caste discrimination and recommendations for its elimination, the European Union still lacks any meaningful inclusion on caste-based discrimination in its regional strategy and country strategies papers for caste affected countries.

IDSN interaction with MEPs resulted in, among other things, obtaining cross party MEP sponsorship for an IDSN photo exhibition on caste-based discrimination to be held in the European Parliament in 2008.

Members of Parliament have posed several questions to the Commission and the Council in pursuit of recommended actions for EU action on elimination of caste discrimination.

In August, a part time Brussels-based consultant was hired to enhance IDSN’s EU work. The contract was, however, terminated only after a few months, as the consultant was offered a position abroad. Arrangements for a replacement in 2008 have been made.

The IDSN EU working group met in Brussels in September for a full day exchange of information, training and planning session.

E. EU member state leaders visiting India

Several heads of European states have visited India in the course of the year. Few exposed a specific interest in understanding caste discrimination such as German

Chancellor Merkel. In her meeting with civil society groups for a discussion on India's caste system and minority rights, the Chancellor exposed a strong interest in the issue. The meeting was also attended by the German Minister for Education and Research.

V. The Private Sector Programme

In partnership with the Human Rights and Business Project (HRBP) of The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIMR), IDSN started in 2006 the development of the Dalit Discrimination Check. The purpose of this tool is to help companies operating in or sourcing from India and other caste-affected countries to avoid discrimination on the basis of caste. The Dalit Discrimination Check is based on the existing Human Rights Compliance Assessment (HRCA), a comprehensive online tool for companies to identify possible human rights violations arising from their operations with respect to international and national conventions and legislation⁸.

The Check was developed in 2006, however, the completion of the project was delayed due to severe barriers in engaging companies in the testing phase. Despite initial positive dialogue with CSR units in European companies, reluctance by the Indian subsidiaries in most cases prevented the company from participating in the testing. During 2006 and 2007 requests were made to 32 companies in Sweden, Germany, The United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Denmark, but in the end only three companies, Indiska, H&M and Heineken, completed the testing.

The ILO in Delhi is preparing a Dalit Resource Guide with references such as legislation, CSR resources and codes of conduct relevant for companies wishing to avoid discrimination against and exploitation of Dalits. The Resource Guide will be published in 2008 and will include description of the Dalit Discrimination Check, as well as mentioning of the Ambedkar Principles⁹.

Dalit Solidarity Networks, mainly in the United Kingdom,

⁸ The Dalit Discrimination Check is available online free of charge at www.humanrightsandbusiness.org

⁹ Employment Principles developed by the IDSN <http://www.idsn.org/Documents/pdf/AmbedkarPrincip.pdf>

Germany and the Netherlands, continue to engage companies in a dialogue to influence their awareness and policies for non-discrimination of Dalits. The DSN-UK's continuous dialogue with major banks which have a significant presence in the Indian market, resulted in an invitation to visit India to observe their activities in relation to caste discrimination and CSR.

VI. Networking, coordination and campaigning

A. Regional Research on caste-based discrimination

A regional research seminar was held in Kathmandu on 9-10 November 2007 as the final stage in a two year research project on caste-based discrimination in South Asia, which has involved university researchers and Dalit resource persons in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The regional research project hosted by the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS), New Delhi, was initiated in 2006 to generate new knowledge and documentation on caste-based discrimination in countries where research and documentation on the subject had been limited. The country studies bring new and ground breaking evidence on the situation of Dalits. It outlines the nature and intensity of the existing practices of caste-based untouchability and other forms of caste-based discrimination, and explores the historic background to prevalent discrimination. The studies include analyses of the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic conditions of Dalits and contain in most cases a series of recommendations for addressing caste discrimination at the national level. The two day regional seminar, which brought together the research teams for the second time, was attended representatives of UN agencies, ILO, and government bodies, as well as IDSN members and Dalit leaders and scholars.

The regional seminar had been preceded by national seminars in the respective countries, held in April and May, at which the initial findings of the research were presented and discussed. The in-country consultations have engaged a range of actors, who had not previously been offered a forum for discussion and exchange on caste discrimination. This encouraged new initiatives for mobilization and action. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, in particular, the seminars generated much media interest. As a partner to the

project, IDSN has liaised closely with IIDS and has been involved in the various processes. Some of IDSN's members and the coordinator participated in national workshops in Nepal and Sri Lanka, and a larger group of IDSN members and associates attended the regional seminar in Kathmandu. IDSN helped co-organise the seminar and sponsored international participation.

In the first round of Universal Periodic Reviews under the Human Rights Council (see also section III A 1) the research reports on Pakistan and Sri Lanka proved to be a highly valuable documentation and resource base for the preparation of joint NGO submissions on caste-based discrimination.

The final research reports will be made public in 2008 as full reports in English and summaries in local languages. The reports will be disseminated nationally by the Dalit platforms and IDSN will introduce the reports and their recommendations to international audiences.

B. Asian Dalit Rights Movement

A new regional alliance of Dalit Platforms was established in 2007 in the form of a Dalit movement network with primarily a regional level perspective. The ADRM has its roots in the South Asia Dalit Rights Movement formed in 2006. The new Asian Dalit Rights Movement (ADRM) involves national Dalit platforms from Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia as well as regional human rights organisations. Membership correlates largely with membership and association of IDSN. ADRM, which is in its initial constituting phase met, in Bangkok in November. The new movement envisions a casteless society, free from all forms of discrimination against Dalits and aims to promote and protect the human rights of Dalits through strengthening solidarity among Dalits, building alliances with human rights and social movements, engaging in collective action and influencing policies at national, regional and international levels. Among the planned core activities are capacity building, training as well as exchange between Dalit organisations.

C. National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights receives Norwegian Human Rights Award

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) was awarded the prestigious Rafto Human Rights Prize

2007 in a ceremony in Bergen, Norway on November 4, as an important recognition of NCDHR's struggle to end the discrimination and human rights violations against India's 167 million Dalits. With the selection of NCDHR for the 2007 award, the Rafto Foundation sent a clear message to the international community that it is time for action to bring an end one of the world's most serious human rights problems.

IDSN had nominated NCDHR for the prize and provided some assistance and support for the preparations for the 2007 Rafto Prize events. The Award ceremony was held at the national theatre of Bergen; other events included a RAFTO Symposium with the title "We are not Untouchable: The Dalit Struggle for Human Rights", and a Thorolf Rafto Memorial Symposium "Human rights, business ethics and economic development in China and India" co-organised with the Norwegian School of Economic and Business Administration. The Award events drew on international expertise, including researchers from India, the UK and the US and were attended by academicians, students, politicians and NGOs. The Award events were extensively covered by the local and national media with news coverage in television, radio interviews and feature articles.

The award was received by NCDHR leaders Vincent Manoharan, Paul Divakar, and Dr. Vimal Thorat. The award ceremony culminated in a torch light procession in Bergen with more than 300 participants.



This Dalit community is displaced by the floods in Bihar, India. NCDHR documented how Dalits were grossly discriminated in the distribution of emergency relief to victims of the July 2007 floods.



The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights was established in 1986, in memory of Professor Thorolf Rafto and his life long efforts to promote the rights of those oppressed in authoritarian regimes. Through the Rafto Prize, the Foundation seeks to support persecuted individuals or groups who struggle for democracy and human rights. The prize is meant to provide a platform and forum for their voices to be heard and recognised by the international community. www.rafto.no

D. Developments in caste-affected countries

The brief accounts below are summarized descriptions of activities carried out by IDSN members in caste-affected countries, and by Dalit groups and resource persons in Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is by no means an attempt to cover country situations extensively in terms of Dalit issues and activities. For studies and reports on country situations, including shadow reports to UN treaty bodies, please see www.idsn.org.

1. National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, India

NCDHR continued its national level activities for the promotion and protection of Dalit Rights. As part of its monitoring activities it carried out 280 fact finding mission of different atrocities cases with the involvement of 50 state level human rights defenders. Out of the 280 cases, 14 national level fact findings were done which included high profile cases. The monitoring unit documented 686 cases which were sent to 14 national level ministries and commissions. NCDHR published three Dalit Monitor reports with details of different forms of violence committed against Dalits.

Extract from Dalit Monitor: A Comprehensive Monitoring Report on Atrocities against Dalits, prepared by the NCDHR, January 2006 – September 2007

Violent crimes against Dalits – also called atrocities – continue to be a widespread element of caste discrimination against Dalits in India. NCDHR conducts fact finding missions and monitors the media in order to document the phenomenon. According to a report by the Indian Ministry of Welfare, two Dalits are assaulted every hour in India, three Dalit women are raped, two Dalits murdered and two Dalit houses burnt down every day. This is probably only the tip of the iceberg.

An incident on 1 March 2007 in the village of Salwan in the state of Hayana illustrates one of the types of crimes committed against Dalits. Following the murder of Mr. Mahipal, who belonged to a dominant caste, the community of the deceased retaliated against the entire Dalit community in an incidence of vigilantism. A mob of 5000 people, some of whom were named leaders of the community, ransacked Dalit houses and attacked villagers, including women and children. 20-25 Dalits were injured, some severely. NCDHR recommended that compensation is paid to victims and that the role of politicians and police in the attack is investigated.

In May, NCDHR organised an Indian People's Tribunal on Untouchability in New Delhi in association with Human Rights Law Network and 56 state and national level organisations. A jury of eminent persons heard 65 cases from victims of different kinds of untouchability and atrocities from 14 states of India. The tribunal was followed by



Dalit Women attending to their chores. Houses in this Dhaka slum are so small that daily life is lived in the streets, leaving little privacy.

a demand for a national campaign to eradicate untouchability and atrocity practices. It was presented to the President, the Prime Minister, concerned ministries, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the National Committee on Scheduled Castes (NCSC). Meetings with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes were also organised on the growing number of atrocities against Dalits and the serious lapses in the implementation of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act (SC/ST POA). Several consultations were organised with members of the National Human Rights Commission and more than 50 Dalit organisations.

A Public Interest Litigation was filed in the Supreme Court of India on the non-implementation of SC/ST POA Act 1989. NCDHR also filed five written petitions in various high courts demanding full implementation of the SC/ST POA Act, 1989 and Rules, 1995, in specific cases. Other cases were filed with magistrate and district courts in eight states.

NCDHR took up critical issues of economic development for Dalits, including inadequate use of funds of the Schedules Castes Sub-Component Plans (SCSP)¹⁰. Advocacy kits on Dalit economic rights with along with demands were delivered to 100 members of Parliament, mainly Dalit members. NCDHR circulated an Action Alert to more than 10,000 people and organised meetings with leaders of 15 political parties and members of the Planning Commission of India on irregularities in the implementation of SCSP. The concerns were also shared with several ministries.

¹⁰ Act annexed

¹¹ HYPERLINK "<http://www.ncdhr.org.in/latestinterventions/resolution-on-reclaiming-schedule-caste-sub-plan/>" <http://www.ncdhr.org.in/latestinterventions/resolution-on-reclaiming-schedule-caste-sub-plan/>

A Dalit budget response to the union budget and a book on "Reclaiming Scheduled Castes Sub Plan: Where is the Dalit Money?" prepared by the Dalit budgeting unit was released in a National Consultation on this matter.

Several state and national consultations on Dalit Budgeting as well as MDGs have been organised during this period. As part of the People's Budget Initiative, a national Consultation was organised in New Delhi on the Union Budget for 2008-2009 and NCDHR played a prominent role in this exercise. A Cheque Bounce Rally was organised in different parts of Delhi to create awareness about non-implementation of SCSP and it was followed by a day long sit in and submission of memorandum to the Government of India.

The All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch – Dalit Women Speak Out (AIDMAM), an initiative of NCDHR, was established as a common platform of Dalit women who are committed to challenge patriarchy, caste, oppressions, exploitation and marginalization of Dalit women in the family, community and the nation.

AIDMAM played a vital role in co-organising the Women's Tribunal against Poverty on 17 October 2007 in New Delhi. AIDMAM in association with Centre for Dalit Rights also organised a Public hearing on Atrocities & Torture of Dalit Women in Rajasthan. AIDMAM undertook follow up of 30 cases of violence against Dalit women in 7 states. The cases were also submitted to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

Monitoring of relief distribution in post disaster situations, e.g. the floods in Bihar led to creation of Dalit Watch as a joint initiative of NCDHR and several other organisations

in Bihar. Dalit Watch carried out a comprehensive survey in 2500 villages in 11 districts in Bihar. Facts related to prevailing discrimination and exclusion of Dalits were presented to the Government Coordination Committee, NGOs and other agencies working on flood relief in Bihar.

NCDHR provides a daily new service "Dalits in the News" which is circulated to approx 4000 subscribers, among others partners and associates, Dalit and civil rights organisations, human rights mechanisms at state, national and international level as well as Government Authorities. NCDHR further released a report on Scheduled Caste Children's Right to Education. More than 10.000 leaflets have been distributed covering several issues that NCDHR is engaged with as well as 1000 copies of the Hague Declaration on the Rights of Dalit Women.

NCDHR participated in several campaigns at national and state level, including Action 2007, Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, and the Right to Food Campaign.

In terms of international advocacy 2007 was a landmark year as joint initiatives with IDSN resulted in the European Parliament passing a resolution on the situation of Dalits in India. NCDHR prepared a joint report for UN CERD in association with 10 other organisations and made a forceful presentation in Geneva in February 2007 in association with Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and other members of IDSN. The result was the passing of significant Concluding Observations on caste discrimination by CERD (see also section III C 2). NCDHR further submitted a preliminary Report to pre-sessional Working Group of UN Committee on ESCR and a joint NGO Report for the UPR on India. NCDHR representatives also participated in the 1st Preparatory Committee Meeting for Durban Review Conference and in a research seminar on caste-based discrimination in South Asia.

Along with partners from India and other South Asian countries, NCDHR participated in the World Social Forum in Kenya in January. The delegation organised events on caste discrimination and participated in solidarity events on issues of discriminated groups in Africa.

NCDHR has decided to focus its future work on civil and political rights of Dalits; Dalit women rights (AIDMAM); economic rights of Dalits; and land rights through the

Formation of a National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movement. www.ncdhr.org.in

India Untouched – Stories of a People Apart

The documentary, "India Untouched – Stories of a People Apart" by Stalin K., won the Best Documentary Award in the 10th Mumbai International Film Festival in January 2008. The jury acclaimed "India Untouched - Stories of a People Apart for achieving the ideals of socially and politically committed documentary film making. The film unflinchingly uncovers the all pervasive, deeply rooted and still existing caste system in twenty first century India, with chilling evidence that it shows no sign of abating in generations to come".

2. Bangladesh Dalit Human Rights Organisation

BDHR organised several actions in support of Dalit communities in 2007. In February, the Government evicted inhabitants of The Mohammadpur Dalit Colony. BDHR protested against this action to government authorities, who eventually identified an area, Gabtali, for the resettlement of the community. Here the community was faced with a serious crisis of drinking water. On behalf of the community, BDHR demanded that Dhaka City Corporation Authorities solve the problem and in April the City Corporation made available appropriate sewerage system and water supplies. The Dalit Women Forum (DWF) organised in collaboration with Partnership of Women in Action (PaWA) a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unit (DRU) to protest slum eviction in Dhaka City Corporation in 19 February 2007.

Also in May, BDHR took action against a planned eviction of the Public Works Department (PWD) Dalit Colony at Agargoan. BDHR's intervention with the PWD authority and the National Committee on Rehabilitation of Urban Poor stopped the eviction. BDHR submitted a list of 400 needy Dalit families to the National Committee on Rehabilitation of Urban Poor for their consideration. In August, BDHR provided relief distribution and road repair for the Dalit flood victims with the support of

Nagorik Uddyog and Research Initiative Bangladesh (RIB) in August, 2007.

Over the course of the year, BDHR organised several seminars and training programmes, including a seminar on Housing Problem of Dalits in Dhaka City organised in collaboration with Nagorik Uddyog at the National Press Club. The speakers demanded solutions to the housing problems and a Dalit Unit in City Corporation and Public Works Department. On 6 September, a seminar on "The Status of Dalits in Bangladesh and Way Forward" was organised in cooperation with Nagorik Uddyog at National Press Club.

Child and adult education programmes were started by BDHR in three Dalit colonies in February and English teaching for SSC and HSC passed students were initiated in October. At a reception for SSC and HSC passed Dalit students on 7 September, speakers demanded quota in all colleges and universities for Dalit students. BDHR also organised a human rights training in collaboration with Youth Citizen's Rights Alliance 20-21 July.

BDHR participated in a regional seminar on caste-based discrimination in South Asia held in Kathmandu in November, a meeting of the Asian Dalits Rights Movement (ADRM) in Bangkok in December and in Peace Events organised by REDS at Karnataka, India.

BDHR is planning to facilitate the formation of a national level Dalit platform with Dalit organisations from across the country. In the initial stage BDHR has started consultations with respective organisations and aims to organise a national level workshop in early 2008.

It is the view of BDHR, that in 2007, the situation of Dalits in Bangladesh has become much more visible. Caste-based discrimination and poverty are emerging concerns also among international NGOs as well as bilateral and multilateral donors. In particular the housing problem of Dalits has been identified as a critical area and as a key issue of concern for relevant authorities. A proposal for a quota system or special allocations for Dalits is also emerging as an issue on the agenda.

A baseline survey on Dalit women was carried out, the report "The Situation of Dalits in Bangladesh" was pro-

duced in cooperation with IDSN and an article of the Housing Problem of Dalits in Dhaka was published in a periodical and widely disseminated.

It can be concluded that 2007 has brought confidence about the idea and process of forming a national Dalit platform in Bangladesh; the Dalit community in Bangladesh now know about Dalit movements elsewhere in the region, and international agencies and donors, especially European donors, have shown interest in Dalit Issue.

3. Dalit NGO Federation - Nepal

Dalit NGO Federation (DNF), established in 1996, is a member-based organisation of 300 Dalit NGOs in Nepal.. The main aim of DNF is to fight against untouchability, all forms of caste-based discrimination and poverty. It is a national forum for raising collective voices of the Dalit community to ensure their rights, dignity and opportunity through influencing policies, networking and alliance building. DNF strives to protect and promote member organisations and supports them to raise issues of the Dalit community at grassroots level.

In 2007 DNF was engaged in influencing policy making makers to ensure protection and promotion of Dalit rights through advocating for constitutional guarantees in the ongoing reform process. DNF has been able to reach out across 59 districts of Nepal with regional chapters in five development regions. Although the major political parties included the agenda of Dalits in their political manifestos, none of them have publicized a clear and concrete action plan. UNDP established a Constituent Assembly Support Unit (CASU), which has been providing support on issues and concerns of Dalits, Janjaties, Madhesis and women in cooperation with concerned organisations, incl. DNF. Throughout the year, DNF and its member organisations were involved in contributing to the establishment of Dalits rights in the constitutional assembly polls and securing Dalit rights and perspective in a new constitution of Nepal - a historical opportunity for change for the Dalits of Nepal.

DNF published booklets and leaflets on different issues and concerns of the Dalit community. Efforts made earlier by various political actors, development partners and donors had not sufficiently provided legitimacy and ownership of the Dalit agenda with the key stakeholders,

including Dalit sister organisations of political parties and Dalit rights related networks. In the present interim constitution of Nepal, several provisions have been made in favour of the Dalit community; yet the situation of Dalit community remains largely unchanged. In DNF's view, the state has not seriously responded to the rights of Dalits as fundamental human rights.

In March 2007, DNF organised a national level campaign to influence the government and political parties for the inclusion of the Dalit agenda in the constitution making process. DNF mobilized its regional chapters and member organisations to organise the campaign. Various interactions programs, meetings, workshops, demonstrations and mass gatherings were carried out by DNF all over the country. As a result many political party leaders, human rights leaders, civil society organisations, national and international organisations made commitments to include 'the Dalit agenda' in the new constitution.

DNF also contributed to collective efforts of developing the Dalit Rights Kathmandu charter (see annex 2). The charter contains a list of comprehensive demands from the Dalit



community in which they expect the Constitutional assembly to address in the new constitutional framework.

For several years Dalits have been claiming the right to proportional political representation, reservation provision in employment, access to resources, as well as pro-Dalit policies for inclusion in development processes. However, most of the Dalit claims are not still included by government nor taken into the programmes of political parties. Towards the end of the year, DNF presented a memorandum to the government with 14 recommendations.

The Dalit NGO Federation recommends to the Government to:

- Establish a federal democratic republic
- Ensure proportionate representation of Dalits at all policy making levels through the proportionate election system
- Ensure proportionate representation of the Dalit community constitutionally in central as well as federal structures
- Ensure 20 % reservation to the Dalit community in all employment sectors (government and private)
- Form the National Dalit Commission as constitutional body equipped with full authority
- Declare a Dalit Rights and Development Decade from 2007-2017
- Form an "Exclusive Land Commission" for equitable and judicious distribution of land to Dalits
- Formulate a Special Act against caste untouchability and discrimination
- Set up Special Courts to look into unsociability cases
- Of the 33% reservation quota allotted to women, allot 20% to Dalit women. Similarly, manage, at least, 33% reservation to Dalit women through the reservation allotted to Dalit community
- Make legal and constitutional provisions to ensuring a 20% representation to Dalit community at all levels of political parties
- Declare 21st March a public holiday to 21st March and name it "international day against all forms of racial and caste-based discrimination"
- Conduct special population census for reservation of Dalits by determining their demography, conditions and status
- Ensure the election of CA in given timeframe.

After the submission of the memorandum to the Government, DNF organised - over seven days - nationwide activities, including demonstrations, a media campaign, torch light demonstration, symbolic weapons demonstration, and further a refusal to carry out traditional occupations of Dalits for one day. The campaigns and various interventions are believed to have resulted in some governmental provisions. The government made a 45% reservation provision to Dalits, women, disabled, and indigenous groups in civil services through an amendment of the Civil Service Act. The state also made the provision of propositional representation in the constitutional assembly under mixed electoral system. Most of the political parties had accepted the inclusion of Dalits and included Dalit agendas in their policy strategies and manifestos and some made reservation policies for inclusion of Dalits within the structure of party. The interim constitution included several provisions for the rights of Dalits.

The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice of New York University and a research associate of IDSN worked with Dalit and human rights organisations, as well as UN and government bodies in Nepal to prepare for a comprehensive memorandum on the constitutional challenges in safeguarding the full spectrum of rights for Dalits. The report will be issued in April 2008.

At a strategic planning workshop in July, DNF decided to expand its member organisations to 500 by 2009 and 700 by 2011. It was also decided to focus on Dalit rights and representation in mainstream social, political and developmental processes, provision of legal aid to Dalit organisations and communities and to strengthen the position of Dalit women, Madhesi Dalits and the marginalized ones within the Dalit communities. In the course of the year, DNF strengthened its alliances with various associations and organisations, and build up new alliances with indigenous, women and land rights federations and trade unions.

DNF participated in a consultation on draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of discrimination based on work and descent held in Kathmandu and was involved in the regional research project on caste-based discrimination.

4. Pakistan

At a large consultation meeting held in Umerkot, Sindh in March, Dalit issues and the formation of a Pakistan network were discussed. The participants agreed to form a Dalit Solidarity Network and an ad hoc committee was set up to coordinate the network until a formal committee could be set up.

At the meeting representatives of Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), who have liaised with IDSN and its members on behalf of the Pakistan Dalit solidarity network (in formation), shared information about the Dalit struggle in other countries of Asia and international level activities. It was observed by the participants that Dalit organisations and groups in Pakistan tend to work individually, whereas they could all benefit from working together under the umbrella of a Pakistan Dalit network. The need for an office of a network was emphasized, and it was decided to send out funding proposals to potential funders as soon as the national research report on caste discrimination in Pakistan had been finalized. A working committee was formed for the purpose of preparing a framework and constitutional base for Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network.

More than hundred events marked the birthday of Dr BR Ambedkar on 14 April organised by different Dalit organisations throughout country including in Lahore, Karachi, Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas. This constituted the largest number of Dalit activists, media, politicians & NGOs activists till date participating in Ambedkar Day celebrations in Pakistan. The events got good coverage in Sindhi, Urdu and English newspapers.

Several new initiatives addressing the rights and livelihoods of Dalits came into being in 2006 and 2007: A Lahore based Dalit organisation, Hindu Balmik Sudhar Shah, has been established to struggle for equal human rights of the Hindu Balmik, a Dalit community subjected to social, political, cultural and religious discrimination. Tharparkar Meghwal Reform Council (Thar Murk) registered in 2007 to represent issues of the Meghwal community organised a series of lecture programs on social awareness and consciousness raising. After some years of inactivity, the Scheduled Caste Educational Association, formed originally in 1963-64, was revitalized. Meghwal Welfare Association organised multiple activities on Dalit

issues, including a literature conference and Dalit award ceremonies in Sindh. An organisation, DAMAN, formed by a group of people from the Kolhi 'sub-caste', organised their first dialogue meeting on Religious Harmony in the district of Tharparkar. All Kolhi Welfare Association Sindh (AKAS) arranged a workshop on to improve the condition of "scheduled castes" in collaboration of SCOPE.

Pakistan Research Institute for Dalit Emancipation (PRIDE), an initiative by senior Dalit activist, Malji Rathore, and others, was set up to organise educational and awareness activities for Dalit people. A monthly and a quarterly Dalit news magazine, namely Dalit Awaz and Dalit Adib, went into print in 2007. A book titled "Drawarn ji Dard Katha" was published on the painful stories of indigenous people, including Dalits.

Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) conducted research on bonded labour focusing particularly on the scheduled caste communities in Umerkot district. Another study on caste-based discrimination in Pakistan was carried out by TRDP and PILER in collaboration with IIDS and IDSN.

A workshop organised by PILER and TRDP was held in Karachi in June to discuss issues concerning caste-based discrimination including the initial findings of the above mentioned research. The participants further considered strategies for affirmative action for Dalits and debated proposed initiatives such as a Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network.

Dr Sono Khangharani, TRDP, participated in Asia Dalit Rights Movement meeting held in Bangkok in November 2007. Zulfiqar Shah, Pakistan Labour Institute, and Pirbhu Satyani, TRDP, participated in a regional research seminar on caste based discrimination held in Kathmandu November 2007.

5. Human Development Organisation - Sri Lanka

The Human Development Organisation (HDO), among the few major NGOs in Sri Lanka focusing on the situation on Dalits in Sri Lanka, continued its activities to mobilize and organise communities discriminated against on the basis of caste, mainly sanitary workers and plantation workers.

HDO initiated a dialogue with municipal and urban councils on issues related to sanitary workers and succeeded in establishing cooperation with urban councils to get welfare facilities for the workers. Further "Right to education and health awareness programs" were organised with the sanitary and plantation workers. Human rights programmes were conducted among women and youths of affected communities and a dialog was initiated among local level political parties, teachers and youths on caste-based discrimination.

HDO involved itself in land issues, incl. forced expulsion of sanitary workers from their settlements in the name of development, wage problems for workers related to privatization of plantations and resettlement and development for Panchammar caste groups from IDP camps.

HDO distributed awareness raising articles among affected communities and produced a photo album on caste affected communities and a video documentary on children in the plantations.

HDO contributed to the regional research project on caste discrimination through cooperation with the Sociology Department of University of Peradeniya, and co-organised a national consultation with the participation of IIDS, IDSN, academics, NGOs, trade unions and leaders from sanitary workers' communities in April. HDO also participated in the Regional Seminar on Caste Based Discrimination in South Asia held in Kathmandu, Nepal, November 2007.

HDO networked and exchanged experiences with Indian Dalits Movements and Malaysian Dalits Groups and as one of the initiators of the Asia Dalits Rights Movement (ADRM) played an active role in developing the constitutional frame for ADRM.

HDO was further involved in the preparation of a joint NGO submission to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights in preparation for the Universal Periodic review of Sri Lanka in 2008

E. Dalit Solidarity Networks

In addition to the national level work described below the Dalit Solidarity networks contributed their expertise to IDSN working groups and took part in lobby interventions and other IDSN activities.

1. Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN-UK)

DSN-UK worked extensively in 2007 to raise awareness of caste-based discrimination from a national perspective, to lobby the UK Parliament and to promote awareness of the role of the private sector in relation to caste-based discrimination.

DSN-UK continued to lobby the UK government, specifically through the Departments of Trade and Industry, International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth office. A number of questions have been raised in Houses of Parliament about caste. In addition, a debate was held in Parliament in May 2007 where an Early Day Motion 1604 from 5 June 2007 called 'Violence with impunity against Dalits in India' received a lot of cross-party support.

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission held a hearing in Parliament in March 2007 on the plight of the Dalits or "untouchables" in India, where extensive accounts were heard of bonded labour, discrimination, rape, sexual slavery, beatings and killings of India's Dalits and "backward castes". This was followed in May 2007 by a debate on India's caste system, with speakers from all parties contributing. The Commission has now included a chapter on caste-based discrimination in India in their report, 'New faces of apartheid: ethnic and caste-based discrimination in India'.

Over the year, DSN-UK strengthened its relationship with the Department for International Development (DFID). DSN-UK urged DFID to begin undertaking monitoring of its own employees and sought a recall meeting of the October 2004 Seminar. This was agreed to and in June 2007, DFID in partnership with the Dalit Solidarity Network UK hosted a seminar on Caste, Social Exclusion and Development in South Asia.

The report 'No Escape: Caste Discrimination in the UK' from 2006 was the corner stone of the network's submission to the Equalities Review and Discrimination Law Review. It highlighted the need for amending discrimination law in the UK to include 'discrimination on the grounds of caste' as a new strand in the UK Equalities Act. A review submitted in February 2007 by a working group of DSN members is made available on the website www.dsnuk.org

The network's Private Sector Group has continued to dialogue with major UK companies investing in India and have had meetings with HSBC, Barclays, and Standard Chartered Banks. In January 2007 a research report, which is expected to be launched in spring 2008, was commissioned on around 8-10 UK companies and the level of their involvement in India. DSN-UK has also continued to promote the Ambedkar Principles of Employment and Social Exclusion published in 2006.

AMICUS, the largest manufacturing union in the UK now called UNITE, has been a growing supporter of DSN-UK. In the process of designing and developing a Caste Discrimination Training Programme, the network is hoping to hold a joint awareness raising event for UNITE staff. In December 2006 DSN-UK joined the Ethical Training Initiative (ETI), which gives the network the opportunity to meet and engage with their member companies such as Boots, Next and Monsoon. Both the Ambedkar principles and the HRCA Caste Discrimination tool are available to download from the ETI website. DSN-UK's Director Meena Varma has been asked to help design a training Programme on Harassment and Discrimination helping to inform DSN's Caste Discrimination training programme.

DSN-UK member David Haslam was invited by HSBC to India in October 2007 based on years of dialogue with international banks with branches in India, including HSBC, Standard Chartered, Barclays, Lloyds, Shell and ICI. A full report from the visit called 'Eyes Wide Shut?' is available on DSN-UK's website. DSN-UK Director Meena Varma was invited by DFID to attend their PACS (Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme) conference following this visit, where she addressed a session at the National Conference on Social exclusion and spoke at a NACDOR national conference with an audience of about 3000 Dalit communities and organisations.

There has been much effort made to raise the issue of caste discrimination and the plight of Dalits in the UK and world media. Among other things, DSNUK was the first port of call for information from Channel 4's Unreported World series, shown on 21 September 2007.





2. Dalit Network Netherlands

One of the major events initiated by the Dalit Network Netherlands (DNN) in 2007 was the publication of the report "Making Things Worse – How caste blindness in post-tsunami disaster recovery has exacerbated vulnerability and exclusion" commissioned by DNN. The report was sent to around 30 international donors and other agencies in association with IDSN as the report made specific recommendations to various actors in the emergency relief phase. The report was also referred to in the Conclusions Observations made by CERD when India was examined in February 2007.

In November 2007 DNN wrote a letter to the Dutch Parliament on the human rights situation of Dalits referring to a number of new reports, including "Making Things Worse." The letter was followed by a request to the Parliament urging the Dutch government to develop a comprehensive policy on caste discrimination in the fields of human rights, development co-operation and corporate accountability. Moreover, a DNN member wrote letters to the Queen and various Ministers, urging for a strong Dutch human rights policy towards India, including on the fight against caste discrimination. An elaborate reply was received, and the reply mentioned a meeting on the India policy beginning of 2008. Furthermore, the new human rights strategy specifically mentions Dalits in one paragraph and the focus in support of the Millennium Development Goals are especially on three caste-affected countries: Yemen, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The issue of Dalit women's rights was emphasised in DNN's work in 2007 as a result of previous efforts to promote this particular human rights concern by the network, including participation of a newly established Dalit

Women Working Group. Together with Dalit women organisations from India, a DNN member submitted individual cases of violence against Dalit women to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. DNN members also had a number of meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with guests from Indian Dalit organisations, in which there was a strong focus on the position of Dalit women. Other contributions included the publication of a report on the conference on human rights and dignity of Dalit women in December 2006 together with the City Council of The Hague. A DNN member contacted representatives of the Dutch trade unions to request the selection of India as a focus country at the International Labour Conference 2007 concerning its compliance with Convention 111 on Discrimination. India was indeed selected and the Committee on the Application of Standards commented on the need for India to address caste-based discrimination in employment. (See also section III E 1)

The network also worked to raise awareness and engaged the media in informing the Dutch public about the issue. The network made preparations for the production of a DVD, a brochure and a leaflet. The issue of caste discrimination was raised during several TV and radio interviews linked to the Dutch state visit to India. In discussions and in the media it has become more common to refer to the caste system and caste discrimination mainly in India. Presentations and lectures were made for different groups of students, including some going on visits to India. In several articles published on child labour in stone quarries and cotton fields it was brought to the attention that these children are mostly Dalit. Also the 70 companies that participated in a trade mission to India have been



Gore Sunar, a Nepalese Dalit aged 55, works as a bonded labourer in the fields of his landlord. He is not sure when his debt is paid off and will probably pass it on to his nephew.

informed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs about caste discrimination and similarly the companies received a letter from Amnesty International on the issue. DNN contributed to a publication (June 2007) by Amnesty International Netherlands on discrimination ('Non-discrimination and equality') which also contains a case study on caste discrimination. In that publication the Ambedkar Principles and Caste Discrimination Check are highlighted.

3. Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark

In 2007 the Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark (DSN-DK) held meetings with Foreign Affairs Committee representatives of the three largest parties with the purpose of raising awareness generally, and specifically to seek support for a hearing in Parliament on caste discrimination. The decision to hold the hearing was made by the FA Committee; however, as an election was called the 'new' Committee had to reaffirm the decision, which was only done in January 2008.

Written input in the form of a non-paper was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with a consultative process with Danish business and civil society

on the EU-India negotiations on a Free-Trade agreement. Written input was also given on the Danish Government's new Asia strategy highlighting the need to focus on caste discrimination in all areas, including trade, development and conflict assessments. A request was furthermore made for the active support from the Danish Government to ensure adequate representation of Dalits in the constitutional process in Nepal.

DSN-DK has lobbied the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support and participate in the development of guidelines on caste discrimination by the EU Commission. The Ministry officials confirmed their willingness to be part of the project. DSN-DK maintained a constructive dialogue with officials in the Human Rights and the Asia sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the media, efforts continued to raise awareness about caste discrimination nationally. The Danish National Radio made three features on Dalits in India, and media persons from the largest TV and print media in Denmark were briefed by DSN-DK as preparation for a trip to India. One newspaper printed a comment from DSN-DK on the

adoption of the EP resolution in December 2006. The monthly Max Havelaar/Fair Trade magazine, which is distributed in 100.000 copies, featured an article on caste discrimination in its July issue, which focused on India, and DSN-DK provided input to this article.

After contacts with DSN-DK, the film festival Copenhagen Dox accepted India Untouched into its programme, and it was shown twice during the festival week, which unfortunately clashed with the elections for Parliament. In cooperation with other groups, DSN-DK participated in a panel discussion on various forms of discrimination at the Danish Social Forum. O3V (Information Centre on the Third World) launched an education package on India, one of three elements concerns the caste system. Raj Bhushan Roy from NCDHR was in Denmark to promote the package and visited a number of schools and teacher training colleges.

4. Dalit Solidarity in Germany (DSiD)

The main activity for the platform in the first half of the year was the participation at the large church-convention ("Kirchentag 2007") in June 2007. The basic idea was to give visitors a chance to feel what discrimination of Dalits means, particularly in the villages, through a role-play where visitors were "marked" as Dalits or non-Dalits. This caused a lot of emotional disturbance with the visitors and gave innumerable chances for long discussions on the seriousness of the ongoing caste discrimination in South-Asia. Another important event was the traditional India-seminar in Bad Boll towards end of September with the topic: "Himalayan of Duties – the Indian Religions and the Human Rights". For this event, speakers deliberated on the universality of human rights, their relativity and the role of religion in this. The panel debate were published in a small booklet, as there is more and more demand for written material in Germany on the Dalit situation.

Due to the several interventions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the last few years, the topic has gained some momentum in German politics. In October, the network met with the human rights envoy of the German Government in preparation of a visit by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Mumbai in November. During the Chancellor's visit, she had a personal meeting with two Dalit representatives, Manjula Pradeep and Sami, who found the Chancellor to be very

interested to learn about the issue. In the preparation meeting, the network raised the CERD Concluding Observations from the review of India. As a result, the issue has been taken up by officers in the ministries on a routine basis. However, a more direct influence on the concrete decision making process, particularly regarding the bi- and multi-lateral development aid, is still not visible.

In the year 2007 the future and in fact very existence of the platform was at the centre of the platform's attention, including the continuation of 2006 activities. After a longer process, new office space was taken in use, and contacts and membership of the network were increased to 107 members. The co-ordinator of the platform actively contributed to a paper as a contribution to the growing criticism towards development aid to countries like China, India and Brazil, which are considered to have reached the take-off point to become equal players and competitors in world trade.

For the awareness and public relation work, a TV programme on the educative channels on the struggle of Dalit in Chennai was shown in April and May. The secretariat also built contacts for a radio journalist from Bavaria, who wanted to make a report on Gandhi's heritage in present India. The platform released three newsletters, which are mostly read by social scientists, journalists and staff of development and human rights organisations.

5. Dalit Solidarity Network - Sweden

Throughout the year the Dalit Solidarity Network Sweden (DSN-S) experienced that more and more people started to show an interest in the Dalit question, not least stu-



dents, as an impact of its network activities. In this way knowledge is reaching more people in Sweden, although reaching out to the general public with a strong message is still very difficult. Media occasionally took up the Dalit question: An interview was conducted with Ruth Manorama during the ceremony following the Right Livelihood Award 2006; Swedish TV showed a Danish documentary on Dalits; and PK Mahanandia, a Dalit residing in Sweden, held public meetings. During the year the DSN-S chairperson published two articles in the news magazine South Asia; one about the World Social Forum in Kenya and one about democracy and local governance. Meetings with ministerial officials and politicians in 2007 were positive because they showed genuine interest and were receptive to what the network brought forward. But when pressured the politicians gave evasive answers. After the CERD examination of India in February 2007, the network sent a letter to the Ambassador of India in Sweden and the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighting a number of international developments. Despite requests for a meeting, no invitation was extended. A follow up meeting was held in July with officials at the Ministry, Dept. for Asia.

A public manifestation was held in Stockholm on 14th April 2007 as a follow-up to a manifestation which took place on 1 December 2006 primarily highlighting the incident in the Khairlanji village in Maharashtra in September 2006 with the participation of members of the network and university students. Moreover, students from the university and secondary high school contacted the network to seek information on caste and Dalits in connection to visits to India and school papers.

A DSN-S representative participated in the World Social Forum (WSF) in Kenya, January 2007, together with delegates from the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) and National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), India. DSN-S also participated in a peace event organised by the Rural Education for Development Society in India in October 2007.

Two Dalit leaders, Aloysius Irudajam and Ruth Manorama were in Stockholm in November to participate in the annual Human Rights Forum, which addresses many different human rights issues around the world. Ruth Manorama was one of the key speakers and Aloysius held a seminar on Dalit women with reference to the 2006

study report Dalit Women Speak Out. During their visit a group discussed a possible future collaboration on a research project on Dalits within the framework of a research programme with Uppsala University.

6. Dalit Solidarity Network – Belgium (SDB)

The Dalit Solidarity Network - Belgium (SDB), established in 2006, has continued its capacity building and strengthening of the network in 2007. The network remains in a building up phase before engaging in addressing politicians at the Belgian and European level. In order to prepare lobbying and advocacy efforts, SDB has prepared, with the valuable support of an intern in communication and the presence of Dr Umakant at the secretariat, a list of potential Belgian politicians, documentation of Dalit issues in South Asia as well as identified possible areas of intervention for the SDB at European and UN level. Direct activities have however not yet taken place due to the long absence of a Belgian government after the June 2007 national elections.

Besides the preparatory activities for political lobbying, the main focus of SDB in 2007 was centred around the launch of a regular e-bulletin in French, called "Flash Dalit". The first two issues focused on the situation of Dalit women in South Asia and the discrimination of Dalits after natural disasters. The purpose of this e-bulletin is to strengthen and broaden the base of the Belgian network.

SDB has also deepened the understanding of the Dalit issue among its members and supporters by organising information exchange after the visits of several members to Dalit groups in Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Orissa in India. Last but not least, the Belgian group has strengthened its links with IDSN, hosting a meeting in Brussels and assisting with establishing contacts with national and European politicians.

7. Emerging Dalit Solidarity Network in Norway

The Rafto Foundation awarded the 2007 Rafto Prize to the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights and organised a series of events in Bergen as well as meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and parliamentarians in Oslo (see also section on the Award). Shortly after the Rafto Award ceremony in November 2007, the Rafto Foundation initiated efforts to establish a Norwegian Dalit Solidarity Network. Both academics and others have

shown interest in such a network. The Rafto Foundation has chosen the Dalit issue as one of the main issues they wish to work with in the coming years. The efforts to consolidate a solidarity network are continuing.

VII. Organisation, administration and finance

A. Council meeting

The annual IDSN Council meeting was held in Geneva in March on the occasion of the CERD review of India. The main topics of the meeting referred to the findings of an internal review of IDSN and included discussions on future governing structure, membership of IDSN, expectations and the role of members, scope of IDSN work and nature of the organisation. One of the decisions made was that IDSN should remain a solidarity body rather than turning itself into a representative body, which had been proposed by some members.

Three new working groups were established at the meeting; an Ad Hoc Constitutional Working group on Nepal led by the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice; a Dalit Women Working Group facilitated initially by COR-DAID and likewise an ad hoc group on IDSN future Governance and Structure.

B. Executive Group

As from March 2007 the executive group members are: Gerard Oonk (IDSN Co-Convenor and Coordinator of DNN)

Vincent Manoharan (IDSN Co-convenor and General Secretary of NCDHR)

Peter Prove (Lutheran World Federation)

Smita Narula (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice)

Rikke Nöhrind (IDSN Coordinator – ex-officio member)

Two executive group meetings were held during the year; in March (Geneva) and in November (Bergen).

C. Review

In 2006-2007, IDSN went through an internal review process focussing on the perceptions of IDSN members and other stakeholders. The final review report "Assessing the

Perceptions: A mapping exercise of strategic, operational and institutional issues concerning the future of IDSN" pointed to the extraordinary achievement of the network in its few years of existence and sketched out critical decisions and opportunities for IDSN in the years ahead. Some issues were dealt with at the aforementioned Council meeting, others taken into working groups and yet another set of recommendations were taken forward by the secretariat.

D. Communication

One of the review recommendations was to enhance the flow of communication, provide and disseminate information that is relevant, high quality and appropriate to the needs of different internal as well as external recipients. To that end a framework for a communication strategy was developed in the second half of 2007.

The secretariat has worked on identifying "best means" of communication in the network and evaluating the usefulness of practices previously used. The assessment has informed the communication strategy which pertains to internal and external communication, production of high quality publications; provision of regular email up-dates to members and subscribers, and media strategy. Work on a new website with relevant, adequate and up-to-date functions began and the launch is expected in 2008.

E. Media and website

Monitoring of media coverage (through Google service) on caste discrimination and Dalit issues, incidences of violence and politics reservation in education and employment especially in India indicated also this year an increased volume of both net based and printed media articles. Several new documentaries on caste discrimination were initiated in 2007 by film production companies of different European countries, sometimes supported by or in cooperation with Dalit Solidarity Networks.

The average number of visits on the IDSN website amounted to 2200 per month in 2007, an increase from 1700 in 2006 and 1500 in 2005. The Secretariat as well as members received many requests from the media for background information, contacts in caste-affected countries and comments. The introductory film on caste discrimination in India "I'm Dalit - how are you" available at www.idsn.org and other blogs has now been viewed by 45.000 people at "Youtube" alone.

F. Photo documentation

A renowned Danish photographer, Jakob Carlsen, was hired by IDSN to travel to various locations in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan to take photos illustrating Dalit lives and various forms of discrimination. The trips were organised in cooperation with IDSN members and associates; National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) in India, Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) in Nepal, Bangladesh Dalit Human Rights in Bangladesh, Tardeep Rural Development Organisation (TRDP) and Pakistan Institute of Labour Research (PILER) in Pakistan. The photos will be used for a photo exhibition on caste discrimination in the European Parliament to be held in June 2008. Complementary photos shall be used for upgrading IDSN photo archive and a series shall be made available to IDSN members, associates and members of the public.

G. Secretariat

The expected addition of a communication officer to the secretariat in mid 2007 failed; the person who was offered the job had requested a considerable delay in date of assuming the assignment, and then later in the year decided to take another job. A new recruitment process was initiated, and with commencement in March 2008, Kirsten Sorensen, has been employed as Communications Officer.

A part time Brussels based consultant hired in June to support IDSN's EU work also had to leave for a post abroad after only a few months engagement with IDSN. A new Brussels consultant was identified and started of 1 January 2008.

IDSN further decided to engage more resources for its UN programme, preferably through a part-time, co-financing arrangement with one of IDSN's associates in Geneva to be effectuated in 2008.

H. Application for Consultative Status with ECOSOC

In June IDSN applied for consultative status with ECOSOC. Whilst there are no outstanding technical and procedural matters attached to the application, which was scheduled to be considered by the UN NGO Committee in January 2008, one member state, namely India, has repeatedly asked questions to the IDSN application, causing delay in

the consideration of the application by the Committee. In spite of detailed replies delivered promptly, the Committee is yet to consider the application.

I. Finances and fundraising

In 2007, the budget was almost fully expended. In the course of the year, budget revisions were made in relation to foreseen programme activities that did not take place, mainly within the UN Programme, where processes of the UN reform did not give room for anticipated interventions in relation to the adoption of the Principles and Guidelines on the elimination of discrimination based on work and descent.

A 2008-2010 programme proposal was developed and submitted to donors, and in the latter part of the year IDSN entered into funding contracts which cover the main budget for the 2008-2010 core programmes. The continued interest and support from the core group of funders are invaluable for the functions and activities of the network and a great moral support to everyone engaged in the struggle for Dalit rights.

J. Perspectives for 2007-2009

The expansion of network members from the South Asia region over the last few years have increased the number of interventions at the UN level, which is expected to increase even further in the coming years.

The number of Dalits, whose representation are facilitated and funded through IDSN for its various lobby interventions, seminars and consultations, is also steadily increasing. It is expected that Dalit Women representation in IDSN events will also increase in the coming years.

Further funding through diversified sources will be needed in order to get full coverage for programmes in 2009-2010 with the expected, increased participation in events, proposed additions of consultancy services and campaigning as well as initial support to establishing an IDSN wing in Washington.

The IDSN network is growing, and so are opportunities for expanding and enhancing existing programmes and for taking up new activities. A careful balance must be maintained in order also to make space for a natural professionalisation of IDSN's work and services.

Annex 1
Audited financial statements
2007

Financial statements 2007
International Dalit Solidarity Network

Profit and loss	2007 DKK	2007 EURO	2006 DKK
Opening balance	1.422.037,35	112.242,03	837.428,81
Income			
DanChurchAid	250.000,00	33.525,55	400.000,00
DanChurchAid (received for DSN-DK)	150.000,00	20.115,33	
Danida		0,00	750.000,00
Danida PPP/HRCA project		0,00	487.456,00
CCFD	149.024,00	19.984,44	148.920,00
ICCO	371.570,00	49.828,35	372.180,00
Cordaid	372.268,00	49.921,95	372.530,00
Cordaid towards review process	66.276,52	8.887,83	74.506,00
Christian Aid (received for DSN-UK)	82.627,50	11.080,53	108.985,00
Interest	6.877,49	922,29	6.948,98
Total	1.448.643,51	194.266,26	2.721.525,98
Expenditure	2.416.460,52	324.052,64	2.136.917,44
Balance 2007	454.220,34	60.911,94	1.422.037,35

Balance statement	2007 DKK	2007 EURO	2006 DKK
Assets			
Cash at bank at 31.12 *	534.980,91	71.742,11	1.560.884,08
Master card deposit	30.918,47	4.146,23	30.494,68
Petty cash	15.747,39	2.111,76	7.034,07
Outstanding accounts	5.892,72	790,23	1.223,62
	587.539,49	78.790,33	1.599.636,45
Liabilities			
Balance Master Card account	-2.009,13	-269,43	-24.956,90
Compulsory holiday payment fund	-125.442,77	-16.822,15	-93.657,14
Outstanding accounts	-5867,25	790,23	-58.985,06
	-133.319,15	-17.878,39	-177.599,10
Balance carried forward	454.220,34	60.911,94	1.422.037,35
The financial statements are presented in Danish kroner. For reasons of comparison, amounts in Euro are also presented, using a fixed exchange rate as of 31-12-2007: Hence, som discrepancies may appear compared to actual amounts received in Euro.			7,457
* Cash at bank include Danida OPP earmarked project grant	234.170,60		

IDSN expenditure 2007

	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure
	DKK	DKK	EUR	EUR
	2007	2007	2007	2007
Networking and coordination				
General staff expenses				
Staff training	35.000		4.704	0
Insurance	4.000	5.281	538	710
Other staff expenses	34.000	15.081	4.570	2.027
Holiday allowance	25.000	40.860	3.360	0
Communications specialist		7.092	0	953
Programme assistant	150.000	107.036	20.161	14.387
Subtotal	248.000	175.351	33.333	18.077
Office costs				
Rent	135.000	136.697	18.145	18.373
Office supplies	10.000	7.355	1.344	989
Postage and freight	2.000	617	269	83
Hospitality expenses	1.500	3.757	202	505
Communication	15.000	14.052	2.016	1.889
Materials/memberships	1.000	2.399	134	322
Equipment	12.000	12.695	1.613	1.706
Audit	20.000	16.250	2.688	2.184
Miscellaneous			0	0
Subtotal	0	196.500	26.411	26.051
IT				
Internet/web	5.000	4.070	672	547
Consultancy/tech. Assistance	50.000		6.720	0
Subtotal	0	55.000	7.392	547
Publicity & Publications	100.000	49.435	13.441	6.644
Bank	14.000	10.309	1.882	1.386
Travelling	15.000	20.736	2.016	2.787
Research seminar in Kathmandu	60.000	82.205	8.065	11.049
Executive group meetings				
Travel	8.000	2.919	1.075	392
Venue/lodging	2.000	2.791	269	375
Council meetings				
Travel	50.000	41.063	6.720	5.519
Venue/lodging	60.000	40.225	8.065	5.407
Subtotal	120.000	86.997,82	16.129	11.693
Management and administration				
Co-ordinator (20%)	104.982	127.322	14.110	17.113
Programme Officer (25%)	101.740	106.620	13.675	14.331
Subtotal	206.722	233.943	27.785	31.444
Total Networking and Co-ordination	1.015.222	856.867	136.455	109.678

	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure
UN Programme	DKK	DKK	EUR	EUR
	2007	2007	2007	2007
Subcommission on Human Rights				
Support to Special Rapporteurs				
Operationalisation of P&P	50.000		6.720	0
Informal consultation				0
International travel	80.000	67.541	10.753	9.078
Accommodation	15.000	12.414	2.016	1.669
Food/consumption	15.000	3.144	2.016	423
				0
Subtotal	160.000	83.099	21.505	11.169
Interventions at SC sessions				
Travel	15.000		2.016	0
affected country reps.				
Secretariat	4.000		538	0
Food/consumption	3.000		403	0
Accommodation	8.000		1.075	0
Subtotal	30.000	0	4.032	0
Subtotal Subcomm. on HR	190.000	83.099	25.538	11.169
UN Human Rights Council				
Travel	15.000		2.016	0
affected country reps				
Secretariat	4.000		538	0
Food	3.000		403	0
Accommodation	8.000		1.075	0
Subtotal	30.000	0	4.032	0
ECOSOC application				
CERD				0
Travel	64.000	54.575	8.602	7.335
affected country reps				
Secretariat	6.000	17.699	806	2.379
Food	10.000	14.533	1.344	1.953
Accommodation	20.000	23.204	2.688	3.119
Subtotal	100.000	110.011	13.441	14.786
Research for UN interventions	25.000		3.360	0
Geneva consultant			0	0
Management and administration				
Co-ordinator (30%)	157.475	190.984	21.166	25.670
Programme Officer (15%)	101.740	63.972	13.675	8.598
Subtotal	259.215	254.956	34.841	34.268
Total UN Programme	604.215	448.067	81.212	60.224

	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure
	DKK	DKK	EUR	EUR
EU Programme	2007	2007	2007	2007
Lobby interventions				
Travel	15.000	6.994	2.016	940
	6.000	23.257	806	3.126
Food	10.000	8.528	1.344	1.146
Accommodation	13.000	16.201	1.747	2.178
Subtotal	44.000	54.979	5.914	7.390
EU Parliament exhibition 2008	200.000	166.461	26.882	22.374
Brussels consultant	25.000	56.032	3.360	7.531
Management and administration				
Co-ordinator (25%)	104.982	159.153	14.110	21.392
Programme Officer (20%)	101.740	85.296	13.675	11.465
Subtotal	206.722	244.449	27.785	32.856
Total EU Programme	475.722	521.921	63.941	70.151

	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure
	DKK	DKK	EUR	EUR
Private sector programme	2007	2007	2007	2007
Seminars/training	10.000	13.811	1.344	1.856
Publications	40.000		5.376	0
Subtotal	50.000	13.811	6.720	1.856
Management and administration				
Co-ordinator (15%)	78.737	95.492	10.583	12.835
Programme Officer (20%)	40.696	85.296	5.470	11.465
Subtotal	119.433	180.788	16.053	24.299
Total Private Sector	169.433	194.599	22.773	26.156

Dalit Discrimination Check (funded by Danida)				
Consultancy		63.503		
Travel		4.035		
Total DDC project		67.538		

	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure
	DKK	DKK	EUR	EUR
Review	2007	2007	2007	2007
OD consultants		76.331		10.260
Interaction with community platforms		16.830		2.262
Travel to solidarity platforms		1.682		226
Total Review		94.843		12.748

Chr. Aid funds transferred to DSN-UK		82.628		
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	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure
	DKK	DKK	EUR	EUR
Summary budget	2007	2007	2007	2007
Networking and coordination	1.015.222	856.867	136.455	109.678
UN Programme	604.215	448.067	81.212	60.224
EU programme	475.722	521.921	63.941	70.151
Private sector	169.433	194.599	22.773	26.156
Dalit Discrimination check project		67.538		
Review		94.843		12.748
Chr. Aid funds to DSN-UK		82.628		
DCA funds to DSN-DK		150.000		
Total programmes	2.264.591,82	2.416.462,45	304.381	278.956,50

Annex 2

Dalit Rights Kathmandu Charter 2007



Dalit Rights Kathmandu Charter 2007

Preamble:

Recognizing the fact that the state system based on feudal Hindu caste system that has marginalized the Dalit community in the political, economic, social, cultural, educational and other spheres of national life,

Respecting the sacrifice made by the Dalit community with the objective of ending untouchability prevalent in Nepali society and create equality in society in (each of) the revolutions and popular movements of country in 1950, 1961, 1971, 1985, 1990 and the 19-day historic movement in 2007,

Seriously considering the failure to implement the provisions of human rights in favour of the Dalits as outlined in UN Charter, Human Rights Worldwide Declaration 1948, Covenant of Civil and Political Rights 1966, Covenant on Social, Cultural and Economic Rights 1966, International Convention on the Abolition of all kinds of Racial Discrimination 1965, Treaty on the Abolition of all Kinds of Discriminations Against Women 1979, Convention on Child Rights 1989, International Humane Laws 1949, Convention on Slavery 1926, and Convention Against Torture and the UN Proposition on Violence Against Women 1925, along with continued occurrences of incidents of racial discrimination and untouchability,

Realizing the political change in the country and in the context of managing the achievements such as the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990, the public declaration of the House of Representatives 2001, all understandings and agreements including the 12-point Comprehensive Peace Accord, the declaration of abolition of untouchability by the reinstated House of Representatives in June 2006, and the adoption of the principle of proportional inclusiveness by the Interim Constitution 2007,

(And) To end prevalent racial discrimination and untouchability and in the campaign of ensuring proportional representation of the Dalit community on the basis of their population at all levels and structures of the State and providing them with additional compensation, we, the (nearly) 300 Dalit participants from 75 districts of the country, would like to declare this Kathmandu Charter 2007 on the basis of the analysis of the decisions reached in the regional conferences held in Dadeldhura of far-west, Dang of mid-west, Pokhara of western region, Birgunj of central region and Dharan of eastern region, and in accordance with the decisions of the three-day national conference (17-19 December 2007) held at Godavari of Lalitpur District, and urge the State to include the endorsed recommendations in the process of (new) constitution making and restructuring of the state.

Restructuring of state and political issues:

1. The State should be restructured as an inclusive federal democratic republic.
2. Constitutional and legal provisions should be made for an election system that will ensure proportional representation of the Dalits, Dalit women, Madhesi Dalits,

- Newar Dalits, including 20 percent representation of Dalits in the elections to the Constituent Assembly on the basis of total percentage of its members.
3. Dalit participation should be compulsorily ensured from the preliminary stage of the process of restructuring of state to the election commission, election advisory committee and other committees that will be formed with regard to constituent assembly elections.
 4. There should be constitutional provision for the participation, representation and access of Dalit (Madhesi Dalits, Newar Dalits, Khas-Parbate Dalits and Dalit women) communities at all levels and bodies of the political parties.
 5. A compulsory provision should be made for the proportional representation of Dalit community (Madhesi Dalits, Newar Dalits, Khas-Parbate Dalits and Dalit women) on the basis of their population in the representative, constitutional and all other bodies of the State.
 6. Reservation should be made for proportional inclusion of the Dalit community on the basis of their racial, regional and gender proportion by restructuring the administrative sector.
 7. The National Dalit Commission should be made a powerful body by making it constitutional and proportionally inclusive.
 8. Since that Dalits do not need a separate state in a federal setup, the national constitution should have a provision of a package policy to resolve the economic, political, administrative, social and cultural problems of the Dalits in the federal state system along with the provision of proportional representation for them.
 9. The constitutional provision to be made in favour of the Dalits for the protection, development, and empowerment of Madhesi, Newar, Kash-Parbate Dalit and Dalit women to enable them to enjoy their rights should have the provision of internal proportional representation.

Economic issues:

10. Land ownership rights of the Dalits should be ensured through revolutionary land reform initiatives.
11. The State should see that all arrangements regarding employment opportunities for Dalit communities are ensured by using employment as a fundamental right.
12. The open market policy of the government which is playing a major role in displacing the traditional profession and skill of the Dalit community should be replaced with mixed economic system.
13. The profession and skills of the Dalits should be modernized. Small industries should be established and subsidy provided to Dalits while ensuring the management of their products.
14. All kinds of bonded labours and exploitation of labour as determined by feudal land-production system in the form of *Haliya*, *Kamaiya*, *Haruwa*, *Charuwa*, *Baligharey*, *Doli*, *Bhund*, *Sino Khaney* and *Phyakney*, *Bethbegary*, *Kamlary* and such other (evil) social practices should be ended and provisions be made for rehabilitation of the affected Dalits.
15. There should be a compulsory management policy for the inclusion of Dalit community in all planning and development activities of the State as well as in the non-governmental sector.

Education, health, culture and social issues:

16. Impunity should be ended and untouchability should be defined as a serious social crime, and a crime against the State and humanity.
17. A code of conduct should be made and implemented for all levels of political parties and civil servants against racial discrimination and untouchability.
18. There should be a provision of a Dalit Bench in all judicial and quasi judicial bodies and a special court at the Centre to look into cases of racial discrimination.
19. The privatization of health service should be stopped by making health service a fundamental right. Dalit community's access to health services should be ensured and the State should provide free health services to the poorest of the poor Dalits.
20. The economic and socio-cultural persecution of the Badis should be rooted out. The agreement reached between the Badis and the government should be implemented immediately.
21. The participation of the Madhesi Dalits, Newar Dalits, Khas-Parbate Dalits, the Dalits of the Karnali region and all other marginalized Dalits should be ensured while guaranteeing the rights of the Dalit community.

Special proposals:

1. A new situation has arisen in the Dalit Movement following the historic people's movement. There is a need for involving Dalits in the forthcoming constituent assembly, restructuring of state and in all decision making processes. We would, therefore, like to underline the need for a strong cooperation among all Dalit political organizations and Dalit civil society bodies, and strongly urge all Dalits to unite for an integrated, joint movement by consolidating all our efforts.
2. Since that the unity between the seven political parties is equally relevant today for the establishment of an inclusive democratic republic through the elections to the constituent assembly as per the mandate of the historic people's movement, we would like to make a strong demand for further strengthening of the unity of the seven parties for immediate declaration of the date to hold the elections (to the constituent assembly) by April 2008.
3. We would like to make a strong demand to hold a fruitful dialogue with Dalits, Madhesi, women's groups, Janajati and the agitating people of the remote regions before the constituent assembly polls and reach a national consensus to ensure the elections.
4. Ensure meaningful representation of Dalits in all the structures that will be set up during the (on going) peace process and in the restructuring of state as envisioned by the Interim Constitution as well as in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and such other bodies.
5. The participation of Dalits in private and governmental media houses should be ensured. The programs relating to Dalit issues should be produced, published and broadcast through private and government media free of cost.
6. Ways should be found to address the issues pertaining to language(s) of the Madhesi Dalit community.



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