

IDSN exchange on caste discrimination with COHOM and EEAS – June 2015

On 16 June, IDSN was invited for an exchange with the EU Human Rights Working Group (COHOM) in the Council of the EU and the European External Action Service.

IDSN team of staff and board members presented current thematic challenges and recommendations in exchanges on 16th June with the EU Human Rights Working Group (COHOM) in the Council of the EU, and the European External Action Service, urging the adoption of an EU policy on the prevention and elimination of caste-based discrimination, EU high level public diplomacy on caste-based discrimination and support to initiatives at multilateral level, proportionate with the scale and consequences of this (enormous) human rights problem. EU officials specifically noted the importance of the SDGs process, the forthcoming UPR of Nepal and non-discrimination in relief and reconstruction in Nepal.

Key themes and country situations were presented by Paul Divakar (NCDHR, India), Manjula Pradeep (Navsarjan Trust, India) and Sandra Petersen (on behalf of Zulfiqar Shah from PDSN, Pakistan). Further points raised and discussed included discrimination in relief efforts in Nepal (Durga Sob (FEDO, Nepal)), the IDSN application for UN accreditation (longest pending with the NGO Committee) and the exclusion of caste in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) zero draft outcome. IDSN Executive Director Rikke Nohrlind presented the highlights of international developments related to caste discrimination and made a number of recommendations to the EU:

- Adoption of an EU policy on the prevention and elimination of caste-based discrimination
- EU high level public diplomacy on caste-based discrimination and promotion of supportive initiatives at multilateral level
- Inclusion of the topic in EEAS and Commission statements and policies, and relevant guidelines and action plans, in particular the EU human rights action plan
- Development a specific set of EU tools to address caste-based discrimination and an action plan for their promotion
- Reporting on caste-based discrimination in EU publications

[For more information please see the briefing note presented to COHOM by IDSN in advance of the exchange.](#)