

Catherine **Ashton**
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
European External Action Service
1046 Bruxelles
Belgium

31 January 2012

Re: Urgent Global Call for Action and Recommendations to Eliminate Caste-Based Discrimination

Dear High Representative,

We write to bring your immediate attention to the Joint Declaration and Urgent Global Call for Action to Eliminate Caste-Based Discrimination from *the International Consultation on Good Practices and Strategies to Eliminate Caste-Based Discrimination by governments, civil society, national and international institutions and agencies*, held in Kathmandu on 29 November – 1 December, 2011. We urge **the EU and Member States** to support this Urgent Global Call for Action, to respond to the specific appeals in the Joint Declaration and to act upon the recommendations on Good Practices and Strategies to Eliminate Caste-Based Discrimination (attached herewith).

The documents are outcomes of the Consultation presentations and discussions on good practices and strategies as well as the critical gaps identified in addressing caste discrimination based on the experience of caste affected communities and Dalit human rights defenders, members of international organizations, UN experts, national human rights institutions, NGOs, Solidarity Networks, researchers, and representatives of Government ministries, diplomatic missions and EU institutions. The consultation was supported financially by the EC through the project “Ending Untouchability - European Action to Eliminate Caste Discrimination” and we wish to thank the EC for this invaluable support.

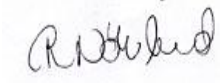
We appeal to the European Union to respond to the Global Call for Action for leadership, cooperation, and constructive engagement at the local, national, regional and international levels to achieve a caste-free world. Specifically, the EU is called upon to:

- **Address** human rights violations stemming from caste discrimination (e.g. access to justice, women’s rights, bonded labour, education, housing, water, torture, and health) in policies, human rights dialogues and political statements, in fora such as the Human Rights Council (HRC), making systematic use of recommendations on the issue by UN human rights bodies;
- **Address the topic in the EU-India summit and human rights dialogue with India**
- **Take action** in the HRC (e.g. in the form of a resolution or joint statement) to recommend the sharing of good practices to eliminate caste discrimination by governments, Special Procedures, UN agencies and country teams, the private sector, and civil society;
- **Endorse and promote** the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent in the HRC with a view to establishing a follow-up mechanism to enhance human rights compliance in this regard on a systematic basis;

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- **Take the recommendations** into consideration in EU human rights country strategies in all caste-affected countries and in India to initiate a process of consultation with Dalit representatives in advance of the EU-India Human Rights Dialogue in March, 2012, and the Universal Periodic Review of India by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2012.

Yours sincerely,



Rikke Nöhrind
Coordinator

- Link to the [Declaration, Global Call and Recommendations](http://bit.ly/ICDeclaration2011) - <http://bit.ly/ICDeclaration2011>
- Link to Consultation documents at <http://idsn.org/idsn-consultation/>
A Consultation report and A Good Practice Catalogue will be available in February 2012
- Link to IDS N Compilation on UN references to Caste Based Discrimination
www.idsn.org/uncompilation