

Side event at the 21st session of the UN Human Rights Council:

“STIGMA AND UNTOUCHABILITY: ROOT CAUSES AND MANIFESTATIONS OF CASTE-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS”

12 September 2012, 4-6 pm, Room XXII



Organisers: International Movement against all forms of Discrimination and Racism, Anti-Slavery International, Franciscans International, Minority Rights Group International and the Asian Legal Resource Centre in association with the International Dalit Solidarity Network

Purpose:

This side event aims to demonstrate the stigma caused by caste-based discrimination and “untouchability”, and the interrelated human rights violations associated with these illegal, yet widespread practices. Issues to be discussed include forced and bonded labour, manual scavenging, the plight of Dalit women and children, and Dalits’ exclusion from access to basic services such as water and sanitation, to mention some.

At the event, two UN Special Rapporteurs, Dalit activists, and an ILO representative will give their perspectives on some of the root causes and manifestations related to this problem, and discuss ways to overcome these challenges. The purpose is to discuss good practices and recommendations on the role of the international community, governments, and civil society to prevent and address this chronic human rights concern.

The event will be chaired by Jyoti Sanghera, Chief of Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues Section in the Research and Right to Development Division, OHCHR, and former Representative, OHCHR-Nepal.

Programme:

Key note speeches by UN Special Rapporteurs:

- **Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque**, Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation
- **Ms. Gulnara Shahinian**, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

Case presentations by Dalit rights’ activists – challenges and good practices:

- **Mr. Ashif Shaikh**, Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan - Jan Sahas, India (manual scavenging movement)
- **Ms. Hannah Johns**, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, India (Dalit women, humanitarian response)
- **Mr. Zulfiqar Shah**, Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (bonded labour, forced and early marriages)

Commentary by **Ms. Caroline O’Reilly**, Declaration Programme, International Labour Office

Discussion and inputs from the floor

Light refreshments will be served prior to the event